



CONNECTING THE PEOPLE OF THE PEE DEE

Technical College, PDRTA isn't just a ride, it's a lifeline. "If I didn't have the PDRTA, I wouldn't be here," she says. "I probably wouldn't have even graduated."

Connecting Communities, Changing Lives

Davis's story is a testament to the impact and importance of accessible transportation. Covering six counties of the Pee Dee region, PDRTA serves as a lifeline in this rural region. Don Strickland, PDRTA Executive Director shared, "The Florence Transit system connects to FDTC, hitting campus about 12 times a day. We've even introduced a semester pass program so students can use financial aid to ride without digging into their own pockets." A game-changer for students like Davis, who rely on the service to get to class, stay on track and chase their dreams.

Breaking Barriers to Education

For FDTC, this partnership is about more than logistics—it's about breaking down barriers. FDTC President, Dr. Ford, emphasized: "Some of our students face food insecurities, transportation challenges, childcare issues and often juggle multiple part-time jobs. But access to quality education through PDRTA opens the door to postgraduate success and workforce development." Davis's journey from student to graduate exemplifies this mission. Using PDRTA, she completed her welding program and now stands as a "home-run success story" for both FDTC and PDRTA.



Expanding Educational Reach

PDRTA’s influence extends beyond FDTC to other vital educational partners across the region. At Francis Marion University (FMU) in Florence, PDRTA provides critical transit links for students off campus, and four dedicated stops on campus ensuring timely access for students. Similarly, Northeastern Technical College (NETC), serving Chesterfield, Marlboro, and Dillon counties, benefits from PDRTA’s services, connecting students from rural areas to technical training programs that pave the way for local employment. Coker University in Hartsville also relies on PDRTA, with routes like the HART bus service offering students and residents alike a convenient way to navigate the area. Beyond higher education, PDRTA collaborates with local school districts—such as Florence I Schools, Adult Education and others across the six counties.

Drivers with a Purpose

The ripple effects extend far beyond the classroom. Tavorous Collins, Transit Center and Driver Development Manager at PDRTA, sees the responsibility of PDRTA and its drivers as more than just a bus driver “We’re moving with a purpose,” he says. “These students are going to school, and we don’t want them missing class or exams. We take that responsibility seriously.” Davis agrees, praising the punctuality of PDRTA’s services: “If I need to be somewhere at a certain time, they get me there. It’s something I really like.” Beyond reliability, there’s a human touch that makes the service special. “The bus drivers are sweet people,” Davis notes. “They’re helpful, nice to talk to and they get you where you need to go.” With bus stops across Florence and other areas, she adds, “It’s easier to get around than with a regular car.” For a rural region where personal vehicles aren’t always an option, this accessibility is a lifeline—whether it’s a trip to FMU, NETC, Coker, medical appointments or to work.



Gratitude That Runs Deep

“I’m eternally grateful they had it,” Davis reflects, “without it, my life would be very, very different.” Her story is one of many, Dr. Ford points out: “There are many students in that same situation where they are looking to better their lives, they’re looking to change the landscape of their families. That is why coming to an organization like Florence Darlington Technical College and ridership with PDRTA is so important for the future growth of the region.” From campus to career, PDRTA provides a service that turns barriers into bridges. For Temperance Davis and so many others, it’s the ride that makes all the difference.

Watch the video here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2SJPBxKQOok>



PASSENGER SURVEY WINNERS

From November 18th through 22nd, 2024, we invited our passengers to fill out surveys, and as a token of our appreciation, we randomly selected a few lucky winners. Each winner received a \$100 Visa gift card, and we are excited to highlight and share stories from these individuals who were drawn—Judy Quick, Elizabeth Barton, Jason Land and Yvette Brown.

Each of these passengers has shown us the true meaning of loyalty and community and we want to take a moment to recognize their support. At PDRTA, we appreciate every passenger who chooses our services, and we're grateful to have such an incredible group of riders who make what we do so rewarding.



Judy Quick - Chesterfield County

Judy Quick has been a loyal rider on our Cheraw Express route since it first started in 2021. Her consistent use of PDRTA services speaks to the reliability and convenience our routes offer.

One of the things Ms. Judy appreciates most is our dependable schedule, which allows her to plan her trips with ease. She often uses the Cheraw Express to travel to Walmart for her shopping, making her trips both practical and stress-free.

Outside of her PDRTA trips, Ms. Judy enjoys spending time with her family and grandchildren, as well as finding joy in reading books when she's not out and about.

Elizabeth Barton - Marlboro County

When meeting with Elizabeth Barton, from Marlboro County, giving her gift card was truly heartwarming and we felt the gratitude in her words. Overcome with emotion, Elizabeth hugged us and expressed how much this gift would help her in “ways she never expected.” She was excited about using the gift card for household essentials and to refill her empty freezer. A Walmart worker shared that “Ms. Elizabeth is a kind, sweet lady who truly appreciates everything in life.” She mentioned that the gift card couldn’t have gone to a more deserving person, and we couldn’t agree more.



Jason Land - Dillon County

Jason Land from Dillon is a regular rider on our Harbor Freight Workforce Route, relying on PDRTA’s services to get to work each day. Without PDRTA, Jason would have to find another way to commute, which would be a challenge. His dedication to his daily commute shows just how important it is for him to have reliable transportation.

When Jason received his \$100 Visa Gift Card he shared that the gift card meant a lot and he expressed how much it would help him out.



Yvette Brown – Darlington County

Although Yvette recently moved to Virginia to be with her family due to health reasons, she was one of our lucky winners from our Passenger Appreciation Week participating in the survey when she lived in Darlington. While we weren’t able to meet Yvette in person her daughter kindly shared a picture of her once she received her gift card.

Yvette expressed how grateful she was for PDRTA’s reliable service during her time here. She shared that the transportation we provided made it easier for her to get where she needed to go, and she truly appreciated having a dependable ride. She also mentioned that she never wins anything, and receiving the gift card was a pleasant surprise for her! While we will miss having Yvette as one of our passengers, we’re happy for her to be with her family now and wish her the very best as she settles in Virginia.



We are beyond grateful for the chance to serve all of our passengers and we look forward to continuing to provide reliable, convenient transportation to our amazing community.

Thank you to all who participated in the surveys, and congratulations to our winners!



PARTNERSHIP IN MOTION: PDRTA & HARBOR FREIGHT

Check Out Our New Video Featuring Harbor Freight and PDRTA

We're excited to share our latest video in the Why I Partner, Ride, and Drive campaign, highlighting the strong partnership between Harbor Freight and PDRTA. In the video, Terence Anderson, Division VP at Harbor Freight, explains how reliable

transportation has improved employee retention and helped associates save on transportation costs.

Improving Work-Life Balance

Matt Patterson, a long-time Harbor Freight employee, shares how access to consistent, dependable transportation has transformed his work-life balance, allowing him to get to work on time and avoid the stress of unreliable rides.

Strengthening the Community

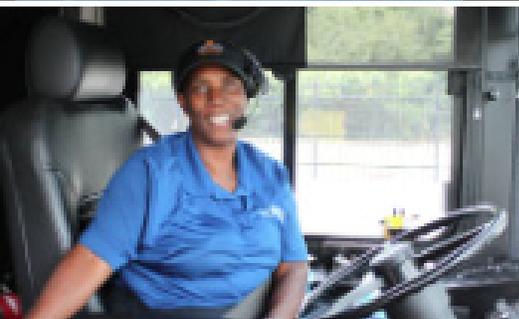
PDRTA driver Darlene Murphy emphasizes how the partnership is benefiting both Harbor Freight employees and the broader community, offering a reliable transportation option that makes a real difference in people's lives.

Watch the full video on YouTube: <https://youtu.be/sV6nUpgadCQ> to see how this collaboration is making an impact!

OUR DRIVING FORCE

TRANSIT DRIVER APPRECIATION

PDRTA



HONORING OUR PDRTA DRIVERS

On March 18, we joined the nation in celebrating National Transit Driver Appreciation Day, a day to recognize and honor the hardworking men and women behind the wheel of public transit systems across the country. Here at PDRTA, we take this opportunity to honor our dedicated drivers who ensure that the people of the Pee Dee region are safely and efficiently transported every day.

With 46 routes across six counties—Florence, Darlington, Chesterfield, Marlboro, Dillon, and Marion—PDRTA provides vital transportation services that connect thousands of passengers to education, employment, healthcare and more. Our drivers play a crucial role in keeping this system running smoothly, offering more than just a ride, they are the faces of our service, ensuring that every trip is as safe and pleasant as possible.

For many of our drivers, the day begins well before sunrise. Some start their shifts as early as 3am, making sure that early morning routes run on time. Whether it's getting workers to their jobs transporting or taking students to technical colleges our team of hardworking drivers make it happen.

The importance of our drivers extends beyond their technical skills and customer service. They are responsible for maintaining the safety of the vehicles, ensuring the buses are in top working condition, keeping detailed records of their routes and staying in constant communication with dispatch to handle any issues that may arise. Their attention to detail and commitment to excellence are what keep PDRTA operating smoothly.



FIRST PLACE WINS AT TASC STATE BUS ROADEO

Saturday, March 22, the Transit Association of South Carolina (TASC) hosted its annual State Bus Roadeo, bringing together bus operators and transit maintenance teams from across the state.

The event, held at the Central Midlands Regional Transit Authority (The COMET) parking lot in Columbia, SC, was an opportunity to showcase the skills and dedication of South Carolina's transit professionals.

Congratulations to PDRTA Bus Operators, Mitch Brantley and Veronica Bostic for earning first-place in their respective categories. Mitch participated in the 35' bus category and Veronica in the Cutaway category. Both drivers excelled in a challenging obstacle course designed to test their driving, precision, safety and customer service skills.



“We are incredibly proud of Mitch and Veronica,” said Don Strickland, Executive Director of PDRTA. “Their success at the State Bus Roadeo highlights the dedication and skill that our team brings to the job every day as we serve our communities.”

Competition Categories and Challenges

The event featured four competition categories: 35' bus, cutaway, transit van and maintenance. Maintenance teams faced technical challenges, including troubleshooting a bus with a no-start condition. Meanwhile, the roдео's obstacle course tested operators with serpentine courses, passenger stops, reverse maneuvers and clearance challenges using cones, barrels and tennis balls.

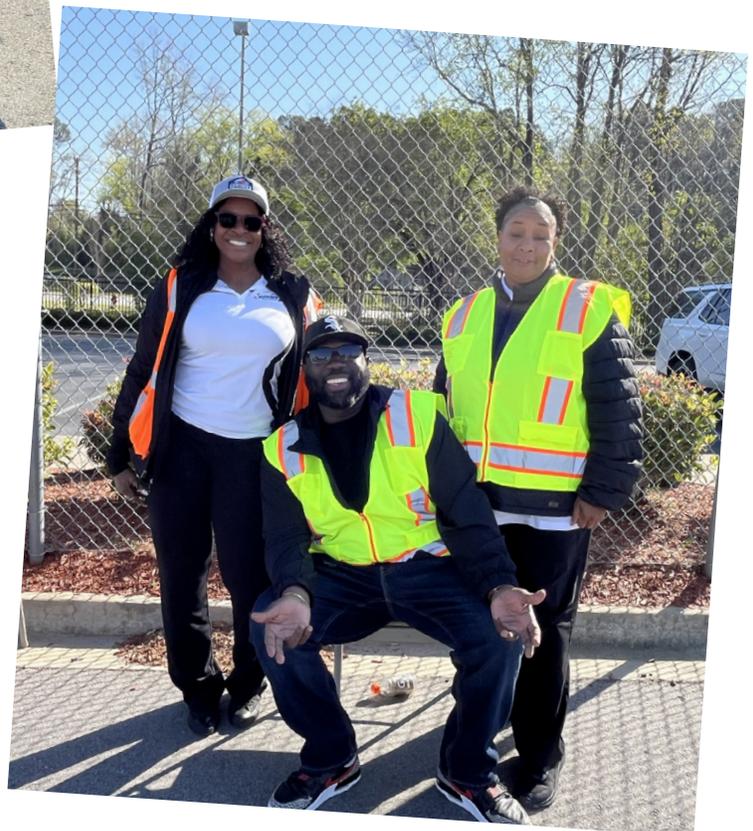


“The course setup is designed to challenge our operators’ skills while prioritizing safety,” Strickland noted. “From pre-trip inspections to wheelchair tie-downs, every detail is important.”

Statewide Participation and Support

Transit authorities from Coast RTA, The COMET, Santee Wateree, Fairfield, and Tri-County Link also participated in the event, alongside the South Carolina State Transport Police, who helped judge the competition and monitor course speeds with LIDAR guns.

The State Bus Roдео remains a highlight event for TASC, offering transit professionals a platform to demonstrate their skills and fostering pride within South Carolina’s public transit community.



NEXT STOP?

4/4-8 - APTA International Bus Roadeo in Austin, Texas

4/18 - Good Friday - Admin Office Closed - Normal Service on all PDRTA routes

May-Aug - Route 7 / FMU Break (No Service)

5/26 - Memorial Day - Admin Office Closed - Limited Service - Myrtle Beach & workforce routes only

6/1 - National Community Transportation Roadeo 2025 in San Diego, California

6/19 - Juneteenth - Admin Office Closed - Normal Service on all PDRTA routes

7/1 - July Newsletter

7/16 - Rural Transit Day 2025

7/4 - Admin Office Closed - Limited Service - Myrtle Beach & workforce routes only

8/18-23 - TASC Conference in Myrtle Beach

9/1 - Labor Day - Admin Office Closed - Limited Service - Myrtle Beach & workforce routes only

10/1 - October Newsletter

SCHEDULE AHEAD
for
2025

- MLK DAY - JANUARY 20**
NORMAL Service Hours on all PDRTA routes.
- GOOD FRIDAY - APRIL 18**
NORMAL Service Hours on all PDRTA routes.
- MEMORIAL DAY - MAY 26**
ONLY routes serving Myrtle Beach and Workforce locations will be operational.
- ROUTE 7 / FMU BREAKS**
Route 7 / FMU - CLOSED during May through August.
- JUNETEENTH - JUNE 19**
NORMAL Service Hours on all PDRTA routes.
- JULY 4TH**
ONLY routes serving Myrtle Beach and Workforce locations will be operational.
- LABOR DAY - SEPTEMBER 1**
ONLY routes serving Myrtle Beach and Workforce locations will be operational.
- VETERANS DAY - NOVEMBER 11**
NORMAL Service Hours on all PDRTA routes.
- THANKSGIVING DAY - NOVEMBER 27**
NO service on all PDRTA routes. Normal schedules will resume Friday, November 28th.
- ROUTE 7 / FMU BREAKS**
Route 7 / FMU - CLOSED mid December through early January.
- CHRISTMAS EVE**
NORMAL Service Hours on all PDRTA routes.
- CHRISTMAS DAY**
NO service on all PDRTA routes. Normal schedules will resume Friday, December 26th.
- NEW YEARS EVE**
NORMAL Service Hours on all PDRTA routes.
- 2026 NEW YEARS DAY**
ONLY routes serving Myrtle Beach and Workforce locations will be operational.

2025 PDRTA Holiday Schedule

Our goal is to keep everyone informed, ensuring smooth travel and service throughout the year.

To help our passengers and community plan ahead for our holiday schedule, we have posted the flyer above, outlining the scheduled closures for all of 2025, on every bus, on social media, and at the Transit Center information hub.



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and information,
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Share your thoughts, suggest improvements.

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