



April 28, 2009

Farewell to RTD

It is with enormously mixed emotions that I announce to the RTD Board of Directors and all RTD employees and contractors that I am leaving my position as General Manager after almost 14 years, effective July 31. This has been, unconditionally, the most gratifying and fulfilling professional experience of my life.

The physical improvements we have accomplished are obvious to most. The purchase of Denver Union Station, the openings—on schedule and on budget—of the Southwest, T-REX, Central Platte Valley Spur Light Rail lines, and numerous park-n-Ride lots and structures are all, in themselves, career defining projects. Over the past few years, we have been visited by dozens of transit properties from throughout the United States and throughout the world in their efforts to try to learn how we brought this remarkable program together and how we have managed the RTD as a business enterprise and earned the trust and confidence of the public. Perhaps the most significant and, I hope, the most enduring legacy that has emerged at RTD is a fundamental change in the organization's culture. The organization now operates as a business enterprise and is guided by the adage that "If you can't measure it, you can't manage it." Every decision, every new hire and every budget decision relates to the accomplishment and sustainability of agency goals and performance measures.

RTD has been named the most outstanding transit system in North America in 1994, 2004, and again in 2008. The RTD Board of Directors and the extraordinary RTD staff have earned these well-deserved awards and fully deserve the thanks and support of all residents of the Metro Region. I have stood upon their shoulders and am forever in their debt.

Today, we labor intensively to build out the industry-changing FasTracks rapid transit system. This goal must be accomplished in an environment of radically increased materials costs and alarming decreases in sales tax revenues. These conditions necessitate revised strategies and tactics that will again require the Regional leadership to come together with a balanced and effective set of actions that get the job done. Based upon every public opinion poll I have reviewed in the past year, the support for FasTracks remains as strong or stronger than ever. Times like these require strength, leadership and dedication to the accomplishment of goals for which the RTD has become renowned through our remarkable successes. I have no doubt that the FasTracks program will be built in its entirety through a carefully crafted regional effort that will be supported by our Mayors, Legislative representatives, the Governor, the business community and, most importantly, our citizenry. This region fully understands that our future depends upon an effective and efficient mobility network.



While the RTD Board of Directors and RTD staff as a whole has labored tirelessly to get us to where we are today, there are a few individuals that require special recognition.

Denver Mayor John Hickenlooper was and is critical to the continued and ultimate success of the RTD mission. Before John even ran for Mayor, he and I would discuss the role of transit in the future of the Region and he articulated an incredibly informed and pragmatic understanding of the role of transit infrastructure investment. He also understood the daunting challenge of earning the public's trust and confidence to pay for these investments. He stepped up in a very significant way to lend his considerable cache of credibility and political support to the FasTracks initiative, which greatly contributed to its overwhelming success in the election of 2004. The Mayor's vision and support cannot be overestimated. He and the other Regional Mayors must continue to work with the RTD to validate the worthiness of the program and to assure continued monitoring of the business stewardship of RTD to assure a successful program implementation.

Mayor Ed Tauer of Aurora brings a level of review and scrutiny to the RTD that is, at times, demanding and difficult, but assures that the right questions are asked and answered and that all regional constituents are treated fairly in whatever plan emerges to get the job done. His business acumen and strong advocacy for his City of Aurora spills over to every other City and County in the region and will ultimately result in a program that, to the greatest extent possible, fairly and effectively distributes investments throughout the Region and to all the taxpayers who are paying for the program.

Lakewood Mayor Bob Murphy led the substantial work of the Metro Mayors Caucus to analyze the evolution of the FasTracks plan and to arrive at a consensus as to what the region's next steps should be. His leadership was much needed and appreciated.

Surprising to many may be the heartfelt thanks I must extend to Jon Caldara, rail critic and President of the Independence Institute. Jon led RTD in its recruitment for a new General Manager when I was hired in 1995. Jon advocated for a GM that would manage the agency as a business that would embrace the use of the private sector where it made business and service sense, and he knew I would do that. At a time when the RTD Board ran the real risk of descending into an all too common transit agency trend to become a social service organization that focused on building an organizational empire instead of focusing on providing the greatest quantity of mobility to the public, Jon led the way to keep this agency on track.

The value of leadership cannot be overestimated. Former Board Chairmen Bob Tonsing, Mary Blue, Bill Effenbein, Chris Martinez and current Chairman Lee Kemp, dedicated thousands of hours and enormous effort to provide the policy direction RTD needed to conceptualize a vision and then to support the staff to implement that vision. Service to the region through service on the RTD Board is invariably underestimated and underappreciated. History will undoubtedly recognize and

appreciate the service of these dedicated and committed elected officials. Our Federal legislative delegation was and continues to be critical and pivotal in assuring a continued partnership in financing our transit investments. Led by Senators Mark Udall and Michael Bennet, as well as former Senators Ben Nighthorse Campbell, Wayne Allard and Ken Salazar—and in the House by Representatives Diana DeGette, Jared Polis, Betsy Markey, Mike Coffman, Ed Perlmutter, John Salazar, Doug Lamborn and former Congressmen Mark Udall, Bob Beauprez and Tom Tancredo, the Metro Region and the State of Colorado have been extraordinarily well served with the entire state reaping the benefits. Our newest senators and representatives promise to continue this strong tradition of Colorado advocacy and support for our transit projects.

Finally, I must thank the men and women at RTD and our contractors who work hard every day to operate and maintain our buses and trains and vehicles for the public. Our management and administrative staff are the best in the industry. Other industry organizations, public and private, regularly attempt, sometimes successfully, to recruit our people away to bring this level of expertise and experience to their properties. Our professional staff are of a caliber that equals or exceeds our much higher paid private sector counterparts. They aspire to a higher purpose of public service and the residents of the region are the beneficiaries. As a regular bus rider, my respect for our maintainers, cleaners and operators could not be higher. These men and women work every day to provide a reliable, clean and safe service to all who ride.

As I move on from the RTD, I will remain a strong supporter and resource to the RTD. The taxpayers of this region should never underestimate the value of an excellent transit system or, most importantly, the value of a dedicated, capable and committed Board of Directors and transit staff. Our future continues to depend upon the work of these dedicated public servants.

I am remaining as RTD's full-time General Manager through the end of July, during which time I pledge to continue my hard work leading the finest transit agency in the nation. We now need to redouble our efforts as a region and recommit to continued and enhanced support to the essential work that lies ahead.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Clarence W. Marsella". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "C" and "M".

Clarence W. Marsella
General Manager