



Volume 2, Issue 4

MAY 2008

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY

STAR TRACKS



Rails & Trails: One Commuter Shares Her Multi-Modal Experience

Monday through Friday Sally Robertson rises at dawn to begin her daily commute into downtown Nashville. Sally's commute is a multi-modal experience, a story set on rails and trails.

She rides her bike one and a half miles to the station in Mount Juliet where she boards the Music City Star. When the commuter train arrives at the Downtown Station, Sally straps her helmet back on, takes her bike off the train, rolls up her pant leg, and starts peddling down Demonbreun towards Music Row. From there, Sally bikes another seven miles to Nashville State Tech Community College where she is a librarian.

With gas prices at all time highs, Sally Robertson is one of many Nashville-area residents looking to alternative modes of transportation. In fact, the Music City Star has seen a 27 percent increase in ridership since May 2007; 700 to 800 passengers are now aboard each day. For Sally, the combination of commuter rail and bicycling makes the ride into work not only more affordable, but much more enjoyable.



Sally Robertson with Lane De Vors, Shaun Watt and Ted Cooper

"I do it for more than just the savings," Robertson states. "I ride because it is fun, and is good for my health and the environment. The money I save is an added bonus."

Sally, age 52, has been getting to work through different means of public transportation since she moved here from Chicago. She and her bike have been riding the Music City Star since it first began service in 2006. Before using the train, she and her bike rode MTA buses. Her favorite mode of transportation, however, is her bicycle.

"Riding my bike to work gives me the opportunity to really experience Nashville," Robertson claims. "Instead of staring at the car's bumper in front of me, I'm seeing, smelling and breathing Nashville. I'm interacting with my city."

Multi-modal commuting is working well for Sally and for many other people whose daily travel combines the Music City Star, bus, walking and bikes, of course. Sally is convinced that she will soon have more company on the rails and trails as more commuters recognize the convenience, savings and fun of traveling the multi-modal way.

Question of the Month

Dear RTA:

How many and what counties does RTA serve?

Signed, Interested

+++

Dear Interested:

The RTA (Regional Transportation Authority) serves nine counties. These counties are: Cheatham, Davidson, Dickson, Maury, Robertson, Rutherford, Sumner, Williamson and Wilson. The RTA is a government-funded agency supported by member communities. Created in 1988, the RTA provides ridesharing opportunities in order to promote the economic growth of our membership and improve the air quality of the region. The RTA is led by a board comprised of city and county mayors and community leaders. The RTA is the manager and operator of the Music City Star.

AIR ALERT SEASON ARRIVES!

Air Alert Season 2008 is here. The Middle Tennessee region periodically has high ozone and particulate matter levels during the months of May—September.

Saving energy reduces pollution; and it saves money. Everyone can use the following guidelines to help keep air cleaner in our community. These recommendations are especially important when ozone and/or particulate matter levels are expected to be unhealthy:

- Conserve electricity; set the air conditioner at a higher temperature.
- Choose a cleaner commute — ride the Music City Star! Combine errands and reduce trips. Bike or walk to errands when possible.
- Defer use of gasoline-powered lawn and garden equipment for later in the day, or for days when the air quality is better.
- Refuel cars and trucks after dusk. Limit engine idling.
- Get regular engine tune ups and car maintenance checks (especially for the spark plugs).
- Avoid spilling gas and don't "top off" the tank. Replace gas tank cap tightly.
- Properly dispose of household paints, solvents and pesticides. Store these materials in airtight containers.
- Paint with a brush, not a sprayer. Buy low volatile organic compound (VOC) paints for indoor and outdoor painting jobs.
- Avoid burning leaves, trash and other materials.

Care for the Air!

Sally Robertson submitted the following poem for publication. She was a participant in the recent Great Commuter Race on May 6th:

Fast rail

Speedy, great fun

Listen for the whistle.

Relaxing and entertaining

Music City Star

Cycle

Low gear lifestyle

Efficient transportation

Effectively splendid way to go.

Trek 8000

Trails

Biking, walking

Along a river way

Beautiful and peaceful and green.

Greenways

May is National Transportation Month!

