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**Laketran dedicates Frank J. Polivka Transit Center and debuts Ohio’s first battery-operated electric bus**

*Frank J. Polivka Transit Center at Lakeland Community College was built to improve access to higher education and training and house charging infrastructure for Laketran’s zero emissions battery-operated electric bus fleet.*

*Dedication of the transit center with charging demonstration will be July 29 at 11:00 a.m.*

Lake County, OH – Laketran will host a ribbon cutting and dedication of the Frank J. Polivka Transit Center located on the campus of Lakeland Community College on Thursday, July 29, 2021.

Laketran will also debut Ohio’s first battery-operated electric bus at the event and complete a charging demonstration of the industry’s latest en-route vehicle charging infrastructure.

Laketran will deploy ten 35-foot [New Flyer xcelsior CHARGE](https://www.newflyer.com/bus/xcelsior-charge-ng/) electric transit bus this fall transitioning 60% of its local route bus fleet to zero emission vehicles.

**Frank J Polivka Transit Center**

The transit center opened to the public on Monday, March 15 and serves as a central transfer point for six local bus routes, Park-n-Ride service to Cleveland, and Lakeland Community College’s Campus Loop shuttle service.

Sitting adjacent to State Route 306, the transit center provides an indoor waiting area, accessible real-time information, public restrooms, Wi-Fi, and charging infrastructure for the agency’s electric bus fleet.

Local Routes 1, 2, 3, 6, 8, and 9 and Park-n-Ride Route 11 operate from the south side of the building. Campus Loop service operates from the north side of the building with service every 10 minutes for easy access to all parts of campus, including the Holden University Center.

“When the college approached us about the idea of a transit center on the property, it was a win-win for both organizations. The new transit center alleviates bus traffic on campus making it more pedestrian friendly and improves the waiting environment for our riders—many of whom are students coming to Lakeland,” explained Laketran CEO Ben Capelle. “Plus, we needed a larger space on campus for the charging infrastructure for our electric buses.”

The transit center name honors Frank J. Polivka, Laketran’s first employee who served as the agency’s general manager from 1979 to 2003 and continued his career at Greater Cleveland RTA until 2019 as Director of Procurement. Polivka currently resides in Madison and serves as a trustee for Lake Metroparks.

“Frank’s vision for Laketran set the groundwork for us to become customer-driven transit agency nationally recognized for innovation and our Dial-a-Ride service,” shared Capelle. “He has left a lasting impact on our community, as well as the transit industry, and it is an honor to name this transit center after him.”

“I remember the early years of Laketran and having to convince the Lake County community there is a need for public transit service,” shared Polivka about starting the agency. “It’s humbling to see what this agency has become to the community almost 50 years later and to be recognized in this way.”

Laketran anticipates the transit center will serve 65,000 commuters annually between the local fixed route, Park-n-Ride and Campus Loop services. In 2019, Laketran provided over 30,000 trips to Lakeland Community College students alone using the local route service.

“Laketran connects people to places; and Lakeland connects people to their futures. We’re honored to be a part of this ceremony today that recognizes the importance of providing access to resources that benefit Lake County and the surrounding communities,” shared Dr. Morris W. Beverage Jr. president of Lakeland Community College. “This partnership is a great example of two Lake County institutions joining forces to improve access to higher education and job training in our community.”

Lakeland Community College donated the land for the new transit center to Laketran and the building cost was $2.5 million. Eighty percent of the funding for the 2,200 square foot transit center was leveraged by a mix of federal and state capital transit grants including NOACA’s [Transportation for Livable Communities Initiative](https://www.noaca.org/community-assistance-center/funding-programs/transportation-for-livable-communities-initiative-tlci) grant and Ohio Department of Transportation’s [Ohio Transit Partnership Program](http://www.dot.state.oh.us/Divisions/Planning/Transit/Programs/Pages/OTPP.aspx).

“We are grateful for Lakeland Community College’s collaboration throughout the design and construction of the new transit center and our local, state and federal funding partners,” shared Brian Falkowski, Laketran’s Board President. “We’re excited to bring the transit industry’s latest technology to Lake County residents.”

The new building was designed and engineered by Mentor-based CT Consultants and Tec, Inc. from Willoughby and constructed by Engelke Construction Solutions of Brunswick. Other local firms involved in construction were project electricians V.L. Chapman of Grand River and Zenith Systems of Bedford.

**Laketran’s Electric Bus program**

Various Federal Transportation Administration (FTA) and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) grant programs aimed to reduce diesel emissions and improve air quality and public transit access are funding Laketran’s electric buses and charging infrastructure program.

In addition to the replacement of diesel buses with zero emission electric vehicles, Laketran is in the process of installing six [ABB fast chargers](https://new.abb.com/ev-charging/products/pantograph-down) that allows for en-route charging vehicle charging.

“We’re replacing 12 year old diesel engines with a vehicle that is powered by a battery pack. This means no diesel fuel, no oil changes, no combustion engine replacements or exhaust systems to maintain.” shared Capelle. “We're very conscious of the impact transportation has on the environment and we're committed to improving the air quality in Northeast Ohio. Electric buses will not only reduce air pollution, but also our operating expenses.”

“I would like to thank the Ohio EPA, U.S. Senator Brown's office, NOACA and our local community partners for their letters of support that helped Laketran provide competitive grant applications to fund our electric bus program.”

Laketran aims to have all 10 electric buses in operation by early fall.

Additional funding partner quotes:

The Frank J. Polivka Transit Centeris an example on what future mobility looks like with combining innovation, transportation, environmental sustainability, and community development,” said **Grace Gallucci, Executive Director and CEO of the Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency** (NOACA).  Gallucci added, “NOACA is proud of the work Laketran accomplished to create such a bold infrastructure investment for our region that will certainly be the impetus for more technologically advanced systems for years to come.”

“Ohio EPA is delighted to have been able to provide grant funding to help LAKETRAN replace six aging diesel buses with new all-electric buses  This project will reduce more than one and a half tons of air pollution annually.” **Carolyn Watkins, Administrator, Diesel Emission Reduction Grant Programs, Ohio EPA**

"We commend Laketran’s partnership and coordination with Lakeland Community College on this project. These efforts will promote access to higher education, which in turn provides for a skilled workforce and economic development in Lake County.” **ODOT District 12 Deputy Director, John Picuri, P.E.**

Photos available at: <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1HGsIqyqpLYpeY534EgSiYeQbNOaAcz2V>

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*Proudly serving over 750,000 riders each year, Laketran is Lake County, Ohio’s regional public transportation system offering local routes, Dial-a-Ride, and Park-n-Ride commuter service to Cleveland.*