



# 2024 COMMUNITY REPORT

## DRIVING PARTNERSHIPS

CATA  
TRANSPORTATION CENTER  
In Memory of Ransom Eli Olds



PAGE

7

UPGRADES  
PLANNED FOR CATA'S  
TRANSPORTATION CENTER

### ALSO INSIDE:

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PAGE 14 GO MOBILE WITH CATA: NEW FARE PAYMENT OPTIONS



## ON THE COVER:

CATA's Transportation Center opened in 1997 in downtown Lansing. It's the central hub for 16 of CATA's 33 fixed routes, and regional transit and intercity bus services.

*CATA's partnership with the Refugee Development Center gives newcomers to the region, including Rosie and her mother, Them, a means of access to transportation services.*

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To request a printed copy, call 517-394-1100 or email [marketing@cata.org](mailto:marketing@cata.org). Requests must include full name, complete mailing address and phone number.

### CATA'S MISSION:

To meet the mobility needs of our region by providing innovative solutions in partnership with the communities we serve.

View online at  
[cata.org/CommunityReport](https://cata.org/CommunityReport).



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**TITLE VI STATEMENT:** CATA services are provided in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, without discrimination on the basis of race, color or national origin.



# A WORD FROM OUR CEO

Dear Capital Region Resident:

As we reach the midpoint of another year filled with promise and progress, I'm thrilled to pause and reflect on the significant milestones we've attained in fiscal 2024. Our dedication to CATA's strategic goals remains unwavering: regional mobility, customer experience excellence, organizational strength, community partnership and dynamic workplace. These priorities continue to guide our efforts as we strive to meet the mobility needs of our region and beyond.

In recognition of our commitment to regional transit coordination, CATA was awarded \$1.66 million from the Michigan Department of Transportation. This funding will support the Enhance Lansing Equity via Creative Transit Solutions project, to advance regional transit in an equitable manner. We're honored to partner with MDOT to ensure accessible and inclusive public transportation for all.

Our upcoming microtransit pilot program, alongside recent regional initiatives such as the Route 3 extension and the launch of EATRAN's two Connectors in Eaton County, reflects our dedication to improving transit connectivity, increasing ridership, and reducing single-occupancy vehicle travel and associated air pollution. We're committed to staying at the forefront of progress, strengthening transportation options and enriching quality of life through innovative technologies and a shared vision with our transit partners, community leaders, business owners, stakeholders and, of course, our riders.

I'm excited about the future. Lansing Mayor Andy Schor's proposal to build a new home for municipal government adjacent to the CATA Transportation Center in downtown Lansing offers an extraordinary opportunity for CATA to help develop a regional transit-oriented, mixed-use facility. This facility could address our administrative space constraints and potentially accommodate other regional offices and their employees downtown. There is also an opportunity to foster collaboration and efficiency by bringing much-needed public services to the heart of Lansing.

Transit plays a key role in regional economic development, making our region an attractive place to live, work and start a business. CATA serves as a lifeline for many and a valuable resource for all. This new project represents a significant step forward in our ongoing efforts to improve access to CATA services and enhance public transportation infrastructure. We're committed to working with the city and other agencies to provide robust, high-quality transit services that meet the diverse needs of our community.

Join us in celebrating our achievements and vision for the future. Within the pages of CATA's 2024 Community Report, you'll find stories that highlight the Authority's pledge to deliver the highest standard of service to our community. We're here to serve you, and reaffirm our commitment to delivering exceptional public transportation services, now and in years to come.

Sincerely,



# REGIONAL MOBILITY RAMPS UP WITH NEW SERVICES

I hear from constituents all the time about what CATA is doing, especially in my area, partnering with EATRAN and offering expanded services. CATA is about family and people and movement, not about lines and borders.

— Fonda Brewer,  
Trustee, Delta Township 



In 2022, CATA's chief executive officer also became executive director of the Eaton County Transportation Authority. Shared management was a monumental step toward deepening the ongoing partnership between the two transit providers and launching a new era of regional mobility across the Capital region. Since then, the transit partnership has rolled out exciting new services that make it easier than ever for CATA and EATRAN

riders to get a seamless ride to their favorite destinations across county lines.

A recent online survey found that Eaton County residents support improved public transit services — and the CATA-EATRAN partnership is doing just that. A new and improved Charlotte Connector returned to service in January, allowing Charlotte residents to catch a ride to key employment and shopping destinations in Delta Township and beyond. The new

Charlotte Connector offers improved routing and expanded service hours, and — in an unprecedented move — Saturday service. Four months later, EATRAN launched the Grand Ledge Connector.

The Charlotte Connector created a blueprint for regional mobility. Considerable thought, planning, research and collaboration

were required to bring this concept to life in Eaton County. The EATRAN team delivered a mobility solution that includes the voice of riders and residents.

Combined with CATA's Route 3 extension, which debuted in May 2023 and added 30 new bus stops, both EATRAN Connectors support a network that integrates riders in Charlotte and Grand Ledge to the entire CATA system. Need to get to the Lansing airport? How about an MSU football game? Got a new job at the Amazon Fulfillment Center? You can count on EATRAN and CATA to get you there.

Watch for even more service enhancements as the region's public transit partnership continues to bear fruit for residents across the region.

I think about how transportation and CATA have played [a part] in my life and how they've impacted my family. We understand the importance of providing a viable transportation system for the entire community.

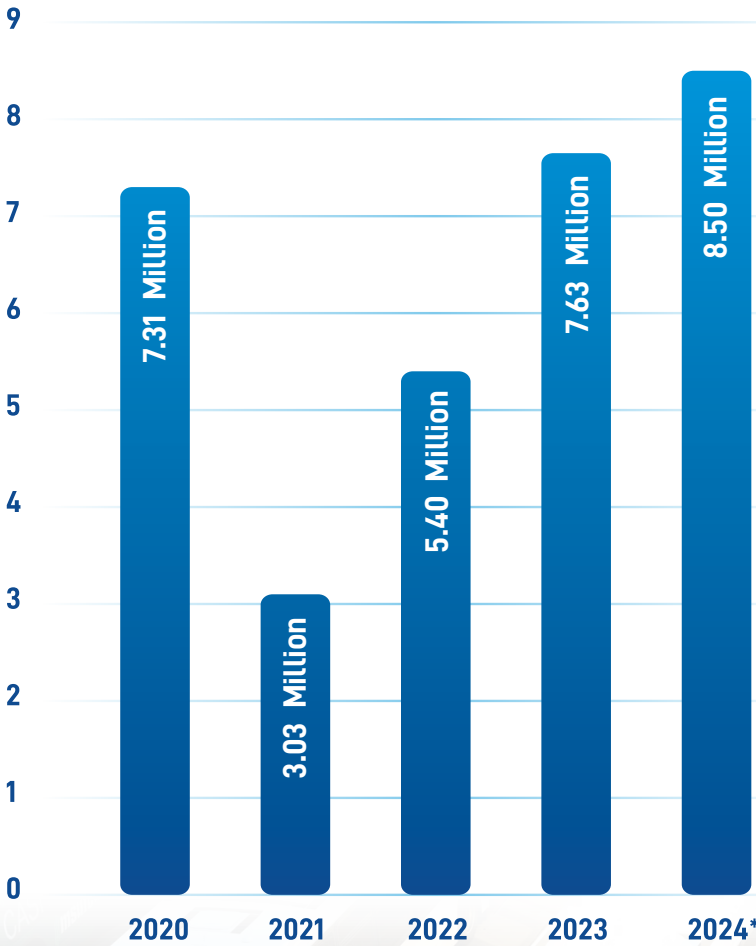
— Patrick Spyke,  
CEO, LAFCU



# ANNUAL RIDERSHIP

\*Fiscal 2024 is projected as of May 2024.

Number of Rides Per Year (in Millions)



## UPGRADES PLANNED

# FOR CATA'S TRANSPORTATION CENTER



CATA's Transportation Center, located in downtown Lansing, opened to the public in 1997. More than a quarter-century later, it's no surprise the facility needs updates and improvements.

In recent years, the facility underwent several renovations including the addition of a dedicated resource room,

conversion to energy efficient LED lighting and upgrades to the heating and cooling systems.

Soon, riders can expect to see a number of additional enhancements at the CTC. Replacement of the original roof, upgrading concrete driveways and approaches, remodeling restrooms and

utilizing new technology to improve security are among the planned changes.

When renovations are completed, the CTC will serve as a regional transfer hub for not only CATA but EATRAN, Clinton Area Transit System, microtransit solutions, transportation network companies and intercity bus services.



## WORD ON THE STREET

Hear what community members have to say about CATA and the value of public transportation at [cata.org/CommunityReport](https://cata.org/CommunityReport).

# MICHIGAN'S 1ST AGENCY LICENSED AS COMMUNITY SAFE PLACE



CATA's fleet and facilities are certified as "safe places" through the National Safe Place program, making CATA the first licensed agency partner in Michigan. This initiative contributes to the safety and well-being of vulnerable community members.

Operational in 40 states, the National Safe Place program provides immediate assistance to youths who face homelessness, abuse or exploitation. Through partnerships with community social services, CATA will extend this support to anyone in crisis.

If individuals are in danger or need assistance, they can notify a CATA employee. A supervisor will promptly meet them, assess the situation and connect them with appropriate resources or, if necessary, law enforcement. Signage detailing the program will be displayed in all CATA vehicles and facilities.

CATA's adoption of the National Safe Place program underscores its commitment to community safety and support for vulnerable individuals. This initiative complements existing efforts to address safety concerns and combat human trafficking through the See Say app, enabling users to anonymously report incidents.



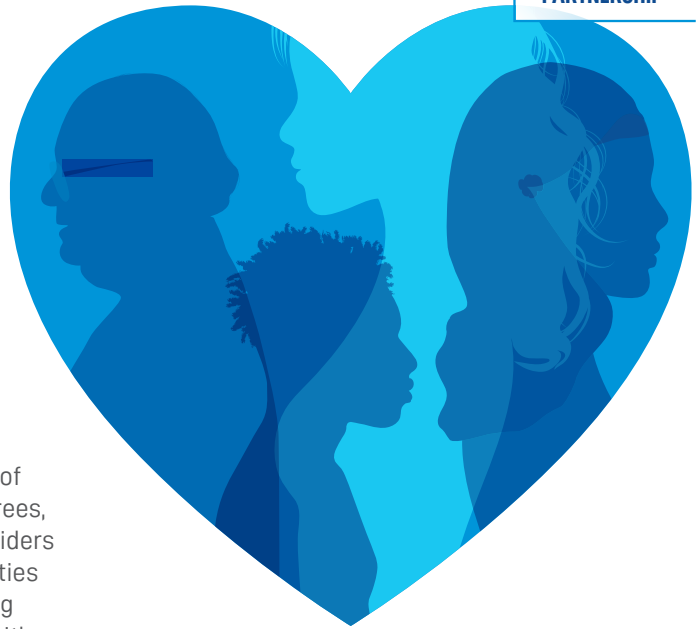
## SEE SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY?

# REPORT IT!



# STRAIGHT FROM THE HEART:

## CATA PARTNERSHIPS LIFT VULNERABLE CITIZENS



CATA serves people of every stripe and in all walks of life from students to families, professionals to retirees, and everyone in between. It's no secret that many riders represent underserved and marginalized communities and supporting them is a collaborative effort. Lifting these vulnerable citizens isn't just a strategic goal, it's integral to CATA's core values.

CATA's impact is greatly enhanced by its partnerships in the region. In fiscal 2023, the Authority supported over 53 non-profit organizations and local programs. CATA is grateful for the opportunity to assist agencies that provide essential social services to the region. CATA's support comes in various forms: donated bus passes, sponsorships and participation in community events.

Partnerships with the Refugee Development Center to welcome new residents, Habitat for Humanity to build homes and providing cooling or warming buses to local law enforcement during emergencies are just a few examples of how CATA supports the essential work of these organizations.

Learn more about how these partnerships are building a stronger, more resilient community at [cata.org/Partnerships](https://cata.org/Partnerships).

OVER  
**53**  
NON-PROFIT  
ORGANIZATIONS  
AND LOCAL  
**PROGRAMS**  
SUPPORTED

### USERS MAY ANONYMOUSLY REPORT

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- Safety or security concerns
- Suspicious activity
- Unattended bag or package
- Vandalism
- Wellness check
- Suspected human trafficking



Learn more and download at  
[CATA.ORG/SEESAY](https://CATA.ORG/SEESAY)



# REFUGEE DEVELOPMENT CENTER

## PARTNERSHIP HELPS LANSING NEWCOMERS RIDE & SUCCEED

Do you remember a time when you felt lost, alone and confused by new surroundings? This is a common experience for newcomers to the United States, including those relocating to the Capital region. Fortunately, CATA and its partners are here to help.

"At the RDC, it's a good community to help you speak English. Your culture is very nice if you understand it. They help you write it and we repeat it for the teacher," said Esther. "The teachers are all very nice. If you don't understand something they repeat it and

The benefits of the RDC's courses are clear, but there remains a challenge for aspiring English speakers: getting to class.

CATA partners with the RDC by providing bus passes for those who regularly use the center's resources. The RDC even offers a program where instructors visit students' homes to teach them how to use CATA's bus system to get to school, often their first experience with American public transportation.

When refugees arrive in Lansing, it is typically without a car, bicycle or other mode of transportation. It can be difficult to focus on classes when relying on neighbors or co-workers to get around. CATA services give them the freedom to build a life in this community without constantly worrying about how they will get from point A to point B.



"WHEN THEY GET ON THE BUS, THEY FEEL ENGAGED IN THE COMMUNITY."

Founded in 2002, Lansing's nonprofit, the Refugee Development Center, supports mid-Michigan's refugee population by offering crucial resources that help newcomers adjust to life in their new country. The RDC provides 13 programs, including English classes and driver education, alongside vital connections to resources necessary for thriving in a new community.

Esther, who relocated to Lansing from Haiti, finds the English classes at the RDC incredibly helpful.

help you. They are very, very good." Rosie and her mother, Them, Burmese refugees who arrived in Lansing in 2024, also find the RDC's classes beneficial.

"I can speak Hindi, but I never spoke English in India, so it's a new thing for me," said Rosie. "I take the English classes to improve my English skills. Before, I didn't know how to speak or say anything in English. Now, day-by-day, I'm improving."

CATA is a good partner with the RDC because they help people for the transportation...people come over here and don't have a car.

- Esther,  
Resident, Lansing / RDC Student





"I'm not driving," said Esther. "I take a bus to come to the RDC, go to the library or the supermarket because I don't have a car."

Mariah Shafer, the outreach director at the RDC, believes the center's work with CATA is one of its most successful partnerships.

"For many, this is the only way they can get to class any time of year," said Shafer. "CATA has provided us with a lot of support in terms of getting bus passes."

CATA connects the community to the RDC and other resources.

"If there is no CATA, we can't go anywhere because we don't have a car," said Rosie. "Plus, we don't know how to drive yet."

So, if there is no bus, we can't go to the RDC to take classes or to go to any appointments."

Hundreds attend classes at the RDC each week with many taking the bus. To better accommodate riders, CATA installed a bus shelter at the bus stop near the RDC to protect students from inclement weather while they wait for transportation.

"We needed a shelter for the students and CATA provided it," said Shafer. "We needed bus passes for our students using Spec-Tran and CATA provided them. We needed passes for

students who are taking one, two, three buses to get here and CATA once again provided."

CATA not only helps connect these new members of the community to their destinations but also fosters a sense of belonging. Shafer recalled something that

Rosie and her mother shared with her about their experience with CATA's service.

"When they get on the bus, they feel engaged in the community," said Shafer. "They see their neighbors, friends and classmates, and they feel a part of something. After having to leave your home and relocate to a new place, it can be very isolating."

CATA is more than just a bus service; it's a vital part of the community for many who make Lansing their new home. CATA's partnership with the RDC creates a lifeline for newcomers to the region.

**"FOR MANY  
THIS IS THE  
ONLY WAY  
THEY CAN GET  
TO CLASS."**

The RDC thrives off of community partnerships and one of our most successful partnerships is with CATA. We're really proud to be able to welcome our newcomers with a newly built and designed bus stop. Our students often take multiple buses to get [to the RDC] and CATA has provided us with a lot of support in terms of getting bus passes.

– Mariah Shafer,

Outreach Director, Refugee Development Center

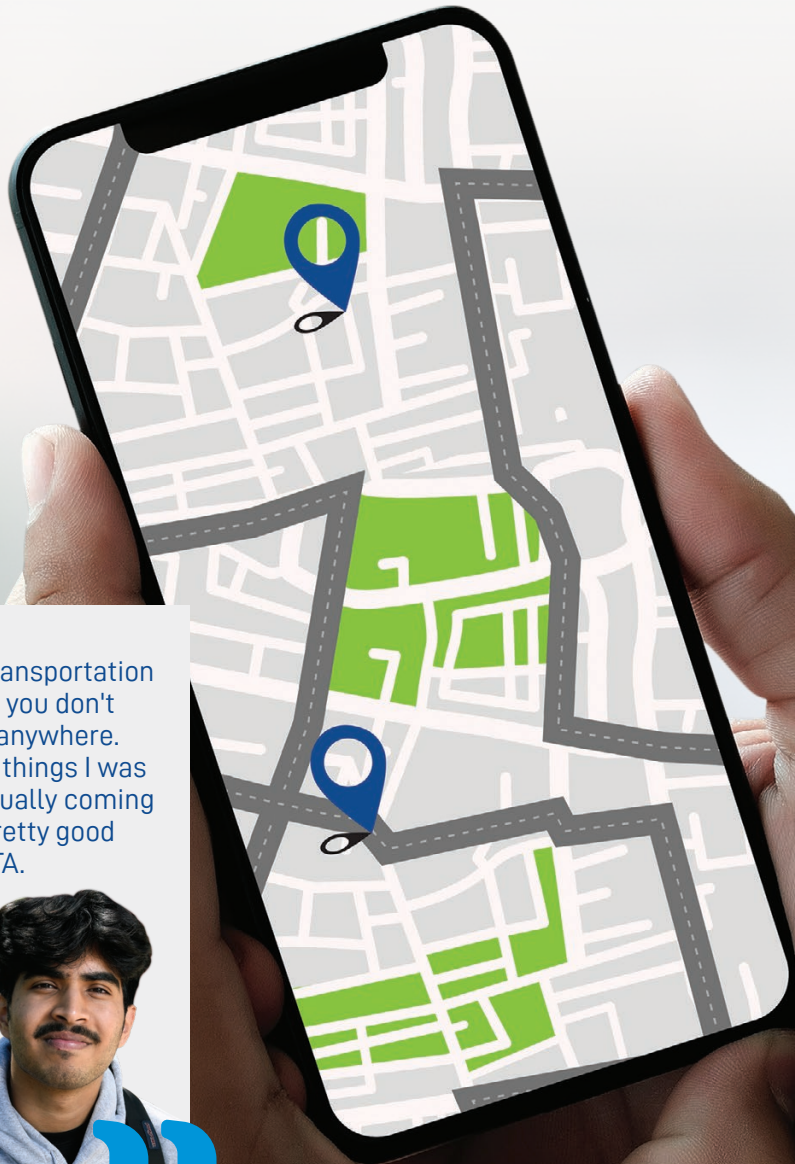


# NEW MICROTRANSIT SERVICE TO OFFER SEAMLESS CONNECTIONS

CATA is expanding its reach with an innovative new microtransit service designed to revolutionize the way people utilize public transportation. Whether you're a stone's throw from a bus stop or miles away, CATA's latest initiative promises seamless journeys from your doorstep to your destination.

Contracting with Via, a leading microtransit provider, CATA will launch a new pilot program later this year. Imagine the flexibility of Uber or Lyft combined with the reliability of public transit. Via's zone-based system will offer rides within

service areas, all accessible through an app. Future plans include seamless integration into CATA's *Transit* app for ultimate convenience and accessibility.



In Mumbai, public transportation is very common. So, you don't really have to drive anywhere. That was one of the things I was looking at when actually coming to MSU. I've had a pretty good time riding with CATA.

– Aahan Gohil,  
Student, Michigan  
State University



# BREAKING THROUGH THE LANGUAGE BARRIER

This fall, CATA will launch a new service to help non- and limited-English speaking customers overcome language barriers.

Language Line will offer translation and interpretation services in nearly 250 languages, including American Sign Language. With 40 years of expertise, Language Line is a leader in its field.

"THE PEOPLE  
WE WORK WITH  
THE MOST  
FACE ENOUGH  
BARRIERS."

CATA employees will be trained by Language Line to recognize when language assistance is needed and how to provide immediate help.

For phone translations, employees will connect callers to a Language Line interpreter. In-person assistance will be facilitated through tablets available at all public-facing CATA locations and workstations.

These tablets will feature an app that connects customers with translators or ASL professionals.

CATA Customer Experience Manager Margaret Stephens said the main goal of the program is inclusion — so everyone who needs public transportation can use it successfully.

"The people we work with the most face enough barriers," said Stephens. "Language and communication shouldn't be among them."



# GO MOBILE WITH CATA: NEW FARE PAYMENT OPTIONS

CATA continues its commitment to improve customer experience by introducing new ways to pay for a ride. After upgrading fareboxes in the spring of 2022, CATA is now focused on contactless payment options, which will be rolled out in two phases:

## Phase I Mobile Pay App (Fall 2024)

CATA will launch a new payment app. CATA Mobile Pay will be the first of the new contactless payment options, allowing riders to pay for bus rides directly from their smartphones. Mobile pay features will also be integrated in the *Transit* app.

## Phase II Smart Cards, Contactless Credit Cards and Stored Values in App (Winter 2024)

Riders will have access to smart cards and the ability to use their contactless-enabled credit cards with 'tap and go' functionality. Stored values will also be an option for easier fare payment.

CATA aims to offer payment options that cater to all riders' preferences. For those who prefer existing payment methods, rest assured that cash and traditional passes will still be accepted and available for purchase. Smart cards, offering a new way to pay, will be available at major local retailers, vending machines and through the new mobile pay app.



## AUTOMATIC-DETOUR DETECTION FEATURE IN *TRANSIT*

Never be surprised by detours again.  
Now you can see them right in *Transit*.

Visit [cata.org/Transit](https://cata.org/Transit) for details.



Download the App



## EXPANDING ONBOARD CAMERA INITIATIVE FOR SAFER TRANSIT

Driven by its commitment to provide a safe experience for customers, employees and the public, CATA is expanding the use of onboard cameras.

This summer, a pilot program will launch with nine vehicles slated for camera installation, including 60-foot buses, 40-foot buses and cutaway buses for Spec-Tran, Redi-Ride and Connector services. Cameras will be strategically placed inside and outside the vehicles, providing comprehensive coverage. The goal is to deter any potential misconduct that could compromise safety aboard or around CATA vehicles.

For some CATA customers, onboard cameras are not a new security feature. In April 2018, cameras were installed on all small buses and minivans operated by CATA's contractor, Transdev, which have been well-received.

While the timeline for the expanded initiative's trial remains open-ended, CATA will evaluate the effectiveness of utilizing cameras across its entire fleet in the future.



## PROGRESSING TOWARD FLEET ELECTRIFICATION

CATA is making strides toward its goal of fleet electrification and achieving net-zero emissions. The expansion of its hybrid fleet has been a successful first step, and the next phase of the plan is to transition entirely to electric vehicles. CATA is collaborating with manufacturers to introduce electric buses by 2025, aiming for a fully electric fleet by 2035.

"We're excited about our progress," said CATA Director of Planning and Development Dustin Hagfors. "While supply chain delays pose challenges, we remain committed to our timeline."

This initiative also recently earned CATA gold status from the American Public Transportation Association, recognizing the Authority's ambitious commitments, as well as a \$1 million funding award from U.S. Representative Elissa Slotkin.

An investment in charging infrastructure and staff training will result in an efficient fleet integration. CATA will continue to deliver reliable service while introducing electric buses. The only noticeable difference will be a quieter ride.

"We want the community to know we're doing our due diligence," added Hagfors. "Our goal is for this technology to be seamless, because we don't want to disrupt someone's ability to get to work just to get an electric bus on the road."

The Authority's dedication to sustainability is evident. In addition to electric vehicles, CATA implemented recycling programs for vehicle parts to lessen upkeep waste and furnished new bus shelters with solar panels.





# VOTING IS EASIER WITH CATA

## FREE RIDES TO POLLS

Since 1988, CATA has offered systemwide free rides to the polls. The November 2022 passing of Proposal 2 expanded CATA's free rides to the polls service to include early voting.

Visit [cata.org/Vote](https://cata.org/Vote) for additional information.



It's very important that voters have the opportunity to call CATA for a ride or have a route [nearby] to get on a bus to go vote. We work in partnership with CATA to make sure the community is taken care of. For the bus stop near the township building, I requested a bus shelter so voters had a place to stay out of the elements and CATA said yes.

– **Deborah Guthrie**, Clerk, Meridian Township 



I ride free because I'm a veteran. I have to depend on CATA a lot because I quit driving about five years ago and it's a godsend for me. I go to the VA clinic on Cedar Street with CATA. I can still be independent to a certain extent. Because of CATA, I can do that.

– **Lewis Schnabelrauch**, Resident, Holt / Veteran 



EMPLOYEE  
SPOTLIGHT46 YEARS OF KINDNESS  
BEHIND THE WHEEL

Ned Rudolph has worked as a CATA bus operator for 46 years, serving passengers with a smile since 1978. He is a lot of different things to a lot of different people — dependable, charitable and kind to name a few — but the one thing he is to everyone is a friendly face.

"Ned is a kind soul," said CATA Director of Operations Todd Brooks. "He wants to help you, whether he's known you for one month or for 20 years."

Beyond his penchant for kindness, Rudolph is an extraordinary bus operator with a career-long record of safe driving. His driving is so smooth, the only time he gets complaints from riders is when he's on vacation and someone else is driving his route.

Rudolph grew up in Montgomery, Alabama, and served in the U.S. Army for three years in air defense. Following his time in the service, he found another way to serve his country — driving.

He began his career behind the wheel as a truck driver, becoming

part of the backbone of American industry. But being part of a profession that transports 70% of all goods in the country can take its toll, and long nights away from home began to weigh on Rudolph. When a friend suggested he work locally at CATA, he soon found himself transporting people instead of products and never looked back.

For the past 20 years, Rudolph has driven Route 24, giving him a unique chance to build relationships with his riders. He knows most of them by name, which he believes is a key part of being a true bus driver.

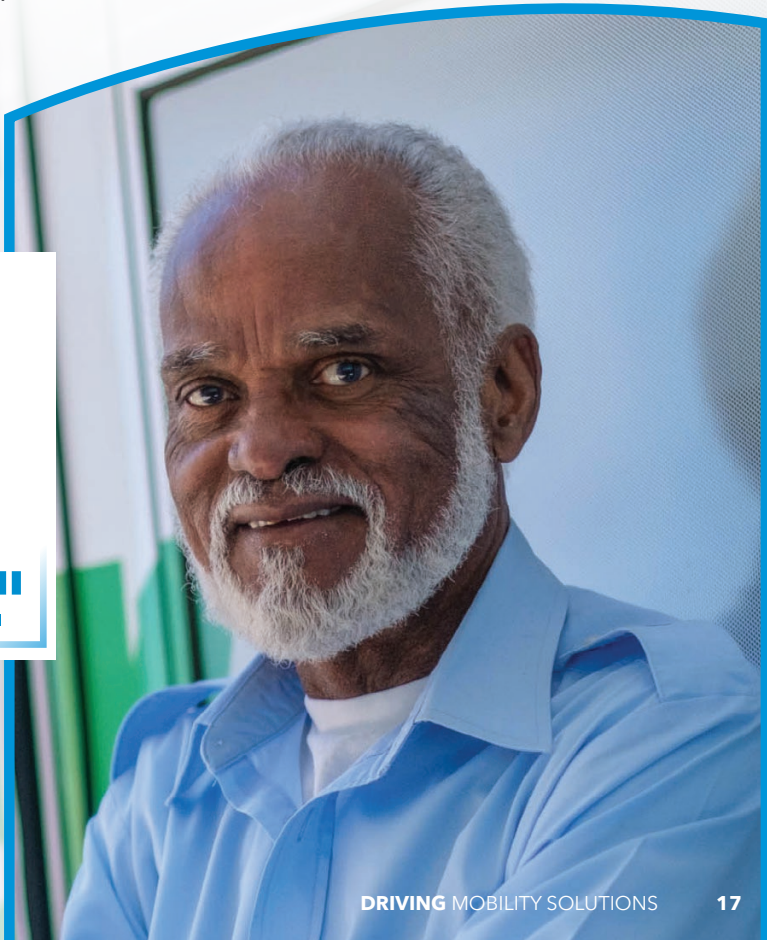
"Anyone can drive a bus, but not everyone can be a bus driver," said Rudolph. "There's more to it than just turning the wheel."

Rudolph's passion for helping people extends beyond his passengers. He supports several charities, including the American Red Cross, Volunteers of America and Disabled American Veterans.

"I like helping," said Rudolph. "I just love giving back to people."

Even at 78, Rudolph sees little reason to retire. Staying busy is important, but more than that, he wants to continue helping people any way he can.

**"ANYONE CAN  
DRIVE A BUS,  
BUT NOT  
EVERYONE  
CAN BE A  
BUS  
DRIVER."**





## WAIT-STOP TRIPS

CATA introduced wait-stop trips for Spec-Tran customers in 2023. The program allows riders to make brief stops during their scheduled trips. Need to drop off or pick up a child from school or day care before heading to work? Want to grab groceries on your way back home? No problem. Wait-stop trips allow riders to seamlessly incorporate stops while staying on the same Spec-Tran vehicle. It's all about providing flexibility and convenience.

I've been riding CATA for 30 years. First, I rode the big bus, then I got in an accident and ended up in a wheelchair, and I graduated to Spec-Tran. I love it, it's really convenient. I'd be lost without CATA.

– Patsy Dillard,  
Resident, Lansing



## BOOKING A WAIT-STOP TRIP:

To schedule a wait-stop trip on Spec-Tran, simply call CATA's Paratransit Department at **517-394-2282** (CATA).

*Please note that same-day service is not available, and next-day ride requests must be received by 5 p.m.*

CATA gives Peckham a voice and the ability to represent all the individuals with disabilities we serve. They rely on CATA transportation daily to succeed in employment and access all the services they need.

– J. Caleb Adams, Chief Human Services Officer, Peckham



## ENHANCING HOLIDAY TRAVEL

CATA is excited to announce the return of limited curb-to-curb service on select holidays in 2024, building on the success of last year's pilot program.

This service allows passengers to reserve rides for **Easter Sunday, Independence Day, Thanksgiving Day** and **Christmas Day**. Advance reservations are required and same-day bookings are not permitted. The service is available to the general public within the Spec-Tran service boundaries.

For additional details, service hours and reservation deadlines, visit [cata.org/Holidays](https://cata.org/Holidays).

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