

PUBLIC TRANSIT NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 2026

CALENDAR - STATE FISCAL YEAR (OCTOBER 1 - DECEMBER 31)

SEPTEMBER

01 Intercity Bus Applications due

OCTOBER

01 ICAAP Applications due to Systems Planning Bureau

16 STA Special Projects Applications due

25 Regional/Small Urban Systems Quarterly Charter Report due

30 1st Quarter Fuel Tax Report due

30 Regional/Small Urban System DBE (April - September) Semi-Annual Reports due

30 Large Urban System Quarterly Charter Report due to FTA

30 Large Urban Quarterly TrAMS Reports (if in TMA) due to FTA

30 Large Urban Annual TrAMS Report (if in 50,000 - 200,000 UZA) due to FTA

NOVEMBER

01 1st Quarter Statistical Report due

15 Large Urban NTD Reports due to NTD

DECEMBER

01 Large Urban System DBE (April - September) Semi-Annual Report due to FTA

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

NTI CLASS FOR MANAGEMENT OF TRANSIT CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS There are still a few spots left!!! (This is eligible for Fellowship). CyRide is hosting an NTI Class for the Management of Transit Construction Projects on September 14, 15, and 16, 2026 at the Hilton Garden Inn at 1325 Dickinson Avenue in Ames, Iowa from 9:00 am. to 5:00 pm. The class size is limited to 35 people only. The cutoff date for registering is August 23, 2026.

Information on the class can be found at: <https://ce-catalog.rutgers.edu/courseDisplay.cfm?schID=97653>. Room block information: <https://group.hiltongardeninn.com/trw39j>

If you have any questions, please contact Cheryl Spencer, CyRide at 515.239.5512 or by email at cheryl.spencer@cyride.com.

National RTAP -Please join us on September 28, 2026 from 2:00-3:00 PM ET for a Fall for New National RTAP Resources Webinar. This fall, explore some of our newest resources: Mobility Management in Rural and Tribal Areas, Demand Responsive Transportation Data Standards Article and Directory, National RTAP Website Accessibility Menu, Incidental and Shared Use: Use of Assets for Non-Transit Purposes, Rural Mobility Hubs: A Community-Based Framework, and more.

NTI - There are several education opportunities available on the National Transit Institute's website: <https://ntionline.com/catalog/>. They offer in-person and virtual options.

IPTA - Mid-Year Meeting, November 9-10, 2026, in Cedar Falls, IA

TRANSIT DIRECTOR SPOTLIGHT ETHAN DUIN Council Bluffs

Ethan is new to transit as a profession, having recently stepped into the role of Resource & Program Coordinator for the City of Council Bluffs Public Works Department. While new to the administrative side of transit, he has been a transit rider, relying on both local and intercity bus systems while living in Spain and has used transit to navigate the Omaha metro area.

Originally from Omaha, he spent time in Western Nebraska for his education at Chadron State College and early career. Before transitioning to his current role, he served for several years with the City of Councils Bluffs in different roles. He also spent six months living in Spain, working as a conversational English assistant.

His current free time is devoted to his three-year-old daughter. His wife, Khin Moe Moe Aye, and him enjoy exploring the local restaurant scene and trying new types of food. While his family originates from the Omaha area, his wife is from Myanmar. Her parents still reside in Myanmar, and her sister lives in the Canadian Arctic. They enjoy keeping in touch with their family and friends scattered around the world!

KRISTIN'S KEYWORDS

Um, where did Summer go? Hopefully all of you enjoyed the season in whatever way you prefer... on the water, at the baseball diamond, on a lawnmower, in your garden, or locked in your comfortable 72 degree air-conditioned house pretending 95 degree days don't exist. My family visited Chicago for a vacation, seeing family and friends, attending a Cubs game, touring the Field Museum and walking to the 'bean', very much appreciating the availability of public transit along the way.

Unfortunately, late in the summer, I had a family member requiring some healthcare services. They were at Mary Greeley Medical Center in Ames, and in completing the registration information the form asked about their transportation after the procedure and noted the availability of HIRTA Public Transit. While HIRTA's services weren't required in our situation, I was happy/proud/impressed that it was mentioned.

I am constantly reminded of the essential nature of public transit for work, medical appointments, and even vacation convenience. That is why my heart hurts when I hear transit agencies in other areas of the country are going out of business, closing their doors. Public transit isn't just a 'nice to have' service, it's a 'need to have' service. There are several transit agencies here in Iowa having a rough time, financially, too. We all need to be exploring and brainstorming ideas about how we not only keep the lights on and fuel tanks filled, but also evaluating if the services offered today are the services needed today. It's easy to get stuck in the "that's the way it's always been done" rut when you have a million things on the list requiring immediate attention. However, conversations held with transit staff members (the dispatchers and drivers likely have ideas for service improvements), with your board members (what do they hear from their constituents about the service? Are there creative partnerships they envision based on other boards they serve on?), with each other (what's working/not working in the neighboring region or city?), and, of course, with the passengers and public about the transit offerings they'd like to see on the street may result in efficiencies and services that better accommodate the passengers. The Iowa DOT transit team is asking similar questions of each other to determine if there are ways we can assist and support these efforts. If your transit agency is exploring ideas for ensuring a strong transit future, let us know – we would love to hear them.

The Iowa DOT public transit team was happy to be able to accept applications for a second round of Fiscal Year 2027 State Transit Assistance (STA) Special Projects and for leftover COVID-relief dollars in July. At their meeting on August 11, 2026, the Iowa Transportation Commission approved the following projects to receive those funds:

STA Special Projects

Bettendorf Transit
Project: Eldridge & LeClaire Demand Response
Amount Recommended: \$23,651

MIDAS, Region 5
Project: Service Dispatch/Maintenance Software
Amount Recommended: \$44,000

Delaware, Dubuque & Jackson County RTA, Region 8
Project: RTA MOVE Initiative
Amount Recommended: \$32,000

SIT, Region 14
Project: Emergency Funding for Operations
Amount Recommended: \$95,430

Iowa DOT
Project: HIRTA Minivan Cost-sharing
Amount Recommended: \$45,796

COVID-Relief Projects: FTA Section 5310 ARPA

Iowa City Transit
Project: Cost of Contracted Services
Amount Recommended: \$63,599

COVID-Relief Projects: FTA Section 5311 CRRSAA/ARPA

SIT, Region 14
Project: Emergency Funding for Operations
Amount Recommended: \$57,180

EARL Public Transit, Region 1
Project: Operating Stabilization
Amount Recommended: \$45,430

Muscabus, Muscatine
Project: Transit System Route Optimization and Modernization Study
Amount Recommended: \$50,000

There are a couple funding opportunities with application deadlines soon, if your agency is interested:

- Federal Fiscal Year 2028 Iowa Clean Air Attainment Program (ICAAP), due October 1, 2026, <https://iowadot.gov/transportation-development/local-systems/grant-programs/iowa-clean-air-attainment-program-icaap>
- Fiscal Year 2028 State Transit Assistance (STA) Special Project, due October 16, 2026, information can be found in BlackCat under the Applications tab

Enjoy your Fall, may your yearend reviews and NTD reporting go smoothly, and we will see you at IPTA in November.

Thank you for all you do for public transit in Iowa.

Kristin



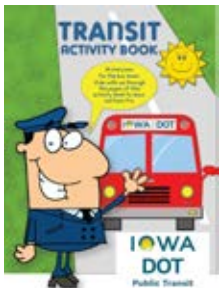
TRANSIT TIDBITS

The next Transit Tidbits will be sometime in December and the topic will be TPMS and will be presented by Brent Paulsen. As soon as a date is scheduled an invite will be sent out. If you want to be added to the invite list for these trainings please email Amy Colwell.

If you missed any previous Transit Tidbits you can watch the recordings or review the PowerPoints at <https://iowadot.gov/modes-travel/transit/training-resources#transit-tidbits>.

BLACKCAT LOG-IN REMINDER

The password reset process can be timely, often requiring a week or more for Iowa DOT staff to interface with our IT provider. We recommend accessing your Blackcat profile at least once a month to avoid any issues with logging in. If you need to add a new user profile or update to a new device, please notify Jeremy Johnson-Miller (Jeremy.johnsonmiller@iowadot.us) immediately to start the process of setting up a multi-factor authentication.



TRANSIT ACTIVITY BOOK

Did you know you can order the Iowa DOT's Public Transit Activity Books to hand out at events. These are free for any transit agency and can be shipped to your mailing address. To order for your transit agency or any questions please contact Amy Colwell at amy.colwell@iowadot.us.

2026 BUS AND BUS FACILITIES STATEWIDE APPLICATION

The Iowa DOT is requesting your support for an upcoming application to the US DOT Federal Transit Administration in the Buses and Bus Facilities Program. Iowa DOT is working with local transit agencies and seeking \$2,100,000 to replace some of the oldest transit revenue vehicles operating beyond their federal useful life. We currently have a list of 24 vehicles that are eligible for replacement that have not been funded yet. If awarded, we would begin replacing vehicles on that list in order of replacement rank. Individual vehicle replacements have been selected using Iowa's fleet management plan, the Public Transit Management System. This list includes vehicles from 9 public transit systems of Iowa's 35 public transit systems, with 5 small urbanized, and 4 rural transit systems. This project includes transit agencies in all four of Iowa's Congressional Districts. The grant application is due September 21, 2026.

RIDE TRANSIT DESIGN

12 years ago, Iowa DOT designed a 'Ride Transit' logo to celebrate Transit Week. The Iowa DOT has refreshed the logo and Amy sent out the logo to all transit agencies in July. Please feel free to utilize the design and create your own swag for your transit team.



2026 IPTA Awards



For the regional systems, earning transit system of the year by providing the most rides per dollar of operating expense and rides per capita, is Region 13/SWITA



For large urban system, with the most rides per dollar of operating expense and most rides per revenue mile is CAMBUS



For small urban system, with the most rides per dollar of operating expense and the largest increase in ridership from 2024 to 2025, is Ottumwa Transit

HONORABLE MENTIONS



Clinton MTA as the Small Urban Transit System with the highest number of rides per capita in Fiscal Year 2025



Iowa City Transit as the Large Urban Transit System with the highest ridership percentage increase in Fiscal Year 2025



CyRide as the Large Urban Transit System with the highest number of rides per capita in Fiscal Year 2025



HIRTA as the Regional Transit System with the highest ridership percentage increase in Fiscal Year 2025



Marshalltown Municipal Transit as the Small Urban Transit System with the greatest number of rides/revenue mile in Fiscal Year 2025



MIDAS as the Regional Transit System with the greatest number of rides/revenue mile in Fiscal Year 2025

IDOT MOMENTS



Brent, Jamie, Tammy, and Emma participating in Ragbrai

Kudos to SWITA as they provided 3,200 rides to travelers during Ragbrai



Emma and Jeremy providing outreach at an event at the Des Moines zoo.



IDOT Transit Team at the IPTA mid-year meeting. (Missing Brent and Matt)

WHO TO CONTACT

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