Central New York Regional Transportation Authority
2018 - 2019 Year in Review
OUR MISSION

It is the mission of the Central New York Regional Transportation Authority (Centro) to be responsive to the transportation needs of the Central New York community by providing services which are safe, convenient, reliable, and environmentally responsible with a goal of maximizing the taxpayers’ return on investment.
To Our Valued Customers

As this decade comes to a close, we’d like to thank all of you; our customers, for choosing Centro for your daily transportation needs. You are the reason why we are here.

Every day, our staff searches for new ways to improve the bus services you have grown to trust – to make your ride more enjoyable and to entice others to hop on board. Just this year alone, we were able to add some new “creature comforts,” some of which came from ideas originating from discussions with customers.

In some really big news, we received a $5-million Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) grant that we will use to improve service in 2020 and beyond. One of the most frequent requests we get from our customers is for more service, and thanks to this grant, we will be able to put more buses on the road next year. We are very excited about the new service opportunities this grant allows us to consider and we look forward to sharing them with you and getting your feedback. We are currently researching the best and most efficient ways to use this grant money to improve service so more detailed information will not be available until Spring 2020. However the new services are ultimately structured, you can count on Centro to be consistent with our Mission to provide safe, convenient and reliable transportation for our customers to be able to get to work, school, appointments or social engagements.

Another improvement that you may have already noticed is that we have changed our bus destination signs to be more consistent. Starting this past fall, the destination signs on our buses have been changed to indicate what bus route they’re currently on instead of indicating where they’re going. It’s one of the great debates in transit, but our customer feedback indicates this is the way most of you want it.

For our customers that use electric mobility devices, we have installed new charging stations at our Syracuse Transit Hub and William F. Walsh Regional Transportation Center. This provides a greater level of security for those individuals to know that they don’t have to worry about their devices running out of power while transferring between buses at the Hub or traveling out of town.

Centro Transit Ambassadors are now a daily fixture at our Syracuse Transit Hub. We’ve added an additional set of eyes and ears at the Hub to help answer your questions, point you in the right direction, or just help keep our facility clean and welcoming.

In order to replace the aging structures that were removed as part of economic development projects in downtown Rome and Auburn, we have completed or are currently constructing new, larger waiting facilities for those communities.

We are developing plans to upgrade the William F. Walsh Regional Transportation Center and the adjoining Amtrak train platform. As an important gateway to Syracuse and Central New York, the Center must be welcoming and comfortable for both train and long-distance bus travelers.

Each of these initiatives was undertaken to enhance the transit experience of our existing customers and to make our services more attractive to new ones. We look forward to continuing to serve our communities in the years to come.

Rick Lee
Chief Executive Officer

Brian M. Schultz
Chairman
Service

Auburn Common Center
In collaboration with the City of Auburn, Centro relocated its Auburn Downtown Common Center transfer location from Loop Road to Dill Street. The new location, which is just a short walk from the newly constructed Equal Rights Heritage Center, provides an additional pedestrian shelter for customers. The change has proven to be especially useful to Cayuga Community College students who live nearby and rely on Centro to get to and from campus.

Rome Transit Center
June 2018 marked the relocation of Centro’s Rome Downtown transfer point from the 300 block of W. Dominick Street to a new location along the 200 block of W. Liberty Street. The new location, which serves as the main transfer point for buses serving the City of Rome, is also the proposed location for a new bus transportation center - part of the City of Rome’s $10M Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI).

Game Day Express
In the fall of 2018 Centro launched its 440 Game Day Express service. The shuttle service, which transports riders from the Downtown Transit Hub to Waverly Avenue for all Syracuse University home football games, operates every 15 minutes beginning 90 minutes before kick-off and ends an hour after the conclusion of each game.

Fleet

New Buses
In 2018/2019 Centro took delivery of 10 new transit buses and 8 new paratransit buses, each replacing an older vehicle that had reached the end of its useful life. The new 40-foot Gillig diesel powered transit buses and 21.9-foot Ford gasoline powered paratransit buses were procured through grant funding and were placed in service in Syracuse, Oswego and Auburn.

Auto-Tech Open House
For the second year in a row, Centro welcomed students and instructors from OCM BOCES to its headquarters and maintenance facilities in Syracuse as part of a ‘Get-to-Know-Centro’ program. The students, who are enrolled in BOCES’ Collision, Auto Technology, and Welding programs, learned more about employment opportunities within Centro and the public transportation industry.

Destination Signs
Destination signs on Centro buses were changed in the spring of 2019. The signs, which now consistently display the bus route as its being operated instead of sometimes showing the next route, were modified in response to customer requests and to provide consistent information to Centro customers. This change will make Centro’s system easier for new customers to understand and use.

New Operators
In 2018/2019 Centro welcomed 33 part-time and 43 full-time bus operators to its workforce. The new operators, who are currently turning a wheel in Centro’s Auburn, Oswego, Syracuse and Utica locations, graduated from one of the six CDL operator training classes conducted by Centro during 2018-2019.

New Tow Truck
Centro purchased a new tow truck for its Fleet Maintenance Department in 2019. The new vehicle will be used for recovering buses damaged in accidents, returning buses to drivable surfaces due to mishaps or inclement weather, and towing or transporting buses back to the bus garage following mechanical failures.
Community

JCC Award
In 2018, Centro was recognized for helping the Jewish Community Center in a time of crisis. At the Jewish Community Center’s Annual Luncheon, Centro was recognized and received the Kvod Gadol Award for safely transporting and sheltering individuals, many of whom were infants and toddlers enrolled at the JCC Nursery School, as the Center dealt with a series of bomb threats that ultimately ended with an arrest.

Blessings in a Backpack
Centro is expanding its role in the local Blessings in a Backpack program! Centro delivers food packs each week throughout the school year to students at Dr. King Elementary School in Syracuse as part of the Blessings in a Backpack program. When Centro began delivering food to the Dr. King Elementary School in 2017, 50 students were being provided for; two years later – that number is now 200! The program, implemented by the national child hunger relief non-profit, is part of a City of Syracuse Public Schools Backpack Coalition Program, which supports existing school programs that provide food for hungry students during weekends and extended breaks.

Stuff-A-Bus
Centro and a host of local organizations collaborated to fill a Centro bus with gifts and non-perishable food to help the needy last holiday season. Members of the community stopped by the Walmart in Liverpool and filled the 40-foot bus with items that were ultimately given out during the Christmas Bureau’s Distribution Day in Syracuse. Better Homes and Gardens Real Estate Select, The Salvation Army Syracuse Area Services, Walmart Liverpool, United Way of Central New York, and Fulton Savings Bank all played an important roll in making the event a success.

Mission Transition
Centro took part in ‘Mission: Transition - Life after High School,’ an information fair designed to help high school age students, families, and educators at Cayuga-Onondaga BOCES explore the options of employment and/or secondary education as well as their transportation options after graduation. The program was sponsored by the United Way of Cayuga County, ARISE CNY, and NYS DCDT.

Accessibility

ADA Celebration
On July 26, 2018 Centro Call-A-Bus vehicles were part of the parade celebrating the 28th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Centro, which has provided Call-A-Bus paratransit services for nearly three decades, provides more than 128,000 Call-A-Bus rides annually.

Call-A-Bus, which is a complementary service that matches the service area and operation hours of Centro’s transit bus system, is provided under the criteria set forth by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990. As an origin-to-destination service, Call-A-Bus routinely provides curb-to-curb service with exterior door-to-exterior door service provided upon advanced notice. Call-A-Bus service is available in Onondaga, Oswego, Cayuga, and Oneida counties and serves the cities of Syracuse, Oswego, Fulton, Auburn, Rome and Utica.

Charging Stations
Customers who use electric mobility devices can now re-charge them at the Centro Transit Hub in Syracuse thanks to a local group called HealtheConnections. The organization secured a grant to pay for the installation of the charging units. The “Reaching People with Disabilities through Healthy Communities” grant is administered by the National Association of Chronic Disease Directors (NACDD), funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and was implemented locally by HealtheConnections in partnership with ARISE CNY. Having these chargers available to individuals who use electric mobility devices, not only provides them with an added level of security and independence, but allows them to participate in community events without the fear of being stranded without power to operate their mobility devices.

System Maps
Large format Onondaga County / City of Syracuse System Maps were installed at the Syracuse Transit Hub. FREE pocket versions of the maps are available to customers in the schedule rack at the Syracuse Transit Hub. The maps, which were created by the Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council, illustrate Centro’s various routes throughout the City of Syracuse and Onondaga County.
Health & Safety

AED / CPR Training
In July, the American Heart Association conducted refresher training for Centro employees in the use of Automated External Defibrillators (AED). The AED units are located throughout Centro’s facilities in cases of emergency. In addition, Centro employees also received training and certification in Adult and Child Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR).

Lights On Caravan
Centro participated in the Onondaga County Traffic Safety Advisory Board’s 35th Annual "Donald H. Barrett Lights On Caravan." The annual event is held to honor and remember victims of drunk and drugged driving crashes, and to remind all drivers of the dangers of driving while impaired.

Fire Extinguisher Training
Members of the Syracuse Fire Department instructed employees from across the company on the proper use and application of fire extinguishers installed throughout Centro’s facilities. Attendees were provided classroom instruction and also had the opportunity to test their skills with the equipment on simulated fire boxes.

ARC Safety Fair
Representatives from Centro’s Specialized Transportation Department participated in the Annual ARC Safety Fair providing attendees with instruction on how to use the various accessibility features available on Centro buses.

Corporate Challenge
More than 20 Centro employees took to the streets for the 2019 J.P. Morgan Corporate Challenge! The 3.5 mile race is held annually in Syracuse to promote wellness and teamwork. It’s the fourth consecutive year that Centro has had a contingent take part in the challenge.

Outreach

Feedback Sessions
Centro held Customer Feedback Sessions at the Syracuse and Utica Transit Hubs in 2018. Representatives were on hand to recap service changes and allow customers to share their thoughts on route improvements, explain available fare media options, educate customers on new technology / strategies / practices aimed at improving customer service, and respond to questions regarding paratransit, travel training, and employment opportunities.

Transit Ambassadors
In 2019, Centro launched a Transit Ambassador customer outreach pilot program at its Syracuse Transit Hub. Travel Ambassadors are available to help customers determine the best way to get to their destination, provide real-time travel information, direct customers to where they can purchase passes, and answer questions about Centro service and schedules. Just look for the people wearing a yellow vest and ask them if they can help.

Ride Pass Guides
Centro Ride Passes are a great way to save money and make it easier for customers to ride the bus. Offering a variety to choose from, customers can choose the Pass that’s best suited for them. Ride Pass Guides are available on Centro’s website or at any Centro location.

Social Media
2,195 active social media followers: up 19% from last year.
Facebook: 1,506 Likes: +15.6%
Twitter: 442 Followers: +15.5%
Instagram: 170 Followers: +88.9%
YouTube: 77 Subscribers: +20.4%
Advocacy

Funding Initiative
Centro participated in a think tank discussion hosted by the Problem Solvers Caucus Infrastructure Working Group. The topic centered on efforts being made by Congress to develop bi-partisan plans to develop national infrastructure legislation, particularly within the House Transportation and Infrastructure committee. U.S. Representative John Katko facilitated the discussion and serves as the Chair of the Infrastructure Working Group within the Problem Solvers Caucus.

Transit Funding Hearing
In March 2019, Centro testified before both State Senate and Assembly members during a hearing in Syracuse where they stressed the importance of long-term, sustainable transit funding that benefits all transit riders throughout the state. Testimony was heard by the NYS Senate’s Standing Committee on Corporations, Authorities and Commissions and the Standing Committee on Transportation, as well as the NYS Assembly Standing Committee on Transportation.

H.O.P. E.
Centro met with Greater Syracuse H.O.P. E. (Healing, Opportunity, Prosperity & Empowerment) to discuss initiatives designed to help reduce poverty in our communities. H.O.P. E. is an anti-poverty initiative powered by Governor Cuomo’s Empire State Poverty Reduction Initiative (ESPRI) working with community partners to create an inclusive future for those battling poverty. Centro and the service it provides is vital to poverty reduction initiatives in Central New York.

Southeast Gateway Initiative
As a member of the Southeast Gateway Initiative, Centro is participating in initiatives focused on revitalizing the southside of Syracuse. Centro and other civic leaders are assessing the various opportunities and challenges involved with creating an economic development plan to rejuvenate the area south of Adams Street to Martin Luther King Drive, and from SUNY Upstate Medical Center to the Centro parking and maintenance facility.

Infrastructure

RTC Roof Project
Following a 20-year life span and significant deterioration, the roof at the William F. Walsh Regional Transportation Center was replaced in 2018. Central New Yorkers may notice the new roof is a different color, changing from its original green roof, to one that is now black. The entire project was paid for with grant money.

RTC: 20th Anniversary
Twenty years ago the doors to the Regional Transportation Center (RTC) opened. Since then, the RTC has served as Central New York’s one-stop transportation center for intercity and local travel via Centro, Greyhound, Megabus, Trailways, and Amtrak. About 500,000 people come through the RTC each year using transportation services that connect them to nearby landmarks such as NBT Bank Stadium (home of the Syracuse Mets), Destiny USA shopping center, and the rest of Central New York.

Schedule Panels
Backlit schedule panels were installed at Destiny USA, ShoppingTown Mall, and Onondaga Community College. The new panels feature location-specific Stop ID numbers, which customers can use on the GoCentroBus mobile app, online Bus Tracker and Trip Planner applications, and Track-By-Text transit tool.
Honor Flight SYR Shuttle

GLITCH Transition Conference | MVCC

City of Syracuse Big Rig Day

Downtown Living Tour Shuttle

Salvation Army Stuff-A-Bus Drive

DMV "Take Your Child to Work Day"

Senator DeFrancisco’s Senior Fair

Bennett Manor Transit Presentation

Congressman Katko Town Hall Meeting

Call-A-Bus | Maple Downs Senior Center

Honor Flight SYR Shuttle

www.centro.org