

Marketing Transit at Cape Girardeau County Transit Authority

Smart, Simple, and Strategic:

CGCTA is both a Small Urban and Rural
Transit provider located in Southeast
Missouri.



Services Provided:
Fixed Route Services-
City of Cape Girardeau
Semo University
Demand Response Services
Van Pool Services





Our Challenges: Doing More with Less



- ✓ Limited marketing budget
- ✓ Limited staff that is already handling multiple jobs
- ✓ Low community awareness of services
- ✓ Misconceptions about who public transit serves
- ✓ Limited resources to measure what actually works





Community Partnerships

What's Worked for Us!

Community Partnerships

Our best marketing tool has been partnerships. We work with medical facilities, senior centers, workforce agencies, and local employers to get information about our services directly to the people who need them.

They distribute our ride guides and brochures, which cost almost nothing but create strong word-of-mouth awareness.



Social Media Storytelling

Facebook has become a powerful, low-cost way to connect with our riders and community. We highlight drivers, rider success stories, and service updates. Posts that feel personal always perform the best.

Presence in the Community

We show up where people and potential riders are — at job fairs, health fairs, and community events. We have brought a vehicle so folks can step inside and experience what it's like to ride. This is a great way to build trust and familiarity, which is powerful marketing. Simply having our vehicles visible in the community is a valuable, free benefit we make the most of.



Community Presence

Rider Spotlight: Shirley Gladstetter
Preserving Independence and Community for Older Adults

At 94 years old, Shirley Gladstetter is a shining example of how accessible public transit helps older adults maintain their independence and stay engaged in their communities. Shirley has been using CGCTA's services for nearly eight years, since she was no longer able to drive.

Originally from St. Louis, Shirley moved to Benton, Missouri in 1952, and later relocated to Cape Girardeau after the passing of her husband. Today, she remains active, independent, and socially connected thanks to the senior program offered by CGCTA.

Through this program, Shirley is able to schedule her rides in advance, giving her peace of mind and ensuring reliability. "I know my bus will be there when I need it," she says. She rides with us at least three times a week—for medical appointments, errands, and social outings. One of her favorite weekly activities? Attending dances at the local VFW, where she continues to enjoy music, friends, and company.

Also as equally important is the elimination of stress. "The senior program has made a big difference in my life," Shirley says. "It allows her to focus on staying healthy and comfortable."

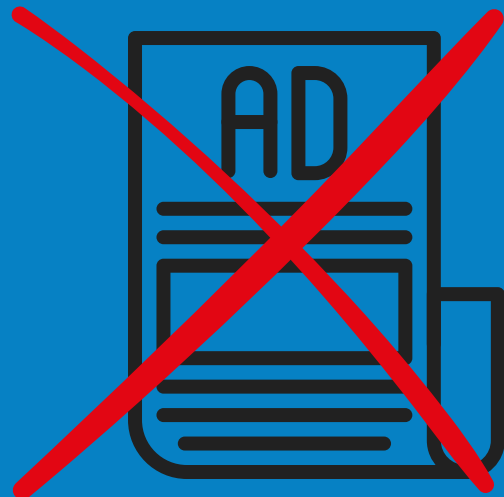
Shirley's story highlights the critical importance of accessible public transit for older adults.

Social Media Storytelling

What Hasn't Worked:

Traditional Advertising

Newspaper and radio ads are expensive and deliver little return — our target audience rarely sees or hears them. Traditional “help wanted” ads just don’t reach the people we need.



Complicated Messaging

We used to pack too much information into our brochures.

People really just want to know:

How do I ride?

How do I pay?

Who do I call?

Simplifying our materials made a big difference.

Inconsistent Social Media Posting

When we didn't post regularly on social media, engagement dropped quickly.

We learned consistency matters more than perfection — even a short, friendly update keeps us visible!



Looking Ahead for Affordable Marketing Opportunities:



Digital Tools:

Asking drivers to help create short recruitment videos for social media

Putting short rider tutorials on our website

Updating our Google business listing



Educating our Drivers:

During the hiring process, we educate our drivers about our services, programs, and what potential riders need to do to use our system. Our drivers are the face of CGCTA and the primary point of contact for most riders—accurate information starts with them.

Asking our riders to be our ambassadors:

Our riders are our best ambassadors. We want to encourage them to share their experiences.

This helps spread positive word-of-mouth faster than any ad campaign.

At CGCTA, we've learned that effective marketing isn't about how much we spend — it's about being visible, consistent, and genuine. We're proud of the relationships we've built and excited to keep finding creative, low-cost ways to share the value of transit in our community.



**Cape Girardeau County Transit Authority -
Connecting our Community**

