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San Diego, CA – Transit ridership continues to increase in 2009, the Metropolitan Transit System’s third quarter numbers showed this week. So far this year, the system has seen a 1.6 percent increase in ridership, with the largest spike of 10 percent coming last July, when gas prices rose over \$4 and riders flocked to transit as a way to save money. Now, with the economy struggling, riders continue to save money by taking public transit.

For MTS’s third quarter in the 2009 fiscal year, ridership rose 4.2 percent from January 2008 to January 2009, February ridership saw relatively flat growth and March 2009 ridership rose 1.4 percent from March 2008. Overall bus ridership saw the most growth, with a 7.9 percent increase from January 2008 to January 2009, a small increase of 1.7 percent in February 2009 and a growth of 3.4 percent in March 2008 to March 2009.

“The steady increase in ridership reflects the importance of public transportation to our region and that many San Diego County residents rely on MTS for work and play.” MTS Chief Executive Officer Paul Jablonski said. “Many started using transit last summer and have not stopped due to the state of the economy and because public transit is cheaper than owning a car their desire to help the environment.”

While MTS is seeing riders stay loyal to their system, other neighboring agencies saw a drop in ridership. LA Metro saw a decrease of 4.7 percent of total boardings from February 2008 to February 2009 and the Orange County Transit Agency saw a drop of 14 percent in that same time period.

The San Diego Metropolitan Transit System transported more than 94 million passengers last year on more than 90 bus routes and 53 miles of rail. For further information on fares, routes, and schedules, or to plan a trip, visit www.sdmts.com or call 511.

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