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NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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MTC Honors Contributions to Bay Area Transportation

Seventeen to Receive Trophies for “Excellence in Motion”

Oakland, Calif., Oct. 15, 2014 . . . For their exceptional contributions to Bay Area transportation, 17 people, projects and organizations will be honored by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission on Wednesday, Oct. 22, during the “Excellence in Motion” awards ceremony. The ceremony, open to the public, is preceded by a reception at 8:30 a.m., with the awards presentation by MTC commissioners beginning at 9 a.m. at the Scottish Rite Center, 1547 Lakeside Drive in Oakland.

The **2014 Grand Award** goes to **Mary King**, in recognition of her leadership as Chair of the Bay Bridge Design Task Force that oversaw the public involvement process and selection of the unique self-anchored suspension element (SAS) for the new East Span of the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge. The new bridge has increased the reliability of the region’s transportation network immensely and the SAS is the span’s marquee element.

The Bay Area’s own **U.S. Congressman George Miller**, a champion for regional transportation improvements over his 40-year congressional career, is the recipient of the **2014 John F. Foran Legislative Award**. Since 1975, he has been a leading advocate of federal support for diverse, multimodal transportation systems in the Bay Area. Miller was instrumental in securing funding for extending BART to SFO and the East Bay with the New Starts program and crafting the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009 to include transit preservation, pavement rehabilitation and bicycle/pedestrian projects. Congressman Miller cut the ribbon last fall for the opening of the fourth bore of the Caldecott Tunnel, a major recipient of ARRA funding. As he retires from Congress this year, the Foran award honors his legacy of leadership that has made getting around the San Francisco Bay Area more environmentally friendly and convenient for years to come.

“Our 2014 award winners, chosen from a field of nearly 100 nominees, have made extraordinary improvements that benefit the Bay Area,” said Amy Rein Worth, MTC chair and City of Orinda councilmember. “They were chosen by a six-member jury representing business, equity interests, the Commission and MTC staff.”

Following is a brief summary of the other award winners.

Doris W. Kahn Accessible Transportation Award – Naomi Armenta

Naomi Armenta uses her experience as a wheelchair and transit user to improve Bay Area public transit. She serves as an in-house consultant for the Alameda County Transportation Commission and has been the county's paratransit coordinator since 2006. Working within the system, she advocates for better transportation options and efficiently oversees approximately \$10 million in annual sales tax funding for transportation for seniors and people with disabilities.

The Kahn Award recognizes individuals or organizations that have helped make the Bay Area transportation network work better for seniors or persons with disabilities.

Greta Ericson Distinguished Service Award—Cory LaVigne

The 2014 Distinguished Service Award, named after the founder of MTC's awards program to recognize achievements by employees in long-term public service, is given to Cory LaVigne posthumously in recognition of his career achievement in the transportation field.

Cory LaVigne's 21-year public service record as everything from bus driver in Illinois to Director of Transit Service Development and Planning at AC Transit is impressive enough, but it was also apparent to our jury that Cory was highly regarded, respected and loved by his co-workers, colleagues, peers and friends.

David Tannehill Special Employee Award—Charles Davis, Transit Operator, San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (Muni)

Charles Davis, a transit operator for Muni for over 11 years, makes an extra effort to assist passengers by calling out their stops and doing so in a way that puts a smile on the faces of the riders. Taking advantage of his experience in a church choir, he sings out the stops on his route, making it easy and entertaining for the riders to hear where they are on the route. The award is named for a dedicated and talented MTC planner who passed away in 2001 and recognizes an employee who exemplifies the day-to-day dedication to duties that are essential in keeping the region moving.

Miriam Gholikely Public Service Award—Bruce Beyaert and Trails for Richmond Action Committee (TRAC)

MTC is honoring Bruce Beyaert and TRAC for helping to develop the longest single segment of the Bay Trail, which includes 32 miles completed with 10 more miles planned along the Richmond

Bay front. Beyaert founded TRAC in 1999, when Richmond had only about 12 miles of shoreline trail. It took 15 years of tenacious behind-the-scenes work to complete the additional 20 miles of trails, and Beyaert and his team of volunteers are steadfast in their determination to see the trail through to completion. In addition, TRAC has created and placed along the trail over 50 interpretative panels about the natural and human history of the region.

For their work with numerous stakeholders in expanding the Bay Trail, Beyaert and TRAC receive the 2014 Public Service Award, named for Miriam Gholikely, a longtime MTC advisor and community activist.

In addition to the awards named in honor of outstanding individuals in Bay Area transportation, MTC will also present the following Awards of Merit.

- **Good Karma Bikes** is a nonprofit organization in San Jose founded in 2009. A volunteer-based organization, it provides free bicycle repair services to underprivileged community members and teaches people how to fix and maintain their bicycles. Since inception, Good Karma Bikes has served 11,000 people and given away 1,100 bicycles.
- **Gary Richards, aka “Mr. Roadshow,”** fields comments and queries on commute issues from readers of his Q&A transportation column for the Bay Area News Group. Mr. Richards receives as many as 1,000 emails a week on such topics as choke-points in commutes, backups on toll bridges and road construction inquiries, all the while managing to maintain an upbeat tone as he highlights regional transportation issues and advocates for improvements.
- **Soltrans**, a Joint Powers Authority created in December 2010 to consolidate the two transit agencies in Benicia and Vallejo, provides sustainable and efficient transportation services for southern Solano County. The agency developed the downtown Vallejo Transit Center, serving approximately 1.4 million annual riders, and the fleet of 21 new hybrid-electric buses which saves more than \$1 million annually in operational costs. Soltrans has consistently recorded increased ridership since the merger.
- **Caldecott Fourth Bore Project:** The Alameda County Transportation Commission, Caltrans District 4 and the Contra Costa Transportation Authority worked together to complete the fourth bore of the Caldecott Tunnel in under four years. Caltrans no longer has to switch the direction of traffic in the middle bore twice daily to accommodate commute traffic and, since the November 2013 opening of the fourth bore, motorists driving on State Route 24 between Alameda and Contra Costa counties are experiencing up to 20 minutes of time savings in the reverse-commute direction. The three agencies will each receive an Award of Merit trophy.

- **Devil’s Slide Tunnel Project and Trail:** With frequent rock slides and road closures, the 1.3-mile stretch of San Mateo County coastline known as Devil’s Slide was desperately in need of a makeover. Caltrans and the San Mateo County Department of Parks each earn an Award of Merit for the pair of inland replacement tunnels, opened in March 2013, that safely pass through the notorious segment of Route 1 between Pacifica and Montara. One year after the tunnels opened, the old, unsafe roadway was transformed as a paved path featuring bi-directional bike lanes and a 10-foot area for pedestrians.
- **Showcasing the Bridge & Bay:** Three visual projects inspired by both the old and new Bay Bridge will each receive an Award of Merit for illuminating its beauty and majesty, including the ecosystem of the Bay underneath. **Bay Lights** includes 25,000 energy-efficient LED lights on the West Span of the bridge. Created by artist Leo Villareal, the nightly light show complements the sparkle of the water below. The new East Span construction inspired photographer **Joseph A. Blum**, a former boilermaker and welder, to capture an unparalleled collection of images of the bridge crews at work, aptly titled “The Bridge Builders.” The final award recipient is the **Oakland Museum’s “Above & Below: Stories From Our Changing Bay,”** an interdisciplinary exhibit about the San Francisco Bay. Through oral histories, replicas, hands-on activities and artifacts from the bridge, the exhibit explored the intersection of the natural and the manufactured.

The Excellence in Motion awards program began in 1977. MTC is the regional transportation planning, financing and coordinating agency for the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area. For additional information on the awards program, visit our website at http://www.mtc.ca.gov/about_mtc/awards/.

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