



Spotlight

New Regional Fixed Route Bus Service In The Works for North Central Kansas

A new regional fixed route bus service will be in operation in early September 2017 for north central Kansas. The Kansas Rides 81 Connection will serve Highway 81 locations from Belleville to Salina with a tentative start date of September 5, 2017.



The 81 Connection bus service will have three bi-directional trips each day, Monday through Friday. The first route will start in Belleville at 7:00 a.m., then head south on Highway 81 to three stops in Concordia, a stop at the Highway 24/Highway 81 junction, two stops in Minneapolis and a stop at 7th and Walnut in Salina and then head back to north to the same stops. This route will do this loop twice and finish in Belleville around 6:15 p.m. each day.

A second route will leave Salina at 1:00 p.m. and head north on Highway 81 to the same two stops in Minneapolis, the stop at the Highway 24/Highway 81 junction, three stops in Concordia and the stop in Belleville, before heading back to Salina with the same stops. The bus will finish in Salina around 6:15 p.m. each day.

The 81 Connection will be operated and managed by OCCK Transportation. Transportation providers in the region, such as Solomon Valley Transportation, Inc.

and Ottawa County Transportation, in addition to OCCK Transportation, will be able to run feeder routes that will bring passengers to and from the stops. The proposed service area would include Republic, Jewell, Cloud, Mitchell, Ottawa, Lincoln and Saline counties. Additional riders could be brought in from Washington, Clay, Smith and Osborne counties with additional coordination. Passengers will come from many age groups and different socio-economic levels and need bus service for employment, medical appointments, social services, shopping, recreation and other needs.

“We are really excited about starting the 81 Connection,” said Michelle Griffin, Mobility Manager for the region. “This regional fixed route has been in process for quite a while as a goal for the region and now we are bringing the route to fruition. It will be a great benefit to the residents of north central Kansas and help them get where they need to go.”

Initial funding for the project came from the Earl Bane Foundation, as well as the Kansas Department of Transportation. The Earl Bane Foundation provided the 30% local match for the first year, with the remaining 70% funding coming from KDOT.

The one-way fares will be as follows:

- Belleville to Concordia - \$1.00
- Concordia to 81/24 Jct - \$1.00
- 81/24 Jct to Minneapolis - \$1.00
- Minneapolis to Salina - \$1.00

Kansas Rides is the name of the statewide transportation branding and website (www.ksrides.org) that came about from the KDOT Regional Transit Business Model Implementation project. The primary purpose of the Business Model is to develop strategies for the provision of transit services throughout rural Kansas that make the most efficient

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use of additional transit funding made available by the state legislature as part of the Transportation Works for Kansas (T-WORKS) transportation program, which was signed into law in May of 2010.

The Kansas Rides website (www.ksrides.org) is in progress and will continue to be updated with information about all general public transportation agencies across all 105 Kansas counties. It will be the source for consumers to find information about transportation options in their areas. "We're very pleased with the new website and trust the public will be to," said Griffin. "We hope it provides users with a positive and informative channel through which they can learn more about transportation options across the state, including the 81 Connection, and how we can help them improve their public transit experience."

The 81 Connection will complement the existing public transportation options in North Central Kansas and provide a way for more people, across all age levels and socioeconomic levels, with transportation limitations, to be served. We anticipate the riders will access medical care, employment, social service agencies, education, recreation, shopping and other destinations to improve their quality of life.

This intra-regional route will improve and establish inter-city connections to regional centers and preserve in-town transit service. In-town providers will be able to provide more local rides to their clients and provide more service in their communities. Destinations along the route will also experience increased economic benefit from more travelers. Employment options will increase, for both employers and prospective employees as one barrier is decreased. Physical and mental health and the overall well being of

individuals will improve with increased access to necessary and important services. Health care providers will have less missed appointments and more service opportunities. Educational facilities could help to market the cost savings benefits of service to their prospective students as a way of helping to counteract the increasing costs of higher education.



With the support of the Kansas Department of Transportation, the North Central Kansas Coordinated Transit Council, Inc. is looking at a new approach to rural transit program management and operations. Historically, the nearly 200 rural transit providers across the state have planned and operated services independently, which in some locations has resulted in redundant service and/or missed opportunities for providing service to those without access. This new approach of coordinated transit service will allow more people in the state to have access to some level of transit service, improve the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of the public and private investments in transit and reduce the gaps and redundancies observed in the current approach to providing service.

This fixed route will be the first step in increased coordination among transportation providers in this region, and across the state. Success with the fixed route can lead to new conversations about providing additional transportation options that span many counties, many other existing general public transportation providers, and improve

the lives of Kansans across the state. Additional fixed routes can be added to serve residents that need to access additional services in Hays, Wichita, Topeka, or even Kansas City.

By providing this additional access to necessary services, the rural counties served will have another incentive for keeping people living in their communities. Declining populations are a concern for many of the counties served by this fixed route. By having additional transportation options in place, residents will be encouraged to stay and the bus service can be an incentive to potential new residents and businesses. Economic development and local chambers of commerce can be potential partners. Families could save money on transportation costs by using more accessible and public transportation versus owning multiple vehicles. There are also environmental and safety benefits to having less vehicles on the roads. Public transportation reduces driving stress and keeps the air cleaner.

Investment in our transportation infrastructure, particularly public transportation, drives growth. It attracts development and increased property values. It connects restaurants to diners, landlords to renters, families to stores and employers to employees. Robust investment in transportation yields results. Transportation = freedom.

For more information about the 81 Connection and Kansas Rides, visit www.ksrides.org. For more information about OCCK, Inc., visit www.occk.com. For more information about CityGo and OCCK Transportation, visit www.salinacitygo.com. Or, contact Michelle Griffin, Mobility Manager (mgriffin@occk.com), or the OCCK Transportation Center at 785-826-1583.

Shelia Nelson-Stout, *President/CEO*
Jan Pfannenstiel, *Editor*

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Robert Phillips, Jordi McGee, Tiffany Anguiano, Bill Sweeney, and Donna Fleming at the SACK conference.

SACK Conference 2017

The Self Advocate Coalition of Kansas conference was held in Topeka from June 23rd to the 25th. Once again, the self advocates of OCK were well represented.

Upon arriving in Topeka Friday night some chose to eat hamburger sliders at the welcome party while others chose to go to their favorite restaurants or be adventurous and try something new. Either way they enjoyed greeting friends from other regions and catching up.

Throughout Saturday everyone attended learning opportunities, browsed the display tables in the lobby, or relaxed and visited. Saturday evening there was a dance (great DJ) and many made use of the free photo booth, donning wacky hats and accessories. There was also a screening of the documentary Bottom Dollars which discusses the inequality of below minimum wage jobs offered to people with disabilities. This was followed by the movie Powder. Some chose to do their own thing and went

to a local casino to have fun trying their luck.

Sunday morning we gathered for breakfast and listened to an inspiring woman talk about her experience as a mother with a disability. After the prize drawings everyone started saying their goodbyes and loading their cars for the ride home.

This conference was as enjoyable and inspiring as they have been in the past. But there was an obvious difference and a shadow hanging over the proceedings. The theme this year was "Let's do this in honor of Hal Lehrer". SACK lost an important leader and staff member who passed away in his sleep earlier this year. Hal was missed, remembered, and memorialized. But the self advocates will continue to learn, educate others, and speak out for themselves.

Natalie Lervold obtains certification

Natalie Lervold of Workforce Solutions has achieved certification as a Offender Workforce Development Specialist (OWDS) from the National Institute of Corrections. Having a long lasting effect on inmate outcomes and transitioning offenders requires more than good intentions. To be truly effective, workforce development professionals must have a deep, rigorous knowledge of the

skills and processes related to their field. This competency based training focuses on these essential skills and



teaches participants how to develop their own training and workforce development services tailored to the needs of their agency.

This training addresses numerous competencies, including career development theory and application, ethics training for the career development facilitator, and transition interventions for the offender population. The 6 month program consists of 3 weeks classroom instruction supplemented by mandatory e-learning coursework, compulsory hands on practice in applying theories learned in the classroom, and required homework assignments. The program consists of 160 hours.

Successful completion of the OWDS Partnership Training meets the requirements for certification as a Global Career Development Facilitator through the Center for Credentialing and Education, Inc. Way to go Natalie!

Using Assistive Technology to be Independent

Shane contacted the Solution Outreach Center wanting access to the internet via laptop or tablet, and ultimately wanted to have some kind of employment from the home via the Internet. Shane had been in a vehicle accident, in which he sustained a traumatic brain injury and broke his neck. Shane has limited range with his shoulders and limited finger extension and uses a power chair that he is in most of the day.

Cassie Ramon, one of the Solution Outreach Center's Assistive Technology Specialists provided a demonstration on the iPad, Surface, and Samsung Tablets and also explored various mounting options with Shane such as Modular Hose, Friction Arm Mounts, and a possible table type. Shane was already using an iPhone with a hand cuff and stylus, so he decided to stay with Apple products, and a mount that would accommodate both devices.

Shane borrowed an iPad with a Big Grips case and a Modular Hose mount with the podium. This was attached

to both sides of his chair with the podium resting left of middle but still allowed access to his chair controls. Shane was very successful with this setup and wanted to try to get funding to purchase the equipment. Cassie and Jenny Cook, OCK Traumatic Brain Injury Trainer, assisted Shane on the funding packet to the Travis Roy Foundation which funded Shane's request.

He was able to purchase an iPad, Big Grips Case, Modular Hose Podium Mount Kit, and two universal hand cuff stylus holders. Shane is using his iPad for applications and games to assist with memory, and movement. Shane has also been able to access many of his hunting and fishing clubs and also helps his wife manage some financial responsibilities.



Shane Bartlett using his new Surface.

Get On & Go Program

Salina CityGo is offering a brand new program for Salina area youth ages 7-18.

Youth ages 7-18 will be able to purchase a "Get On & Go" Summer Youth Bus Pass for \$10. The pass will be good for unlimited rides on Salina CityGo from June 1 to August 31.

Youth must show the drivers their "Get On & Go" pass when they board the buses.

Riding the bus gives kids the freedom to get around in the summer. The "Get On & Go" Summer Youth Bus Pass is a great way for kids to get to Kenwood Cove, community centers, parks, the library, shopping and more.

The Summer Youth Bus Pass is available for purchase at OCK Transportation, 340 N. Santa Fe;

OCK Corporate Office, 1710 W. Schilling; Bennington State Bank, 200 S. 9th St., and 2130 S. Ohio; Salina Regional Health Center Human Resources, 400 S. Santa Fe.

"We are excited to start the Get On & Go program," said Michelle Griffin, Mobility Manager. "The program has a two-fold mission. One is to help kids get around Salina safely and two, we hope getting kids used to riding the bus will increase our passenger numbers for the rest of the year. It's a great deal and we hope a lot of families take advantage of it."

For more information call OCK Transportation at 826-1583 or go to www.salinacitygo.com.

CityGo spans the city from North to South and East to West with five routes, noted by colors on route maps and bus stops: red, blue, yellow, green and purple. Service runs from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m., Monday through Friday, and 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday, with more than 200 fixed bus stops citywide, plus two areas designated as "Wave and Ride". Fares for the CityGo buses are \$1 for a Single-Trip Pass (recommended for one-way trips), \$2 for a Day Pass (recommended for round trips and transfers), \$5 for a 6-Trip Ticket Book, and \$35 for a Monthly Pass. The Get On & Go Summer Youth Bus Pass is \$10 and good June 1-August 31. Children 6 and under ride free with a fare paying passenger.

High School Students learn about jobs through Disability Mentoring Day

The Jewell, Mitchell, and Lincoln Transition Council recently sponsored their annual Disability Mentoring Day in Beloit on April 22nd. Disability Mentoring Day is an international event that gives high school students an opportunity to shadow employees in the workplace of a student's interest and gain workplace knowledge and experience. It is an important opportunity to help students have a broader understanding of employment and careers possibilities.

The students tour their workplace of interest, meet with employers and employees, and learn firsthand about different types of jobs and related opportunities within that career field.

This year we had 45 students from the area who participated in the program. Special thanks go to the following business who donated their time and expertise to help make this a special event: Ace Hardware, Agco Sunflower, Beloit Pizza Hut, Beloit Auto, Beloit Motor, Ray's Apple Market, City of Beloit, Farmway Distribution Center, Hilltop Lodge Retirement Center, Mitchell County Community Hospital Health Systems Dietary Department and Residential Care Center, North Central Kansas Technical College



Pam Hollerich, Residential Care Center, presents certificate.

Food Service, Solomon Valley Bank, Solomon Valley Veterinary Hospital, and Tangles. Gail Pearson also met with a student who was interested in **Paleontology and Archaeology.**

Transition council members who helped make this event possible each year are Barb Wise, Becky McQueen, Darsey Offutt, Kathy Webster, and Sarah Allen.



Brad Heidrick, Hilltop Lodge Retirement, presents certificate.

Project Search

We are so excited! OCKK, Inc. Employment services had the pleasure of partnering with Vocational Rehabilitation services and Project Search at Salina Regional Health Center to assist Jessica Foley and Brett Wallace to become employed at Salina Regional Health Center.

Jessica Foley started the Project Search program August 2016. She performed very well in all the intern jobs she participated in. Due to her dedication and abilities she landed a job with environmental services in February 2017. Jessica Graduated from the program in May 2017



Brett Wallace started the Project Search program in October 2016.

Brett's personality and hard work paid off. He graduated from the program in May 2017. He is currently working with Workforce Solutions on obtaining employment in the community.



Jessica and Brett must be commended for their hard work and success in the work market. We also appreciate the partnership. Way to go!

Success Stories



Brianna Blazek

Brianna Blazek has successfully worked at the Nazareth House since July of 2016. Brianna works as a Dietary Aide part-time. Workforce Solutions assisted with employment preparation such as soft skills training, time management development, dress/groom, and interview skills. Upon hire, job coaching assisted Brianna with learning her work tasks. Brianna has done very well within her role.



Jacob Stalder

Jacob began working in May at Menard's as a Carry Out/Loader. Jacob just graduated from Project SEARCH at Salina Regional Health Center shortly before starting his job. Menard's was Jacob's employer of choice from the beginning. Jacob interviewed and was offered his position within a week. Jacob completed his orientation independently, and is utilizing Workforce Solutions Support to complete his online training so he is eligible for raises at his performance reviews. Menard's management informs Jacob is hard working, gets along with everyone, and is always willing to help where needed.

Congrats Jacob on being employed! We look forward to following your success.



Arnold "Arnie" Collette

Arnie began working at Wal-mart in Concordia in March of 2017. Arnie works in maintenance part-time. Arnie enjoys his work and plans to continue his employment with Wal-Mart.

Arnie has been independent in learning and mastering his work tasks, and has successfully graduated from Wal-Mart's Pathways program. Arnie is dedicated to his employment and to providing for his family. Through Arnie's hard work and dedication, he is now able to assist his daughter with her college education.

Employee of the Quarter



Lance Gustin

Lance Gustin has successfully gained and maintained employment with Dillon's as a Courtesy Clerk. Lance has done a great job in his role and plans to continue his employment.

Employers of the Quarter

Thank you for your
partnership!

Target

Salina Regional
Health Center

Sam's Club

McDonald's

Wal-Mart

Rays Apple Market

Chick-fil-A

Menard's

Save the Date

Salina's largest Employment Expo
to be held Thursday, October 5

More info at www.occk.com

National Transportation Week Celebrated

On Tuesday, May 16, 2017, OCCK Transportation will be hosted an open house and cook out in honor of National Transportation Week. Guests were able to view the current transportation vehicles, including a CityGo bus, meet staff, and learn more about transportation.

“We are pleased to offer this event to the public,” said Michelle Griffin, Mobility Manager. “The community has been so supportive of our efforts to provide public transportation. We want to celebrate our successes and this gives us an opportunity to share that with everyone.”



National Transportation Week is a way to increase the awareness and appreciation of the transportation industry and to celebrate the community of transportation professionals who keep our country on the move.

- In 1957, Congress designated the third Friday of May each year as National Defense Transportation Day.
- In 1962, Congress updated the designation, naming the entire third week of May each year as National Transportation Week.
- Each year the President of the United States signs a proclamation encouraging the observation of National Transportation Week.

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for one-way trips), \$2 for a Day Pass (recommended for round trips and transfers), \$5 for a 6-Trip Ticket Book, and \$35 for a Monthly Pass. Children 10 and under ride free with a fare paying adult.

OCCK offers Regional Paratransit, origin-to-destination, on-demand service for the general public throughout North Central Kansas including passengers with disabilities and seniors. Passengers seeking Paratransit services in Salina are required to meet medical eligibility

due to fixed route regulations. Riders will be picked up at their address and dropped off at their destination. Hours are 6 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday through Friday and 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday (Salina only). Fares

are \$2 per person each way in Saline County and 10-cents per mile outside Saline County. Personal Assistants ride free. Children, 10 and under, ride free when accompanied by an adult and must have an age appropriate car seat. To schedule rides, call the OCCK Transportation office at (785) 826-1583.

For more information about OCCK, Inc., visit www.occk.com. For more information about CityGo and OCCK Transportation, visit www.salinacitygo.com. Or, contact the OCCK Transportation Center at 785-826-1583.

About CityGo

OCCK Inc., in partnership with the City of Salina and the Kansas Department of Transportation, operates and manages CityGo fixed-route transit service. CityGo has been recognized for outstanding service and growth nationally and statewide by the Kansas Department of Transportation. For more information about CityGo, call 785-826-1583 or visit www.salinacitygo.com.

Contributors

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Darrell Lee Memorial

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In Honor of Brenda Henry

Dale & Lynda Eisenhauer, Salina

Mary George Memorial

Kerry Lustick, Salina

Bryan Cox Memorial

Kerry Lustick, Salina

Duane Elliott Memorial

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Retirement Celebrated!

Nancy Stork started her career at OCCK, Inc. as an Independent Living Specialist with Independent

Connection and later transferred to the Solution Outreach Center as an Assistive Technology Specialist. Nancy worked with children and adults on their assistive technology needs, as well as farmers and ranchers as an AgrAbility Assistive Technology Specialist. Nancy was recognized on a local, state and national level for her expertise in the assistive technology field. Thank you Nancy for your 33 years of service at OCCK. We wish you the very best!!

Upcoming Events

August

Aug. 21 Brain Injury Support Group
 1710 W. Schilling Rd, Salina
 4:30 p.m.

September

Sept. 18 Brain Injury Support Group
 1710 W. Schilling Rd, Salina
 4:30 p.m.

October

Oct. 16 Brain Injury Support Group
 1710 W. Schilling Rd, Salina
 4:30 p.m.

Alternate Formats

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