

The Newsletter of the Wyoming Public Transit Association**2019 Wyoming Public Transit Association Award Nominations*****Driver of the Year Nominees*****Nominee: Bill Briner****Agency: Cheyenne Transit Program***Nomination by Renae Jording, Director*

Bill started as a part time bus driver for Cheyenne Transit in September of 2014.

Bill is always where he's supposed to be, always comes to work and never says no when we need him, always willing to pick up extra shifts. He shows up early for his shift so he can make the coffee for the other drivers and assure he's prepared for his day. Bill is always willing to offer suggestions on how we can make transit better and is a great help when it comes to getting others to buy into changes that need to be made. When we implemented driver uniforms, drivers are required to wear black pants, he didn't complain that he didn't have black pants or that he would have to go buy black pants, he simply put black cover ups over his blue jeans, keeping his pants clean and meeting the uniform requirements. SMART THINKING!!

Bill always makes sure he is doing things the "right" way and helps to make sure others are doing the same. Bill is a true example of a valuable team member.

I strongly recommend Bill for the Driver of the Year award.

Nominee: Booge Hartman**Agency: Goose Creek Transit***Nomination by Steve Ainslie, Director*

I would like to nominate Charles Hartman for WYTRANS Driver of the Year. Charles, aka "Booge", Hartman has been driving for Goose Creek Transit for a year and a half. He has been one of the most dependable employees I have ever known. He is always to work early. He likes to look over his rides for the day and spend a little time each morning visiting with the other drivers. He's a real team player. It is obvious to all of his co-workers and riders that he really enjoys his job. He is very tuned in to his riders' frame of mind and general well-being.

I think he would work 365 days a year if we let him. In fact, he has not taken a single vacation day since he

started. So now he is maxed out on PTO and I have to schedule him for a day off every now and then. He is a Dispatcher's dream driver and a Transit Director's model employee. Booge takes meticulous care of the buses he drives. He always does a thorough pre-trip and post-trip inspection. And he keeps the inside of the bus surgery room clean.

I think if I had to limit my praise for him to just one attribute, it would be his genuine concern and compassion for the people we serve. He always represents Goose Creek Transit in the best possible light and for all of these things, I think he is very worthy of the 2019 WYTRANS Driver of the Year award.

Nominee: Connie Wilson**Agency: STAR Transit***Nomination by Judy Owens, Director*

For 20 years, Connie Wilson has been a wonderful asset to STAR Transit. During this time, she has become a role model to all new drivers who are hired on to the team. She is willingly to answer any questions that arise, and her knowledge of Transit issues are beyond compare. Connie is always able to do any task STAR requests of her, we know if we need a pinch hitter, she will knock it out of the park.

Connie's knowledge about the laws, and safety conscience are very helpful. She is always the first to report issue. She gives Dispatch road condition reports during the winter as she is the first driver to drive I-80 every morning. She also let's Dispatch of any special needs of our passengers. Which is helpful when trying to accommodate their needs.

We don't worry when Connie is driving a bus. She knows where everyone lives and where all the streets are. If another driver has a question about a passenger's location, she quickly chimes in to help.

She is always reliable and arrives to work on time. Her compassion for her passengers really comes through to everyone and they often request Connie to be their driver. STAR Transit would like to nominate Connie Wilson as driver of the year.

WYTRANS Agency of the Year - Nominations Submitted by WYDOT

Nominee: CATC—Casper

Over the past three years CATC has been on a buying spree (read: Using Proper Procurement Procedures) when it comes to replacing their fleet and upgrading their computer and security systems. Since 2016 CATC and the City of Casper have purchased \$1,181,000 worth of new buses for their Transit System through the Section 5339, Bus and Bus Facilities Program. This means the riders in Casper will not only be able to enjoy the use of new equipment, it also means they will be benefiting from the latest safety advances in mass transit vehicle design.

CATC has also taken advantage of the 5339 Program to remove and replace the parking lot at the Bus Garage and Storage area on Fourth Street. The old asphalt was a mess with pot holes and crumbling surfaces, making it a Bus-Roadeo-of-sorts for the drivers trying to avoid the bad sections. CATC and the City of Casper successfully applied for and were awarded \$100,000 in 5339 money, and along with \$25,000 in local match, they were able to completely tear out and replace the old parking lot surface with a new, smooth asphalt surface that rivals any big box store or grocery store parking lot.

CATC further took advantage of the available funds provided by Section 5339 to purchase Surveillance Camera Systems and software for their buses. These days having a camera on board buses is essential to being able to see just what takes place during the course of the ride. Cameras and audio surveillance removes the she said – he said from disputes, or accidents, or any of a number of other interactions and complaints. Video and audio surveillance equipment goes a long way towards keeping passengers, drivers and transit agencies safe from individuals who may wish to do them wrong. CATC used \$35,000 from 5339 to purchase and install this system.

The staff at CATC is very efficient and willing to provide us with any information requested. They are able to do that even more efficiently now thanks to the eight new computers and attendant software they were able to purchase with ... yes ... 5339 Bus and Bus Facilities funding. CATC Staff are consistently on time with submittals and requests, and every one of their procurements has followed the procurement rules and regulations.

The City of Casper and CATC are in the process of developing their Long Range Transportation Plan with the help of a Consultant. In the Plan they will be considering future public transportation projects to further meet the needs of individuals in the Casper area. Casper has been making great strides to improve their Transit Program by making full use of the funding opportunities available from the FTA.

Nominee: Cody Council on Aging

Cody Council on Aging is being nominated because Director Bonnie Emmett and her staff have consistently done an excellent job with their Transit Program in all areas. Their monthly reports are always on time and accurate.

Cody consistently, professionally, and promptly responds to WYDOT inquires and requests. Additionally, Cody Council on Aging routinely submits their applications on time, complete and accurate with all applicable information. Cody's staff also demonstrates the willingness to go above and beyond the call of duty. One particular example is Jim Krubeck who comes to the WYTRANS conference year after year to train drivers. Jim brings exceptional knowledge and experience to the training sessions at WYTRANS and other locations.

WYDOT recently visited Cody to inspect their bus garage so a benchmark score could be assigned to the facility. This is part of the FTA's new Transit Asset Management Plan (TAM Plan) wherein future needs can be programmed based on condition assessments over time. Facilities are rated on a TERM Scale from 1 to 5. A rating of 5 would be considered new construction quality; and a rating of 1 would be significant deficiencies and recommend replace. Cody's garage was built in 2004 and WYDOT rated it a 4 on the TAM TERM Scale. That shows a commitment by Cody Council on Aging to take care of their facilities and wisely use their limited resources.

Finally, Cody's transit program provides a vital and valuable resource for the citizens in Cody. It improves the quality of life for many seniors by furnishing reliable and safe public transportation. As is the case with nearly all of Wyoming's transit programs, Cody's ridership is higher in the winter months than in the summer because many folks prefer not to drive on ice and snow. They instead choose to rely on the professionals to help get them out of the house and around town. From 2017 to 2018 Cody Council on Aging has seen a 12.45% increase in their ridership and this trend looks to be continuing through 2019 as well.

Nominee: Thayne Senior Center

Thayne Senior Center is a little hidden gem of a transit agency up in Western Wyoming. Thayne does not have a large service area; they transport folks mostly in and around the Star Valley, and mostly to and from the Senior Center. A substantial portion of Thayne Senior Center's day-to-day operations involve the home delivery of meals. And even though that may be the case, Thayne's ridership has increased by 15.45% over the last year. That's a rather sizeable increase for an agency that until last year had not provided more than 5,000 rides over the course of a year.

Thayne continually submits their documentation and reimbursement requests on time and correctly. WYDOT Transit Staff has always been impressed with how much Thayne gets done with the small amount of assistance we are able to give them each year. Clearly they are resourceful and proud of their community. Thayne takes the time to make the effort to do more with less.

Outstanding Service Award Nominees

Nominee: Greg Singer

Agency: Cheyenne Transit Program

Nomination by Renae Jording, Director

I would like to nominate Greg Singer for the Outstanding Service Award.

Greg became a part of the Cheyenne Transit team in June of 2016 as a part-time bus driver. Greg was promoted to a full-time bus driver position in May of 2017 and in August of 2018 he was promoted once more to Operations Coordinator, where he shares supervision responsibilities of 27 bus drivers.

Greg owned and operated a local photography studio for over 40 years and he brought with him excellent listening and customer service skills. He is the most patient person I have ever met, plus he is very dependable and loyal. Greg is always looking for opportunities to make himself and transit better and never says no to a new experience. Cheyenne Transit is truly lucky to have Mr. Singer as part of our team, he makes it even more amazing!

Nominee: Liz Swisher

Agency: Goose Creek Transit

Nomination by Steve Ainslie Jording, Director

I would like to nominate Liz Swisher for the WYTRANS Outstanding Service Award. Liz splits her time between dispatching and bookkeeping. When she is dispatching, she is always very pleasant with the drivers and passengers. She has a quick wit that can crack up everyone with a two way radio in an instant. And she can visualize in her mind where all of our 9 to 10 buses are at any time. She is wonderfully patient, never loses her cool no matter the stress level. And that patience really pays off when she is training a new dispatcher.

When she is bookkeeping, her patience and optimism are key to her survival. She is the one in our organization tasked with traversing the mine field that is Medicaid. And every day that I see her on the phone trying to sort out a reimbursement denial, which is almost a daily event, I thank my lucky stars that I have her to do that and not me. And she is also the one tasked with administering our Community Service Block Grant that we got last year to provide discounted or free bus ride tickets to income qualified residents of Sheridan. It is a nice service for the low income people of Sheridan but it does have a lot of reporting requirements and customer outreach. But she takes care of it all and I am so thankful. So because of Liz's patience, humor, dedication and optimism, I believe she is very deserving of the WYTRANS Outstanding Service Award for 2019.

Nominee: Ann Lawler

Agency: Meeteetse Recreation District

Nomination by John Fernandez, Director

I would like to nominate Ann Lawler for the Outstanding Service Award. Ann has driven for the Meeteetse Recreation District for 10 years. Ann has been through some health issues but has never stopped being a public servant for our community. She has not been able to driver fro a period because of her health issues but she continued to support our transit system. Ann calls people to ride the bus when we promote a trip to other places. Ann also supports the senior center in their activities and is on the Meeteetse Visitor Center Board of Trustees. Ann is very important to me personally and to this business as well.

Nominee: Sue Wilcox

Agency: Niobrara Senior Center

Nomination by Connie Baker, Retired Director

Niobrara Senior Center and the community of Lusk, Wyoming and Niobrara County are very fortunate to have employed Sue Wilcox as a Bus Driver and later as the Transportation Supervisor of the Niobrara County Public Transportation since 2011.

Sue knows each and every passenger personally and makes sure that their needs are met. She goes above and beyond in every detail of Transportation and the individual needs for passengers. She comes to work ½ to 1 hour early in the morning and is usually the last to leave at night, closing the Senior Center down. She sets up the schedule for drivers for the day and then coordinates deliveries of Home Delivery meals that the center does not have volunteers to deliver. She shovels walks often when snow piles in and personally calls to encourage regular passengers and clients to remain home during stormy days, for safety reasons. Seniors and passengers know that Sue truly cares about them and their need. She has been known to drive in after hours from her home, which is 15 miles from the Senior Center, to run forgotten important errands, for clients who feel it is an emergency. Sue is a strong advocate for the Seniors and their needs.

The Niobrara Senior Center staff appreciates and depends on all that Sue does for the senior center and clients, and in turn, have become very reliable and compassionate employees providing a high quality of service to the community as well. The Niobrara Senior Center is so proud of the quality of service Sue provides daily.

Dispatcher of the Year Nominees

Nominee: Michelle Munoz

Agency: Cheyenne Transit Program

Nomination by Renae Jording, Director

I am pleased to nominate Michelle Munoz for the Dispatcher of the Year award.

Michelle started with Cheyenne Transit in November of 2016. Since Michelle hired on she has held the positions of bus driver, part-time dispatcher and now full-time dispatcher.

Michelle is very patient with every customer, whether it be on the bus, on the telephone or in person. Even when things get a little heated, Michelle always keeps her composure and definitely adds to diffusing the situation with her kind demeanor. Michelle is the only dispatcher on duty in the evenings and on Saturday's and the drivers look to her for guidance as they are confident she knows how to handle anything that may arise.

Michelle is always willing to learn and help where she can. We needed help in our front office and she jumped right in to learn all the processes and procedures. She catches on quickly and works with little to no supervision. She has become our most versatile employee.

Michelle never forgets that we do good things for good people and it shows in the kindness she gives to EVERYONE!

Please consider Michelle for this award as she is truly deserving.

Nominee: Misty Dohse

Agency: Cody Council on Aging, Inc.

Nomination by Bonnie Emmett, Director

Misty is relatively new to our center (about 1 1/2 years) however, she fits in very well with our center's staff of misfits. She is hard working, loyal, and loves our seniors. It is truly wonderful to have someone with that work ethic. Misty knew of the services we offer here at our center due to her sister who uses our transportation services for dialysis three days a week. Misty is very kind and giving, she has even given her sister one of her own kidneys. She shows that same kind of compassion with everyone that calls into the center or visits with her at the front desk. As we all know there are certain people you see or that will call in that might be a bit of a challenge, yet, she always has a smile on her face and she is very kind, patient and understanding.

I will usually go to Misty's office with several different tasks for her to do on top of the many tasks she already does and she takes on the work without a complaint and gets it

done in a very timely manner. Misty has a great sense of humor which we love having in our office, it really helps to keep up morale and keeps the atmosphere lite. We are truly lucky to have her at our center.

Nominee: Nettie Campros

Agency: Goose Creek Transit

Nomination by Steve Ainslie, Director

I would like to nominate Nettie Campros for WYTRANS Dispatcher of the Year. When I arrived in Sheridan five years ago and started work as the Transportation Director for the Sheridan Mini Bus, Nettie had already been working as a driver and then dispatcher for twenty years. Over the past five years, I have watched Nettie perform some pretty amazing dispatching. As they say in the Farmers Insurance commercial, "We know a thing or two because we've seen a thing or two," In twenty-five years of driving and dispatching, Nettie has seen a thing or two.

Today is a pretty good example. We are having a near record day in terms of riders so she is managing that. And in addition, she is rotating buses through our local tire store to get the winter tires off and the summer tires on. And on top of that, I gave her two driver random drug tests to schedule around. It went smooth as glass.

But the most amazing thing I have seen was the way she managed a complete power outage in Sheridan a few winters ago. You can understand that a power outage brings a lot of problems. First thing you notice, other than that you are suddenly in the dark, is that the computer does not work so using the scheduling software is not possible. That means that the digital communication with the drivers is not possible. And then you notice that the phone system doesn't work so riders can't call us when they are ready to be picked up. And the last thing that happens, with us at least, is our base two-way radio stops working. So when all of this stuff started crashing around us, I was wondering just what in the heck we were going to do. But in a hot minute, Nettie had things under control. She backed one of our spare buses out of the garage and was using the two-way radio in that bus to talk to the drivers, she had our phone number forwarded to her cell phone and

had grabbed all of our paper manifests that we use for just such emergencies as she was headed out the door to do her job from the bus. I was mightily impressed.

So for her remarkable knowledge and cool headedness, I believe she is very deserving of the 2019 WYTRANS Dispatcher of the Year award. I hope you do too.

Nominee: Thelma Cudney

Agency: STAR Transit

Nomination by Judy Owens, Director

Sweetwater County Transit Authority would like to recognize this person for how they have stepped up for our Transit system. Thelma Cudney started out as a part-time Route Driver for STAR in April of 2010.

Since Thelma did such an excellent job, she was promoted to the challenging position of Full-time dispatcher in 2016. She has taken on the task with great ease and professionalism.

Thelma is always willing to go the extra mile to help. She took on the responsibility of managing drivers she uses to work with without any problems. She understands every job at STAR and is willing to step up and cover all positions, even if it means she will miss lunch or stay late. She understands the employees have lives other than work and she works hard to adjust she schedule to accommodate theirs.

Thelma understand the needs of our riders and tries to help Coach them in coordination their schedules to match their needs using the shortest route possible. Everyone who has dispatched knows this is a not an easy task. Some riders have special needs and have a hard time understanding how the transit system works. She takes the time to understand their needs and explain the system. She works hard to make STAR effective for them. Thelma also understand and manages the vehicle maintenance for 13 buses which is a job in itself.

As a dispatcher and catchall person, Thelma is a key factor in creating a fantastic work environment. People enjoy coming to work and they will even make time to come in the office to visit before, during and after their shifts.

We feel extremely lucky to have Thelma working at our Transit Agency. We know that if any problems arise, as they offend do, Thelma will be there to handle it with a smiling face and get her done attitude.

2019 WYTRANS Conference

Tuesday afternoon, June 18

- ◆ Paratransit Operator Training—Day 1 of 3
- ◆ WYTRANS Board Meeting
- ◆ Trainers' Meeting

Wednesday, June 19

- ◆ Paratransit Operator Training Continued
- ◆ Dealing with Difficult Customers
- ◆ CPR & First Aid
- ◆ K-9s for Mobility
- ◆ **Awards Luncheon**
- ◆ Rural NTD
- ◆ Managing Workforce Behavior

Thursday morning, June 20

- ◆ Paratransit Operator Training Continued
- ◆ WYTRANS Member Panel Discussion
- ◆ WYDOT Funding Session
- ◆ Panther Presentation

A complete schedule and registration material will be included in the May issue of the Transit Express.

The WYTRANS Conference will be held at the Little America located in Cheyenne. Please make room reservations now by calling (800)235-6396. A block of rooms has been reserved at the rate of \$93.00. Please call the Little America by May 18, 2019, to reserve rooms at this rate.





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WYTRANS Conference Room Reservations

This year's WYTRANS Conference will be held at the Little American in Cheyenne. Be sure to tell them you are with WYTRANS to receive the special Conference rate on sleeping rooms. Reservations must be made by **May 18, 2019**.

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Editor's note:

This issue of the *Transit Express* includes edited nominations for the 2019 WYTRANS Annual Awards. Nominee information is in alphabetical order by the agency represented.

WYTRANS Members will be sent a separate ballot to vote for the nominees. Winners will be announced at the Awards Luncheon on Wednesday, June 20, at the Little America.