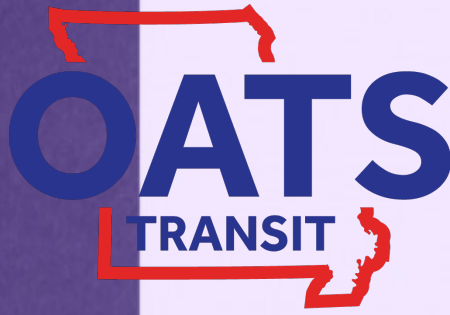




June is NATIONAL CANCER SURVIVOR Month

The Wheel

News Publication - June 2026

HONORING THE JOURNEY: CANCER SURVIVORS MONTH

Cancer Survivors Month is a time to recognize and celebrate the strength, courage, and resilience of those who have faced cancer and continue moving forward. Among our employees and riders are individuals whose journeys through diagnosis, treatment, recovery, and survivorship inspire us every day. Their determination, perseverance, and positive spirit serve as a reminder of the incredible strength people carry, even during life's most difficult challenges. To our riders we take to cancer treatments, we honor your courage, determination, and the strength you show every day.

This month, we honor the cancer survivors within our organization who have overcome obstacles while continuing to work, care for loved ones, attend appointments, and remain engaged in daily life. Their stories reflect hope, bravery, and the importance of support systems that help individuals navigate their journey. We celebrate their victories, recognize their resilience, and stand with all those whose lives have been touched by cancer.

LEE BOWERS- JEFFERSON COUNTY DRIVER SINCE 2006:

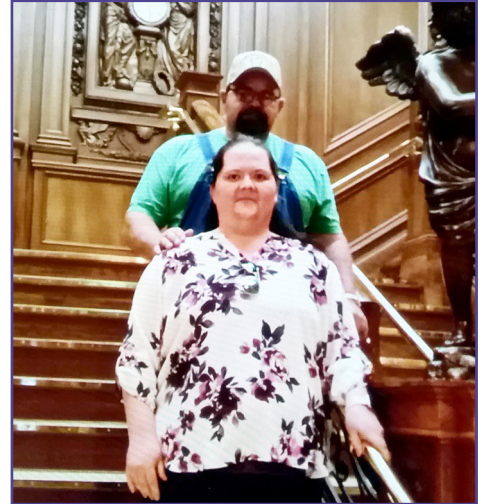
"My story starts in May 2024. I had stopped at the OATS office to turn in paperwork and take a short break. When I walked in, Denise took one look at me and said, "you're jaundiced, do you feel ok." I replied that I was just tired and would be ok. Two days later I was back at the office when Denise saw me again. She told me I was done for the day and I needed to see my doctor soon. I went home and was able to see my doctor the next day. He took one look at me, ran a urine test and told me to " go home, pack a bag and get to the hospital" I did as I was told and went to the emergency room at Mercy Jefferson. Tests were run, including a CT scan. Four hours later, I was transferred by ambulance to Mercy South and admitted. The next morning the doctor came in and told me I had a blocked bile duct in my liver, and I was going into surgery that afternoon to have it unblocked. While in surgery they ran a scope down my throat, repaired the blockage and took pictures of the surrounding areas. The next morning the doctor came in and told me he had good news, bad news and not so bad news. He said " the good news is we found the blockage, cleaned it up and put a temporary stint in. The bad news is we found pancreatic cancer. The not so bad news is we found it early and it hasn't spread and you have a 85% chance of beating it." I told the doctor "You're wrong I have a 100% chance, I'm going to beat this" He said "I like your attitude, keep it, you will need it." My wife came to see me after the doctor had left, and I told her the news I think that's when it really hit me. We had a good cry. During the next three weeks I met with the chemo doctor to set up chemo, and the cancer surgeon to set up my surgery. I started chemo in June 2024, had my surgery in October 2024 and resumed chemo in November. I returned to work in December 2024. I rang my bell in January 2025 and have been cancer-free since then. Many thanks to all my wonderful co-workers! My advice to anyone who gets a cancer diagnosis - DON'T GIVE UP- Attitude is 80% of the battle!"



JOIE CREASON AND WIFE TAMMY- NORTHEAST INTERCITY DRIVER SINCE 2023:

"Our story starts in 2018. "Watching my wife go through cancer was one of the hardest things I've ever experienced. Seeing someone you love fighting something like that brings a lot of fear and uncertainty. There were times I felt helpless, but at the same time, it showed me just how strong she truly is. Tammy is a fighter, and I've always been incredibly proud of her strength and determination. During her journey, I made sure I was by her side every step of the way. I took her to appointments and did whatever I could to support her, both physically and emotionally. Sometimes it was helping with day-to-day things, and other times it was just being there to listen or sit with her when things got tough. I wanted her to know she wasn't facing it alone. What helped me stay positive was Tammy herself. Even on the hardest days, she never gave up, and her strength gave me strength. Our family and our faith also played a big role in keeping us going and focused on hope through everything she faced." *Driver Joie Creason*

Tammy added: "Being diagnosed with cancer was overwhelming at first. The initial reaction was shock and fear, but that quickly turned into determination to fight. I didn't let the diagnosis define me and instead faced it with courage. There were moments along the way that gave me hope and strength, whether it was encouraging words from loved ones, small victories in treatment, or simply deciding not to give up. Those moments helped me stay focused on pushing forward. I want others to know that no matter how difficult the journey may be, you should never give up. There is always hope, even on the hardest days. Lean on the people around you, stay strong, and keep fighting. What kept me motivated throughout everything is my family. Knowing I have people who loved and support me, gave me the drive to keep going, even when things were at their lowest. Today, I try to be an inspiration, by showing strength, resilience, and what it truly means to be a survivor." *Tammy Creason*



OATS TRANSIT RIDER CHESTER TROTTER, AUDRIAN COUNTY MISSOURI:

"My story starts in 2018. I was diagnosed with multiple myeloma the year before COVID began, and was going through chemo treatments up until about three years ago. Multiple myeloma is a rare, incurable but highly treatable blood cancer." He admitted the side effects from the chemo treatments were absolutely terrible. "I lost 85 pounds in three months," said Chester. When asked what got him through the dark times, he said he leaned on his faith and went to bible study. He also became very interested in quantum physics to study the behavior of matter and energy and watched a lot of science documentaries. "There is a strong and growing correlation

between quantum physics and cancer research," added Chester. He was very thankful for the support from his friends and family, especially his niece, sister and aunts during his cancer journey. Chester is in remission from cancer, but now also dealing with chronic kidney disease. His advice to others is to not see cancer as a death sentence, but to rely on faith, stay positive, and maintain a peace of mind.

Since he does not drive, he relies on OATS Transit and other forms of public transit. For this reason, he also wrote letters to his state representatives to tell them why OATS Transit is so important to him and others like him. He rides the bus at least twice a week to get where he needs to go. His driver Anthony said, "Chester is one of my favorite riders and a true champion in his fight against cancer!"



SOUTHWEST REGION OPERATIONS COORDINATOR, TINA INMON:

"My story started in April 2020. I was having some medical issues and went to the doctor. I always thought that I was in good health. They did some testing and then referred to a gynecologic oncologist. Turns out there was a small portion of cancer, and the doctor told me I had endometrial cancer and needed a total hysterectomy. My first surgery was that July. When they were looking at the surrounding organ's they saw something in my bladder. August 2020 sent me on my biggest cancer journey. I was told I had bladder tumors, but they were not inside the wall of the bladder, which was a blessing, and it was caught in the very early stages.

I asked myself, "Why me God- what have I done wrong to be punished like this?" I asked the doctor what caused these tumors and the doctor said smoking and tobacco are the #1 contributor, but I don't smoke or drink. He couldn't give me a specific reason for mine. I had surgeries about every 3 months to remove the tumors which took a toll on my body and mind. Then, the depression of self-pity hits, and you start feeling sorry for yourself and even though you try to keep your spirits up, there are days that bring you down. It really zapped my strength, and I had a breakdown. I have fought through depression for all these years and I had enough. I finally went to talk to someone about what was going on and that helped. After treatments, which was most of the day, I would go back to work for a couple of hours to finish up my work. Even though I put on a "I feel fine" face, deep down I was not, but you can't show or complain all the time.

I quit doing the things I loved because I was tired. However, I decided I am not giving up on one thing that lets me be someone different-I still go to cosplay conventions in Springfield; that brings me joy when I dress up and become a different character. I started going to the gym to get stronger and gain my strength back. My family and co-workers have been with me through this journey and given me support and shoulders to cry on. My dogs Flash and Riley are my reasons to keep fighting, and my co-workers who supported and encouraged me. My gynecologic oncologist told me that 2026 will be the last year that I have to see them. And, my urologist told me that my bladder cancer is no longer there; I have been cancer-free since June 2024."



Cancer touches lives in many ways, leaving behind stories of resilience, compassion, and unwavering determination. As we reflect during Cancer Survivors Month, we are reminded of the importance of supporting one another through every stage of the journey — celebrating victories, offering comfort during hardships, and keeping alive the memories of those we miss deeply. Together, we stand united in hope, remembrance, and gratitude for all who have faced cancer with remarkable strength. OATS Transit continues to be a part of so many peoples cancer journeys as they go for testing, treatments, and in many cases to complete the celebratory challenge of ringing the bell!

As we honor survivors, we also pause to remember and pay tribute to those who faced cancer but are no longer with us. We hold in our hearts the employees, riders, family members, and friends we have lost, recognizing the impact they made on our lives and communities. Their strength, courage, and memories continue to inspire us, and their legacy lives on through the lives they touched. During Cancer Survivors Month, we honor not only those who continue the journey, but also those whose journey ended too soon and who will never be forgotten.





Our Springfield staff showing off their new 55th anniversary shirts!



OATS Transit offices will be closed, and regular routes will not be running on Friday **June 19th** for the Juneteenth holiday.

A special thank you to those drivers who work holidays to ensure our dialysis riders get to their life saving treatments.

THANK YOU!

"I am writing to thank you for the amazing service, and to commend Cindy Bench, one of your 'excellent' drivers. She is amazing in every aspect of her job. She is friendly, kind, and helpful. Most of all she is a very good and careful driver. Her alertness, attentiveness, and care with her approach to making sure we all get to our destination safely is beyond measure and I for one could not be more thankful. Someone should run her through a copy machine- we need more like her. Thank you for this service that is such a huge help to me and many others. I feel very safe riding on your busses." *Rider Susan*



THE WHEEL

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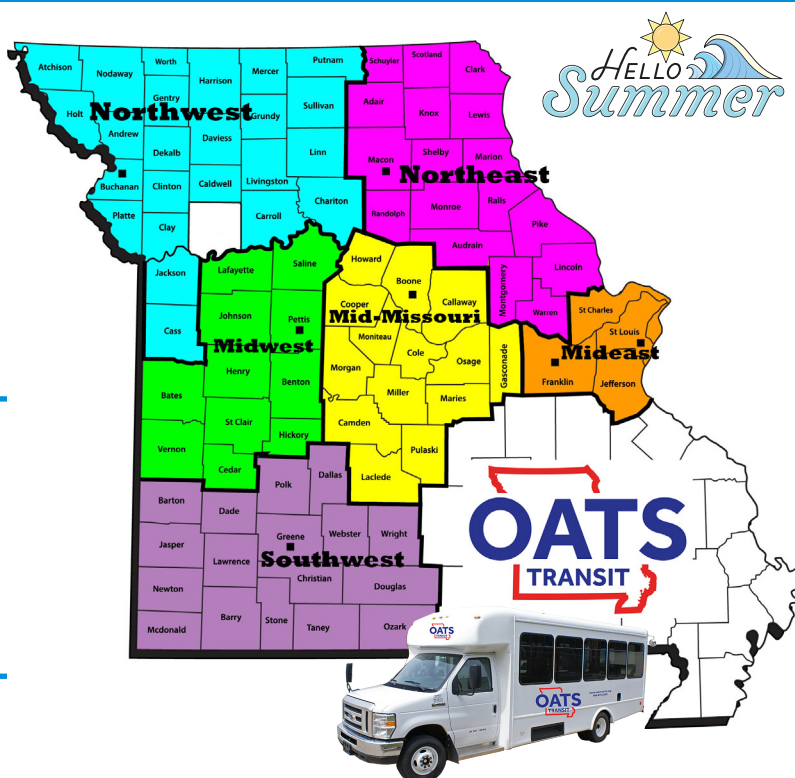
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