



MEDIA ADVISORY

For Immediate Release

COMTO's Northern California Chapter Awards 23 Scholarships for the 2008 Academic Year

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OAKLAND, Calif., Dec. 16, 2008 . . . The Northern California Chapter of the Conference of Minority Transportation Officials (COMTO) awarded \$30,000 in scholarships to 23 undergraduate students of color at their 5th Annual Holiday Dinner and Dance on Friday, December 12, at the Oakland Marriott Hotel in Downtown Oakland.

SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED TO STUDENTS WITH FINANCIAL NEED

The Northern California Chapter saw a 70 percent increase in scholarship applications this year. “We had a huge response this year, and the scholarship recipients are extremely deserving,” said Dana Lang, a senior administrative analyst with the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency and COMTO Scholarship Committee chair. “One winner cried tears of joy and relief when notified that she was a winner, as she was barely hanging on financially. This young woman had no idea that she’d get the top prize of \$3,000. Another student attends school full time, works full time, singlehandedly raises his teenage brother and takes care of his grandmother — and he’s only 19 years old. It is very gratifying to be able to help these students.” At the awards ceremony, students mingled with potential mentors and employers in the transit industry.

SPECIAL AWARD FOR NATHANIEL P. FORD, Sr. SFMTA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR/CEO

In addition, COMTO will honor Nathaniel P. Ford, Sr., Executive Director/CEO of the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency, with a Special Recognition Award for outstanding career service and achievement, and his commitment to COMTO. For more information, please visit the COMTO Northern California Chapter website at www.comtonorcal.org or call Kenya Wheeler at the above-listed number.

WHAT: COMTO Northern California, 5th Annual Holiday and Dinner Dance
WHO: The dinner was attended by transportation officials and leading engineering and consulting firms that work in Northern California.
WHEN: Dinner: 8 p.m. on Friday, December 12, 2008
WHERE: Marriott Oakland City Center, Calvin Simmons Ballroom, 1001 Broadway, Oakland

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MORE INFORMATION ON COMTO NORTHERN CALIFORNIA CHAPTER SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS

The COMTO Northern California Chapter grants awards of \$1,000 – \$3,000 each to students from a variety of traditionally underrepresented backgrounds. Awards are based on a combination of academic achievement, financial need and perseverance and students must either be San Francisco Bay Area or Sacramento Area residents or they must attend college in these areas. Applications were received from 95 students this year, the highest number ever for the Chapter's scholarship program.

BACKGROUND ON COMTO

COMTO's vision is to be the primary voice in the transportation industry for people, businesses, and communities of color, with a focus on equal access, advancement and sustainable results. COMTO also supports opportunities for youth to learn more about careers in transportation through scholarship programs, internships and mentoring opportunities.

COMTO is a national, multiethnic organization founded in 1971 to advocate for the transportation careers and transportation needs of minorities. Since its inception COMTO has established chapters in over 40 cities throughout the United States, and has over 1,500 members from various transportation-related corporations, small businesses, government agencies and universities. More information on the National COMTO organization can be found at www.comto.org.

The Northern California Chapter currently has 105 members representing businesses and government agencies throughout the San Francisco Bay Area and Sacramento/Central Valley areas.

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