

The Newsletter of the Wyoming Public Transit Association

2023 Wyoming Public Transit Association Award Nominations

WYTRANS Agency of the Year*Nominations Submitted by WYDOT Staff***Nominee: Converse County Aging Services****Director—Nancie Fink**

These Converse County Aging folks know how to get work done. They are consistently on time with the submission of information. Whether it is monthly reports or additional requested information by WYDOT, they promptly respond. Moreover, they exhibit a natural curiosity and possess a high level of skill when it comes to asking clarifying questions and for further instruction. Their willingness to learn and grow in the transit program is evident.

Nominee: Southern Teton Area Rapid Transit (START)**Director—Bruce Abel**

START may be the largest public transit provider in the State of Wyoming, but that does not mean they are exempt from bumps in the road. Despite staffing, funding, and other issues, the Director has worked diligently to keep the organization moving forward. If WYDOT ever identifies an issue, START personnel works on methods to improve their policies/procedures to correct the situation. START works to ensure effective and efficient public transportation for Teton County residents and visitors.

Nominee: Uinta Senior Citizens, Inc.**Director—Glenn Roach**

The Uinta Senior Citizens may be one of the less-known public transportation providers in the program, but as the saying goes, “Though she is little, she is fierce!” The Program Director runs two centers in two towns. Despite the turnover of their Director and the setbacks associated with that, the staff maintains a great attitude when issues arise in the program. Thankfully, a new Director has been hired, is eager to learn with a “hands-on” approach, and is very willing to provide requested information in a timely manner.

Editor’s note:

This issue of the *Transit Express* includes edited nominations for the 2023 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 WYTRANS Conference in Casper on October 4.

Dispatcher of the Year Nominees

Nominee: Chris Corriveau

Agency: Cheyenne Transit

Nomination by Renae Jording, Director

Chris was recently promoted to the position of Dispatch Supervisor. He is not only highly capable and productive, but also a mentor to newly hired dispatchers, fiercely committed to the mission of the organization and the success of others, and, as a result, a valuable colleague.

Chris does not shy away from a challenge and accepts EVERY task. He is eager to learn everything about Transit that he possibly can. He is asked to assume many more roles than can be listed. When a dispatcher requests or needs time off, Chris volunteers to work his day off so he can grant them the time they need. He keeps a cool head when things are “turned upside down” which can happen in a minute in dispatch. He aspires to be the future Director of Transit.

Chris implements strong customer service principles and continually handles his customers in a professional and effective manner. All of Chris’s interactions contribute to promoting the image of Cheyenne Transit.

I believe these characteristics represent all that is good, and I am pleased to nominate Chris for the honor of Dispatcher of the Year.

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Nominee: Tina Click

Agency: Ten Sleep Senior Center

Nomination by Randall Firnekas, Director

Tina Click has been employed at the Ten Sleep Senior Center for 19 years and works very hard to see that the Center is in tip-top shape, and looking nice. When she began her career here, she started as our housekeeper for seniors, and gradually “ascended the ranks”. She now serves this Center in many different capacities—assistant director, cook, assistant cook, dispatcher for transportation, building manager, and data input specialist for the Aging Divisions’ WellSky program. Whenever reports are due, they are always accurate and available in a timely manner. As a dispatcher, she not only coordinates the drives and trips but is cooperative and encouraging to the participants that need transportation.

Needless to say, Tina is both my “right” and “left” hand of help here at the Center, and I appreciate her efforts immensely! She’s one-of-a-kind and has a great personality and a wonderful work ethic that would pale in comparison to others. Whenever she starts a task, she finishes it with a conviction of service to the seniors and the community that we are living in. Tina is an irreplaceable employee, who gets to work on time, never misses a beat, and always goes above her regular duties.

I am excited to be able to recognize Tina Click for her years of dedicated service, and commitment to our transportation program by nominating her for this year’s 2023 Dispatcher of the Year award.

WYTRANS Conference Room Reservations

This year’s WYTRANS Conference will be held at the Casper Hilton Garden Inn. A block of sleeping rooms has been reserved there. Please call 307.266.1300. to make your reservations.

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

Outstanding Service Award Nominees

Nominee: Allen Andrews

Agency: Cheyenne Transit

Nomination by Renae Jording, Director

Allen brings strong assets to his role and our team is incredibly fortunate to have him as our Operations Assistant. First, he is dedicated and hardworking. He is extremely dependable, efficient, and unfailingly punctual. Allen is extremely organized and focused on continuously learning and developing best practices to manage routine activities both efficiently and effectively. I have never worked with a person who gives as much attention to detail as he does. He brings positive energy and a personal touch.

He brings true professionalism to Cheyenne Transit and genuinely cares about delivering excellent quality work. He strives to integrate both an understanding of the big picture strategy and goals, as well as attention to details. He also always goes above and beyond the call of duty in pursuing excellence. I have seen him resolve conflicts and handle difficult situations with remarkable patience and admirable tact.

Allen easily develops and fosters relationships with staff, riders, and transit guests. He actively participates in meetings and events; his participation enables him to understand the departments' implicit needs and initiate ideas to support the efforts. Allen is terrific in welcoming our new staff members and helping them adjust.

I highly recommend Allen for the Outstanding Service Award. Allen is motivated and positively engaged, serving as a true inspiration.

Nominee: Kathy Rebesch

Agency: Rendezvous Pointe

Nomination by Kevin Warren, Director

Rendezvous Pointe is nominating, Kathy Rebesch for a 2023 WYTRANS Outstanding Service Award. Kathy was hired in 2017 and for the past six plus years has been creatively trying to find the best way to serve the most amount of people possible. Those under her regular care love her and sincerely appreciate the kindness,

care, compassion, attention to detail and commitment she brings to their transportation needs. Kathy is retiring this month and will be missed. She leaves a record behind her that can be summarized as, excellent work over time. Job well done, Kathy.

Nominee: Cheryl Bjornsrud

Agency: Ten Sleep Senior Center

Nomination by Randall Firnekas, Director

200 or 300 words cannot adequately express how valuable Cheryl Bjornsrud has been to the Ten Sleep Senior Center. Cheri always goes above and beyond while working at the Center. When she is off the center clock she's still volunteering and helping out her neighbors with needful things, as well as contributing her time and efforts to other community events.

Cheri is our bookkeeper, activities director, and driver, and does an outstanding job wearing those "hats". I nominated her a few years ago and used this statement, which still holds true today, "Cheri relentlessly keeps people interested in all of the activities and services here at the center." She is excited to be able to get our people out and about by planning various activities and trips to interesting places of local history.

Apart from working here at the center, some other hats that Cheri wears well, is that she's a bookkeeper for a non-profit organization in Arizona, caretaker for her Down syndrome sister, Grace who will be 63 in July, secretary and piano player for her church, a loving housewife and mom to her great husband, Bill who has MS, and their five children, and last but not least a proud grandmother of 17 grandchildren! Because of the great, and loving person that she is to her family and community, and all that she does to help keep thing going here at the center, I am extremely pleased to nominate Cheryl Bjornsrud for this year's 2023 WYTRANS "Outstanding Service Award". Cheri is a remarkable person!

Driver of the Year Nominees

Nominee: Jerry Colson and Steve Howell

Agency: Carbon County Seniors

Nomination by Kelly Morrell, Executive Director

I would like to nominate Jerry Colson and Steve Howell for the 2023 WYTRANS Driver of the Year Award. I can't nominate them separately because they operate our senior bus program as a team. They facilitate work schedules, bus schedules, maintenance and everything else so I don't have to worry about our transportation program. They decide their work schedules and negotiate time off between each other. I appreciate the fact that they are self-motivated and don't depend on me to oversee that part of our senior services.

Our seniors LOVE these two drivers! The most common comment I hear is "Those two drivers need a raise!" I am constantly getting approached by our seniors asking if there is anything they can do for Jerry and Steve because our seniors appreciate all the extra care Jerry and Steve provide. Jerry and Steve take extra time and care to walk our frail seniors from their doorways, to the bus, to their destinations and back again. This last spring, they also volunteered a weekend day to build a handrail for one of our seniors because she was having a hard time walking from her door, down the stairs, to the sidewalk and onto the bus. They truly go above and beyond for our seniors.

Nominee: Adrian Flood

Agency: North Big Hon Senior Center

Nomination by Kim Gifford, Director

I would like to nominate Adrian Flood for the 2023 WYTRANS Driver of the year award. Adrian Flood has been our bus driver since 2008. He always goes above and beyond everyday with our clients. He is kind and compassionate to our clients. He is the most patient person and never tries to rush a client to get to the next task. He will do whatever is asked of him without complaint. He always has a smile for everyone and takes extra care to make sure the clients are comfortable.

Adrian always makes sure the vehicles are clean inside and out. He is diligent in keeping his transportation records completed. He completes his monthly paperwork in a timely manner. He keeps up with his vehicle maintenance checks.

When asked to do any task his response is always "I would be happy to do that" or "I would love to do that". Adrian is a huge asset to our Senior Center, and I feel he is very deserving of this award.

Nominee: Buddy Diaz

Agency: Powell Senior Center

Nomination by Linda Dalton, Director

I would like to nominate Sabino (Buddy) Diaz III for Driver of the Year. Buddy has been a full-time driver at the Powell Senior Center since June of 2018. There are very few people in Powell and the surrounding areas that do not know Buddy. He is an asset to our senior center, and we are grateful that he is one of our drivers. If you meet Buddy, he becomes an instant friend.

Buddy is always on time and is usually the last person to leave work each day. He will volunteer to come in early or stay late if one of our riders needs a ride outside of our regular work hours. We have a few "problem" riders and Buddy always takes these people because he listens to them and can calm them down or explain why their behavior is inappropriate in a very therapeutic way. We have many riders who ask for Buddy to drive them. He truly goes above and beyond what his job description requires. He spends much of his time outside of work, visiting clients and friends who are in the hospital or in the Long-Term Care Center.

When a problem comes up, Buddy will figure out a solution. He always has a smile and a good word for everyone. He has days when another person would quit, but Buddy figures out how to find the good in everything and everybody.

Driver Nominees Continued

Buddy truly deserves this award and I am proud to recommend him for the Driver of the Year.

Nominee: Paul Tierney

Agency: STAR Transit

Nomination by Mary Seppie, Director

Paul Tierney started driving for Sweetwater County Transit Authority (STAR Transit) in March of 2020, right before the COVID-19 pandemic truly hit our agency. Needless to say, like every agency that kept running services during the pandemic, STAR was all over the board trying to figure out the best way to run operations. It seemed like every day we were changing and adapting, having to keep providing as many rides as possible while keeping all of our riders and drivers safe. Paul was a trooper during all of this change. He was always willing to adapt his schedule and do whatever was asked of him.

In the summer of 2021, STAR moved to a new software platform, which was a huge change for everyone. Paul never complained and was constantly relaying information back to the office and was always willing to test features in the software to keep improving it.

Paul is well liked by everyone, from the office staff to the other drivers, and most importantly by the riders. He is always willing to lend a hand and go the extra mile for anyone. He doesn't complain about extra work that is thrown his way and works hard every day to make STAR a better place. He has a great sense of humor and keeps us all laughing and smiling. Paul is honest and hard-working and we are lucky to have him as a driver here at STAR. All of these attributes are why I am happy and proud to nominate Paul Tierney for driver of the year.



Volunteer of the Year Nominee

Nominee: Mike Wellmann

Agency: Thayne Senior Center

Nomination by Melinda Pebbles, Director

The Thayne Senior Center would like to nominate Mike Wellmann for Volunteer of the Year. He has volunteered at the center for the past three or four years. Volunteering is a passion of Mike's. He loves the connections and positive feelings he gets from serving others. He especially enjoys helping seniors.

Mike volunteers for the Thayne Senior Center in many capacities as well as other places in our area. He delivers meals to homebound seniors and assists with public relations and marketing for the senior center. Until recently, when he took a position on the WSSB board, he served on the Thayne Senior Center board.

Mike is a caring and thoughtful man. We appreciate his willingness to serve and compassion for seniors. He is willing to do anything for anyone and gets excited when he has a new person on his home delivery route. He genuinely cares about each and every senior in our community.

Mike Wellman is a wonderful man and deserves the honor of "Volunteer of the Year" more than anyone we know.

Mark your calendars now for the 2023

WYTRANS Bus Roadeo

September 9 in Casper.

Register on-line at:

www.wytrans.org/roadeo

Cash prizes for winners.

Scholarships available to attend.

WYTRANS

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Tuesday, October 3

- ◆ Paratransit Operator Training—Day 1 of 2
- ◆ LTA—WYDOT
- ◆ Trainers' Dinner Meeting

Wednesday, October 4

- ◆ Paratransit Operator Training—Day 2 of 2
- ◆ ADA—5 Pillars of Compliance
- ◆ Reducing Turnover
- ◆ ADA—Service Animals
- ◆ Navigating the Transition to Public Transit
- ◆ **Awards Luncheon**
- ◆ ADA—Reasonable Modification
- ◆ Coaching for Superior Performance
- ◆ ADA—Paratransit Operating Requirements
- ◆ Team Building for Supervisors

Thursday am, October 5

- ◆ WYTRANS Member Panel Discussion
- ◆ FTA Session
- ◆ Drug and Alcohol Update

All sessions to be held at the Casper Hilton Garden Inn. Call 307-266-1300 to reserve your sleeping room today. See the next issue of the Transit Express Newsletter for more info.

**WYTRANS
Conference
Schedule**