RMTD to celebrate 40th anniversary throughout 2017

As part of its anniversary celebration, Rides Mass Transit District has been rolling out a new, updated logo. RMTD will be celebrating its 40th anniversary throughout 2017.

The service was established in 1977 in Hardin and Pope counties as the Rural Initiative Development of Effective Services.

At the start, there were four, 15-passenger vans in the fleet which were primarily used to transport older adults to nutrition centers and to deliver meals to those who were homebound.

Today, RMTD is the largest rural public transportation provider in Illinois serving more than 18 counties. The organization employs over 215 people across southeastern and east central Illinois and transports 686,000 residents each year on its more than 150 buses.

RMTD buses can connect the public to local, regional and national destinations. The fleet travels nearly 3.7 million miles annually.

More information can be found by visiting ridesmtd.com.
Division of Rides Mass Transit District gets new name, new look

Rides Mass Transit District is pleased to announce the former MedTrans Call Center, located in Williamson County, is now the Rides Plus Call Center.

Rides Plus can continue to be utilized as a one-stop transportation resource for medical facilities and patients across southern Illinois.

The program is made possible through Federal Transit Administration grant funding as part of a partnership with Southern Illinois University’s Center for Rural Health and Social Service Development and a “Rides to Wellness” program which focuses on innovative solutions for patients.

“We appreciate the federal funding opportunity that allows this program to serve the residents of southern Illinois,” said RMTD CEO Bill Jung. “With the help of the Illinois delegation, including Congressman (John) Shimkus (R-Collinsville), Congressman (Mike) Bost (R-Murphysboro) and Sen. Durbin, we are able to ensure that residents no longer have a transportation barrier when it comes to getting to medical appointments. The goal of the program is to greatly reduce the risk of re-hospitalization and the long-term costs associated with healthcare.”

Medical or healthcare facilities are able to contact 844-220-1243 in order to arrange transportation or to speak with a mobility specialist.

Mobility specialists at the Rides Plus location in Energy are able to coordinate with other transportation organizations throughout the region to provide the most cost-effective transportation options for all residents.
RMTD ‘delivers’ clothing donation to area organization

Rides Mass Transit District, the largest rural transportation district in Illinois, recently delivered several boxes of close-out items from a local clothing store to an area organization focused on dependent, neglected and abused children.

Linda Lamb, store manager of Factory Connection in Olney, came up with the idea to donate the items to the Baptist Children’s Home and Family Services location in Carmi.

Rides Mass Transit District operates daily routes that connect residents between the two areas which made it easy for the clothing to make its way from Richland County via RMTD’s fleet.

“Here in Olney, we wanted to help make a difference,” said RMTD Richland County supervisor Bill Lamb. “We were happy to play a small role of connecting the generosity of the Factory Connection to the Baptist Children’s Home.”

Nearly five boxes of female clothing left the Olney location to be handed out to residents of the facility in White County.

“We were pleased to be able to deliver these items that can make an impact in the lives of so many young people in and around Carmi,” said RMTD White County supervisor Judy Whitaker.

RMTD CEO Bill Jung says it’s acts like these that make a special bond between local communities.

“This is a special area and a region full of helpful people,” said Jung. “Making a positive impact is a principle that is key to the Rides message. We make a difference in the lives of getting people where they need to be and were able to make a positive impact in this case as well.”

Each year, RMTD buses travel nearly 3.7 million miles taking residents of all ages to work, medical appointments, school, socialize and to connect to other forms of mass transit.
Human Service Spotlight - UIC Division of Specialized Care for Children

Rides Mass Transit District prides itself on being able to partner with multiple human service agencies and organizations across the region.

The University of Illinois at Chicago’s Division of Specialized Care for Children (DSCC) is one of those organizations that has formed a partnership with the largest rural public transportation provider in Illinois. DSCC serves Illinois families from all across the state with children and youth from birth to age 21 who have a chronic eligible medical condition.

DSCC Communications Manager Amanda Simhauser says while there are some income guidelines for families who receive financial support from DSCC, the program provides help to all eligible children at no cost. Better yet, DSCC partners with Illinois families and communities to help them connect to services and resources. Simhauser says the program can be a big help for families not knowing where to turn for help.

“We can provide access to diagnostic testing, help find specialized medical care and help families maximize insurance coverage,” Simhauser says. “We can also help communicate with doctors and schools and help prepare families for when their children are transitioning into adulthood. We try and help and support the family and work with their providers to make sure everyone is focused on the health, happiness and long-term success of the child. We try to make it easier for families to communicate with all who are involved in their child’s care and keep everybody on the same page.”

Families in and around southern Illinois have been able to utilize the services DSCC offers out of its Marion office in conjunction with the public transportation options RMTD provides.

"Often it can be difficult for families with to arrange travel with everything on their plate,” says Simhauser. “We have staff from doctor’s offices that tell us families have been doing a good job of keeping their appointments because of reliable transportation.”

If a family might be in need of services, Simhauser suggests reaching out to a local DSCC office. There are 12 located across the state.

“Our assistance is completely free to families,” says Simhauser. “Even though we have eligible impairment categories, we would still encourage families to contact us. We can even refer families with places to go where they can get help.”

More information about DSCC can be found by visiting dscc.uic.edu or by calling 800-322-3722.
RMTD offering to take residents to polls for April Election

Rides Mass Transit District is continuing its efforts to provide complimentary transportation to the polls for the April 4 Consolidated Election.

In the November 2016 General Election, more than 50 residents took advantage of using public transportation in order to cast their ballots.

“This is one of the most rewarding public service acts we can offer,” said RMTD CEO Bill Jung. “It gives those who might otherwise not have an opportunity to vote a chance to exercise an extremely important right.”

If someone needs transportation April 4, they are asked to call their local RMTD operation center.

In Saline, Gallatin, Hardin and Pope counties that number is 877-667-6119.

Voters in Williamson County may phone 993-1900 or 877-743-3402.

Residents in Hamilton and White counties may phone 877-667-6118.
Board of Directors Spotlight - Rick Preston

-Veterans and Disabled Communities Representative
-Appointed to RMTD Board February 2017
-Worked for veteran’s transportation service out of Marion VA for more than nine years
-Served 1973-76 in U.S. Navy
-Background in trucking

“That’s why I’m here is for the veterans and anybody with a disability because I understand how hard it is for them to get from home to their clinics,” said Preston.