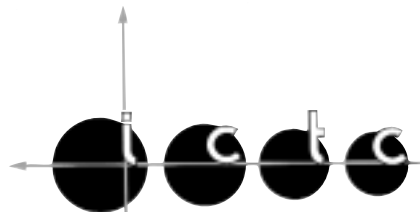


Transit Times

isabella county transportation commission

JANUARY 2007

QUARTERLY REPORT



ICTC Employees Top United Way Goal

Drivers and staff "dig deep" to help those in need

This year the employees of ICTC set a goal to raise \$6000 for United Way campaign that ran from September to December of 2006. It was with great pride and considerable sacrifice that the employees raised a total of \$7976!

For more than a decade the drivers and staff of the Isabella County Transportation Commission have contributed generously to our local annual United Way Campaign.

It is no coincidence that working with many of those who find themselves in need in difficult times sensitizes ICTC employees to the plight of those less fortunate than themselves. Every day drivers deliver passengers to dialysis, counseling and emergency food programs. They hear the stories of difficult

times in an often, difficult world. They see single moms and their children struggling to get educated or hold a job. They see seniors striving to maintain their independence in the face of often daunting medical problems. They interact with the disabilities community transporting them, often using mobility devices, to work and to social interactions that define the quality of everyday life.

But it is not enough to take from their job the satisfaction of assisting those they serve. They also recognize the fragile and often miniscule line between those that have and those that have not. They are often looking to see what they can do above and beyond the routine of their job. Some of this can be accomplished through helping a senior with their

groceries, making sure mom's precious child reaches their destination safely or helping with friendly advice when knowledge of the community and services is in doubt. But more and more every year the employees of ICTC have come to recognize the value to those in need of United Way agencies and the programs United Way helps fund.

The ICTC could not be prouder of the generosity of its employees and their recognition of the personal satisfaction that comes from giving to the needy in our community. Thanks again to all the drivers and staff that made this years United Way campaign such an overwhelming success.

ICTC records record number of riders

For the first quarter of the ICTC fiscal year, from October 1, 2006 through December 31, 2006 **124,219 passengers!**

ICTC Phone System Replaces 20 Year Old Equipment

New phones help manage high volume of calls

With a daily ridership of more than 1500 passengers, advance service requests and inquires about current ride request status, as well as, general information questions, it is easy to see how the ever increasing number of phone calls had become an issue in the dispatch area for ICTC.

With a phone system purchased more than 20 years ago, ICTC operations staff struggled with getting to customers in a timely manor. The three lines for ride requests were often ringing busy to our customer base. It became painfully apparent that a new system that would bring with it the modern convenience of automated answering and routing of phone requests was necessary.

Using a capital equipment grant from FTA, ICTC selected Omega Systems to provide a state-of-the-art phone system that would meet ICTC current needs, and position them for future communications expansions.

Using the software program Vertical TeleVantage, the new system now in place at

ICTC, not only automatically answers those contacting ICTC for ride requests, it provides options to callers allowing them to route themselves directly to personnel in administration, accounting or maintenance. Callers that must wait to speak with a customer service representative are provided with a music background while on hold, and are frequently reminded of the importance of their call, as well as other options available to them.

Data information available to the customer service representatives, like phone number and name of caller or location of caller, is of great assistance in handling requests for service efficiently and effectively. The volume of calls, more than 1000 a day, at peak periods of the day, will often hit 60 to 70 calls an hour. With requests for information or assistance with setting up calls often taking several minutes per call, it is easy to see how this type of management system is vital to the continued growth and efficient management of ICTC services.

Apartment Route Service Sees New Developments

Community's first bus shelters go into use

The Isabella County Transportation Commission (ICTC) has developed fixed-route bus service that serves nine apartment complexes with connector service to and from CMU. These routes, paid in full by the owners of the complexes, have continued to flourish since the demise of on-campus service, after severe budget restrictions necessitated CMU to no longer fund the on campus portion.



Two large shelters at CMU serve riders waiting for return service to their apartment complexes. Smaller shelters are at most stops in the apartment complexes being served.

ICTC had requested a grant to provide bus shelters for this service from the Federal Transportation Administration (FTA) and just before Christmas the first of these shelters went into place at the complexes and at the bus stop location at CMU.

ICTC is the first rural transit system in the state of Michigan to receive such a grant for shelter use on fixed-routes. Additional shelters will also become a part of the ICTC dial-a-ride service in areas that are restricted for access by transit vehicles. There are several mobile home developments that, because of layout or other restrictions, require residents to meet the ICTC bus at the front of the complex. These shelters will also afford residents at these locations to have a place to wait for their ride sheltered from the elements.

Busy parking lot areas at schools and businesses will also be spots where ICTC shelters can assist the customer, and our drivers, in loading and unloading avoiding the congestion.

Brasco International, Inc., a shelter manufacturer in the

Detroit area, was awarded the contract for supplying the bus shelters. Made of anodized aluminum and safety glass the structures are built to last for years and will serve the community as the increased traffic and population density in the area continues to show the need for fixed-route service. The shelters also have benches made of recycled plastic and are wheelchair accessible, meeting the standards of the American's with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Further use of these shelters is planned in the Union Commons Mall area, and other high traffic retail areas, to better serve these areas with routed service. Routed service provides a greater time sensitivity than the dial-a-ride service, since bus arrival/departure times are preset, thus avoiding the uncertainty of arrival times for the demand response style service that is dial-a-ride.

ICTC is committed to developing public transit service to meet the needs of all Isabella county residents. These newest additions to the fixed-route service are just one of many ways in which ICTC is moving the future of public transportation forward. Remember, ICTC, we're going your way!

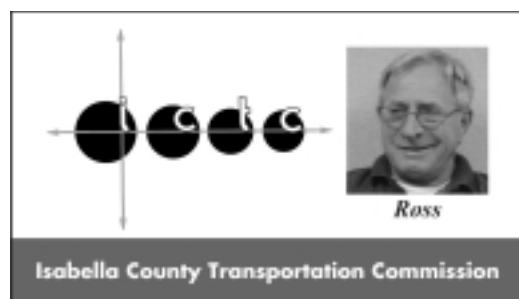
For further information on ICTC fixed-route service or the ICTC bus shelters, contact ICTC Director of Marketing and Public Relations, Denny Adams at 989/773-2913, extension 106 or e-mail, ictcpr@yahoo.com.

New Program Helps Identify Employees

ID badges now in use by ICTC drivers

Beginning this January ICTC drivers have been issued photo ID badges. These identification cards can be clipped to a lapel or worn around the neck on a lanyard. These ID's

are not required, but have come into use with the increased need for drivers to occasionally enter schools, medical facilities and government buildings where concerns over security have grown over the recent years.



Drivers actually requested such identification to avoid any concerns when the above situations occur. These badges simply display the ICTC logo, a photo of the employee and their first name. Many drivers and riders have already expressed appreciation for this ID program. Riders seem to enjoy being able to address their driver by name, and are comforted by the acknowledgement that the appropriate, trained professional is behind the wheel.

Take a ride, meet your driver and let us know what you think. At ICTC, we take pride in our ride!

New Funding Helps Broaden Services

County gets night runs to help residents return to work

A primary focus of rural public transportation is in assisting those that are transportation dependent. This group includes many seniors, youths and those in the disabilities community, but also includes the portion of our society that has fallen on hard economic times. Some may have been unemployed for a period of time, while others may find themselves facing the job market for the first time due to divorce or death of the family breadwinner.

Specific funding to assist those in the transition from unemployed to gainfully employed is the focus of funding coming from the federal government in the form of an FTA program known as JARC, Job Access Reverse Commute.

ICTC has applied for and received funding under the JARC program to assist those attempting to re-enter the job market. This fiscal year ICTC will receive partial funding to expand its county service into the evening hours. This service was developed under a community human services plan, which includes input from the Michigan Department of Human Services and the Michigan Works program, as well as other human service agencies.

The most unmet need was determined to be service into the rural areas of the county later at night. Those trying to access the job market are often looking at second and third shift work. Prior to this expansion of service by ICTC, the last service from the out-county area into Mt. Pleasant was at 4PM. This meant that the latest trip from the outlying county areas might necessitate being picked up to ride into Mt. Pleasant at 5:30 - 6:00 PM., even if the job didn't start until 11:00 PM.

Sheldon Selected as Winter Rider of the Quarter

This rider chooses to use public transportation



The drivers and staff of Isabella County Transportation Commission have selected lifelong Mt. Pleasant resident Anne Sheldon as the winter Rider of the Quarter. This recognition is given to an ICTC rider who exemplifies the qualities most appreciated by our transit staff.

Anne was born and raised in Mt. Pleasant, one of the fifteen children of Charley and Helen Sheldon. Her father worked as a self-employed mechanic, while mom joined the work force outside the home after raising all those children by working at the "Regional Center", as it was known in those days. Anne has been a Westside resident all her life.

She currently works at Downtown Discount, where she has been employed for the past seven years. Prior to that she worked for 35 years at what was last known as the Piccadilly Party Store, or as the kids in the neighborhood called it "the candy store".

Since traditional 8AM -5 PM jobs have become more difficult to find in this retail/service driven economy, ICTC has now added service to the out-county areas at approximately 6PM, 8PM and 10:00PM. These new service times allow for more effective service for those trying to arrive in Mt. Pleasant for these late starting positions, and also for service to home for many that find themselves in need of service after 5:00 PM.

In addition, many youth programs that run later, as well as activities for the family that occur during the evening hours, are available to those who are dependent upon or choose to use ICTC services for their transportation needs.

It is important to note, that since this is a new service offering, in the beginning there will be many times when ICTC is not scheduled at the above times, because we have not received a ride request for that time frame. Calling late in the day, to see what evening service is available that evening may be disappointing, since ICTC needs prior knowledge of transportation service needs in order to have enough drivers and buses on the road to meet that need. Calling a day or two ahead of your anticipated need allows ICTC to have sufficient staffing to meet your ride request.

REMEMBER, CALL AHEAD FOR THE BEST SERVICE! Same day, short notice requests for evening service may not be able to be met.

Please contact ICTC customer service representatives at 989/772-9441 to determine which service may be available to meet your evening transportation needs.

Anne raised three children, Rocky, Kandace and Carrie. Rocky drives truck and still lives in the area, while Kandace lives in Florida and Carrie lives in Roseville. Collectively they have provided Anne with five grandchildren.

Anne has been using ICTC bus service since its inception, in 1974. "I sold my car when ICTC started," she states. "I didn't like driving, and ICTC gave me a choice to ride public transportation. I even gave up my driver's license. Nobody can force me to drive again!"

When asked for her evaluation of ICTC services, Anne stated, "You're always there whenever I need you, which is pretty much every day." What is her advice to those who ask about using ICTC? "It's great, if you have to go somewhere, just call them." To Anne being flexible is the key. If she hears someone complain about waiting she just says, "Give 'em a break, they can't be everywhere at once."

"The ICTC staff is great", she adds. "They're friendly and nice, so after a while you just become friends with them."

The ICTC is honored to be considered a friend, Anne. In recognition of Anne's exemplary approach to ICTC services and its employees, she has received this recognition and a complimentary bus pass. Thanks again for your kind words and for being our friend.

ICTC Now Accepts Visa

Purchases at ICTC offices can now be done with charge card

ICTC has recently added the ability for customers to purchase products and services with the use of a credit or debit card. Available for ICTC business office purchases only, VISA and MASTERCARD credit and debit cards are now accepted.

Purchases of passes and prepaid services, as well as, payment for road skills tests can now be done with your personal or business credit card.

HOURS

Note: phones are open one half hour before and after times indicated.

Monday through Saturday.....6:30 a.m. until 12:00 midnight
Sunday.....8:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m.

Latest scheduled ride at 11:30 pm (4:30 pm Sun)

Number of available rides at closing is limited. CALL EARLY!!

FARES

	Fare (one way)	Pass (44 rides)	1/2 Pass (22 rides)
Adult.....	\$2.00	\$65.00	\$33.00
Youth (Under 18)	\$1.50	\$50.00	\$25.00
Senior/Disabled	\$1.00	\$35.00	\$18.00

772-9441

ictcbus.org

Are there any questions or issues you'd like to have answered through the Transit Times? Contact Rick Atkin, ICTC General Manager at 2100 Transportation Drive, Mt. Pleasant, MI 48858 or call (989) 773-2913.

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