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****PRESS RELEASE****

**SFMTA Announces Rail Car Technician Apprenticeship Programs
During National Apprenticeship Week**

San Francisco — The San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA), which oversees all surface transportation in the city, including the Municipal Railway (Muni), announced its participation in the First Annual National Apprenticeship Week with the development of a Rail Car Technician Apprenticeship Program, the first apprenticeship program at the agency.

Through a partnership with The Transportation Learning Center, up to five apprenticeship programs will begin in July 2016, including Maintenance and Auto Machinists, Transit Power Line Workers, and Electricians.

“The apprenticeship program is a crucial investment in the future of Muni,” said Tom Nolan, Chairman of the SFMTA Board of Directors. “By starting now to train a new robust, highly-skilled technical workforce, we’re laying the foundation to ensure that our Muni Metro system can be the reliable rail network our City needs.”

Through a partnership with The Transportation Learning Center, a nonprofit, the SFMTA will be one of nine transportation agencies nationwide to share \$750,000 grant from the United States Department of Transportation (US DOT)’s Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to help launch standards-based apprenticeship programs. The funds will support costs for materials, tools, and additional efforts, and will be matched by funds from all participating agencies with amounts based on ridership.

President Barack Obama made apprenticeships a priority in 2014, declaring November 2-8 Annual National Apprenticeship Week and releasing funding to support the trades.

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“The next generation of employees will continue to provide the technical expertise that allows San Franciscans to move around our City reliably and efficiently,” said Edward D. Reiskin, Director of Transportation. “Investing in apprenticeships will allow us to create opportunities for local residents to start meaningful careers, while also enabling us to keep up with developing technology, learn best practices, and ultimately allow for the sustained growth of the nation’s first publicly-owned transit system.”

Nationwide, there is a shortage of new workers entering these highly skilled trades. For the SFMTA, this is a particularly critical effort, as nearly 50 percent of Muni workers in many technical positions have reached the age of eligibility for retirement.

“In the city of San Francisco, building a talent pipeline through apprenticeships is a solution towards developing the workforce of tomorrow,” says Kevin Hughes, of IBEW Local Union 6.

The SFMTA’s rail technician apprenticeships will last four to five years, after which graduates will become Journey-level workers. To learn more about National Apprentice Week and the national program, please visit: <http://www.dol.gov/apprenticeship/>. Once more information is made available for potential local candidates, details will be made available at www.sfmta.com or www.sfgov.org.

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Established by voter proposition in 1999, the SFMTA, a department of the City and County of San Francisco, oversees the Municipal Railway (Muni), parking and traffic, bicycling, walking and taxis. With five modes of transit, Muni has approximately 700,000 passenger boardings each day. Over 1 million people get around this city each day and rely on the SFMTA to ensure safe and reliable travel by transit, walking, bicycling, taxi and driving.

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