

For Immediate Release
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NEORide receives \$1.6 million ATTAIN grant from Federal Highway Administration, funds will spur development of innovative data system that will improve service, efficiency, and increase ridership

Executive Director Katherine Conrad announced today that NEORide, a consortium of 35 public transit agencies located in ten states, will receive a \$1.6 million Advanced Transportation Technology and Innovation (ATTAIN) grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation's (USDOT) Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). The grant will fund the development and deployment of EZData, a cloud-based system that will enable participating transit agencies to store and access transit-related data and NEOTech, a team of analysts that will help participating transit systems utilize that data to improve service, operate more efficiently, and increase the use of public transportation, especially in rural areas.

“The ATTAIN grant program was established to fund the development of innovative ways to make traveling on public transit easier, safer, and more convenient,” Ms. Conrad said. “We are pleased the DOT and FHWA recognized that EZData and NEOTech align perfectly with those goals, and we look forward to using the \$1.6 million dollars to implement both programs.”

In addition to NEORide, six member systems are participating in the programs funded by the grant: Stark County Regional Transit Authority (SARTA), the Western Reserve Transit Authority (WRTA) which operates in Mahoning County, Columbiana Action Agency of Columbiana County (CARTS), Trumbull County, Butler County RTA, Dayton RTA, and City Bus which serves Lafayette, Indiana.

According to Ms. Conrad, NEORide and its partner agencies have long recognized that the widespread and efficient use of the terabytes of data transit systems collect had the potential to fuel the sustained, exponential growth of public transportation, but that a number of seemingly insurmountable roadblocks made it difficult, and in some cases impossible to unleash that potential.

“Some smaller rural systems did not have access to all the available data,” she explained. “Other, larger agencies like CityBus simply did not have the staff or computing power to analyze and utilize all the information that pours in each day. And, to further complicate matters, the various technology platforms used by agencies effectively served as silos that discouraged communication and collaboration.”

Ms. Conrad said that EZData and NEOTech were specifically conceived to tear down existing roadblocks and provide transit professionals with information that will enable them to:

- Monitor and modify fixed routes to meet evolving community needs.
- Ensure that drivers and vehicles are available to provide paratransit and other on-demand rides during peak hours.
- Make traveling across system and geographic boundaries easy, seamless, and affordable.

- Support business development and job growth by connecting employers with job seeking workers.
- Operate more cost effectively by identifying and eliminating waste.
- Evaluate fare payment, GPS, and other products supplied by vendors.
- Share fuel efficiency, emissions, vehicle performance, and other operation data.
- Maximize the use of human resources.

“We are confident that by fully unleashing the power of data, transit systems will significantly improve service, enhance the rider experience, and make traveling to the thousands of destinations served by public transit each day an attractive option for a growing segment of the public in the years ahead.”

The ATTAIN award is the latest in a series of state and federal grants secured by NEORide which has earned a national reputation as a leader in the use of innovative, state-of-the-art technology in the public transportation space. A \$1.3 million Federal Transit Administration Integrated Mobility Innovation (IMI) grant supported the creation of EZfare, the app-based ticketing system now used by 15 transit agencies in five states. In addition, funding from ODOT's OTP2 program, [FTA's EMI Grant](#), [DOT's ATMCTD Grant](#) and an FHWA Advanced Transportation Technologies and Innovative Mobility Development (ATTIMD) grant is fueling the development of EZConnect, NEORide's one-call/one-click ride scheduling and customer service center project.

“We will continue to pursue grant funding for technology from all available sources because innovation will continue to play an essential role in the growth of public transit,” Ms. Conrad said. “And while we are proud of all we have accomplished and appreciative of the support we've received, we'll continue to work hard to improve the quality of life in our community, spur economic development, promote the wise and extremely efficient use of taxpayer dollars, and enable an ever-growing segment of our population to enjoy the benefits of public transit.”

About NEORide

NEORide is a Council of Governments comprised of 35 public transit agencies in ten states including Ohio, Arkansas, Kentucky, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Iowa, Indiana, Texas, Tennessee, and West Virginia that are committed to breaking down artificial boundaries, streamlining opportunities and making it easier for people to utilize public transportation. For more information please visit www.neoride.org