

KEC Members Take 'May Day' Field Trip to Akron METRO Intermodal Transit Center

Under the sponsorship of the KEC Focus Group on Transportation, nine KEC members enjoyed a May Day field trip to the recently opened Akron METRO Intermodal Transit Center on South Broadway in Akron. Molly Becker, communications director for the center, gave the group had a sweeping look at the impressive new center—including a climb to the roof to see the expanse of solar panels which (together with the facility's geothermal system), provides heat for the facility. In



addition to being a "green" option, METRO's facility is the largest solar-heated facility in Ohio.

The trip began at the Kent State University Student Center and a 40-minute PARTA bus trip (\$.50 one-way for seniors, with stops at the Brimfield Walmart, Akron City Hospital and the University of Akron). The intermodal facility serves as the hub station for Akron METRO and Greyhound buses and serves as the destination for PARTA's Akron express bus. Rail access to the facility is in

place in anticipation of the day when passenger rail transportation returns to Ohio. Connections with bike facilities and trails are in the planning stages.

Bus passenger traffic through the center is substantial, and facilities for passengers in transit are handsome and comfortable—including lounges and meeting rooms and food-service dispensers) a restaurant is expected to open soon), showcases for art exhibitions and visual education, and an ample spread of sheltered loading docks for access to buses.

Having seen what an intermodal transportation center can look like "in the concrete," the group boarded the PARTA express bus back to the KSU Student Center, stimulated by considerations of what shape should be given to an intermodal center for the city of Kent,

If you are interested in deliberating and advocating for such transportation-related issues, contact Harold Walker about joining the KEC Focus Group on Transportation.

Photo courtesy of Deb Butler, KEC member and tour participant.