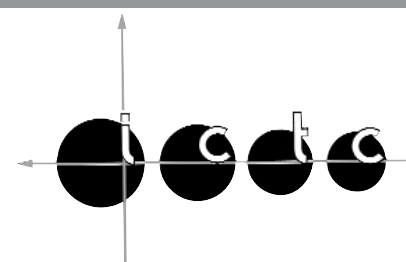


# Transit Times



## isabella county transportation commission

OCTOBER 2010

QUARTERLY REPORT

### Partnerships Drive Route Development

## Free rides highlight current route service

The Isabella County Transportation Commission has entered another era of transit leadership with its development of route service funded by partnerships, both private and public. The first development of route service partnership was the private/public partnership with various student housing apartment complexes near Central Michigan University.

In early 2001 CMU approached ICTC regarding finding a way to solve its parking problem on campus. Although it had a large number of parking spaces throughout campus, the perception by students was that not enough of the parking was nearby classroom buildings and, therefore, not meeting their needs. This began a two year experiment of developing an on-campus shuttle service to serve CMU students. For two years this service developed and expanded, but when budget cuts hit CMU the shuttle bus routes ended on campus.

This presented the opportunity to form private/public partnerships with some of the student apartment complexes off campus to provide service to their residents to get to class. Starting with just three apartment complexes in 2004, this service has now developed into three routes serving nine complexes surrounding CMU. Annual ridership in this service has grown from a fledgling 12,000 riders during the first semester to more than 223,000 riders last school year.

Expanding this year, with a route connecting the CMU campus with the Mt. Pleasant downtown area, ICTC has again partnered with another public agency (CMU) to

provide this additional route. This route extends and connects service to all classrooms on campus, to the downtown area and to the other three routes already in existence. CMU's commitment to better serve its students, faculty and staff has resulted in this additional route and a continuation of route service that operates "fare free" for its users. Students, as well as all employees of CMU, now have the ability to access timed stops along the routes that allow for movement throughout the community with no more hassle than simply waiting at the bus stop and hopping on board.

The city of Mt. Pleasant has also joined in this partnership in support of timed stop route service, allowing for those boarding at designated stops to ride to all route destinations without having to pay a fare. The town-center bus stop, alongside First Bank on Broadway Street, is the primary boarding location for the downtown community. This newest service allows for those seeking access to CMU, as well as apartment complex residents and on-campus CMU students and staff, seeking to move about the community, a time-sensitive, and cost effective, way to travel and return.

Further development of route service is being pursued by ICTC, with the hope of adding more routes to its county-wide demand response service that has been its staple for the past 36 years. For more information you can go to the ICTC website at [ictcbus.com](http://ictcbus.com) or contact ICTC Marketing Director Dennis Adams at [dadams@ictcbus.com](mailto:dadams@ictcbus.com).

### Prout Recognized at Front Line Employees Conference

## "Spirit of Public Transportation" award presented

Jen Prout was recognized at the MASSTrans "Frontline Employees" Conference in Bay City on September 11, 2010. The conference for drivers, dispatchers and mechanics is a three day training event, featuring breakout sessions on a number of issues that are faced on a daily basis by frontline transit employees. Sharon Edgar, Michigan Department of Transportation Administrator for the Bureau of Passenger Transportation gave out the awards during the luncheon at the conference on Saturday.

Jen was nominated by the Isabella County Transportation Commission as a recipient of the "Spirit of Public Transportation" award for her years of service and dedication to her job. Jen has been employed by ICTC as a driver for more than 10 years, where her demeanor and dedication to her customers needs alone would warrant this recognition.

But, in addition, she works with the ICTC Trainer in evaluating and training new employees, as well as, refreshing current drivers on the many procedures involved in being a good public transit bus driver.

Over the years Jen has earned a number of training certifications including; Passenger Assistance Training (PAT), Passenger Service and Safety (PASS), Q'Staint Train the Trainer. She also holds certifications from the Transportation Safety Institute (TSI) as a driver trainer and for dealing with transit emergencies.

Congratulations to Jen for a job well done and for being recognized for her achievements.



JEN PROUT

### Future of Public Transportation Faces Challenge

## Investment in public transit makes good economic sense

The future of Michigan's public transportation, both urban and rural, is in jeopardy from a lack of funding at a time of ever increasing demand for service. The recent series of editorials in the Detroit Free Press accurately describes the circumstance facing public transit. The last time there was an increase in the Michigan gas tax was in 1997, and public transit was shut out of any money from that increase, when all the new revenue generated was directed to the highway side of transportation.

The perspective at that time was that more, and improved, roads were all that was necessary to keep Michigan on track for the future. Even the Michigan Transportation and Infrastructure Association (MITA), whose current proposal for a 4 cent raise in the user fees collected through gasoline purchases, recognizes the shortsightedness of that approach. Putting money only into road building is a perfect example of when more is not necessarily better.

Michigan's economy failed for decades to come to grips with the singular focus on the auto industry as its job base, and the personal auto as the sole means of transportation. The effect of building more and more highways has not been to solve the mobility issues of our urban centers.

Rural public transportation has become vital to many to provide

mobility within their communities. An ever increasing number of working Americans, struggling to make ends meet, and no longer able to purchase, insure and fuel a personal auto, have turned to public transportation. Public transportation is now integrated with its partners on the highway side, recognizing the importance of all citizens to the mobility that allows for the sustaining of life and home as we have come to expect in our society.

The Social and Economic Benefits of Public Transportation in Michigan model developed by economists to evaluate the effects of public transportation in Michigan shows that for every dollar spent on public transportation services in Michigan communities experience a dollar and a half of economic development. For every ten jobs in public transportation, another six jobs are created in the private sector. However, Michigan spends only about \$20 per resident annually on public transportation, compared with a national average of \$34 per person.

Aside from all the social arguments for public transportation serving our dependent groups of seniors, persons with disabilities and the young, it is now quite apparent that investment in public transportation makes good economic sense.

Michigan has long had a user fee attached to gasoline purchases to sup-

port transportation. Every community's drivers pay this fee each time they fuel their personal auto. But, in order to get those dollars back to our local communities to provide public transportation services, local incomes must be generated to draw down on the funds available to provide such services. Failure to provide transportation services means that our local fees paid on gasoline purchases are being spent by other communities. Isabella County has long supported public transportation with a millage that, combined with fares from the riders on its transit services, has allowed our residents to attain transportation services in support of our community that they have already paid to the state and federal governments to support such services.

The current proposed increase in the user fee attached to gasoline would generate sufficient funds for Michigan to both capture the federal funds available, when matched, to meet the needs for highway and bridge repair in our state, as well as, provide greater funding for public transit to move forward with planned development of services in our urban areas. This change, along with a modification of the distribution method for rural public transit, will assure adequate funding for the immediate future, and go a long way to restoring Michigan's economy.

### Independence is Key for Rider of Quarter

## Jessica loves to ride the bus

The Isabella County Transportation Commission (ICTC) drivers and staff have selected Jessica Hutchins as the Rider of the Quarter recognizing her as an exemplary public transit patron.

Jessica is the daughter of Mike and Cathy Hutchins of Mt. Pleasant. She is a full time employee of Mid Michigan Industries (MMI), where she has worked as a paper shredder for the last three years.

Jessica attended Shepherd Public Schools prior to starting at MMI. She has two brothers and lives in a rural area outside Mt. Pleasant with her parents. Jessica enjoys the wildlife in around her home, but more than anything she loves music, going out to dinner, shopping and riding the bus.

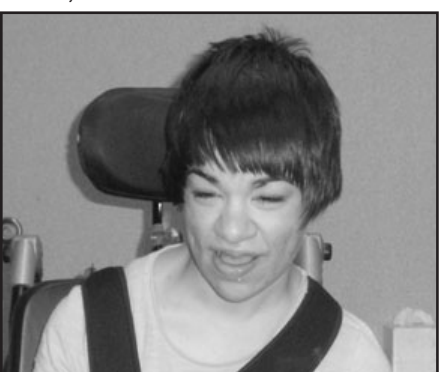
Jessica is essentially non-verbal, but she can certainly let you know when she is happy or excited about what she is doing. Her eyes light up and she becomes quite animated when friends approach and/or music catches her ear. She loves children's songs and flashes an enormous smile when someone sings to her, or entertains her with animal noises.

Some drivers are favorites, and Jessica greets them with a broad beaming smile. Becky, Kevin and Tom top her list, and she tops theirs as a favorite customer. Jessica rides every day to have dinner after coming home from her job. She loves KFC, McDonald's and, especially, Bob

Evans.

Jessica's dad, Mike, says, "ICTC is a lifesaver for us. Its wheelchair accessibility allows Jessica the independence she needs to get out." Cathy, Jessica's mom, adds, "We really appreciate the care taken with our daughter. Once the dispatcher called to indicate Jessica was having a medical problem, a seizure, and we were able to meet the bus and take care of the problem. It's great that you are looking out for your passengers and that they are not just getting on the bus and being forgotten about."

ICTC wants to thank Jessica for being a great transit patron, and congratulate her for being selected as the Rider of the Quarter. As a token of our appreciation, ICTC presented Jessica with a forty-four ride punch pass so she can continue to enjoy one of her favorite pastimes, and we can continue to provide such a necessary service to someone so grateful, and pleased, with the service we offer.



Jessica Hutchins has been selected as Rider of the Quarter.

## National Transportation Safety Week October 3rd through October 9th

Join the  
**Isabella County Transportation Commission (ICTC)**

And  
**Child & Family Enrichment Council (CAFÉ)**

Celebrate

## National Transportation Safety Week

Bring your vehicle and infant/toddler car seat in for a safety check. Child restraint seats will be inspected on a first come first serve basis.

## CHILD SAFETY SEAT CHECK

WHEN: Saturday, October 9th from 9:00 a.m. until Noon

WHERE: ICTC - 2100 E. Transportation Drive  
Directions: North of M-20 (High Street) off Lincoln Road to the east

For more information call  
CAFÉ @ 773-6444 or ICTC at 773-2913

### Skills Testing Keeps Drivers Focused on Performance

## 34th annual Michigan Small Bus Rodeo held in Mt. Pleasant

The 34th Annual Michigan Small Bus Rodeo was held in Mt. Pleasant on Friday, July 23, 2010. This competition serves as a training event for public transit drivers in four primary areas of the required skills to operate a small transit vehicle.

The event starts with a written test on law and procedural skills necessary for the daily operation of a transit vehicle. The contestants are then required to do a pre-trip inspection on a bus to determine if there are any safety violations. Drivers are then required to load and secure a passenger using a mobility device on a bus. The final challenge is to navigate a small transit bus through a series of ten obstacles representing on-the-road skills required in daily operation.

Sixteen transit agencies and 43 drivers took part in this year's event hosted by ICTC at the Comfort Inn Convention Center and using the parking area at CMU located just to the south of the football stadium. Sponsored by the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), the Michigan Association of Transportation Systems (MASSTrans) and the Michigan Public Transit Association (MPTA), the event also receives financial support from a number of private companies including Q'Straint, Inc., A.C. Carrier, Hoekstra Transportation, El Dorado National, Holland Bus, Arboc Mobility, Inc., Capital City Bus and International Corporation.

The Governor declared the day of the rodeo as "Michigan Public Transit Bus Driver Day" in the state of Michigan and in her proclamation states, "I encourage all residents of this state to recognize the dedication and hard work of Michigan's public transit bus drivers."

Winning drivers receive a trophy and a small stipend for their achievement, and the top three finishers in the individual competition are eligible to compete in the nation small bus rodeo, held annually by

the Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA) at its annual Expo, held next year in Indianapolis.

This year's winners in the various categories were;

### Individual Competition

1. Al Diana - Capital Area Transportation Authority (CATA) - Lansing
2. Dan Miller - Clinton Area Transit Service - St. Johns
3. Diana Hughes - Gladwin City/County Transit - Gladwin

### Team Competition

1. Clinton Area Transit Service
2. Capital Area Transportation Authority
3. Gladwin City/County Transit

**Rookie Award:** Brad Guilds - Blue Water Transit Authority - Port Huron

### Highest Written Score:

Tie between top three individual winners

### Highest Driving Course Score:

Al Diana - CATA

In addition to the above recognitions there are two other awards given. The first is to the individual who scores the highest on the wheelchair securement problem. Ten drivers this year scored a perfect 150 points in this part of the competition, and the tie was broken by the time it took to complete the problem. Recognized as the Q'Straint Michigan Driver of the Year was Troy Lowe of Branch Area Transit Authority in southwest Michigan who completed the exercise with a perfect score in 3 minutes and 14 seconds. Troy currently holds the record time in this event which has been determined by time as a tie breaker every year since its inception.

The final award is the recognition of the overall winner as the Michigan Transit Driver of the Year, Body-on-Chassis Division. A presentation of this award is scheduled later this month for Al Diana from the Capital Area Transportation Authority.

## 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.com

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.

paid advertisement