

Valley Regional Transit buses roll ahead of peers with free Wi-Fi

By: Teya Vitu January 31, 2017 0



A ValleyRides bus in the city's new downtown transit center. File photo.

Valley Regional Transit has rolled ahead of its peers in many other markets by offering free Wi-Fi service on all of its ValleyRide buses in Ada and Canyon counties. The free Wi-Fi became available Jan. 30.

Bus riders can access the free Wi-Fi by going to "settings" and clicking "Valley Regional Transit Wireless," according to a VRT news release.

The free Wi-Fi 4G network technology comes at no additional cost to VRT as it taps into an enhancement of the \$68,000 electronic bus locator map provided by Boise-based Cradlepoint. This went live with the Main

Street Station underground bus terminal in downtown Boise that opened in October, VRT spokesman Mark Carnopis said.

"There is a public demand for (free Wi-Fi)," Carnopis said. "People have asked, 'When are you getting Wi-Fi on buses?'"

Boise bus riders will have free Wi-Fi before Miami bus riders, where the service was approved the last week of January and will be rolled out over the next three months, according to the Miami Herald.

Free Wi-Fi became available at all New York City subway station only at the start of January, according to Transit Wireless, the provider of the service.

Transit systems Knoxville, Tenn., and Orlando, Fla., in January announced the start of free Wi-Fi in all their buses. Riverside, Calif., installed Wi-Fi on its first bus in 2005 but didn't outfit its bus fleet fully until December, said Brad Weaver, spokesman at Riverside Transit Agency.

The American Public Transportation Association in a 2016 survey of transit systems determined only 7.3 percent of all public transit agencies were equipped with Wi-Fi and that only 25 public transit agencies had Wi-Fi on a significant number of buses, APTA spokeswoman Virginia Miller said.

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