

*Georgia Transit Association's  
Frank J. Hill Outstanding Service Award – 2009*

*Whitfield County Transit Service – 5311 Program*

1. Whitfield County's commitment to improving rural transportation opportunities:
  - Took over direct operation of transit program to improve services to County
  - Added FT coordinator, PT director, and PT operations/maintenance manager along with adding 3 new drivers
  - Added two rental buses to fleet to improve timeliness of trips
  - Increased hours of operation - from 6:30 - 4:30 to 6:30 - 6:00
  - Installed new transit software to improve routes and better manage operations
2. Innovative ideas and solutions for rural transit
  - #1 issue was lack of awareness of the transit service
    - Increased advertising and public information releases
    - Advertised for 1<sup>st</sup> time in Hispanic Newspaper
    - Revised logo to make bus fleet more visible
    - Updated County website with Transit information
    - Joined Whitfield County Collaborative to meet with other service providers and promote awareness of service
  - Established contacts with neighboring transit services to learn what was working for them
3. Bridging gaps between people, places, and meaningful connections
  - Recession – allows unemployed people to get to job interviews at very low cost
  - Worked with Dalton State College to create a program for single mothers to get their children to daycare and the Moms to class so that they could continue their education
  - Beginning new effort to contact local doctor's offices to offer our transit services to get patients to them and letting them know the best times to schedule trips with the service. This should also build ridership in slack periods.
4. Innovative strategies for gaps/unmet needs
  - Established two new floating routes to allow for more cashbox trips
  - Increased hours of operation
5. Ridership Increase
  - In 10 months of operation, overall ridership has gone up almost 35%
  - Cashbox revenue has risen by 80%
6. Other Comments
  - In the truest sense, Whitfield County STARTED their transit service in 2009:
    - Took over direct operations from MATS
    - Hired all positions
    - Installed and started using new transit software
    - Took over direct maintenance of transit fleet and establish preventative maintenance schedules