KAT CHRONICLE
NEWSLETTER FOR KENDALL COUNTY’S PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM

SUMMER 2012 ISSUE

KAT NOTES

It’s hard to believe that the Kendall Area Transit program has been operational for two and a half years already. It seems like yesterday that the first bus hit the road. Since KAT began service in early 2010, over 24,000 trips have been provided to Kendall County residents.

KAT has seen tremendous growth over its young life. Ridership has consistently increased and shows no signs of slowing down. To help cope with the increased demand, KAT has undergone some changes. New staff has been hired and/or promoted to fill gaps. Buses have been rerouted to create more efficient service runs. And, new services — such as a Joliet run, a Morris run, and a Waubonsee Community College - Sugar Grove Campus run — have been under development.

Because of these changes, it has become even more important for us to stay in touch with our riders throughout the Kendall County community. We have become more active on our Facebook page, posting events, news items, service closures and updates. We had sent out surveys to our riders, and plan on sending a few more in the coming months. Also, this is the first ever KAT newsletter. Initially, the KAT Chronicle is meant to be a quarterly newsletter, and we hope to keep interested people informed of KAT events.

These past two years have been exciting, and the future looks even more so. KAT is an ever evolving program, and we will do our best to serve those who need its demand-response services the most. As always, we welcome your feedback. If you have any comments, questions, or suggestions, please call the office. Thanks, and we hope to build upon the program’s early successes in the months to come!

-- Paul LaLonde, Program Director KAT

TRANSIT SPEAK: “PARATRANSIT”

Paratransit is an alternative mode of flexible passenger transportation that does not follow fixed routes or schedules. Typically minibuses are used to provide paratransit service. Paratransit also can be known as demand-response service and dial-a-ride service. The first recorded use of the word was in 1973.

Paratransit services may vary considerably on the degree of flexibility they provide their customers and services are mostly operated by public transit agencies, community groups or not-for-profit organizations, and for-profit private companies or operators.
STAFF SPOTLIGHT

Name: Bill Schaeffer
Position: Bus Operator

Joined KAT: March 2010

Before KAT: I worked in the distribution and trucking industry, and later the school bus industry.

Favorite Part of the Job: The appreciation I get from the riders!

Most Rewarding Experience Thus Far: So many it’s hard to pick. I always love when a rider gets on the bus and says “I’m so glad you’re driving me.”

Hobbies: RC models, hunting, motorcycles

“PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION - QUICK FACTS

- In 2010, Americans took 10.2 billion trips on public transportation.
- 35 million times each weekday, people board public transportation.
- From 1995 through 2010, public transportation ridership increased by 31%—a growth rate higher than the 17% increase in U.S. population and higher than the 24% growth in the use of the nation’s highways over the same period.
- Investment in the public transportation industry creates and supports over 1.9 million public and private sector jobs and is a $55 billion a year industry.
- Public transportation’s overall effects save the United States 4.2 billion gallons of gasoline annually: more than 3 times the amount of gasoline imported from Kuwait.
- More than 7,200 organizations provide public transportation in the United States.

For more facts and stats, please visit the American Public Transportation Association website at www.apta.com.

KENDALL COUNTY JOB FAIR - JUNE 1

Paul LaLonde and Diannah Thompson (pictured left) represented KAT at the Kendall County Job Fair held June 1st at the Waubonsee Community College, Plano Campus.

A KAT bus drops off riders who requested to attend the KC Job Fair on June 1st.
**Did you know?**

Did you know that Kendall Area Transit is a County-wide general public transportation system? That means anyone who is a Kendall County resident can use KAT! Many people assume bus systems such as KAT are only for seniors or individuals with disabilities. While some bus systems are, like Plainfield Township in Will County, which is a program exclusively for senior citizens, KAT is for everyone! It must be noted, however, that KAT policy is to give priority to seniors and individuals with disabilities; but we often take general public riders to many different destinations, such as job sites, medical appointments, shopping, residential areas, and many more locations in and immediately around Kendall County. If you would like more information, or would like to register for service, please call the KAT office at (630) 882-6970, or visit the website.

**KAT, Celebrate Differences Partner for PrairieFest**

On June 17th, KAT partnered with Celebrate Differences to walk in the Oswegoland Park District’s annual PrairieFest Parade in downtown Oswego! Celebrate Differences, a non-profit founded in 2007, is committed to supporting individuals with disabilities in reaching their fullest potential by providing positive resources and information to families, communities and health care providers while promoting a competent level of awareness and understanding. Both KAT and Celebrate Differences had so much fun reaching out to members of the community in promoting how important transportation is to individuals with disabilities.

*Left:* Representatives from Celebrate Differences and Voluntary Action Center walking in front of a KAT bus in downtown Oswego.  
*Below:* Group photo of all the participants!
Travel training is the process by which a person learns to travel a specific route, between two different places, on their own and in a safe and responsible way. Traveling by KAT is easy, however, some people have expressed their nervousness in using the system. The goal of the program is to show people that using the KAT bus is a straightforward, safe transit option. Representatives from KAT will gladly meet with a group or individual, give presentations, give a guided tour, and explain the rules and policies of the KAT system. In addition, there will be an intermodal component to these lessons. If someone wants to travel outside KAT’s current operational zone, a representative will gladly assist the rider in reaching their destination though other transportation options. An example could be train station connections, transfers to PACE fixed routes, or transfers with other paratransit systems. If you or anyone you know may be interested in learning more, please contact the KAT office at (630) 882-6970 and ask to speak with Paul. The Travel Training program should begin sometime in August.
**Tips for Using KAT**

**Tip 1:** Reserve your ride as soon as possible within KAT policy guidelines. You may schedule your ride up to six (6) days in advance, but no later than one (1) day before your ride. The scheduling office is open five (5) days a week, 8:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m., at (630) 882-6970.

**Tip 2:** Schedule all pickups and drop offs ahead of time with the KAT office only. Be sure to provide the scheduler/dispatcher with the street number, street name, and town where you are traveling to and from. To request changes to your previously scheduled rides, please call the dispatch number at (630) 882-6970 to see if changes are possible.

**Tip 3:** Call the KAT office at (630) 882-6970 to cancel a ride. If you need to cancel a trip, please do so at least two (2) hours before your scheduled pick up time. If you do not call to cancel, this will be recorded as a “no-show.” Please note that three or more “no-shows” could result in temporarily suspend service. Please consult the KAT Rider Guide and Policies for complete details.

**Tip 4:** Be ready and waiting for your driver 10 minutes before your scheduled pickup time. For example, if you are scheduled to be picked up at 9:00 a.m., please be ready to go at 8:50 a.m. Please note the driver has a 10-minute window before and after your scheduled pickup. The KAT bus may arrive any time between 8:50 a.m. and 9:10 a.m. for your 9:00 a.m. scheduled pickup.

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**KAT TRANSITIONS**

“TRANSITions” highlights staff members who have recently been hired or changed positions.

**Jeri Shick, Lead Scheduler**
Jeri started with VAC in June of 2011 as a PT KAT scheduler/dispatcher. She took over as a FT Lead Scheduler in June 2012.

**Val Nickerson, Travel Trainer**
Val started with VAC in Dec. 2011 in the Grundy County division, but transferred to Kendall County in July 2012 as the new Travel Trainer/Driver Trainer.

**Ted Shick, Bus Operator**
Ted started with VAC in March of 2011 as a PT Bus Operator. He took over a FT route in June 2012.

**Duane Cheek, Sub Driver**
Duane started with KAT in June 2012 as a Sub Driver. Subs are important in the event a driver cannot fulfill a route, dispatch gives them a call to fill the route.

**Cary Goldman, Sub Driver**
Cary started with KAT in June 2012 as a Sub Driver. Subs are important in the event a driver cannot fulfill a route, dispatch gives them a call to fill the route.

**Not Pictured:**
About Kendall Area Transit

Kendall Area Transit, the public transportation program of Kendall County, is a transportation partnership between Kendall County and the Voluntary Action Center.

KAT is a community transit service that is intended to be safe, reliable, flexible, and financially sustainable, while satisfying the various mobility needs of seniors, individuals with disabilities, and the general public throughout Kendall County. KAT is made possible through various federal and state grants, in addition to contributions and donations from local municipalities, businesses, and residents.

This newsletter is a quarterly publication. If anyone has information or ideas to contribute, please contact KAT staff.

STAFF TRAINING: PASSENGER ASSISTANCE

On June 4th, KAT staff was trained in passenger assistance techniques by Rudy Muzzarelli of the Rural Transit Assistance Center. In addition to explaining proper securement of wheelchairs, use of wheelchair lift, and various ways to physically assist passengers, Rudy addressed sensitivity issues and the best way to communicate with people with disabilities, manual operation of the lift in case of mechanical failure, as well as a customer service component.