
Curtis Stitt to Retire, Capping Transformative Tenure as President and CEO

COLUMBUS, OH—Having served 18 years at the Central Ohio Transit Authority (COTA), including the past five as president and CEO, W. Curtis Stitt announced at this morning's Board of Trustees meeting that he will retire Sept. 30. Appointed to lead COTA on Feb. 1, 2012, Stitt oversaw the transformation of public transit in Central Ohio, including a downtown circulator, an airport shuttle and a comprehensive redesign of the entire bus network.

"As I look back on my tenure, I'm grateful for the opportunity I've had to work with so many great people, and I am extremely proud of what we achieved together," Stitt said. "We've leveraged new technology, innovative thinking and old-fashioned common sense to make public transit more convenient and efficient, and to meet the needs of more people."

COTA's accomplishments during Stitt's tenure as president and CEO include:

- SmartRide and GREAT, targeted partnerships which have connected people to New Albany and Groveport-Rickenbacker job centers;
- CBUS, the downtown circulator, which has enhanced economic development along High Street while introducing new riders to COTA;
- AirConnect, the shuttle that makes the trip from downtown to John Glenn Columbus International Airport and back every 30 minutes;
- The Smart City Challenge, the bid, supported by COTA, which netted \$50 million for advanced transportation in Columbus from the U.S. Department of Transportation and Vulcan Inc.;
- Syncing COTA's bus schedule with Transit App so passengers can check their smart phones to find out where a bus is at any given moment and when it will arrive;
- The renewal – with support from more than 72 percent of Franklin County voters – of COTA's 10-year operating levy in November of 2016, which highlighted a period of unprecedented financial stability;
- The Transit System Redesign, which beginning Monday will revamp COTA's entire bus network to deliver more direct and faster service throughout Central Ohio;
- CMAX, the bus rapid transit service launching in January, which will move passengers along the Northeast Corridor on Cleveland Avenue to downtown and back 20 percent faster than COTA's traditional bus service; and
- NextGen, the inclusive community planning process to develop the public transportation system to meet the needs of our community as it grows by 1 million residents by 2050.

"Curtis' strong leadership has brought COTA into a new era of public transit. Under Curtis' direction, COTA is transforming itself with the current system redesign, implementation of the multimodal bus rapid transit line, and technology advances like Transit App," said Jean Carter Ryan, COTA Board of Trustees Chair. "On behalf of the board, I want to thank Curtis for his service and dedication, not only to COTA, but to the Central Ohio community. We wish him all the best."

The Board of Trustees will launch a nationwide search for the next COTA president and CEO.

“Curtis leaves COTA with big shoes to fill – and we are determined to fill them, ensuring a smooth leadership transition,” said Trudy Bartley, Board of Trustees Vice Chair. “We will convene a Search Committee comprised of trustees and community leaders to secure an experienced executive recruiter to assemble a strong, diverse pool of qualified candidates.”

Prior to his appointment as president and CEO, Stitt served one year as COTA’s senior vice president and chief operating officer. Before that, he served 12 years as COTA’s legal counsel, including six years as general counsel and vice president of legal and government affairs. Prior to joining COTA, Stitt held several legal and administrative leadership positions, including superintendent of Ohio’s Division of Financial Institutions, superintendent of the Ohio Division of Credit Unions and legal counsel both to the Ohio Division of Banks and the Ohio Division of Credit Unions. He also served three years as corporations counsel for the Ohio Secretary of State, and three years as appellate counsel for the Franklin County Public Defender.

Stitt has served numerous community organizations and continues to serve on the boards of Experience Columbus, Capital University, Action for Children, the Ohio Public Transit Association and the American Public Transportation Association. A longtime coach, administrator, and organizer of track and field programs, Stitt founded New World Track Club, Inc. in 1987. He was a finalist for the 2003 Jefferson Award and received the 2009 Jewel Award for his volunteer and community service.

Stitt earned a B.A. from Kent State University and a J.D. from Northern Kentucky University’s Chase College of Law. He is a member of Mt. Olivet Baptist Church, is married to his wife, Lana, and has a daughter and two granddaughters.

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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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