

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SYVT Donates to Service Dog Training

Solvang, California – Santa Ynez Valley Transit (SYVT) donated the use of a bus and driver for teams from the Psychiatric Service Dog Partners to train service dogs at the organization’s annual international convention held at the Solvang Veteran’s Memorial Hall on Saturday, April 7, 2018.

Psychiatric Service Dog Partners is a non-profit organization that operates multiple programs assisting the public and service dog teams. When convention coordinator Chanda Hagen was driving through Solvang to familiarize herself with the area prior to the convention, she noticed the distinctive SYVT bus and decided to incorporate public transit training in the 2018 convention. “I thought it would be great to train the dogs to work in and around a stationary and moving bus. So I called the City and it offered to donate the use of a bus and driver,” noted Hagen.

John Webb, a representative from Roadrunner Management Services (SYVT’s contracted bus operator), demonstrated various transit procedures from 11:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the convention. The trainers worked the service dogs through wheelchair lift usage as well as safety measures for boarding and alighting from the bus. Webb was able to answer questions from more than a dozen trainers attending the convention with their service dogs.

“This donation represents an important partnership between SYVT and our riders who rely on service dogs to travel,” stated Matt van der Linden, Public Works Director/City Engineer for the City of Solvang. “The opportunity to participate in the actual training of these animals will add to our understanding of the support service dogs provide.”

SYVT subscribes to the guidelines established by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) as it pertains to service animals, and such animals are allowed on buses at no additional charge. Service animals are defined by the ADA as “any guide dog, signal dog, or other animal individually trained to work or perform tasks for an individual with a disability, including but not limited to guiding individuals with impaired vision, alerting individuals with impaired hearing to intruders or sounds, providing minimal protection or rescue work, pulling a wheelchair, or fetching dropped items.”

SYVT is funded through a Joint Powers Agreement by the cities of Buellton and Solvang and Santa Barbara County. The daily operation of SYVT is contracted to Roadrunner Management Services. For more information about SYVT, visit www.syvt.com or call the SYVT office at (805) 688-5452.

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