



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SWITA Hosts Spring Drivers Meeting and Awards in Atlantic

SWITA gathered April 20th for its biannual Drivers Meeting for training and awards.

Atlantic, IA- Southwest Iowa Transit Agency (SWITA) administrators, staff, and drivers gathered for a day of professional development and recognition on Saturday, April 20th at the Atlantic Golf & Country Club.

The meeting featured a review of safety practices and procedures to follow in the event of an incident. There were also break-out sessions for focused training on specific routes and services provided. Another group session featured a follow-up report from the Transportation Safety Administration about a bus safety training program.

Another focus for the Spring meeting is driver recognition. SWITA takes pride in providing safe, efficient, and affordable transportation for all, and drivers ultimately make rides happen. Each year SWITA takes time to recognize drivers for exceptional commitment to service. Drivers nominate their colleagues for the awards. SWITA presented five Outstanding Driver Awards, Service Recognition Awards, Rookie of the Year, Kelly Davis Leadership Award, and Driver of the Year.

This year's Outstanding Driver Awards went to Roger Jensen (Cass), Virgil VanFosson (Montgomery), James Lewis (Shelby), Darrell Newman (Mills), and Lois Heidenescher (Mills).

Recently retired driver James Butler attended and was recognized for his 10 years of service. Retired drivers Chris Newman and Terry Musich were also honored for their service to SWITA. Current driver Jon Graham was recognized for 10 years of service.

Rookie of the Year was awarded to Peter Menke of Pottawattamie County. Pete has been a great addition to SWITA. He has shown great flexibility and his willingness to learn and cover routes has been appreciated, in addition to a regular route in Council Bluffs/Omaha.

The Kelly Davis Leadership Award was presented to driver Jon Clemens for his dedication to transit services and willingness to train others along the way. The Kelly Davis Award is given each year in honor of former SWITA Transit Coordinator Kelly Davis, who passed away in 2022. The award is given to an employee who demonstrates a selfless desire to serve their team and community, as Kelly did. Jon is always willing to help cover routes at the last minute and gets great reviews from riders for being “wonderful and amazing.” Jon has a great attitude and has a willingness to train new drivers and learn new routes.

The Driver of the Year Award was given to Steven Herrington from Cass County. Steve goes above and beyond for his riders, always greeting them with a smile and hello. He is willing to pick up extra trips and routes, including nighttime and weekend routes, and assists new drivers with routes and other training issues. His student riders love him, and he always checks in with office staff with a smile. Steve is a great representative of what SWITA is all about.

SWITA is Southwest Iowa’s public transportation system that is available in Cass, Fremont, Harrison, Mills, Montgomery, Page, Pottawattamie, and Shelby counties. SWITA is Iowa’s largest rural public transit agency, providing 526,300 rides in fiscal year 2023 and expects to exceed that record mark in 2024.

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