



On the Road to Opportunity

Getting to work means more than simply getting from Point A to Point B—it means having the independence, opportunity, and reliability needed to be part of the community. Every day, OATS Transit helps riders reach their jobs. In rural Missouri, where jobs can be spread across communities and reliable transportation options are often limited, OATS Transit provides a vital connection between people and employment. We help riders get to work so they can be contributing members of their community and provide support for their family.

Today, more than half of the service we provide – **56%** - helps people get to work. That’s up from 39% in 2016, and 36% in 2006, showing just how important transportation has become for connecting people in rural Missouri to employment and opportunities. Behind those numbers are real people whose ability to work and contribute to their communities is made possible, in part, by dependable transportation. Through this story we are sharing some rider stories about why the bus is important to them and their employer.

Jeff Reed- Troy Missouri - Lincoln County

“I work at the Lincoln County Courthouse. My title is Security Monitor, but I am kind of like a concierge. I love my job! I help people who come into the courthouse to find the office they need and get where they are going. I have worked for Lincoln County and ridden the bus for 23 years. A typical day for me starts with getting to work and going to my station. One day a week, I also go around and make sure the lights are on. Throughout the day, I greet everyone who comes in and ask if I can help them. Before I worked for the County, I worked for our family logging business and drove myself to work. My family has been in the logging business for many years. After I was in a car accident in 1995, I had to make some changes in my life. Having OATS Transit is very important to me and to many other people in our area. It is how I get to and from work. Without OATS Transit, I would not be able to get to work, go to doctor appointments, or go shopping. Because of this service, I am able to work and completely support myself and I am very proud of that. I would like people to know just how valuable OATS Transit is to our community. Years ago, I went with the OATS group to the Capitol in Jefferson City to talk with legislators about the importance of rural public transportation in Missouri. State funding is essential to maintaining an adequate, affordable and reliable bus system. I want to thank everyone who is a part of OATS Transit for providing such important service. I truly appreciate everything your company does for me!” *Jeff Reed*



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Denna Ogle- Chillicothe Missouri - Livingston County

"I work for the Chillicothe School District as a substitute teacher, where I have worked for over 10 years now. I love working with students of all ages. My days and hours vary depending on which school I am assigned to work at. I work at elementary schools, middle school, and high school. Before I started riding the OATS bus my family and friends were helping me get to and from school. Being able to ride the OATS bus has been a godsend to me! It would be very difficult to work every day if I didn't have the bus to ride. Now, I don't have to depend on family or friends to help me out. The OATS bus is the way to go. Fares are very reasonable and the drivers are friendly. Thank you for much OATS Transit for making my life easier!" *Denna Ogle*



Richie Harris- Marshfield Missouri - Webster County

"I work at McDonald's in Marshfield and I count on OATS Transit to get me to work every day. Previously, I was riding my bike to get to work until my tires went flat, so I decided to give the bus a try. I have been riding the bus for two and a half years now- riding four days a week to work at McDonald's. There, I primarily work in the lobby but occasionally work on the fryer too. I'm glad to have the bus because many towns aren't lucky enough to have daily public transportation. If I didn't have the bus, I would have to walk or find someone else to take me. I know many people don't drive because of disabilities and other factors, which makes OATS Transit service even more important. If I was talking to the state legislators and local agencies, I would tell them: Please keep the buses going and provide funding so I can work and be independent. I like my drivers and appreciate that the bus is affordable and consistent. Thanks to everyone for great bus service."

Richie Harris

Anonymous Rider - Lees Summit Missouri- Jackson County

"OATS Transit means a lot to me. I have been riding the bus for more than 5 years now and I ride it every day. It gives me opportunity to go to work on time with safety and confidence and also take my child to daycare."

Local funding support is essential to keeping connections strong for these riders and others like them. Local funding is essential to help OATS Transit provide the reliable transportation riders need to get to work and maintain their independence. In towns where we have strong local funding support, we have daily service available. Other areas where we don't have local funding schedule options are more limited. When local businesses, agencies and governments invest in rural transit, it's an investment in your neighbors. Local support helps ensure people in your own community can get to work, earn a paycheck, and remain independent—strengthening families, businesses, and the community we all call home.

2026 Transit Operator of the Year Award Winners

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Midwest Region



Larry Milligan
Mid-MO Region



Jim Slone
Midwest Region

Chuck Lear
Northeast Region

Terry Breeze
Northwest Region

Mike Swallow
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THE WHEEL

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