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In This Issue

[KAT Holiday Schedule](#)

[KTA Guest Editorial
letter](#)

Quick Links

[KAT website](#)

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Coming in Next Issue:

Commuter Challenge

**Lily, the little transit
traveler**

KAT Holiday Schedule



All KAT buses will run on a Saturday schedule on Monday, May 30, 2011 due to the Memorial Day holiday. KAT administrative offices, including the Customer Service counter at Knoxville Station, will be closed on Memorial Day. Have a safe and happy holiday!

Message from Our Board Chair



The following Guest Editorial was written by KTA Chairman Brian Simmons, in response to recent media releases about the Brookings Institute transit study.

The Brookings Institute has released a study examining the success of U.S. metropolitan areas in

connecting people to jobs via mass transit. It is not surprising that Knoxville ranked poorly when you consider that our sole fixed-route transit service is limited to operating only within the City of Knoxville boundaries, yet the Knoxville MSA (metropolitan statistical area) consists of five counties. Unfortunately, what was reported in some cases was that Knoxville Area Transit (KAT) was ranked as a low-performing transit system. However the quality of the KAT system was not what the study examined. Rather, the study considered transit coverage over a 5-county region.

The Knoxville MSA, which includes Knox, Blount, Anderson, Loudon and Union counties, is a low-density region with jobs and housing spread throughout the five counties and beyond. Serving the entire five-county area with transit services is not financially feasible for the City of Knoxville. Comparing metro

Knoxville with the other top 99 metro areas, nearly all of which have either multiple transit systems (Hartford, Connecticut, for example, has 7 transit systems in its metro area) or a single, metro-wide system, does not accurately highlight the effectiveness of transit as much as it points out the concentrated focus of the KAT system.

As chairman of the Knoxville Transportation Authority (KTA), I feel this issue of regional transit connections is an important one, but KAT's current mission does not include transit service for Anderson, Blount, Loudon and Union counties. KAT's objective is to serve the City of Knoxville, and it does so very successfully, with 70% of passenger trips connecting people to jobs within the city. In the past several years, KAT has worked diligently to improve transit services with the city, with revamped routes and new outlying transfer opportunities. The new transit center downtown has enhanced the customer experience in many ways, and as evidenced by an increase in overall ridership, our passengers are embracing our public transportation.

If you live in the City of Knoxville and work here too, KAT could be a wonderful and effective resource for you. If you are in the Knoxville MSA, we should take this study's findings, not as a deflating criticism, but as an inspiration to continue our discussion on the importance of connecting our community beyond city boundaries. As our population grows, and as our affinity for the automobile wanes in light of rising gas prices, our transit system needs to evolve in an effective yet fiscally responsible way. Let's be activists for this evolution. Let's be proactive for improvement and progress. And, as the KAT slogan advocates, let's *Ride for Change!*

I <3 Transit

I <3 transit (I heart transit) is a public education initiative that seeks to recruit public transportation supporters via a mobile text messaging campaign to drive signatures to the APTA public transportation petition, and demonstrate support for expanding transit options nationally.



Just text TRANSIT to 86677 from your cell phone; Once the text is received you will get a message explaining how you can further support public transit, and the expansion of public transportation options. These instructions will include web links to the petition, and various other websites.

Alternatively, you can sign the petition from the website, publictransportation.org, where you'll also find stories from transit riders, along with a fuel savings calculator and a carbon savings calculator that you can use to see how you can save money by using transit.
