Downtown stop impacted by sidewalk project

Coastal Regional Commission launches transit survey

The Coastal Regional Commission of Georgia is conducting a survey for residents and transit riders of the Coastal Georgia region, which includes Bryan, Bulloch, Camden, Chatham, Effingham, Glynn, Liberty, Long, McIntosh, and Screven counties. This survey is regarding public transit service within these counties. Even if you do not use public transit or do not have an interest in transit service, your opinion is still valuable.

The following routes will be impacted: 10, 14, 27, 28, 31.

Growing number of CAT customers embrace mobile ticketing

Since CAT launched the Token Transit mobile ticketing service in March, over 900 customers have used the app to purchase more than 5,400 bus passes. If you didn’t know, the Token Transit app lets customers purchase electronic tickets using their smartphones. Customers can then simply show their digital ticket to board the bus or paratransit vehicle.

Never overpay for riding the bus!

Among the app’s users is Jie Qin, a local university professor. When she lived in China, cashless options such as the Token Transit app were much more common and she missed such apps when she first arrived in the United States, Qin said.

“To be honest, it took me a while to get used to using cash again,” Qin said. “When I saw the ad of the app in the bus, I decided to take it immediately.”

Try it for yourself and experience the benefits. Just download the Token Transit app in the Apple App Store or the Google Play Store.

CAT openings provide opportunity to keep people, economy moving

After 27 years behind the wheel, Mason has gotten to know a lot of riders. He takes pride in the job he and his coworkers perform on a daily basis.

“CAT is a pillar in the community,” he said. “When people count on you to get to and from their destination that means a lot.”

Opportunities now abound for residents looking for such meaningful work.

CAT is hiring operators for its fixed-route bus service, as well as its CAT Mobility paratransit service for customers with disabilities who are unable to use the bus. Pay rates are competitive, benefits are generous and the job can be a rewarding one for the right person.

But being an operator is about more than driving a bus. People skills come in handy, Mason said.

“I just genuinely love people and I love to talk also,” he said.

“That makes a difference.”

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Mask mandates reinstated, vaccinations urged as COVID-19 spreads

On July 26, Mayor Van Johnson signed an emergency order requiring face coverings or masks be worn in the city of Savannah due to increasing COVID-19 cases and transmission. The mandate applies to government buildings, hospitals, early childhood centers, guide tours and public transit.

“I know the question will come - are we effectively punishing those who did the right thing and took the vaccine? And the answer is yes, we probably are,” Johnson said. “The minority is being punished because of the inaction of the majority. We have the ability to determine our own fate, our own destiny, by doing what we can to improve our vaccination rates. As for me, the short and long-term health effects associated with COVID-19 are too high, so I chose vaccination. And I hope you will, too.”

Chatham County and the Savannah-Chatham County School System quickly followed suit with similar mask mandates. Meanwhile, CAT’s mask mandate has remained in place at the direction of the Transportation Security Administration and we expect passengers will be required to wear masks until at least mid-September. CAT vehicles also remain at half capacity to allow for customers to spread out.

Health officials say that such mandates and safety measures would not be necessary if more people were getting vaccinated, but the hesitancy to get the shot, along with the arrival of the Delta variant, has unfortunately led to COVID-19 cases increasing again. While no vaccine is 100% effective, health officials say that those who are vaccinated are less likely to contract the Delta variant and that for those who do, the symptoms are mild and the chance of hospitalization is low.

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For more information about the COVID vaccine or to make an appointment, go to covid19.gachd.org or scan the QR code to the right.
CAT Board approves CEO search firm

On July 27, the CAT Board of Directors unanimously approved a $34,500 contract with Colin Baenziger & Associates to conduct executive recruitment services for CAT’s new CEO. The executive recruitment firm is expected to begin the search process in late August and take about 90 days to complete, said Director Michael O’Halloran.

“So hopefully within three months we’ll be interviewing and hiring a new CEO,” O’Halloran said.

The Board’s selection came after procurement staff contacted a number of executive search agencies with experience in recruiting senior executive level professionals. The proposals were reviewed by the Board’s ad-hoc search committee for review. Director O’Halloran, the ad-hoc committee chair, requested a meeting of ad-hoc members and each firm to present their proposal for consideration. The ad-hoc committee members, procurement staff, and legal counsel met with three search firms on June 22 and June 23, prior to recommending the selected firm.

July’s meeting can be viewed on CAT’s YouTube channel at https://bit.ly/2Es8R4K. The vote and discussion regarding the search firm takes place at about the 19:30 minute mark of the meeting (Part 1).

Go to CAT’s YouTube channel by scanning the QR code with your phone’s camera.

CAT Board August meeting calendar

All of the August CAT Board/Committee meetings can be viewed live on CAT’s YouTube page at: YouTube.com/ChathamAreaTransit.

CAT Board Committee Meetings
Date: Aug. 10
Time: 11 a.m.
Performance Monitoring/Audit: 1 p.m.
Strategic and Operational Planning: 10:30 a.m.
External Stakeholder Relations: 2:30 p.m.

CAT Governance Committee
Date: Aug. 17
Time: 11 a.m.

CAT Board Regular Meeting
Date: Aug. 24
Time: 10 a.m.

Letters to CAT: Former news anchor, state rep offers words of support

On July 30, Sonny Dixon submitted a letter expressing his appreciation for our operators. Below, you’ll find his words of support.

Letter from Sonny Dixon

Quick note to drivers on the Savannah Mall routes, specifically those who trek Apache at Shawnee every early morning, I’m the old fella who picks up trash just after dawn - in and around Hidden Lake Townhomes, where I live - and waves at all the bus drivers.

Please pass along to them my gratitude for the jobs they do. I am a longtime ardent supporter of mass transit, serving on Garden City Council years ago, through five terms in the Georgia House of Representatives, and 18 years as a news anchor / reporter at WTOC.

We who GET IT often defended transit against ridership critics who don’t understand the ebb and flow of riders along the routes and/or tightwad taxpayers who simply cannot or will not recognize the general benefit of mass transit.

But, here, one issue that plagues other communities has never been a major issue - drivers maintaining courtesy and timeliness, day in - day out. So, professional bus and commuter train jockeys have my utmost respect.

While much of my time dealing with transit issues in the legislature was spent on MARTA, as I often stated, one thing some have that we don’t - driver complaints.

So I wave at personal heroes who put up with idiots in four wheelers yet safely traverse the streets of Savannah - Chatham, almost unnoticed. That’s because problems are very seldom related to them. So - I’ll keep walking and waving.

Please pass along my compliments. Tell em I’ll see ‘em along the trail, fumbling with my bucket n’ grabber so I can throw up a big ol’ mornin’ wave.

All the best — Sonny Dixon

Send an email to marketing@catchacat.org to subscribe to our weekly electronic newsletter, the CAT Express