

The Wheel



FEATURE STORY:
Team Leader Summit
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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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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.

OATS Transit Board of Directors

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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
Phone: 888-875-6287

Follow us on social media:
@oatstransit



Cover Photo: Team Leaders throughout the OATS Transit service area attended a training summit at the Home Office on March 21, 2024. *credit: OATS Transit Marketing.*

West Region Director Sara Davis Retires

OATS Transit announces the retirement of our West Region Director Sara Davis, effective July 31. Sara has been with OATS Transit since September 2006 and is a Certified Community Transit Manager (CCTM).

She brought to OATS Transit 20 years of experience in Human Resources as the Director of Human Resources at a hospital in Nevada, MO where she was also responsible for the transportation department. She provided a wide variety of service, including several sheltered workshops, senior centers and various other local agencies.

“Sara has been an integral part of OATS Transit’s leadership team.” Dorothy Yeager, Executive Director, says, “We will miss her guidance but wish her the best in her retirement.”

One of the West region’s largest contracts is with the City of Lee’s Summit and Kansas City Area Transit Authority. The West Region is comprised of four counties and has six office staff and 25 drivers.



Sara Davis, West Region Director retiring on July 31.

Webb Celebrates 45 Years

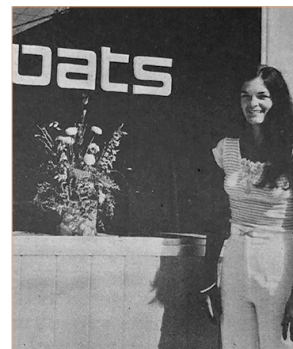
Northeast Region Director Sheree Webb has been employed by OATS Transit since August of 1979. Webb served as the Northeast Area Coordinator from her date of hire until March of 1991, when she was promoted to the position of Northeast Regional Director. The Northeast Region is comprised of 16 counties with an office located in Macon Missouri. The region has nine office staff and 81 drivers.

Sheree has been very active in bringing transit services to smaller communities, a valuable service often only reserved for urban areas. The Linc in Lincoln County; Magic City Express in Moberly; Kirk-Tran in Kirksville; and daily service in Hannibal are just a few of her success stories.

Sheree is one of three employees who have been at OATS Transit since the 1970’s as our longest tenured employees: Sandy Nolan started in 1976; Diane Floyd and Sheree Webb started in 1979.



Sheree Webb, Northeast Region Director has helped guide OATS Transit for 45 years.



Sheree Webb circa 1979

Knipp Appointed to National RTAP Review Board

Created in 1987, the National Rural Transit Assistance Program (RTAP) assists with safely and effectively delivering public transportation services in rural areas.

As the country's number one rural transportation provider, OATS Transit is proud of its association with RTAP. Much of National RTAP's work is overseen by a Review Board, whose experience helps inform the development of our products and services. Composed of fourteen rural and tribal providers and state transit officials, the Board provides expertise and local perspectives to ensure rural transportation is of the highest quality. Members serve as National RTAP Ambassadors at conferences.

Dion Knipp, Operations Director for OATS Transit in Columbia, Missouri, has been appointed to a three-year term on the Review Board. Dion started

at the organization in September 2018 as the Regional Director for the Mid-Missouri area before being promoted to Operations Director. Prior to coming to work for OATS Transit, Dion held various positions for the Missouri Department of Transportation for 28 years.

As Operations Director, Knipp is responsible for managing the day-to-day operations of the statewide fleet, facility maintenance, training, and safety programs at OATS Transit. He is a Certified Community Transit Manager, a national certification program for transit professionals.



Dion Knipp, Operations Director for OATS Transit will serve a three-year term.

Missouri Public Transit Association Recognized Nationally

The Missouri Public Transit Association (MPTA) was awarded the 2024 State Leadership Award at the Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA) Conference in West Palm Beach FL in June.

OATS Transit was one of the founding members of the Missouri Association in 1980 to help provide a voice for Missouri transit agencies to the state and national legislators. The work being done by MPTA has resulted in millions of dollars being put into public transportation so we can continue being there for Missourians who need our services. Their results are why we are able to fund much of our service while keeping fares low for Missourians.

OATS Transit had four staff members at the Conference in Florida when the award was presented.



OATS Transit's Mission:

Enhancing quality of life by providing safe, caring, and reliable transportation services.

For more information about OATS Transit, please visit the website at oatstransit.org. You can find bus schedules, ridership information and current job vacancies online as well.

You can also follow OATS Transit on our social media platforms: Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn and YouTube.



When operating a transit organization the size of OATS Transit, it takes everyone sharing their experiences, whether from past employment or daily encounters, to make a difference. Several years ago, OATS Transit established the Team Leader/D3 position in each region that allows experienced drivers to assume a training or mentoring position. Their contributions in training our new drivers and assisting with our safety program measures have been invaluable. Many of the Team Leaders have also become certified American Red Cross CPR/AED/First Aid instructors. We are fortunate to have these dedicated team leaders in our organization.

The pandemic and social distancing restrictions made it challenging to meet in person. However, on March 21, 2024, OATS Transit’s home office in Columbia, Missouri, was bustling as Team Leaders, Regional Directors, and Operations Managers participated in a Team Leader Summit.

The focus of this summit was to unite all staff members in the organization who are involved in training our drivers or emphasizing safety. OATS Transit has eight regional offices and one satellite office that oversee 87 counties in Missouri. With over 520 employees throughout these counties, ensuring that our organization provides consistent training is crucial for meeting the expectations of our riders, employees, and donors.

Throughout the training day, Team Leaders reviewed what is expected of a Team Leader, analyzed organizational accident trends and accident investigation techniques, worked with a new online training form, and experienced a new driver training course.

The new driver training course was popular, with several Team Leaders and even a couple of the Re-

gional Directors driving through it to the cheers of the assembled group. While OATS Transit has had a Safe Driving Academy for several years, the organization



The new driving course replicates the National Rural Transit Assistance Program’s “Rodeo” course and we hope to add a competitive edge to it in the next few years for our drivers to show off their skills.

wanted to add new elements to the course that better define some of the daily challenges drivers encounter.

The introduction of rear-entry minivans generated a lot of interest. These minivans are new to the OATS Transit fleet and come equipped with a new mobility device securement system. Attendees were able to ask questions and learn about some of the modifications to assist our riders who will be using it.

The day was filled with a lot of learning, laughter and plans are already underway for a fall summit. OATS Transit is appreciative of our Regional Directors, Operations Managers and Team Leaders for coordinating and participating in this training summit and for their leadership of our premier drivers.

Always walk through life as if you have something new to learn and you will.
- Vernon Howard

Thank you to OATS Transit's Team Leaders



Mid MO Team Leaders Nicole Eidson and Maggie Meltabarger (seated) getting ready to use the new rear entry van. Also pictured (left to right) are Northeast Team Leader Dwayne Linke, West Team Leader Shane Johnson, Midwest Operations Manager Dawn Ashurst and (retired) Mid MO Team Leader Mike Dodds).



These three ladies are East Team Leaders and helped us with a video we made for our social media platforms. It only took one take to capture the fun. (Left to right): Lakendria Moreland, Frankie Hedges and Felicia Wilson. Lakendria was our first volunteer to take on the driving course and made it through without any errors.



Team Leaders taking notes during the training. The Team Leaders were able to share their insights with others during the training and discuss future training goals.



Cleaster Dean*
East Region



Frankie Hedges
East Region



Lakendria Moreland
East Region



Felicia Wilson*
East Region



Lee Bowers
Midwest Region



Danny Tuggle
Midwest Region



Barry Zurick*
Midwest Region



Nicole Eidson*
Mid MO Region



Maggie Meltabarger*
Mid MO Region



Donna Chism*
Midwest Region



Cheryl Skillingstad*
Midwest Region



Joshua Spears*
Midwest Region



Peggy Taylor
Midwest Region



Michael Williams
Midwest Region



Phil Leatherman*
Northeast Region



Dwayne Linke
Northeast Region



Jim Scott
Northeast Region



Bill Bravo
Northwest Region



Doug Ward
Northwest Region



Jeff Harp*
Southwest Region



Don Kiblinger
Southwest Region



Sandy Schultz*
Southwest Region



Bobby Whitney*
Southwest Region



Shane Johnson
West Region

* Indicates that the Team Leader is a certified American Red Cross CPR/AED/First Aid instructor.

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.

Community Foundation of the Ozarks - Mountain Grove Community Foundation

\$2,000 toward bus match



(Center): Driver Julie Vandivort was presented with a check by members of the Community Foundation of the Ozarks- Mountain Grove Area Community Foundation.

Boone County Community Trust

\$9,000 toward bus match in Boone County

Co-MO Cares Trust

\$500 toward program support
in Camden, Cooper and Moniteau counties

White River Valley Electric

\$500 toward bus match for Taney 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.

Did You Know...?

You've probably seen many organizations that say they are a 501(c)3 nonprofit corporation (or organization). But what does that really mean?

A nonprofit organization is a legal entity organized and operated for a collective, public or social benefit. With a nonprofit any revenues that exceed expenses must be committed to the organization's purpose, whether for operating (salaries, fuel costs, insurance, etc.) or for tangible purchases (buses, wash bays, etc.).

OATS Transit is a 501(c)3 nonprofit corporation providing transportation to 87 counties in Missouri. We provide specialized transportation for thousands of Missourians, including the rural general public, senior citizens and people with disabilities. So how do we operate if we are a nonprofit? Well, it takes everything and everyone to make us a success. We receive funding from many places:

- Federal
- State (Dept. of Mental Health, Medicaid, etc.)
- Fares
- Personal donations
- Foundation grants
- Benevolent groups (Elks, Masons, etc.)
- Locally raised (businesses, counties, cities, churches).
- Contracts with local agencies (sheltered workshops, Headstart, etc.)
- ...and some more.

While that might seem like a huge list of financial resources, not all of them fund in multiple areas or even in the same amount. Most money is donated with restrictions. Restrictions are exactly what you think, the money can only be used for what it is intended and sometimes even restricts to where it can be used and even a time frame.

Why are we explaining all of this? We wanted to give a better understanding of how OATS Transit receives funds and how some regions may be funded differently based on who is funding in that area. Oftentimes, this is what limits our service in some towns.

What we would like from you? If you know of a foundation, benevolent group, bank, church, etc., that we could speak to about a possible funding partnership, let us know. We will take care of reaching out to them. You can email Jill Stedem at jstedem@oatstransit.org with your suggestions.

Employee Anniversaries

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

15
YEARS

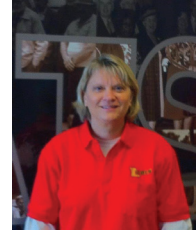


Samantha Ratliff
Operations Manager
Northeast Region

10
YEARS



Kelly Barron
Driver
Midwest Region



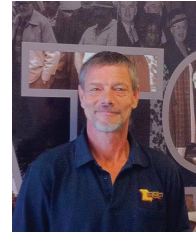
Kim Bowman
Driver
Mid MO Region



Loren Cloyd
Driver
Northeast Region



Kris Hamilton
Driver
West Region



Rick Shaffer
Driver
Mid MO Region



Jim Williams
Driver
Midwest Region

5
YEARS



Mike Altemueller
Fleet Coordinator
Home Office



Paul Billington
Driver
Northwest Region



Tony Borgstadt
Driver
Midwest Office



Mike Born
Driver
West Region



Gary Brannaman
Driver
Mid MO Office



Andy Compton
Driver
Southwest Region



Russ Deckard
Driver
Midwest Region



Jeff Hunter
Driver
Midwest Region



Bill Mitchell
Driver
Mid MO Region



Stephan Neumann
Driver
Midwest Region



Terry Pinkerton
Driver
Northeast Region



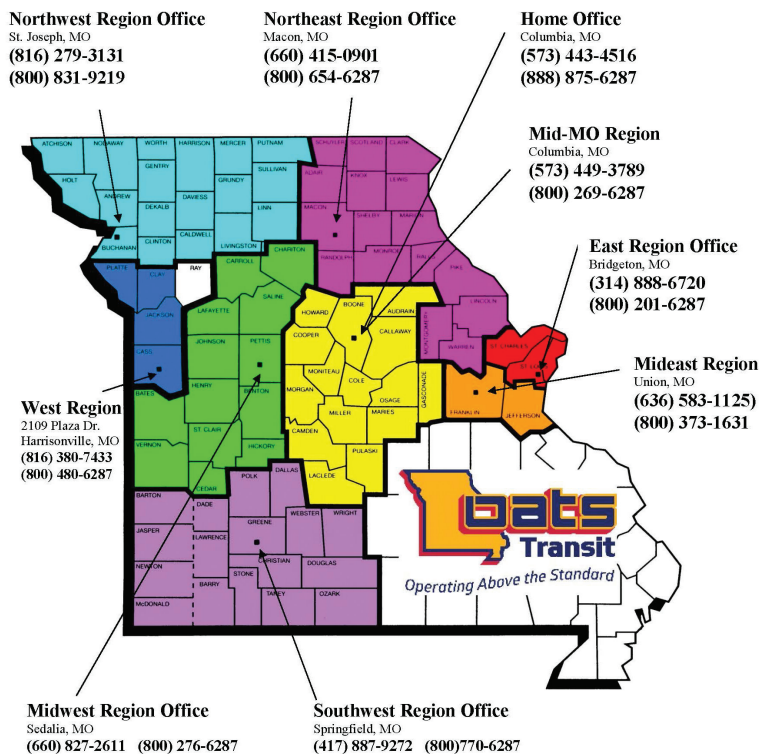
Terry Poindexter
Driver
Midwest Region



Amanda Wilson
Ops Coordinator
Northwest Region

OATS Transit
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 Columbia, MO 65201-8252

Nonprofit Org.
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 Columbia, MO
 Permit No. 86



Upcoming HOLIDAYS:

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

Independence Day
 Thursday, July 4, 2024

Labor Day
 Monday, September 2, 2024

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.