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Big Expansion to Belton's ADA-Accessible Transit Program Launches in May

Frequency, destinations grow for seniors and those with disabilities

April 19, 2021 – BELTON, MO – On Wednesday, May 5, 2021 the city of Belton will launch a greatly expanded OATS Transit program for its seniors and individuals with disabilities as the service grows to weekly rather than monthly service with destinations to nearly any location within the city rather than only to shopping outlets.

Following a Mid-America Regional Council (MARC) application selection process, the Kansas City Area Transportation Authority secured the Federal Transit Administration grant that will assist in funding the enhanced program, with the city contributing a 20 percent match. Belton city council approved a resolution at its April 13, 2021 meeting on the agreement with Oats, Inc., for an annual total cost of \$9,792.00.

“This OATS program expansion is a huge step forward in reliable, accessible transportation for Belton’s seniors and those with disabilities,” said Alexa Barton, Belton city manager. “It can be life changing for them as more ADA-accessible transit options give participants more freedom, helping to increase their independence and keep them connected to our community.”

Belton seniors age 65 and over and those with disabilities may call the OATS office at 816.380.7433 up to two weeks in advance to schedule this door-to-door service that now will take them to doctor’s offices, hair appointments, gyms, social gatherings, shopping and nearly any other destination in the city. On the fourth Wednesday of each month, participants can schedule medical-related trips to areas not only within Belton but also in Raymore, Grandview or Harrisonville. The service will operate Wednesdays, 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. With the expansion, riders will provide a \$1.00 co-pay per trip, per way, to help sustain the program for the long run.

The service will not operate on a month's fifth Wednesday, when those occur. In 2021 after the expanded program starts, fifth Wednesdays fall on June 30, September 29 and December 29.

According to MARC's Environmental Justice map, Belton has a relatively high population of residents 65 years of age or older at 23 percent (more than 1,200 adults) and 21 percent (more than 1,100 individuals) with a disability. Many are homebound and/or otherwise limited in ability to drive.

"The city of Belton is invested in cultivating a community that serves all of our residents and that includes supporting the needs of our older population and those with disabilities," added Barton. "Our goal with these enhancements to the city's OATS Transit program is to improve the mobility independence of these residents and in so doing, help them live healthier, more active and engaged lives."

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