



**Published in the Novato Advance
Volume 91, Issue 30
July 29, 2015**

SMART Updates and More

For SMART, the good news just keeps on coming! I want to take this opportunity to update you on some recent news.

The newest announcement came earlier this month from California Transportation Agency Secretary Brian Kelly and State Senator Mike McGuire who announced that SMART is one of only 14 transit agencies in the State to receive a grant from the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund (using proceeds from the State's cap-and-trade auctions). SMART will receive \$11 million to purchase three more rail cars, which will boost SMART's seating capacity by 35 percent. These 14 state grants help support about \$720 million in public transportation investments and reduce an estimated 860,000 metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions, the equivalent of taking 180,000 cars off the road.

With these additional rail cars, SMART will run a three-car format during busy times instead of a two-car format, thus providing even more capacity for those who will ride SMART. This configuration will boost passenger capacity from 320 passengers sitting and standing to 450 passengers sitting and standing. The three-car format will also increase bicycle capacity to 36 bicycles, instead of 24 in the two-rail car format.

An exciting update for Phase Two of the SMART project - the San Rafael to Larkspur extension has received final environmental clearance from the Federal Government. Preliminary discussions have begun between SMART, the City of San Rafael, the City of Larkspur, and our local bus transit operators on how to best coordinate the construction and the operation of our services so we can best serve the community and our local transit passengers.

I hope you had an opportunity to visit SMART at the County Fair. Not only was the train parked at its future stop at the Civic Center for visitors to board and tour, SMART had a great informational booth chalked full of staff and materials to answer questions. One of SMARTS' important public outreach efforts shared at the Fair included the rail safety educational campaign and outreach to children and teens. SMART has produced a great cartoon style pamphlet and fun computer game. SMART staff has been very active with outreach efforts to schools and service clubs reminding us all that "There is a train coming to town!" The reviews from Fair patrons have been very positive, full of excitement about the upcoming passenger service.

Keep your eyes out for the pilot trains that will be tested this year in anticipation of passenger service starting in 2016 for Phase One of the project. Phase One includes 43 miles of service from Downtown San Rafael to Airport Blvd north of Santa Rosa and will include 10 stations: three in Santa Rosa (Airport Blvd, Guerneville Rd and Railroad Square), one in Rohnert Park (Rohnert Park Expressway), one in Cotati (East Cotati Ave), one in Petaluma (Downtown), two in Novato (San Marin/Atherton and Hamilton), and two in San Rafael (Marin Civic Center and Downtown). Trains will operate in both directions every thirty minutes during peak commute hours, with a mid-day trip and weekend service planned as well.

If you want to see an innovative, sustainable mode of transit that I have long-advocated would be a good connector service to bring commuters to and from SMART train stations, Google: SkyTran to Israel. The young brain trust that designed this just updated me with the news that SkyTran is now under construction at the Israeli airport.

There is a new "pop-up" library at 931 C Street just off Main Gate Road in Hamilton, replacing the branch formerly housed at the hangars. While the space is small, it's a full service library operating with the same hours as the old location. The move is part of a plan to open a larger permanent modular structure at this location this fall. The new library space is a partnership between the Marin County Library and the Novato Unified School District and will be approximately 6,000 square feet, or double the size of the former branch in the hangars. The new location is conveniently located near the Hamilton K-8 public school, the North Bay Children's Center, the Novato Charter School and the future commuter rail station for the Sonoma-Marín Area Rail Transit line. I stopped by the temporary "pop up" branch last week and encourage you to do the same – you'll be pleased with all they have to offer!

As always, my door is open to you. You can reach me at: (415) 473-7331 or jarnold@marincounty.org.