Community Transportation Association of America Names 2026 Award Winners
Small System of the Year, Rising Star, and more.

Omaha, Neb. – May 13, 2026 – The Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA) proudly announced the winners of the 2026 Community Transportation Awards during its annual EXPO, recognizing individuals and organizations that have demonstrated exceptional commitment to providing mobility, innovation, and service to their community.

These annual awards highlight the critical role community transit plays in connecting people to jobs, education, healthcare, and vital services, particularly in rural and small urban areas.

"The 2026 award recipients exemplify the heart of community transportation," said Scott Bogren, CTAA Executive Director. "Their innovative approaches to service, unwavering dedication to riders, and impactful partnerships are setting a new standard for transit agencies nationwide. They are truly bridging gaps and building stronger communities."

“We congratulate all of the winners, and all of the nominees. The diversity of nominees this year showed just how strong and widespread the CTAA network of members is across the nation. They do so much for their communities, we’re honored to be able to provide this recognition,” shared Loreal Lance, CTAA Chief of Staff.

Winners:

Rising Star Award
Winner: Felicia Trujillo, Rabbittransit (Harrisburg, PA)

Felicia Trujillo was honored for her exceptional combination of high-level emotional intelligence and unwavering professionalism. Her nomination praised her for "modeling accountability and integrity" and building a reputation as a leader who can "maintain stability and morale in a high-stakes service environment." Felicia is recognized as representing the future of transit leadership: empathetic, highly organized, and deeply committed to the mission of community mobility.

Frontline Heroes Award
Winner: Steve Herrington, Southwest Iowa Transit Agency (SWITA)

Steve Herrington received the Frontline Heroes Award for his outstanding positivity, care for his job, and dedication to his community. Steve is known for his willingness to assist whenever needed, his flexibility, and his efforts in training new drivers. His nomination highlighted how he "goes out of his way to take an interest in other's lives and is always quick with a smile or friendly hello."

Outstanding Community Partner Award
Winner: Delta Rides Regional Coordination Group (Cleveland, MS)

Delta Rides was recognized for fostering meaningful connections that extend beyond transportation. Through ongoing coordination with local agencies and service providers, Delta Rides works to respond to community needs by supporting services that connect people to essential destinations. They demonstrate a sustained commitment to understanding and responding to the needs of the communities they serve.

State Leadership Award
Winners: CALACT and Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT)

This year, the State Leadership Award recognized two exceptional recipients:

- **CALACT:** Honored as a strong advocate for small and rural public transportation providers, CALACT regularly engages in direct advocacy and hosts major conferences to elevate key issues like funding stability, workforce challenges, and the zero-emission transition.
- **Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT):** Recognized for its unwavering commitment to advancing training and technical assistance programs. Under the leadership of Eric Gleason, TxDOT developed flexible funding strategies, championed innovative grant programs, and established strong relationships with policymakers to facilitate discussions on infrastructure and regulatory challenges.

Small Transportation System of the Year
Winners: Vincennes Trolley (Vincennes, IN) and Prairie Hills Transit (Spearfish, SD)

The award for Small Transportation System of the Year was presented to two agencies for their exemplary service models:

- **Vincennes Trolley (Vincennes, IN):** The Trolley was built on the foundation of listening to its community. It continually adapts based on real-world feedback, adjusting routes to better serve medical destinations and becoming a vital link for individuals needing access to the library and employment centers. Their approach ensures that their service "delivers dignity, access, and opportunity to everyone it serves."
- **Prairie Hills Transit (Spearfish, SD):** Recognized for filling gaps for residents in the rural Black Hills area through expansive partnerships. The agency supports the greater community by connecting thousands of riders and leading South Dakota's

environmentally conscious transportation goals. In 2024, they integrated propane autogas buses and installed the state's first propane fueling infrastructure, demonstrating a commitment to reducing emissions, reducing expenses, and maintaining reliability.

Large Community Transportation System of the Year
Winner: Mountain Line (Missoula, MT)

Mountain Line was honored as a long-time leader in innovative, accessible public transit. The agency was the first in Montana to offer seven-day-a-week service and has provided zero-fare service for over a decade. In recent years, Mountain Line purchased 14 battery-electric buses, making over 90% of its fixed-route fleet electric, significantly contributing to Missoula's sustainability goals. The agency also works closely with organizations serving people experiencing houselessness and those reentering the workforce, emphasizing transportation as a vital community resource.

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About the Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA):

The Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA) serves its 1,200+ member organizations with resources, training, events, and advocacy. CTAA rural, small urban, tribal, NEMT, and specialized transportation members are dedicated to ensuring that all Americans, regardless of age, ability, geography, or income, have access to safe, affordable, and reliable transportation. https://ctaa.org.

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