

2250 Florida Boulevard  
Baton Rouge, LA 70802  
PHONE: 225.389.8920



## EXECUTIVE STAFF

**Bill Deville**  
*Chief Executive Officer*

### JUNE 2020 Executive Report Bill Deville and CATS Staff

#### **COVID-19 UPDATES: Bill Deville (Please note there are several “hyperlinks” in the body of this report that provide more detailed supporting information):**

- Governor Edwards declared a pandemic state of emergency on March 11<sup>th</sup> & Stay at Home Order March 22<sup>nd</sup>. On May 14<sup>th</sup>, Governor Edwards signed an order moving Louisiana to Phase One of his Roadmap to a Resilient Louisiana; Governor Edwards implemented the Phase 2 Reopening order on June 5<sup>th</sup> through June 26<sup>th</sup>.
- CATS is continuing to meet safety and security guidelines, even as they continue to change and evolve on a sometimes weekly basis, by the State of Louisiana and Governor Edwards, East Baton Rouge Parish and Mayor-President Sharon Weston Broome, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC).
- CATS amended its internal Policy Committee into a Covid-19 Response Task Force, led by the CAO Pearlina Thomas and Theo Richards, with participants from all departments; the group meets daily.
- CATS, accordingly, has begun requiring all employees that deal with the public to wear face masks. Additionally, CATS is urging everyone else, including riders, to wear them as well; CATS was advised that it “cannot legally require riders to wear face masks”.
- CATS began [waiving fares](#) for all customers on both fixed route and CATS On Demand on March 18<sup>th</sup>.
- CATS began enforcing [social distancing](#) on vehicles on March 18<sup>th</sup>.
- CATS began running its current [essential service](#) (most transit agencies call it “Covid-19 Lifeline” service”) April 5<sup>th</sup>; this service will continue through the Phase One reopening. (See further explanation of service planning status attached to executive report.)
- The agency has been providing PPEs to essential employees and has begun distributing them to nonessential employees for professional/work use.
- The FTA Coronavirus Aid, Recovery, and Economic Security (CARES) Act was enacted into law on April 27<sup>th</sup> and superseded the March 18<sup>th</sup> Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA), which makes Mass Transit a US Department of Homeland Security Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) “essential” service class, including CATS service; DHS CISA compliance was merged into Governor’s orders.
- The CARES Act “supplemental” grant (FTA grant class 5307) funding allocation was awarded to CATS in the amount of \$17million.
- CATS is allowed to use the funds for loss of revenues, all Covid-19 related operating expenses, and all “operating” expenses, effective January 20, 2020, until funds are fully exhausted.

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- CATS comptroller and CEO are working closely with COO, CAO, staff, and key consultants reviewing and revising the projected CY20 revenues and expenses, as well as what to expect in the “new normal” recovery process going forward.
- The agency continues to provide the same essential “lifeline” service that has been in effect since April 5<sup>th</sup> through Phases 1 and 2 of the State reopening.
- Detailed [information](#) can be found on the CATS website and [updates](#) are provided to the public via email, social media, website, and digital advertising on WAFB and The Advocate’s websites.

### TRIENNIAL REVIEW

- On August 7 and 8, 2019, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) conducted a Triennial Review of CATS. This review focuses on 21 compliance areas. The review found deficiencies in 12 areas: Financial Management and Capacity, Technical Capacity – Award Management, Transit Asset Management, Maintenance, Procurement, Disadvantaged Business Enterprise, Title VI, Americans with Disabilities (ADA) – General, ADA – Complementary Paratransit, Equal Employment Opportunity, Charter Bus, Section 5307 Program Requirements. A final report was issued by the FTA on October 9, 2019, describing the corrective actions that CATS needed to implement to address the deficiencies. In response to the report, CATS staff worked with our consultant Pierlott & Associates to implement the corrective actions in each of the 12 review areas. CATS submitted its response to the FTA on February 28, 2020, and as a result of these efforts FTA closed all but one of the review findings. The review finding that remains open is related to the outstanding findings from CATS’ FY2018 Single Audit. CATS continues to work towards completing this corrective action.

### 2019 Audit: *John Cutrone*

- P&N began the CATS 2019 year-end audit on time in January but did run into delays caused by the Pandemic crisis, and they would up working alternately at the CATS facilities and remotely as needed with staff. The audit cannot be completed with the FTA NTD report not being completed, and the FTA extended nearly all due dates by at least 30 to 90 days – we have an interim ordered delay until May 30<sup>th</sup>. The audit will be completed subsequent to receipt of that report and the Pension audit
- The NTD final draft is being reviewed by the CEO and the report is due June 30<sup>th</sup>. The report will be complete in advance of that date and shared with P&N.

### OPERATIONS: *Dwana Williams*

- There are currently 116 active operators working. There are 145 total operators; the remaining operators are as follows:
  - 9 – inactive
  - 20 – out due to COVID-19

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- See attached Performance Measures April performance measures reflect measures during COVID-19.

### **Administration: *Pearlina Thomas***

- HUMAN RESOURCES
- PROCUREMENT – Monthly contract status report attached
- Covid-19 Response Task Force
- Covid-19 Draft Policies
  - The following draft policies have been approved by the Internal Policy & Procedures Committee and are making their way to the Technical Policies and Practices (TPP) Committee:
    - Policies and Procedures Process
    - Internal Policy & Procedures Committee (IPPC)
    - Emergency Procurement Policy
    - Internal State of Emergency Policy

### **PLANNING AND PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT: *Bill Deville***

#### **Service:**

- CATS has been monitoring the ridership daily since the onset of the Stay at Home Order from Governor Edwards. Ridership trends are down as a result of the virus, as they are in the rest of the country. CATS is contributing information to the [BRAC Covid-19 Dashboard Report](#) "Transportation" section.
- Nationally known planning and scheduling expert consultant Arthur Gaudet was brought back to urgently help CATS contend with the Covid-19 emergency declaration/Stay at Home order from Governor Edwards. CATS essential "lifeline" service began on April 5<sup>th</sup> and is running at a reduced level. Mr. Gaudet is assisting the CEO and CATS leadership to monitor the Covid-19 service and ridership. The Stay at Home Order is being incrementally rescinded effective May 15<sup>th</sup> and CATS will continue to observe ridership trends as we plan to respond to government directives and prepare service models that could be implemented later for CATS return to what may be the "new normal". See attached report.
- GRANT APPLICATIONS:
  - FTA Bus & Bus Facilities Grant Opportunity
    - In April, CATS submitted a FTA Bus & Bus Facilities grant application for funds to provide 14 new fixed route, electric 30' buses (smaller than the normal 35' buses), 14 new cutaway 24' paratransit buses, shop equipment, and a new air conditioning system for the 2250 Florida Operations, Administration, and Maintenance (OAM) facility. The FTA grant application also included passenger amenities for the proposed new Downtown Transit Transfer Center. All 28 of the current cutaway bus fleet are beyond their useful

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life. The application also includes the replacement of the four Capitol Park trolleys with new electric simulated trolley buses. CATS has garnered letters of support from key stakeholders, including congressional and local elected officials; hopefully, FTA will approve this grant application for funding.

- FTA Helping Obtain Prosperity for Everyone (HOPE) – Project Manager, Theo Richards
  - The HOPE Grant is a new planning grant opportunity released by the FTA for FY 2020. This grant focuses on providing transportation planning services to the depressed regions in the country, some of which are included in the Capital and New Orleans regions. CATS is applying for the HOPE grant to fund a planning study focused on increasing mobility between Baton Rouge and New Orleans. This study will look into park-and-ride locations, commuter services (including vanpool and/or commuter bus), industry commuting data, and associated costs. The application is due in early June and no applicant will receive more than \$850,000. CEOs for New Orleans and Baton Rouge have agreed to work together to try and make it happen (RTA in New Orleans is also applying, but for “suburban/region service” – New Orleans East & Jefferson Parish).
- FTA Accelerating Innovative Mobility (AIM) – Project initiated by CAO Pearlina Thomas; Project Manager, Theo Richards
  - The AIM Grant will highlight FTA’s commitment to support and advance innovation in the transit industry. AIM will drive innovation by promoting forward-thinking approaches to improve financing, system design, and service. CATS is applying for this competitive innovation grant. If awarded, CATS would receive up to \$250,000 and will focus on enhancing the customer experience through new electronic digital technology messaging. Providing more live time information, 2-way SMS chat for direct time communication between passengers and CATS, and more. CATS will serve in a national network of transit agencies, spotlighted by the FTA, that will test and share project results with all transit agencies.

### Capital:

- BRT –Plank/Nicholson BRT Corridor project – A major milestone was accomplished with approvals received last week from both the State Historic Preservation Office and environmental clearance by FTA. Next steps include

refining BUILD grant budget and development of the next CEA between CATS and the City-Parish.

- Meetings with the City-Parish, Build Baton Rouge, HNTB, and CATS for the design of BRT & transit center station shelters by the contractor Reich Architects are being scheduled this week.
- Transit Hubs/Centers –  
*East, Cortana* – completed.  
*Downtown* – federal funding is being sought to fund the amenities needed for the relocation of the 2250 and 22<sup>nd</sup> street CATS Terminal to the Florida at I-110 site via a FTA Bus and Bus Facilities grant application that was submitted last week.
- *North, LSU permanent/EKL temporary site* – CATS counsel reported title is finally cleared; awaiting formal title documents before CATS can move forward with FTA next steps.
- *South, Mall of Louisiana temporary site* – staff and board member Laurence Lambert seeking permanent site.
- *Baker Park & Ride* – CATS continues meetings with principals in this project: CRPC and Mayor Waites. CRPCA and the City of Baker purchased the Park & Ride property and are moving ahead with the Planning study. Please see following link for WHLA rendering of the retail development resulting as TOD (transit oriented development). Here are the latest Baker TOD development graphics:  
<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/wzwd5ws2hr18swn/AABIP72OSR8SLhJpa0Y1dCk6a?dl=0>
- Planning study by the City of Baker and CRPC is next step.
- **Technology – highlighted solicitation scoping or contract negotiations:**  
Key Technology Needs Status
  - Enterprise Resource Planning System – The Foundation(negotiating)
    - HR, Payroll
    - Finance AP, AR, Budget, etc.
    - Project Management/Project Controls
    - Procurement, etc.
  - Enterprise Asset Management System
    - Evaluate if current system meets the needs of CATS, or replace
  - Scheduling/AVL System SaaS (software as a service licensing by subscription for both meets needs much quicker)
    - Current situation is tolerable, but facing challenges
    - Replace AVL as soon as possible – 2 year extension action item needed in the interim – they won't do one year term.
    - Move Scheduling in house as soon as possible
  - Customer Service System
    - Procure work rules based customer service application

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- Business Analytics Solicitation about to start
  - Procure an agency wide tool to gather reporting data automatically from the core systems

### CEO NOTES: *Bill Deville*

- CATS CEO appointed to Southwest Transit Association (SWTA) Board, a regional association of transit systems representing eight states – Louisiana, Texas, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado, and Kansas.
- CEO sought legal assistance from FTA Legal, who in turn forwarded the CEO to FTA DC/HQ on questions regarding CARES amending FFCRA and “Admin Leave” criteria under US DHS CISA guidelines.
- Engaged outside legal counsel to assist in quickly growing pandemic crisis related issues/challenges, i.e. COVID-19 policies and legislative compliance, labor, personnel, etc.
  - CATS is further developing a Pandemic Virus Policy and Service Restoration Checklist according to congressional legislation in coordination with State law.
  - “The Pandemic Virus Service Restoration Strategy must be nimble and flexible. Therefore an analysis of policy, financial and legal ramifications of restoring service is being conducted. This is the purpose of the Pandemic Virus Service Restoration Checklist.
  - The state must find the right middle ground between restarting large-scale shutdowns – that the public might not tolerate- and doing little or nothing. The middle ground involves state and local government officials being able to rapidly respond to outbreaks and respond to specific activities that are the sources of spread of the virus. This involves people continuing to social distance and wear masks. CATS must be nimble enough to respond to this fluid situation. The basic protocols of social distancing, masks and sanitization of work places, facilities and transit vehicles may be with us for a while.”
- Source: <https://www.wsj.com/articles/new-rules-for-covid-summer-be-flexible-and-vigilant-11592167772>
- See attached Pre, Current, and Post Covid-19 Service Review and Planning Executive Summary Report; Mr. Gaudet can join in by phone if desired.

### Finance: *Mr. John Cutrone*

- See attached financial report.