



For Immediate Release

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SMART partners with Becoming Independent to offer onboard snack and beverage service for passengers

The Sonoma-Marin Area Rail Transit (SMART) District is partnering with a Santa Rosa-based nonprofit organization to operate its onboard concession services. Becoming Independent, which helps individuals with developmental disabilities become successful members of the workforce, will provide snack and beverage service on SMART's fleet of passenger trains.

SMART provides the space to Becoming Independent (BI) free of charge, and all proceeds from concession sales go directly to BI to fuel programs that elevate human abilities for the mutual benefit of our community.

Becoming Independent's onboard BI Buzz concession will offer coffee, pastries, snacks and beverages, including beer and wine, and will serve locally sourced food and drinks, said Luana Vaetoe, CEO of Becoming Independent.

"Our partnership with SMART aligns with Becoming Independent's purpose and is a wonderful opportunity in so many ways," Vaetoe said. "The people we serve are often invisible contributors, and this partnership allows them to be at the forefront, actively engaged with their fellow citizens. The launch of the BI Buzz concession comes at a perfect time, as we celebrate 50 years in the field of human services."

The partnership with SMART is part of Becoming Independent's new Social Enterprise Division, which focuses on building sustainability for the organization by developing independent revenue streams.

"We have found an excellent partner in Becoming Independent," said SMART's General Manager Farhad Mansourian. "Their work has a positive impact on the lives of many in our community, and we are proud to be part of that."

For more information on Becoming Independent visit www.BecomingIndependent.org.

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