

Meeting of Nov. 25, 2024

November Employees of the Month Recognized

The Orange County Transportation Authority's Board of Directors recognized three employees of the month for November.

- Alicia Gonzalez, a coach operator, was honored for 12 years of safe driving, along with assisting with this year's OC Fair Express and American Public Transportation Association (APTA) conference. Alicia's dedication to safety and customer service exemplifies OCTA's core values.
- William Verduzco, a maintenance employee, was recognized for his role in the successful completion of the California Highway Patrol terminal inspection, utilizing his extensive knowledge of OCTA's bus systems.
- Sofia Perez, an administrative employee, was recognized for her can-do spirit and ability to develop valuable relationships that has led to the success of many outreach activities and events, including the recent APTA TRANSform conference.

Fare Policy Updates Coming in July

The OCTA board approved updates to the agency's fare collection policy to enhance accessibility and affordability for OC Bus riders.

Starting in July, OCTA will introduce the following changes:

- Fare capping: Riders will pay for individual trips until they reach the equivalent cost of a daily or monthly pass, ensuring they never pay more than necessary. This system benefits riders who can't afford upfront costs or are uncertain about how often they will travel on OC Bus.
- Two-hour free transfer period: Riders will also be able to switch buses within a two-hour window without having to pay additional fares, further reducing overall travel costs.

OCTA will begin communicating these updates with passengers in January to ensure they are well-informed about the new fare policy before it's implemented in July.

Board Approves Purchase of Additional Zero-Emission Buses

The OCTA board approved the purchase of 50 new zero-emission buses, marking a major milestone in an ongoing effort to transition the bus fleet to 100% zero-emission technology by 2040.

The purchase includes 40 hydrogen fuel-cell buses and 10 battery-electric buses, which will join the 10 of each type already in OCTA's zero-emission fleet. OCTA has been testing both types of zero-emission technology to understand which type – or mix of technologies – best meet the needs of Orange County's streets.

In a separate action, the board also approved the purchase of 11 battery chargers. Those chargers will be installed at OCTA's bus base in Santa Ana, where the new battery electric buses will be fueled and maintained.

Currently, OCTA stations its 10 battery electric buses at its Garden Grove facility. The hydrogen fuel-cell buses are stationed at the Santa Ana base, which in 2020 debuted the nation's largest hydrogen fuel tank.