

Public Transportation in Kalamazoo

History of a System – 1900 – 2014

The following is a history of public transportation in Kalamazoo County from 1900 to 2014. Questions about the history can be directed to Kalamazoo Metro Transit at (269) 337-8222.

1900

Public transportation began nearly 100 years ago in Kalamazoo when the first horse-drawn street cars appeared. In the 1900's, these horse-drawn carriages were replaced by electric street cars that operated until the late 1920's and 1930's when motor buses were introduced.

1932

From 1932 to 1966, Kalamazoo City Lines operated the Kalamazoo bus service. It was a privately-owned company which eventually suffered from increasing operating costs and decreasing ridership.

1967

Because of continued financial losses by the private sector, Kalamazoo City residents voted in late 1966 to acquire public ownership of the system. As a result, the Kalamazoo Metro Transit System was born on January 1, 1967. From 1967 to 1974, Kalamazoo Metro Transit focused much of its attention on increasing ridership through an improved route structure, as well as the purchase of all new vehicles.

1975

From 1975 through 1979, Metro Transit used federal and state funds to reorganize, improve, and promote services. Bus routes were revised and expanded; waiting time between buses was reduced from 90 minutes to 30 minutes; passenger comforts were encouraged; and fares were reduced from 30¢ to 25¢. These operational improvements, along with gasoline shortages at the time, resulted in a 40% increase in ridership to 1.6 million riders in 1976.

1977

By 1977, service had reached into the surrounding communities of Portage and Parchment, and the townships of Comstock, Oshtemo, Kalamazoo, and Schoolcraft. That same year, system ridership climbed to two million passengers for the first time in 24 years. During this time, the administrative

offices and maintenance facility of Metro Transit were relocated to 530 North Rose Street, where they stand today.

1980

In 1980, Metro Transit replaced its entire fleet of 34 1967 motor coaches, and added 20 additional coaches for the purpose of system expansion. It should be noted that all 54 coaches were purchased with wheelchair lifts, making Kalamazoo Metro Transit the first 100% fully accessible bus fleet in Michigan. These new vehicles provided a higher level of passenger comfort, safety, and convenience. As a result, ridership levels grew at a phenomenal rate and peaked at 3.5 million riders.

1981

Beginning in 1981, a combination of inflationary increases, higher operating costs, and a decision on the part of the federal government to both limit and reduce its financial participation, led to a decline in both service and ridership. Due to cutbacks at federal, state, and local levels, Metro Transit was forced to reduce its overall budget over \$1.9 million between 1981 and 1986. Service reductions during off-peak hours and Saturdays were implemented. Staff positions were cut and fares were increased. As a result of these service cutbacks and increased fares, ridership levels continue to fall to just under 1.6 million riders in 1986.

1985

In an effort to stabilize the system's financial base, the Kalamazoo City Commission appointed a Transit Authority Board of Directors to examine funding alternatives for the provision of continued transit service. After several months of deliberations, the Transit Authority voted to ask the citizens of Kalamazoo to support the system with a 0.5 mill levy each year for two years. This millage request was put on the November 5, 1985 ballot, but was defeated by only 29 votes.

1986

The Board of Directors returned to the voters on November 4, 1986, to request a 0.5 mill levy each year for three years. That referendum passed by a 3-2 margin. The establishment of a dedicated and stable financial base ensured the continuation of public transit service in the Kalamazoo metropolitan area over the next three-year period.

1987

With the successful millage, Metro Transit's immediate financial picture improved. 1987 brought minor routing and schedule improvements, replacement of 40 bus passenger shelters, internal transit management improvements, and special promotions in honor of the system's 20th anniversary.

1988

During 1988, stabilized gasoline prices and increases in personal income affected local ridership levels, as they had nationwide. However, expanded marketing and advertising programs, coupled with a concentrated effort at improved service delivery, resulted in a stabilization of system ridership, and even several months of ridership increases. Continued efforts at subcontracting services to the private sector, improved management techniques, and a reduction in bus fleet size contributed to reductions in overall operating expenses.

1989

Major accomplishments for 1989 included the renewal of the three-year 0.5 mill special transit levy that ensured continued operations between 1990 and 1992. System improvements were made in terms of improved fleet maintenance, retraining of both mechanics and motor coach operators, expanded market research and promotional/advertising programs, as well as continued efforts at cost reduction through privatization of system services. On-street operations improved with the continued monitoring of coach operators and improved system information dissemination, as well as the formal integration of maintenance, operational, and system financial data as part of a departmental automation and computer networking system. All of these enhancements helped to achieve a steady increase in system usage through 1989.

1990

Initiation of a short-range transit planning document used to guide future service development.

Completion of a private sector "operational appraisal", which resulted in specific recommendations for improvements in all areas of administration, vehicle maintenance, and system operations.

Continued improvement of fleet maintenance and the undertaking of a major bus rehabilitation project to resolve a vehicle structural deficiency that occurred fleet-wide.

Initiation of system service standards to guide continued improvements in service delivery.

Implementation of formal hiring procedures and testing of all new motor coach operators, as well as formal coach operator retraining programs.

Development of improved marketing and promotional activities, as well as a direct mail campaign to over 28,000 service area residences. In addition, the system increased the number of transit service information locations, as well as pass sales outlets.

Continued improvement in ridership figures, with monthly increases experienced in seven of twelve months. 1990 fixed-route ridership figures indicated a 1.3% increase over the previous year, with 1,489,471 total passenger trips provided.

1991

Fixed-route ridership levels remained fairly constant compared with 1990 figures. Total fixed-route ridership for 1991 was 1,511,571, or a 1.5% increase.

Efforts continued at improved service delivery and increased system usage.

Due to budgetary constraints, Western Michigan University's Bronco Transit service was terminated in the fall.

Necessary vehicle bulkhead replacements were completed on all coaches in an effort to extend vehicle life until such time as fleet replacement could be accomplished.

Special activities during the year included the department hosting a visit by a Russian official, staff assisting local radio station WRKR with a "Stuff-a-Bus" promotion to raise awareness of the homeless situation in the county, and a special free Saturday promotion for the four Saturdays before Christmas.

A specially outfitted GETAROUND bus was developed and put into service in the summer to draw attention to that special youth program, and a painted bus was prepared for the U.S. Post Office, with both programs generating additional operating revenue. Another special bus was used on a trial basis, an alternate fueled (methanol) vehicle, with generally positive results.

Further drawing attention to the system's operations was our new media campaign, "Another Good Reason to Ride the Bus," which began in 1991 and continued through 1992, 1993, and 1994.

As 1991 ended, work continued on the linkage of Metro Transit's computer system with the City's network, and a private transit consultant firm initiated work on a comprehensive operational analysis, as well as a feasibility study for a downtown transfer center.

1992

Completion of a comprehensive system-wide route analysis that provided recommendations for routing and service improvements over the next five-year period, several of which were implemented effective March 1, 1993.

Completion by staff of updates to a five-year Capital Improvement Program, a five-year Financial Plan, a five-year Marketing Program, and a five-year Vehicle Maintenance Program as part of our ongoing short-range planning efforts.

Application for federal and state capital funding for fleet replacement was also made. Funding was secured for 11 new buses, while funding to replace the remainder of the current fleet remained in question.

Special marketing and promotional activities concentrated on the system's 25th anniversary as a public service.

Continued improvements in system efficiency through implementation of further cost cutting measures, expansion of a preventive vehicle maintenance program, improved passenger amenities such as bus shelters and bus stop locations, and increased transit information dissemination.

Efforts concentrated in the areas of improved driver training, public relations training, and enhanced vehicle and passenger safety programs.

In November 1992, the special transit millage levy was approved by the voters for an additional three year period, ensuring funding from the City of Kalamazoo for transit services through 1995.

A new flash pass program was initiated during 1992. Initially implemented as a pilot program with the Department of Social Services, this program was expanded to the general public in late 1992 and was publicized extensively during 1993.

1993

Effective with the 1993 operating budget, a 25% increase in local share requirements was implemented, along with a general fare increase of 20%, effective March 1, 1993. Also effective on March 1st were a number of minor routing changes to improve and enhance current on-street service.

Fixed-route ridership levels remained nearly constant when compared with 1992 figures, in spite of a fare increase from 75¢ to 90¢. A total of 1,524,145 passenger trips were provided.

Efforts continued at improved service delivery and promoting increased system usage. System services remained relatively constant through 1993.

Vehicle maintenance efforts continued to improve and a coach refurbishment program continued, which will allow buses to be used past their normal 12-year life span until such time as total fleet replacement can be achieved.

A painted bus for Little Caesar's was secured, which was launched in late October with, appropriately enough, a pizza party.

A number of improvements were completed at the Intermodal Transportation Center, including a new brick platform, new lighting and signage, gutter repairs, landscaping, and an underground sprinkling system.

The Smart pass monthly flash pass was expanded to the general public with a special promotion via television.

An expanded number of token and pass sales outlets were secured.

The manufacture of 11 new Flexible coaches with new logos/color schemes was completed, with delivery in late December.

The department hosted an expedition of the Swedish X2000 high speed train.

On the downside, due to economic constraints in Comstock Township, service to that jurisdiction was reduced during weekdays and eliminated on Saturdays.

A consultant conducted a feasibility study to determine the potential for coordination/consolidation of Metro Transit's ADA paratransit service and Kalamazoo County's Care-A-Van system. An Intergovernmental Transportation Committee was also formed to determine long-range solutions to the transportation problems encountered by individuals with disabilities in Kalamazoo County.

An ADA Local Advisory Committee was formed and began meeting in December. The committee was charged with making recommendations to the Transit Authority Board with regard to annual updates, eligibility criteria, certification appeals, and all other aspects of our ADA paratransit service.

1994

The 11 new coaches were placed into service on March 22nd.

The adult cash fare was increased on March 1st to \$1, but the pass fare structure was reinstated to 1993 levels, effective May 1st.

Efforts during the year focused on implementation of an employer pass program, purchase of new bus radios, a shelter advertising contract, an update to the socioeconomic survey, discussions with Western Michigan University on reinstatement of a campus bus system, and continuation of talks with Kalamazoo Public Schools' officials on potential areas of consolidation.

Due to low ridership, Route #12-Portage South was eliminated on March 4th, and service reductions were implemented in Comstock Township due to insufficient funding by that jurisdiction.

ADA paratransit demand/response, curb-to-curb service began on July 18th, with two accessible mini-vans that were secured with additional State operating assistance made available. A third accessible mini-van was also available for use by supervisory staff in the event of wheelchair lift failure on fixed-route coaches.

Special transportation services were provided for Kalamazoo Public School students. Four separate routes were established, serving approximately 440 students. A total of 9,805 trips were provided.

Staff worked throughout the year with WMU's Students for a Sustainable Earth. The group attempted to secure student funding for reinstatement of a campus bus service.

State funding was secured for the construction of a Public Safety precinct in the Intermodal Transportation Center.

A special Smart pass promotion for KVCC students was held during the first semester of the 1994-95 school year.

Our Little Caesar's painted bus was renewed for another year, and new painted bus contracts were reached with Prudential/Berghorst & Associates Realtors, the law firm of Keller & Keller, and the Kalamazoo Nature Center.

1995

Two additional ADA paratransit vehicles were placed into service.

The WMU group, Students for a Sustainable Earth, decided to postpone until the next school year a proposed student referendum on an increase in student fees to fund a campus transportation program.

Public Safety Precinct #1 opened in the Intermodal Transportation Center in February, with a formal dedication held on March 17th.

Contract negotiations were held with the Amalgamated Transit Union Local and a new contract was signed for maintenance and operations staff.

Eight new Flexible fixed-route coaches were ordered, with 3 coaches received in September from a prior order. Funding was also secured for the purchase of four smaller (25-foot coaches) to be purchased in 1996.

New painted buses were produced for Bronson Hospital, the Michigan K-Wings, and Western Temporary services. Contracts were also secured for painted buses for the City's Public Works Division, the Kalamazoo Museum, and the Kalamazoo County Health Department.

Special free/reduced ride promotions were held in November for area students, and in December for our Smart pass and for WMU international students.

Our special 0.5 mill transit millage levy was overwhelmingly approved by voters in the City of Kalamazoo for another three-year period.

A socio-economic survey was conducted of all passengers in December.

New bus stop signs were ordered, with installation scheduled for spring of 1996.

1996

A federally-required drug and alcohol testing program was implemented for all employees in safety-sensitive positions in January.

The Greater Kalamazoo Public Transportation Strategy Group began meeting in May. The group's focus was on the development of short- and long-term financial strategies; integration of existing public transportation systems; management of the integrated system in an affordable, cost effective, and efficient manner; and re-definition of public transportation as a more viable option for Kalamazoo citizens. The initial phase of their work ended with the completion of a "Strategic Direction".

A new passenger newsletter, The Bus Stop, premiered. This quarterly newsletter is posted in all coaches and in downtown shelters to provide passengers with information on Metro Transit services. At the same time, new Comment Cards for passengers were placed in all coaches for passenger feedback.

Summer free ride coupons were distributed to area students in grades 5-8, with a total of 1,222 free rides provided during the summer months.

We received word that the Flexible Company went bankrupt, effectively canceling our outstanding contract with that company for 8 new coaches.

The Maintenance Unit received recognition from the Michigan Department of Transportation for their "Excellence in Vehicle Maintenance."

Metro Transit participated in the City's July 4th Spectacular by providing a shuttle service from downtown parking lots to the Annen Sports Complex for the baseball game, concert, and fireworks. A total of 3,979 people were transported that day.

Renovations were completed to the administrative offices and dispatch office.

President Clinton visited Kalamazoo, traveling through our Intermodal Transportation Center.

A county-wide telephone survey was conducted of community residents, current bus riders, government leaders, and business leaders to determine community perceptions with regard to public transportation.

Surveys were sent to approximately 200 ADA-paratransit-eligible individuals to determine their satisfaction with our Metro Van service.

Word was received in September that Kalamazoo will receive \$1 million in federal funds to be used for buses and bus-related facilities. The majority of the funds will be used to complete our fleet replacement program, with the remaining funds to be dedicated toward our planned downtown transfer center.

Another new painted bus was unveiled, this one for Western Michigan University.

The Intermodal Transportation Center hosted a high speed rail ceremony. This "Demonstration of High Speed Rail in Michigan" included a ceremony held in Martin Luther King Park, and a train ride for invited guests to Niles and back, where speeds of up to 100 mph were demonstrated.

A new unlimited ride "Elite Pass" Program was announced that will offer free rides to residents of participating apartment complexes.

1997

Routing and fare structure changes will be implemented effective March 3rd. Route changes affect the Westnedge, Bronson, Oakland, South Burdick, and Paterson routes, and include the elimination of the Portage-East and Portage-West routes. Increases will be made in the punch and flash passes offered to passengers, but the cash fare will remain \$1.

Facility improvements scheduled to take place include renovations to the facility's boiler as well as modifications to the vehicle storage area's ventilation system.

Despite two recent winter storms in January, bus service was not interrupted.

Metro Transit will celebrate its 30th anniversary all year, with a variety of activities including a new 30th anniversary logo, an "I Have Connections" campaign, Passenger Appreciation Days, and other events.

1998

In January, Metro Transit began providing service on the WMU campus. This was a pilot project to determine the efficiency of this service.

As part of the pilot project, several routes continued to provide service until 10 pm on Monday - Thursday.

Starting in August all Metro Transit routes will be providing service until 10 pm.

1999

LIFE EMS began providing service for Metro Van on January 2nd with the beginning of a three-year contract.

An automated call distribution (ACD) system was installed at Metro Transit, allowing a number of individuals to handle incoming calls during high volume periods, allowing a quicker response to the needs of customers.

Child seats were purchased for use in Metro Van vehicles to help people with disabilities who travel with young passengers.

Metro Transit was awarded Federal funding to provide bicycle racks on buses. Bike racks are estimated to be installed in spring 2000.

Metro Transit received an award of excellence in recognition for an outstanding vehicle maintenance program. The award, presented June 18th, was presented by the Michigan Department of Transportation.

August 30th marked the kick-off of the Brown & Gold bus raffle to promote ridership on WMU's campus.

3,500 umbrellas and 63,000 schedules were distributed to WMU students at the Bronco Bash.

Metro Transit reached its goal of providing more than 2 million trips for the year of 1999!

2000

Route #21-Solon/Kendall and Route #22-Lafayette were added to the system. These two new routes service Western Michigan University students who live in nearby off-campus housing.

New peak service hours were introduced. \$.50 fares became available to senior citizens and people with disabilities Monday through Friday, 10 am to 3 pm and after 7:15 pm, including all day on Saturday.

The "Buscycle" program was launched. Bike racks were added to all buses.

Metro Transit obtained 9 new Gillig buses. Each of these buses has cameras installed on board for the added security of our passengers.

All non-campus regular fixed-route buses started running Monday through Saturday with the addition of Saturday service on three routes.

Almost 2.2 million trips were provided in the year 2000.

2001

New schedule racks were added to Metro Transit coaches. These new racks hold more schedules which accommodated the 2000 increase in bus routes.

Senators Debbie Stabenow and Carl Levin announced that the Michigan Department of Transportation received more than \$22 million to replace buses and vans and to build new bus facilities across Michigan. The funds released to Metro Transit covered the payment of one newly purchased Gillig coach and future facility improvements.

President Bush visited Kalamazoo and Metro Transit was there, transporting approximately 800 people between a remote parking lot on Western Michigan University's campus to the site of President Bush's speech.

Property located at 405 North Burdick was purchased by the City of Kalamazoo to eventually be used as a downtown transfer center for buses.

A new three-year contract with Western Michigan University was approved. The contract will ensure continued bus service for WMU students.

Metro Transit began a season-long route to the Kalamazoo Kings home baseball games.

Route #22-Lafayette was expanded to include direct service from Fraternity Village to Western Michigan University's campus.

Route #14-West Main was changed to provide direct service from downtown to West Main Mall.

Route #3-West Michigan was revised to provide direct service between Western Michigan University's campus, the Arboretum, Meijer, Jefferson Commons, Concord Place, and other apartments along West Michigan.

Route #23-Drake North and Route #24-Drake South were added to the system.

Metro Transit obtained four 1988 30-foot lift equipped Flxible buses from the Capital Area Transportation Authority. The buses underwent complete maintenance and service checks as well as new exterior finishes.

Metro Transit retired the very last of its GMC RTS buses from its fleet. The last of 20 RTS coaches purchased in 1979 and 34 purchased in 1980 traveled on its last official assigned run around the Kalamazoo area in October.

A new newsletter, "BUSiness News", was developed to highlight important information about Metro Transit to our community.

The citizens of Kalamazoo overwhelmingly voted in favor of a renewal millage which supported public transportation services in our community. Proposal B (for Bus) was passed with a total of 8,562 votes, or 78% in favor of renewing the millage.

Metro Transit provided 2,311,292 passenger trips on fixed routes in 2001. That's the most trips provided by Metro Transit in more than 20 years.

2002

Two Metro Transit employees traveled to Salt Lake City, Utah, to drive buses for the 2002 Winter Olympics.

A new interior bus cleaning system consisting of a full-service, high-powered vacuum was purchased and installed.

Ten new token machines were purchased and installed throughout the community replacing out-of-date token machines which only accepted \$5 bills. The new machines accept \$1, \$5, \$10, and \$20 bills.

New routing was implemented on Route #10-Comstock to accommodate passengers to and from the Mayor's Riverfront Park.

The American Public Transit Association announced that Metro Transit won the Improvement Award, Group III, in the Bus Safety Award competition for most improvements made in safe service delivery.

Credit cards became an accepted method of payment for bus passes at the Administrative Office or by mail.

The garage ceiling was completely repainted in an off-white color.

Phase I of a Facility Expansion/Renovation Project began as many administrative employees were relocated into temporary offices. The project will result increased office space and a better, more customer-friendly lobby area.

Printable bus schedules were added to the Metro Transit website to make it easier for our customers to access information about bus routes.

A Defensive Driver Training took place. It was the National Safety Council's course to provide drivers with knowledge of safe driving techniques to prevent collisions and violations.

Car seat installation training became a service of the Transportation Department. Certification was obtained through the Michigan Department of Community Health.

Coach Operators participated in a Safety and Security Training provided by the Kalamazoo Department of Public Safety.

Metro Transit service hours were increased on Saturdays to provide transportation from 6:00 am until 10:15 pm, six days per week.

Subscription Service for certified Metro Van passengers was implemented. This service allows passengers to schedule rides three or more times per week at the same scheduled time to the same location for three month periods.

Metro Transit partnered with Michigan Citizen Action to register voters by handing out voter registrations to passengers and passersby alike. Completed registrations were even mailed in for participants.

The Transportation Department obtained the area's Ridesharing program (formerly known as Kalamazoo Ridesharing), thus further enhancing the transportation services offered to our community.

A new one-day ridership record was set on Election Day. 17,923 rides were provided.

Metro Van ID cards became an acceptable form of validation for half fare bus rides during non-peak hours on all fixed routes.

2003

Congressman Fred Upton (R-St. Joseph) announced that he was successful in securing \$2.9 million towards the completion of the construction of the Kalamazoo Transportation center, slated to open in 2005.

Land between N. Rose St. and N. Burdick St. was acquired to accommodate the future Kalamazoo Transportation Center.

Renovations to the Metro Transit Administration Facility, 530 N. Rose, were completed. Funding for the project was provided by state and Federal dollars specifically for the renovation of the building.

Two new Ford Econoline 250 vans were put into service for the ADA Metro Van paratransit service.

A Socio-Economic Survey was conducted on Metro transit buses to determine the demographics of bus passengers.

Three 1988 30-foot Flexible buses were obtained from the Capital Area Transportation Authority to replace older buses.

Metro Van Subscription service was expanded. Passengers became eligible for the service if they traveled to the same locations at the same times at least twice each week. The previous requirement was three times per week.

Metro Transit Coach Operators and Maintenance employees underwent Fire Extinguisher Training. Employees learned how to operate the pressurized fire extinguishers and the safety measures needed to operate one.

Community forums were held to discuss ideas for the design of the Kalamazoo Transportation Center to be built south of the current inter-city bus/train station.

The Northside Business Association awarded the Transportation Department its annual Pride Award for improving the aesthetics of the Northside Neighborhood area with the Metro Transit Facility Expansion/Renovation.

Vacated buildings on the site of the future Kalamazoo Transportation Center were demolished and an asphalt surface was installed in the area.

The Kalamazoo Advantage Academy approved the use of the Metro Transit System to provide transportation for students. Children in kindergarten through 8th grade, accompanied by monitors in many cases, began riding Metro Transit to and from school.

A passenger trip scorecard was mailed to all Metro Van passengers and placed on all Metro Vans in an on-going attempt to determine the quality of service paratransit passengers are receiving.

Five new 35-foot, heavy duty, low floor, cleaner burning diesel Gillig buses arrived and were put into service.

Several routing enhancements went into effect, including the addition of a new route. Route #25-WMU Parkview Campus not only benefited the students by providing transportation between the two campuses, but also benefited the community by helping to reduce traffic congestion along Stadium Dr. and Drake Rd.

Metro Transit employees pledged \$7,596 to the Greater Kalamazoo United Way for 2004--an increase of 220 percent in pledges and 48 percent in number of participants over 2002.

The Community Ridesharing program started its second year as a Transportation Department program.

A bi-annual passenger opinion survey was mailed to all certified Metro Van passengers to measure current levels of satisfaction as well as to identify areas for improvement within the paratransit service.

Public input was sought regarding a proposed increase in bus fares to occur in 2004.

For the first time in more than 20 years more than 3 million passenger trips were provided by Metro Transit in 2003.

2004

The Kalamazoo City Commission approved a \$.10 fare increase to go into effect on April 1, 2004. This was the first time a fare increase had been implemented in more than ten years.

Results from a survey taken on Metro Van demonstrated overall passenger satisfaction with the Metro Van service.

Final designs for construction of the Kalamazoo Transportation Center and renovations to the Intermodal Transportation center were presented at a Community Forum.

A celebration was held at the Intermodal Transportation Center to introduce a new Amtrak line, the Blue Water.

Metro Transit participated in local Earth Day activities with a presentation, a booth, and coupons.

Route #25-Parkview Campus was continued with limited service throughout the summer months.

Market research conducted by the Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study (KATS) demonstrated that 92.7% of Metro Transit passengers are either completely or mostly satisfied with both Metro Transit and Metro Van services.

Metro Transit participated in Business Expo, promoting services such as Commuter Choice benefits to employers and Community Ridesharing.

A new bus shelter was added at Crossroads Mall.

Metro Van's service contract was awarded to Pride Care.

Metro Van celebrated a 10-year anniversary.

Downtown Kalamazoo Incorporated (DKI) worked with Metro Transit on an event called "Click to Downtown" which helped familiarize Western Michigan University students with riding on Metro Transit buses. Approximately 2,100 students rode the Route #16-Lovell bus during the event.

A revised bus advertising policy was adopted by the Kalamazoo City Commission.

Coaches #1050, #1054, and #1056 were permanently retired from the Metro Transit fleet.

Metro transit participated in Communities in Motion by offering passengers a free ride in exchange for donated food, personal hygiene products, or clothing. The donated items were delivered to the Gospel Mission or to Ministry with Community.

A Mystery Rider program was launched to help determine the level of satisfaction our passengers have with the quality of service we provide.

City of Kalamazoo residents approved a one mil special transit levy for three years.

Metro Transit employees donated a total of \$5,978.45 to the Greater Kalamazoo United Way.

Metro Transit started a service agreement with Barclay Hills Education Center for the Parchment School District. Using a pass issued by the school district, students are able to ride the bus without paying a fare. This program is similar to programs offered by Western Michigan University and the Kalamazoo Advantage Academy.

The Kalamazoo City Commission approved a fare increase on Metro Transit buses for 2005. The increase raised fares to \$1.25 for a one-way regular adult fare.

2005

Two new accessible vans were purchased for use in the Metro Van service.

The Metro Transit safety committee developed new guidelines and recommendations for safety.

Several Metro Transit employees volunteered during the Community-Wide Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Day of Service.

An application was added to the kmetro.com website for people who want to participate in the Community Rideshare program.

The Safety Committee completed a Service Call Procedures Policy that was implemented by Metro Transit.

A new Child Car Seat Policy was implemented on the Metro Van service.

The Metro Transit Maintenance Division underwent an inspection by the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT).

Metro Transit participated in the Western Michigan University (WMU) Housing Fair.

Kalamazoo City and County Administrations reached an agreement for providing the Care-A-Van service.

The contract for the construction of the Kalamazoo Transportation Center was awarded to Miller-Davis of Kalamazoo.

The working agreement between the Kalamazoo Transit Authority Board of Directors and the Kalamazoo City Commission was renewed for three years.

Care-A-Van officially moved to Metro Transit following unanimous approval at a joint Kalamazoo City Commission and Kalamazoo County Board of Commissioners meeting.

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An additional three new positions were created on the Transit Authority Board's Local Advisory Committee as a result of the Care-A-Van / Metro Transit merger.

A RidePoint software demonstration was held at Metro Transit for transportation providers to learn how to use the software to schedule vehicles, drivers and routes.

The House passed the Transportation Equity Act, a Legacy of Users (SAFETEA-LU) to reauthorize federal transit and highway programs for four years.

A summer schedule for Route #25-Parkview Campus was developed.

New Adult 10-Ride Punch Passes were created and began being sold.

With Congressman Fred Upton (R-St. Joseph) participating, a groundbreaking was held for the Kalamazoo Transportation Center.

Metro Transit participated in Kalamazoo's Regional Chamber of Commerce's 2005 Business and Technology Expo.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Accessibility Plan for the Metro Transit System was presented to the Transit Authority Board for approval and submission to MDOT.

Five new ADA compliant bus shelters were placed in the Kalamazoo area.

Indian Trails and Greyhound buses relocated to the Kalamazoo International Airport but began making daily stops at the Intermodal Transportation Center.

Metro Transit announced route and schedule changes to be implemented in August.

Metro Transit attended the Kalamazoo Public Library's Vehicle Day.

Metro Transit attended the 15th Anniversary Celebration of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

A contract was renewed with the Kalamazoo Advantage Academy to provide students with transportation.

A revised transfer policy went into effect.

Hundreds of students rode the Route #16-Lovell bus as part of the "Click Downtown" promotion to welcome WMU freshmen to Kalamazoo.

Metro transit attended the Cougar Connection at Kalamazoo Valley Community College.

Metro Transit participated in the WMU International Student Orientation.

Metro Transit participated in the WMU Bronco Bash.

Metro Transit was called upon by MDOT to provide assistance during disaster relief following hurricane Katrina. Wheelchair accessible vehicles and Coach Operators helped to transport evacuees.

Metro Transit participated in an Open House and Career Day hosted by MDOT and the Michigan State Police.

Three years after the option to participate in a Subscription Service was added to the Metro Van procedures, the 150th Subscription was issued.

Metro Transit participated in the Senior Expo as part of the national Seniors in Motion Celebration.

Surveys to determine levels of satisfaction with the Care-A-Van service were mailed out to certified users.

Metro Transit announced an increase in bus fares was being proposed to help offset reductions in State transit funding and increases in costs, such as rising fuel prices.

The Kalamazoo County Transportation Authority was formed at the regular meeting of the County Board of Commissioners and unanimously accepted the articles of incorporation to form the county-wide authority.

The Holly Jolly Trolley, Route #26, began operating in the downtown area. Thanks to sponsorship by Downtown Kalamazoo, Inc., the trolley was able to provide free rides.

A Stuff the Bus campaign was held with Cumulus Broadcasting to fill a Metro Transit bus with toys for the U.S. Marines Toys for Tots program. Thousands of toys were donated to children in our area.

2006

Metro Transit's Care-A-Van service started out the year with a new 18-month contract with Pride Care Ambulance Company.

Construction on the Kalamazoo Transportation Center (KTC) was well underway. In January, the lobby area of the depot building was emptied so that rehabilitation of the interior could begin.

The Kalamazoo City Commission approved a fare increase to go into effect on March 1.

A routing study was implemented to help plan the restructuring of bus routes to service the KTC upon its opening.

A Care-A-Van passenger survey showed an overall satisfaction level of 95%.

A bus transfer survey was conducted to help determine usage patterns of passengers who would be using the KTC upon its opening.

Bus fare increases went into effect. An adult cash fare increased to \$1.35.

Four new 40-foot, low floor, Gillig buses arrived at Metro Transit to replace some of the older buses in the fleet.

Four new Econoline E250 vans were purchased. Three of the vans were added to the fleet of existing vans in the Metro Van service and one was added for use in the Metro Transit bus service.

Metro Transit held public input meetings about newly proposed bus routing.

The Kalamazoo City Commission approved a provisional agreement with the Kalamazoo County Transportation Authority (KCTA) and the Kalamazoo Transit Authority Board (TAB) for continuation of public transportation services throughout Kalamazoo County.

Proposed new routing was posted online for the WMU passengers who were able to view the proposals and comment on them.

WMU orientation leaders participated in a training to learn how the Metro Transit System works. They then took what they learned at the training and taught incoming freshmen about public transportation services provided.

Metro Transit joined the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) in celebrating National Dump the Pump Day to help raise awareness that public transportation is the quickest way to beat high gas prices.

Officials began considering the possibility of relocating the Indian Trails and Greyhound intercity bus services back to the KTC.

The Grand Opening of the KTC was held.

Customer Service moved to the KTC.

Metro Transit was contacted by Kalamazoo County's Office of Emergency Management to assist with four Cooling Centers during the high summer temperatures. The emergency relief effort provided fares to transport people to the Centers. In a matter of minutes, buses were transporting passengers to relief centers.

Coach Operators began training for using the KTC as the new Metro Transit loading zone.

Metro Transit flew the official Kalamazoo City flag for the first time at the KTC. Previous to August, the only Kalamazoo City flag in existence was displayed inside the City Commission Chambers at City Hall.

The Metro Transit loading zone was moved from the intersection of Rose and Michigan to the KTC.

New bus routing went into effect.

Approximately 2,600 rides were taken on the Route #16-Lovell bus in a single day as a result of the "Click Downtown" event coordinated by Downtown Kalamazoo Inc. to encourage WMU students to come downtown.

The KCTA filed a Resolution calling for a referendum on November 7 to levy a tax to provide for public transportation services to the residents of Kalamazoo County.

It was announced that beginning in 2007, Metro Transit will be introducing up to five BioBuses, or coaches powered by biodiesel as part of a cooperative pilot project between the City of Kalamazoo and WMU.

Residents of Kalamazoo County voted to pass the KCTA's request to levy 0.45 mills to operate and provide public transportation to the County of Kalamazoo for two years. The question passed with 51% in favor, or 46,034 voting yes and 43,559 voting no.

A Travel Trend Survey was conducted on several Metro Transit bus routes to help determine demographics and socio-economic traits of passengers on certain routes.

The #26-Special Holly Jolly Trolley returned for its second season.

Metro Transit employees donated a total of \$5,368.20 to the Greater Kalamazoo United Way Campaign.

The City of Kalamazoo Commission approved the purchase of seven new Care-A-Van vehicles and 11 new buses for 2007 and 2008.

Route changes were made on five Metro Transit bus routes.

Metro Transit assisted WKFR with the second annual Stuff the Bus campaign and helped generate a bus full of new toys for the U.S. Marines Toys for Tots Program.

The KCTA held two public input meetings to discuss new fixed bus routes for the City of Portage area.

2007

Metro Transit celebrated its 40th anniversary of providing public transportation services to the Kalamazoo area.

A new Metro Transit website went live.

Indian Trails and Greyhound buses moved back to the Kalamazoo Transportation Center after briefly operating out of the Kalamazoo/Battle Creek International Airport.

A survey was conducted to help in the planning of new routing for the Portage area.

It was announced that Metro Transit provided 78.5 million passenger trips in its 40-year history.

Metro Transit passed a Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) inspection on wheelchair lifts and ramps.

An inauguration of three new bus routes in the Portage area was held.

Metro Transit became one of many public transportation providers across the nation who signed an agreement with the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) to participate in an Emergency Response and Preparedness Agreement.

Transportation Director Bill Schomisch was awarded the American Institute of Architects Southwest Michigan Chapter Owner's Award for the design of the Kalamazoo Transportation Center.

The Kalamazoo Historic Preservation Commission elected to present the Transportation Department with the 2007 Historic Preservation Merit Award for the spectacular restoration of the historic Michigan Central Depot (Kalamazoo Transportation Center).

Metro Transit joined public transportation providers across the nation in celebrating Dump the Pump Day.

A contract was renewed with the Kalamazoo Advantage Academy (KAA) for the 2007-08 school year to allow students and monitors to ride buses throughout the year on a pre-paid program.

A new contract was signed between Metro Transit and Western Michigan University (WMU) for the '07-'08 school year.

The Metro Transit customer service staff received an award from Greyhound for achieving an outstanding score following a recent audit of their services.

The Care-A-Van program experienced a brief service interruption following the onset of an employee strike at the Pride Care Ambulance Company.

Supervisors of safety sensitive employees from Metro Transit and those from Pride Care who work the Metro Van and Care-A-Van programs attended the Safety Institute's (TSI) "Substance Abuse Management and Program Compliance" courses.

Downtown Kalamazoo Incorporated (DKI) worked with WMU and Metro Transit to hold an event known as "Click Downtown". The event was designed to bring approximately 1,400 WMU freshmen to the downtown area and to demonstrate how to use the bus system.

A presentation and one-on-one assistance on how to use the Metro Transit System were given to WMU international students during their orientation.

5,000 packets of information were handed out at WMU's Bronco Bash event.

The Greater Kalamazoo United Way Campaign was launched as a way for Metro Transit employees to participate in a program to help members of our community.

Metro Van celebrated the 200th Metro Van subscription being issued to a passenger.

A new discount fare for children who are not certified as disabled using the Care-A-Van service became available for children ages 6 through 17.

A Care-A-Van survey was mailed to every registered passenger to help determine passenger satisfaction and to help identify areas needing improvement. Results showed that 88% of respondents were either very satisfied or satisfied with the Care-A-Van service.

The Transit Authority Board (TAB) placed a one-year one-mil levy request on the general election ballot to generate \$1.6M for public transit services in the City of Kalamazoo for 2008. It was approved with 72% of City of Kalamazoo voters in favor.

The Holly Jolly Trolley began operating in the downtown Kalamazoo area for a third season.

Seven new Care-A-Van buses arrived, were prepped and put into service.

Metro Van broke the record for passenger trips provided in a single month with 3,935 trips--more than 500 trips over the previous record set in May, 2007.

A new trolley service, the South Westnedge Holiday Express was started with funding from the KCTA.

Metro Transit joined forces with WKFR-103.3 FM to help stuff a bus full of toys for the Toys for Tots program.

2008

The Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study (KATS) began a year-long study gathering ridership data of Metro Transit fixed-route buses for National Transit Data (NTD).

Three new Ford Econoline E-250 vans arrived and were added to the Metro Van fleet, bringing the total number of service vans to 15.

A new trip scheduling policy was implemented in the Metro Van and Care-A-Van services that increased the number of days passengers could call ahead to schedule their trips.

New cameras and upgraded camera systems were added to fixed-route buses.

Four new 35-foot, low floor, Gillig buses arrived for use in the fixed-route service.

Metro Van set a new record for the most rides provided in a single month with 3,935 trips taken in January, 2008.

The Ride to Win campaign was launched as an incentive to encourage new ridership on the newest bus routes in Portage.

A passenger satisfaction survey was conducted in the Care-A-Van and Metro Van services to determine satisfaction levels regarding trip scheduling, trip comfort, driver professionalism, and more.

Artwork was added to Care-A-Van vehicles. The stickers read, "Funded by the Kalamazoo County Transportation Authority."

Proposals were sought from agencies to rebrand the public transit system.

Reports showed an increase of 22% in the number of passenger trips taken in February, 2008, on Metro Transit fixed-route buses compared with February of 2007.

Metro Transit services were featured as a segment in a show called Kalamazoo County is One Community on Cable Access.

It was reported that Metro Transit provided just more than 3 million passenger trips in 2007--keeping pace with ridership levels over the past five years.

Metro Van had another record-breaking month in March with a total of 4,072 passenger trips provided during the month.

For the third month in a row, there was an increase of 9.2% in productivity for the month of March compared with March, 2007, on board fixed-route buses.

The City of Kalamazoo was awarded the Diamond Award for Engineering Excellence for the design of the Kalamazoo Transportation Center from the American Council of Engineering Companies.

Fixed-route bus ridership exhibited yet another increase for the month of April compared with April of 2007. There was a 14.79% increase in productivity.

There were 4,204 Metro Van passenger trips in the month of April, 2008. This was the most trips provided in a single month in the history of the service.

Detours in the Metro Transit fixed-route system were added to the home page at <http://www.kmetro.com/>.

A telephone survey and focus groups were held in May as part of the research phase of the system rebranding effort.

Western Michigan University Orientation Leaders attended a presentation to learn how to teach incoming freshmen at the university how to ride the Metro Transit buses.

Metro Transit announced that the four newest fixed-route buses were being powered by ultra-low sulfur biodiesel fuel.

The third annual Dump the Pump event was held in Kalamazoo in conjunction with communities across the nation as a way to encourage people to park their personal vehicles and ride the bus. An incentive coupon for a reduced price on July SMART Passes was offered.

A tornado was spotted in the area and a warning was issued. Within minutes of the warning, Metro Transit passengers and those at the Kalamazoo Transportation Center were evacuated to safety.

The Metro Transit System was found to have no deficiencies in any area during the Federal Transit Administration's Triennial Review which covers things such as legal and financial areas, maintenance practices, ADA compliance, fare requirements, and drug / alcohol programs.

Productivity on fixed-route buses during the month of June increased 27.08% when compared to June, 2007.

Care-A-Van service hours were increased to match the hours of service being offered for Metro Transit fixed-route buses and for the Metro Van service.

New rules of use were implemented at the Kalamazoo Transportation Center.

Congressman Fred Upton (R-St. Joseph) visited Kalamazoo Metro Transit to show support of more funding in the State of Michigan for public transportation. While here, he took a ride on the Route #7-Alamo bus.

New software was purchased for scheduling Care-A-Van rides. Training was held on how to best utilize the software for passenger scheduling.

Metro Transit transported approximately 1,400 Western Michigan University students between campus and downtown Kalamazoo during the click downtown event held by Downtown Kalamazoo Incorporated (DKI).

Metro Transit celebrated its anniversary of 35 years of partnership with the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT).

More WMU students rode Metro Transit fixed-route buses in August, 2008, than in the month of August for the past two years.

Minor routing changes went into effect which included the elimination of some WMU service.

5,000 packets of information were distributed to students during WMU's Bronco Bash event.

A telephone linking directly with the Kalamazoo Department of Public Safety was installed at the KTC. The phone was housed in a casing from the 1960s, giving it some historical appeal.

Intense rain showers and tornado warnings occurred in the Kalamazoo area which caused flooding. Metro Transit staff worked to get passengers to safety and to detour vehicles around flooded areas.

Productivity on fixed-route buses in September, 2008, was up for the fifth month in a row by 6.9% compared with September of 2007.

Metro Transit was represented at a booth during the Area Agency on Aging Senior Expo.

More trips than ever were provided in a single month on Metro Van vehicles in October with 4,363 rides provided.

A county-wide public transportation millage was placed on the ballot. The millage did not pass.

Service was added to the Veteran's Administration Hospital just across the border of Calhoun County using Care-A-Van.

The Holly Jolly Trolley started its fourth season of service in the downtown Kalamazoo area.

It was reported that there was a significant decrease in criminal activities at the Kalamazoo Transportation Center since implementing new rules at the facility.

Ten Metro Transit maintenance employees attended a transmission training class at Battle Creek Transit where they learned advanced transmission diagnostics and repair specifically for Gillig buses.

Metro Transit participated in the WKFR-FM 103.3 Stuff the Bus even which generated a busload of toys for needy children in our area through the U.S. Marines Toys for Tots program.

It was announced that Metro Transit would not be transferring from the City of Kalamazoo to the Kalamazoo Transportation Authority in January, 2009, as previously planned due to the failure of the millage request in November.

For the first time in at least 28 years, Metro Transit suspended all service for one hour due to significantly dangerous icy road conditions.

2009

It was announced that Metro Transit received an award from the United States Department of Transportation for an Achievement of Excellence for our results in the 2008 Triennial Review.

The Kalamazoo County Transportation Authority received a City/County recommendation to request a millage from Kalamazoo County residents, a millage from City of Kalamazoo residents, and an increase in fares from passengers.

Metro Transit assisted The Kalamazoo Department of Public Safety by providing a warm bus for shelter and transportation during an apartment complex fire.

Metro Transit was the focus of a rally at Kalamazoo College to help move the campus toward a more green existence by utilizing public transportation.

A socio-economic survey was conducted on-board all Metro Transit fixed route buses.

Seven new Gillig buses arrived at Metro transit and replaced several 1999 Eldorado buses.

A county-wide millage request put forth by the Kalamazoo County Transportation Authority passed by 63% approval.

Metro Transit participated in a Bike to Work event being coordinated by the Kalamazoo Chamber of Commerce as part of National Bike to Work Week.

Western Michigan University Orientation Leaders attended a training session about riding Metro Transit buses so they could pass along what they learned to students coming to WMU.

Metro Transit was present at a booth at Kalamazoo's Business Expo where information was provided about services such as Community Ridesharing.

A request for proposal was generated to help secure a single service provider to operate both the Metro Van and Care-A-Van services.

The Kalamazoo Transportation Center began a bi-monthly deep cleaning schedule.

Plans to expand the Metro Transit Administration Facility were announced.

A new Name and logo were developed for the merged services of Metro Van and Care-A-Van. Metro County Connect was introduced with plans to become one merged service on November 1, 2009.

Western Michigan University students participated in Click Downtown which utilized the Route #16-Lovell bus to transport large numbers of students between campus and downtown Kalamazoo.

A contract was approved with the Apple Bus Company to provide the Metro County Connect Service for three years beginning in November, 2009.

A total of seven new cutaway buses arrived to be used in the Metro County Connect service.

A Travel Trend survey was conducted.

A comprehensive Operational Analysis (COA) of the Metro Transit system was started.

A public hearing regarding proposed fare increases was held.

city residents voted 76% in favor of a 0.6 mil levy to support fixed-route bus service.

The Holly Jolly Trolley began its fifth holiday season running throughout the downtown Kalamazoo area.

Supervisors were trained on the usage of new fareboxes.

A brick wall between the Metro Transit building and nearby railway tracks was torn down and replaced.

Metro Transit participated in the WKFR-FM 103.3 Stuff a Bus campaign and helped generate a bus full of toys for the Toys for Tots program.

New fare boxes were installed on all fixed-route buses.

2010

A new fare and pass structure was implemented.

Minor routing changes went into effect.

The results of a Comprehensive Operational Analysis were made available to both employees and to the community.

Year-end ridership totals for 2009 showed a decrease in the number of passenger trips for that year.

A preliminary needs assessment for the implementation of an Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) was underway.

Old-style bus passes were re-introduced as an option for sale.

The coin counting room was remodeled with added comfort for those employees who count fares each day.

Display cases were installed in each bus bay at the Kalamazoo Transportation Center to display routing and detour information for each specific bus route.

Metro Transit launched an Earth Day promotion which focused on the many benefits to the environment when people use public transportation.

A Grocery Bag Assistance Program was introduced to passengers using the Metro County Connect service.

Metro Transit was the main transportation provider for Project Connect, which brought needed services to residents of low-income households and homeless individuals.

The Michigan Association of Rail Passengers held a National Train Day celebration at the Kalamazoo Transportation Center.

People took their bikes on buses as part of the Kalamazoo Regional Chamber of Commerce's annual Bike to Work event.

The Friends of Transit began recording video footage for an instructional video to teach people how to successfully ride public transportation in Kalamazoo County.

A series of public input meetings coordinated by the Kalamazoo County Transportation Authority were launched.

Public Transportation supporters across the country and in the Kalamazoo area celebrated the 20th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

The National Alliance of Preservation Commissions traveled to Kalamazoo to tour the Kalamazoo Transportation Center to view the historic preservation efforts of the 1887 historic depot.

Coach Operators were trained to use defibrillators. Defibrillators were installed at the Metro Transit administration building and at the Kalamazoo Transportation Center.

A construction project to add 2, 500 square feet to the Metro Transit administration building was started.

Metro Transit hosted a round-table discussion with public transportation leaders from around Michigan to help bring awareness to funding issues.

The National Association of Rail Passengers traveled to the Kalamazoo Transportation Center to tour the facility.

Five new medium duty vehicles arrived at Metro Transit to be used in the Metro County Connect service as replacement vehicles.

The installation of 70 new replacement bus shelters around the Metro Transit service area was completed.

A Metro Transit bus was stuffed with more than 4,200 toys for the Toys for Tots program as part of the WKFR 103.3 Stuff the Bus event.

2011

It was reported that the Holly Jolly Trolley which was operated by Metro Transit provided a record number of rides for the 2010-2011 season.

Construction work was underway on the addition of building space.

New bulletin board style display signs were added to the exterior of the Kalamazoo Transportation Center.

The last of Metro Transit's Flexible buses was sold at auction.

Metro Transit implemented routing changes based on recommendations from a Comprehensive Operational Analysis.

It was announced that a record number of ADA rides were provided on board Metro County Connect.

Metro Transit worked with the Poverty Reduction Initiative who provided transportation to Project Connect - an event to connect homeless individuals with services they may need.

Train Day was celebrated at the Kalamazoo Transportation Center.

Ten new surveillance cameras were installed at the Kalamazoo Transportation Center, increasing the number of cameras at the facility to 42.

Four routing changes were implemented.

A billboard campaign was launched. The campaign promoted Metro Transit as an alternative to paying for fuel at the pumps.

The Kalamazoo County Transportation Authority held a media event to announce changes in laws that would allow for the creation of a second Act 196 transportation authority in Kalamazoo County.

New bus passes that use magnetic stripe card readers were introduced and began being sold.

Metro Transit underwent the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Triennial Review of the system.

An analysis of the Metro County Connect telephone reservation system was conducted showing an average of 95 calls per day.

Metro Transit participated in Click Downtown - a scavenger hunt for Western Michigan University students to orient themselves with public transportation in the downtown area.

An on-board survey was conducted on Portage routes to help determine if routing changes were needed in that area.

It was announced that bus tokens would no longer be sold over the counter at the Kalamazoo Transportation Center unless they were bulk purchases. They would instead be sold at token machines.

Metro Transit attended Senior Expo.

Minor routing changes took place on three bus routes.

Kalamazoo County Transportation Authority employees moved into the Metro Transit administration building.

An Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) project started with work in the early phases of implementing a technologically advanced system for passenger information sharing.

Five new hybrid electric buses arrived at Metro Transit to replace 1998 Gillig buses.

Two buses were stuffed with toys as part of the WIN 98.5 Toys for Tots Stuff the Bus and the WKFR 103.3 Big Brothers/Big Sisters Stuff the Bus events.

It was announced that ridership had increased system-wide by over 7% for each of the months of September, October and November, 2011, compared with the same time in 2010.

2012

The Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study (KATS) began a yearlong survey to gather data on ridership for the National Transit Database which included passengers per mile and fare box per mile totals.

It was announced that many of the long-time employees were taking advantage of the City or Kalamazoo's Early Retirement Incentive.

As part of Metro Transit's Intelligent Transportation System project, it was announced that Mobile Data Terminals (MDTs) would be installed on all buses and Metro County Connect vehicles.

Ridership on Metro Transit fixed-route service was up 20.4% over 2011 and Metro County Connect trips increased 28.7%

The American Public Transportation Association (APTA) sponsored the annual "Dump the Pump Day" to promote riding public transportation. Metro Transit placed billboards throughout the area to promote the event.

The City Commission approved the purchase of six 35' hybrid electric buses from Gillig Corporation. These hybrid buses use both electric and diesel engines for fuel savings.

Four buses began a pilot program for the Intelligent Transportation System. Several coach operators were trained to use the system which included automated passenger counters, bus stop announcements and header changes.

The Click Downtown event was held to introduce incoming WMU freshmen to the downtown Kalamazoo area. Metro Transit provided almost 3,000 rides for the event.

Metro Transit received four new Ford Econoline E-350 vans. Two of the vans replaced Metro County Connect vehicles and the other two replaced vehicles for the Community Service Van program.

Global Positioning Systems were installed on all Metro Transit fixed-route buses.

Metro Transit was more than 130 exhibitors at the 16th annual Area Agency on Aging Senior Expo at the Kalamazoo County Fairgrounds.

A Community Service Van was placed with South County Community Services in Vicksburg under a pilot project to expand service availability for residents of the county.

Metro Transit participated in the ARC Community Advocates Annual Inclusion Conference at Western Michigan University.

City of Kalamazoo voters approved a three-year transit millage renewal to help fund bus service in the City.

Fleet Watch was installed on all fixed-route buses to allow Maintenance employees to monitor the buses for potential maintenance issues electronically.

Two buses were stuffed with toys as part of the WIN 98.5 Toys for Tots Stuff the Bus and the WKFR 103.3 Big Brothers/Big Sisters Stuff the Bus events.

2013

A new electronic status board was installed at the Kalamazoo Transportation Center which displays arrival and departure information for Metro Transit, Indian Trails, Greyhound, and Amtrak.

Metro Transit celebrated Earth Day by promoting the many benefits of public transportation on the environment.

Kalamazoo County voters decisively passed the Kalamazoo County Transportation Authority county-wide transit millage renewal that will fund transit services throughout Kalamazoo County for the next four years.

Three new hybrid electric Gillig buses were added to the Metro Transit fleet.

Metro Transit celebrated Dump the Pump Day by providing information about the many ways public transportation helps the community.

Metro Transit unveiled its new website with "Track My Bus" features that allow people to see live and interactively where buses are located.

A Community Service Van was placed at the Portage Senior Center as part of a pilot program allowing Community Service Vans to be operated and housed in area agencies.

A pilot project was started at Pavilion Estates to help determine the number of rides that would be taken from the housing area if fixed-route bus service was changed to cover that area.

Metro Transit was recognized for 40 years of partnership with the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT).

Metro Transit displayed at Senior Expo and provided information to area senior citizens who were interested in public transportation.

Metro Transit began contracting with the Disability Network to provide travel training to individuals needing assistance in learning how to independently travel on fixed-route buses.

A group of public transportation supporters traveled across Michigan with a stop at the Kalamazoo Transportation Center as part of the 3rd annual Michigan Transportation Odyssey.

An open house was held at Pavilion Estates to provide information and encourage ridership on the route pilot project.

Metro Transit participated in the City's Safe Halloween event.

Metro Transit provided transportation to the Red Cross Emergency Care Center following massive area power outages.

Sean McBride became the new Transportation Director for the Metro Transit System following the retirement of long-time Director William Schomisch.

Metro Transit assisted by providing a bus to support the U.S. Marines Toys for Tots program in a Stuff the Bus campaign held by radio station by 98.5 FM.

A bus was provided to WKFR 103.3 FM's Stuff the Bus program which benefitted Big Brothers Big Sisters.

2014

It was announced that Metro County Connect had set many new records for 2013.

A public forum was held to review proposed routing changes that would bring bus service to the Pavilion Estates housing area.

Three new hybrid electric buses were built and put into service.

Routing changes were implemented.

Metro Transit launched Facebook and Twitter accounts.

Metro Transit began the first phase of its Federal Transit Administration Review.

Metro Transit participated in an Earth Day Festival.

Metro Transit participated in Touch-A-Truck by providing vehicles for children to interact with.

Metro Transit launched an awareness campaign for Dump the Pump.

Metro Transit sponsored Movies in the Park.

Girl Scouts began using Metro Transit buses as their mode of transportation during the summer months.

Buses were equipped with new scooter tie-downs.

The installation process for up to 9 LED signs to be installed around the community announcing bus departures were underway.

Metro Transit partnered with Kalamazoo Valley Community College to create a new bus pass for KVCC students. Passes were also sold on KVCC's campus.

Metro Transit participated in Click Downtown as a way to introduce freshmen at Western Michigan University to the downtown area and to bus service.

Metro Transit participated at the Western Michigan University International Student Orientation.

A new Android app was unveiled to promote real-time bus location information to passengers using mobile devices.

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) triennial review was conducted.

Metro Transit participated in Senior Expo.

A new iPhone app was introduced to assist iPhone users with real-time bus location.

Metro Transit employees participated in the City of Kalamazoo's annual United Way campaign.

Metro Transit employees donated gently used hats, scarves, and mittens to the Kalamazoo Gospel Mission.

A Metro Transit bus collected thousands of toys in two different Stuff the Bus campaigns.

The Pushkin display at the Kalamazoo Transportation Center was commemorated.

2015

Student passes went on sale again for Kalamazoo Valley Community College students who wanted to use their student financial aid to pay for bus fare.

Metro Transit sent buses to help transport people who were involved in a 100+ car pileup emergency on I-94.

Quick thinking during a bus fire led to passenger safety and confirmation of the importance of safety training.

It was announced that 3.2 million passenger trips had been provided system-wide for 2014—a 2.43% increase from the previous year.

An announcement was made that Metro County Connect set many new records in ridership, ADA certifications, trips, and more in 2014.

It was announced that Community Service Van usage had increased 155.2% in 2014 when compared to 2013.

The bus washing equipment underwent revitalization.

Two public input meetings were held to share information regarding an August millage request that was in the planning stages.

Transit in Kalamazoo became a topic of discussion on the Imagine Kalamazoo idea sharing website, generating useful feedback.

Three new Gillig hybrid electric buses arrived, ready for service, in Kalamazoo.

Two new Metro County Connect, El Dorado Aero Lite vehicles arrived for service.

The Kalamazoo County Transportation Authority was awarded “Public Ally of the Year” recognition by the Interfaith Strategy for Advocacy and Action in the Community (ISAAC) group.

Ballot language was approved by the Central County Transportation Authority for an August 4, 2015, millage election requesting approval on a millage of up to .75 mills for five years.

Metro Transit held a mini-awareness campaign focusing on the environmental benefits of public transit in conjunction with Earth Day.

Metro Transit launched an Employee of the Quarter commendation program to focus on the many strengths of the employees who make public transportation in our community available.

Mechanics at Metro Transit attended a GFI farebox school to learn about repairing farebox equipment.

Metro Transit participated in the 10th Annual National Children’s Mental Health Awareness Day and in the Junior League of Kalamazoo’s 4th Annual Touch-A-Truck event.

Staff set up a booth at the Kalamazoo Transportation Center to gather input from passengers on their experiences with Metro Transit.

Results of a Metro County Connect Satisfaction Survey were tallied and showed overall service satisfaction.

Metro Transit staff held several meet-and-greet events at the Kalamazoo Transportation Center to answer questions and gather feedback from passengers.

Metro Transit joined with the Kalamazoo Climate Change Coalition to celebrate National Dump the Pump Day with a focus on the importance of public transportation for our environment.

A public meeting was held to gather input on the future of public transportation as part of the process of developing a 10-Year Vision Service Plan that will help guide the public transportation system into the future.

Metro Transit maintenance staff attended electrical school to learn about new equipment and maintenance techniques.

Metro Transit received demonstration bus driver seats to try out for the comfort of Coach Operators.

A millage request in support of public transit services for the Central County Transportation Authority (CCTA) service area passed with 62% in favor of a 0.75 mill property tax to maintain existing public transit and increase services offered by Kalamazoo Metro Transit.

The Metro Transit bus garage got new paint with new stripes being added to the bus lanes.

Floor drains inside the Metro Transit bus garage were replaced.

Kalamazoo Valley Community College student passes went on sale again for the Fall, 2015, semester.

Schedule changes on two bus routes and routing changes on two bus routes went into effect.

Metro Transit partnered with Downtown Kalamazoo, Inc., to provide the annual Click Downtown event. Hundreds of incoming Western Michigan University freshmen participated in the event, becoming familiar with the bus system.

A training session was provided at Western Michigan University to help orient the approximately 200 international students staying in the Kalamazoo area during the school year.

Metro Transit participated with the City of Kalamazoo in Western Michigan University's Bronco Bash event.

Metro Transit's ridesharing program, Kalamazoo Metro Ridesharing, was launched. A new website to track rider participation and to promote sharing rides went live. The site can be found at www.kmetroride.com.

Metro Transit mechanics attended a Hybrid Safety Training to learn how to respond to hybrid vehicle repair needs.

Metro Transit presented at a vendor exhibit as part of the 19th Annual Senior and Caregiver Expo.

Employees at Metro Transit participated in the Annual United Way Campaign, raising funds to help people within our community.

A Comprehensive Transition Agreement (CTA) between the City of Kalamazoo, the Central County Transportation Authority (CCTA), the Kalamazoo Transit Authority Board (TAB), and the Kalamazoo County Transportation Authority Board (KCTA) was approved on Monday, October 19, 2015, outlining the process for transferring the public transit system (Metro Transit) from the City of Kalamazoo to the CCTA.

Round two of the bus garage drain replacement began and was completed, finalizing the repairs needed for the garage area of the Metro Transit building for the year.

A committee consisting of a mix of administrative and operations employees was formed to plan recommendations for routing enhancements to go into effect in October, 2016. The enhancements will be increased route frequencies, Sunday bus service, and later night bus service.

A survey was provided to passengers on-board Metro Transit buses over a two-day period to help gather information about the needs of passengers for later night and Sunday bus services. Approximately 1,500 surveys were returned.

It was announced that a new bus pass option will be available on January 1. The new pass offers passengers unlimited ride for 31 consecutive days. The monthly bus pass valid for a calendar month will be phased out.

A bus was provided to the U.S. Marines as part of an annual Stuff the Bus campaign to generate donations of new, unwrapped toys for the Toys for Tots program. So many toys were donated, they would not all fit inside the bus.

A bus was provided for the WKFR—FM 103.3 Stuff the Bus event that generated toys to benefit Big Brothers/Big Sisters. Many toys were donated to help this program.

2017
