“These Operators have skills that we all share and take for granted. Through training and experience they take these skills to a higher level. Then they sustain that level. Day in and day out. Weekly, monthly, yearly. My appreciation for the job they do grows daily.”

Mayor Van Johnson

“Bus operating may look easy to the riders. But it takes special people to sit behind the wheel all day and stay on that kind of schedule.”

“Happy Transit Driver Appreciation Day! Thank you all for EVERYTHING you all do EACH AND EVERY DAY. Your kindness, dedication and making a very challenging job look easy and keeping the hostess city Love you all so much!”

Korbyn Kares 29th Birthday Donation event

Haaaaaas!! Your favorite birthday of the year is almost approaching! On April 7, I will have blessed your presence on this Earth for 29 years and counting. This year for my birthday I want to do things a little differently. Instead of receiving gifts, I would like to give back to my beloved community of Savannah. I will be hosting a Korbyn Kares event and would absolutely love for you to be a part! Your donations will go a long way to help fund provisions for the homeless in food, personal protective equipment and hygiene supplies.

There’s no minimum to kindness, and the skies the limit. No matter how small, your donation counts as a huge help and will really make a difference!

To donate, you can visit my Amazon Wish List at http://amazon.to/1rH4C9E and purchase items from there. If you would like to send monetary donations, my Cash App is $KorbynM. If you would like to donate outside of Amazon and Cash App please feel free to email me at KorbynMingledorf@gmail.com.

The deadline for donations is April 1 and the distribution event will be April 10. Are you interested in volunteering? Contact me via email to find out how you can assist. You are amazing and thank you for being you!

- Korbyn J Mingledorf
CAT Board makes veterans discount permanent

The CAT Board on Tuesday approved staff’s recommendation to make a veterans discount program permanent. The veterans program provides a 50-percent discount on CAT services to former members of the military. The discount can be applied to most of CAT’s fixed-route fare options, including $1.50 one-way trips, $3 day passes and $5 monthly passes.

“We owe a great debt of gratitude to our veterans and active-duty service members, who take risks and make immense sacrifices to defend and protect our country,” said interim CEO Valerie Ragland. “Today’s vote by the Board to make this a permanent discount allows us to express our gratitude for their service and their sacrifice.”

Initially launched in November 2019 in conjunction with Veterans Day, a planned six-month assessment period to track participation rates was interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic and CAT’s suspension of fare collection.

Following the resumption of fare collection in December, CAT also re-implemented the veterans discount pilot program. A total of 740 veteran discounts were issued during the six-month trial period, accounting for $555 total discounted.

According to the Georgia Department of Veterans Service, there were about 28,000 veterans in Chatham County in 2017. Statewide, the number was almost 700,000.

To get the discount, veterans should present bus operators with either their veteran ID card, discharge documents or driver’s license with a veteran designation. Proof of membership in a veterans’ organization such as the VFW, American Legion and AMVETS also will be accepted.

Half-price ID cards also can be obtained by presenting proof of service at the ticket window at the downtown Joe Murray Riders, Jr. Intermodal Transit Center. These IDs can then be used in place of military service documentation.

Safety Spotlight by Chief Safety Officer Charles Hall: Distracted Driving

We all have heard the phase, “Driving While Distracted.” But what does it really mean – especially to transit bus operators? Distracted driving is any non-driving activity a person engages in that has the potential to distract him or her from the primary task of driving and increases the risk of an accident. Believe it or not, driving while distracted can be a very technical topic in terms of overall safety. Whether studying independent variables and associations with multimodal logistic regression models or common cell phone usage, driving while distracted has proven to be unsafe and deadly. Bus operators encounter a vast array of risks or potential distractions that can lead to accidents throughout their day.

Sure, there is radio traffic, road hazards and even passengers to contend with while operating a bus. But have you given consideration to how reaching for your favorite beverage in its cup holder can be a distraction? Everything we do outside of driving the bus can be a distraction. Adjusting the temperature controls, checking the farebox, monitoring passengers and of course, eating, drinking, or conversing with passengers all pose distractions. Let’s not forget about how being tired affects alertness behind the wheel and constitute distractions.

COVID-19 has created a new distraction that did not exist a year ago. Now operators have to contend with social distancing, wearing of masks and the overall anxiety of serving as a valued front-line worker amidst a pandemic.

Our job as professional operators is to ensure personal and public safety by staying focused when behind the wheel and eliminating the risk of distracted driving. Remember, there are three main types of distractions we have to avoid – mental, manual, and visual. Staying focused is sometimes difficult, but it is extremely critical in safe bus operations. So, even after checking mirrors or looking ahead to the next stop, it important to re-focus immediately because a reduction of one second in your response time can make it impossible to stop or avoid an obstacle.

While we all have heard this before, now is a great time to refresh ourselves on the importance of avoiding driving while distracted. Please be safe out there!

Acronyms & Actions: My first CORE MPO Citizens Advisory Committee

As part of CAT’s ongoing community engagement efforts, I recently applied to serve on the Coastal Regional Metropolitan Planning Organization Citizens Advisory Committee – an organization with a name so long even its acronym (CORE MPO CAC) could use an acronym. I joke about the name, but the advisory committee does important work and I am appreciative of the Savannah City Council members for their trust in appointing me to the public body.

The advisory committee is made of appointed citizens who make non-binding recommendations concerning transportation planning to the CORE MPO, which is a governing body of elected officials from jurisdictions within Chatham County.

CAT is committed to the highest possible standards of ethical, moral and legal business conduct.

In conjunction with this commitment, CAT aims to provide an avenue for employees to raise concerns without fear of reprisals or victimization for whistleblowing in good faith.

With this in mind, CAT has engaged Lighthouse Services, Inc. to provide all CAT employees with access to a third party anonymous hotline for reporting possible violations.

This service is accessible 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Reports may cover, but are not limited to: ethical violations; unsafe working conditions; quality of service; sexual harassment; discrimination; alcohol and substance abuse; fraud; conflict of interest; theft and embezzlement; violation of the law; falsification of contract; reports or records; wrongfull discharge; internal controls; vandalism and sabotage; theft; conduct violations; threats; bribery and kickbacks; improper conduct; violation of company policy; and misuse of company property.

During my first meeting last month, I joined the rest of the committee in recommending approval of plans for ensuring compliance with federal Title VI anti-disiscrimination requirements and for informing the public using more accessible outreach methods for people with disabilities. We also recommended approval of some budgeting and project scope amendments to the FY 2018-2021 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). These amendments applied to such projects as the Truman Linear Park Trail, DeKerne Avenue improvements, and a new city traffic control center. CAT’s electric bus initiative is included on the TIP as well. Lastly, we recommended approval of Pooler’s request to add two road projects to the 2045 MTP Vision Plan, a comprehensive “blueprint” for area transportation services aimed at meeting mobility needs through the next 20-plus years.

It is encouraging to see how much can be accomplished through the collaboration of governments and agencies throughout Chatham County, and I look forward to being a part of the effort to improve mobility throughout the community.

- Eric Curl

Anonymous ethics and compliance hotline in place

Want the electronic version of the CAT Inbound? Let us know by emailing marketing@catchacat.org

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