



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SWITA Honors Top Drivers at Annual Awards and Spring Meeting

SWITA gathered April 26th for its biannual Drivers Meeting for training and awards.

ATLANTIC- Southwest Iowa Transit Agency (SWITA) hosted their Spring Driver Meeting and Awards on Saturday, April 26th at the Atlantic Golf and Country Club. Staff and drivers enjoyed a day of professional development and recognition.

Top honorees on the day were Mike Ames as Driver of the Year, Steve Herrington as the Kelly Dave Award recipient, and Leon Zaiger as Rookie of the Year. SWITA also recognized five Star Drivers from around the region: Mike Rhode (Cass County), Michael Irvin (Mills County), Denny Giedd (Pottawattamie County), Galen Gaer (Shelby County), and Bob Kreiser (Pottawattamie County). Recognition was also given for milestone service years: Larry Pedersen, 5 years; Rachel Schoening, 5 years; Rich Stehly, 5 years; Brian Elliott, 10 years; Max Smelser, 15 years; Gary Smithson, 20 years. Retired driver Jackie Williams was also honored for her 17 years of service. SWITA takes pride in providing safe, reliable, affordable, and accessible transportation and these drivers gave exceptional commitment to that service this past year.

Driver of the Year Mike Ames has worked for SWITA since July of 2016. Mike often picks up extra routes and covers for others when needed. He handles last-minute route changes with grace and is a great resource for other drivers by training them on routes and how to use software. Mike provides excellent customer service and went above and beyond during RAGBRAI transportation in multiple towns last year. He has recently taken over the Shenandoah taxi with ease and continues to be a go-to driver. Mike's riders are very fond of him and praise his customer service often.

The Kelly Davis Leadership Award was presented to Steve Herrington for his continued superior transit skills. Steve started with SWITA in December of 2022 and not only is a great driver but also a great friend to his fellow drivers. He is always willing to jump in

and help when needed and flexible with his schedule. Steve does a great job training other drivers and has a great attitude.

SWITA Rookie of the Year Leon Zaiger has been willing to learn any route that is needed to accomplish our transportation schedule. He is always pleasant, versatile, and eager to learn. He often is willing to work late, and riders have praised how wonderful he is as their driver.

The meeting also included a presentation on ADA guidelines from Jeremy Johnson-Miller with Easterseals Iowa. This helped provide guidance on assuring that all individuals have a proper experience riding public transit regardless of any disability.

SWITA is Southwest Iowa's public transportation system that is available in Cass, Fremont, Harrison, Mills, Montgomery, Page, Pottawattamie, and Shelby counties. SWITA is Iowa's largest rural public transit agency, providing 552,231 rides in fiscal year 2024.