Your Safety is our Top Priority

When it comes to riding on our buses, your safety is our highest priority. OATS Transit drivers take all preventable measures to ensure you are safe while riding with us.

We have over 500 drivers that receive training each year on more than 20 different topics ranging from ADA sensitivity, to defensive driving, to first aid, and more. Driver training is mandatory as part of our federal grants, and helps us provide the best and safest experience for you as a rider.

OATS Transit drivers have an enormous amount of responsibility and our training programs are built on a foundation of safety. “Providing the most effective and efficient training opportunities for our drivers is essential to continuously reinforce our mission statement of enhancing quality of life by providing safe, caring and reliable transportation services,” said OATS Corporate Trainer, Blaine Anderson. “Our top priority is the safety of our riders and drivers, and through their dedicated commitment to training, we are able to operate above the standard.”

Pictured: Top-Southwest region driver Don Kiblinger kneels beside fellow driver Aubrey Foster during a recent training using “Rescue Randy” instead of other drivers to prevent any compromise of social distancing guidelines. Bottom-Southwest region driver Paula Stephens (right) with Rural Transit Assistance Program (RTAP) trainer John Rice and SW region driver Debbie Smiles (left).
OATS Transit is pleased and grateful to be the recipient of numerous donations given by Missouri businesses and foundations over the past few months.

- Boone Electric Community Trust-$15,250 for Boone County bus match
- Central Bank of Sedalia-$500 for Midwest region bus match
- Community Foundation Serving West Central IL & NE Missouri-$1,500 for COVID-19 Crisis Funding
- Crawford Electric Community Trust-$250 for Franklin County bus match
- Cuivre River Electric Community Trust-$2,000 for Lincoln County bus match
- Intercounty Charitable Electric Cooperative Foundation-$250 for operating support in MM & SW Counties
- Laclede Electric Trust-$5,000 for Camden County bus match
- Macon Electric Community Foundation-$750 Macon County bus match
- Margaret P. Platter Charitable Trust: St. Clair County State Bank-$500 for Midwest region bus match
- MFA Oil Foundation-$2,000 for local bus match
- Osage Valley Electric Cooperative-$1,000 for Cass County bus match
- Tyson Foods-$2,500 for operating support in Pettis County
- White River Valley Electric Community Foundation-$2,500 for Taney 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 need rides to medical appointments, work and so much more!

**Pictured:** Top-Mid-MO Regional Director, Dion Knipp, and Boone County driver, Darwin George accept a donation from MFA Oil Foundation. Bottom-Northeast region office staff prepare COVID-19 safety kits for their drivers purchased with funds donated from Community Foundation Serving West Central IL & NE Missouri.
A New Normal for Public Transit

From the very beginning, public transit was considered an essential service. We had to quickly learn to adapt to the needs of the individuals and businesses we serve.

As initial coronavirus reports started to emerge in the United States in early 2020, OATS Transit began developing a plan should this virus affect Missouri. We had to figure out how we could continue being there for the communities who depend on us, while at the same time protecting our drivers and riders.

From the very beginning, public transit was considered an essential service. We had to quickly learn to adapt to the needs of the individuals and businesses we serve. We are now living in a world changed by the coronavirus pandemic, and this has created anxiety for many. As fears spread, these challenges have become of the utmost importance, and one that our company officials are considering to be the “new norm.”

We adopted healthier habits early on that we would carry throughout our vehicles and facilities. Extra precautions were put in place to ensure the safety of those on board the bus. This has been a big change for all drivers including Carolyn Toney.

Carolyn is a driver in OATS Northwest region where she has worked since 1991. She has seen a lot of changes to her usual Daviess county route since the beginning of the pandemic. She hasn’t quite experienced anything like this on the job before. Despite everything though, Carolyn still enjoys working with the public. “The riders are great,” she said. “We have all really worked together to help each other out during the pandemic.”

Whether you ride public transit or go out in the community, we all play a role in increased situational awareness. You can limit your exposure to germs by doing your part to be being aware of your surroundings and changing typical behaviors. This helps protect your health and the health of your fellow passengers and drivers.
Precautions we have put into place for the foreseeable future include the following:

- Riders are asked to wear masks/face coverings while on board the bus to reduce the spread of germs.
- Riders should refrain from riding the bus if experiencing a fever or other forms of sickness. If you are sick, or have had recent contact with someone with coronavirus, do not board the bus until it’s deemed safe to do so.
- Social distancing requirements are still in place on our buses and probably will be for some time. Seating capacity has been reduced to help us maintain proper distance and reduce the spread of germs.
- Wash your hand often with soap and water - before and after boarding the bus - and even during your trip if you can. If soap and water are not accessible, use hand sanitizer.
- If you are using a wheelchair, please turn your head when the driver is securing your wheelchair to limit their exposure to germs.
- Drivers are cleaning the buses on a routine basis. Our drivers are supplied with personal protective equipment to help them with this additional duty and to ensure your bus is clean and properly sanitized.

We have no doubt that OATS Transit will bounce back from this crisis. Unfortunately, we won’t be able to flip a switch and have full service the way it was in past anytime soon. We are using a phased in approach, and may even see a resurgence of cases that we have to deal with.

We ask for your patience and understanding with our schedulers and drivers as they navigate unprecedented and challenging hurdles to accommodate our thousands of customers across the state of Missouri. For up-to-date information from OATS Transit on service in your area, please visit our coronavirus resource page on the web at www.oatstransit.org/health.
OATS Transit is happy to welcome four new members to its Board of Directors in 2020. Angie Crowder, Jeff Leeman, Stacey Steffens and Tammy Nadler were newly appointed members of the Board, who will serve four-year terms in office.

Angie Crowder of Moberly is a Medical Social Worker for DCI, Inc. She has been a strong supporter of OATS Transit working tirelessly to ensure DCI clients have rides to their weekly treatments throughout many counties that OATS Transit serves. Dialysis treatments make up about 5% of the transportation request we receive, so her insight to growing this service will be invaluable to our company. Angie also serves on the Board of the Central Missouri Kidney Association and the Hallsville Community Development Association. She hopes her background will help support and improve our services as dependable transportation is vital to the patients that she cares for.

Jeff Leeman of Sedalia is a Certified Network Engineer who owned and operated JL Computer Technologies until he retired in 2008. Currently, Jeff serves as 1st Ward Councilman for the City of Sedalia. Buses in Sedalia and the surrounding county provide more than 75,000 trips annually, so his knowledge on city operations will be invaluable to the future growth of Pettis County. He is also a long-time member of the Midwest Regional Bank Board of Directors. Jeff holds numerous awards from the US Air Force where he served from 1972-1981. He hopes his extensive background in serving the public will be beneficial to OATS Transit.

Stacey Steffens of Alma is the Administrator at The Living Center at Fitzgibbon Hospital, which is a nursing home in Marshall. OATS Transit provides transportation for a number of nursing homes and assisted living facilities in the state, so we are looking forward to learning more from her on how to improve this service. Stacey volunteers her time with Fitzgibbon Hospital and Trinity Lutheran Church and School. She has spent her entire career working with the elderly and low income population. OATS Transit has brought many benefits to the residents she serves, and she hopes that by joining the Board she will be able to assist in strengthening this service.

Tammy Nadler of Clinton is the Chief Finance Officer at Golden Valley Memorial Healthcare. 62% of OATS Transit service in Henry County is for medical appointments, which the Hospital plays an important role in. Tammy has 30 years of experience in the healthcare industry. She sees the crucial link between rural transportation and healthcare, so she hopes to bring additional service and funding to our organization during her time on the Board.

These four newly appointed members join 11 other members from around the state of Missouri who make up the Board of Directors. The Board is responsible for overseeing the development and adoption of company policies, assisting with community outreach and approving the annual budget and audit. The Board meets six times per year, which in recent months has been by virtual meetings due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Marsha Crowley Celebrates 25 Years of Service

Marsha Crowley of Shelbina, MO celebrated 25 years of service with OATS Transit in May.

Marsha is an Operations Coordinator and handles much of the northeast Missouri Medicaid program. She started with OATS Transit in May 1995, which at that time was housed in Shelbina. In 2013, the regional office relocated to Macon, where she still works today.

Regional Director, Sheree Webb, says that Marsha is a great employee who has contributed to the success of the Northeast region. “She has consistently performed far beyond established objectives and has made significant contributions to our company,” says Webb.

Employee Anniversaries

The employees listed below celebrated an anniversary April-June 2020. Thank you to each of these employees for your hard work and dedication to OATS Transit!

20 years:
Terry Burns-Caldwell County Driver

15 years:
Felicia Wilson-East Region Dispatcher

10 years:
Bob Whitney-Polk County Driver
Wanda Vieth-Northwest Region Dispatcher
Christine George-Vernon County Driver
Ted Haverich-Boone County Driver
Lori Thomas-SW Region Operations Coord.

Congratulations to all!

Public Transit Returns to the City of Arnold, MO

OATS Transit is happy to announce that in May 2020, the JeffCo Express City of Arnold service was able to start back up again thanks to local funding from the City government. The routes were closed down for a couple of months due to lack of local funding in early 2020. Riders and businesses rallied around the need for public transit, and the Council ultimately voted to continue service for another year.

Before the pandemic hit Missouri, OATS Transit had planned to reinstate service mid-March. The pandemic brought many businesses to a halt in Missouri, including Arnold public transit for a few weeks. Now the City of Arnold service, as well as the other two deviated services in Jefferson County, are back up and running.

Currently, Arnold service is funded in part by a Federal Transit Administration 5310 urban grant through Bi-State Development. The remaining 50% comes from the City of Arnold. At the end of the year OATS Transit officials will review options for new federal grant opportunities. As with any federal grants, those funds come with the stipulation that local money is needed as match.

The Arnold City route operates Monday – Friday from 7am to 5pm and circles the city four times a day with more than 30 stops per run. In addition to the Arnold city service, OATS Transit operates the JeffCo Express blue and green routes, the JC Transit service for individuals with developmental disabilities, and its own service for seniors and individuals with disabilities.

Visit www.oatstransit.org/jefferson to view schedules online. Jefferson County residents interested in scheduling a ride can call the OATS office at 636-933-9380.
When you shop through Amazon Smile and select OATS, Inc. as your charity, we receive a donation from each order. Start shopping and supporting OATS Transit today by visiting smile.amazon.com!

**Holiday Reminder:** OATS Transit will be closed and most regular routes will not be running on Friday, July 3rd for Independence Day and Monday, September 7th for Labor Day.