

DUNN COUNTY TRANSIT

2018: IN REVIEW

A few minor setbacks

A few major boosts

Let's start with the bad news first so we can linger on the good. The newly purchased Doorstop Bus for the elderly and disabled service was in an accident on Kwik Trip property. Coincidentally it was hit by a Kwik Trip delivery truck, therefore Kwik Trip fully covered the repairs and also the deductible. Another stumbling block in the year, was the unplanned costs of building maintenance. These included a frozen pipe in our wash bay last winter, garage door repairs and panel replacements, as well as garage heater and vent repair. Also in the last few months the transit offices were repeatedly without heat precipitating a costly furnace repair.

Here's the good, actually our great highlights of 2018. Through negotiations between Dunn County Public Works and WisDOT, DCT received a Capital Funding Allocation as an Amendment to the 2016 Section 5311 Agreement, which two years later could have slipped through the cracks. As a result, the total award amount is \$332,200. These funds are earmarked to be applied to the purchase of new buses, passenger shelters and road signage. Two new bus orders were approved by WisDOT and forwarded to the manufacturer in late January 2019. They should be in service at DCT in about four months. Passenger shelters placements, sizes and design have been review by community stakeholders and planning is moving forward.

More great news was received from Federal Transit Administration in November 2018, as WisDOT received a 2018 FTA 5339(c)Low/No Emission program award. This was a state submitted group application to purchase battery electric cutaway buses and infrastructure upgrades. Dunn County Transit Commission was among five recipients to participate in this program, which is being funded at a higher level than other FTA capital programs. The federal share is at 85% for the bus purchases and 90% for infrastructure investment.

Many thanks to those that submitted a Letter of Support for DCT involvement in this application illustrating our local commitment to environmental and public transit stewardship. Please note that your letters were noticed by both FTA and WisDOT, as there were over thirty letters of support! The work to implement this program has begun and will continue as a manufacturer has now been chosen and safety testing will follow. Infrastructure upgrades will include a charging station and coordination with local utility providers and contractors. Ready to ride will most likely be late 2020.

2018 was also about other collaborations, one celebrated by Dunn County Economic Development Corporation as the recipient of a Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development(DWD) grant in the amount of \$244,813. This DWD program named, Commute to Careers, is targeted to plan and implement an affordable, self-sustaining, flexible transportation program that connects under-resourced workers to employment opportunities. Together with Dunn County Transit, DCEDC submitted a proposal to connect residents in the City of Menomonie to jobs in both the Menomonie Industrial Park and the Stout Technology and Business Park.

We continued to move forward in our requirements to WisDOT; including quarterly and annual operations reporting, driver certifications, vehicle safety and maintenance inspections, Drug and Alcohol Zero Tolerance Testing Policy, and asset management planning. We additionally follow and submit requirements for the Paratransit program for older adults and people with disabilities.

Our transit program is also about sharing ideas and information that can help our clients and our community. This is done through the participation in many local government departments, non-profit agencies, and organization assisting in various areas to support those in need of assistance.

As we look forward to 2019, great things happened in 2018 to support us moving forward. These include local increases in funding and WisDOT/FTA awards and capital funding allocations.

Our local fund contributions come from three sources; including Dunn County, the City of Menomonie and the University of Stout Student Senate Association. All of these entities increased their Local Share to DCT funding. This Local Share is necessary to leverage both the State of Wisconsin's and the Federal Transit Administration's substantial subsidies supporting our Rural Transit Program and Urban Bus Program.

I extend my thanks to DCT's hardworking staff and the Transit Commission.

Submitted by: Dolly Catlin, Dunn County Transit Commission Manager