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MEDIA RELEASE

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VVTA AWARDED AIR DISTRICT'S HIGHEST HONOR

Victorville – San Bernardino County’s second-largest transit operator was recognized today by the Governing Board of the Mojave Desert Air Quality Management District, as the local regulatory agency presented the 2011/2012 *Exemplar* Award to Victor Valley Transit Authority in recognition of its energy-saving, carbon-friendly new bus facility and headquarters in Hesperia.

VVTA was honored for successfully incorporating state-of-the-art renewable energy technologies and other sustainable features into the construction of its 28,820 square foot Administration and 15,750 square foot Maintenance facilities on Smoketree Street, which opened in November 2011. The centerpiece of the complex is a 1 MW photovoltaic solar system which not only produces 100% of the electricity used in both buildings, but also doubles as a canopy shading structure used to cover cars and VVTA fleet vehicles. As a result, air conditioning cooling time during bus start up is reduced, as is fuel use and idling emissions from the bus fleet.

VVTA’s new facility also houses a public-access compressed natural gas fueling station which opened in 2009, before the rest of the complex. The CNG station produces more fuel faster than other similar High Desert sites by employing a “buffer” system which utilizes three heavy duty compressors to fuel several

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buses consecutively, at an average rate of 6 to 8 minutes each. Based on the station's ability to fuel large vehicles quickly, Advanced Disposal recently procured a fleet of CNG-powered refuse trucks, which it plans to expand in the near future. According to MDAQMD Executive Director Eldon Heaston, CNG is one of the cleanest-burning fuels currently available. "NOx emissions from a single bus using CNG instead of diesel are equivalent to removing 55 passenger cars from the road, while particulate matter savings are equivalent to removing 17 vehicles," he stated.

In addition to running on solar energy, VVTA's complex also boasts a number of other sustainable features. More than 20% of its building materials contain recycled content, while over 50% of the wood used in constructing the buildings are "sustainability harvested," as defined by the Forest Stewardship Council. The Administration building is equipped with a highly efficient, energy-saving lighting system which utilizes motion detectors and "solatubes" which bring natural light inside, plus an under-floor air system which pushes clean tempered air up through the work area. Recycled water is used to wash buses in the Maintenance building, while Xeriscaping and drought-resistant plants are used throughout the facility's grounds.

With VVTA's complex 98% complete, the Administration Building is on track for LEED (Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design) Gold certification, while the Maintenance building is on its way to Silver Certification, according to San Bernardino County First District Supervisor Brad Mitzelfelt, who serves on VVTA's Board and is the MDADQMD's current Board Chair. "VVTA continues to be a leader in environmentally-friendly technologies which help get High Desert residents to their destinations at a reasonable price, while benefitting air quality," commented Mitzelfelt.

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Other emission-reducing activities currently being implemented by VVTA include the agency's recent assumption of the previously discontinued bus service to Fort Irwin for DOD workers, which is expected to remove more than 21,000 vehicles from the road during its six-month demonstration period; lifeline service to San Bernardino and Fontana for High Desert residents, which includes an Omnitrans connection; and a van pool pilot program which offers participants up to a \$400/month incentive. The 2011-2012 *Exemplar* Award was accepted by VVTA Chair & Town of Apple Valley Mayor Barb Stanton and Executive Director Kevin Kane.

The *Exemplar* Awards recognize High Desert entities which demonstrate an exceptional commitment to clean air through the development of voluntary activities/projects that reduce or prevent air pollution within the MDAQMD's jurisdiction, which encompasses San Bernardino County's High Desert and Riverside County's Palo Verde Valley. The *Exemplar* Awards are presented annually in association with National Pollution Prevention Week.

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