

## **Meeting of Nov. 22, 2021**

### **Board Recognizes November Employees of the Month**

The Orange County Transportation Authority's board of directors recognized three employees of the month for November. The honors went to:

- Steve Swanson, a coach operator at the Santa Ana base who has 20 years of experience as a coach operator and behind-the-wheel trainer. Last month, a driver clipped a cyclist who was subsequently thrown in front of Steve's bus. Steve's experience allowed him to safely slow down and maneuver the bus to avoid the fallen cyclist and protect the cyclist from getting hit by other vehicles.
- Joaquin Barraza, a journeyman mechanic at the Santa Ana base who joined OCTA in 2019. Joaquin's exceptional diagnostic skills were instrumental in identifying and correcting an intermittent wiring fault with the kneeling system on one of OCTA's buses.
- Heidi Busslinger, who joined OCTA six years ago and was recently promoted to Senior Transportation Funding Analyst. Throughout the pandemic, Heidi has played an important role in developing guidelines for the distribution of federal funding through OCTA's Pavement Management Relief Funding Program – providing much needed support to cities and the county to repair local streets.

### **OCTA Awards Nearly \$3 Million to Improve Transportation for Seniors and People with Disabilities**

The OCTA board awarded \$2.75 million to local organizations to help meet the transportation needs of seniors and people with disabilities throughout Orange County.

The grants will go to 10 nonprofit organizations and public agencies for projects that will provide paratransit vans, buses, support equipment and other assistance to ensure that quality transportation options are available to seniors and people with disabilities in Orange County.

These programs are intended to support the needs of these populations beyond traditional public transportation and may help alleviate demand for OC ACCESS, a shared-ride service that OCTA provides for passengers unable to use the regular OC Bus system due to functional limitations caused by a disability.

### **Board Receives Attitudinal and Awareness Survey Results**

The OCTA Board received the results of the agency's Attitudinal and Awareness Survey that measured awareness and perceptions of OCTA among Orange County residents.

OCTA conducts this survey every few years. In addition to measuring awareness and opinions of the agency, the survey gathered input on strategies and priorities for the 2022 Long-Range Transportation Plan and profiled residents' use of Orange County's transportation system, communications preferences

and demographic information. The survey was conducted by phone and online from June 3-27 in English, Spanish and Vietnamese.

Key takeaways include:

- Nearly 90 percent of Orange County residents are aware of OCTA
- Favorable opinions of OCTA outnumber unfavorable opinions 2.5 to 1
- There is widespread support for all strategies designed to reduce vehicle trips, vehicle miles traveled and traffic congestion, including encouraging remote work, creating safe routes to school and improving commuter rail
- Pricing and policy strategies to reduce congestion received mixed reactions
- There is strong support for infrastructure repair and maintenance