



PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Dec. 7, 2017,
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2 Pictures Attached

MTA Extends Free Bus Ride Program for Spring Semester Mendocino College Students

The GI Bill and free transportation on Mendocino Transit Authority (MTA) buses enable Justin Todd, of Willits, to attend Mendocino College. He's enrolled full-time as a second semester math major after spending nine years in the Army.

The GI Bill pays his tuition at the college as part of a monthly educational benefit earned by members of the active duty armed forces. He has a car but prefers to take the MTA bus to school.



Justin Todd of Willits, a math major at Mendocino College, boards the MTA bus to return home after a day of school. His travel is free thanks to a state grant to Mendocino Transit Authority to reduce auto emissions.

"I want to study and be at school, but I couldn't do it without the student bus benefit," said the father of two young children. "If I had to drive, it would really affect me financially." He rides the 9:30 a.m. Route 20 bus from Willits to Mendocino College and usually takes the 5:50 p.m. bus back home.

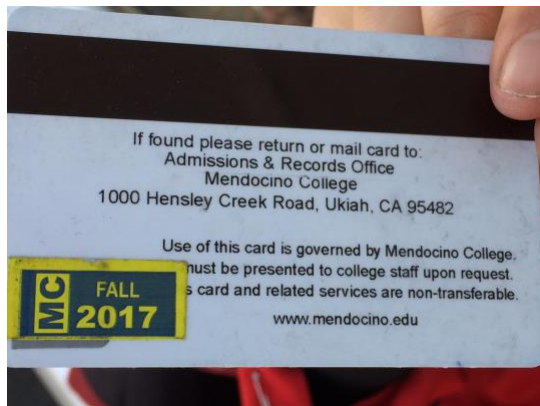
Enrolled students at Mendocino College are eligible for a sticker on



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their student ID that allows them free passage on any MTA bus throughout Mendocino County, and to the college's campuses in Fort Bragg and Willits.

The program is available to spring semester 2018 students. Once enrolled, they can ask for a sticker at the front desk of the college library to affix to the back of their student ID.



Once enrolled for a semester of classes, Mendocino College students can get a sticker allowing them free rides on all MTA buses. Stickers are at the college library front desk.

"MTA is dedicated to serving our communities in Mendocino County, and when we learned that funding was available to help us provide free transportation to students, we immediately applied," said MTA General Manager Carla Meyer. "College education is an important factor in lifetime success, and this program helps make college more affordable. As funding allows, we will continue to partner with Mendocino College and offer free transportation for their students."

MTA received \$41,878 for the college free ridership program in 2016/17 as one of 125 transit projects totaling \$34.5 million that were funded through California's Low Carbon Transit Operations Program (LCTOP). LCTOP is one of several state programs that awards auction proceeds from California's Cap-and-Trade Program, and it focuses upon transit projects that reduce greenhouse gas emissions throughout California.

In its request for funding, MTA proposed to reduce emissions by attracting more students to ride the bus rather than drive to campus. In the 13 months since its inception in fall semester 2016, MTA buses gave 31,268 free rides to college students, saved 10,539 vehicle miles traveled and reduced greenhouse gas emissions by 5.5 metric tons of particulates, as calculated using California Air Resources Board methodology. With money from an additional 2015/16 LCTOP grant, MTA has provided a total \$73,000 in transportation support for the county's college students.

"Free bus fare provides an important benefit to Mendocino College students and we applaud Mendocino Transit Authority for spearheading this program," said J. Arturo Reyes, Mendocino



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College president. "There are other benefits too, including reduced auto emissions on campus and reduced demand for parking. Perhaps even more importantly, this partnership is changing the lives of our students. We hear stories daily from students who are eternally grateful to MTA for providing them the opportunity to attend Mendocino College!"

Mendocino Transit Authority provides safe, low-cost and convenient public bus service throughout Mendocino County. For more information, visit mendocinotransit.org.

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