

The Newsletter of the Wyoming Public Transit Association

2024 Wyoming Public Transit Association Award Nominations

WYTRANS Agency of the Year

Nominations Submitted by WYDOT Staff

Nominee: Goshen County Senior Friendship Center

Director—Linda Cockett

The Goshen County Senior Friendship Center team consistently delivers service that exceeds expectations. When tasked with obtaining information for WYDOT, they are well-organized and reflect their commitment to going the extra mile, ensuring that all requested documentation is not only provided but also demonstrates thoroughness and attention to detail. The submission of their application was not only timely but also error-free. Linda and her team exhibit a commendable ability to adhere to deadlines, whether it's managing expenses or tracking ridership. Linda's leadership shines through as she not only ensures the team meets its obligations but also finds time to contribute actively as a member of WYTRANS.

Nominee: Pine Bluffs Senior Center

Director—Alisha Michaud

Pine Bluffs Senior Center, Inc. is commended for its invaluable service to the community. Under the leadership of Alisha, the Pine Bluffs Senior Center is learning new skills, embracing challenges, and continuously improving. Alisha's dedication to ongoing learning directly translates into the delivery of exceptional customer service in public transportation for the community. Furthermore, Pine Bluffs Senior Center, Inc. consistently excels in submitting expenses and ridership reports on time.

Nominee: Wind River Transportation Authority -WRTA

Director— Tim Nichols

WRTA recently underwent a "changing of the guard" and Tim Nichols is an amazing addition to the agency with his creativity, fresh perspective, drive, and dedication. There are many new strategies being implemented that will make WRTA more efficient, cost effective and far-reaching. The focus is to intensify WRTA's engagement with the public, concentrating on the service it already provides while adding much-needed connectivity to the community with an inner-city fixed route within Riverton. This agency is breathing new life into the public transit system by enhancing, streamlining and adding to the impressive commuter routes that link several Fremont County towns.

Editor's note:

This issue of the *Transit Express* includes edited nominations for the 2024 WYTRANS Annual Awards. Nominee information is in alphabetical order by the agency represented. WYTRANS Members will be sent a separate ballot to vote for the nominees. Winners will be announced at the WYTRANS Conference in Riverton on August 13.

Dispatcher of the Year Nominees

Nominee: Jerome Medina

Agency: Cheyenne Transit

Nomination by Renae Jording, Director

I am honored to nominate Jerome Medina for the Dispatcher of the Year award. Jerome exemplifies all the qualities that make an outstanding dispatcher, and his dedication to his role makes him an exceptional candidate for this recognition.

Jerome possesses exceptional people skills and gets along well with everyone he interacts with. His ability to communicate effectively and empathetically ensures that both his colleagues and the passengers receive the support and assistance they need.

In addition to his interpersonal skills, Jerome is highly organized. He manages his tasks efficiently and keeps the dispatch operations running smoothly. His attention to detail and ability to multitask ensure that every aspect of his job is handled with precision.

Jerome's patience is one of his most admirable traits. He remains calm and composed, even in the most stressful situations, and handles them with professionalism. His ability to stay level-headed under pressure is a testament to his experience and expertise as a dispatcher.

Outstanding customer service is at the core of Jerome's work ethic. He consistently goes above and beyond to assist passengers, addressing their concerns and inquiries with care and efficiency. His positive attitude is infectious, creating a welcoming and supportive environment for everyone.

Jerome's attendance record is impeccable. He is always punctual and reliable, ensuring that the dispatch operations are never disrupted. Additionally, he takes pride in his professional appearance, representing our organization with dignity and respect.

In summary, Jerome Medina is an exemplary dispatcher whose dedication, organization, patience, and professionalism make him an ideal candidate for Dispatcher of the Year. It is with great enthusiasm that I nominate Jerome Medina for this well-deserved award.

Nominee: Lenita Snyder

Agency: Goose Creek Transit

Nomination by Steve Ainslie, Transportation Director

I would like to nominate Lenita Snyder for WYTRANS Dispatcher of the Year. Lenita has been dispatching for Goose Creek Transit for a year and a half and she is really good at it. She is always punctual and comes to work smiling. Her rapport with the drivers and the rest of the office staff is always friendly and professional. And even when we get the rare phone call from a disappointed rider, she handles that smoothly too. (She had a previous career with the US Postal Service, so she knows a thing or two about dealing with disgruntled customers.) Lenita can handle multiple tasks/emergencies with ease. She never gets flustered and always remains calm and focused.

One of the things that I admire about her is her determination to stay healthy and fit. Dispatching tends to be a sedentary job, but Lenita formulated a plan to avoid the pitfalls of a sit all day office job. After the holiday season, she started getting her steps in each day while at work. Several times a day, Lenita will grab a portable two-way radio and take it with her as she takes a quick walk around the bus barn (~500 steps) and up the stairs (17 stairs) to our training room and then back down and back to her office. It is a neat thing to watch, and it has inspired some of the other office staff to do the same thing. Her dedication is impressive. I should be so dedicated to getting my steps in.

So, for bringing great energy and professionalism to our transit operation, I feel Lenita is deserving of the WYTRANS Dispatcher of the Year award. I hope you do too.

Dispatcher Continued

Nominee: Toni Roberts

Agency: Wind River Transportation Authority

Nomination by Tim Nichols, Director

I am honored to nominate Toni Roberts for the Dispatcher of the Year award presented by the Wyoming Transit Association. Toni's exceptional skills, experience, and dedication have significantly contributed to the success of our dispatch program at WRTA.

Toni joined WRTA as a part-time dispatcher, bringing with her numerous years of experience in dispatch operations from Colorado. Since her arrival, Toni has played a pivotal role in providing recommendations and structure to our growing dispatch program. Her wealth of experience has been invaluable in shaping the direction of our operations and ensuring efficiency and effectiveness in our dispatch processes.

What sets Toni apart is not just her professional expertise, but also her commitment to excellence and the well-being of our operators in the field. She approaches her role with a sense of responsibility and dedication, always ensuring that she is punctual and attentive to the needs of our team members during her watch.

Moreover, Toni's instruction from her years of life experience in dispatch has provided invaluable insights into how dispatch operations should be conducted. Her guidance and leadership have been instrumental in fostering a positive and supportive environment within our dispatch team.

Toni's dedication, professionalism, and genuine concern for the well-being of our operators make her an exceptional candidate for the Dispatcher of the Year award. Her contributions to our organization have been immeasurable, and she is truly deserving of this recognition.

Thank you for considering my nomination of Toni Roberts. I am confident that her leadership and dedication will continue to positively impact our dispatch operations for years to come.

Trainer of the Year

Nominee: Colin Harnish

Agency: UW Transportation

Nomination by Tim Nichols, Director WRTA

I am thrilled to nominate Colin Harnish for the Trainer of the Year award by the Wyoming Public Transit Association. Colin's remarkable expertise and dedication make him an outstanding candidate for this honor.

Colin has played a pivotal role at the University of Wyoming, spearheading the implementation, refinement, and expansion of the Entry-Level Driver Training (ELDT) program and the University of Wyoming Transit System's overall safety program. His contributions have not only enhanced the university's transit system but have also left a significant impact on the entire state of Wyoming.

With his unparalleled experience, Colin has become an invaluable resource, possessing a deep understanding of both state and federal guidelines and requirements in the transit industry. As a former colleague, I have personally benefited from his wealth of knowledge and dedication to excellence.

Colin's passion for his work is truly inspiring, and his commitment to staying updated on industry standards is commendable. His expertise, combined with his visionary leadership, makes him well deserving of the Trainer of the Year award.

Beyond this recognition, I firmly believe that Colin will continue to be a driving force in the advancement of transit initiatives in Wyoming. His leadership and expertise will be instrumental in shaping the future of transit services statewide.

In conclusion, I wholeheartedly endorse Colin Harnish for the Trainer of the Year award. His contributions to the transit industry in Wyoming are undeniable and I am honored to nominate him for this well-deserved recognition.

Outstanding Service Award Nominees

Nominee: Vicki Nemecek

Agency: Cheyenne Transit

Nomination by Renae Jording, Director

I am honored to nominate Vicki Nemecek for the Outstanding Service Award. Vicki's unwavering dedication and invaluable support of transit operations make her an exceptional candidate for this recognition.

Vicki serves as the Public Works Director for the City of Cheyenne and is the direct supervisor of the Transit Director. In this role, she consistently demonstrates her commitment to the success and improvement of our transit system. Her support for transit is unwavering.

Vicki is a true advocate for transit, going above and beyond in her efforts to support and promote our initiatives. Her dedication is evident in her constant encouragement and challenge for us to excel. She inspires us to push our boundaries and strive for excellence in all that we do.

Under Vicki's leadership, we have achieved significant milestones and improvements. Her vision and guidance have been instrumental in our progress and success. We would not be where we are today without her steadfast support and direction.

Vicki Nemecek is an invaluable asset to our transit operations. Her dedication, leadership, and unwavering support make her a deserving recipient of the Outstanding Service Award. It is with great enthusiasm that I nominate Vicki Nemecek for this well-deserved recognition.

Nominee: Sid Dudley

Agency: Goose Creek Transit

Nomination by Steve Ainslie, Transit Director

I would like to nominate Sid Dudley for the WYTRANS Outstanding Service Award. Sid has been driving for Goose Creek Transit for just under five years. In addition to driving in Sheridan for our Demand Response service and the occasional day driving the Fixed Route, Sid is also our driver for our weekly Wednesday medical trips to Billings.

Prior to driving for Goose Creek Transit, Sid was a professional over the road truck driver including driving fuel tankers to support forest fire fighting efforts. He fueled helicopters in very remote locations. Needless to say, driving a load of volatile fuel in difficult conditions does not stress Sid out. And that is why we asked him to be our Wednesday Billings driver. If there is one thing for certain about winter in the Sheridan foothills, it is that the worst winter storms always hit on Wednesday. Weird but true. But Sid has always said that if the road is open, he is willing to drive.

But the main reason that I want Sid to have the Outstanding Service Award is that he truly cares about the people he transports. Particularly, the people he takes to Billings. He makes sure they are comfortable for the two-hour ride. That they have rest breaks on the way there and back and that they all have a meal while in Billings. He often knows their appointment times better than they do.

You may recognize Sid from the video interview he did with our own Heather Comstock. The video was shown during Heather's presentation at last fall's WYTRANS Conference. If you saw the video, you know how Sid feels about the work we do. It brought a tear to my eye, and I wasn't the only one. I hope you will give your vote for Outstanding Service Award to Sid Dudley of Goose Creek Transit.

Nominee: Glenn Roach

Agency: Uinta Senior Citizens

Nomination by Pam Ward, Transportation Director

I have written this over twice and I still feel I have not conveyed the message I want to send on how much Glenn Roach has done for Uinta Senior Citizens. Since starting at USCI just over one year ago Glenn Roach has turned around a struggling Senior Center and has raised the morale of the employees. My co-workers are telling me they enjoy coming to work every day and that is with extra jobs on everyone's plate. He has been fixing problems and taking on each one with a can-do

Outstanding Service Cont.

attitude. When everyone is crying "the sky is falling" Glenn calmly jumps in and tells us that it will get fixed, and things will work out. As each problem was laid on his shoulders, he would hit it head on, continuing to move USCI forward. Glenn always steps up wherever the need is. He has even been a homemaker, although I did have to talk to him about his charting and handwriting. I have heard him say that he could not do this without his team of co-workers, but I believe we could not have done this without Glenn. I cannot stress enough just how much I respect him and enjoy working with him.

Nominee: Milisa Palmer

Agency: Wind River Trans. Authority

Nomination by Tim Nichols, Director

I am delighted to nominate Milisa Palmer for The Outstanding Service Award presented by the Wyoming Public Transit Association. Milisa's exceptional contributions and unwavering dedication during her tenure at WRTA have had a profound and positive impact on her peers and the organization as a whole.

In her two years at WRTA, Milisa has demonstrated remarkable leadership and excellence. Initially hired as a "Bus Driver and Bookkeeping Assistant," Milisa quickly distinguished herself with her superior skills and commitment to excellence. As a testament to her outstanding performance, she was appointed to the role of "Training and Safety Coordinator."

In this capacity, Milisa has taken her responsibilities seriously, working tirelessly to ensure the safety and education of her fellow employees. She has shown a keen ability to identify areas of risk and has implemented effective solutions to address them, resulting in a safer and more informed workforce.

Milisa's dedication, professionalism, and initiative are truly commendable. Her efforts have not only contributed to the success of WRTA but have also fostered a culture of safety and continuous improvement within the organization.

Overall, Milisa's performance is exemplary and deserving of The Outstanding Service Award. Her commitment to excellence and her positive impact on her peers make her a truly deserving candidate for this esteemed recognition.

Thank you for considering my nomination of Milisa Palmer for The Outstanding Service Award. I am confident that she will continue to inspire others with her exceptional leadership and dedication.

WYTRANS Conference Room Reservations

This year's WYTRANS Conference will be held at the Riverton Holiday Inn. A block of sleeping rooms has been reserved there. Please call 307.856.8100 to make your reservations.

A complete schedule and registration material will be included in the next issue of the Transit Express.

Mark your calendars now for the
2024 WYTRANS Bus Rodeo
August 13 in Riverton. Register

on-line at:

www.wytrans.org/rodeo

- ❖ Cash prizes for winners.
- ❖ Scholarships available to attend.

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Driver of the Year Nominees

Nominee: Jim Rossow

Agency: Buffalo Senior Center

Nomination by Gary Love, Transit Director

I would like to Nominate Jim Rossow for The Driver of the Year! Jim is and has been one of the most fun drivers I've been around. His personality and energy fill any room he is in. Before any passenger boards Jim's bus, they know what to expect, and they love it. I constantly get compliments about Jim's ability as a driver, his skill is very sharp and it's a factor in the confidence his passengers feel, they know they are safe with Jim. Not only that but his fun personality and laughter make the experience his passenger receive second to none.

Jim is always on time, responsible and very caring for his passengers, I've had passengers tell me that riding with Jim is like riding with family! Now that is truly remarkable to have such energy to make people feel like they are with family, it's a measure above anything I could ever expect from one of my drivers. Jim is truly a team player, never complains and is always willing to help others. The list is way too long to include everything this man brings to our team.

Jim is a remarkable man and it's my honor to nominate him, to have such quality on my team is a blessing and for our community a real treasure!

Nominee: Bayard Bray

Agency: Cheyenne Transit

Nomination by Renae Jording, Director

I am honored to nominate Bayard Bray for the prestigious Transit Driver of the Year award. Bayard consistently demonstrates exceptional qualities that make him an outstanding candidate for this recognition.

Bayard consistently exceeds the expectations of his role. Whether it's staying late to ensure passengers safely reach their destinations or assisting with unexpected vehicle issues, Bayard is always willing to go the extra mile. His dedication to his work is evident in every aspect of his performance.

Passengers frequently commend Bayard for his exceptional customer service. He greets every passenger with a warm smile and ensures that everyone feels welcome and comfortable. Bayard handles any issues or complaints with grace and efficiency, always prioritizing the satisfaction and well-being of the passengers.

Bayard is known for his unwavering positive attitude. Regardless of the challenges faced during his shifts, he maintains a cheerful demeanor and encourages others to do the same. His optimism is contagious.

Reliability is a hallmark of Bayard's professional conduct. He has an impeccable attendance record, consistently showing up on time and ready to work. His commitment to punctuality ensures that our transit system runs smoothly and efficiently.

Bayard takes pride in his professional appearance, always presenting himself in a neat and tidy manner. He understands the importance of representing our transit system with dignity and respect, and his appearance reflects his dedication to professionalism.

In summary, Bayard Bray exemplifies all the qualities we seek in a Transit Driver of the Year. His commitment to excellence, outstanding customer service, positive attitude, reliability, and professionalism set him apart as a truly remarkable transit driver. It is with great enthusiasm that I nominate Bayard Bray for this well-deserved award.

Nominee: Pat Hamilton

Agency: Goose Creek Transit

Nomination by Steve Ainslie, Transit Director

I would like to nominate Pat Hamilton for WYTRANS Driver of the Year. Pat has been driving for Goose Creek Transit for two and a half years and during that time, he has become one of our "go to" drivers that we can call on short notice and we can count on him to come in and help us out of a jam. He is experienced with both our fixed route and door to door service. And he can drive any of the buses we have. He likes to work and would work as many hours as possible. He says that he has grandkids who play in an ice hockey league and that is why he still needs to

Driver Nominees Continued

work. It's a really expensive sport. But I guess it's a good thing that ice hockey is so expensive because we are really happy to have Pat driving for us.

Prior to coming to work for Goose Creek Transit, Pat was a Train Master for BNSF. And before that, he ferried airplanes around the globe for Air America including planes used to fight forest fires around the western US. Both really fascinating careers and I always enjoy visiting with him about them. The knowledge that he gained from his career managing people made him my "go to" guy for when I had difficult personnel issues to deal with. I have always valued his advice. And his great sense of humor has helped a lot too.

So, to sum up, Pat Hamilton is an excellent driver, dedicated to providing safe and friendly transportation to our riders and clients and he is also a great guy to spend time just shooting the breeze. And for these reasons, I believe Pat is deserving of the WYTRANS Driver of the Year.

Nominee: Kim Flom

Agency: Meeteetse Rec. District

Nomination by Brodie Serres, Director

Kim Flom is a bus driver for Meeteetse Recreation District's Public Transportation Program. Kim started driving for the Rec in the summer months in 2018, as she was a full-time Meeteetse School Employee bus driver & kitchen staff. She has been with the program on a year-round basis since 2022 and has been instrumental in helping it grow and expand to better serve the needs of the Meeteetse community. Kim is known for her friendly demeanor, willingness to go above and beyond, and her dedication to providing her riders with a safe and enjoyable experience. She is also a big reason why the transit program has grown in popularity and ridership numbers have increased. Kim is always willing to help out and is always looking for ways to improve the services that the program provides. Kim Flom is a valuable asset to the Meeteetse Recreation District, and the community is lucky to have her.

Nominee: Adrian Flood

Agency: North Big Horn Senior Center

Nomination by Kim Gifford, Director

I would like to nominate Adrian Flood for the 2024 WYTRANS Driver of the year award. Adrian has been the primary driver for the North Big Horn Senior Center since 2008. In the past 16 years, Adrian has consistently demonstrated outstanding work ethic dependability, dedication, and excellence in client care.

Adrian provides excellent customer service and goes above and beyond every day for our clients. He is kind, compassionate and patient and never tries to rush a client to get to the next task. He will do whatever is asked of him without complaint. He has a positive attitude and a smile for everyone and takes extra care to make sure our clients are comfortable.

Adrian makes sure the vehicles are clean inside and out. He is diligent in keeping his transportation records, monthly paperwork, and vehicle maintenance forms up to date.

Adrian's dedication to the senior center and to the safety and satisfaction of our clients is amazing. Adrian is a great asset to the North Big Horn Senior Center, and he is very deserving of this award. Thank you for considering Adrian for this award.

Nominee: Paul Moore

Agency: Sweetwater County Transit Authority

Nomination by Dwane Pacheco, Director

It is my distinct pleasure to nominate Paul Moore for the WYTRANS Driver of the Year Award.

Paul Moore has worked for the Sweetwater County Transit Authority since March of 2023. Paul is very reliable and dependable and has an impeccable attendance record. Paul arrives for his shift early, conducts his safety checks to include engine fluids and fuel. During inclement weather and especially on snow days he ensures all the snow is brushed off his bus and it is prepared for his shift.

Paul is a team player and volunteers to cover shifts or stay late when necessary. He has a positive attitude toward our customers and his co-workers. His appearance is impeccable, and he always has a smile on his face.

Driver of the Year Nominees

Excellent customer service is another attribute of Paul's. He has compassion and empathy when dealing with riders and makes the ride enjoyable.

Paul is quick to ask questions when clarification is needed and is a joy to work with. Dispatchers enjoy hearing Paul's voice on the other end of the radio, and they are grateful for his can-do approach to the job. He is a self-motivated driver who makes good use of his time by washing and sanitizing his bus.

Paul is an avid sports fan and a dedicated husband, father and grandfather. He has earned the title, Driver of the Year.

Nominee: Richard Bennett

Agency: Wind River Trans. Authority

Nomination by Tim Nichols, Director

I am thrilled to nominate Richard Bennett for the prestigious Driver of the Year award presented by the Wyoming Public Transit Association. Richard's remarkable lifetime of driving experience and his extensive contributions to his community make him an exemplary candidate for this honor.

Richard's career spans decades, during which he has excelled in various driving roles, including as a truck driver, school bus driver, and WRTA public transit operator. His breadth of experience not only showcases his exceptional driving skills but also highlights his unwavering commitment to safe and reliable transportation services.

Beyond his professional accomplishments, Richard has made significant contributions to his community. His past involvements as a Jaycee's member, County Commissioner, and in numerous other roles demonstrates his dedication to serving others and improving the lives of those around him.

In April 2024, Richard was rightfully awarded the WRTA Driver of the Year award, a testament to his outstanding performance and dedication to excellence. I am proud to nominate him for this award as well, recognizing his continued commitment to excellence in the transit industry.

Richard's passion for driving, coupled with his strong work ethic and community spirit, truly set him apart as a deserving candidate for this esteemed award. His nomination is a testament to his exceptional character and contributions to the transit community.

Thank you for considering my nomination of Richard Bennett for the Driver of the Year award. I am confident that he will continue to inspire others with his professionalism, dedication, and exemplary service.

WYTRANS Conference Schedule

Tuesday, August 13

- ◆ WYTRANS Bus Rodeo
- ◆ Paratransit Operator Training—1/2 day
- ◆ LTA—WYDOT
- ◆ Awards Dinner

Wednesday, August 14

- ◆ Paratransit Operator Training—Day 2
- ◆ ADA Paratransit's Operating Requirements
- ◆ Procurement 101
- ◆ Intro to DBE
- ◆ ADA Paratransit Eligibility Determination
- ◆ Calculating the Fully Allocated Cost of Service
- ◆ Cost Allocation Overview

Thursday am, August 15

- ◆ WYTRANS Member Panel Discussion
- ◆ FTA Session
- ◆ Paratransit Operator Training—1/2 Day

All sessions to be held at the Riverton Holiday Inn. Call 307-856-8100 to reserve your sleeping room today. See the next issue of the Transit Express Newsletter for more info.

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