



## NEWS RELEASE

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## **'Rover' public transportation system marks 10-year anniversary** ***Free Fare Day Celebrates Transit Service that has risen to 271,000 annual riders***

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** May 10, 2017

**MURFREESBORO, Tenn.** – Rover, the little green bus with the snoopy-looking dog embossed on its side, is turning ten. In dog years that's older but only the City Manager is counting since it's his job to draft numbers in the annual budget. Tongue-in-cheek aside, Murfreesboro's public transit system is celebrating ten years of operation.

As part of the celebration Rover patrons are invited to enjoy a day of free ridership all day and free food from 10 a.m. – 2 p.m., Friday, **May 19** at the **Rover Transit Hub**, located at 222 W Burton. Three Rover employees have remained with Rover since its inception: Lesia McCluskey, Rover Operator Supervisor, and Full-Time operators Don Murphree and Rebecca Herman.

The City's public transportation system surpassed a significant milestone in July 2016—the 2 million mark in ridership and now has almost 2.2 million riders since inception. Rover has approximately 23,500 riders per month. Rover officially began service in April 2007. At the time Bob Nugent served as Transit Director.

"While the names and faces have changed over the past decade, Rover continues to provide excellent customer service," said Assistant Transportation Director Russell Brashear. "Thanks to all the staff, management, and patrons for continuing to utilize and support Rover as we anticipate expansion and a future Rover Transit Center in the fast-growing City of Murfreesboro."

Rover began as an idea in the minds of Murfreesboro's city leaders in 2006. Due to the growth of the City, the U.S. Census Bureau designated the City of Murfreesboro a Small Urban City following the 2000 U.S. Census count. As such, Murfreesboro was eligible to receive Small Urban Funding from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). The available federal funding set in motion the Rover Public Transit System.

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A public contest was held to determine a name for the new system. A name-the-transit-system contest involved the community and promoted the transit system in a fun and creative way to both traditional and non-traditional users of public transit. At the time, then Transit Director Bob Nugent expressed,

“We want a name that is creative, energetic, unique to Murfreesboro, and one that will work well for a public transit system that will serve all the residents of the City. We want a name that works when it’s splashed across the side of our vehicles.”

Beginning operation in 2007 with six routes, ridership for that first full year-of-service was 118,659. Since then, ridership has gradually risen to 271,047 in FY 2015-2016, 262,439 in FY 2016-17 to date. Total ridership from April 2007 thru April 2017 was 2,197,216.

The original Rover vehicles were 16-passenger diesel buses with rear wheelchair lifts. The current fleet, purchased in 2013, features 23-passenger low floor kneeling buses with front wheelchair ramps allowing for ease of boarding. Rover Route Guides and tickets are available at City Hall, Linebaugh Public Library, MTSU, the Murfreesboro Housing Authority and on Rover buses. Rover and Linebaugh Public Library also partner by serving library patrons with a mobile book drop for returning checked out materials on buses.

For more information on the Rover Public Transit System, including the Rover Route Guide, visit the City Transportation webpage at <http://www.murfreesborotn.gov/index.aspx?NID=248>.

*For City News online, visit [www.Murfreesborotn.gov](http://www.Murfreesborotn.gov).*

**Photo attached captions:**

1. *Rover Logo.jpg*
2. *Rover Bus.jpg*