

River Valley Mass Transit District began serving the urbanized area of Kankakee County in 1999. This was the result of the work of many passionate, foresighted people who understood how a regional transit system would benefit people and businesses in this community.

Ridership quickly grew to a quarter-million rides per year, then half a million, and by 2014, River Valley Metro was providing nearly one million rides per year for the people of Kankakee County.

All of this was jeopardized last fall when it was discovered that the Local Share money was not being deposited into the Downstate Mass Transit Fund. While these funds are legislatively required to be deposited monthly into the Downstate Fund, it appeared they were being diverted for other purposes.

These actions placed 56 downstate transit agencies, including River Valley Metro, in danger of being forced to reduce services or completely shut down. Some did, in fact, temporarily close their doors. At River Valley Metro, we chose to reduce services, eliminating two routes and ceasing Sunday and holiday service. We knew that this would only buy some time and that without quick resolution; we would also be forced to close our doors.

Reduction or elimination of service creates long term harm to Metro, our Customers and the communities we serve. Our Customers are not just numbers in a report. They are real people who trust we will be there to get them to work, school, doctor appointments, grocery or drug stores, or many other destinations. We needed to fight for these people, and we knew it would require help.

That is when we saw just how much this community supports River Valley Metro. Customers asked who they could contact and wrote letters and made calls. People who have never used Public Transportation understood the need for our services and were doing the same. Local media was extremely supportive, and even some regional media got involved. Local and state politicians voiced their support and went to Springfield on our behalf.

The crisis is now behind us and the rebuilding process has begun. Legislation has been passed that should bar any future unauthorized use of Downstate Transit Funds. We want to thank everyone for their patience and their support over the last year. We would not have made it through this situation without you. We especially want to recognize the following people and organizations for their efforts:

Former Rep. Lisa Dugan

Rep. Jerry Costello

Former Rep. Kate Cloonen

Sen. Toi Hutchinson

Rep. Elgie Sims

Tim Nugent, CEO Economic Alliance

Peoples Bank

Milner Broadcasting

STARadio

Daily Journal

WGN TV

WBEZ

WGFA

Joe Cainkar, Atty.

We thank you for your support and commit to do everything possible to earn your continued business.

The River Valley Metro Board of Trustees and Staff