



September 2012

OmniNews

New PRTC signs in DC

Have you noticed a change at your bus stop in DC or Arlington? All PRTC bus stop signs in those areas were replaced this spring.

The new signs are the result of a partnership with Metro to create unified bus stop signage within the service area. In an effort to keep all of the local bus service signs consistent, a simple flag-style design was used.

Due to the limited space on the signs, PRTC route names were abbreviated using the trip designation system for each route. These designations, such as "D100" for Dale City-Washington, correspond to the trip designations on OmniRide schedules.

For the first time, PRTC drop-off stops as well as pick-up stops are now outfitted with signs.



11 New OmniRide Buses Arrive

Six new OmniRide buses arrived in June and another five were delivered in August as PRTC continues to update its fleet. These buses are replacements for older buses that will be retired.

The buses that arrived in June are 40-foot Gilligs funded by the U.S. DOT through its discretionary Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) program. These buses will be used primarily for Metro Direct and Cross County services.

The buses that arrived in August are 45-foot MCIs purchased with Federal Transit Administration formula funding. These buses will be used for OmniRide service.

With 11 new buses on the street,

PRTC plans to sell the oldest buses in the active fleet — nine MCIs built in 1993 and 1995 — and move two Orion buses (built in 2000) into PRTC's currently-depleted contingency bus fleet.

The new buses also will enable PRTC to accelerate its mid-life bus overhaul project so that four buses, rather than three, can be overhauled simultaneously. This allows PRTC to operate with a more reliable fleet.

And even more buses are on the way! Seven new 40-foot Gillig buses also purchased with TIGER funds are to arrive in late 2012. When those buses arrive, another seven retirement-age Orion buses that are part of PRTC's current fleet will be moved into the contingency fleet.

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PRTC Achieves SmarTrip Sales Milestone

PRTC set a milestone in April 2012 when the agency sold its 10,000th SmarTrip card at the Transit Center.

SmarTrip is the rechargeable plastic farecard accepted by most area transit agencies. PRTC started selling the SmarTrip card in March 2008, the same month that it started accepting the card for PRTC fares.

There are many advantages to using a SmarTrip card. OmniRide and Metro Direct passengers pay less per trip with a SmarTrip card than with cash. Also, it's convenient to use a single fare card when transferring between a PRTC bus and Metro or other regional transportation providers.



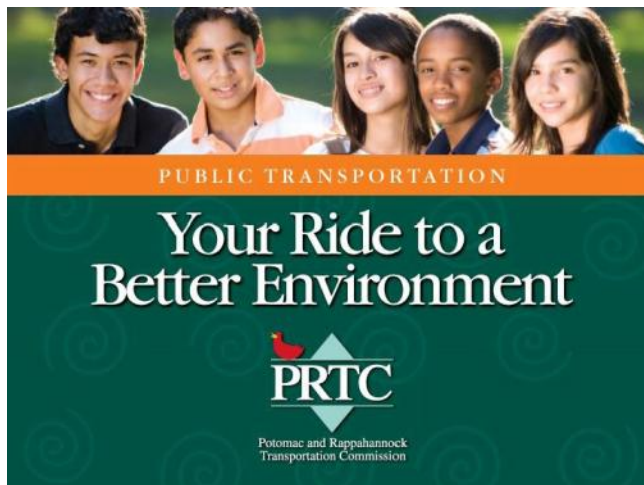
In November 2011, local bus passengers had incentive to start using SmarTrip when PRTC introduced an electronic Day Pass and

Weekly Pass. These pass products can only be loaded on a SmarTrip card.

In addition, passengers who transfer between different types of PRTC services—such as starting a trip on OmniLink and transferring to the more expensive Metro Direct or OmniRide buses—receive credit for the OmniLink portion of their trip when the transfer is made within two hours of the first fare being paid.

PRTC staff noticed an uptick in sales since November when the Day Pass and Weekly Pass were introduced.

The SmarTrip card is sold at the PRTC Transit Center and online at SmarTrip.com in addition to other locations in the area. Visit PRTCtransit.org for a complete listing of sales locations. The card costs \$5 before any value is loaded. □



New PRTC Program Educates Tweens

In the spring, PRTC launched a new program aimed at educating middle school students about the benefits of public transportation.

The *Your Ride to a Better Environment* program was presented to more than 1,100 Prince William County sixth grade students at four schools this spring.

During the free presentation, students learn that transit helps save energy resources, reduces air pollution and saves money. Participants also learn how to read a map and timetable, plan a trip and calculate fares. Program materials include a PowerPoint presentation and two handouts for students to take home.

The middle school program fills a gap in PRTC's efforts to educate children about the benefits of public transportation. It complements two existing outreach efforts:

- The OmniLink Teen Summer Pass, which enables teens ages 13-19 to get unlimited local bus rides over the summer for \$30; and
- *The Safe Bus Adventure Program*, a free interactive program designed to teach children between preschool and second grade about bus safety and the basics about riding the bus.

To learn more about *Your Ride to a Better Environment* and all of PRTC's youth outreach programs, visit PRTCtransit.org, see the Special Programs tab on the homepage and click on Youth Programs. □

Outstanding Operators

First Transit, the contract provider for PRTC's bus services, recognizes one outstanding operator each month. If you have a compliment about your operator, please let us know!

Samuel Adu — November 2011

Originally from Ghana, West Africa, Mr. Adu has lived in the area for eight years and has worked at PRTC since September 2010. He currently operates trips on the Dale City OmniLink route and says he loves his job. In his spare time, he enjoys soccer, jogging, swimming and movies.



Solomon Workneh — December 2011

With First Transit since August 2010, Mr. Workneh currently operates a trip on the South Route 1 OmniRide route. A native of Ethiopia, the married father of two sons says he enjoys playing soccer and watching football and basketball.



Mohammad Shafiq Operator of the Year 2011

Mr. Shafiq's providing of safe, reliable and quality on-time service led to his being named Operator of the Year for 2011. Mr. Shafiq has worked at PRTC since October 2009 and currently operates trips on the Montclair and Dale City OmniRide routes. Originally from



Afghanistan, he has lived in this region for 26 years and now calls Dale City home. He and his wife have two sons and two daughters, and he enjoys camping and soccer.



Ahmed Kamoul — January 2012

A native Moroccan, Mr. Kamoul has lived in this area for eight years and has worked at PRTC since June 2008. He currently operates a trip on the Dale City OmniRide route. When not at work, he enjoys soccer and spending time with his wife and three children. Note: Mr. Kamoul requested that his photo not be included.



Rony Chirinos — March 2012

Mr. Chirinos says he loves driving for a living. He has worked at PRTC since April 2006 and currently operates trips on the Dale City and Lake Ridge OmniRide routes as well as a combined Montclair/Route 1 trip. A resident of Annandale, he is originally from Honduras and has a wife and four children. His hobbies are football and soccer.



Glendora Douglas — April 2012

Ms. Douglas has worked at PRTC since May 2011 and is an extraboard operator, responsible for filling in on any route as necessary. A Virginia native, she has two daughters and four grandchildren and enjoys crocheting and videography. Note: Ms. Douglas requested that her photo not be included.



'On-The-Go' Provides Travel Training

PRTC, in partnership with the Prince William Area Agency on Aging, this spring launched On-The-Go, a program to provide public transportation training to individuals and groups.

Free travel training is available to seniors, those with disabilities and those from low-income

households. Individuals and groups who qualify are trained to be able to use PRTC's services on their own. The training is done by Medical Transportation Management Inc (MTM).

PRTC and MTM also offer 'Train the Trainer' sessions to educate people who frequently

serve as information resources in the community. For example after training, Social Services staff members could answer basic questions about PRTC's services for their clients.

To learn more about the program, visit PRTCtransit.org or call MTM at (888) 513-1614.



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**Serving Prince William County,
Manassas and Manassas Park**

I Want to Know...

Can I get information about PRTC services over the phone without waiting to speak to a Customer Service Agent? — H. T. of Lake Ridge

Yes, you can! PRTC recently improved its phone system to provide riders with easier access to vital travel information without having to wait to personally speak with a Customer Service Agent.

The upgraded phone system also enables PRTC Customer Service Agents to devote more time to callers who need individualized attention.

With the improved phone system, you now can:

- Receive scheduled bus arrival times based on the bus stop

number or bus route;

- Learn about bus fares and passes;
- Hear service alerts; and
- Confirm or cancel previously scheduled off-route trips on OmniLink local buses.

PRTC's OmniLink local buses can travel up to $\frac{3}{4}$ mile off the standard route to pick up and drop off passengers who are unable to access a regular bus stop. Passengers must call Customer Service at least two hours in advance to book OmniLink off-route trips.

To access information for off-route trips, callers must first speak with a Customer Service agent during regular Customer

Service hours (Monday to Friday, 5:30 a.m. to 8:30 p.m.) to get their personalized phone system ID and password.



Once callers have their personalized information, they may confirm or cancel their scheduled OmniLink off-route trip at any time of the day or night.

All other information on the phone system is available without an ID or password.

To speak with a Customer Service Agent or check out the improved phone system, call (703) 730-6664. 