

# OCCK Inc. Spotlight

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## Faces of Leadership at OCCK

Kristi Marco officially joined OCCK on June 1, 2021, as Regional Director of Community Services, leading Salina departments including Independent Living Services, Retirement Services, Life Skills Services, Employment Services, Brain Injury Services, and Community Access Services.

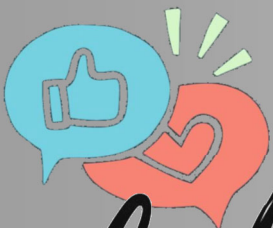


Kristi received her AA in Human Services from North Platte Community College and her BA in Sociology and Psychology from Fort Hays State University. Before joining OCCK, she was the Executive Director of a Center for Independent Living, Independent Connection Inc.

Kristi has worked in the Human Services field for over 30 years.

Kristi and her husband moved to Kansas from Nebraska in 2013, when they found out they would soon be grandparents to a grandson, Mason. Kristi and her husband have two adult children and three pugs.

In her free time Kristi enjoys auctions, antiques, on-line and in person craft sales, traveling, camping, fishing, playing cards, sewing, and spending time with friends and family.



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# Dickinson County Job Fair

OCCK Workforce Solutions, in collaboration with Dickinson County Economic Development Corporation and KANSASWORKS, held a job fair at the Abilene Community Center on May 25, 2022, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

This event was organized to assist area employers with filling open positions and to allow them to talk about possible

future openings.

Over 20 employers were present. The KansasWorks Mobile Unit was available to assist job seekers with computer access to apply for jobs.

Prospective employees attended to learn more about the hiring needs of businesses, brush up on their job search skills, and network with others. Nearly

20 job seekers took advantage of the opportunity to talk with employers from various employment sectors. This event is an incredible opportunity for hiring businesses to reach multiple job seekers at one time.

OCCK looks forward to hosting this community service event annually to assist area employer in filling open positions.





# OCCK Transportation Celebrates Anniversaries

OCCK Transportation is proud to announce the 1<sup>st</sup> Anniversary of the start of GoConcordia, the public transportation service for Concordia.

OCCK Transportation started operating GoConcordia on July 1, 2021, after talks with the Concordia Senior Center. Since that date, GoConcordia has provided almost 8,000 rides to passengers within the city limits, with trips being taken for employment, shopping, medical, and more. Ridership continues to rebound after the reduced service of the pandemic.

*“For the past year, GoConcordia has offered Concordia residents reliable rides throughout the community,” said Michelle Griffin, Mobility Manager for North Central Kansas. “We look forward to continuing our work to extend transportation options through partnerships and conversations, and further connect people and services with affordable transit options in Concordia and beyond.”*

Rides must be scheduled in advance in one of two ways, either by phone by calling 785.826.1583 or 855.577.4337 or by using the online scheduling form

found at [www.salinacitygo.com](http://www.salinacitygo.com) under GoConcordia.

Passengers interested in riding GoConcordia have many options for fares and fare payments, using cash, buying coupons, or paying with digital fares using Token Transit.

GoConcordia can link passengers with 81 Connection, the regional fixed route bus service to make even longer trips.

OCCK Transportation serves all of Cloud County with additional regional paratransit service.

OCCK Transportation is also proud to announce the 3<sup>rd</sup> Anniversary of the start of GoAbilene, the public transportation service for Abilene.

OCCK Transportation started operating GoAbilene on July 1, 2019, in partnership with the City of Abilene. Since that date, GoAbilene has provided more than 23,000 rides to passengers within the city limits, with trips being taken for employment, shopping, medical, and more. Ridership continues to rebound after the reduced service of the pandemic.

*“For the past three years, GoAbilene has offered Abilene residents reliable rides throughout the community,” said Trell Grinter, OCCK Transportation Director. “We look forward to continuing our work to extend transportation options like GoAbilene and connect people and services with affordable transit options.”*

Rides must be scheduled in advance in one of two ways, either by phone by calling 785.826.1583 or 855.577.4337 or by using the online scheduling form found at [www.salinacitygo.com](http://www.salinacitygo.com) under GoAbilene.

Passengers interested in riding GoAbilene have many options for fares and fare payments, including free rides to West’s Country Mart, the use of the Go Anywhere Summer Youth Pass, or paying with digital fares using Token Transit.

OCCK Transportation serves all of Dickinson County with additional regional paratransit service.

For more information about GoAbilene or GoConcordia, go to [www.salinacitygo.com](http://www.salinacitygo.com).



# Congratulations to our 2021 and 2022 Retirees

## Melinda Wolfe

Melinda started driving with OCCK in 2016, starting as a substitute driver for all services. She enjoyed driving Para Transit, CityGo and 81 Connection. Finishing up her 5 year career at OCCK Transportation, Melinda was a full time CityGo driver. She made amazing connections with employees and passengers, alike.



For Melinda, retirement looks like time spent with family and at the race track! Congratulations to Melinda Wolfe on her retirement.

We wish her the absolute best of luck!

## Janet Croisant

Janet Croisant retired after 13 years with OCCK. She started in January of 2009 as a Direct Support Professional.

Janet knew the importance of finding out what people liked and wanted, and she spent lots of time getting to know people and learning how they wanted to spend their time at OCCK.

Janet was always willing to work and help out wherever she was needed.

Since her retirement, everyone misses her and her kindness.

We wish her the best!



## Deanna Lamer

Deanna Lamer worked for OCCK for 26 years as the Director of Human Resources. During those years, she led the human resources part of the organization through a world of changes. Her knowledge and experience were invaluable assets as OCCK more than doubled in size and scope. Having a solid foundation for hiring and retention of staff allowed OCCK to deliver high quality services to thousands of people.



Congratulations, Deanna!

## Jean Modine

Jean Modine, who led Self-Direction Services for OCCK, retired at the end of June.

Jean held many different jobs during her 22-year career at OCCK. She was an Independent Living Specialist for Independent Connection for many years. She led us as a Housing Specialist, and Youth Services leader. She then joined the team to lead self-direction services at OCCK.

Jean is a tireless advocate for people and elevated the quality of self-direction services at OCCK. She is known and admired for her honesty, leadership, and her strong set of values.

As a youth leader and mentor, Jean made a difference in the lives of so many young people.

Jean plans to spend time with your grandchildren, children and husband.

Thank you, Jean, for all of the many contributions you have made to people and OCCK.



# OCCK Transportation Announces Real Time Information Available Through Newly Endorsed App Transit

OCCK Transportation announces *Transit* as the official mobility app for Salina and North Central Kansas. Transit counts millions of active users in more than 200 cities worldwide and is now available for CityGo and 81 Connection riders who are now able to track their bus in real-time with the leading transport app in North America.

Upon launching the app, CityGo and 81 Connection riders see nearby options and departure times in big text and bright colors. Users can easily navigate the region, aided by accurate real-time bus ETAs, trip planning, step-by-step navigation, and crowdsourced real-time information with Transit's GO feature.

OCCK's partnership with Transit offers a comprehensive, easy-to-use and widely adopted app for riders. Under this agreement, OCCK will also receive anonymized usage data and customizations to better serve the public, such as the ability to send important information directly to riders via Transit's home screen.

"We are so excited to be working with Transit to bring a mobile app to our passengers," said Michelle Griffin, Mobility Manager for North Central Kansas. "It's a great resource for people to use on a daily basis as they are using both CityGo and 81 Connection."

By endorsing Transit as its official app, OCCK joins dozens of other public transit agencies across North America that have partnered with the app, including LA Metro, Boston's MBTA, Baltimore's MDOT MTA, Silicon Valley's VTA, Metro Transit in St. Louis and Montreal's STM. Agencies in Kansas include Kansas City ATA, Lawrence, Topeka Metro and the Flint Hills ATA in Manhattan.

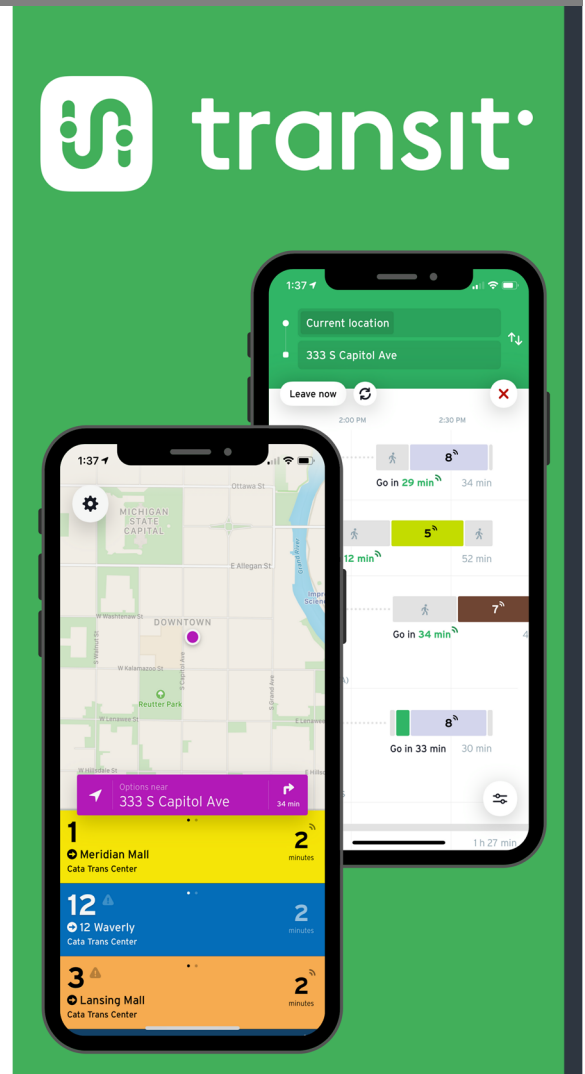
"Partnering with a single app that prioritizes transit makes it clear to riders where they can go for information," said David Block-Schachter, Chief Business Officer of Transit. "We're excited to work with OCCK and to see more people using Transit as part of their daily routine."

Transit is available to download for iPhone and Android at [www.transitapp.com](http://www.transitapp.com) or [www.salinacitygo.com/transit](http://www.salinacitygo.com/transit).

OCCK is committed to providing transportation services to the general public, seniors, and persons with disabilities, through a variety of programs, including a fixed route service in Salina, CityGo, a regional paratransit service that serves fourteen counties, non emergency medical transportation for people with Medicaid, as well as non emergency medical transportation for clients of Salina Regional Health Center, a regional fixed route service, 81 Connection, KANcycle – the regional bike sharing program, GoAbilene public transportation, KanConnect, the regional fixed route, and the newest program, GoConcordia.

For more information about OCCK, Inc., visit [www.occk.com](http://www.occk.com). For more information about CityGo and OCCK Transportation, visit [www.salinacitygo.com](http://www.salinacitygo.com). Or, contact the OCCK Transportation Center at 785-826-1583.

**About Transit:** *Transit* solves the urban commute in more than 200 cities worldwide. Users can easily navigate public transit with accurate real-time predictions, simple trip planning, step-by-step navigation and quick, easy payments. The app also integrates additional transport modes — bikesharing, scooters, carsharing and ridehail — so users can mix-and-match their options with transit to determine the best way to get from A to B. The company is based in Montréal, QC. Learn more by visiting [www.transitapp.com](http://www.transitapp.com).





# Workforce Corner

## Success Stories

**Vernon** came to Workforce Solutions in late March. Within a week of his first meeting with his Employment Consultant, he was hired at Acoustic Sounds, located in Salina.

Vernon is currently employed full-time as an order picker. After a customer makes a purchase, it is Vernon's job to find and select the correct items to fill the order. Then Vernon packs and labels the order for customer delivery. Vernon enjoys the fast-paced work environment, and the company along with his fellow co-workers. Vernon is currently on the waiting list, to be trained to operate the forklift. Vernon hopes to have enough money saved to purchase his own vehicle soon.

Nice job Vernon, keep up the great work ethic!



**Kristen** had a goal of gaining employment within the Salina area where she was able to interact with individuals. Kristen gets along well with others and wanted to put that strength of hers to use. Kristen expressed interest in working in a nursing home.

Kristen and Workforce Solutions worked together to secure her part-time employment at Eaglecrest Retirement Community as a Server.

Kristen is thriving in her position. She adores interacting with the residents while serving their food and enjoys working alongside her coworkers. As Kristen navigates the workforce, OCCK will continue to provide her support while cheering Kristen on in her successes!

Great job Kristen!



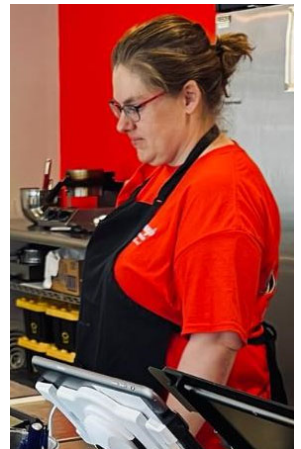
**Trisha** was ready and excited to return to the work environment. Workforce Solutions assisted Trisha to find employment that featured Trisha's interests.

Trisha is now a dedicated hard-working employee at Dagny's Ice Cream. She makes homemade waffle cones, serves ice cream, runs the cash register, restocks items as needed, and helps keep the ice cream shop clean. Her favorite ice cream flavor is Huckleberry.

OCCK wishes all the best for Trisha as she maintains her employment with Dagny's Ice Cream. OCCK will continue to provide support services to help her reach her goal of becoming independent.

Congratulations Trisha!

Keep up the hard work!



## EMPLOYERS OF THE QUARTER

### SALINE COUNTY

- Eaglecrest Retirement Community
- Dagny's Ice Cream
- OCCK, Inc.
- McDonalds on I-70
- Big Cheese Pizza
- Acoustic Sounds

### ELLSWORTH COUNTY

- Ellsworth County Medical Center

### BARTON COUNTY

- Sutherland's Lumber Company
- Freedom Claims Management

### OUT OF STATE

- Nichols Research
- Driveline Retail Merchandising

Thank you to these Employers who helped people secure employment this past quarter.

# Meet Mallory

Mallory made the choice to be a part of Salina Community Living Services in June of 2019. She moved out of her family's home into a new world of adulthood.

Mallory moved into a home that she shared with roommates. She started to work on discovering what she really wanted in life. As Mallory started this new journey in her life, she found that living in her hometown of Abilene was very important to her. She wanted to be closer to her family and friends and had made relationships in Abilene in her childhood that meant a lot to her.

Mallory and her family met with Renee Gardner, Coordinator of Services in Salina, to talk about Mallory's dream life. Mallory, her family, and her Salina team put together a plan to support her in her own apartment in Abilene.

Mallory and her family found the perfect apartment that fit what

she was looking for, and she moved into her own apartment in Abilene in 2020.

Mallory is still living her dream today! She is working on increasing her skills daily while in her own apartment. Community Living Services provide Mallory with the support she needs to be able to be a part of her community. Mallory enjoys spending time out in her community. People are excited to see her and look forward to her visits at the local stores.

Mallory is now in the process of exploring what type of community employment she wants to try.

Community Living staff are working hard to help people reach their dreams every day! The Community Living team in



Salina has assisted three other people this past year transition from living with their families to a more independent setting. This process supports people to explore options, dream and decide how they want to live and what they want their life to look like.

## Free Rides to Salina Family Healthcare

Access to medical appointments in Salina and the surrounding area just got a little easier!

Rides are available at no charge to OCCK's Regional Paratransit passengers going to and from Salina Family Healthcare Center, 651 E. Prescott, or the Salina Family Eye Care Center, 2676 Planet Avenue, through a partnership between OCCK Transportation and the Center.

Qualified passengers within OCCK's transportation service area can schedule a ride with Regional Paratransit during normal operating hours by calling 785-826-1583 and pressing option 4.

"Salina Family Healthcare Center is excited to partner with OCCK Transportation to break down barriers to healthcare for area citizens. We know that lack of transportation is one of the greatest obstacles to visiting our health center, and OCCK Transportation is a vital link for our community's health and wellbeing," said Dr. Robert Kraft, CEO and Chief Medical Officer of Salina Family Healthcare Center.

OCCK's Regional Paratransit service operates Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., providing rides to the general public in Salina, Ottawa, Cloud, Republic, Clay, Dickinson, Jewell, Mitchell, Lincoln, Ellsworth, Smith, Osborne, McPherson, and Marion

Counties. Passengers are encouraged to reserve their ride by 4:00 p.m. on the business day before the needed ride. Rides can be scheduled up to two weeks in advance.

OCCK is committed to providing transportation services to the general public, seniors, and persons with disabilities, through a variety of Programs.

For more information about OCCK, Inc., visit [www.occk.com](http://www.occk.com). For more information about CityGo and OCCK Transportation, visit [www.salinacitygo.com](http://www.salinacitygo.com). Or, contact the OCCK Transportation Center at 785-826-1583.



# OCCK, Inc. Celebrates Staff's Years of Service

Lunch celebrations were held in May and June to celebrate staff's years of employment.

## **40 Years of Service:**

Shelia Nelson-Stout, President/CEO

## **30 Years of Service:**

Rex Sibley, Maintenance

## **25 Years of Service:**

Caroline Bader, Team Leader

Deb Dragoo, Driver

Jacque Skieff, Coordinator of Services

Selena Storer, Quality of Operations Specialist

## **20 Years of Service:**

Dobb Morton, Maintenance

Karen Pearson, Service Coordination Specialist

## **15 Years of Service:**

Brandon Alwin, Team Leader

Brianne Beck, Direct Support Professional

Elzie Cunningham, Direct Support Professional

Felicia Johnson, Direct Support Professional

Kendra Krier, Vice President of Rural Services

Sue McMahan, Driver

## **10 Years of Service:**

Rena Bishop, Transportation Supervisor

Nancy Bolden, Technology Specialist

Steven Breeding, Direct Support Professional

Norvin Callahan, Driver

Janae Cramer, Administration and Information Systems Manager

Tim Dickinson, Driver

Stephanie Feuerborn, Direct Support Professional

Renee Gardner, Coordinator of Services

Cassandra Ramon, Technology Specialist

Jenny Richardson, Abilene Regional Coordinator

Jason Tieking, Driver

Tammy Wessling, Team Leader

## **5 Years of Service:**

Rose Base, Home Care Attendant

James Bean, Driver

Jessica Biester, Direct Support Professional

Shannon Boff, Direct Support Professional

Christina Burch, Driver

Donald Burns, Transportation Maintenance Supervisor

Paula Carpenter, Accounting Specialist

Jennifer Christenson, Direct Support Professional

Hope Collins, Home Care Attendant

Juanita Dalton, Accounting Specialist

Sarah Fancher, Direct Support Professional

Mary Feters, Direct Support Professional

Virginia Finney, Home Care Attendant

Michelle Griffin, Mobility Manager

Kelli Kaufman, Direct Support Professional

Elizabeth McCormick, Driver

Timmy Morris, Driver

Scott Poulton, Driver

Clark Shenk, Driver

Dennis Smith, Driver

Lisa Smith, Direct Support Professional

Mark Stokes, Driver

Ashley Strange, Self Direction Specialist

Leslie Webb, Risk Management Director

Melinda Wolfe, Driver

## **3 Years of Service:**

Sarah Anderson, Transitional Living Specialist

Donovan Anguiano, Direct Support Professional

Shelly Arnold, Occupational Therapist

Dena Blazier, Autism Support Specialist

Bethany Bloomer, Team Leader

Madison Carlgren, Alzheimer's Specialist

Randy Chapman, Direct Support Professional

Christina Dorman, Direct Support Professional

Shawna Edman, Home Care Attendant

Ricki Elliott, Driver

Sarah Eustice, Direct Support Professional

Jennifer Everett, Direct Support Professional

Gerald Funk, Driver

Michael Gallagher, Services Specialist

Kayla Garst, Infant Toddler Coordinator

Dianna Graham, Driver

Trell Grinter, Director of Transportation

Susan Johnson, Services Specialist

Rebecca Key, Home Health Aide

Amanda Kirby, Occupational Therapy Assistant

Kimberly Klucas, Driver

Angela Lindquist, Early Childhood Educator

Katherine Luehring, Direct Support Professional

Kara Mannebach, Assistive Technology Clerk

Korena Martin, Team Leader

Megan McGuire, Direct Support Professional

Doug Olson, Driver

David Perkinson, Driver

Heather Phillips, Home Care Attendant

Mary Pulkrabek, Autism Support Specialist

Rebecca Ragan, Home Care Attendant

Angela Sanchez, Transportation Supervisor

Taylor Sitton, Service Coordination Specialist

Jenilynn Spiess, Direct Support Professional

Susan Sprague, Vice President of Communication and Expansion

Shirley Stockdale, Administrative Support Specialist

Leon Swanson, Driver

Kay Tappendick, Driver

Walter Tolson, Direct Support Professional

Sharon Vajgrt, Physical Therapist

Patricia Velasquez, Direct Support Professional

Brenda Ward, LPN

Alan Webb, Team Leader

LeRoy Weigel, Direct Support Professional

Ernest Wilcher, Driver

Tammy Winters, Administrative Support Specialist

Gregory Worthen, Direct Support Professional

**Congratulations and thank you to everyone for your years of providing quality services to people in our communities!**



# ADA32



## Americans with Disabilities Act

### Celebrate the ADA! July 26, 2022

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was signed into law on July 26, 1990 by President George H.W. Bush. Throughout the year and on the ADA Anniversary (July 26), the ADA National Network recognizes this landmark event and the important work to promote equal opportunity for people with disabilities.

OCCK, Inc. is proud to support the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

32nd Anniversary. On July 26th we celebrate this important civil rights law that prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities in all areas of public life, including jobs, schools, transportation, and all public and private places that are open to the general public. The purpose of the law is to make sure that people with disabilities have the same rights and opportunities as everyone else.

Celebrate with us by visiting: [www.adaanniversary.org/](http://www.adaanniversary.org/) #ADA32 #ThanksToTheADA.

Did you know that the ADA National Network is a free resource that provides information and training on the Americans with Disabilities Act? Learn more about the resources you can access at: <https://adata.org/national-network> #ADA32 #ThanksToTheADA (Information obtained at [adata.org](http://adata.org))

## DID YOU KNOW?

### 41.1 Million, or 12.7%

According to the 2019 American Community Survey, this is the total civilian noninstitutionalized population with a disability in the United States in 2019.

### 7.9 Million

According to the 2019 American Community Survey, this is the total civilian noninstitutionalized population ages 18 to 64 with a disability who were employed in 2019.

### \$25,270

According to the 2019 American Community Survey, this is the median earnings in 2019 of the civilian noninstitutionalized population age 16 and over with a disability who had earnings in 2019.

# OCCK Transportation Ribbon Cutting

OCCK's Transportation department was the proud host of a Ribbon Cutting and Grant Announcement ceremony on April 7, 2022. The ribbon cutting for the new addition to the transportation facility at 340 N. Santa Fe in Salina was held in cooperation with the Kansas Secretary of State announcing the 2022 recipients of the Access, Innovation and Collaboration (AIC) Public Transit Program.

The expanded bus facility was funded by a grant from the Kansas Department of Transportation and the Federal Transit Administration, with local support from the City of Salina and OCCK, Inc.

The event was well attended with special guests that included state and federal dignitaries – Kansas Governor Laura Kelly, Kansas Transportation Secretary Julie Lorenz, Federal Transit Administrator Nuria Fernandez, and

FTA Region Seven Administrator Mokhtee Ahmad, as well as other representatives from the FTA, KDOT, local community partners and supporters.

"OCCK has always believed that through partnerships, most things can be accomplished," OCCK President and CEO Shelia Nelson-Stout told the crowd assembled. "Many years ago, we began public transportation through a partnership with Salina Regional hospital, KDOT, and FTA. Since that time, we've added many other parties, City of Salina, county commissioners, service organizations, businesses, schools, and colleges, to that partnership."

Trell Grinter, OCCK Transportation Director, told the crowd that since 2005, OCCK Transportation has provided more than four million rides to people of North Central Kansas while

logging millions of miles statewide.

"Transportation in Kansas is such an important tool. It connects people to the places and things that they need to live healthy and vibrant lives. It's not just for seniors and people with disabilities, but we pride ourselves on safe, affordable, quality, efficient transportation for people of all ages and abilities," said Michelle Griffin, Director of Mobility Management for North Central Kansas.

Griffin noted that transit supports both large and small communities in both rural and urban areas. It helps people get to and from work, school, medical appointments, shopping, visiting friends, and anywhere else they need to go.

"It helps us protect our rural areas, it promotes economic development, and it helps to curb social isolation," she said.

Lorenz said Salina was a shining example for the state, and even the nation, for what rural transit can do for people. Lorenz explained that the team aspect of transportation was the collaboration between local, state, and federal government, as well as strong partnerships with the private sector and non-profit organizations.

"And, perhaps what is often overlooked is we need communities working together, working regionally. And that's what I want to underscore here today, the regional aspect of what you all deliver, because people's transportation needs aren't confined to just a city or a county line or a state line, and we shouldn't try to deliver service that way," Lorenz said. "You'd be hard-pressed to find a better example of regional transit than right here in north-central Kansas," she





# and Grant Announcement Ceremony

added.

Fernandez said she would share information about what OCCK and its partners have accomplished.

"Mark my words. I will be using what's going on here and how you've been able to broaden into the community and into this region in many of my speeches and I will be sharing that also with Secretary

Buttigieg, who I bring regards to all of you from, because it is so important for all of us to tell these stories. These are the stories that matter," she said.

Governor Kelly made the announcements for the AIC Grants.

OCCK was awarded more than \$1.2 million for the following:

- Mobility hubs and stop improvements, \$84,600

- Second floor renovation, \$270,316
- 81 Connection expansion (Saturdays), \$54,812
- CityGo+ - microtransit pilot in Salina, \$250,400
- Fixed route enhancements - Software and Bus Equipment, \$570,769



Front row, left to right: Trent Davis, MD, Salina Mayor Trent Davis; Trell Grinter, OCCK Transportation Director; Michelle Griffin, North Central Kansas Coordinated Transit District Director of Mobility Management; Laura Kelly, Kansas Governor; Nuria Hernandez, FTA Administrator; Julie Lorenz, Kansas Secretary of Transportation; Mokhtee Ahmad, FTA Region 7 Administrator; Cory Davis, KDOT Assistant Bureau Chief of Multi-Modal Planning.

Back row: Shelia Nelson-Stout, President/CEO of OCCK, Inc.; Patrick Wallerius, Vice-President/CFO for OCCK, Inc.; Cara Emig, First Bank Kansas; Dusty Harris, Sunflower Bank; Nancy Nickell, Eaglecrest Retirement Community.



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Gail Painter  
Lucille Wiley  
Blanche Koetting  
Ed and Cheryl Deatherage  
Monty Montee  
Thelma Rowson  
Wanda Lynn

*In Memory of Bobby Martell*  
Robert and Vicki Wright  
Sheldon and Mary Muninger

*In Memory of Josh Asbury*  
Chuck and Mary Worthington  
Larry and Janice Doll  
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*In Memory of Donald Scrivner*  
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