

# **SOUTHWEST TRANSIT**

## **NEWS RELEASE**

### **SouthWest Transit Riders Give Agency High Marks in Annual Survey**

Eden Prairie – December 5, 2008 – Nearly 1,200 bus riders took part in SouthWest Transit’s Annual Rider Survey in mid-October and the vast majority of them are pleased with the service.

“We take these survey results and our riders’ opinions very seriously,” said Len Simich, CEO of SouthWest Transit. “These results, along with our own monitoring, are used as the basis for changes we will make in the upcoming year.”

99.9% of those who completed the survey say they are satisfied or very satisfied with the overall service provided by SouthWest Transit. In specific areas the cleanliness of the buses and transit facilities as well as the drivers’ knowledge of routes, appearance, safety and courtesy were ranked high by more than 99% of respondents.

Overall travel times and on-time arrivals were the two lowest rated areas of the survey, but 93% of riders still said they were either satisfied or very satisfied with these areas. Many of the passengers understood that the reasons for the delays are beyond the control of SouthWest Transit. The reconstruction of the main downtown streets used by SouthWest Transit and the ensuing changes to other roadways were two of the major reasons for travel delays.

Riders also made the point that the buses have become much more crowded. “The increasing price of gasoline in the past year has led to a significant increase in ridership. This has meant that in some cases all seats were taken and customers were forced to stand,” said Simich. “We are looking for long term solutions to this issue, but in the meantime we are oftentimes running a second bus immediately behind the first one on routes that have been the most popular so that there are additional seats.”

Some other interesting results from the survey include:

- Women make up 56% of the riders;
- Nearly 90% of SouthWest Transit riders have a car they could use instead of taking the bus;
- Of that 90%, three out of four would drive alone if the bus were not available;
- Eden Prairie residents accounted for 48% of the completed surveys;
- Chaska and Chanhassen residents each accounted for nearly 11% of the surveys;
- More than 20 different languages are spoken by riders of SouthWest Transit.

Through the first 10 months of 2008, ridership on SouthWest Transit has increased more than 15% from last year. This is due in part to the higher gas prices as well as the fact that during 2008 SouthWest Transit added two major Park & Ride facilities along Highway 212 in Chaska and Chanhassen. More information on SouthWest Transit is available at: [www.swtransit.org](http://www.swtransit.org)

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