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Dignitaries Usher in 'Next Generation in Public Transit' at DART Central Station Ribbon Cutting

Local, state and national dignitaries today cut the ribbon on the new \$21 million DART Central Station, ushering in the "next generation of public transit for Greater Des Moines."

The new station is set to open in downtown Des Moines on November 23 as part of a larger transformation of the Des Moines Area Regional Transit Authority (DART) since its creation in 2006. The new station will replace the Walnut Street Transit Mall, offering residents and visitors a superior transit facility with real-time departure information, sheltered boarding platforms, and more. At the same time, DART is launching a redesigned and expanded network of bus routes aimed at serving thousands more people by going more places, more often, with faster travel times.

The milestone was noted in remarks today by Senator Tom Harkin and Congressman Leonard Boswell, who helped secure \$16.5 million in grants for the station from the Federal Transit Administration and the U.S. Department of Transportation; Iowa Senator Matt McCoy, who helped secure a \$4 million IJOBS grant for the station; FTA Region VII Administrator Mokhtee Ahmad; Jay Byers, CEO of the Greater Des Moines Partnership; and the DART Commissioners.

"This investment to our transit infrastructure will put people to work, help commuters travel efficiently throughout the city, and boost economic development," Harkin said. "I have long supported federal funding for this effort to ease travel for Iowans who rely on public transportation, and I will continue to work to provide federal assistance for public transit crucial for so many in central Iowa."

"Today's ribbon-cutting represents an exciting new beginning for central Iowa transit and more efficient, rider-friendly transportation opportunities for Iowans in the region," Congressman Boswell said. "I have been a strong proponent of the project from concept to construction and I am proud to see the dedication and hard work on the local, state and federal level pay off."

Senator McCoy said the station is an example of the critical infrastructure that can be built when governments work together to make needed investments. "The local infrastructure is better today because of the cooperation between partners at the local, state and federal level. The real winners are the thousands of people, employers and other organizations who benefit from a strong transportation network."

Partnership CEO Byers said the new station will serve as the cornerstone for an ongoing renaissance in Greater Des Moines' public transit system. "Our vision to be a best-in-class community requires best-in-class transit delivery. This station provides that to our metro. With the completion of this monumental project, we now need to focus our regional efforts on moving forward on a bus rapid transit line – with distinctly branded hybrid vehicles, technology to speed up travel, and stations along the streets – to take Greater Des Moines' transit system to the next level."

Steve Van Oort, Mayor of Ankeny and the Chair of the DART Commission, said the station was symbolic of the future. "I see more than a new station," he said. "I see the next generation of public transit in Greater Des Moines."

Additional details about the upcoming changes to the network of bus routes and the opening of DART Central Station are available online at www.ridedart.com.