

## South Central Regional Transit District Offers Free Rides

*Dona Ana County-Sponsored 90-Day Program to Lure Drivers onto Transit as Gasoline Prices Exceed \$4.00*

Las Cruces, New Mexico-With Dona Ana County residents paying an average of \$4.14 for a gallon of gasoline,<sup>1</sup> Dona Ana County is providing relief to cash-strapped households by underwriting free rides on South Central Regional Transit District (SCRTD). All SCRTD service in Dona Ana County, including those connecting to El Paso will be free from April 1, 2022, until June 30, 2022.

Dona Ana Commissioner Manuel Sanchez said that now is the best time to encourage residents to try public transit, "According to the 2020 US Census, residents in rural counties such as Dona Ana spend about 20% of their household incomes on transportation annually.<sup>2</sup> By offering free rides, we will allow those who drive today to experience SCRTD's safe and convenient service while saving on their family's budgets and helping us to improve our air quality."

The \$12,000 cost of operating SCRTD service free of fares for the three-month period will come from the Dona Ana County General Fund.

SCRTD has expanded its services over the past year adding new routes and new user information including a new county-wide sign system. Lynn Ellins, SCRTD Board member and Dona Ana County Commissioner said, "Most other transit agencies in the nation have cut their service dramatically because of the pandemic, SCRTD has controlled its cost making it possible to prudently increase its service coverage. As a result, County residents can go more places than ever before on SCRTD. Offering free fares will allow more people to give SCRTD a try."

SCRTD route and schedule information is available at [scrted.org](http://scrted.org) or by calling 575-323-1620.

### About Dona Ana County

Dona Ana County is in southern New Mexico bordering Texas and Mexico. With a population of 219,561, it is the second largest county in the State of New Mexico. The County seat is in Las Cruces and is the largest majority-Hispanic county in the state.

### About SCRTD

SCRTD was formed in 2006 and began operation of service in 2016. The agency operates a regional transit service with eight routes that serve three counties carrying over 65,000 riders in 2021, a ridership increase of 118% over 2020. SCRTD services connect riders with Roadrunner bus service, El Paso's Sun Metro, and other local operators.

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<sup>1</sup> AAA-Daily Average 3/25/22 New Mexico

<sup>2</sup> US Census 2020/USDOT Bureau of Transportation Statistics