

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY -Congressman Steny Hoyer viewed new technology today intended to provide bus riders with up to the minute information so commuters know when a bus will arrive at their stop. Congressman Hoyer helped to secure \$1 million in federal funds so that Prince George's County could utilize this new information technology. Following are Congressman Hoyer's remarks, as prepared for delivery:

"Prince George's County has experienced unparalleled growth over the last few decades, spurring economic development, new housing, and job growth. As expected, such growth and expansion are making ever more demands on our transportation infrastructure, making the simple tasks of going to work, school, and retail stores a challenging exercise.

"As more and more families move to and work in Prince George's County, we are finding that traffic is becoming more congested and commuting times have increased as residents travel to and from their jobs.

"The Prince George's County public transit system is bearing a disproportionate share of the burden in trying to meet the transportation needs of county residents. However, I can tell you with all confidence that the Prince George's County Department of Public Works and Transportation has done an excellent job serving commuters to and from this county.

"And it is a testament to the Department's responsiveness and effectiveness that it seeks to use proven satellite technology to improve transit services and options for its passengers. The Department knows, and I agree, that more accurate and timely information, quicker traffic movement, and better traffic management will go a long way in making travel by public transit a more attractive option for residents and visitors to Prince George's County.

"We need to do much more to ensure that you have every available option for a timely and efficient commute to and from work.

"It gives me great pride to announce the next step in making sure that public transit ridership is both efficient and pleasurable - \$1 million in federal Intelligent Transportation System funds for the Prince George's County Management and Passenger Information System in the FY04 Omnibus Appropriations bill that passed in January.

"I'd like to thank my friend, Congressman Albert Wynn, who worked with me to secure this funding in the House, and Senators Barbara Mikulski and Paul Sarbanes for their efforts to help secure these funds.

"This money will be used to complete the installation of automatic vehicle location (AVL) technology throughout the transit system to allow the Division of Transit to provide real-time passenger information to riders and residents throughout the county. The Department will be able to locate their buses, manage the flow of traffic, and predict the arrivals and departures at particular stops.

"Using digital signs, like the one here, and providing information on the Internet and by phone, the Division of Transit will be able to provide transit schedules, emergency messages, and other information to riders as they plan their trips throughout the county.

"This is a technologically progressive transportation effort that will result in increased ridership, reduced congestion, improved service, better security, and increased access for the disabled.

"This funding is recognition by the Congress, by the state, and by the transit administration that we have unique transportation challenges here in Prince George's County and that we must begin addressing those needs by first listening to the concerns of our commuters.

"This is just the beginning of our effort to make needed improvements to the transportation infrastructure in the region. In the Transportation Reauthorization bill that passed on April 2, I worked with the committee to provide \$45 million for various projects to help ease the traffic burden on those who live and work in Prince George's County.

"I am committed to making Prince George's County not only a great place to live and work, but also a place where congestion and gridlock will not interfere with its growth and vitality."

This grant provides funding for the purchase of 50 tracking units and system support services.

These units will complete installation of AVL units on all of the County's TheBus and Call-A-Bus transit vehicles. In addition, Prince George's County will be purchasing 30 schedule informational display units that will be installed in bus shelters located at high use bus stops in the County.

Customers will be able to use the AVL system beginning July 6, 2004. Information regarding local bus service in Prince George's County's is available through the County's website www.goprincegeorgescounty.com or by logging on www.nextbus.com.

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