
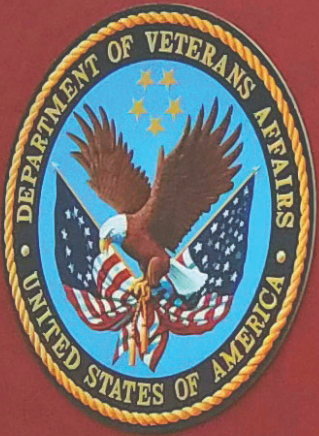


# The Wheel

 Department of  
Veterans Affairs

HARRY S. TRUMAN  
MEMORIAL VETERANS  
HOSPITAL

MAIN ENTRANCE



**FEATURE STORY:**  
**The Hidden Costs of No Shows**  
Page 4



A publication of OATS Transit  
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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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**Phone: 573-443-4516 or 888-875-6287**  
**Email: rproctor@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, 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](http://www.oatstransit.org/schedules)  
**Phone: 888-875-6287**

**Follow us on social media:**  
**@oatstransit**



# 2024 Missouri Transit Operator Champions

**E**ight drivers from OATS Transit were honored with the Transit Champions Awards at the Missouri Public Transit Association annual conference in St. Louis. These individuals were nominated by their managers for their outstanding commitment to OATS Transit and public transit.

Each driver was recognized at the state conference and will be included on the Association's Operator Wall of Fame. The Missouri Public Transit Association, a Missouri non-profit membership association, is dedicated to enhancing mobility in the state. It was established to serve as a collective voice for public and specialized transportation providers in Missouri and to champion the elevation of public transit as a national priority.

OATS Transit is proud of our eight honorees. Congratulations, and thank you for making our mission of "Enhancing quality of life by providing safe, caring, and reliable transportation services" a reality.



**Howard Nevins**  
East Region



**Frank Seiberlich**  
Midwest Region



**Dan Langendoerfer**  
Mid MO Region



**Peggy Taylor**  
Midwest Region



**Patty Robinson**  
Northeast Region



**Randy Hillyard**  
Northwest Region



**Rick Painter**  
Southwest Region



**Shane Johnson**  
West Region

# The Wheel

## is Turning Directions

For more than 50 years, OATS Transit has been producing and mailing its publication, *The Wheel*. What initially began with a typewriter, mimeograph machine, and an individual diligently typing out the organization's routes each month has evolved into a colorful marketing piece that is mailed to over 18,000 riders, employees, legislators, donors, supporters, and others. The publication even played a role in the early career of our current Executive Director Dorothy Yeager, who was hired as the editor for the publication in 1987.

After extensive discussions about the readership of the publication, the need to disseminate timely information, and the increasing costs of printing and postage, coupled with a decrease in the number of recipients, the OATS Transit Board has approved transitioning to a digital monthly format beginning in 2025.

This edition marks the final printed version of *The Wheel*. Starting in January 2025, a monthly digital version will be delivered to your email. To ensure that you stay informed about OATS Transit's latest news, including holiday closures, client and driver profiles, updated route information, and other note-

worthy updates, please confirm your email address by calling 888-875-6287.

You can also sign up for the digital version of *The Wheel* by visiting our website at [oatstransit.org](http://oatstransit.org) and scrolling to the bottom of the page. Enter your email address and click "join" on our email list.

Sign up for updates from OATS Transit

<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="button" value="Join"/>
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To sign up for our digital newsletter, please fill out this form, located at the bottom of the [OATSTransit.org](http://OATSTransit.org) home page.

OATS Transit takes the confidentiality of our riders and supporters seriously and does not share any information with outside entities.

OATS Transit is excited about this change. We are looking forward to sharing relevant and timely stories, video features, and more through our digital platform. *The Wheel* will continue to be available on our website for reference, ensuring that you can always stay connected with OATS Transit.

## 2025 Holidays

For planning purposes for the 2025 Holiday calendar, please note that OATS Transit offices will be closed and normal routes will not be running on the following dates:

**New Year's Day** - Wed., January 1

**Martin Luther King, Jr. Day** - Mon., January 20

**President's Day** - Mon., February 17

**Memorial Day** - Mon., May 26

**Juneteenth** - Thur., June 19

**Independence Day** - Fri., July 4

**Labor Day** - Mon., September 1

**Columbus/Indigenous Peoples' Day** - Mon., October 13

**Veterans Day** - Tue., November 11

**Thanksgiving Day** - Thur., November 27

**Day after Thanksgiving** - Fri., November 28

**Christmas Eve** - Wed., December 24

**Christmas Day** - Thur., December 25

# The Hidden Costs of No Shows

Every year, our drivers run thousands of trips to pick up a rider, only to find out for various reasons that they aren't riding, nor did they call ahead to tell us they weren't. This is not just an inconvenience, but a significant cost to our company in terms of time, fuel, and missed opportunities to serve other riders.

Last year alone, we made **53,851** trips or **381,672** unnecessary miles, to pick someone up, only to find out once we got there they weren't riding. These "no-shows" cost us money, but more importantly, funding could have been used to provide a ride for someone else.

We have a strict policy on no-shows and late cancellations, and you need to know the impact this could have on your future trips.

OATS Transit policy is that passengers who establish a pattern or practice of excessive No-Shows or Late Cancellations will be subject to suspension of service.

- A No-Show occurs when a rider fails to appear to board the vehicle for a scheduled trip. This presumes the vehicle arrives at the scheduled pickup location within the pickup window, and the driver waits at least five minutes.
- A Late Cancellation occurs when a rider cancels scheduled service one hour or less before the rider's scheduled pickup window begins.

Any combination of three No-Shows or Late Cancellations in a consecutive 30-day period will be deemed "excessive." Riders with excessive No-Shows or Late Cancellations will be subject to temporary service suspension. The first offense will be 30 days, the second 60 days, and the third 90 days. OATS Transit will charge the funding source a no-show fee that does not exceed half the trip cost.

If you use the OATS Transit app, you can cancel trips through the app. This feature is designed to make trip management easier for you. A tab on the app called no-shows lists those trips, so you can check to see if you have any no shows.

Please help us by doing your part and letting us know ahead of time if you are not going on a scheduled trip so we can give that seat to someone else. This saves us fuel, drivers' time, and places fewer miles on our aging fleet.



*We have friendly operations coordinators in each regional office to help you with your schedule or cancellations. (pictured: Laura McClain, West Region).*

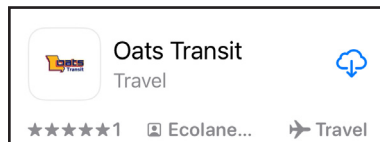
# We have an App for That!

We have an app for OATS Transit riders to see scheduled trips, track their bus and check their account balances. This app is available in all of the service areas of OATS Transit. The app will **not** work for those who board at bus stops, such as Kirksville or Sedalia.

To use the app, please follow these directions:

**1** When you call to schedule a trip, provide a valid email address and ask that self-service be turned on for your account. An email will be sent to the rider once their account has been activated.

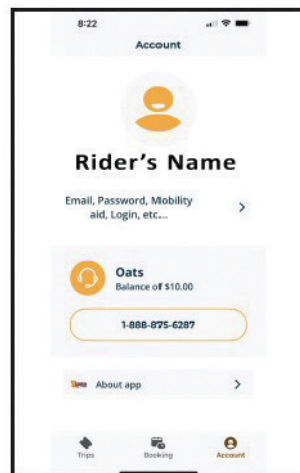
**2** You will need to download the app through the Google Play Store (Android) or the Apple Store (IOS/iPhone) for free. Once the app has been downloaded, the rider will need to set up a password. If you forget your password, you will have to use the “Forget Password?” option; our offices cannot reset or tell you what your password is.



What the app looks like.

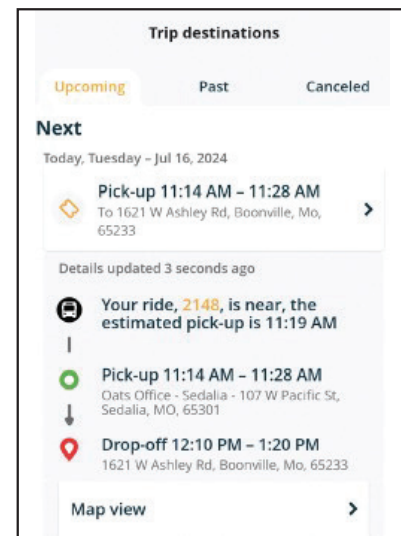
**3** On the app, you will see the following information:

On the main page of the app, your name will appear, the balance on your account and the main phone number for OATS.



**4** Under trips, you can see Upcoming, Past & Canceled trips. You can also use this app to cancel trips but remember that OATS Transit needs at least one hour or more to cancel a pre-scheduled trip. Failure to give our organization at least one hour or more will be recorded as a **Late Cancellation** (see story on page 4).

**5** In the sample below, a rider can view where there bus is located, based off when the trip is scheduled. This is referred to as the “Where’s My Ride” feature.



Even if you do not want to use the app, we would appreciate it if you would provide us with an email address, so we can send you news regarding OATS Transit.

## Just a Reminder:

This app cannot be used for riders who use bus or flag stops in Kirksville, Arnold, Sedalia, etc. This app is for riders who **pre-schedule** their trips.

# Serving Veterans Through Rides & Employment

Few groups deserve our recognition, respect, and gratitude more than the brave men and women who have served in the military. These individuals and their families have made tremendous sacrifices so we can preserve our way of life. This Veterans Day, we sincerely thank and appreciate veterans who have served so selflessly and courageously.

OATS Transit is proud to say that 19% of our employees are veterans, and two of our OATS Transit Board of Directors are veterans. We serve more than 400 riders who are veterans across our service territory and are appreciative of those who help us connect and support this group of riders. Our organization is fortunate to have received funding and support through several foundations that recognize the value of our services and how the services help veterans get to medical appointments.

"I live in Columbia and noticed the OATS Transit buses seemed like they were 'everywhere' before I took this job," Samuel Custer, Special Modes Coordinator for the Harry S Truman Memorial Veterans Administration Hospital, says. "My position is trying to find the best transportation fit for our veterans where they live and where they need services, so I checked into OATS Transit as an option for our veterans. OATS Transit fills that niche for us."

The hospital uses OATS Transit to transport veterans who live rurally or in smaller towns to dialysis appointments. Last year, over 800 trips were arranged through the Truman VA Hospital, with some veterans needing to be taken thrice weekly for their life-essential medical needs to be met.

"We are thrilled by what OATS Transit can provide, whether it's in rural areas or just being able to handle the needs of someone who uses a mobility device." Custer states, "It also helps that the services provided

are economically friendly to our budget. I always try to explain that to those who do not qualify for their medical transportation to be paid through their veterans benefits. I always encourage them to look into OATS Transit and your affordable costs."

OATS Transit drivers undergo extensive training, including many hours of learning how to transport, secure, and assist those who use mobility devices or have medical needs. This dedication to providing high-quality service is a testament to our commitment to our veterans and riders.

"I appreciate the depth of the coverage that OATS Transit provides in the state and the ease of making arrangements for a veteran to ride." Custer explains, "The website is pretty self-explanatory. If you need a ride, look for your county, and there the schedule is. Of course, in special circumstances like dialysis or medical needs, a simple phone call and the office people really work with you to see how best to get the service for the person in need."

OATS Transit specializes in getting people to work each day, taking patients to life-saving medical appointments, and taking people shopping so they can continue living independently. We also offer contract transportation services for agencies.



*An OATS Transit rider and veteran arriving at a medical appointment.*

## Did You Know?

Our organization is a certified "Hire Our Heroes" employer. This program, sponsored by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation, is committed to bringing together businesses, organizations, and veterans seeking employment.

If you are interested in working for OATS Transit, visit our website at [oatstransit.org/jobs](http://oatstransit.org/jobs) to find out what positions are open.



# 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](mailto:jstedem@oatstransit.org).

**Tri-County Electric Charity Foundation**  
\$1,000 for bus match Schulyer & Adair Counties

**Ms. Sherman**

\$2,000 from the family of a rider to be used for general operating expenses.

**Community Foundation Serving West  
Central Illinois & Northeast Missouri**  
\$1,400 toward bus match for Gasconade County

**Macon Electric Cooperative**  
\$1,000 for bus match for Macon County

**First Christian Church -Troy**  
\$2,155 toward bus match in Lincoln County

**Lebanon Area Foundation Community  
CARES for 2024**

\$7,500 for operating support - Laclede County

**Community Foundation of the Quincy Area**  
\$1,000 for bus match for Marion & Ralls counties

**Jason Ash Memorial Foundation**  
\$500 toward operating expenses - Miller county

If you are aware of any foundation, corporation, or individual that could extend support to OATS Transit, please let our development team know. Donations assist in covering the costs of purchasing buses and covering operational expenses.

If you are interested in making a donation to OATS Transit, you may submit donations through our website at <https://www.oatstransit.org/donate> or by mailing them to OATS Transit, 2501 Maguire Blvd, Suite 101, Columbia, MO 65201.

# Employee Anniversaries

The employees listed below celebrated an anniversary from July - September 2024. Thank you to each of these employees for your hard work and dedication to OATS Transit.



**45**  
Years

**Sheree Webb**  
Regional Director  
Northeast Region



**25**  
Years

**Maggie Meltabarger**  
Team Leader/Driver  
Mid MO Region



**Patty Robinson**  
Driver  
Northeast Region

**15 YEARS - Bill Green** (Driver/Midwest Region)

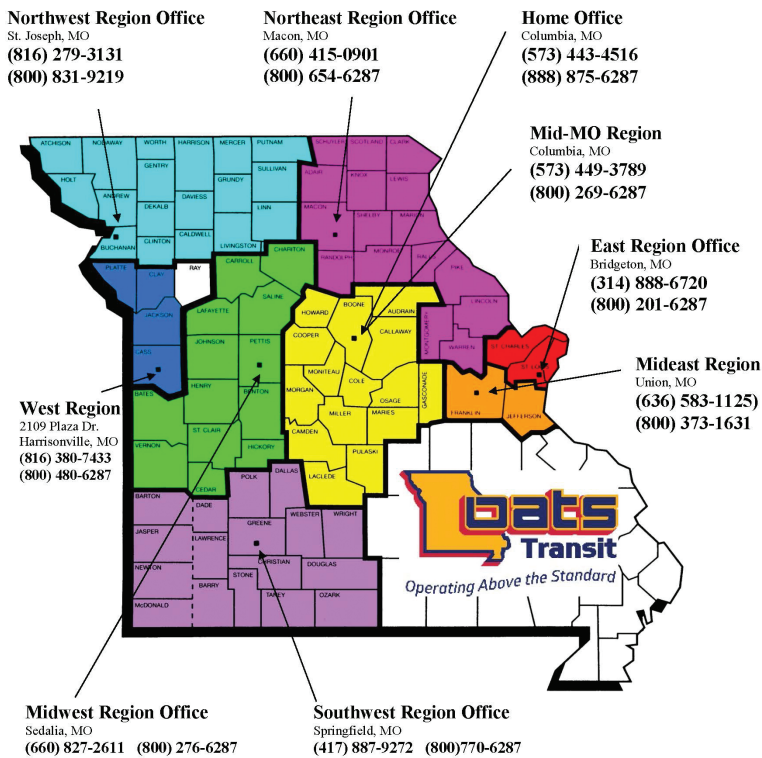
**10 YEARS - Curt Deer** (Driver/Northeast Region),  
**Dottie McBride** (Operations Coordinator/Midwest Region),  
**Kirk Robinson** (Driver/Northeast Region),  
and **Paula Stephens** (Driver/Southwest Region).

**5 YEARS - Terry Breeze** (Driver/Northwest Region),  
**Dan Collier** (Driver/Mid MO Region), **Jamie Costello**  
(Operations Coordinator/Mideast Region), **Megan El-  
lert** (Operations Manager/Mideast Region), **Jeff Harp**  
(Team Leader - Driver/Southwest Region), **Ruth Lewis**  
(Driver/Northeast Region), **Amanda Marriott** (Opera-  
tions Coordinator/West Region), **Kathy Sawyer** (Driv-  
er/Southwest Region), **Donald Shelton** (Driver/Mid-  
east Region), **David Starke** (Driver/Midwest Region),  
**Tammie Stevens** (Driver/Southwest Region) and **Al-  
fonso Wilson** (Driver/East Region).

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 Columbia, MO 65201-8252

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## Service Area



## Upcoming HOLIDAYS:

The following are OATS Transit holidays remaining in 2024. OATS Transit offices state-wide are closed, including running of normal routes. These closures, along with reminders, are posted on our social media platforms.

**Columbus Day/Indigenous People's Day** - October 14

**Veterans Day** - November 11

**Thanksgiving Day** - November 28

**Day after Thanksgiving** - November 29

**Christmas Eve** - December 24

**Christmas Day** - December 25

**New Year's Day** - January 1

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.