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Community College Students Ride Free with ID in Omnitrans' "Go Smart" Program

San Bernardino, CA – Thousands of local college students will get a break from the rising cost of higher education this fall, by swiping their student IDs to ride free on Omnitrans' buses during the first week of classes.

Chaffey, Crafton Hills and San Bernardino Valley Colleges students can ride free from August 16 -22. Cal State University San Bernardino students will receive their free rides when their fall term begins on September 23.

This is the third year that Omnitrans has partnered with the colleges to give free rides during the first week of the fall session, but it is the first year that bus fare boxes are programmed to accept student IDs. Previously, special passes were issued to each school.

"We believe the added convenience of swiping their ID will encourage more students to give Omnitrans a try," said Omnitrans Director of Marketing Wendy Williams. "They won't need to pick up a special pass anywhere; just get on, swipe and go."

In 2009, students tallied more than 50,000 free boardings through the Go Smart program, a 31 percent increase from the inaugural year. Boardings at campus bus stops increased by 14% during the free ride period compared to 2008 and were 79% higher than 2007, before the Go Smart program was established. Students tended to stick with riding Omnitrans even past the free ride period. Campus bus stop activity grew by 9% a month after free rides ended compared to 2008 levels and was up 62% vs. 2007.

"Go Smart lets college students try the bus for free to see how well it works for their situation," said Williams. "We know students are looking for low-cost transportation solutions, just like our other customers. Omnitrans offers convenient service to each campus and with our 100% natural gas fleet, taking the bus is also environmentally responsible."

For details and personalized trip planning, visit www.omnitrans.org.

Founded in 1976, Omnitrans is the public transit agency providing 50,000 passenger trips each weekday across the San Bernardino Valley. Omnitrans is governed by a 20-member board representing the 15 cities served by Omnitrans and San Bernardino County.

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