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**NEWS RELEASE
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Transit Operators and Mechanics Show Off Skills at State Bus Competition

The Virginia State Bus Rodeo was held Sunday, July 13 in Richmond at the Richmond International Raceway. Ten transit systems from across the State competed.

Their annual competition promotes safe operation of public transportation vehicles and provides an opportunity for the best bus operators and mechanics to test their skill and knowledge.

The overall Bus Operator winner, Jimmy Carter, Greater Roanoke Transit Company (Valley Metro) and the winning Maintenance Team of Doug Bauserman, Fred (Ty) McCormick and John Clememts from GRTC Transit System will compete in the International Bus Rodeo to be held in Las Vegas, Nevada, September 19-22, 2002.

In the 35-foot Bus Operator Competition, the winners are: First Place – Jimmy Carter, Greater Roanoke Transit Company (Valley Metro); Second Place - Lonell Glover, Alexandria Transit; and Third Place - Clarence Jackson, Alexandria Transit. In the 40-foot bus operator category, the winners are: First Place – W.T. Lowery, GRTC Transit System; Second Place – Jeremy Martin, Harrisonburg Transit; and Third Place - Calvin Parker, Hampton Roads Transit.

Operators are given a particular amount of time to quickly maneuver a bus though an 11-station obstacle course. As each stop is completed, judges measure, evaluate, and give a score to each contestant.

The winners in the Maintenance Team Category are: First Place – GRTC Transit System; Second Place – Greater Roanoke Transit Company; and Third Place – Greater Lynchburg Transit Company.

In the Mechanic Competition, engine and air brake skills are tested as well as overall bus maintenance. Three-member teams compete to diagnose and repair various mechanical problems. One member from each team also drives the bus through the obstacle course.

The Virginia Transit Association (VTA) sponsors the Rodeo. Participating transit systems included: Alexandria Transit (DASH); Blacksburg Transit; Charlottesville Transit; Fairfax Connector, Herndon; Greater Lynchburg Transit Company; GRTC Transit System; Greater Roanoke Transit Company (Valley Metro); Hampton Roads Transit; Harrisonburg Transit Company; and University Transit (UVA).

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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