

The Wheel

**FEATURE STORY:
FROM BABIES TO
THE BRAVE, ALL
CAN RIDE.**



Operating Above the Standard

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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, and 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 Transit representative or to schedule your trip.

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Board Meetings are held six times a year and are open to the public.

Bus schedules and fare information can be found at:

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

Follow us on social media:
@oatstransit



OATS Transit is a 501(c)3 nonprofit corporation providing transportation to 87 counties in Missouri. We provide specialized transportation for thousands of Missourians, including the rural general public, senior citizens, and people with disabilities.

OATS Transit offers a *shared-ride, demand-response, door-to-door service*. We do not act as a taxi service where someone can call and get a ride at a certain time. OATS Transit has established routes based on rider demand and funding. Our services range from taking toddlers to preschool, getting people to work each day, transporting patients to life-saving medical appointments, and taking people shopping so they can continue to live independently. We also offer contract transportation services for agencies. Many of our routes can connect you to other transportation services such as Amtrak, airports, or intercity bus services.

The past three years have been tough for everyone. OATS Transit is seeing some of the same things that are affecting all workforces; funding cuts, lower rider demands in specific areas, and driver shortages. We understand the frustrations as routes have been canceled or changed and we continue to look for qualified drivers and locate funding to bring back some of our service.



At OATS Transit, our mission is “*Enhancing quality of life by providing safe, caring, and reliable transportation services.*” That mission extends to hiring courteous, caring drivers and transporting courteous, caring riders. Recently, there has been a marked notice of abusive behavior from people who use our transportation services, including threats, inappropriate words, and actions toward our employees. Physical, mental, and/or verbal abuse towards our employees will not be tolerated; just as we expect our employees to behave professionally towards our riders.

Here are some helpful tips that riders can do to help all of us as we work towards coming out of the pandemic.

- ▶ **Plan ahead.** If you do not know what route a bus runs in your county, visit our website at oatstransit.org/schedules. Go to your county and check what routes are offered. Make sure you call ahead to schedule your ride. Some of our routes have a specific number of days between when you call and when we can schedule your request. This helps us with driver schedules and use of resources.

BE

KIND CALM SAFE

- ▶ When calling to schedule trips, be ready to provide the following rider information:
 - Your name, address, and phone number.
 - Date of the trip(s), including specific appointment or work times.
 - Approximate duration of the appointment.
 - The exact street address and building entrance of each location pickup and drop off.
 - If a companion, personal care attendant, or service animal will be traveling with you.
 - For new riders, please let us know if you use a mobility device.
- ▶ If it is your first time riding, let the operations coordinator/dispatcher know as they can help make sure you understand the route.
- ▶ If you need to cancel your ride, please call us to let us know as soon as possible. This allows others the chance to use our services and conserves resources/time for the route.
- ▶ Understand that traffic, riders or other factors may delay the bus. Our offices will try to contact you if the bus is running later than 30 minutes. Please make sure we have a current phone number for you.
- ▶ Be ready to meet the driver at your designated house door when the driver arrives. Make sure you have everything you need for your day, including sweaters, paperwork, phone and wallet/purse.
- ▶ When the bus pulls up to a specific pickup/drop off location, please stay seated until the bus driver comes around to assist everyone off the bus. Let other passengers get off the bus before you board. Allow riders using the lift to board first.
- ▶ Our buses sometimes need to load/unload from a busy street. Please be ready to load/unload in a expedient manner to avoid traffic stoppage.
- ▶ When entering the bus, select a seat and remain seated. We do not reserve specific seats. Aisles must be kept clear. Our drivers can help you with your seat belt, if needed.
- ▶ Our drivers must make sure that riders with mobility devices are secured in a safe manner and should not be distracted.
- ▶ Please make sure all pets at your home are secured safely away from the bus and bus drivers, so that they do not interfere or cause a safety concern for our employees or themselves.
- ▶ When exiting the bus, make sure you have all of your belongings, as OATS Transit is not responsible for lost/stolen items and is not able to make an extra trip to return items.

Thank you for understanding and assisting OATS Transit as we continue to deliver top-notch door-to-door transportation to our rural riders.

Feature Story:

FROM BABIES TO THE BRAVE, ALL CAN RIDE

The cheer of “My bus is here! My bus is here!” shows the excitement that four-year old Rehani has when her OATS Transit driver, Mr. Brian, pulls up in front of her home.

“At first, Rehani just wasn’t really sure about riding on the OATS bus to school,” Rachael DeMent says, but then adds laughingly, “Now she’s almost upset when school is out for the summer and she can’t ride. She loves riding on the bus with her friends and looking out the window. It’s been a great experience for her and for our family.”

Childish giggles are not what everyone would expect on an OATS Transit bus. But through a special contracted service with an educational program several 3-5

year-olds get safe, reliable, and caring transportation to/from their homes to their school.

“I learned about OATS Transit through Rehani’s school,” DeMent says, “It was super simple to schedule the bus to school each day. The service is fabulous and provides



Rachael DeMent and her daughter Rehani utilize the OATS Transit bus for educational purposes.



Sheltered workshop employees enjoy the convenience of using OATS Transit.

a service that means a lot to families who might find themselves in a situation where having a car is very expensive but using a taxi or Uber is even more costly. I’m starting to see more people use OATS Transit in my town. It just makes sense.”

OATS Transit used to be known as a transportation source for older adults, but it is now a service that ***everyone*** in rural areas can use, without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, sex, disability, age, military or veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity or any other



Veteran Jack Riley rides the OATS Transit bus twice a week to see his wife, Norma who resides in an assistive care home.

factor prohibited by law. OATS Transit riders are using our affordable transportation services for employment, education, medical appointments, and shopping.

OATS Transit is a leading transportation provider for those who attend day program or sheltered workshop employment. Riders who utilize these programs make up 39% of OATS ridership. We still provide service to our “more experienced in life” age groups however.

While only two miles separate John “Jack” Riley, and wife Norma in Mexico, Missouri, there was a concern about how the two would be able to see each other when they decided to go to different care facilities. “We have celebrated 34 years of marriage,” Jack says quietly, “She was having some memory issues. Eventually we decided for Norma to go live at King’s Daughters Home and I went to the Veterans Home. The Veterans Home told me about the OATS Transit bus.”

Jack rides the OATS Transit bus twice a week to see Norma and spend time with her. “The OATS Transit drivers are so polite, and the service is great,” Jack states, “I’ve made some good friends by riding the bus and the service is door-to-door. I appreciate OATS Transit for helping me be able to hold my wife’s hand again and see her sweet smile.”

Because Jack is a Veteran, he can ride the OATS Bus for free thanks to a grant from the Veterans United Foundation, the philanthropic arm of Veterans United Home Loans. The funds donated by the foundation are used by OATS Transit to provide rides to Mid-MO veterans for no fare and transport veterans to the annual Entrepreneurship Boot Camp hosted by the University of Missouri in Columbia.

OATS Transit has been in business since 1971 and serves 87 of the 114 counties in Missouri. The agency provides more than one million trips annually, covering 11 million miles. We can provide rides to everyone, from babies to the brave along our designated routes. To find out more about OATS Transit and our unique rural transportation services, visit oatstransit.org.

OATS TRANSIT RIDERSHIP BY AGE

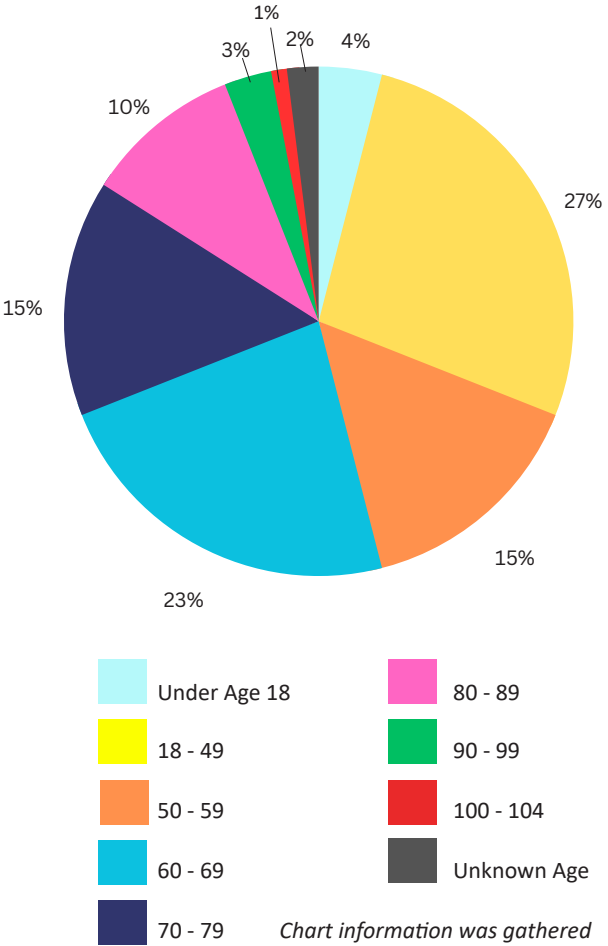


Chart information was gathered in 2023 but reflects past collected historical data.

Foundation & Businesses Providing Support

OATS Transit is pleased and grateful to be the recipient of donations given by Missouri businesses and foundations over the past few months. Your support is important, so we can continue being there for individuals who need rides to medical appointments, work and so much more!

To find out how you can support public transportation in your local community, call OATS Transit's Development staff at 573-443-4516, or email jstedem@oatstransit.org.

Central Bank of Boone County

\$1,000 toward operating support for the City of Columbia.



(left to right): OATS Transit Executive Director Dorothy Yeager, Central Bank of Boone County's CFO Judy Starr, and OATS Transit Mid-MO Regional Director Gary Anspach.

Tyson Foods

\$2,500 toward operating support for the City of Sedalia.



(left to right): Tyson Plant Manager Speed Branch, Jr., OATS Transit Driver Gary Nelson and Tyson Complex Manager Dustin Tippin.

Three Rivers Helping Hands Community Foundation

\$4,500 toward operating support in Franklin, Cole, Moniteau and Miller counties.



(left to right): Foundation Coordinator Vicki Lange, Foundation Chairman Bonnie Baker, OATS Transit Administrative Director Jill Stedem and Foundation Trustee Wes Bailey.

POET Bioprocessing - Macon

\$2,500 toward operating support for Macon County.



(left to right): OATS Transit Operations Manager Trever White, POET Bioprocessing General Manager Scott Tuttle, OATS Transit Regional Director Sheree Webb and OATS Transit Operations Manager Samantha Ratliff.

Stone County ARPA Funds (not pictured)

\$20,000 toward operating support in Stone County.

*Thank you for
your support!*

Employee Anniversaries (April - June 2023)

30 Years



Beth Langley
Northwest Regional
Director



Peggy Taylor
Midwest Driver/
Team Leader

20 Years



Pam Knox
East Regional
Director

15 Years

- Patty Dodson, Mid-MO Operations Coordinator
- Bill Lamkemeyer, East Driver
- Jim Reid, Midwest Driver
- Craig Robinson, Midwest Driver
- Dennis Rupp, Northwest Driver
- Larry Thomas, Mid-MO Driver
- Brian Woolery, Midwest Driver

10 Years

- Richard Gill, Northeast Driver
- Tandy Lancaster, Mid-MO Driver
- Steve Weekley, IT Director
- Janet Wright, Northeast Operations Coordinator

5 Years

- Ty Baxter, Southwest Driver
- Jamie Breit, Southwest Driver
- Ken Coleson, East Region Shop Service Manager
- Fred Fletcher, Midwest Driver
- David Francis, Midwest Driver
- Rene Frazier, Southwest Operations Manager
- Wint Kelley, West Driver
- Mike Kovac, Northwest Driver
- Daniel Langendoerfer, Mid-MO Driver
- Chris Martin, East Region Service Mechanic
- Stephen Richter, Southwest Driver
- Sue Wilson, IT Help Desk
- Todd York, West Driver



Certification Congratulations

OATS Transit would like to congratulate Mid-MO Regional Director Gary Anspach, Southwest Regional Operations Managers Lisa Bailey and Naomi Garner, along with Corporate Marketing & Training Specialist Rhonda Proctor for their recent certifications.

The Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA) is recognized as an industry standard when it comes to ensuring that our passengers are transported in the most safe, sensitive and careful manner possible.

Anspach received his Certified Community Transit Manager Training (CCTM) certification in March 2023. The CCTM is a training program that covers six exam topic areas, including human resources, budgeting & finances, transportation operations, service planning & development, procurement & contracts, and organizational leadership.

Southwest Region Operations Managers Lisa Bailey and Naomi Garner, along with Corporate Marketing & Training Specialist Rhonda Proctor received their Passenger Assistance Safety & Sensitivity (PASS) Driver and Trainer certifications in May.

This certification consists of seven modules, including hands-on demonstrations regarding wheelchair securement and ADA compliance.

OATS Transit currently has 23 employees who are CTAA certified.



Anspach



Bailey



Garner

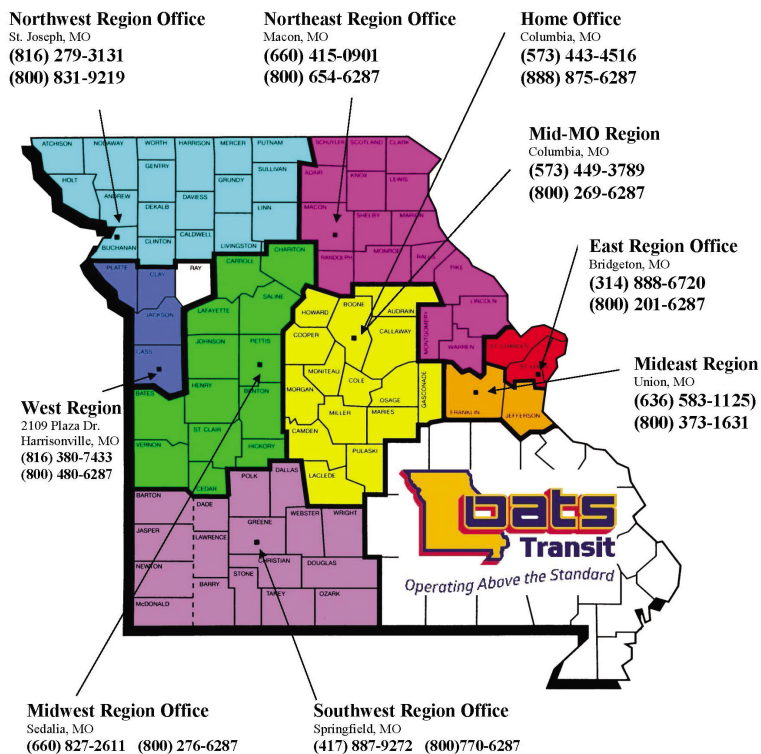


Proctor

Congratulations and job well-done!

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Upcoming HOLIDAYS:

The following are OATS Transit holidays and all OATS Transit offices state-wide are closed, including running of normal routes. These closures, along with reminders, are posted on our social media platforms.

Independence Day (July 4)

Labor Day (September 4)

Please note: If the holiday falls on a Saturday, the preceding Friday will be the day observed; if it falls on a Sunday, the following Monday will be observed.