

**Brevard County Transit Services Department**

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**Local Bus System Takes Top Awards at State Conference**

At the annual Florida Public Transportation Association (FPTA) Conference, recently held in Jacksonville, FL, Space Coast Area Transit vehicle operator Ann Bernick received the 2016 State of Florida *Paratransit Driver of the Year Award*. Bernick has a 31-year record of safe driving, a spotless customer service record and numerous commendations. She has been a trainer, lead operator and operations supervisor, and is a graduate of Brevard County's Executive Leadership Institute. Bernick has won bus rodeos multiple times, and represented Brevard County in 10 State and 6 National rodeos, an exceptionally difficult competition of skill.

She was also recognized for coordinating the safe evacuation of residents with special needs to shelters during emergencies such as hurricanes, performing at an extremely high level throughout urgent situations and changing weather conditions. In her off-duty time, Bernick participates as a guardian in Space Coast Honor Flights, accompanying WWII, Korean, and Vietnam veterans from Brevard County to Washington, D.C. Space Coast Area Transit Director Jim Liesenfelt stated, "The care and compassion Ann shows for our citizens is amazing; she makes a difference in each of the citizens' lives she encounters."

Space Coast Area Transit also received FPTA's Gold Safety Award, the top honor for safe transit operations in the State of Florida. Innovative procedures that resulted in receiving the honor included an ongoing analytical review of accident records and statistics to determine trends and preventive measures. Additionally, monthly safety review meetings and improved training led to decreasing trends in passenger accidents and collisions. "The entire process resulted in an improved safety culture agency-wide. Safety has always been our first priority; it's not just a slogan, it's the way we roll. If we can't do it safely, we just don't do it," stated Liesenfelt.

Additionally, Space Coast Area Transit received multiple marketing awards for their creative and effective advertising efforts. Merritt Island-based Space Coast Advertising Consortium represents the transit agency.

