



For Immediate Release

November 26, 2019

Mary-Michal Rawling, MPA
Public Affairs Manager
(209) 723-3153 x 119
mary-michal.rawling@mcagov.org

\$4.3 million Federal Grant funds six YARTS Electric Buses

MERCED – The Yosemite Area Regional Transportation System (YARTS) has been awarded \$4.3 million by the Federal Transit Authority for the purchase of six electric coaches. These zero-emission vehicles will operate on YARTS routes by the end of 2020, making YARTS the first public transit agency to utilize battery-operated vehicles for service into a National Park.

“This is such an exciting moment for YARTS,” said Stacie Guzman, YARTS Executive Director. “With this award, YARTS will be able to purchase much-needed buses for our aging fleet as well as acquire our first battery-electric coaches. This investment is a huge step towards YARTS’ long-standing goal to help ease congestion in Yosemite National Park and improve our region’s air quality by providing a safe and convenient transit alternative for park visitors.”

The YARTS service was started as a joint effort 20 years ago between the National Park Service and the Counties of Mariposa, Merced and Mono in order to decrease traffic and pollution in Yosemite. “Yosemite National Park is proud of our long-standing partnership with YARTS,” stated Yosemite National Park Superintendent Michael Reynolds. “We are thrilled that this grant will help YARTS continue to improve critical public transportation services to and from Yosemite National Park.”

Competition for grant funds was high, with less than one third of applications being approved. “The fact that YARTS was given this level of funding says a lot about the important service we provide,” said Mariposa County Supervisor Miles Menetrey, Chair of the YARTS board. “This highly competitive, nation-wide grant funding resulted in YARTS being selected as one of only eight recipients in the entire state.”

Funding for the electric coaches was made through the 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>.

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.

YARTS is a California Joint Powers Authority comprised of Merced, Mariposa and Mono Counties in partnership with Caltrans, Federal Highway Administration, National Park Service and the United States Forest Service. The Merced County Association of Governments provides staff services and operational support for YARTS.

##