
COTA Mourns the Loss of William J. Lhota

Former president/CEO credited with agency turnaround

COLUMBUS, OH—The Central Ohio Transit Authority (COTA) is saddened to learn of the passing of William J. Lhota on Thurs., August 10 after a battle with cancer. Lhota served as COTA's president/CEO from September 2004 to February 2012.

After a 37-year career with American Electric Power (AEP), Lhota was recruited out of retirement to lead COTA through a turnaround during a period of financial and reputational crisis.

"Bill's business acumen and reputation as a leader with the highest moral and ethical standards was just what COTA needed at that time," said W. Curtis Stitt, COTA president/CEO.

As president/CEO, Lhota restored community confidence in COTA. He implemented a program of service growth, capital investment and fiscal stability that continues today.

"During his time at COTA, Bill developed a strong passion for public transportation, a compassion for the people who use it, and a great understanding of the important role transit plays in our community," Stitt said. "His impact on COTA, our customers and our community will be felt for many years to come. He will be greatly missed."

COTA's administrative headquarters located at 33 N. High St. in downtown Columbus bears Lhota's name.

Lhota retired from AEP in December 2001, where he was responsible for power transmission and distribution systems in 11 states. At retirement, he served as President - Energy Delivery, American Electric Power and Executive Vice President, American Electric Power Service Corporation. He briefly owned a consulting business before taking the helm at COTA.

Lhota earned a Bachelor's Degree in Civil Engineering in 1964 from The Ohio State University. He also earned a Master's Degree in Management from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1978.

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The Central Ohio Transit Authority (COTA) is the regional public transit provider for Greater Columbus and central Ohio. With a service area of 1.2 million residents, COTA provides more than 18 million passenger trips per year, and employs more than 1,000 people. COTA operates throughout Franklin County, and parts of Delaware, Fairfield, Licking and Union counties. For more information about COTA, visit COTA.com or call (614) 228-1776.



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