



For Immediate Release

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\$4.6 million Federal Grant funds 5 New YARTS Buses

MERCED – The Yosemite Area Regional Transportation System (YARTS) has been awarded \$4.6 million by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) for the purchase of five new, over-the-road coaches.

The funding was made available through the Buses and Bus Facilities-Section 5339(b) grant program and will allow YARTS to own its entire fleet. Owning its whole fleet means YARTS can operate more efficiently throughout its six-county, 480-square mile service area rather than depend on the availability of leased vehicles during the peak summer season when visitation to Yosemite is high. The new vehicles will be ADA-accessible and have restroom facilities on board. The clean-diesel coaches are scheduled to be added to YARTS routes in summer of 2023.

“This investment in YARTS vehicles is an investment in the sustainability of Yosemite National Park,” said Christine Chavez, YARTS Transit Manager. “This award directly enables YARTS to maintain its foundational goal of easing congestion in Yosemite National Park. The new coaches will be equipped with the latest technology, making them cleaner and more comfortable buses to ride than buses on the road today, which means we are also helping to improve our region’s air quality overall.”

Competition was high for this nation-wide funding source; YARTS was one of only 14 recipients funded in California and one of two projects awarded on behalf of California Department of Transportation (Caltrans). The full FTA award announcement can be found here: <https://www.transit.dot.gov/funding/grants/fiscal-year-2021-buses-and-bus-facilities-projects>

YARTS is a regional public transit service that provides a year-round alternative to driving to Yosemite. YARTS schedules make connections with all intercity transportation providers in Merced: Amtrak, Greyhound and Advanced Air at the Merced Airport, and also connects to transit providers in Mono, Tuolumne and Fresno Counties during summer operations. Park entrance fees and National Park Service reservations are included in any YARTS trip. For more information about YARTS, ticket prices, seasonal schedules, or COVID-19 protocols, please visit www.yarts.com or call (877) 989-2787.

YARTS is a California Joint Powers Authority comprised of Merced, Mariposa, Madera, Mono, and Tuolumne Counties in partnership with Caltrans, Federal Highway Administration, National Park Service, and the United States Forest Service. The Merced County Association of Governments provides staff services and operational support for YARTS.

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