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SUN TRAN AND CITY OF TUCSON RECEIVE \$221,100 GRANT

FTA announces Human Trafficking and Public Safety Initiative recipients

TUCSON, Ariz. –The City of Tucson (COT) and Sun Tran were awarded \$221,100 from the Federal Transit Administration’s (FTA) Human Trafficking Awareness and Public Safety Initiative. The grant will allow funding for the COT and Sun Tran to implement solutions to reduce human trafficking, protect transit operators from the risk of assault, and reduce crime on public transit vehicles.

The grant selection process for the FTA’s Human Trafficking Awareness and Public Safety Initiative was highly competitive, with \$5.4 million in total funding awarded. Sun Tran and COT received the total amount requested (\$221,100), and are one of twenty-four organizations across the country to receive funding for projects to help prevent human trafficking and other crimes on public transportation.

“Sun Tran is pleased to have these resources to bring awareness to this important national issue,” stated Steve Spade, Sun Tran General Manager. “The federal government successfully worked with the trucking industry to increase awareness and reporting of human trafficking incidents. Now they are looking to create a similar effort with select transit systems. With the support from our partners and the community, this is an opportunity for Sun Tran to enhance public safety in Tucson.”

Efforts will include training on how to identify activities related to human trafficking, and how to report it to authorities. The City and Sun Tran will provide education and training to all Tucson transit operators. Sun Tran will collaborate with the Arizona Transit Association (AzTA) to offer these trainings to other transit providers throughout Arizona and for local transportation service providers, as well as Tucson Transportation Department staff.

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Following the training sessions, Sun Tran will implement a public awareness campaign. The campaign will aim to raise awareness of human trafficking and to educate the public about recognizing the activities of human traffickers. There will be materials available to the public and transit riders about what human trafficking looks like and what to do when they see something.

In addition, Tucson Police Department's (TPD) Special Crimes Unit, which focuses on human trafficking crimes in Tucson, will work with transit management to strengthen reporting protocol, collaborate on the training to all transit staff, and investigate suspected human trafficking activity.

In addition, Sun Tran will increase supervision and security at the three Tucson transit centers to watch for potential human trafficking situations and other criminal behavior to reduce crime and increase safety.

Human trafficking is a national problem, affecting millions of adults and children in the United States. Traffickers move their victims on all modes of transportation, and sometimes use public transit due to its low cost, greater anonymity in buying fare cards, and less direct interaction with government or transit officials.

In subsequent project phases, Sun Tran will focus on reducing assaults against operators. This activity will consist of employee training, public awareness and improved security. The City and Sun Tran will continue to provide Communication and De-Escalation Training courses to all Sun Tran, Sun Link and Sun Shuttle bus operators and supervisors. Since many confrontations occur when customers behave inappropriately, Sun Tran will take steps to make clear expectations of the public as they use public transit and its facilities. Sun Tran's Ride with Respect campaign will inform the public about the rules and proper behavior for public transit.