



HUMBOLDT COUNTY ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS
Regional Transportation Planning Agency
Humboldt County Local Transportation Authority
Service Authority for Freeway Emergencies

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Eureka, Humboldt County
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NEW YEAR, NEW WEEKEND BUS SERVICE **Free Rides During *Arts Alive!* Will Promote New Service**

The Redwood Transit System (RTS) will inaugurate a new Saturday night run starting on January 7, 2017, the first Saturday of the new year. To promote public transit and celebrate local art, all rides on RTS will be free after 7:30 p.m. on the first Saturday of the month—the same day as *Arts Alive!* The Humboldt County Association of Governments (HCAOG) is sponsoring the free first-Saturday-night rides all year long.

HCAOG, which is the Regional Transportation Planning Agency, created this project to get more people to ride the bus, and to make it easier for people who already ride. In particular, HCAOG is hoping to attract more Baby Boomers to take the bus. “For people who haven’t ridden our local buses,” said Oona Smith, HCAOG Senior Planner, “we’re hoping the free ride will be the ‘gateway ride’ that gets them hooked on riding public transit. We want it to be habit-forming.”

“Hopefully, the free rides on *Arts Alive!* nights will entice people to skip the crowded parking scene and enjoy themselves by relying on the bus,” said Mayor Susan Ornelas, who represents the City of Arcata on the HCAOG Board. “It’s not just for trips to Arcata, the late Saturday bus will serve people all along the route.”

The entire RTS mainline route runs from Trinidad to Scotia, with stops in 14 communities in between. The extended Saturday night service will provide a later bus northbound from Scotia to McKinleyville, and southbound from Trinidad to Fortuna. The later Saturday service will allow riders to take RTS from one to four hours later than before.

HCAOG and Humboldt Transit Authority (HTA) are happy to be able to launch this service, thanks to a new source of funds. The funds are from the California Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund/Low-Carbon Transit Operations Program. That fund was created through the California cap-and-trade program, which sells carbon credits. HCAOG allocated the State funds with co-sponsorships from the Cities of Arcata, Eureka, and Fortuna.

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The cap-and-trade program is one of the State's strategies to achieve its goal to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to 1990 levels by the year 2020, and ultimately to reduce 1990 levels by 80% by the year 2050.

HCAOG is a Joint Powers Agency comprised of the seven incorporated cities (Arcata, Blue Lake, Eureka, Ferndale, Fortuna, Rio Dell, Trinidad), and the County of Humboldt. It is the designated Regional Transportation Planning Agency (RTPA), largely responsible for programming highway and road improvements, public transportation resources, the roadside call box program, and active transportation education.

RTS schedules are posted at bus stops and available on-line at www.hta.org.