



## NOT YOUR TYPICAL TRANSIT AGENCY

Over the years there has been much debate concerning SouthWest Transit not fitting the mold of a typical transit agency. We agree, we do not fit the mold: **WE ARE DIFFERENT.**

Like any successful business, we need to appeal to our customers and potential customers. **We do not believe in the "one shoe fits all" approach to transit.**



The SouthWest Transit business model for attracting and retaining riders in the areas we serve has been to ensure its service is extremely reliable; that plenty of travel options exist; that passengers get to their destination on time, and as fast or faster than if they drove; and that the equipment, facilities, and customer service are of a very high quality.

So what has this business model produced?

- SouthWest Transit saw double digit ridership growth from 2004-2008. We now provide over one million rides annually.
- SouthWest Transit has one of the highest percentage use of park and ride stalls in the region.
- SouthWest Transit has an on-time performance record of 99% - the highest in the region and among the best in the entire country.
- SouthWest Transit's vehicle breakdowns are over three times less than the national average.
- SouthWest Transit's express service has some of the lowest subsidy routes in the region.
- SouthWest Transit customers have overwhelmingly (99%) given the agency a satisfied or very satisfied rating each of the past four years.
- SouthWest Transit has been recognized for its outstanding performance numerous times, including:
  - **1999 & 2008 Transit System of the Year in Minnesota**
  - **2000 State of Minnesota Management Innovation Award Winner**
  - **2004 National Transit System of the Year**
  - **2005 National Environmental Excellence Award**
  - **2007, 2008, 2009 National "Gold" Award for Transit Safety & Security**
  - **Honored by GFOA for "Excellence in Financial Reporting" 2007, 2008 and 2009**
  - **2009 Employer of the Year – ISD 287**

A criticism that some have leveled at SouthWest Transit is that its vehicle and facilities are too nice. We believe that these have played a role in our success. Additionally, the cost for these items is equal to and no different than what other transit agencies in our region invest in vehicles and facilities.

Others say the people in our service area do not need transit. We believe they're just plain wrong. SouthWest Transit provides services to many different demographic segments. Without our services, some people would not have access to their job and others would not have a mobility option available that allows them to stay in the communities where they've lived for most of their lives.

It is true that the majority of our customers use our service to commute for work or school, have an automobile available for their trip, and come from households with incomes well above the metropolitan average. However, when you factor in the benefits the entire metro area receives for having over 4,500 vehicles taken off of the most congested roadway segments in the region twice per day (for over twenty miles each way), the benefits that SouthWest Transit provides the entire region far outweigh the costs.



SouthWest Transit is different from most transit agencies. We are different for reasons that are unique to us and which allow us to be successful. We serve the young, the old, the mobility impaired, the rich and the poor and we serve them well.

We also play an important role in relieving congestion, reducing our dependence on foreign oil and helping improve the environment.

The bottom line is that our region cannot afford to debate the purpose, the need or the operating principles used by SouthWest Transit. We fulfill a critical need while at the same time continuing to be good stewards of the public's funding.

*SouthWest Transit (SWT) provides express and local bus service to residents of Eden Prairie, Chanhassen, Chaska and surrounding communities. SWT operates seven park-and-ride lots, including its main hub, SouthWest Station in Eden Prairie. Additional information and complete schedules for SWT can be found on the web at [www.swtransit.org](http://www.swtransit.org) or by calling our customer service line at 952-949-2BUS (2287).*