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**MCT ROLLS OUT NEW HEAVY DUTY “TALKING” BUSES**
Vehicles with Bus Rapid Transit-Style Design are First in the Region

**GRANITE CITY, ILL., JANUARY 27, 2011…** As ridership continues to climb, Madison County Transit (MCT) is rolling out new, clean-burning, heavy duty biodiesel buses to operate bus routes on its fixed-route system. The 50 new vehicles, with enhanced safety features, automatic vehicle enunciators, a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) style streamlined design and modern paint scheme, are the first of their kind in the region and will partially replace MCT’s aging heavy-duty fixed-route fleet. Produced by the Gillig Corporation, the buses are funded through a series of federal grants including American Reinvestment and Recovery Act Stimulus funds, Federal Transit Administration (FTA) formula dollars and Federal Discretionary funds. Less than 8% of the procurement will be funded with local dollars. The new Gillig buses were 100% assembled in the United States, keeping Americans working.

“The purchase of these buses would not have been possible without the support of a congressional delegation that included U.S. Senator Dick Durbin and U.S. Congressmen Jerry Costello and John Shimkus,” said MCT Managing Director Jerry Kane. “On behalf of the more than 2.3 million individuals who rode MCT this year, I want to commend these leaders for this investment in the mobility of Madison County residents.”

The ‘heavy duty’ vehicles in MCT’s current fixed-route fleet are 30 and 40-foot buses, which were purchased new in 1997. All of these vehicles have surpassed their useful life expectancy as defined by both the FTA and the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT).

“It is imperative that we replace these vehicles before problems negatively impact the provision of transit service,” said MCT Board Chairman Dan Corbett. “The fact that we were able to safely operate these vehicles well beyond their life expectancy is a testament to MCT’s skilled staff and rigorous preventive maintenance program.”

The new buses cost approximately $400,000 each and have a mandated useful life of 12 years. MCT acquired these vehicles in a timely manner thanks to the full cooperation and assistance of the Bi-State Development Agency, DBA Metro, by ‘piggy-backing’ on an existing bus procurement - MORE-
MCT ROLLS OUT NEW BUSES
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and entering into an agreement that benefitted both agencies. The new buses will feature the same safety and accessibility elements as the current vehicles, such as a wheelchair ramp, ‘kneeling’ ability and wheelchair securements.

“In the early 1990s, MCT became the first transit agency in the region to introduce low floor buses,” said Collinsville Township Supervisor and MCT Board Member Terry Allan. “The low floor requires only one step up and the ramp creates safer and faster boarding.”

The new Gillig vehicles are also equipped with the following additional features:

- “Talking Bus” capability - Automated Voice Annunciation with Interior Display to announce upcoming stops and connecting routes.
- Enhanced on-board video surveillance system for improved passenger safety.
- Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Front Body Design for expanded driver visibility.
- 2010 Clean Diesel Technology utilizing Biodiesel Alternative Fuel for improved air quality, fuel economy and to reduce consumption of fossil fuel.
- Enhanced wheelchair restraint system to reduce securement implementation time.
- LED lighting for improved visibility, longer component life and reduced energy consumption.
- Fuel-fired heaters to warm bus engines and heat bus interiors, for reduced fuel consumption.

“The new safety features, accessibility components and fuel efficiencies will enable MCT to maintain operational costs while improving the passenger experience,” said Granite City Mayor and MCT Board Member Ed Hagnauer.

With approximately 2.3 million boardings annually and local fuel prices passing the $3.00 mark, there is growing demand for transit service in Madison County.

“As a County Board Member, I see firsthand the impact that MCT services have on communities and individuals,” said Madison County Board Member and MCT Board Member Bruce Malone. “

For details about MCT’s fixed-route service please call (618) 931-7433 or visit www.mct.org.

Madison County Transit (MCT) provides multi-modal transportation services for Madison County, Illinois. MCT operates a fixed-route bus service, connecting to MetroLink; express weekday commuter service directly to and from downtown St. Louis; and seasonal express service to the Rams games and the Muny. For elderly and disabled residents who are unable to use the fixed-route buses, MCT provides complementary paratransit service. MCT is also responsible for the construction and maintenance of more than 100 miles of bikeways that comprise the MCT Trails system, as well as overseeing RideFinders, the St. Louis region’s FREE carpooling and vanpooling program.