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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**City of Denton and Denton County Transportation Authority Partner to Conduct Full-Scale Disaster Drill on Friday, May 4**

**Denton, TX (April 25, 2018)** – The City of Denton and the Denton County Transportation Authority (DCTA) are collaborating to conduct a full-scale disaster drill on Friday, May 4, from 10 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at DCTA’s Downtown Denton Transit Center (DDTC). The exercise – named “Operation Mercury Rising” – will simulate a large scale disaster to test the response capabilities and emergency operations of first responders, hospitals, and other agencies.

**Annual Drill to Evaluate Crisis Plan and Response**

The City of Denton conducts a full-scale disaster exercise each year to evaluate current response concepts, plans and capabilities, and test response systems for strengths and needed improvements. Other departments and agencies participating in the full-scale disaster drill include: First Transit, Union Pacific Railroad, Transportation Community Awareness and Emergency Response (TRANSCAER®), Denton Fire department, Denton Police department, Atrium Medical Center, Texas Health Presbyterian Denton, the Heart Hospital Baylor Denton, North Central Texas Council of Government (NCTCOG).

Approximately 100 students from the University of North Texas (UNT) and Texas Woman’s University (TWU) will serve as mock victims, and many will be transported from the scene by “walking wounded” DCTA buses to participating hospitals.

“The annual disaster drill is an excellent way to test our emergency response capabilities,” said Denton Fire Chief Kenneth Hedges. “It is important to ensure that we are prepared and ready to respond in the event of a real-world event. We are also thankful that our community partners, like DCTA, UNT, and local hospitals, join us in working together to help protect the Denton community.”

**DCTA Service Modifications during the Exercise**

During the full-scale disaster drill, DCTA A-train service will be suspended. Bus operations will not be suspended, and DCTA is partnering with the City of Denton to have regular bus service from the DDTC stationed at City Hall East in the parallel parking area adjacent to the building. The DDTC will be open and accessible during regular business hours.

DCTA riders needing to access the A-train during the drill can use the bus bridge DCTA will have in operation from the DDTC to the MedPark Station. Specific times for the A-train suspension and bus bridge schedule can be found at [RideDCTA.net](http://RideDCTA.net).

“Collaborating with the City of Denton for this full-scale disaster drill is a great opportunity for DCTA to test and evaluate our response and partner crisis communications strategy to demonstrate that we are prepared to respond effectively to ensure public safety,” said Jim Cline, DCTA President. “In addition, we have operational plans in place to make sure our riders can use our facilities and services to get to their desired destination during the exercise.”

For more information about the full-scale disaster drill, visit [cityofdenton.com](http://cityofdenton.com) and [RideDCTA.net](http://RideDCTA.net).

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#### **About City of Denton**

The City of Denton is a full service municipal organization that operates under the council-manager form of government. City directed services include public safety and emergency services; a municipally owned electric utility; a landfill and resource recovery park; an airport; three libraries; 30 parks, 27 miles of trails, and three recreation centers; a water park and natatorium; and a 2,900-acre nature preserve. Denton, Texas is the seat of Denton County, located at the apex of the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex, where I-35E meets I-35W. Denton ranks as one of the fastest growing communities in Texas, with a current population estimate of 120,000. Visit [www.cityofdenton.com](http://www.cityofdenton.com) for more news and to stay updated.

#### **About Denton County Transportation Authority**

Formed in 2002 and funded in 2003, the Denton County Transportation Authority has been focused on an aggressive service implementation strategy to address the mobility needs of Denton County residents. The central element of the agency's service plan is the A-train, which connects with the Dallas Area Rapid Transit's (DART) Green Line at Trinity Mills in Carrollton and provides service to five stations within Denton County. In addition to the A-train, DCTA provides Connect Bus service in Denton and Lewisville, Connect Shuttle and Community On-Demand services in Highland Village, Access service, Frisco Demand-Response service, Collin County Transit service, North Texas Xpress commuter bus service in partnership with Fort Worth Transportation Authority (FWTA), University of North Texas (UNT) and North Central Texas College (NCTC) Campus Shuttle and vanpool services. The agency carries nearly three million passengers annually system-wide. For more information about DCTA, visit [www.RideDCTA.net](http://www.RideDCTA.net).