

Meeting of Feb. 24, 2025

February Employees of the Month Recognized

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

- Anthony Jimerson, a coach operator, has worked at OCTA since 2006 and is known for his professionalism and commitment to safety, including 13 years of safe driving. He exemplifies a can-do spirit by training fellow drivers as a behind-the-wheel trainer and previously serving as an OC Fair Express ambassador.
- Chris Petit, the maintenance employee of the month, has worked at OCTA as a senior facilities technician since 2008 and is known for his technical abilities, dedication and problem-solving skills.
- Allison Kale, the administrative employee of the month, manages OCTA's Vanpool and College Pass Programs, helping commuters and students access affordable, sustainable transportation. In a short period of time, she's renewed key agreements, launched a roundtable for college partners and helped boost student bus ridership by nearly 26%.

Board Receives Update on Zero-Emission Bus Transition

The OCTA board received an update on its efforts to transition to a zero-emission bus fleet by 2040.

OCTA has been testing both hydrogen fuel-cell and battery-electric buses to see which type of zero-emission technology works best for the agency. OCTA launched its hydrogen fuel-cell pilot in 2020 with 10 buses and a hydrogen fueling station, and began operating plug-in battery-electric buses in 2021.

While the pilots have provided valuable experience, both technologies have encountered challenges. In 2024, the fuel-cell bus availability dropped to 49%, well below the 80% target, primarily due to electrical issues and supply chain delays. Battery-electric bus availability reached 58%, due to issues such as long lead times for replacement parts.

Meanwhile, battery-electric buses have shown strong fuel efficiency, while fuel-cell buses have experienced performance declines due to fuel cell degradation.

To address these challenges, OCTA has undertaken infrastructure improvements, including installing dedicated battery-electric bus charging stations and initiating plans for a second hydrogen fueling station.

In November, the board also approved purchasing an additional 40 hydrogen fuel-cell electric buses, 10 additional battery-electric buses along with chargers, and 10 battery-electric paratransit vans, further advancing the agency's zero-emission goals.

For more information, please visit www.octa.net/ZeroEmission.