

Report: Fresno bus ridership in 2013 lowest in 16 years

<http://www.fresnobee.com/2014/03/19/3831278/report-fresno-bus-ridership-in.html>

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Ridership on Fresno Area Express, the city's municipal bus service, amounted to about 10.7 million trips last year -- the lowest it's been in 16 years, according to figures released by the American Public Transportation Association.

The APTA data, compiled from quarterly reports submitted by transit agencies, commuter rail lines and other public transportation systems, shows Fresno's ridership has fallen each year since peaking at more than 14 million trips in 2008. That decline -- almost 24% in five years -- comes as nationwide use of public transportation reached its highest point in almost 60 years.

The FAX figures include its fixed-route buses and its Handy Ride, a dial-a-ride service for people with disabilities. Handy Ride reported almost 206,000 trips in 2013, an increase of 0.64% from 2012, according to the APTA statistics. But on the fixed-route FAX buses, the number of trips taken by riders fell by almost 2.7% compared to 2012.

The FAX ridership for 2013 in the APTA database is the lowest for the Fresno system since 1997, when ridership was reported at less than 10.4 million. APTA's database archive dates to 1996.

Fresno City Manager Bruce Rudd said a number of factors are responsible for Fresno's downward trend.

"Along with a reduction in service, the economy, subsequent increase in fares, elasticity in the market -- all contributed to a decline in ridership," he said.

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