

Mr. Jim Hoppel, President  
Columbiana County Board of Commissioners  
105 South Market Street  
Lisbon, Ohio 44432

**COMMUNITY ACTION RURAL TRANSIT SYSTEM  
(C.A.R.T.S)  
ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2006  
TO  
COLUMBIANA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

Dear Mr. Hoppel:

The Community Action Rural Transit System is pleased to be the provider of public transportation services for Columbiana County. Our dedicated staff continually strives to provide a quality safe service to our county residents. Our drivers provided **47,531** passenger trips and traveled over **424,185** miles in 2006. Adding our Head Start transportation of Columbiana County children brings our passenger trips total to **99,857** and our mileage to **514,492** traveled in the county. Congratulations are in order for our dispatchers and scheduler who coordinate a complex schedule system throughout the county. Our mechanical team deserves our thanks for maintaining our fleet in a safe operating condition.

It is interesting to note the service differences between the northern and southern areas of our county. More passengers take advantage of our service in the southern part of the county, but more miles are traveled in the northern half. The population concentration of the county and the large geographical area put a strain on our budget, equipment, and personnel. In spite of these constraints, our staff continues to provide the quality service our county residents have come to expect.



It is worth noting that fuel costs increased 16% in 2006 compared to a 20% increase in 2005. Our mileage increased by 59,763 miles over 2005.

As a direct result of our Transportation Development Plan (TDP) completed in early 2005 and implemented in August 2005, usage of transportation services in Columbiana County is on the increase. New demand routes and areas of service were started. We are continuing to address the needs of our riders in terms of new demand routes and hours needed. Our Saturday hours in East Liverpool and Salem are becoming more popular and growing each week. Ridership in general is continuing to increase. We continue to explore expanding Saturday services and hours of daily transportation. Since these are expensive services to provide, we must move forward cautiously. Many systems in Ohio have been forced to reduce service as a result of Ohio's budget cutbacks. There is hope the current governor recognizes the importance mass transit plays in the Ohio economy and importance to Ohio residents.

With our increases in the usage of transportation service, both through the public and by contracts, and our own ability to control our expenses, we are able to enter 2007 without a fare increase proposal.

We provide two runs daily to the East Liverpool and Salem Dialysis Centers. These are life saving trips for our residents and requests for this service are growing. We have linked our transportation system into the Countywide Emergency Preparedness Program. We are prepared to assist in the transportation of residents from risk areas. Our **eighteen vehicles** with lift capabilities will be of tremendous value in assisting our elderly and disabled citizens in moving to safe areas. Our drivers, mechanics, and office staff have been trained in the use of a Dosimeter and completed the exposure control procedure program presented by the County Emergency Management Agency and the Ohio Public Safety program.

In addition to the emergency preparedness training, our personnel are trained and certified in CPR for all age groups through the American Heart Association. They have also received training in proper handling of Bloodborne Pathogens and how to protect themselves and others from exposure to HIV, HBV, and HCV.

Special transportation services are provided to three of our county public school systems. We transport for Wellsville, East Liverpool, and East Palestine.

Eighty percent of our daily transit service is reduced fare service for the elderly and disabled. We have service five days a week for work trips. These trips are for our citizens who cannot afford an automobile. Without this service they would not likely be employed, thereby not being productive tax paying citizens. With the increases in the cost of maintaining an automobile, it is important to maintain alternative methods of transportation for our citizens. This continuing increase in expenses makes an automobile less and less within the reach of low-income persons.

Four new vehicles were approved by ODOT for us to purchase in 2007. These were ordered in the spring and should be received in September. This will almost complete our switching over the fleet to the new style of LTN vehicle (white vans). Our riders are constantly thanking us for switching the fleet to this style of van. They are easier to get in and out of and more comfortable to ride.

At times we still will make mistakes and not provide the service we would like. Our riders let us know and our members of our Transportation Advisory Committee ( TAC) provide us a good sounding board for complaints. We have always encouraged complaints and suggestions to improve our service. Our TAC members are active in this area as they strive for us to improve each day.

In August 2005, the agency entered into a bus advertising program. This program took a lot of work to develop. Now the results of this hard work are beginning to show. Advertising space rental is picking up as Columbiana County businesses are realizing the value they can receive for participating. Several of these ads can be seen in the pictures enclosed, along with our own promotion "Gas Pain Relief". With the high prices of fuel we want to show people what a good bargain Public Transportation is. Advertising will not be accepted for a political candidate and alcohol.

The faith and trust shown in CARTS to provide transportation to Columbiana County by the Commissioners is not taken lightly. We continue to listen to our riders, upgrade our equipment, and remind ourselves of our mission and responsibilities.

Yours truly,

Carol F. Bretz

Executive Director

Community Action Agency of Columbiana County, Inc.

**July 2007**