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## \$3 Day Pass a Hit with Riders; Boosts Farebox Revenue

- Riders buying 100,000 Day Passes each weekday
- Avalanche of paper money buries tokens, coins



By BILL HEARD, Editor

(Oct. 19, 2004) You can clearly see it on Metro's monthly revenue reports. Employees in the Cash Counting room know it for sure. The \$3 Day Pass is a hit with customers.

Consider this: In August 2003, tokens made up 50 percent of farebox collections on buses and rail, while bills and coins were 25 percent each. In August 2004, 65 percent of farebox collections were bills, 18 percent were coins and 14 percent were tokens.

Not only that. In Spring 2003, 39 percent of Metro Bus riders surveyed said they used a monthly, semi-monthly or weekly pass. By Spring 2004, however, 36 percent of riders bought a Day Pass while 32 percent used another type of discount pass.

Metro riders are now buying some 100,000 Day Passes each weekday. Revenues from Day Pass sales for July were estimated at approximately \$7.2 million and reached about \$7.7 million in August.

### Big revenue producer

"Currently, the Day Pass produces as much or more revenue than all the other Metro monthly, semi-monthly and weekly pass fare media combined," says April McKay, Day Pass project manager.

In the fourth quarter of FY 2003, taking into account all types of fares, the average fare per boarding was 56 cents. In the fourth quarter of FY 2004, the average fare per boarding was about 61 cents. Day Pass sales made a strong contribution to the increase.

The \$3 Day Pass, introduced in January 2004, is sold only by Metro Bus operators and through Metro Rail ticket vending machines. Neither Metro Customer Centers nor the agency's vendors sell them.

The avalanche of paper money generated by Day Pass sales has required Revenue Collections Manager Marcello Melicor and his Cash Counting staff to shift gears.

In August 2003, the staff handled \$3.7 million in greenbacks – almost exclusively \$1 bills that could quickly be bagged, weighed and sold to a vendor. They spent most of their time sorting and packaging coins and tokens.

In August 2004, however, \$9.4 million in bills flooded in, many of them \$5 and \$10 bills that require special sorting and banding into \$100 bundles for deposit in a bank. Time spent handling tokens and coins declined dramatically.

**‘Up by 800 percent’**

“The number of bills we handle went up by 800 percent,” says Melicor. He notes that the staff must “keep our eyes open” to catch the \$5 and \$10 bills coming in from riders who buy Day Passes for weekend family shopping trips.

Why has the \$3 Day Pass become so popular with Metro patrons? Part of it is the convenience of buying one “ticket” that lasts all day and is good on any part of the Metro system.

But, other factors include last January’s fare restructuring that increased the price of a 90-cent token to \$1.10 and lowered the cash fare from \$1.35 to \$1.25, says McKay.

Still, she says, “I’m very surprised. I didn’t expect the Day Pass to be the Number One fare media.”

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