

MCT

Continued from Page 1

If implemented, the proposed changes would **reduce weekday frequency** from every 30 minutes to every 60 minutes on #4 Madison-Edwardsville, #7 Alton-Edwardsville, and #18 Collinsville Regional bus routes.

In addition, the #23 Gateway Commerce Center Shuttle would be **eliminated** because of its low ridership and the duplication of service offered on the #20 Granite City-Pontoon Beach Shuttle.

Other notes on the proposed service changes include:

#4 Madison-Edwardsville:

- Decrease weekday frequency between Granite City and Edwardsville from 30 minutes to 60 minutes.
- Increase the weekday service span until 10:46 p.m. to accommodate SIUE and SWIC evening classes.

#6 Roxana – Pontoon Beach:

- Extend all trips to Wood River Schnucks on IL-143.

#7 Alton-Edwardsville:

- Decrease frequency between Alton and Edwardsville Station from 30 minutes to 60 minutes.
- Discontinue service to Alton Regional Multimodal Transportation Center while continuing service to Alton Square Mall.

#9 Washington Shuttle:

- Reinstate service to Skyline Towers senior living facility in Alton.

#13 Troy – Glen Carbon:

- Serve Cambridge House and Liberty Village on Illinois 162 on every trip.

#18 Collinsville Regional:

- Decrease weekday frequency between Collinsville and Emerson Park MetroLink from 30 minutes to 60 minutes.

#23 Gateway Commerce Center Shuttle:

- Discontinue route due to low ridership. Service is still available on the #20 Granite City – Pontoon.

In terms of any added safety and security measures to consider with longer wait times in between pickups and transfers,



The Hiring Bus set up shop in the parking lot of AMC Edwardsville 12 Theatre in Edwardsville on Oct. 20, one of many stops along a critical recruiting tour hosted by ACT/MCT with hopes of filling a 30-plus transit driver gap currently being experienced.

longer transfer times, and intermittent in-route delays, Viliocco-Smith said, “A presence at all MCT facilities will still be maintained at their current levels. Proposed changes on the 4, 7, and 18 would continue to allow riders opportunities to make transfers at MCT stations where there are climate-controlled waiting areas. All other routes would continue to operate on their published schedule, which brings in passengers, drivers, and road supervisors into the facilities every 30 minutes.”

Regarding how the longer frequencies (30 minutes to become 60 minutes) might impact commuters linking up with other public transit such as MetroLink, Bi-State/Metro, and Tri-County Rural Transit, Viliocco-Smith noted, “Passengers transferring to MCT from Metro services at the MCT Collinsville Station and/or the Emerson Park MetroLink Station may experience delays due to the proposed reduction. Tri-County Rural Transit is not an agency we interface with on a consistent basis or at any specific locations within Madi-

son County. If the proposal is approved by the MCT Board of Trustees, we will work with other local transit operators to ensure understanding of these changes.”

“It’s our hope that over the course of the next few months, enough drivers will be hired in order to reduce or even cancel these proposed service changes,” added Morrison. “We’re urging the public to spread the word about this critical need for drivers in order to help keep this service consistent and reliable for the thousands of Madison County residents who need it the most.”

To learn more about the proposed January 2023 service changes, visit www.mct.org, email info@mct.org, or call 618-797-INFO (4636).

As Morrison noted, MCT is also actively trying to fill its critical workforce shortage gap. One way the agency is doing this is by deploying its mobile recruitment center known as “The Hiring Bus” to highly visible spots throughout Madison County.

In October, The Hiring Bus could be boarded by prospective employees at stops in Collinsville, East Alton, Edwardsville, Jerseyville, Madison and Troy.

At its stops, job seekers can step onboard The Hiring Bus, ask questions, fill out applications, talk with recruiters and hiring personnel, and be interviewed the same day. The recruitment campaign continues, as the Agency for Community Transit (ACT) that employs MCT’s bus drivers is always seeking to hire friendly, energetic professionals to drive MCT’s green and white buses.

No experience is needed as all training is provided. ACT offers drivers competitive wages with an increase upon completion of a probationary period. Full-time work is available upon hire, as well as health and retirement benefits.

For a list of all open positions and their descriptions, or to apply online, visit www.ACTinfo.org/jobs. ACT is a drug-free workplace and an equal-opportunity employer.

Resumes can also be sent to ACT, Attn: Human Resources, 1 Transit Way, Pontoon Beach, IL 62040.

In addition to drivers, the agency also has the following openings to fill: Fleet technician (mechanic), bus fuelers and cleaners, account representative, fleet database specialist, network administrator, and accounting-purchasing associate.

Positions in high demand, including drivers, fuelers, cleaners, and mechanics qualify for a \$1,000 sign-on bonus.

Madison County Transit (MCT) provides multi-modal transportation services for Madison County, Illinois. MCT operates a fixed-route bus service, connecting to MetroLink; express weekday commuter service directly to and from downtown St. Louis, and seasonal express service to the Muny. For elderly and disabled residents who are unable to use the fixed-route buses, MCT provides complementary door-to-door service.

PARTNERSHIP

Continued from Page 1

Towing vessels that are certificated under the Coast Guard option undergo annual Coast Guard inspections after obtaining a COI. Towing vessels that are certificated under the Towing Safety Management System option are inspected by the Coast Guard every five years, with an interim schedule of annual surveys and regular audits conducted by Coast Guard-approved third-party organizations.”

At the beginning of 2022, the Coast Guard announced that it would prohibit the operation of any towing vessel not carrying a Certificate of Inspection by July 20 for non-compliance with the agency’s regulations. As of late July, the Coast Guard had prohibited 236 towing vessels from operating for failure to carry a COI as required.

“As the Coast Guard continues to do its important work on the waterways, including conducting safety and security inspections and investigating marine casualties, it can compel any vessel that is not in compliance with its regulations to take corrective action to ensure waterways safety,” said Stewart.

Stewart also said that, since its start, the goal of towing vessel inspection has been to improve vessel and industry safety to ensure that crewmembers can go home to their families and friends at the end of their hitch. “Over the past several years, in addition to their everyday responsibilities of ensuring the safe operation of their vessels, towing vessel crewmembers have been on the front lines of implementing these new requirements. It was the intention, and it remains the expectation, that

their hard work will pay off in reduced accident, injury, and fatality rates.

“It’s already making a difference – in 2021, the Coast Guard-AWO Safety Partnership recorded the lowest number of towing vessel crew fatalities (two) since tracking began in 1995, and the lowest amount of oil spilled by tank barges (0.1 gallons per 1 million gallons transported) since 2010,” Stewart added.

Regarding some of the main challenges along the way in the nearly 20 years of partnership between the Coast Guard and waterways operators to reach this milestone, Stewart said, “The journey was lengthy in part because of the Coast Guard’s strong commitment to stakeholder engagement.

“After Congress passed legislation to make towing vessels subject to Coast Guard inspection in 2004, the Coast Guard invited the Congressionally authorized Towing Safety Advisory Committee to inform the development of the new regulations for towing vessels, which enabled vessel owners and operators, crewmembers, and other members of the public to weigh in with their expertise and experience. While the federal rulemaking process took time, AWO members were gratified by the opportunity to participate,” Stewart said.

SCF Lewis and Clark Fleeting operates vessels from Alton, Ill., to Festus, Mo. SCF General Manager Fleeting Kenny Inman said, “SCF Lewis and Clark Fleeting is in fact a part of the COI inspections, and we are proud to say they

all got their certification well before the deadline. SCF Lewis and Clark started this process to ensure our vessels were in compliance several years ago. We found the process was not that big of a deal to our operations – the safety of our crews and assets has always been our priority and we welcomed the inspection process.”

“SCF Lewis and Clark has trained our crews to be fully prepared for any type of inspections, we are audited annually by the Coast Guard and the majority of our customers. I believe it goes a long way for our employees when they know they are on a safe vessel and that we do safety and security drills and training on a weekly and monthly basis. We are members of the Responsible Carrier Program (RCP) which is our safety management system. We have four safety personnel that ride and perform in-house inspections on our vessels and shore-side facilities,” Inman said further.

Kindra Lake Towing, LP generally operates in the Chicagoland and Northwest Indiana areas. General Manager Don Campbell said, “For Kindra Lake Towing, we have been affected in a positive way by the implementation of Sub Chapter M. We pride ourselves on the fact that we have always been a safe operator. Sub M has encouraged us to better document our safety procedures, to do more routine inspections and to formalize the safety training of our employees. Most importantly it has put all barge towing companies on the same safety-conscious track, which ultimately makes the barge industry as a whole safer.”

“With Subchapter M now in effect the vessels must meet a minimum standard,” Campbell added. “As a result, workers have become more safety conscious. Due to the current regulations, the workers are exposed to more safety inspections. This includes documentation and added paperwork, especially for the Captains. Subchapter M has helped to promote more safety awareness and accountability for the tug crews. The goal is to create a Safety Culture for all on board the vessels. We believe a Safety Culture is what the crew does individually when no one is looking.”

AWO President and CEO Jennifer Carpenter summarized the achievement of this historic milestone while further emphasizing its importance to the industry on the day of enactment this past summer. “July 19 is a historic day for transportation safety in the largest segment of America’s domestic maritime industry. Our arrival at today’s certification milestone has been driven by our industry’s deep commitment to elevating safety as we transport our nation’s vital cargo as a critical part of the American supply chain.”

“We commend the men and women of the tugboat, towboat and barge industry, and the U.S. Coast Guard, for the bold vision and hard work that have made this achievement possible,” Carpenter added. “Maritime commerce is vital to America’s economy, security, environment, and quality of life, and we are proud of our industry’s role in keeping our nation moving safely.”