KAT Chronicles

KAT Notes

The KAT system continues to grow and grow and grow. This past August marks a particularly momentous occasion for KAT. Not only did we provide over 2,000 dial-a-ride trips in a single month for the first time, but we also provided our 50,000th KAT trip! Coupled with the Oswego Park and Ride operations, the KAT system routinely provides close to or over 3,000 trips a month. This same time last year, we thought 1,500 trips a month was a lot! As a way to address KAT’s growth, Voluntary Action Center staff recently finished a summer long project of surveying our KAT riders. We were looking for feedback as we seek to modify the KAT system in accommodating more trips and improving service provision. Survey results have been very helpful as we transition forward. VAC has been humbled to receive comments like: “All drivers have been very friendly and professional,” “This service is wonderful for seniors,” and “This service is a big help to Metra riders.” As the operating agency, VAC takes great pride … (continued on page 6)

KAT Calendar of Events

- **Monday October 7th** Kendall County Legislative Forum on Senior/Disability Issues 9:00 a.m. Beecher Center in Yorkville.
- **Thursday October 10th** 2nd Annual VAC “Toast to Transit” Fundraiser at Fox Valley Winery in Oswego from 4:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.
- **Monday October 14th** KAT dial-a-ride service will operate on a limited service schedule. Park and Ride will operate as normal.
- **Wednesday October 30th** Plano Chamber of Commerce EXPO, from 2 p.m. to 7 p.m. at the Plano High School.
- **Thursday November 28th** All KAT operations will be closed in observance of Thanksgiving holiday.
- **Friday November 29th** KAT dial-a-ride service will operate on a limited service schedule. Park and Ride operations will be closed.
- **Tuesday December 24th** KAT dial-a-ride service will operate on a limited service schedule. Park and Ride operations will be closed.
- **Wednesday December 25th** All KAT operations will be closed in observance of Christmas holiday.
- **Wednesday January 1st** All KAT operations will be closed in observance of the New Year holiday.
NEW KENDALL COUNTY WEBSITE

Earlier in the year, the Kendall County Board became resolute in improving the County website with the goal of improving transparency, accountability, and citizen involvement. Well, after a summer of planning and I.T. development, the new website has been unveiled! Have you had a chance to see it yet? In addition to being much sleeker and more user-friendly, the site features much more information than before, such as budgets, tax information, and contact information. The KAT portion of the site includes new links, including holiday schedule, KAT newsletters, Park and Ride information, and a link to the KAT Facebook page! Let us know what you think by visiting www.co.kendall.il.us/kendall-area-transit.

TRANSPORTATION

The Downstate Operation Assistance Program (DOAP) is an Illinois public transportation funding assistance program administered by the Illinois Department of Transportation Division of Public and Intermodal Transportation (IDOT-DPIT). The program, authorized by State Statutes: 30 ILCS 740- Article II, provides a 65% reimbursement for funds expended in public transportation operations, as long as a local match of 35% is provided by the administering/operating agency or agencies. DOAP is a unique program that has helped many Illinois transportation programs provide many additional rides to seniors, the disabled, and general public. According to the statute, “downstate” is comprises of all Illinois areas not Chicago, or the immediate six collar counties.
**KAT Provides 50,000th Trip**

**AUGUST 2013** - In August 2011, the Kendall Area Transit (KAT) program was operational for a little over a year and a half. That summer, KAT provided its 10,000th trip. Less than two years later, KAT has reached another milestone: 50,000th trip provided! That’s 40,000 more rides provided in roughly the same amount of time. This tremendous growth in a relatively short amount of time speaks to the transportation needs of the Kendall County community.

County Administrator Jeff Wilkins said he was excited to see the continued success of the program. “It’s pretty remarkable to see how quickly it has grown. It feels good to know that the KAT program is advancing its mission of meeting the essential mobility needs of the community.” Wilkins said the partnership the County formed with the nonprofit operator Voluntary Action Center (VAC) has been one of many key factors in KAT’s success. “Their expertise and experience at providing such services has been very beneficial to the program and County residents.”

According to VAC Executive Director Tom Zucker, “I’m very happy to see KAT expanding as it has. In many cases, KAT is literally a lifeline to our riders. It enables our riders to achieve personal independence and economic well-being. The success is a testament to the County’s vision. We’re proud of our partnership and proud to provide the services we do.”

The KAT program offers community and public transportation service to all Kendall County residents but is particularly vital to seniors and individuals with disabilities. KAT is administered through the County with daily operations provided by VAC. Dial-a-ride services offer a flexible affordable alternative for many individuals seeking medical trips, employment or educational opportunities, necessary shopping trips, and much more. In January 2013, KAT services expanded to offer Park and Ride service by way of a private-public partnership with VAC, the County, and the Village of Oswego. As more residents discover KAT services, the program has quickly come into high demand.

According to Paul LaLonde, VAC Program Director of KAT, many factors have contributed to the tremendous growth of the system. “Certainly, VAC staff’s expertise in and dedication to community transportation administration and operation has broadened our accomplishments.” However, he feels the greatest factor has been the willingness to provide innovative services, the determination to meet the growing need for services, and the extensive public/private partnerships that made the service possible.

“Particularly instrumental are the County and local municipal contributions. Their financial support to VAC help provide critical matching funds for state and federal grants that really make these services possible and affordable. Without them, KAT would be a nonstarter.” LaLonde continued by saying the generosity of local community members is both extensive and humbling. “Many community members including businesses, social service agencies, and families directly witness the value the KAT program has for their customers, employees, clients, parents, children. I’m always speechless at how willing people are to donate their time, money, and resources in an effort to seeing that KAT remains a viable successful program.”

(Continued on page 6...
“Toast to Transit” Wine Tasting Fundraiser

October 10, 2013 4:30 to 6:30 PM - Fox Valley Winery, Oswego

Please join us at the “TOAST TO TRANSIT” fundraiser for an evening filled with food, fun, and entertainment! Tickets only $25 / person and available prior to the event or at the door. For information on the event, please contact Paul at (630) 882-6970.

SPONSORED BY:

Jerroboam Level:

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Kendall Printing...of course we can

Bottle Level:

The Office Works, Inc.

The generous contributions from our event sponsors will help support the Voluntary Action Center in providing community transportation for seniors, individuals with disabilities, and other community members throughout Kendall County.
KAT in the Community

Diannah (right) and Sara (left) help promote KAT at the Plano Back to School Bash at the Plano HS on August 23rd!

Diannah (right), Paul (middle), and Sara (left) attend the annual Illinois Public Transportation Association conference in Peoria September 4th and 5th. IPTA is an advocate for Illinois’ community transportation programs like KAT and a wonderful resource for staff.

KAT staff attended the Rush Copley “Play It Safe” Fair on September 21st. KAT got to teach kids how to board the bus safely, how KAT drivers assist passengers on and off the bus using the lift, and provided information on registering for and using KAT services! At least several hundred attended the event.
And one thing is certain: The growth of KAT will continue in the near future as the program tries to keep up with the demand. Last year, IDOT awarded the County two additional buses and a minivan. The minivan is expected to arrive in November, and the two buses hopefully by December. “Arrival of new vehicles depends on many factors. IDOT has advised us of these expected delivery times, but that can change. We hope to get them sooner, but it could also be delayed,” Wilkins said.

As the KAT program continues fulfilling the transit needs of residents, Kendall County and VAC look forward to meeting the challenges posed by rapidly expanding ridership. As KAT continues to grow and expand, the residents of Kendall County remain the chief benefactor of these services.

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**“Toast to Transit” Fundraiser Set for October 10th**

The Voluntary Action Center (VAC) will be hosting its Kendall County fundraiser, the “TOAST TO TRANSIT” Wine Tasting on October 10th at the Fox Valley Winery in support of KAT.

Guests will enjoy a wide selection of wines, a delicious hors d’oeuvre spread from Premier Meals Catering, music, and silent auction prizes. The tasting will begin at 4:30 PM and last until 6:30 PM. Ticket purchases can be made for $25 per person and can be purchased by contacting Paul LaLonde at (630) 882-6970. Tickets can also be purchased at the door the day of the event. *Only cash or check payments can be accepted.*

Last year, VAC helped raise almost $1000, which helped us provide community transportation through the KAT program. Every $100 raised will help VAC provide six (6) rides to community members in need. All donations stay in the community to support local services and will help improve the quality of life in Kendall County. We hope to see you there!

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**KAT Notes**

*(continued from page 1)*

...in how we help our riders achieve independence, and we hope to continue providing high quality services for the community. The survey revealed that KAT dial-a-ride riders would like more service - 80 percent of respondents would like to see expanded scheduling hours and 64 percent would like expanded bus hours. Park and Ride commuters experienced an overall smooth transition from Pace to VAC, and many appreciate the expanded routes. Based on commuter feedback, we are working with Oswego Village to adjust bus schedule hours where it makes most sense for commuters. Be on the lookout for potential schedule changes in the coming months. Based on rider feedback and dial-a-ride system needs, we are moving forward with updating the scheduling system. On October 2nd, we implemented an automated phone system to better help direct calls to the appropriate person. Please listen carefully to the menu options. This will be coupled with expanded service hours. Beginning October 15th, scheduling hours will expand from the old 8am - 3pm hours to new hours of 8am - 5pm, and bus operations will expand from 7am - 6pm to 6am - 7pm. We hope these expanded hours add convenience and flexibility for KAT patrons. Lastly, we are awaiting the arrival of buses that have been granted to the County by IDOT. The additional fleet will certainly help as KAT transitions from a small rural operator to a midsized one. As always, we welcome your feedback. If you have any comments or questions, please do not hesitate to give us a call. In the meantime, we look forward to this transition and the next phase of KAT’s evolution! ~ Paul LaLonde, KAT Program Director

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**KAT Provides 50,000th Trip**

*(continued from page 3)*

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As the KAT program continues fulfilling the transit needs of residents, Kendall County and VAC look forward to meeting the challenges posed by rapidly expanding ridership. As KAT continues to grow and expand, the residents of Kendall County remain the chief benefactor of these services.
The Case for Letting Nonprofits Run Public Transit

Even a popular public transportation service can struggle to cover its expenses. Take the recent case of Caltrain, the commuter line that links San Francisco and San Jose. Ridership is up 38 percent since 2010. Still, this past May, the agency announced an expected budget shortfall for 2015. You wouldn't think that could be the case, but across the American transit landscape, it's actually the norm.

The difficulties of fixing transit funding have occupied some top minds in recent years. Count New York City planner turned Stanford University scholar Rohit T. Aggarwala among them. In the summer issue of the Stanford Social Innovation Review, Aggarwala argues that inefficient public sector management is at the root of public transportation troubles. For that reason, he says, U.S. transit systems would be far better off run by non-profit groups than by government — especially commuter lines:

Turning a commuter rail operation into a nonprofit is both feasible and potentially desirable. Doing so has the potential to reap great benefits, both for that transit system and, by demonstration, for the rest of the transit industry as well.

Aggarwala builds his case for transferring transit power from the public to non-profits on three points:

- **A clearer mission.** All too often, transit agencies try to be everything to everyone. They try to attract more riders to generate revenue, and they also try to cover more space in the metro area to serve the public — even though, as the work of Jarrett Walker has shown, these two purposes run counter to one another. If non-profit groups took control of transit they could pick a mission and stick with it, in large part because of point number two …

- **Political autonomy.** Generally speaking, transit agencies are managed by boards whose members are beholden to an elected official in some way or another. That makes every decision to change a route, raise a fare, or negotiate new labor contracts a politically charged debate rather than an objective business move. As a result, writes Aggarwala, operating costs tend to be higher than they should be, and service quality lower.

- **Access to new revenue.** Even as non-profit transit agencies improved their business model, they could also seek out charitable donations. Private donors don't usually money to the government, but they do give to non-profits — to the tune of nearly $300 billion in 2011 alone [PDF]. And it need not be huge lumps, either; Aggarwala envisions library-type of mailers that read: "Your $10 donation would eliminate 200 vehicle-miles from our roads this year."

A good first candidate to make the shift into non-profit hands? Try Caltrain, says Aggarwala.

(Continued on page 9)
**STAFF SPOTLIGHT**

*Name:* Pamela Leonard

*Position:* Lead Dispatcher  
*Joined VAC:* March 2010

*Before KAT:* I was a bookkeeper/accounting clerk for 20 years before I became a FT bus driver for First Student in Yorkville.

*Favorite Part of the Job:* My favorite part of the job is getting to know our riders; it’s like being part of an extended family.

*Most Rewarding Experience Thus Far:* No one experience stands out. I always find it rewarding when I talk to someone who is lonely. The best part is making them laugh!

*Hobbies:* Animals, especially my four cats and two dogs, crocheting, walking, and reading.

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“KAT came into my life at the right time a few years ago. It has been the most rewarding job I’ve ever had.”

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**TRANSITIONS**

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

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**Dale Weisshaar, Bus Operator**

Dale, a retired flatbed truck driver, joins KAT with much driving experience. He is excited to start helping people travel across the County.

**Shari Riddle, Scheduler**

Shari comes to KAT from Plano School District, where she worked for the district bus system. She has over 10 years transit office experience and is eager to help KAT riders schedule their trips.

**Richard Anderson, Bus Operator**

Richard recently retired from the Sandwich School District where he was a mechanic for over 25 years. He comes to KAT in hopes of staying active and helping the community.

(continued on page 11)
**The Case for Letting Nonprofits Run Public Transit**

Here's why. For one thing, Caltrain has a wealthy ridership (43 percent make six figures). That means its focus should be on enticing people out of their cars, instead of providing an equity service. But past efforts to make the train more attractive to drivers — say, by running express trains that skip some local stops — have been met with public outrage. As things stand, the agency would rather cut service to meet financial gaps than implement upgrades that could spark a social uproar.

Aggarwala's whole argument is well-conceived and worth the read. He explains why non-profits would have no trouble running a transit system (they already dip into sectors that traditionally fall under the public domain, such as schools and hospitals). He also makes clear why this "non-profitization" is preferable to privatization (basically: less fear of profit-gouging).

The real question, of course, is whether or not the idea could ever happen. A powerful philanthropist would have to lead the charge — probably someone of Bloomberg's or Gates's stature — since it requires a fairly radical commitment by elected officials. The public would also need an option to reclaim the system (as well as some alternative mode for low-income riders being displaced by the shift).

For his part, Aggarwala wants the non-profit community to jump into the discussion the next time a commuter line faces a funding crisis. Shouldn't be too long before the next chance comes along.

*This article, written by Eric Jaffe, originally ran August 16, 2013 on The Atlantic Cities online site.*

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**Waubonsee Community College Dial-a-ride**

KAT is a community and public transportation dial-a-ride service that is available to all Kendall County residents. All riders must be registered to use the service. All rides must be scheduled in advance and times are based on availability. For information regarding registration, scheduling rides, and fares please call the KAT Office at (877) 1GO-4KAT, (877) 446-4528.

- Daily One-way Fare: $5.00
- 10-Ride Pass: $35.00 ($50 value)

**10-Ride passes available for $35:** Purchase at Waubonsee C.C. Bookstore, Kendall Area Transit office, or your friendly bus driver.

**Daily Fare:** Purchase on the bus at time of the trip. *Exact Fare Required.* No change will be issued.

* *The schedules, fares, and other information listed are subject to change.*

**Pick up and drop off locations at Sugar Grove Campus** are at the Student Center & Science Building. Drop-offs and pickups at all other campuses will be at the respective Main Entrances. Campus & location must be given at time of reservation.

*There is no Sugar Grove Campus 5:00 P.M. pickup on Fridays.*

**Arrives at Sugar Grove Campus:**

- 8:50 A.M.
- 1:00 P.M.
- 5:00 P.M.*

**Plano, Rush Copley, & Downtown Aurora:**

Schedules based on availability.
KENDALL COUNTY LEGISLATIVE FORUM ON
SENIOR / DISABILITY ISSUES

Who should attend?
- Seniors/Disabled
- Local officials
- Service providers
- You!

Free of charge!!
Breakfast and Lunch
RSVP for Luncheon

Need a ride? Call KAT at
(877) IGO-4KAT
to schedule your trips today!
✓ Free round trip!
✓ Trips must be booked at least 24 hours in advance!
✓ Must be registered. To register call above number!

Rides sponsored by Home For Life Advantage, Inc.

MONDAY, October 7th, 2013
Beecher Community Center, 908 Game Farm Rd., Yorkville, IL
Doors Open at 9:00 a.m.

PROGRAM SCHEDULE:

9:00 a.m.  Registration & Continental Breakfast
           Breakfast sponsored by Kendall County Senior Providers
9:20      Welcome and Introductions
9:30-10:30 Program:
- Medicare Part D Annual Open Enrollment and the Affordable Care Act. How will they affect you in 2014?
- How Late State Payments and Expanding Program Needs are Stretching Services.
- The Center for Independent Living Program Services
- Transportation in Kendall County - The KAT Program

10:30-11:15 Legislator Presentations
11:15-11:30 Questions from the audience to legislators
11:30      Luncheon - RSVP required by October 2nd to receive lunch!
           Luncheon sponsored by Kendall Co. Senior Provider Group and Kendall Co. TRIAD

Contact to RSVP for Luncheon by Oct. 2nd: 630-553-5777

Event Sponsored by:

KCSP
Kendall County Senior Providers

Agency on Aging
NORTHEASTERN ILLINOIS

KENDALL COUNTY TASK FORCE ON DISABILITY
**Equipment Lending Library Donation Drive**

The Kendall County Task Force on Disability (KCTFD) was recently formed with the mission to raise and maintain a high level of public awareness of disability issues and available, accessible resources for disabled individuals through effective outreach, education, and advocacy with the goal of promoting better integration of persons with disabilities into the community.

In helping keep with that mission, the KCTFD is excited to announce our October Equipment Lending Library Drive in honor of Disabled Employment Awareness Month!

A library is not just about books. An Equipment Lending Library is a loaning program where items are temporarily provided to individuals throughout the community that may have a need but not the resources to obtain. Once the individual has stopped needing the item, it is returned to the Equipment Lending Library and loaned out the next person in need. Examples of equipment in these loaning programs are canes, walkers, wheelchairs, electric scooters, recovery beds, and much more.

Items needed for donation include: Rollators, walkers, wheelchair ramps, wheelchairs, canes, crutches, bedside commodes, toilet risers, shower chairs, and tub transfer benches.

If you or someone you know wish to donate items of need, please contact one of the following donation sites: Karylin Clevenger, Senior Service Associates, (630) 553-5777, Rebecca Christiansen, Celebrate Differences, (630) 885-3006, or Paul LaLonde, Voluntary Action Center, (630) 882-6970.

Task Force member agencies include: Celebrate Differences, Senior Service Associates, Open Door Rehabilitation Center, Association for Individual Development, Kendall County Special Education Cooperative, the Area Agency on Aging, Easter Seals of Joliet, Waubonsee Community College, Home for Life Advantage, and Voluntary Action Center, operator of Kendall Area Transit, among many other agencies, businesses, and individuals.

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**TRANSITIONS (continued from page 8)**

Kamie Cruce, Dispatcher

Kamie comes to VAC from Waste Management, where she spent the last 10 years doing various office projects and dispatching. She is looking forward to helping KAT bus operators navigate the community.

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**KAT Ridership - FY2014 Q1**

Kendall Area Transit operates on four 3 month quarters per fiscal year. Fiscal years last from July to June, and Quarter 1 is July-August-September. Here are KAT ridership numbers for FY14-Q1.

KAT provided 8,700 trips this quarter, which is the single most trips the program has ever provided in a single quarter! Dial-a-ride operations averaged 90 riders/day and park and ride operations averaged 50 rides/day. Both are up from the previous quarter.

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About Kendall Area Transit

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

KAT is a 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.

Oswego Park and Ride Schedule

Please note: Park and Ride users will not be able to use a Metra Link-up Pass, Plus-Bus Stickers, or other PACE related passes to use the bus. PACE will also not honor KAT passes. Users will need to obtain separate passed if they utilize PACE or CTA services as part of their trip.

Fares can be purchased in one of three ways: (1) A monthly pass for $30, (2) a 10-ride pass for $17.50, or (3) daily one-way fare of $3.50. Monthly and 10-ride passes can be purchased at Oswego Village Hall, Montgomery Village Hall, Yorkville City Hall, Plano City Hall, and the Oswego Police Department. The daily fare is purchased on the bus at the time of boarding, and **exact change is needed**.

The schedules, fares, and other information in this timetable are subject to change. The Village of Oswego and Kendall Area Transit do not assume responsibility for damage resulting from delayed trains or buses or failure to make connections. **Please Note:** Bus schedules follow posted times, *NOT* specific Metra trains.

For more transit info, please call (630) 554-3618 or (877) IGO-4KAT.