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Tuesday, October 1, 2024

Padres fans get a free lift to Wednesday's Wild Card game to enjoy postseason action

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San Diego – Today, San Diego County leaders gathered to encourage residents to shake up commutes, reduce emissions and take transit on Wednesday, Oct 2, a day-long promotion that offers free transit for all in San Diego. Free Ride Day is an annual promotion hosted by the Metropolitan Transit System (MTS) and North County Transit District (NCTD).

The day coincides with California Clean Air Day, which encourages residents to take actions that are known to clean air like taking transit, shopping local, installing an air monitor and more.

“Whether you choose transit to reduce your carbon footprint or to reduce the bill at the gas pump, I invite you to explore what MTS and NCTD have to offer this Free Ride Day,” said Stephen

Whitburn, MTS Board Chair and San Diego City Councilmember, District 3. “MTS is at the forefront of zero emission technology on our bus and light rail systems. We want to continue doing our part to reduce emissions and encourage San Diegans to participate in the statewide efforts to advocate for cleaner air.”

On Free Ride Day all rides are free on MTS buses, the Trolley, COASTER, SPRINTER, NCTD+ On-demand rides and BREEZE fixed-route services. This will be the fifth Free Ride Day held jointly by MTS and NCTD. Free Ride Day is sponsored by Mission Federal Credit Union and is part of California Clean Air Day, which encourages the state’s residents to reduce carbon emissions to improve the region’s air quality.

“NCTD is committed to reducing emissions as part of Clean Air Day,” said NCTD Board Chair Jewel Edson. “We urge regular riders, choice riders, and anyone who has been waiting to try public transit to ride our modes for free on Wednesday and do your part to improve air quality throughout our region.”

MTS and NCTD have held Free Ride Day four times since 2018, and in 2021 the agencies held a free ride month. Each year, the transit agencies have seen a significant increase in ridership, by as much as 30%. The agencies anticipate logging more than 250,000 passenger trips on Oct. 2.

Mission Federal Credit Union (Mission Fed) is sponsoring this year’s Free Ride Day as part of its Community is Everything initiative, a commitment to investing in the community to contribute to the well-being and needs of the region’s residents.

“At Mission Fed, we believe that everyone deserves to live in a healthy community – that’s why we are proudly sponsoring Free Ride Day,” said Doug Wright, President & CEO of Mission Fed Credit Union. “We join MTS, NCTD and cities across San Diego County in highlighting the benefits that alternative modes of transportation can provide, like reducing transportation costs and the region’s carbon emissions.”

Free Ride Day Activities

The San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) encourages people in the San Diego region to take part in Free Ride Day and support California Clean Air Day. Pledge to commute for clean air on Wednesday, Oct. 2, by walking, biking, carpooling, or riding transit for free. San Diego commuters travel more miles annually than the state average, making Clean Air Day the perfect opportunity to help clean the air. Take the pledge at [SANDAG.org/CleanAirDay](https://www.sandag.org/CleanAirDay).

“Tomorrow is an important day to recognize the small changes we can make in our daily lives that can make a big difference for everyone,” said Lesa Heebner, SANDAG Second Vice Chair and Mayor of Solana Beach. “SANDAG is proud to partner and help people explore more sustainable options to driving alone. Together, we can take action to ensure the air that everyone breathes is clean air.”

Riders who take advantage of Free Ride Day can reap the benefits of taking public transportation, including:

- **Cost savings:** With gas prices nearing \$5 in San Diego County, riders are encouraged to try the commute cost calculator to see how they can save by choosing transit.
- **Reducing air pollution:** People who will participate in Free Ride Day are encouraged to take the clean air pledge and demonstrate the collective commitment to cleaner air.

MTS, NCTD and SANDAG will also hold pop-up outreach events at major transit centers in the morning (from 6 – 8 a.m.) and afternoon (from 4 -6 p.m.) to thank riders for choosing transit. Riders can stop by for transit information and promotional items and enter to win a Free Ride Day giveaway. For more information about Free Ride Day activities, visit sdmts.com/free-ride-day or GoNCTD.com.

Padres Wild Card Series

With large crowds anticipated both inside and outside Petco Park for the Padres Wild Card Series games, MTS and NCTD will be ramping up service. For Wednesday's game, all fans ride free as part of Free Ride Day. NCTD COASTER service provides easy downtown connections to the Trolley's Green and Blue Lines, which will serve all stations every 15 minutes or better pre- and post-game.

About Free Ride Day

Free Ride Day will be valid on all MTS and NCTD fixed-route services including buses, the Trolley, SPRINTER and COASTER (Amtrak Rail 2 Rail, MTS Access and NCTD LIFT paratransit are not part of this promotion). Passengers will not need a PRONTO card or valid fare for either system. MTS and NCTD services will operate on a normal weekday schedule. To plan a trip, visit the [MTS](#) or [NCTD](#) website and use the Trip Planner tool.

About MTS

The Metropolitan Transit System (MTS) operates 92 bus routes and three Trolley lines in 10 cities and unincorporated areas of San Diego. MTS is a leader in advancing initiatives to create a greener, cleaner and better-connected transit system in San Diego. Each weekday more than 250,000 passenger trips are taken throughout the MTS system taking people to work, school, health appointments and other essential trips. In FY 2024, MTS served more than 75 million riders. For service schedule updates, news, alerts and more information on how you can use public transportation, go to www.sdmts.com.

About NCTD

The North County Transit District is a public transportation agency providing critical multi-modal services throughout North San Diego County and into downtown San Diego. NCTD is designated as a rail common carrier by the Surface Transportation Board based on the movement of interstate commerce on the tracks and the Railroad of Record by the Federal Railroad Administration responsible for safety over the entire San Diego portion of the LOSSAN corridor, the nation's second largest passenger rail network. NCTD's system includes BREEZE buses (with FLEX service), COASTER commuter trains, SPRINTER hybrid rail trains, LIFT paratransit

service, and NCTD+ On-demand rides and is one of only three public transit agencies in the nation to operate heavy rail, hybrid rail, and bus service. For more information visit: GoNCTD.com

About Mission Federal Credit Union

Mission Fed Credit Union (Mission Fed) is the largest member-owned, not-for-profit, full-service financial institution exclusively serving San Diego County. Mission Fed enhances the lives of its members through financial education and services, providing stability and strength to help San Diegans with financial wellness and success. Banking at Mission Fed means doing good for San Diego. Mission Fed gives money back to our local communities, has helped hundreds of nonprofits and important causes, and builds deep relationships with community partners.

Mission Fed has served the financial needs of San Diegans for over 60 years through checking, savings, loans, credit cards, and other financial offerings. Mission Fed has more than \$6.0 billion in assets, over 300,000 members, 34 convenient local branches, 30,000 fee-free CO-OP ATMs nationwide and free mobile and online banking services. The credit union is regularly named a Top Workplaces USA winner and has placed in the top five California credit unions on Forbes' Best-In-State Credit Unions list. Mission Fed is also the first San Diego-based credit union to receive the "Juntos Avanzamos" designation, honoring its commitment to serving and empowering Hispanic/Latinx consumers. Federally insured by NCUA and Equal Housing Lender. To learn more, visit www.MissionFed.com.

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