



SouthWest Transit 2011 ANNUAL REPORT

It's my honor to present the 2011 Annual Report for SouthWest Transit. In reviewing this past year we have a lot to be proud of. Despite the financial and political challenges, we succeeded in delivering high quality services in a cost effective and efficient manner.

SouthWest Transit was able to achieve a number of operational milestones and service initiatives in 2011. While many of these are outlined throughout the body of this report, I would like to take a moment to highlight a few:

First, 2011 brought us our first ridership increase in three years. Since the majority of trips taken on SouthWest Transit are work commutes, this increase may be a sign that a more positive economic climate is emerging.

Second, our operations and maintenance staff did an outstanding job with our daily services. All trips operated and departed on-time; our system reliability factors were some of the best in the entire nation; and 99% of our customers indicated that they were very pleased with the service they received. All this was accomplished while reducing costs for the fourth year in a row.

Finally, SouthWest was again recognized for its outstanding safety record; its management innovation; its excellence in financial reporting; and for providing an excellent place to work. These were all repeat awards, and a strong testament to the dedication and commitment displayed every day by our Staff and Commission.

As we turn our sights on 2012, we will continue to focus on meeting the needs of our customers and the communities we serve by improving and expanding upon the services we provide.

As our population continues to grow, becomes older, and as our roadways experience additional congestion, the people living in our service area will need to rely more and more on the public transportation options SouthWest Transit provides.

Funding continues to be an issue, and we are disappointed that our system has not received its fair share. To address this, we have and will continue to work diligently with our elected leaders to help address and hopefully reverse this problem in the very near future.

However, besides advocating for additional resources, we will remain committed to continuing our proactive approach which relies on cost effective and sound management decisions.

"How we deal with today defines how successful we will be tomorrow". We understand the opportunities and challenges that await us, and we are eager for the test.



Len Simich
Chief Executive Officer/General Manager
SouthWest Transit



2011 SouthWest Transit Commission Members

Nancy Tyra-Lukens, Chair – City of Eden Prairie
Greg Boe, Vice-Chair – City of Chaska
Jody Collis King, Secretary/Treasurer – City of Chanhassen

Jerry McDonald – City of Chanhassen
Jennifer Wolff – City of Chaska
Sherry Butcher Wickstrom – City of Eden Prairie
Dan Wilczek – Rider Representative

ACCOMPLISHMENTS



Awards

In 2011, SouthWest was honored with the following:

The American Public Transportation Association (APTA) awarded SouthWest Transit its **2011 Gold Award for Safety**. This is the fourth year that SouthWest Transit has been honored by APTA for its safety and security program.

The Minnesota Public Transit Association (MPTA) presented its **Management Innovation Award** to SouthWest Transit in recognition of its “Park-Out” program. This program reduces costs without negatively impacting customers.

Intermediate District 287 again presented SouthWest Transit with its “**Outstanding Employer**” award recognizing the opportunities offered to their special-needs students who receive work experience and provide SouthWest Transit exceptional service.

The Government Finance Officers Association presented SouthWest Transit with its Certificate of Achievement for **Excellence in Financial Reporting**. SWT has been recognized for its 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009 and 2010 reports. This certificate is the highest form of recognition in the area of governmental accounting and financial reporting, and its attainment represents a significant accomplishment by a governmental unit and its management.

Cost Savings/Budget Balancing



Our **mid-day park-out of buses** at the Metrodome in downtown Minneapolis continued to be very cost-effective saving the agency over \$150,000 annually.

We were able to generate **additional revenues** by leasing space at one of our facilities and by advertising in ramps and wrapping buses with advertising.

Another source of revenue which will augment our budget is an agreement entered into with Jefferson Lines. SouthWest Station in Eden Prairie is now a stop on eastbound and westbound intercity routes, and in January 2012 SWT will also become a ticketing agent.

Chanhasen Station



In 2011, SWT completed construction and began service at its new 400+ stall ramp and station – **Chanhasen Station**. This facility, located just south of the Chanhasen Dinner Theatre, will meet the growing demand for SWT service. A significant amount of this demand comes from the City of Chanhasen and areas west of the city.

The new 420 space, four-level parking structure replaces the former 120 space Market Park & Ride surface lot and provides covered parking as well as an enclosed, climate controlled waiting area.

Express service will be provided to and from downtown Minneapolis and the U of M in the peak morning and afternoon hours, with limited mid-day service.

Future Transit Leaders

What started out to be a cost-saving effort for SWT has now become a career-building experience for many local high school and college students.

Once a student completes their sophomore year in college, they are given the opportunity to put aside their maintenance duties one or two days a week and join the admin staff, where they're exposed to a wide variety of tasks, focusing on their emphasis of study in college.



The goal is to help these student leaders develop skills for their professional growth, skills they can take anywhere, including the transit industry.

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Growth



In 2011 SWT began the design for a new 450 stall park and ride, a transit station and busway in Chaska (East Creek Station).

Ridership figures and comments from riders tell us that the current 225 surface park and ride stalls at the East Creek Park and Ride facility are near capacity and the facility needs to be expanded.

Bidding for the construction of the East Creek ramp and station is expected to take place in the spring/summer of 2012, with construction beginning later in the summer/fall. Plans are for the new facility to open by the fall of 2013.

Operations

SouthWest Transit operations continued strong in 2011, despite the fourth consecutive year of a reduced operating budget. For the fifth consecutive year SWT safely provided **over one million rides** without sacrificing service quality. Decisions to reduce and re-tool the workforce to match consolidated operation levels were not easy. Because of these actions the **subsidy per passenger was reduced for the fourth consecutive year**. The subsidy per passenger dropped from \$5.14 in 2008; \$5.08 in 2009; \$5.03 in 2010; and projected \$4.60 in 2011. Additional evidence of an excellent year includes:



- All scheduled routes departed 99 percent on time with arrivals being 95 percent on time.
- One road call for every 32,000 miles driven compared to the national average of one per 8,500 miles operated
- Zero missed trips.
- Less than one chargeable accident for every 200,000 miles operated.
- Customer satisfaction level of 99 percent who were either satisfied or very satisfied with the services provided, as provided by the results of the SWT annual customer survey of performance.



Community Outreach

In July, a group of Veterans staying in Chanhassen used SW Transit to attend a Twins game. To honor and display gratitude for their services, SouthWest collaborated with Trans Media Group to “wrap” a bus in the American flag. Members of this Veterans group also rode along with us in the 4th of July parade in Chanhassen.

On Tuesdays throughout the year, the Eden Prairie **Feeder Bus** transported residents from several housing sites to nearby shopping areas and medical facilities. In 2011 we received a grant from Eden Prairie which will help us continue to offer this service. SWT continued its “**job-seeker**” program, providing “Flash Passes” for free bus rides to help people in their search for employment. **Twins Express** service continued in 2011 and provided more than 8,500 rides to Target Field from our Cities. Summer service was extended to the **Como Zoo**. In December, riders and staff donated toys and food for the annual **Toys for Tots** drive and **local food shelves**. Many rode the **Holidazzle Express**. SWT, with the Lodge in Chaska, again hosted an **event for local seniors**. A local school choir performed and we then transported the group of seniors from all three southwest communities to the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum for the afternoon.



State Fair

Our ridership reached a new high this year – 68,156. We generally look at this service as giving back to the communities we serve, as a public relations tool, not as a money-making venture. This year, after instituting some changes to our procedures, we were quite pleased to have more than covered our expenses, allowing us to fill some holes in other parts of our budget.



'47 Silverside

SWT prides itself on its premiere fleet of buses. But, in addition, we are proud of our 1947 GMC Silver Side bus. A number of years ago staff rescued this vehicle and restored it to pristine condition. We generally use it for community events like local parades and festivals, and this spring and fall we ran it several times as part of our regular downtown service. It was well-received by our riders and received a lot of attention.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS



Technology

SouthWest developed the first smart phone app in the region that displays real time information. The app is scheduled for roll-out in early 2012.

All SouthWest buses are now equipped with Automated Vehicle Locator (AVL). This allows Dispatch and Customer Service staff to track any vehicle's location.

Wi-fi service is now available to the public at all of our transit stations.

Best Small Places to Live

Once again the three cities SouthWest Transit serves have been recognized nationally as one of the "Best Places to Live" in the U.S.

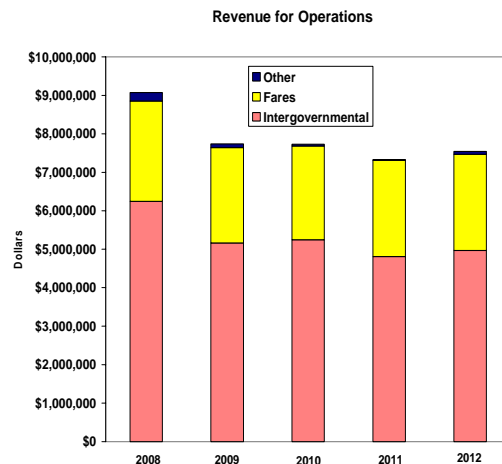
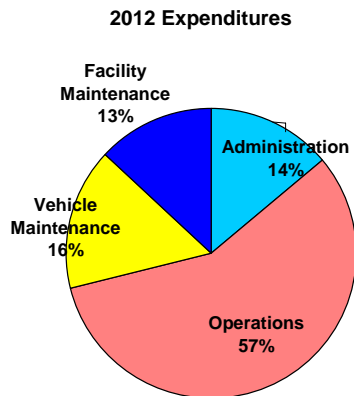


Besides the job climate, schools and recreational opportunities that exist in our three communities, another factor recognized was the transit service provided by SouthWest Transit. We are proud of the communities we serve and for being a part of making each of them one of the "Best Places to Live".

Budget and Revenue

Revenue for the general operations of SouthWest Transit has decreased from a high of \$9 million in 2008 to \$7.3 million in 2011.

Faced with decreasing revenues in 2011 and 2012, SouthWest Transit operations continues to focus on the most efficient routes while still providing service to the transit dependent population. Current transit services in 2012 will be maintained with a use of \$1.1 million from its reserves.



SWT Celebrated its 25th Anniversary in 2011!

In September SouthWest Transit celebrated its 25th anniversary at its SouthWest Village station in Chanhassen. Many former staff and Commission members and contractors who have played a role in the agency's success over the years attended the celebration.

