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## **Regional Partnering Center to launch transitional shuttle service for Sabino Canyon Recreation Area**

TUCSON, AZ (December 13, 2018) – The Coronado National Forest has just issued a permit to the Tucson-based nonprofit, Regional Partnering Center (RPC), to implement a new shuttle service in the Sabino Canyon Recreation Area in the Santa Catalina Ranger District. Implementation will occur in several phases to provide for a transition to the new fully electric shuttle system.

The transitional service, which will be fully compliant with the Forest’s vehicle design requirements, will have up to six 21-passenger gasoline-powered shuttles that will remain in operation until a full fleet of electric shuttles can be manufactured, delivered, and put into service. RPC has ordered the electric shuttles from Trams International, with Tucson Electric Power (TEP) helping to finance RPC’s purchase of the new vehicles. During the transition, RPC will introduce a web-based ticketing system for purchasing tickets online. Tickets may also be purchased on site at the ticket booth.

RPC’s zero-emission electric shuttles will carry passengers safely, quietly, and efficiently through Sabino and Bear Canyons, which attract approximately one million visitors annually. The open-air, 62-passenger electric shuttles will be equipped with an electronic fare payment system, an audio narration system, and a multilingual interpretive system accessed through the use of audio jacks and headsets. RPC has entered into a partnership with Total Transit Enterprises (Total Ride), which operates the Regional Transportation Authority’s Sun Shuttle.

“We apologize for any inconvenience to the public due to the gap in shuttle service,” said Santa Catalina District Ranger Charles Woodard. “The new permit meets our goals for a 21<sup>st</sup> century transportation system in the Sabino Canyon Recreation Area. We look forward to having the transitional system in operation in the near future.”

“The Regional Partnering Center is working diligently with the Forest Service to ramp up transitional services as soon as possible,” said Farhad Moghimi, Secretary of RPC.

The transitional shuttle service will operate from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. seven days per week. The shuttle service will be closed annually on Thanksgiving and Christmas and three additional days, as needed, for construction and maintenance.

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