

TRANSIT INSIDER

MCTS NEWS FOR STAKEHOLDERS AND COMMUNITY PARTNERS



QTR 1, 2022



Our goal is to bring you informative transit news and insights that will assist your work with constituents and advocates.

THE ROAD AHEAD

DAN BOEHM, MCTS MANAGING DIRECTOR

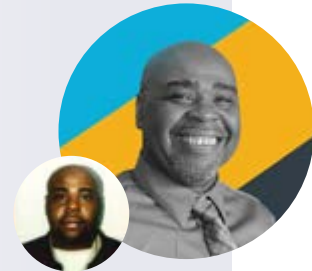
This year we are focusing on how MCTS offers employees career growth and touting our track record of promoting from within. We are competing for talent just like many other companies. To show our commitment to employees, we will showcase our career success stories in an upcoming recruitment advertising campaign.

Transit is one of those organizations that benefits from home-grown talent because the work is complex and can take years to learn. In my nearly 25-year career at MCTS, I have held several positions on my way to becoming the managing director almost 8 years ago.

I think you'll be interested to read about these employees and the paths that led them to where they are today:



Denise Wandke - In 1994, Denise almost quit in the middle of her training, fearful she couldn't drive a bus. Instead, not only did she go on to drive for 11 years, she paved the way for the women who followed in her footsteps. Recently, Denise became the first woman to hold the position of director of transportation at MCTS, leading a massive team that includes more than 800 bus drivers, route supervisors, transit security officers, dispatchers, trainers, and support staff. Now, she works directly with me as MCTS's deputy director.



Kevin Pumphrey - Kevin joined us as a bus operator in 1998. He asked lots of questions, until he became the "go-to" person for answers! His trajectory took him from administrative assistant to coordinator of station operations to deputy director of transportation. Today, as director of transportation, Kevin never stops seeking a deeper understanding of the complexities of transit.



Ron McCorkel - Ron joined MCTS in 1992 after serving eight years in the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve. He progressed from bus operator to tank house supervisor, garage manager, and then director of maintenance - a position he's held for four years. Ron is living proof that "working the floor" is a highly valued credential in one's career journey through MCTS.



Dwyane Reese - Dwyane started in 1998 as an entry level cleaner tanker working third shift. Whenever he got the chance, he'd watch the mechanics diagnose and repair drive trains, brake systems, suspension, steering, air conditioning, and electronics. He enjoyed learning everything that goes into keeping the buses on the road. His passion led him to earn his Class C mechanic title followed by Class A mechanic, and a supervisory role before serving as a garage manager. Through several promotions, he's now the assistant director of maintenance.

**IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN EXPLORING CAREERS AT MCTS,
I ENCOURAGE YOU TO VISIT [RIDEMCTS.COM/CAREERS](https://www.ridemcts.com/careers)**

WHO'S DRIVING OUR SUCCESS

Each issue will spotlight an MCTS employee or department delivering on our mission.

How long have you worked at MCTS? I started working at MCTS in 1994 as a bus operator. My previous career was in purchasing and materials management within a manufacturing business. At the time, I already knew people who worked at MCTS and how great their pay and benefits were compared to mine. Ultimately, I decided that my purchasing job didn't have a career path, so I switched to driving a bus for 14 years. For half of those years I worked part-time and raised my two children.

What has your career path been at MCTS? I've held more than seven positions here. After 14 years as a bus operator, I became an extra clerk. My responsibilities included assigning bus operators their work schedules and helping with any needs at the station. Next, I was promoted to relief administrative assistant where I developed bus operator schedules. Very few women (fewer than five) were route supervisors at that time, and another woman in that role – who is now deputy director at MCTS – suggested I apply.

What do route supervisors do? Route supervisors coordinate a variety of things that keep transit running smoothly. The position is twofold: monitoring operator performance and responding to and investigating incidents; essentially anything regarding daily transit operations.

What was next in your career path? After I was a route supervisor, I was a dispatcher for a year and a half before I moved into a street operations position in which I coordinated our special event service for Summerfest, State Fair and other festivals. In this role I also developed routing for construction and special event detours and the managing and coordinating of route supervisors. I eventually was promoted to manager of street operations, which is the role I'm in today.



**MELANIE
FLYNN**

Manager of
Street Operations



*"Bottomline, I'm always
problem solving to
keep transit moving."*



You can reach her at
mflynn@mcts.org

WHO'S DRIVING OUR SUCCESS CONTINUED

Please describe how your position supports the Transportation department.

I work closely with the supervisor of dispatch operations to manage and direct 20 route supervisors who respond to accidents and incidents – anything involving the bus and supporting our bus operators. I also manage the transit security contractor and contract which includes 37+ officers and managers. It's important to note that route supervisors and transit security are scheduled around the clock, 24-hours a day – an important change that I instituted a few years back.

What surprised you about the role you're in now? I've learned to be ready for anything anytime!

Describe something about your position that someone outside of transit would be interested to learn.

Running a transit agency is complex – a lot of the job is collaborating with multiple departments to find solutions. And each day is different; one day I'm working with high schools to re-acclimate students to riding the bus again after being at home during the pandemic, and the next I'm checking buses to make sure the electronic destination signs are correct or working with the Marketing Department on signage that needs to be hung for a service change. Bottomline, I'm always problem solving to keep transit moving.

What's your favorite MCTS memory, or your favorite thing about working at MCTS?

I have a lot of fun memories with operators – from Summerfest crowd control (entering and exiting buses) to shoveling buses out of the snow with co-workers. One of the

most memorable times was when Imagine Dragons played at Summerfest the summer of 2013. The crowds were unbelievable! At one point, we had to have Instructors make the trips themselves because we ran out of buses. We eventually had to stop boarding passengers at the park and ride lots because too many people were coming for the concert. Looking back – I'm still amazed that we managed that level of crowd control – but that's when we were fully staffed and had a larger system in general. That night we provided rides for more than 20,000 people.

Is there anything else you'd like to share - a little known fact about yourself, a hobby or your job?

When I'm not working, my husband (who is a retired former route supervisor and bus operator) and I retreat up north where I tend a giant garden which is a labor of love. Our property has tons of vegetables and fruit trees, so naturally I do lot of canning, along with fishing and hunting. I have a lot of fond memories of my kids growing up around transit and hanging out at the stations looking for quarters under the vending machines when they were young.

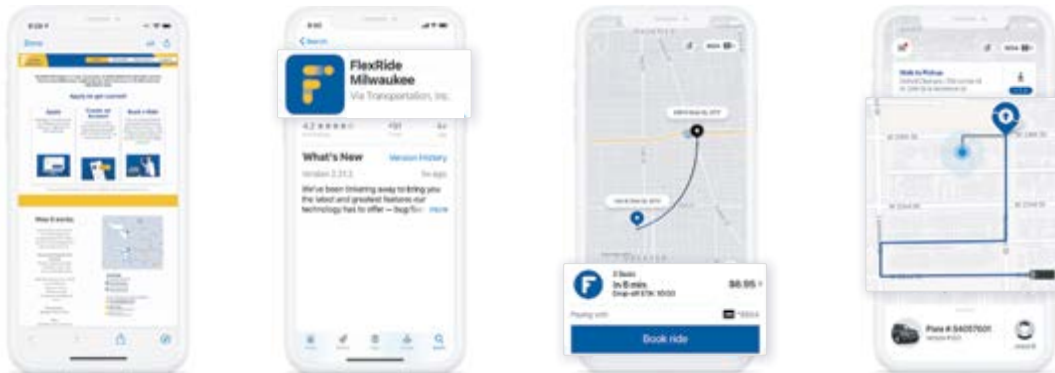
Final thoughts? I grew up in Tacoma, Washington. Never in my wildest dreams would I have thought I would become a bus driver. I always wanted to be an accountant. But each step in my career always put me in leadership positions – from part time jobs to today.

TRANSIT ADVOCACY

FLEXRIDE MILWAUKEE AND MCTS CONNECTS RIDERS TO JOBS IN NORTHWEST SUBURBS

Milwaukee residents have a new way to get to jobs in the northwest suburbs.

FlexRide Milwaukee is an on-demand ride service that launched in early February. Riders are picked up from one of five stops served by MCTS in and around Milwaukee's north and northwest sides. Riders are then dropped off at any employer within the Menomonee Falls and Butler service areas. FlexRide's goal is to use technology to close Milwaukee's first- and last-mile transit gaps (the distance between the last bus stop and one's final end point). Research has shown that closing transit gaps can expand access to transportation for local workers, ultimately fostering opportunities for economic mobility. The pilot service will operate through the fall of 2022 with hopes of securing funding for continued use. Riders – who must be at least 18 years old, City of Milwaukee residents, and working or willing to work within the service areas – can request pickups using a smartphone app or by phone.



FLEXRIDE HOURS, STOPS & COST

The service will operate weekdays from 5 a.m. to 9 p.m., with highly flexible scheduling based on demand. Fixed stops will be at the following locations from which riders can connect directly to jobs or job interviews in Menomonee Falls and Butler:

- Sherman Phoenix
3536 W. Fond du Lac Avenue
- Midtown Center
5700 W. Capitol Drive
- Silver Spring Neighborhood Center
5460 N. 64th Street
- Silver Spring Drive/Lovers Lane
- Woodman's/Sam's Club
Highway 145 in Menomonee Falls
- Rides from and to the Woodman's/Sam's Club and Silver Spring/Lovers Lane stops will be free.
- Riders from and to the other stops pay \$1.50 for a one-way ride, increasing to \$3 later in the pilot.

HOW FLEXRIDE WORKS

Riders must register to use the service. To do so, they can go to flexridemke.com and fill out a form to determine eligibility and share basic information with the FlexRide team.

After applying for the service, eligible riders will be able to download the FlexRide Milwaukee app and create an account.

To book a ride, the rider will enter the pickup and drop-off locations and then check the app to find out where to meet the vehicle and when it will arrive.

The service will be accessible to all riders – including residents with disabilities, those without a smartphone, and those without a credit or debit card.

The service is a pilot funded by a \$1 million grant from the National Science Foundation to the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission.

**For more information about FlexRide,
please visit [FlexRideMKE.com](https://flexridemke.com).**



**TRANSIT
EMPLOYEE
APPRECIATION
DAY IS MARCH 18.**

**PLEASE
REMEMBER TO
'THANK' YOUR
BUS DRIVER!**



WHO'S RIDING? RIDER PROFILES

How long have you been riding the bus?

I have been using MCTS for over 25 years.

What is your primary reason for riding?

Commuting to and from work.

Do you use the bus other than to travel to work?

Yes, I use the bus system for other travels around the city.

Do you have a regular bus driver? Any thoughts on him/her, or general service you receive

I don't have a regular driver; I use the bus at several different times.

How did COVID-19 affect your bus travel?

I have been fortunate to work throughout the pandemic. I am pleased to say that I was only affected a few times when the bus was too full so I had to take the next bus.

What's something interesting about riding the bus people not might know or think about?

One thing is all the behind-the-scenes planning that must take place for each route and how the buses are maintained and cleaned each day.

If you could encourage someone to try riding the bus, what would you say?

I have told many people that riding the bus saves you the stress of traffic problems, is easy to save money and allows you to ride while getting other important things done. Let MCTS do the driving for you!



**DARRELL
LINSKI**

Security
Manager,
Compass
Properties at
the CityCenter

TRANSIT SPOTLIGHT

VECTOR MEDIA

MCTS was recently featured in a national 2021 roundup of unique ways transit agencies are using transit advertising via Vector Media to promote goods and services. Here's an excerpt of the opening letter, along with two projects for MCTS:

“Public transit systems are the backbone of our communities, helping citizens from every walk of life move freely to places of work and worship, to family gatherings, doctor’s appointments, and grocery stores. At Vector Media, we are thrilled to partner with organizations like yours, to support the financial health of the public transit system and to help use this incredibly powerful platform to raise awareness for local businesses and local initiatives.”

Beginning in 2010, January has been recognized by the White House as National Human Trafficking Prevention Month. In support of the monumental national effort to raise awareness around the abhorrent crimes surrounding human trafficking, we are committed to uniting with our municipal partners around leveraging their effective platforms to share the President’s message with local communities.

In collaboration with Milwaukee County Transit System, Vector donated a collection of shelter panels and interior cards on MCTS vehicles

to support the cause. In addition to raising awareness among Milwaukeeans, the messaging was shared internally at the organization, among drivers and staff, who are outstanding citizens that play an important role in identifying cases of human trafficking in the local area.



TRANSIT SPOTLIGHT

VECTOR MEDIA- BUBBLE TOP SHELTERS

In 2021 Vector worked with MCTS to create a new, more impactful, attractive bus shelter advertising format. At key locations throughout Milwaukee County there are prime glass box “bubble top” shelters, which have large glass panels that our skilled production crew are capable of turning into additional high-impact ad space. The new Bubble Top MCTS shelter wraps can be placed on the inside or the outside of the glass panels, expanding the advertising canvas for brands, and increasing overall coverage in the market.



SPRING SERVICE CHANGES

Public transportation agencies typically adjust service four times a year to account for road construction, long-term detours, new commercial developments, school schedules, ridership trends, and staffing requirements.

The new spring service changes take effect on Sunday, March 6. Schedules that are changing include: **12, 14, 18, 21, 22, 31, 35, 40u, 55, 56, 60, 66 & 68.** Check buses or **RideMCTS.com** for updated schedules.



[LEARN MORE](#)

NEWS ON THE STREET

MCTS NEXT

MCTS NEXT – We recently measured the success of last year’s route redesign project and are pleased to report a 14 percent increase in ridership! It’s a good reminder to talk about one of the exciting changes to come out of MCTS NEXT- the addition of 6 High Frequency routes (16 total throughout our route network) to shorten the time it takes riders to travel on transit, meaning buses arrive every 15 minutes or less.

CHEER ON THE GREEN!

On Saturday, March 12, cheer on the MCTS bus and several MCTS employees as we take part in the Shamrock Club of Wisconsin’s Annual Saint Patrick’s Day Parade beginning at 12:00 p.m. in Downtown Milwaukee. The parade route starts at North Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Drive and West Wisconsin Avenue ending at Water Street and Highland Avenue. You can also cheer on MCTS at the Bluemound Road Business Association’s St. Patrick’s Day parade starting at 3:30 p.m. The parade takes place on Bluemound Road, between 51st and 64th Streets.

SAVE YOUR GREEN

Miller Lite Free Rides for St. Patrick’s Day returns in 2022! It will take place on St. Patrick’s Day, Thursday, March 17, beginning at 6:00 p.m. until the end of regularly scheduled service. This applies to all routes. Save your “green” on parking fees and gas while you celebrate responsibly with us! Visit [RideMCTS.com](https://www.mcts.com/ride) for more details about the program.



MCTS IN THE COMMUNITY

ROSA PARKS SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

On Rosa Parks' birthday — which is also National Transit Equity Day — we announced the winners of our second annual Rosa Parks Tribute Scholarship essay contest. High school seniors in Milwaukee County who will attend a trade school, college, or university were invited to submit a short essay inspired by Parks' famous quote, "Each person must live their life as a model for others."

More than 102 essays were submitted — representing 26 high schools — and reviewed by a diverse panel of staff from MCTS, the Milwaukee County Department of Transportation, and the Milwaukee County Office of Equity.

The following three students were chosen to each receive a \$1,000 scholarship towards their higher education:



ELIZABETH NIEVES
Audubon Tech High School,
Milwaukee

Nieves finds strength in Parks to fulfill her own dreams of helping the Hispanic community. Her goal is to major in business management with a focus in human resources, and then develop higher education opportunities for women and minority youth through peer mentoring programs.

[CLICK HERE TO READ ELIZABETH'S ESSAY.](#)



EMILY ODENKIRK
Oak Creek High School,
Milwaukee

Odenkirk found inspiration in Parks' ability to make the world a more just place. She plans to major in political science and support legislative change for social justice. She volunteers for political candidates who share her commitment to stop the injustices which came to light during the pandemic.

[CLICK HERE TO READ EMILY'S ESSAY.](#)



PARIS WOODEN
Greendale High School,
Milwaukee

Inspired by not only Rosa Parks but also by her late father's leadership as a Milwaukee Police Department lieutenant, Wooden's goal is to be a first-generation college graduate who will then lead and advance African American and Ethnic studies, no matter what she chooses as a major.

[CLICK HERE TO READ PARIS' ESSAY.](#)



“I was struck by the very moving essays and the heartfelt stories each student shared. It made the decision-making process very challenging,” said Donna Brown-Martin, director of the Milwaukee County Department of Transportation. “Students continue to show the power and inspiration that Rosa Parks’ courageous act of defiance so many decades ago has on their daily lives today. I am so pleased MCTS invests in the future leadership of this generation who plan to address racial equity in their own unique way.”

Parks was arrested on December 1, 1955, after refusing to give up her seat to a white man in Montgomery, Alabama. Her small act of civil disobedience led to a landmark Supreme Court ruling that outlawed segregation on public transportation.

Every year, on December 1 — recognized nationally as Rosa Parks Day — MCTS honors Parks by reserving a seat on board all buses in its fleet. Each reserved seat includes a red rose and a placard that features Parks’ photo and a message about her courageous act.



ADVANCING RACIAL EQUITY MAJOR COOPER JOINS MCTS AS MANAGER OF DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION

Respect, excellence and equity are among our company values. We recognize the value in having a diverse workforce and its impact on how we deliver our services to customers. Recently, our human resources department welcomed Major Cooper as our new manager of diversity, equity & inclusion (DEI).

Major brings 16 years of higher education and DEI experience to his new position. Prior to MCTS, he served as the dean of equity and inclusion at Lake Michigan College in Benton Harbor, Michigan. He's also held leadership roles with the University of Cincinnati, University of Wisconsin-Green Bay, Marquette University, Milwaukee Area Technical College, Cardinal Stritch University, and with several higher educational

institutions in Kentucky. Major holds a master's degree in public administration and a bachelor's degree in psychology from Kentucky State University, which is among the country's Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs).

Do you have any early memories of riding the bus? I started riding MCTS as a teenager when I spent my summers in Milwaukee with my dad. He taught me which buses to catch from 73rd and Congress to my cousin's house at 8th and North. I enjoyed riding MCTS, especially to go to the different festivals.

Describe your role as manager of diversity, equity & inclusion (DEI)

In my role as DEI Manager, I am looking at all assets of DEI in each department, and how we can implement new DEI initiatives into our daily work and work with the community. I also would love for MCTS to be an information hub for the County to discuss the effects and history of redlining in Milwaukee Country as it

relates to transportation.

How would you describe DEI and its role at MCTS? I always say that diversity, equity and inclusion means making sure everyone is at the table, and everyone at the table feels validated and has a voice. I believe DEI is so important at MCTS because we want to ensure it's present in all areas of the company. My approach is to focus on "EDI" – leading with Equity at the forefront. I can see how the groundwork has been laid and I look forward to continue the momentum to push equity forward.

Is there anything that has surprised you about working in transit thus far?

I think the biggest surprise was how many different departments make up the organization and the passion of employees who work tirelessly to make sure the buses are where they need to be every day.

INNOVATION NEWS

NEW WAY TO PAY BUS FARE COMING SOON

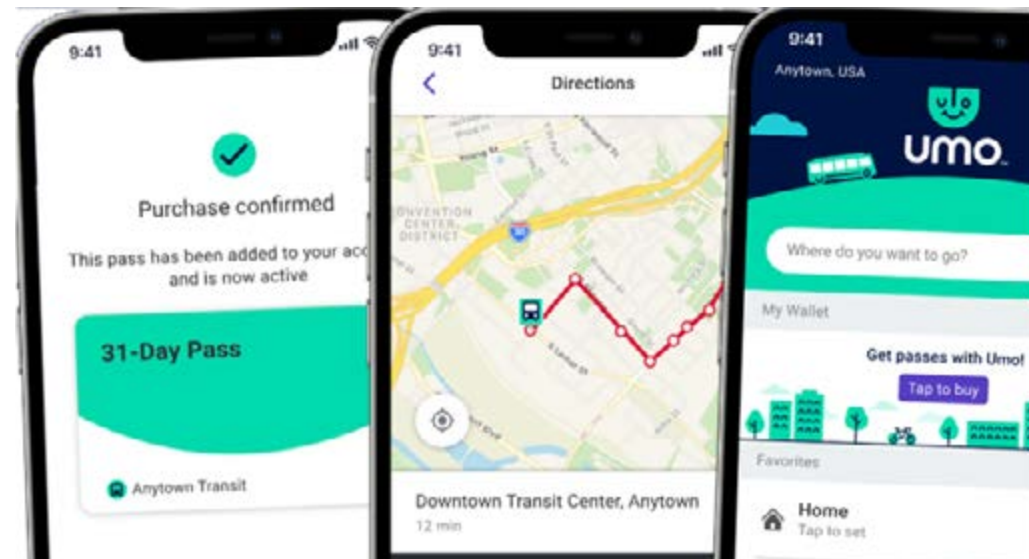
MCTS has chosen the Umo Mobility Platform by Cubic Transportation Systems as its new fare collection system vendor following a competitive process. Umo (pronounced YOU-mo) is a national fare collection system that will connect MCTS riders to not only its bus services but to other forms of transit across the region as well. The new fare collection system is expected to launch in fall of 2022.

The communities MCTS serves will benefit from improved transportation equity. The new fare collection system is made to fit the needs of all transit riders, including those without smartphones or who don't have a bank account. Riders can choose to pay for their transit trips whichever way they prefer, including via contactless credit cards, mobile phones using the new app, a new smart card reloadable online or at retail outlets, or cash on board the buses. More plentiful retail locations based in a larger number of neighborhoods, multi-lingual capabilities, and options for the visually impaired further boost access to transit. With fare capping, riders will pay the lowest price, no matter how many times they ride.

“Making public transit more accessible is key to achieving racial equity in Milwaukee County. To create more connected communities, we must reduce the barriers that keep our neighborhoods, and their residents, separated today,” said

Milwaukee County Executive David Crowley. “MCTS is working to reduce barriers to accessing public transit by introducing flexibility in transit fare collection to accommodate the needs of all potential riders.”

The ability to fare cap means riders can purchase as much or as little as they can afford, and still get the discount of a weekly or monthly pass. The new system recognizes when riders reach the equivalent of a pass, and automatically rewards them with free rides for the remainder of the period. Now, everyone can access a faster, more convenient way to pay and travel to jobs, education, entertainment and other destinations.



INNOVATION NEWS

NEW SYSTEM CONNECTS RIDERS TO OTHER MODES OF TRANSPORTATION ACROSS THE REGION

The fare collection system has the potential to support seamless regional connectivity for commuters traveling to and from Milwaukee County and eventually throughout the southeastern Wisconsin region.

“We are excited to partner with Milwaukee County Transit System,” said Bonnie Crawford, VP and General Manager, Umo. “MCTS sees the future of transit and the potential to connect its community to all mobility options using one app, whether they are riding the bus, grabbing a scooter or booking a ride-share, just like other major cities.”

Because the platform is cloud-based, it works faster than the current fare collection system, offering immediate on-board payment validation via mobile app or smart card. The mobile app will also provide real-time bus tracking and trip planning. To use Umo, passengers create an account via the app and then add funds to their account using their credit or debit card or with cash at more than 200 retail locations.

WATCH FOR ANNOUNCEMENTS ABOUT EDUCATIONAL MEETINGS COMING SOON

In the coming months, MCTS will begin educating its rider base how the account-based system works and introduce them to the comprehensive features and benefits found on the Umo mobile app and fare card.

On-bus “validators” are expected to be installed by later this fall. This new system will eventually replace the current M-Card and mobile app. The education campaign will include a timeline of when the old system will be phased out and the new one begins. There will be an introductory period allowing riders time to transition to the new system.



Freeway Flyer routes 40, 43, 44, 46, 48, 49, and 79 will continue to be suspended this spring. The one exception is Route 143, which will restart service on March 7, as required by a contract with Ozaukee County.

Freeway Flyers are buses that operate primarily between Park & Ride lots and downtown Milwaukee on weekday mornings and afternoons. The following routes will remain suspended until further notice:

- **Route 40** (College Avenue Flyer)
- **Route 43** (Hales Corners Flyer)
- **Route 44** (State Fair Park Flyer)
- **Route 46** (Loomis Flyer)
- **Route 48** (South Shore Flyer)
- **Route 49** (Brown Deer-Bayshore Flyer)
- **Route 79** (Menomonee Falls Flyer)

University routes 40U, 44U, and 49U are not affected and will continue as scheduled.



LET'S GET TO WORK

GOING THE EXTRA MILE MCTS WELCOMES NEW CVP CLIENTS

Milwaukee County Transit System's Corporate fare program, **Commuter Value Pass**, provides employers across the County the opportunity to offer the valuable benefit of transportation to their team members. With ease of access and a stress-free commute more companies are exploring the benefits of public transportation for

their company. During the first quarter of 2022 MCTS welcomed The Marcus Corporation's businesses including: Hilton Milwaukee City Center, SafeHouse, Saint Kate The Arts Hotel and The Pfister Hotel. We look forward to a successful partnership in serving the team members of the The Marcus Corporation.

TRANSIT THOUGHTS
MCTS WINS 2021
"BEST RIDE SERVICE"



PLEASE SHARE THIS ISSUE.

NEW READERS CAN SIGN UP TO STAY INFORMED
BY EMAILING MARKETING@MCTS.ORG



MISSION:

MCTS connects our community to jobs, education and life with essential transit services.



VISION:

To be the preferred transportation choice through service excellence and innovation.



VALUES:

Respect, Integrity, Excellence,
Equity, Collaboration, Innovation