FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
AUGUST 12, 2013

KENDALL AREA TRANSIT PROVIDES 50,000th TRIP

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.”

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 October, 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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