APRIL 2013 SETS KENDALL AREA TRANSIT RECORD FOR RIDERSHIP

In the 2000s as Kendall County experienced unprecedented growth, forward-thinking leaders identified that transit would be – if it wasn’t already – desperately needed in the area. Stakeholders set out to partner with others in the community for meeting that need. Their work ultimately culminated in the county-wide community transportation program Kendall Area Transit (KAT) in March 2010.

KAT provides 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 the nonprofit Voluntary Action Center (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 added 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.

That demand has resulted in extraordinary ridership growth in the KAT system. In March 2013, KAT provided 1,644 dial-a-ride trips, the most ever for a single month. That record didn’t last long, however, because in April 2013 KAT provided 1,957 dial-a-ride trips – an addition of 313 more for a 19% increase from the previous month and a 34% increase from April 2012! In addition, April 2013 saw the most park and ride trips provided for a single month since KAT became operator: 1,198 trips, an increase of 24% since KAT’s initial month of park and ride service. So, for April 2013, the KAT system provided 3,155 total trips to Kendall County residents. By way of comparison as this trend continues, the KAT system will provide more trips in a two month period than during its first calendar year of operation.

It is impossible to name all the participants who have made KAT so successful so quickly, but particularly instrumental are the County and municipalities, which help provide critical matching funds for state and federal grants that really make these services possible and affordable; the staff of Voluntary Action Center, especially the dispatchers and drivers whom so many rely on for safe and courteous service; local area businesses, social service agencies, individual community members and families, and all who have donated their time, money, and resources in an effort to seeing that KAT remains a viable successful program; and state and federal agencies.

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.

If you would like more information on this topic or to schedule an interview with Paul LaLonde, please contact him at the phone number listed above.

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