

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT:

Linda McMinimy, Executive Director
Virginia Transit Association
1108 East Main Street, Suite 1108
Richmond, VA 23219
Phone: 804-643-1166
mcmimimy_associates@cavtel.net

The Virginia Transit Association hosted its 2005 Awards Luncheon on May 10th to recognize outstanding service by individuals and exceptional transit programs, and to advance and expand public transportation in the Commonwealth.

Richmond, Virginia - Held at the Crowne Plaza Ft. Magruder Hotel in Williamsburg, the *2005 VTA Awards Luncheon* honored the outstanding public transportation leadership and innovative and effective programs by transit systems. This year a number of VTA Awards were presented to Northern Virginia public transportation systems.

The following awards were given:

2005 Innovative Program Award (Small System) – In partnership with George Mason University’s student newspaper, the **City of Fairfax CUE Bus System** launched the On Cue Directory, a print and web-based publication, as a creative marketing strategy to increase awareness among City residents and the GMU community and connect the community to local businesses while increasing ridership. The directory includes businesses by category, bus route and stop number. The companion website includes a searchable database complete with maps and directions. Distribution included direct mailing, and display racks in businesses, hotels, and government buildings.

2005 Innovative Program Honorable Mention (Large System) – **Virginia Railway Express’ EZ Bus** is a subscription shuttle bus service that was implemented in December of 2003. Funded by and in cooperation with **Fairfax County Department of Transportation**, EZ Bus operates two community routes, one north of the Burke Centre Station, and one south. As a subscription service, passengers sign up online or via phone in advance, although the bus will take non-subscribers on a space available basis. By employing the service, 10% of the Burke Center lot has been freed up by subscribers.

Outstanding Public Transportation Marketing Award (Large System)- The **Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission** has broken new ground in transportation marketing. PRTC developed the “Safe Bus Adventure Program” in 2004 to teach children how to stay safe when riding an OmniLink local bus and to foster positive attitudes about public transportation in general. By educating youngsters about how public transportation benefits the entire community, PRTC proposes to increase the likelihood that they will consider using public transportation as adults – and perhaps influence their parents’ transportation decisions in the immediate future. PRTC created the interactive program with education professionals complete with an oversized storybook, a board game and age-appropriate activity sheets. Presentations are given by request at primary and elementary schools, and libraries upon request. Each presentation is concluded with a tour of a real OmniLink bus.

~~~~~CONTINUED~~~~~

***Outstanding Public Transportation Marketing Honorable Mention (Large System) – Fairfax County Department of Transportation*** received this award for its Richmond Highway Express bus service. Known as “REX”, the service connects Ft. Belvoir and King Street Station and reduces overall travel time by 30%. Bold purple and gold buses with the running lion taken from the Fairfax County Seal to represent “REX, king of the concrete jungle”, stand out in traffic and draw interest from pedestrians and motorists alike. Six months after implementation, ridership is up by 20%.

Awards were presented by Chris Zimmerman, President of VTA and Vice-Chairman of the Arlington County Board.

# # #

*VTA is a trade association based in Richmond, VA representing transit agencies of all sizes throughout Virginia and businesses that support public transportation. VTA’s members provide a wide range of services to the communities in which they operate. [www.vatransit.com](http://www.vatransit.com)*