Reflecting on 2019
The Wheel is published quarterly & mailed free of charge to active OATS Transit riders, legislators, current funding sources & other interested people in the 87 county service area. It is mailed third class bulk postage paid at Columbia. If your name is misspelled or address has changed, please call your local OATS Transit office or email the editor.

Brittany Bussey, Editor
Phone: 573-443-4516 or 888-875-6287
Email: bbussey@oatstransit.org

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 & 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. Individuals and agencies may contract with OATS Transit for transportation.

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
President: Mel Sundermeyer
Vice President: Krissy Sinor
Members: Edna Foster, John Griesheimer, Darleen Rapp, Dottie Littlejohn, Patricia Mefford, Rachel Baskerville, Scott Kosky, Rex Scott and Julie Rodgers.

Board Meetings are held at the Home Office in Columbia and are open to the public. Contact the Home Office for meeting dates.

Bus Schedules & fare information can be found at www.oatstransit.org/schedules

Development Office: 888-875-6287

Follow us on social media: @oatstransit

Reflecting on 2019

The year 2019 was one of the most challenging ones in OATS Transit recent history. Winter storms and the shutdown of the federal government during third quarter resulted in temporary reductions of service. Despite these challenges, our drivers, staff and volunteers provided more than 1.4 million trips and our vehicles traveled 14,653,297 miles.

We began implementation of a new scheduling process which, when complete this year in 2020, will completely change how OATS Transit does business. It also lays the foundation for future innovations such as a mobile app, automatic notifications, and much more which will greatly improve communication with our customers.

No review of 2019 would be complete without acknowledging the loss of long-time OATS Transit President Nolan McNeill who passed away in January 2019 shortly after retiring from the board, on which he served for 32 years. His contribution to OATS Transit will never be forgotten and was commemorated with a bronze plaque at the headquarters in Columbia.

As we move forward in 2020, and beyond towards our 50th anniversary in 2021, it is with a deep appreciation for our partners, employees and volunteers who make it all possible. We look forward to the year ahead and continuing to fulfill our mission of: “Enhancing quality of life by providing safe, caring and reliable transportation services.”

Happy New Year,
Mel Sundermeyer, President
Dorothy Yeager, Executive Director

Winter Weather Policy

Our first concern at OATS Transit is for the safety of our riders and employees. While every effort is made to operate according to published schedules, weather conditions may cause traveling to be hazardous. As a general guide, OATS Transit service will be canceled in a county when school bus service is canceled in that county due to inclement weather. In the event localized weather exists during which school bus operations continue, the OATS Transit driver may still recommend to the Regional Director that service be canceled. Any service cancellation will be closely coordinated with the local office to assure all who are scheduled that day are notified of the cancellation. Keep in mind cancellations may be localized and not affect the entire region.

OATS Transit will be closed and regular routes will not be running on January 1 for New Year’s Day, January 20 for Martin Luther King Jr. Day & February 17 for President’s Day.
Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2019
July 2018 to June 2019

Facts & Highlights

- 14,653,297 miles traveled
- 307 safe driver awards
- 1,420,691 trips provided
- 772,282 operating hours
- 707 employees statewide
- 8 region offices & 4 satellite offices
- 83 employee milestone anniversaries
- 444 volunteers statewide who serve as county advocates
- 134,631 volunteer hours including bus aides & helpers
- Hours equivalent to $1,422,725
- 1,441 bus schedules
- 13,441 in local newspapers totaling $136,944 in in-kind value

Funding & Expenses

Where our funding comes from:

- Federal Funding 34%
- Special Billings 22%
- Medicaid 13%
- Other 12%
- State Funding 10%
- Rider Fares & Local Contributions 5%
- Area Agencies on Aging 4%

Where our funding goes:

- Driver/Dispatcher Wages & Benefits 48%
- Gasoline 11%
- Capital Investment 10%
- Repairs & Maintenance 9%
- Indirect Admin 7%
- Direct Operating Support 6%
- Driver Expenses & Supplies 5%
- Vehicle Insurance 4%

The firm of Graves and Associates, CPA’s, LLC of Jefferson City, MO, audits the financial statements of OATS, Inc. annually. The Audit Report is reviewed & adopted by the OATS, Inc. Board of Directors. Copies of these statements are available upon request by mail: 2501 Maguire Blvd., Ste. 101, Columbia, MO 65201; or call (573) 443-4516.

Board of Directors meetings are held six times a year at the company headquarters in Columbia and are open to the public. The Board of Directors provide policy direction, guidance and fiduciary direction for the organization. The Board includes President Mel Sundermeyer, Vice-President Krissy Sinor, Secretary/Treasurer Scott Kosky and nine other board members.
OATS Transit is pleased to announce the acquisition of one of Jefferson County’s transportation programs known as the JeffCo Express. The administrative change became effective on December 1, 2019.

Though OATS has always operated the service, maintained the buses and hired the drivers, we are officially taking over administration of the program from the Jefferson County Community Partnership (JCCP).

“This consolidation will result in few changes for the riders who depend on this service,” said Dorothy Yeager, OATS Transit Executive Director. “It will also allow for better efficiencies and greater customer effectiveness.”

JeffCo Express was developed in 2009 by JCCP who saw a need for a general public, deviated fixed route system. Under their leadership, the program grew thanks to collaboration with local agencies and business who stepped up to support the service. JCCP contracted with OATS Transit to provide the service, including dispatching and driver recruitment, but made the decision to hand over administration as part of their continuing efforts to better coordinate services.

Currently, OATS Transit operates three transportation programs in Jefferson County, all operate under different names- OATS Transit, JC Transit and JeffCo Express. Transportation for Jefferson County is funded by federal grants administered by the MO Department of Transportation, Developmental Disability Advocates, Aging Ahead, Missouri Elderly & Handicapped Assistance Program, and Medicaid Waiver. OATS Transit has also been awarded a grant for $100,000 from the Jefferson Foundation, which will go toward transportation in Jefferson County for 2020.

Jeffco Express has two cross-county routes, which mirror each other, that do three loops a day. The blue route starts in De Soto and travels north to Arnold, and the green route starts in Arnold and travels south. Both routes have stops in Hillsboro, Pevely and Festus. A third route, partially funded through grants from the city of Arnold, circles the city five times a day with more than 30 stops per run.

Jefferson County residents wanting to schedule a ride can call the local Festus office at 636-933-9380. Schedules can be found online at www.jeffcoexpress.org or www.oatstransit.org, or by picking up a brochure at several local businesses.

Pictured: Jefferson County Driver, John Cage.
OATS Transit is pleased and grateful to be the recipient of numerous grants given by Missouri businesses and foundations over the past few months.

- **Allen & Josephine Green Foundation** - $10,000 for Boone County bus match
- **Boone Electric Community Trust** - $22,952 for Boone & Audrian County bus match
- **Boonville Community Foundation** - $2,500 for Cooper County bus match
- **Community Foundation of the Ozarks Truman Lake Affiliate Program** - $5,000 for Henry County bus match
- **Delta Dental** - $1,000 for St. Louis senior transportation
- **Fleming Family Foundation** - $10,456 for Randolph County bus match
- **Jefferson Foundation** - $100,000 for operating support for Jefferson County
- **Laclede Electric** - $5,000 for Camden County bus match
- **Livingston County Senior Tax Board** - $24,000 to cover fares for seniors in their County in 2020
- **Productive Living Board** - $50,000 for a new bus in St. Louis County
- **Three Rivers Helping Hands Community Foundation** - $3,500 for 1 tablet each in 7 counties

In addition to above grants, we received donations from these businesses:

- **America Direct Marketing Resources** - $10,000 to St. Louis County bus match
- **First State Community Bank in Lebanon** - $1,500 for Laclede County bus match

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 needs rides to medical appointments, work and so much more!

**Pictured:** Top- Donna Chism, Cedar County Driver (left), accepting a grant check from Ryan Cook of The Truman Lake Community Foundation on behalf of OATS Transit. Bottom- Laclede County OATS Transit riders David Bullard, Kay Steinman, Ellen Hopkins, Willie Jacoby, Shannon Brockman and Jo Masten with driver Robin Ballhagen (red shirt) and Mid-Missouri Regional Director, Dion Knipp (far right-back) accepting a check from First State Community Bank in Lebanon.
Elle Wasson Duggan announced her retirement from the OATS Transit Board of Directors at the December 2019 meeting. She was acknowledged for her five years of service to OATS Transit by Board President, Mel Sundermeyer.

Elle joined the Board of Directors in March 2014 to fill the vacancy left by Nora Belle Bottom who had passed away. In addition to her role on the Board, she played an important part in the renovations to the Sedalia train depot, where our Midwest Region office is currently located.

We wish her the best of luck in her retirement. Thank you for all you have done for our company over the years, Elle!

*Pictured: Board President, Mel Sundermeyer recognizing Elle’s many years of service to OATS Transit at her last Board of Directors meeting held in December.*

---

**Drivers Recognized in Safety Drawing**

Safe Driver award bonuses are awarded each quarter that an OATS Transit driver has an accident-free quarter. This year, there were 307 drivers who received a bonus for all four quarters. These drivers had their names entered into a drawing for a gift catalog. Out of all the safe drivers, the eight drivers pictured below had their names chosen at random to win. Congratulations to the winners of the drawings that took place for Fiscal Year 2019. Also, congratulations to all drivers state-wide who were issued safe driver awards!

*Top Row- East Region: LaToya Williams-St. Louis County; Mideast Region: Rachel Settle-Jefferson County; Midwest Region: John Hanlon-Pettis County & Mid-MO Region: Leroy Cornine-Cooper County*

*Bottom Row- Northeast Region: Andy Shahan-Adair County; Northwest Region: Kenny Hollon-Linn County; Southwest Region: Roger Treese-Lawrence County & West Region: Gene Craft-Cass County*
The Special Olympics of Missouri (SOMO) holds a dear place in the hearts of many. Several of our riders are athletes and compete every year in different sports for SOMO. We wanted to highlight two OATS Transit riders and one of our drivers who have been impacted positively by this organization.

Jeremy Walkenhorst has ridden OATS Transit for over 16 years. He uses our transportation services to get to and from his job at Kroger every day. Lincoln County driver, Larry Cordsiemon, has gotten to know Jeremy well over his last four years of employment. “Jeremy is a remarkable young man,” Larry said. “He’s also quite the athlete!” Jeremy competes in golf, bowling, basketball, softball and track & field for SOMO.

Last spring, Jeremy asked Larry if they could partner up for the upcoming SOMO Golf Tournament; he accepted. They competed together in the tournament at Woods Fort Golf Course in Troy, MO in August of last year where they took home a gold medal together. They then moved on to compete at the State Tournament in Jefferson City in October. The silver medal was awarded to the duo in their division (9 hole alternating shots).

Brock Guseman, from Jefferson County, is another rider whose life has been impacted by SOMO. In January 2019, he was inducted into the Special Olympics MO Hall of Fame for many achievements over his 28 years of competing. According to SOMO’s website, Brock’s claim to fame is Bocce ball and a fundraising event called “Bocce with Brock” is held annually in St. Louis.

In addition to his participation in the Special Olympics, Brock has been working at Feed My People in High Ridge, MO for 20 years. There he is responsible for unloading groceries from delivery trucks. He first began as a volunteer at the food pantry and thrift store, but eventually the volunteer role turned into a paid position with benefits.

Brock credits much of his success in life to Special Olympics and his ability to live independently to OATS Transit’s service. He owns his own home, manages his own finances with minimal support, and coordinates his transportation. “It would be impossible for me to live this quality of life and have the independence I have without [OATS] service,” Brock said.

Congratulations to these awesome SOMO athletes!

OATS Transit Supports Special Olympics of Missouri

Pictured: Jeremy Walkenhorst (left) and his Driver Larry Cordsiemon (right) wearing their medals after the golf tournament. Left-Brock Guseman posing beside the OATS Transit van.
Employee Anniversaries

The employees listed below celebrated an anniversary October-December 2019. Thank you to each of these employees for your hard work and dedication to OATS Transit!

40 years:
Janet Chapin-Wright County Driver

25 years:
Susie Melloway-Assistant Finance Director
Pat Houston-Mideast Operations Coord.

15 years:
Delores Mason-St. Louis County Driver
Don Howell-Nodaway County Driver
Dave Smith-Benton County Driver

10 years:
Jane Anne Heimer-Knox County Driver
Larry West-Marion County Driver
Carolyn Chapman-Randolph County Driver

Congratulations!