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27 new buses enhance DART's fleet

Buses come equipped with new features to enhance safety and passenger comfort

The Des Moines Area Regional Transit Authority (DART) recently upgraded 25 percent of its fleet with 27 new buses. The new buses have replaced older buses in DART's fleet, some of which were up to 15-years-old.

Replacing these buses reduces the average age of DART's heavy-duty fleet from more than 9-years-old to just over 6-years-old. DART's goal is to keep the average age of its fleet to 7-years-old or less. Doing so helps maintain reasonable maintenance costs and reduces the number of maintenance-related service disruptions that typically occur with an older fleet.

Along with the benefits to DART's operations, the new buses feature many amenities that all riders will appreciate. These include a skylight in the rear portion of the bus to brighten the space, white LED lights used in the exterior destination to improve readability, and wider aisles with more space for riders as they get on and off the bus.

These new buses are welcome news for DART riders who use mobility devices. Each of the 27 buses is equipped with new Q'Pod Wheelchair Restraints. These three-point securements are accommodating to anyone in a traditional four-wheel device, but also securely fit three-wheeled chairs and scooters. "These Q-Pods are specifically designed to handle our riders in scooters. Wider aisles in the buses make it easier for scooters to get on and off the buses, and these restraints better accommodate both three-wheel and four-wheel mobility devices," says DART Safety and Training Manager Patrick Daly.

In addition to the new Q'Pods, there are a few other safety features riders will find on the buses. There are additional barriers on seats throughout the bus to keep riders secure while traveling, and to assist riders as they sit down and stand up at their seats. The buses are equipped with a new G-Force sensor that will track hard brakes and hard turns by drivers and record that information for DART's records. In addition, there are new cameras equipped with GPS monitoring on each bus so that DART dispatch is able to monitor bus routes or find information from specific geo-locations.

“These new buses help us meet several strategic priorities including improving safety and decreasing the age of our fleet,” says Amanda Wanke, DART’s chief engagement and communications officer. “With them, we can better provide the more than 15,000 rides throughout our community each weekday.”

DART welcomes the public to take a look inside one of these new buses by viewing a short video on [DART's website](#). Media interested in scheduling a ride on the buses are asked to contact DART Chief Engagement and Communications Officer Amanda Wanke by emailing awanke@ridedart.com or calling 515-360-2125.

The Des Moines Area Regional Transit Authority is the public transportation provider that serves Polk County. DART operates a family of transportation services that makes getting around the Greater Des Moines area easier and more convenient. For more information about DART services, schedules, route changes, or directions to the nearest DART stop, visit the website at ridedart.com or call 515-283-8100. The MyDART Tools, Trip Planner and RideTime App are now available at ridedart.com.

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