

The Wheel

Public Transportation News
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BUILT BY VOLUNTEERS



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The Wheel is published quarterly and mailed or emailed to riders, agencies, legislators and other interested parties.

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OATS, Inc. (dba OATS Transit) is a private, not-for-profit transportation provider serving 87 Missouri counties. Transportation is available to the general public in rural areas. In urban areas (Columbia, St. Louis, St. Joseph, Springfield, Kansas City) service is limited to contract service, and not available to the general public. Contact your local OATS Transit office for service available to you, or to enter into an agreement to pay for services.

OATS Transit operates its programs and services without regard to race, color, and national origin in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act. We are an equal opportunity employer M/F/H/V.

Relay Missouri is available to individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, deaf-blind, and/or speech impaired. Use the Relay Missouri service by calling 711 to talk with an OATS representative or to schedule your trip.

OATS Transit Board of Directors

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Board Meetings are held six times each year & open to the public.

Bus schedules & fare information can be found at:

www.oatstransit.org/schedules
Phone: 888-875-6287

Follow us on social media:
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Cover photo: A Missouri delegation attended the 1971 White House Conference on Aging. Senator Thomas Eagleton (back row, center) was instrumental in helping OATS (then CTS) gain national attention. Quinine Benton (front row, 2nd from left) later became OATS President from 1973-1979.

50 YEARS OF PRESIDENTS



SHAREHOLDERS



In the 1970's to be eligible to ride the bus, persons would pay a \$5 per year membership fee plus buy a minimum of one share in the cooperative at \$1 per share, plus pay 2 cents per mile for each trip.

50 YEARS OF LEADERS

Malcom Essen 1971-1973



Peter Schauer 1973-1979



Earl Welfy 1979-1980



Robert "Bob" Tice 1980-1985



Don Erter 1985-1986



Jim Skahan 1986-1994



Linda Yeager 1994-2012



Dorothy Yeager 2012- present



1971

FUN FACTS

2021

- Volunteers met in August 1971 to formalize a plan to start transportation. These volunteers formed Cooperative Transportation Service (CTS).
- Service started in 8 counties: Audrian, Boone, Callaway, Cole, Cooper, Howard, Moniteau & Osage.
- 5 drivers began service on November 1, 1971: Willis Perry, John Bloom, Marley McGuire, Hap Erlick & Martha Bolton.
- In Fall 1971, 3 vans were purchased at a cost of \$4,250 each.
- Volunteers took calls for rides to ensure our buses were full & operating at full capacity.
- The starting wage for a driver was \$2.25/hour, and \$15 per day for a Secretary.
- Buses were stationed in Fayette, Mexico & Fulton where drivers started their day.
- Gas was 36 cents per gallon.
- We provided 1,000 trips our first year. By 1977, we had expanded to 2,300 trips per day.
- Riders bought a membership to ride, plus paid a per mile rate for service. Rides were offered to seniors 55+ or individuals with a disability.

- Our company is known as OATS Transit.
- OATS Transit serves 87 counties in the state, making us the largest rural transportation provider in the entire United States.
- We employ 480 drivers and 110 office staff. Pre-COVID we had 600 drivers.
- We have 400 volunteers who help with advocacy around the state. While they no longer schedule riders, they do ensure people in their community know about OATS Transit.
- Starting wages for a driver is \$12.00/hour.
- We have a fleet of 700 minibuses, minivans & sedans. Cost range from \$38,000 for a minivan to \$60,000 for a minibus.
- Drivers are assigned a bus which they either keep at their home or report to an office, to begin their route each day.
- We purchase more than one million gallons of gas per year at a cost of \$2.50+ per gallon.
- Annually we provide 1.1 million trips and travel 11 million miles.

OATS HELPS GET PEOPLE TO COVID VACCINE SITES



Since February, OATS Transit has been working to get people to health clinics, mass vaccination sites, pharmacies and hospitals around the state to get their COVID vaccine. Staff are working with various agencies to ensure everyone that wants the vaccine can physically get there. OATS Transit is also a provider for the state Medicaid system, with those trips being scheduled through Modiv-Care. Each area of the state is handling the process a bit different, but OATS officials are working to help be a part of the solution, no matter what the process is.



In Washington and Sullivan Missouri, OATS teamed up with Empac Group Sheltered Workshop to get vaccines administered to 39 individuals. As each bus arrived, a nurse came onto the bus and gave each person their shot without them having to get off the bus and go inside. The process worked seamlessly thanks to drivers Cheryl Machelett and Jeff Hunter who provided the rides to the site.



In the St. Joseph area staff are working with Mosaic Hospital to get riders to their clinics for shots. In Cameron, OATS drivers are taking riders to Walmart to be vaccinated. In cities such as Springfield, Clinton and Carrollton drivers are taking groups to the mass vaccine sites. Clinton County health officials are working with OATS Transit to provide night and weekend service for those sites open during non-business hours. In March, drivers also provided shuttle service to the mass vaccination site at the School of the Osage in Miller County.

These trips are all made possible thanks to federal CARES Act funding. OATS Transit is working with public health officials around the state ensuring that as many people who want vaccines are getting them. Riders who are going for vaccines are not being charged a fare to ride.

Top Photo: Rider Joseph M. stayed on the bus to receive his vaccine.

Middle Photo: Empac Sheltered Workshop employees rode with OATS Transit to their vaccine site.

Bottom Photo: Martha Schmitter rode to Lancaster MO to get her vaccine in March.

50 YEARS OF VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION



Pike County volunteers at *Transportation Day at the Capital*, 2017



Volunteers gathered in Columbia to celebrate OATS 25th Anniversary, 1996



Volunteers went to Washington DC Trip in the early days in order to secure funding for OATS, Inc.



Lawrence County volunteer
Abe Freeman, 2017

Adair County volunteers hosted a fundraiser, 2008

Platte County volunteers, 2015



Henry County volunteer
Gail Maddux, 2017





April 18-24 is National Volunteer Week. Thank you to the thousands of individuals who have been a part of OATS Transit over the last 50 years! Because of you, OATS is known across the entire country.

Foundations & Businesses Provide Support

OATS Transit is pleased and grateful to be the recipient of numerous donations given by Missouri businesses and foundations over the past few months.

- **Community Foundation of the Ozarks, AmerenCARES-** \$5,000 for Gasconade County transportation program.
- **Community Foundation of the Ozarks, Lake Area AmerenCARES-** \$5,000 for Camden, Miller & Morgan Counties transportation program.
- **Estate of Eileen Fowler-** \$36,098 for Livingston County transportation program.
- **Jefferson County CARES Act-** \$25,000 for COVID related expenses.
- **Macon County CARES Act-** \$2,200 for COVID related expenses.
- **Rotary Club of Springfield Southeast-** \$1,000 for senior transportation program in Greene County.
- **Vernon County CARES Act-** \$805 for COVID related expenses.
- **Wright County CARES Act-** \$900 for COVID related expenses.

To find out how you can support public transportation in your local community, call OATS Transit Development staff at 573-443-4516, or email jstedem@oatstransit.org. Your support is important so we can continue being there for individuals who need rides to medical appointments, work and so much more!



OATS Transit received a grant from Community Foundation of the Ozarks-Lake Area AmerenCARES for transportation in Camden, Miller & Morgan County in January. Staff on hand for the presentation were (L to R) Eric Browder-Driver; Ted Haverich-Driver; Dion Knipp- Mid MO Regional Director; Ray Janicek-Driver; and Darwin George- Driver. Thank you to the Community Foundation of the Ozarks for your ongoing support.



SHOW-ME HOPE

MISSOURI



Many Missourians live in congregate care facilities statewide. The loss we are experiencing is devastating and compounded by an emotional toll that lingers. Staff and administrators must continue to combat the pandemic with no end in sight. Family members face the holidays without a loved one.

Know that there is hope for everyone. *Show-Me Hope* is the statewide crisis counseling program to address the stress, strain, grief and loss throughout Missouri. It is free, confidential and available 24/7. Individuals can access a toll free helpline to discuss their feelings and be referred to services such as grief counseling. Employers can arrange virtual stress management programs for staff and family.

Additional services provided by *Show-Me Hope* include:

- Individual and group crisis counseling.
- Basic supportive or educational contact.
- Community networking and support.
- Assessments, referrals, and resources.
- Development and distribution of educational materials.
- Media and public service announcements.

Call or text 800-985-5990 today and ask to be connected to the local *Show-Me Hope* program in your community.

Employee Anniversaries

The employees listed below celebrated an anniversary January - March 2021. Thank you to each of these employees for your hard work and dedication to OATS Transit!



30 years:

Doris Viets- Midwest Operations Coordinator (pictured above)

25 years:

Rob Johnson- Mid-MO Operations Coordinator (pictured above)

20 years:

Cherie Bono- East Operations Manager

15 years:

Karen Johnson- Mid-MO Operations Coordinator
Laura McClain- West Operations Coordinator

10 years:

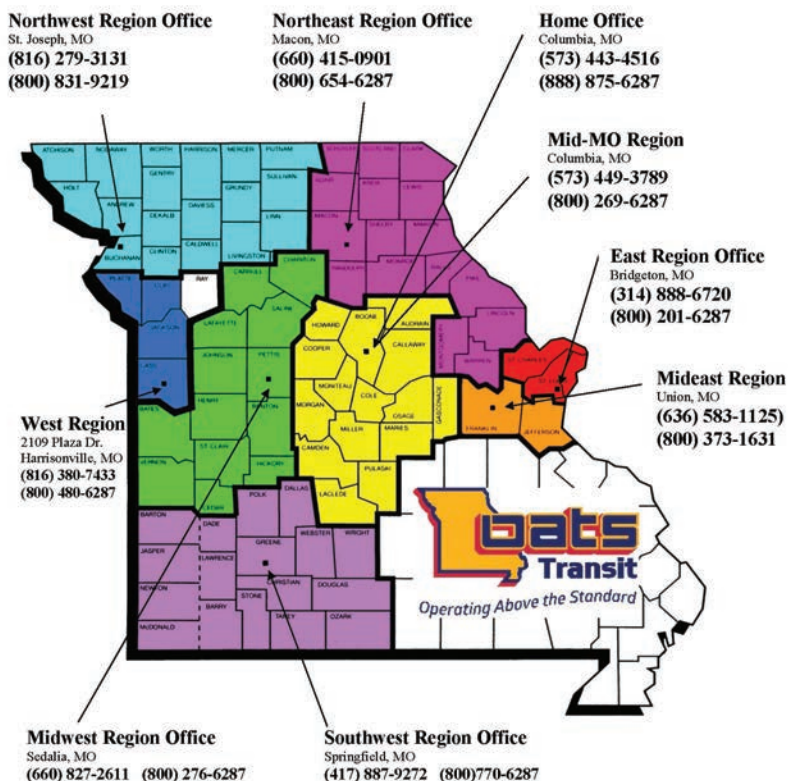
Terry Bloss- Northwest Region Driver
Cliff Ketchum- Northeast Region Driver
Alan Traux- Northwest Region Driver

Congratulations to all!

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OATS Transit Service Area



OATS Transit offices will be closed and regular routes will not be running on Monday, May 31st for the Memorial Day Holiday.