

Local News South/Southern Denton County

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DCTA unveils new rail cars

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By Bj Lewis / Staff Writer

Local and regional officials got their first glimpse Friday at two of the Denton County Transportation Authority's long-standing projects.



DRC/AI Key

One of the new A-train vehicles pulls up for people to see during an open house Friday at the Denton County Transportation Authority's new rail operations and maintenance facility in Lewisville.

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The agency held an open house to spotlight the new 47,000-square-foot rail operations and maintenance facility and two of the A-train's new Swiss-made rail cars. The gathering of 100-plus attendees included members of city government, regional transportation and political representatives.

"You're making history," said Jungus Jordan, who represents the city of Fort Worth on the Regional Transportation Council. "We've all worked together to make this happen as a community."

Jordan said developing quality mass transit was important because the transportation agencies cannot build enough concrete roads to accommodate the state's growing needs and demands. "This vehicle is the future of regional rail," he said. "[It's] different, unique and going to be the backbone of regional transportation."

The Stadler GTW 2-6 Diesel Multiple Unit rail vehicles were manufactured by Stadler Bussnang AG in Switzerland and soon will replace the cars DCTA now leases from Dallas Area Rapid Transit.

DCTA plans to run two joined cars with trips every 20 minutes during peak operating times. The new vehicles can seat 104 passengers and have standing-room capacity for up to 94. They have luggage and bike racks, as well as space for wheelchairs, better air conditioning and video surveillance. The cars will provide level boarding for passengers in wheelchairs or those using strollers for children.

Christian Eigenmann, commercial project manager for Stadler, attended the event and commented on the short time there was between DCTA and Stadler coming together and the production of the first cars.

About 100 people work on the cars for 35 weeks from beginning to end, he said. Each car is constructed with 22,000 pounds of aluminum and has more than 22 miles of cable running through it. Each is topped off with 1,000 pounds of paint to give it its shiny coat.



For the DRC/Tim Blackwell
Christian Eigenmann, commercial project manager for Stadler Bussnang AG in Switzerland, talks Friday about the new A-train rail cars manufactured by his company.

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For the DRC/Tim Blackwell Open house attendees check out one of the A-train's new Stadler GTW 2-6 Diesel Multiple Unit rail vehicles. The Denton County Transportation Authority's new rail cars, manufactured in Switzerland, will go into service later this year. [View larger](#) [More photos](#) [Photo store](#)

The agency has six cars in hand and is waiting for five more to complete the order, DCTA President Jim Cline said. Officials are waiting on crash-worthiness certification from the state to be able to put the new cars on the track alongside the older cars until the full fleet is ready to be deployed.

The opening of the maintenance facility represented the final part of the A-train project. The facility sits on an 80-acre site in Lewisville and employs 30 people. A regional dispatch center was also built into the facility to serve as dispatch for the A-train and a backup for the Trinity Railway Express, which runs between Dallas and Fort Worth.

Charles Emery, president of DCTA's board, said that the new rail cars, the facility and the train service all validate the path the agency has taken for the last 10 years.

In his comments at the open house, Emery chose to focus on the regional aspect as the way to get planning and projects done.

"I have to go back to the approach [DCTA] took. It will be necessary for the future to plug in at the regional level," he said. "That's where it starts; it has to be regional."

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