March 4, 2026

ESTA STAFF REPORT

Subject: Executive Director's Report
Presented by: Phil Moores, Executive Director

Staffing

David Corkett, a trainer in Mammoth Lakes was voted by his peers as Employee of the Quarter. David has trained many drivers for ESTA and earned their respect with hard work during storms. He can be counted on when times are tough, and that's exactly the kind of employee ESTA needs. THANK YOU DAVID!

Hiring has slowed a little this season. We have a recruitment for Assistant Transportation Supervisor in Mammoth Lakes. The recruitment for a new Executive Director is also underway.

Reds Meadow

It looks like another limited summer for the Reds Meadow Shuttle. The most recent schedule duplicates last year with partial Thursday and full Friday-Saturday-Sunday service. This schedule reduces our revenue potential by several hundred thousand dollars. July 4th weekend is the current start date despite the potential for early snow melt. I recommend revisiting the schedule if the forest service gets in early.

Service

Town and airport management are working with ESTA to develop a dependable airport service to meet the demand. Current ground transportation solutions are inadequate and from a visitor and airline perspective, not dependable. Airlines have expressed a desire to introduce a larger plane, but not until we can ensure that passengers will be served. The only obstacle is the lack of buses designed to handle 30+ passengers with all their gear. The existing fleet in Mammoth is to old and can't even handle current demand. Rather than spend millions on buses that won't be built for 20-24 months, we are looking at refurbished buses designed to serve the passengers with style and comfort at an affordable price.

Technology

We have technological goals set for future projects. Our current database is Microsoft Access and is in dire need of replacement. Carmichael Business is migrating the ESTA data to a MySQL database. MySQL (My Structured Query Language) is a relational database which organizes data into one or more data tables in which data may be related to each other; these relations help structure the data. SQL is a language that programmers use to create, modify and extract data from the relational database, as well as control user access. This change will stabilize our data and improve data usage for many years.

The Mammoth digital information signage is installing and promises to improve ridership and ease of system use. Watch these signs on Main Street in Mammoth Lakes. One goal is to raise awareness about the system as visitors enter the town.

A contactless payment system is planned for installation on buses later this year. This style of payment will allow riders to use phones and prepaid cards on the buses. It involves special hardware and software solutions.

Equipment

Several vehicle purchases are in action at this time. Fourteen new heavy-duty Mammoth buses equipped with all the bells and whistles including automated passenger counters allowing for stop level ridership numbers are ordered. They will replace the twelve bus fleet and are expected in late 2027.

Two new electric vans are funded for the Mammoth yard. These zero emission vehicles will replace the current fossil burners and conduct the dial-a-ride microtransit service around town. Town staffer, Riley Griesenbeck, is managing the installation of two chargers at the yard for these new vans. Southern California Edison's Charge Ready program will pay for a large portion of the project.

Marketing

The Bishop Airport bus stop is completed and looks fantastic. Revenue generating ads are already planned for the shelter.

Look Ahead

ESTA continues to receive service requests from communities throughout the region. New airport service, June Lake service, charters, Darwin, etc. are just a few examples of where ESTA is needed. Service expansion in transit is dependent on stable funding, drivers, and buses. All these factors must be considered before any commitment should be made. In FY24-25, ESTA experienced its first budget overrun, since nobody knows when. Drivers are always a challenge with attrition exceeding 30% and new driver training at $10,000 each. Buses, well, you know that story, ours are well beyond useful life and breaking almost daily. This doesn't mean new service will never happen, but careful planning must be made.

Mammoth Public Works and ESTA have shared a facility for many years. Both groups have grown and plan for more growth and change in the future. ESTA has new buses coming and new fueling opportunities that demand special facilities to be installed. Also, Public Works is split into several locations, and there is a benefit for having public works in a central location working together. We are discussing options for ESTA to purchase the 210 Commerce building which in turn helps fund a new location for the entire Public Works group. ESTA pays $200,000 a year in rent. $150,000 to the Town and $50,000 for the temporary facility in Bishop. Since capital funds are available through federal programs, the benefit to our budget is obvious.

Ridership

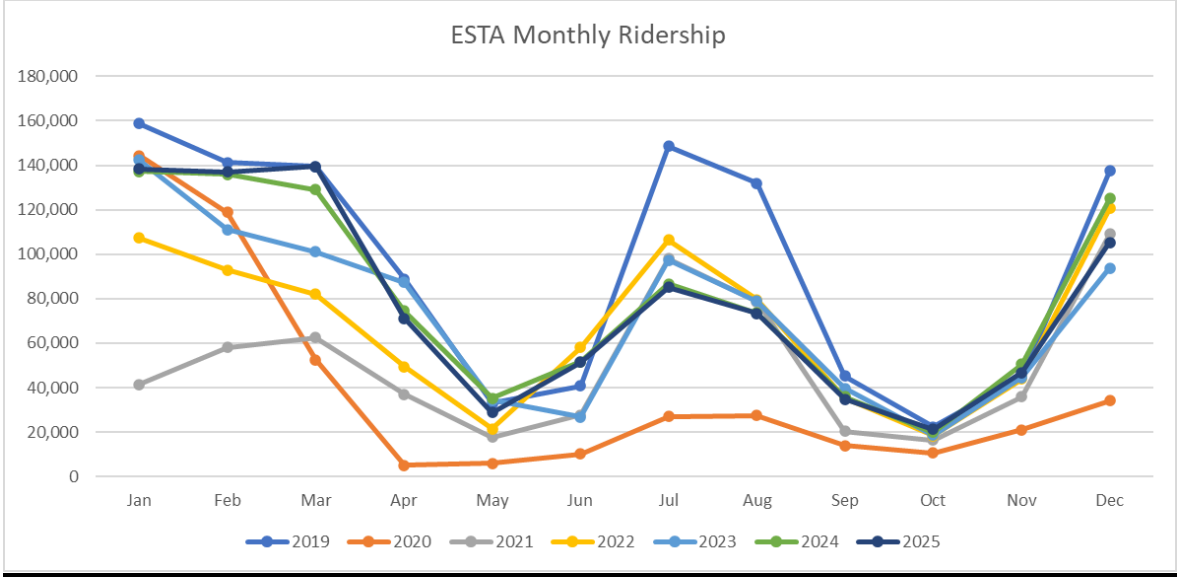
There were no significant service cancellations affecting ridership. The tables below show the ridership by month and year. The chart at the bottom shows the 2019 dark blue line which has served as our ridership goal for the last few years. With Reds Meadow Road still under construction, ridership is strongly affected. Once the Reds Meadow Rd is fully open, a steep spike in ridership is expected.

October Ridership Report								
Route	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	Change Current vs. Last year
Benton	54	6	5	14	11	9	5.00	-4
Bishop DART	3,792	2,439	2,762	3,590	3,646	3,904	3,942.00	38
Bridgeport-Carson	19	10	6	20	12	25	28.00	3
Lancaster	476	215	350	395	674	690	649.00	-41
Lone Pine-Bishop	289	158	228	291	328	391	382.00	-9
Lone Pine DART	473	312	396	501	465	581	674.00	93
Mammoth Fixed	15,620	6,795	11,569	12,191	12,125	12,340	11,095.00	-1,245
Mammoth DART	266	124	150	196	217	286	603.00	317
Mammoth Express	369	190	180	226	410	460	468.00	8
Night Rider	322	134	275	332	322	287	288.00	1
Reds Meadow	1,836	0	0	0	0	0	2,224.00	2,224
Reno	591	289	513	637	775	967	908.00	-59
Walker DART	27	12	5	16	17	66	70.00	4
Total	24,134	10,684	16,439	18,409	19,002	20,006	21,336	1,330

November Ridership Report								
Route	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	Change Current vs. Last year
Benton	44.00	6.00	2.00	4.00	4	8.00	10.00	2
Bishop DART	3,051.00	2,279.00	2,736.00	3,006.00	3,552	3,451.00	3,612.00	161
Bridgeport-Carson	10.00	12.00	4.00	30.00	4	23.00	27.00	4
Lancaster	367.00	183.00	324.00	306.00	565	468.00	567.00	99
Lone Pine-Bishop	231.00	162.00	172.00	227.00	274	266.00	374.00	108
Lone Pine DART	311.00	336.00	332.00	416.00	366	364.00	496.00	132
Mammoth Fixed	14,112.00	8,974.00	12,028.00	14,202.00	8,945	11,724.00	12,307.00	583
Mammoth DART	107.00	110.00	100.00	166.00	190	304.00	544.00	240
Mountain Resort	25,370.00	8,541.00	19,292.00	24,347.00	29,208	32,219.00	27,198.00	-5,021
Mammoth Express	377.00	175.00	197.00	288.00	493	429.00	514.00	85
Night Rider	357.00	59.00	275.00	253.00	323	253.00	279.00	26
Reno	436.00	275.00	406.00	580.00	670	946.00	819.00	-127
Walker DART	25.00	10.00	0.00	10.00	14	83.00	73.00	-10
Total	44,798	21,122	35,868	43,835	44,608	50,538	46,820	-3,718

December Ridership Report								
Route	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	Change Current vs. Last year
Benton	33	4	2	14	11	7.00	5.00	-2
Bishop DART	3,816	2,284	2,936	3,354	3,832	3,399.00	3,859.00	460
Bridgeport-Carson	24	5	12	28	5	16.00	35.00	19
Lancaster	419	139	323	320	363	509.00	761.00	252
Lone Pine-Bishop	222	151	139	241	279	330.00	349.00	19
Lone Pine DART	417	415	390	381	413	489.00	736.00	247
Mammoth Fixed	24,999	4,565	15,366	20,326	18,977	24,313.00	23,735.00	-578
Mammoth DART	183	88	148	233	281	338.00	541.00	203
Mountain Resort	105,606	26,001	88,698	92,360	67,993	91,944.00	72,416.00	-19,528
Mammoth Express	630	178	369	502	469	666.00	804.00	138
Night Rider	404	78	192	308	324	293.00	203.00	-90
Other	1,806	0	1,597	1,890	1,983	1,606.00	832.00	-774
Reno	625	308	434	570	784	956.00	1,013.00	57
Walker DART	26	13	0	9	13	72.00	72.00	0
Total	139,210	34,229	110,606	120,536	95,727	124,938	105,361	-19,577

Historical Annual Ridership Data							
Year	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Jan	158,754	144,341	41,512	107,382	142,382	137,144	138,412
Feb	141,240	118,822	58,171	92,870	111,066	135,978	136,960
Mar	139,505	52,582	62,457	82,051	100,995	128,995	139,458
Apr	88,883	5,086	37,046	49,395	87,321	74,479	71,091
May	32,963	5,970	17,744	21,511	34,378	35,293	28,876
Jun	40,859	10,175	27,664	58,080	26,893	51,591	51,495
Jul	148,430	27,061	98,102	106,363	97,231	86,605	85,026
Aug	131,970	27,404	78,722	79,686	78,931	73,509	73,360
Sep	45,200	13,952	20,362	35,385	39,788	35,921	34,797
Oct	22,493	10,684	16,439	18,409	18,715	20,006	21,336
Nov	44,798	21,122	35,868	43,835	44,608	50,538	46,820
Dec	137,404	34,229	109,009	120,536	93,774	124,938	105,361
Total	1,132,499	471,428	603,096	815,503	876,082	954,997	932,992


ESTA Monthly Ridership
180,000
160,000
140,000
120,000
100,000
80,000
60,000
40,000
20,000
0
Jan
Feb
Mar
Apr
May
Jun
Jul
Aug
Sep
Oct
Nov
Dec
2019
2020
2021
2022
2023
2024
2025