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*** For Immediate Release ***

SARTA's innovative Fueling Our Future energy education program hits the road in December, hydrogen fuel cell bus, unique curriculum will highlight benefits of alternative energy

Canton, Ohio - When the first of the Stark Area Regional Transit Authority's (SARTA) growing fleet of futuristic hydrogen fuel cell-powered buses drove through the transit authority's gate in 2016, system CEO Kirt Conrad immediately thought "rolling classroom." That thought will become a reality next month when SARTA brings its new "Fueling Our Future" energy education program to middle schools across Northeast Ohio.

Developed in conjunction with the Renewable Hydrogen Fuel Cell Collaborative (RHFCC) and the Center for Transportation and the Environment (CTE), Fueling Our Future's multi-faceted curriculum is designed to introduce seventh graders to alternative fuels, the environmental impact of clean technologies, and the career opportunities that will be created as the demand for renewable energy grows in the years ahead. The program is being funded by grants from the Federal Transportation Administration and the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency educational outreach program. Columbus State Community College is leading development of Fueling Our Future's curriculum.

While a visit from one of SARTA's hydrogen fuel cell buses is the centerpiece of the program, the curriculum offers students a wealth of other hands-on learning experiences including the opportunity to build both a wind turbine and batteries, assemble a fuel cell-powered model car, and experiment with photovoltaics.

According to Andrew Thomas, Director of the RHFCC as well as the Energy Policy Center at Cleveland State University, the program's lesson plans and kits are aligned with state Content Standards for seventh graders and with only slight modifications may be used in eighth grade and high school. All materials needed for the curriculum, including a three-hour professional development course for integrated science teachers, are available free of charge from SARTA and the RHFCC. "We want to ensure that this important course of study is available to any teacher or school system that would like to offer it," Mr. Thomas said. "The FTA grant funding and our partnership with SARTA and CTE makes that possible."

Mr. Conrad said he is particularly pleased that the curriculum includes materials related to career opportunities in renewable energy-related fields. "Our area is already a leading center for hydrogen fuel cell R&D and manufacturing," he noted. "A recent study concluded that HFCs have the potential to create 65,000 jobs in Ohio alone. Letting young students know those jobs will be out there and what type of training and education they'll need to secure them gives them a leg up on dominating a field that will drive the American economy for decades to come."

To date the schools listed below have agreed to participate in Fueling our Future. The dates and times when SARTA's HFC-powered bus will on site are noted. To arrange a media avail at the schools please contact SARTA Marketing Administrator Timothy Montgomery at 330-477-2782 ext. 570.

- Edison Middle School, 4201 13th St SW # 2, Massillon, OH 44646. Tuesday December 4, 2018 from 8 A.M. to 11 A.M.
- Campus International School, 2160 Payne Ave, Cleveland, OH 44114. Wednesday December 5, 2018, from 9 A.M. to 11:30 A.M.
- Alliance Middle School 3205 S Union Ave, Alliance, OH 44601. Thursday, December 6, 2018 from 8:30 A.M. to 11:30 A.M.
- STEAMM Academy at Hartford Middle School, 1824 3rd St SE, Canton, OH 44707. Thursday, December 6 from 12:00 Noon to 3 P.M.

In addition to the four middle schools currently scheduled, the bus will be available for public rides and review at Cleveland State's Levin College of Urban Affairs, 1717 Euclid Avenue, from 12:30 to 2:00 p.m. on December 5, 2018.

For more information please contact Timothy Montgomery at 330-477-2782 ext. 570.

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The Stark Area Regional Transit Authority (SARTA) was established in 1997 to meet the public transportation needs of Stark County, Ohio residents. SARTA provides more than 2.5 million rides annually to commuters, seniors, individuals with disabilities, students, and veterans through the system's fixed routes, ProLine, MedLine, veterans, and campus bus services.

Along with providing safe, reliable, affordable transportation to destinations in Stark and beyond, SARTA is a nationally-recognized leader in the use of transit technology. Receiving numerous awards for its clean energy initiatives which include the acquisition and deployment of one of the world's largest fleets of hydrogen fuel powered-buses. To learn more please visit sartaonline.com or contact Kristie Petty-Cox by phone at 330-477-2782 or via email at kcox@sartaonline.com.