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Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Friday, March 29, 2024 8:48:26 AM
Last Modified: Friday, March 29, 2024 4:57:17 PM
Time Spent: 08:08:50
IP Address: 198.41.49.39

Page 1: Award Categories

Q1

Directions: Read the descriptions below and select a category for which you would like to make an award nomination.

Community Transportation System of the Year - Small System
Defined as providing service in areas and places of a rural setting where the population is 50,000 and below AND/OR the agency receives 5310 or 5311 funding. Typical CTAA membership demographics that would apply for this award include: NEMT/specialized transportation services, rural and tribal transit systems. Recognizes a community transportation system for:- Innovative and creative services in the community;- Being responsive to its customers' and community needs;- Actively coordinating and collaborating with other public and special services transportation;- Effectively helps the community accomplish their goals;- Creates partnerships with a wide-range of organizations, both public and private;- Providing accessible transportation service;- Building transportation alternatives that are intended to meet a wide range of the communities' needs.

Page 2: Why is This Nominee Outstanding?

Q2

Innovative and creative services in the community.

Respondent skipped this question

Q3

Being responsive to its customers' and community needs.

Respondent skipped this question

Q4

Actively coordinating and collaborating with other public and special services transportation.

Respondent skipped this question

Q5 Respondent skipped this question
Effectively helps the community accomplish their goals.

Q6 Respondent skipped this question
Creates partnerships with a wide-range of organizations, both public and private.

Q7 Respondent skipped this question
Providing accessible transportation service.

Q8 Respondent skipped this question
Building transportation alternatives that are intended to meet a wide range of the communities' needs.

Page 3: Why is This Nominee Outstanding?

Q9
Innovative and creative services in the community.

READY RIDE! is an on-demand service we provide to: Keyser, Moorefield, Petersburg, and Romney. This on-demand service began operating in Romney and Moorefield in 2007 for \$1.50 per boarding. In 2019 READY RIDE! was introduced to Petersburg and that same year, Keyser moved from a fix-route service to the door-to-door READY RIDE! In five years, PVTA has increased this on-demand service by 188%. After 17 years, the price per boarding increased to \$2.00 on March 4, 2024. PVTA operates many diverse services for the communities we serve. This diversity created numerous barriers to modernizing our services onto a digital platform. We were committed to finding the perfect software solution to fit the needs of our staff and drivers. The main-stream transportation software options required us to fit our operation into what they offered and required compromise. We needed a different alternative, the result of this is a purpose-built application that is built specifically for our operations. We now operate all aspects of our operations over this robust system. PVTA is now more efficient, more productive, and effective with our on-demand trips, fixed route service and work routes, and operates with an accurate mapping system which is vital in rural areas.

Q10

Being responsive to its customers' and community needs.

In 2019, PVTA made a significant change in the community of Keyser. A decision was made, based on need and input from the community, to move from a fixed route service, the "Keyser Loop", to our on-demand service, READY RIDE!.

READY RIDE! had been operating effectively in Romney and Moorefield therefore management decided to bring READY RIDE! to Keyser. The existing single "Keyser Loop" bus made five daily circuits to fixed stops within Keyser, transporting a mere 5,800 riders over its 20-mile loops.

Within one-year of READY RIDE! operations, ridership increased to over 25,000 operating four vehicles, traveling 300 miles daily. This service area continues to grow annually, welcoming 31,346 riders in FY2023.

PVTA is adaptive to the communities it serves. Local businesses have requested that PVTA provide earlier start times in two of our service areas to aid employees with transportation to fit their work schedules. After a review and discussion, we have added an hour to each day to accommodate those businesses and their employees, which has improved their attendance and productivity. This change has also been beneficial for medical appointments and early risers that want to get their shopping done and is building our early morning numbers.

Q11

Actively coordinating and collaborating with other public and special services transportation.

Potomac Valley Transit Authority has been coordinating and collaborating with various entities for decades. One of our first partners was Potomac Highlands Guild (PHG), a comprehensive behavioral health service provider servicing 5 West Virginia rural counties. The two organizations began their partnership in 1980 transporting 10 – 12 disabled individuals to workshops daily. Over the next decade two more agencies requested transportation to their workshops, one in Keyser and one in Romney. In 2023 we continue to provide daily transport for the same 3 organizations, our workshop boardings were 22,500.

In 2020, PVTA and PHG partnered with the WV Department Health and Human Resources to transport individuals to recovery care, detox facilities, and to regular substance abuse treatment appointments. This State Opioid Response (SOR) program was established to increase access to treatment and expand the availability of Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) and evidence-based services that identify and engage individuals in treatment and provide supports to help keep them in treatment and long-term recovery. In 2023 PVTA transported nearly 1,000 individuals through the SOR program.

Q12

Effectively helps the community accomplish their goals.

PVTA created a program to provide preventative vehicle maintenance for Senior Centers in our area. The centers distribute meals to seniors on a regular basis, they do not have the means or budget to service their buses and vans. Through innovative planning, PVTA has been able to save the centers both time and money by managing this task.

PVTA is considered part of the first responder community in our region, we provide transportation and support during crisis or critical situations. Our general manager sits on the local emergency planning commission board and participates in training and exercises. We work closely with health departments in our 5 counties to establish safe health protocols for riders. During the world-wide pandemic caused by COVID-19, reducing service wasn't an option, people needed to get to physical therapy, dialysis appointments, chemo and radiation treatments, and necessary trips to doctor offices, pharmacies, and other essential engagements. PVTA stepped up to serve communities, businesses, and individuals, and did not reduce staff or services during the crisis. PVTA was one of the first transit systems in West Virginia to install a protective barrier between the driver and riders offering drivers and riders an extra level of protection.

Q13

Creates partnerships with a wide-range of organizations, both public and private.

Living in rural Appalachia, finding workers and/or getting to work can be a struggle for businesses and residents. Since it was established in 1977 PVTA has been getting people to work and providing businesses with workers in a safe, timely manner. Our first route carried 8-12 riders traveling 2 hours across the mountains. Throughout the years, PVTA has expanded and partnered with industries, taking West Virginians to work. PVTA transports workers from Cumberland, Maryland and multiple locations in our 5-county area to Pilgrim's Pride in Moorefield and to Trex Inc, in Winchester VA. The demand for employees is great. Businesses recognize the increased productivity that a dependable workforce enables, helping to achieve their productivity goals as well as reduced turnover. Our numbers have increased for these business work routes from less than 5,000 rides in the beginning to nearly 70,000 rides in 2023 which reflects a 144% increase over the last 5 years. Residents can also request transport through our on-demand READY RIDE! service for employment opportunities across town.

Q14

Providing accessible transportation service.

PVTA, located in the heart of the Potomac Highlands Region of West Virginia, provides transportation services to the general public, with an emphasis on serving the specialized needs of the mobility impaired or otherwise disadvantaged by providing non-emergency medical transportation (NEMT). There are over 21,200 Medicaid recipients living in the mountains, small communities and towns, 25% of the population is over the age of 65. NEMT is an important part of the funding structure of PVTA along with the state opioid response program. Both services transported 7622 people to doctor or medical appointments in 2023. Currently, PVTA is processing between 120 and 140 daily boardings for NEMT and cannot fulfill at least another 110 trips.

Recently PVTA purchased three ADA compliant "microtransit" vans which have easy wheelchair accessibility. These vehicles, along with our fleet of 43 vehicles have helped to relieve some of the pressure of meeting the needs of disadvantaged and disabled riders.

NEMT generates 24% of PVTA's funding which is used for local match purposes, local contribution generates only 2%. The relationship between Medicaid NEMT and the general public routes and services are tightly interwoven and has been the foundation on which PVTA has operated for many years.

Q15

Building transportation alternatives that are intended to meet a wide range of the communities' needs.

On June 22, 2023, PVTA received notice of a grant award. The POTOMAC HIGHLANDS HYDROGEN FUEL INITIATIVE ADVANCING RURAL TRANSIT IN APPALACHIA grant submission to the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT), was awarded to West Virginia Department of Public Transit's Potomac Valley Transit Authority (PVTA).⁹ The DOT's Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Program is providing \$4.7 million for the planning and development of a Hydrogen Initiative. The availability of new, green energy is driving unprecedented change in the transportation industry. The grant will create the foundation to develop the necessary plans and designs to implement a new model for transit that will transition PVTA's existing carbon-based transit system to one based on hydrogen fuel. In addition, the project will be the basis for laying groundwork for rural public transit systems across the nation.

A solar-powered hydrogen fuel plant will be developed in two main phases. Phase I will include the construction of a Photovoltaic Array to provide the electricity for an Electrolysis Hydrogen Production Plant. Phase II will include the development of facilities that will support the compression and storage of hydrogen on site and its delivery to onsite stations for hydrogen fuel cell powered transit vehicles.

Page 4: Why is This Nominee Outstanding?

Q16 Respondent skipped this question

Have demonstrated an extensive history of community engagement;

Q17 Respondent skipped this question

Have created long-standing partnerships with other stakeholders that allow its residents to flourish.

Page 5: Why is This Nominee Outstanding?

Q18 Respondent skipped this question

Providing creative, effective and continuing training and technical assistance programs.

Q19 Respondent skipped this question

Using new concepts, strategies, procedures and policies to provide support to local transit systems.

Q20 Respondent skipped this question

Communicating local transit systems' concerns and issues at the state and national level.

Q21 Respondent skipped this question

Advocating for public and community transportation at the state and local level.

Page 6: Why Is This Nominee Outstanding?

Q22 Respondent skipped this question

A record that reflects ongoing and exceptional growth in contribution to the profession and increased levels of leadership, responsibility and sphere of impact

Q23 Respondent skipped this question

A recent track-record in the transit field reflects a strong career trajectory with the possibility of forward advancement and potential for appointment at the highest levels of the profession

Page 7: Why Is This Nominee Outstanding?

Q24

Respondent skipped this question

Go that extra mile time and time again, encapsulating the spirit and professionalism of the workplace and the community transportation industry.

Q25

Respondent skipped this question

Exudes the spirit and professionalism of community transportation at its best

Q26

Respondent skipped this question

This award can include nominations from any of an agency's frontline positions (examples include drivers, dispatchers, etc.)

Page 8: Tell Us About Your Nominee

Q27

Name

Suzanne Park

Q28

Title

Community Collaborator
Outreach and Marketing

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Page 9: Tell us about yourself: who is submitting this nomination?

Q33

Name

Suzanne Park

Q34

Title

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