KAT CHRONICLE

NEWSLETTER FOR THE KENDALL COMMUNITY & PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM

SUMMER 2014 ISSUE

KAT NOTES

The Importance of Training
By: Paul LaLonde, Director of Kendall Area Transit

There’s a saying in the world of professional public transportation: No one who works in public transportation ever thought they’d end up there! I can’t tell whether it’s true for everyone, but it certainly is for me.

When I was deciding which colleges to attend, classes to take, and programs to enter, never once did I think that I was doing it so I could one day manage a community transit program. But life always throws us that Adam Wainwright style curveball.

From the time that I began my job as KAT Director, I have thoroughly enjoyed many aspects of the position. I have the privilege of working with a great group of people. The KAT staff is dedicated and tireless in their pursuit of providing a reliable, safe community and public transportation system to their friends and neighbors throughout Kendall County.

The world of community and public transportation is ever challenging, ever changing. As a way of keeping pace with the near constant landscape changes, I made it my priority to expand staff training opportunities in 2014.

(Continued on p. 11)

KAT CALENDAR

• Friday July 4th In observance of Independence Day, all KAT operations will be closed.

• Monday September 1st In observance of Labor Day, all KAT operations will be closed.

TRANSIT SPEAK: PASS-THROUGH

Pass-through grants are funds given to the states by the federal government and then distributed by the states to local governments. The states may disburse the pass-through federal funds to eligible local jurisdictions using formula allocations or competitive applications. In the case of Kendall Area Transit, Kendall County acts as the pass-through for the Voluntary Action Center, the non-profit agency that operates the community and public transportation program. The County applies for and receives federal and state transportation funding, ex. FTA Section 5311 and IL DOAP, and then “passes through” these funds to the VAC for use in KAT. These funds, however, require a local match component, which is shared by the County, the municipalities, and donations from private businesses and individuals to the VAC.
**VAC Staff, including KAT Bus Operator, Attends RTAC Roadeo**

Each spring the Rural Transit Assistance Center hosts their Transit ROADeo in Springfield! Contestants participate in four events: written test, wheelchair securement, pre-trip inspection, and driving. The winner of each event is presented with a plaque. The first, second, and third overall winner is presented with a trophy and a cash award. The first place winner also receives an all expense paid trip to participate in the National Roadeo that is sponsored by the Community Transportation Association of America. In the past, the Voluntary Action Center’s own Brad Gibbs has participated and won the event!

This year’s ROADeo was held on April 26th and for the first time, KAT was represented! Charlie Sondgeroth, a bus operator with KAT for over four years, said he was excited to attend and represent Kendall. He spent several weeks studying for the tests, and commented that even though he was a seasoned driving vet, he learned a lot of new techniques and ideas. He can’t wait to attend next year and do even better!

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**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.
**County Receives Two New Buses for KAT Fleet**

In 2012 Kendall County was awarded expansion vehicles for use in the Kendall Area Transit (KAT) program by the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT). The County was awarded two 12-passenger buses and one 5-passenger minivan. The minivan was delivered last autumn; on Thursday May 22nd, the two buses had arrived! As with the current KAT fleet, the two buses are handicapped accessible and have a capacity for twelve (12) passengers. However, unlike the older buses, these new ones have raised floors for a smoother wheelchair experience.

*Above:* On Thursday May 22nd, Val Nickerson, Assistant Operations Manager, and Susan Galles, KAT Bus Operator, inspect the new buses at the delivery site in Kankakee — making sure all mechanics and points of safety pass the quality control tests.

*Below:* Buses stickered and ready to go!
The Current Crisis in Bus Capital

It's no secret that community and public transportation use has been rising and rising over the past decade. Community and public transportation agencies have had a tough time dealing with the skyrocketing demand. The rapid rise in transportation demand has led to, what the Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA) calls, the Bus Capital Crisis.

Simply put, the bus capital crisis is a situation where there are not enough community and public transportation vehicles to meet the community’s ridership demands. This is a situation that affects all transportation agencies across the United States in some way.

To better tell the story of the bus capital crisis across the nation, CTAA has developed a special google map designed to highlight the impact of bus capital shortfalls on both agencies and states.

Here is their blurb concerning “downstate Illinois,” [of which Kendall County is a part]:

In downstate Illinois, more than $1 billion is needed over the next decade to support vehicles and bus facilities for replacement of existing capital assets as well as expansion of service to meet mobility needs. During that same time, a total of 761 buses and 3,138 paratransit vehicles will be needed just to maintain existing levels of service, while 168 buses and 419 paratransit vehicles are currently operating past their recommended retirement date.

This article originally appeared on PublicTransportation.com, an American Public Transportation Association website. For more information, please visit apta.com.

A Note on KAT’s Fleet

KAT has not been immune from the bus capital crisis, but thankfully help is on the way!

In 2013 the program was awarded six (6) vehicles. Four (4) vehicles will be replacements of older vehicles that have reached their useful life expectancy. Two (2) vehicles will be used to expand service. IDOT has advised us that tentatively these vehicles should be arriving in late autumn.

The high demand is both a testament to the need of these services in Kendall County, and to the public’s trust and gratitude in the service.

Save the Date!

2014 marks the Voluntary Action Center’s 40th anniversary! A celebration will be held on September 18th from 5pm to 8pm at the Kishwaukee Country Club in DeKalb. As more details emerge of the evening, we will keep you up to date. If a business or agency wishes to become an even sponsor, please contact Ellen Rogers, VAC Associate Director, at (815) 758-3932, or erogers@vadcck.com.
2013-2014 Membership Drive Donations: THANK YOU

The 2013-2014 Voluntary Action Center Membership Drive has come to a close. Though we fell short of our target amount, we were still able to raise $3,000 for the KAT program. We sincerely appreciate the generosity of the community, who help us do what we do best, provide rides to those who otherwise may not have one. Thank you to our friends and supporters throughout the greater Kendall County area!

2013-2014 ORGANIZATIONAL GIFTS

2013-2014 INDIVIDUAL GIFTS

Anna Lessick
Bette Schoenholtz
Betty Anderson
Blanca Mustafa
Claire Duy
Delores Glynn
Edward & Priscilla Gruber
Dianna May
Esther Pierce
Gordon Lehnert

Jack & Jill Hauser
Janet Schor
Jean Ingemunson
Jeanine Ecklund
Josephine Lorenz
Jo Kledzinski
Lucille Maly
Martha Hettinger
Mary Ellen Herron

Mary Ellis & Earl Bushnell
Richard & Eleanor Wenckus
Richard & Lori Jansen
Scott & Heather Gryder
Steve & Mary Kapernekas
Susan Johnson
Thomas & Margaret Wagner
Walter & Kathleen Sullivan
**TRANSITions**

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

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**KAT’s Happy Anniversaries!**

**Jeri Shick**  
Scheduler - 3 years, June 2011

**Craig Riemenschneider**  
Bus Operator - 1 year, April 2013

**Laura Keyser**  
Dispatcher - 1 year, April 2013

**Frank Suarez**  
Bus Operator - 1 Year, April 2013

**Sara Iobbi**  
Travel Trainer - 1 year, May 2013

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**Mike Neuenkirchen, Dispatcher**  
Mike, a lifelong Boulder Hill resident, is excited to join the KAT staff as a dispatcher and maintenance officer. Most recently he worked for the Bureau Putnam Area Rural Transit system. He is proud of helping to guide that system as it experienced tremendous growth - similar to systems around the state and country.

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**Scott Shockley, Bus Operator**  
Scott joined the KAT staff after nearly 30 years as a police officer with both the Kendall County Sheriff's Dept. and the Oswego P.D. He couldn’t resist the urge to continue serving the public and looks forward to helping residents get to their destinations safely.

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**Rob Dearborn, Bus Operator**  
Rob used to own and operate the Bridge Street Café in downtown Yorkville for 20 years. After selling the business, he wanted to stay active in the community. In addition to volunteering at the food pantry, he looks forward to helping seniors, individuals with disabilities, and maybe even some of his former customers get around the area!
Travel Training Gives A New Perspective by: Sara Iobbi

Travel training is a relatively new professional field in the world of community transportation. Travel training is a self-paced process that teaches KAT riders to safely and independently use the public bus. The ability to live a self-sufficient life is important to everyone, and the ability to travel between home and destinations of choice is an integral part of self-sufficient living. Travel training promotes people’s wellbeing by enabling independence. Community mobility has considerable importance by facilitating access to enable interactions with others. Restricted community mobility may reduce social contacts and negatively affect physical and mental health.

Travel training helps people make journeys safely using public transportation, enabling engagement services that may otherwise be unavailable. Through travel training services, people in the community can learn how to use general public transportation for their transit trips. Community members can utilize travel training for medical appointments, purchasing groceries, picking up medicines, or any trip they’d like to make. Travel training is available free of charge, and can be done on a one-on-one basis or presented to groups.

So far in 2014, I have had the opportunity to do presentations at Heritage Woods in Yorkville, Bickford Senior Living in Oswego, the Kendall County Special Education Coop., and the Kendall County Senior Providers May meeting. I have also, had some great experiences with KAT riders, performing one-on-one travel training exercises.

For example, I helped one Kendall county resident learn how to use the bus back in April. She was in an unfortunate position. She had not left her residence in years, had no friends or family in the area, and had needed to go to the doctor for several months. She was very appreciative to get some outside interaction, fresh air, and be able to make it to her doctor’s appointments when she found out about our services.

Diannaha and I had an excellent time presenting to the Kendall County Special Education Coop. We gave the presentation the day before their field trip with KAT to prepare them. This was our second year in a row presenting to them. They were an interactive and fun group to work with.

Increasing community mobility is the ultimate goal of travel training. Through travel training services, people in the community can learn how to use general public transportation for their transit trips. My background in social work has given me knowledge and experience in working with diverse and vulnerable populations. Travel Training is free and can be done one-on-one or can be presented to a group. I truly enjoy helping individuals practice using the bus, traveling to different locations, and making them feel comfortable with using public transportation.

If you wish to learn more about travel training, or would like to schedule an appointment, please contact me at siobbi@co.kendall.il.us or (630) 882-6970.
**Wish to Help VAC Provide Rides?**

For every $100 the Voluntary Action Center receives, six rides can be provided to community members in need of transportation. VAC and our riders thank you for the support!

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**VAC Donation Gift Form**

Yes, I would like to donate to the Voluntary Action Center and help support the KAT program!

- [ ] Individual / Family Gift
- [ ] Corporate Gift

Name/Business:___________________________________

Address:_________________________________________

City:_____________________________ Zip____________

Phone:___________________________________________

Email____________________________________________

- [ ] $25 Gift
- [ ] $50 Gift
- [ ] $75 Gift
- [ ] $100 Gift

*Any amount will be greatly appreciated!*

Please mail Donation Gift to:

Voluntary Action Center
Kendall Area Transit
109 W. Ridge Street Room 002
Yorkville, IL 60560

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**KAT Ridership - Fiscal Year 2014 Roundup**

The 2014 KAT Fiscal Year has just ended and ridership is up 40% over FY 2013! Through KAT, the VAC has provided 23,852 paratransit trips and 11,464 park and ride trips for a total of 35,316 total rides! KAT averaged 144 rides/day. These figures showcase that demand is high for community and public transportation options in the region. As KAT is expected to receive several new vehicles in the coming months, staff is excited to continue providing the Kendall County community with transit. Thank you to all our riders, community contributors, and local partners that help make this possible!

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**KAT in the Community**

*Above: On Saturday April 12th, Diannaha and Sara attended the Oswego Chamber Business and Consumer EXPO. They were able to reach out to residents to explain and promote KAT community transportation services. Bottom: Kendall County Board member Dan Koukol attended the Oswego Community and Consumer EXPO and made sure to stop by the KAT booth!*
**STAFF SPOTLIGHT**

**Name:** Gary Miller  
**Joined VAC:** Nov. 2012  
**Position:** Bus Operator, Park and Ride

**Before KAT:** I worked for Lowes in Oswego as a delivery manager until it closed and before that as a route driver for 20 years delivering seafood to area stores and restaurants.

**Favorite Part of the Job:** I enjoy the short commute to work and having weekends and holidays off!

**Most Rewarding Experience Thus Far:** Getting the riders to the train station on time and safely no matter the road conditions or weather conditions.

**Hobbies:** I enjoy traveling to see my son play baseball around the country, going to concerts, cooking, and landscaping my yard.

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“It really enjoy chatting with the riders. It always makes my day when they get off the bus and tell me ‘thank you’ and ‘have a good day.’”
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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) IGO-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.

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- 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.
**KAT Travel Training Program**

**What is Travel Training?**
Travel training is a self-paced process that teaches KAT riders how to safely and independently use the public bus. Travel destinations are the trainee’s choice and can include: work, school, medical appointments, and recreation sites.

**Who Should Participate?**
Any rider in need of assistance and those who wish to become more independent. Your residence and destination should be in the KAT designated service area.

**Costs:**
Travel training is provided free-of-charge except for your bus fare while training is taking place.

**Training Process:**
A mobility instructor will travel with you to your desired destination at times of your convenience. The instructor will stay with you, teaching you KAT procedures, skills, and techniques for safe travel. Training is conducted in a series of steps from initial one-on-one instruction to the gradual fading of trainer assistance leading to independent travel. A trainer will stay with you until you feel comfortable and confident riding the bus.

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**Benefits of Travel Training:**
- Enhances freedom, mobility and independence.
- Provides access to safe and low-cost transportation.
- Increases self-confidence.
- Promotes healthy living by helping you stay active in the community.

**KAT Travel Trainers Can Teach You:**
- How to plan your trip
- How to get to and from your bus
- How to recognize bus numbers, bus stops, and landmarks
- How to pay fares and purchase tickets and passes
- How to board with a mobility device
- Where to position your mobility device on the bus
- How to prepare for the unexpected
- How to read and understand route maps and schedules

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**Don’t wait. Your road to independence can start today!**

1. **Call KAT** at (630) 882-6970 to learn more about our Travel Training Program.

2. **Schedule an appointment** with our Travel Trainer for a travel needs assessment.
Thank You for Your Generosity!

Recently, several Yorkville area businesses have donated to the Voluntary Action Center for use in the KAT program! We want to thank **Munchies, Mike & Denise’s Pizzeria, Smokey’s Woodpit BBQ, and Dairy Queen** for their support! Their generosity will help the VAC provide bus service to seniors, the disabled, and others throughout our community!

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**PT Bus Operators Wanted**

Looking for a PT job? Like to help people and have an outgoing, friendly personality? Then consider applying to join the Kendall Area Transit staff as a Bus Operator! To apply, read below!

Voluntary Action Center is hiring part time bus operators for Kendall Area Transit. Must be at least 21 years of age, excellent driving record, excellent oral and written communication skills, knowledge of Kendall County and surrounding areas. CDL required within 30 days of hire. Previous paratransit driving and dispatching experience are pluses. Must pass pre-employment drug screen. To apply, contact Paul at (630) 882-6970, or apply in person at 109 W. Ridge St., Rm. 002, Yorkville, IL. Drug free workplace. EEOE.

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**Cat Rides the Bus**

The story behind this picture of the year: A 15 year old pet cat named Dodger hops on and off public transport at the bus station near his home in England. He sits on bemused passengers’ laps as the bus makes up to 10 mile round trips. Bus drivers often bring him food and know which stop to let him off at the end of his day.
**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.*

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**Voluntary Action Center**

**Kendall Area Transit**

109 W. Ridge Street
Room 002
Yorkville, IL 60560

Toll Free: (877) IGO-4KAT
Phone: (630) 882-6970
Fax: (630) 882-6971
Email: kdialpach2@co.kendall.il.us
Website: co.kendall.il.us/kendall-area-transit

Facebook: facebook.com/KendallAreaTransit

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**KAT Notes (continued from page 1)**

As the nonprofit operator of KAT, the Voluntary Action Center (VAC) takes great pride in training our staff. We always strive to provide our bus operators, dispatchers, schedulers, and managers with the most up-to-date knowledge, skills, and trends around the industry.

Here are some of the training goals I have for 2014 to

- Update the Bus Operator, Dispatcher/Scheduler, and Transit Manager handbooks,
- Creation of a Disability Awareness/Training Guidebook,
- Introduction of expanded training seminars, including disability awareness and customer service workshops,
- Expanded staff enrollment in online courses specifically designed for the public transportation industry.

These goals are in addition to our already extensive training seminars, which include Emergency Procedures, Defensive Driving, and Passenger Assistance workshops, as well as extensive use of the RTAC resource library.

The importance of these efforts cannot be understated. As safety is a key priority of VAC, training is the single most important tool we have in ensuring safe operation and transport of our community members.

While I never thought I’d end up in the world of transit, I am glad I did. I am full of pride when I see new and seasoned staff members enjoy learning new things and the joy on their faces when they put that knowledge to use assisting our riders!

I look forward to continue providing the community with the best service possible, and I expect these expanded training efforts to facilitate that goal.