



For Immediate Release

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Federal Grant Funds Electric Vehicles for The Bus and YARTS Fleets

MERCED – Two large grant awards from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) will allow two Merced County transit agencies to soon add several battery-electric buses to their fleets. The Transit Joint Powers Authority of Merced County, known as The Bus, was awarded \$2 million for the purchase of five buses and their corresponding charging depots that will be installed at its maintenance and operations center in Merced.

The Bus's five new vehicles will be added to existing routes in 2021. This is the second grant that will help the Agency meet state regulations to purchase electric buses years ahead of the deadline. This summer, the City of Merced received a grant from California's Strategic Growth Council that included money to purchase The Bus's first electric vehicle to serve a new affordable housing complex.

"The Bus not only provides an important service by connecting residents throughout Merced County to health care, employment and other vital services, but it is also part of our region's collective effort to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve local air quality," said Stacie Guzman, Executive Director of Merced County Association of Governments. "Now, thanks to this federal investment, The Bus will begin the transition to a zero-emission fleet."

The Yosemite Area Regional Transportation System (YARTS) which provides year-round transit service between Merced and Yosemite National Park was also awarded \$4.3 million through the same FTA grant program. These monies will be used to purchase six battery-electric coaches for the Agency's aging fleet. The zero-emission vehicles will operate on YARTS routes both into and within Yosemite by the end of 2020, making YARTS the first public transit agency in the country to utilize battery-operated vehicles for service into a National Park.

"This is great news for Merced County residents and visitors to Yosemite," said Congressman Jim Costa. "These buses will not only help improve air quality in the Valley, but will also expand access into and around the Park by alleviating congested roads, allowing visitors of all abilities to experience the beauty of this national treasure."

Funding for the electric buses was made through the FTA Bus and Bus Facilities grant program; the full award announcement can be found here: <https://www.transit.dot.gov/about/news/us-transportation-secretary-elaine-l-chao-announces-423-million-grants-nationwide>.

All bus schedules and hours of operation can be found at www.mercedthebus.com or by calling The Bus at (209) 723-3100. Real-time information regarding bus locations, services and arrival times can

be found at www.thebuslive.com or by downloading 'The Bus Live' app on your smart phone for free. All buses are equipped with bike racks and are wheelchair accessible. Seniors, Veterans and ADA eligible passengers can ride all fixed route service for free year-round with qualifying identification. Those wishing to see if they are eligible for the free fare should contact The Bus office to learn more.

The Bus is the single public transportation service provider for all of Merced County and is administered by the Transit Joint Powers Authority for Merced County and managed by the Merced County Association of Governments (MCAG). For more information, please visit www.mercedthebus.com and www.mcagov.org.

YARTS is a regional public transit service that provides a year-round alternative to driving to Yosemite. YARTS schedules make connections with all intercity transportation providers in Merced: Amtrak, Greyhound and Boutique Air at the Merced Airport, and also connects to transit providers in Mono, Tuolumne and Fresno Counties during summer operations. United Airlines also provides connection through its carriers to Fresno Yosemite International Airport and Mammoth Lakes Airport. Park entrance fees are always included in any YARTS trip. For more information about YARTS, ticket prices, or the seasonal schedules, please visit www.yarts.com or call (877) 989-2787.

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