

Transit Talk

Kansas City Area Transportation Authority's Employee News Publication

SEPTEMBER 15, 2017

CALENDAR

Friday, Sept. 15

Employee Cookout
11 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Adjacent to Breen Building

Tuesday, Sept. 19-Friday, Sept. 22

Part-Time Operator Mark Up
10:30 a.m.
Training Building

Tuesday, Sept. 26

KCATA Board of Commissioners
Finance Standing Committee
3 p.m.
Board Room

Wednesday, Sept. 27

KCATA Board of Commissioners
Noon
Board Room

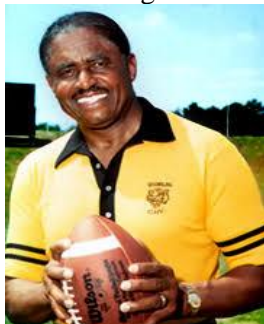
Sunday, Oct. 1

Main Street MAX Celebration
2 p.m. to 4 p.m.
Washington Square Park

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK

“The will to win, the desire to succeed, the urge to reach your full potential...these are the keys that will unlock the door to personal excellence.”

Eddie Robinson,
Former Grambling football coach



KCATA AIDS HISTORIC VETERANS' GROUP REUNION

They did something no one had done in 1,000 years.

And because of it, they were known as men of iron for their tenacity.

They were in Kansas City last week for a reunion and the KCATA was honored to be part of the event.

This very special group of veterans is known as the “Iron Men of Metz.”

The men of the 95th Infantry Division earned the nickname from their German adversaries after overtaking the heavily fortified Medieval French city of Metz in the fall of 1944 toward the end of World War II.

Survivors of the battle were in Kansas City last week for the unit's 68th reunion, and the KCATA helped make it a very special visit.

RideKC offered up two buses – including our special “Honor” bus — to transport 10 veterans and about 60 their family members as part of the unit's reunion festivities.

Part of George Patton's 3rd Army, the 95th Division – or the 95ers as they call themselves - helped capture a city that was critical to the German defensive strategy. It was the only time since A.D. 451 that a military assault had captured the city.

The 3rd Army overcame a complex subterranean network of forts, bunkers and pill boxes that made Metz a formidable challenge against an assault.



The 'Iron Men of Metz' snap a photo in front of the RideKC bus honoring veterans. The bus took them to the National World War I Museum and Memorial.



KCATA Chief Executive Robbie Makinen greeted the 'Iron Men of Metz' as they stepped off the 'Honor' bus last Friday.



Infantry from the 95th enter the fortified city of Metz in November 1944 toward the end of World War II.

The city was surrounded by hills that were turned into underground forts with a series of interconnecting tunnels.

Steel and concrete doors were installed in such a way that they not only concealed the forts but protected the bunkers against artillery.

An inner and outer belt ringed the city with 128 heavy guns that could inflict damage on approaching infantry.

It took a month for the soldiers of the 95th to take Metz, a gritty effort to capture a city that stood as a major roadblock to the allies as they drove across France into Germany.

The reunion featured a banquet where one of the veterans, Charles “Red” Whittington, received the French Legion of Honor – France’s highest order of merit for military and civil achievements.

The award put Whittington among such luminaries as Dwight D. Eisenhower, Thomas Edison, Colin Powell and Alexander Graham Bell who have received the honor over the years.

Our Midwestern hospitality to our out-of-town visitors once again demonstrated our commitment to our veterans. It was just one more way we could give back to an extraordinary group of veterans who served our country so valiantly during World War II.

KCATA President and Chief Executive Robbie Makinen and Chief Operating Officer Sam Desue greeted the veterans as they stepped off the bus at the National World War I Museum and Memorial last Friday.

Makinen and Desue presented each veteran and family member with a special veterans’ medallion to honor their service to the country. “We honor you and we’re grateful that you’re here,” Makinen said.

Organizers praised Kansas City for rolling out the welcome mat for the veterans. “Kansas City has been a wonderfully, marvelous place to visit,” said Clif Twaddle, one the reunion’s organizers whose grandfather was the commanding general of the 95th. “The people here have been extraordinary.”

And so have the men of the 95th Infantry Division. Thanks for your service.

FOOD, GAMES, PRIZES: CELEBRATE MAX’S MOVE TO GRAND BOULEVARD OCT. 1

We’ve been working on improving our Main Street MAX service for months.

Now, we’ve come up with a solution that should improve reliability of the route and give our riders direct and fast service through downtown. Move MAX to Grand downtown.

So, we’re going to celebrate on Sunday, Oct. 1, the day Main Street MAX moves to Grand downtown.

CATCH THE MAX Celebration Event
Free Games
Announcements
Prizes + more

Sunday, Oct. 1
2-4 p.m.

Washington Square Park

RideKC

Food. Games. Prizes. Give-aways. We’ll have it all for this free family event set from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. in Washington Square Park across from Crown Center. All KCATA employees are invited to attend.



“This is really a wonderful opportunity to bring the community together to celebrate an initiative that will improve transit for our customers,” said Frank White III, the Authority’s Chief Marketing Officer.

“Our celebration marks a major event in the life of one of our premier bus routes that provides connections to thousands of people each day,” White said.

Main Street MAX – now called Main MAX – will run on Grand from Third Street in the River Market to Pershing Road near Crown Center.

Frisbees and footballs will be among the give-aways at our Oct. 1 MAX celebration in Washington Square Park..



It will no longer wind through downtown, giving riders a more direct route that will ensure their trip is more reliable.

Main Street MAX will no longer run on Wyandotte, Eighth, Ninth, 11th, 12th and Oak streets. The Main Street MAX route will remain the same south of Pershing and Grand out to Waldo.

The new route reflects our evolving downtown. When MAX started in 2005, there was no Sprint Center, no Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts and no Power and Light District.

We’ve designed a new route that will better serve our customers changing travel demands and offer the type of excellent service they expect from the region’s transit Authority.

So come join us on Oct. 1 and celebrate all the work that went into this new initiative and the difference it will make for our customers.

‘SORRY STOP’ NO MORE: KCATA IMPROVES AMENITIES AT STADIUM COMPLEX

This is a contest we’ll happily let someone else win.

The Kansas City Area Transportation Authority has made sure its Kauffman Stadium stop won’t be winning this year’s sorriest bus stop.



New Truman Complex stop



Old Truman Complex stop

The KCATA partnered with the Jackson County Sports Complex Authority recently to add a shelter and sidewalk at Blue Ridge Cutoff and 41st Terrace near Kauffman and Arrowhead Stadiums.

The sports complex authority added the sidewalk and the concrete base for the shelter since it was already building a sidewalk from Kauffman Stadium to Blue Ridge Cutoff to provide a continuous path from the stop to both stadiums. The KCATA installed the shelter and the sign at the stop, which was moved about 500 feet north near the Missouri Welcome Center at 4010 Blue Ridge Cutoff.



“Thanks to this partnership, fans and employees headed to both stadiums will have a safer, more dignified experience riding the bus,” said Robbie Makinen, the KCATA’s president and chief executive officer. “The upgraded stop signals to stadium workers and guests that they are welcome.”

Last year, the RideKC stop at Kauffman Stadium came within several hundred votes of being named the country’s worst stop by Streetsblog, a national website that promotes walking, biking, and transit.



KCATA Planner Shawn Strate discusses the new bus stop with a television reporter.

Not this year. Our improvements answer critics who complained the stop was hard to find and difficult to access because of a lack of sidewalks. Now, getting on and off the bus is a safer, a more pleasant experience and easier to find.

The new stop received national attention in an Aug. 10 tweet from the Transit Center, which reported the improvements to its 6,100 followers.

“Sorriest stop nominations can lead to action,” the Transit Center tweeted. “2016 finalist in KC has a shelter and sidewalk thnx to @RideKCTransit & @JacksonCountyMO”

The KCATA celebrated the new stop on Wednesday morning with a tailgating party before the start of the Royals and White Sox game.

Kauffman Stadium is served seven days a week by the 47 Broadway, which carries about 1,600 riders each weekday. The 28X Blue Ridge Express also travels to the Blue Ridge Cutoff stop, but with less frequent service.

USED KCATA BUSES, BOX TRUCKS, PICKUP GOING ON THE AUCTION BLOCK

Want to buy a used KCATA vehicle? Now’s your chance to bid on 13 used KCATA vehicles, including 10 buses, two box trucks and a pickup.

The 40-foot buses range from fair to poor condition and have anywhere from 508,000 to 541,000 miles on them.

The Ford F-150 pickup is in poor condition with 75,000 miles. The two trucks — a GMC T-5500 and an International CF600 — are in poor condition. The GMC has 116,000 miles and the International has 121,000 miles.

The vehicles will be part of an auction that’s scheduled to start at 10 a.m. on Saturday, Sept. 23 at Affiliated Auctioneers at 8747 E. U.S. 40 Highway.

The week before, you can register to bid online at affiliatedauctioneers.com. Vehicles can be previewed from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Friday Sept. 22 and from 7 a.m. to 9 a.m. on Sept 23. Questions? Call 816-920-6606

KCATA BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT CULMINATES WITH FRIDAY COOKOUT

The road to the finals of the KCATA's weeklong basketball tournament comes to an end on Friday, Sept. 15 with Team Indi-Face meeting Team Super in the finals of the Competitive Division.

Indi-Face won its two preliminary games, defeating the Northeast Connections 32-9 and Team Super 15-14 in overtime. It will again play Team Super, which downed The Bald & The Beautiful and Northeast Connections to advance to the finals in this double-elimination tourney. Now, Team Super gets to exact a little revenge after losing Wednesday's tight contest against Indi-Face. In the Recreation Division, the Vanilla Brownies will square off with the OG Road Warriors. Just as a reminder, here are the rosters for Friday's games:

Team "Indi-Face:" Brandon Smiley, Tony Smiley, Aaron Hoepfner, Kevin Mitchell and Ken Lewis.

Team Super: James Wells, Richard Vaden, Barry King, Andy Ebert and Korroy Davis

OG Road Warriors: Michael Dixon, Eric Smith, Charles Jones, Thurman Craney

Vanilla Brownies: Raed Kandah, B.J. Garcia, James Hernandez and Tommy Hernandez.

The championship game of the Competitive Division is set for 12:15 p.m. Friday. It will be preceded by the Rec Division championship at 11:45 a.m. And for the rest of us not playing, the employee cookout behind the Breen Building starts at 11 a.m. See you there.



ARTICLE SUBMISSIONS

Any information, announcements or articles for *Transit Talk* should be submitted to bcooper@kcata.org.