

Upcoming Events

NARCOG Board Meeting
DATES: Feb. 23 at 10 a.m.
LOCATION: NARCOG Board Room - Decatur

Agency Contacts

RTA Office
256-580-2088

Falguni Patel
Director
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David Clemons
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Dee Tucker
Administrative Assistant
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Hours of Operation

Open Monday through Friday
from 7 a.m. -5 p.m.

Schedule a Ride

Schedule a ride by calling 256-580-2088. The NARCOG RTA provides transit services in Lawrence and Morgan counties and serves both rural and urban areas. This service is available by scheduling a ride at least 24 hours in advance and by no later than 2 p.m. the day before. Trips outside the Region are limited to a 50-mile radius of the NARCOG office, and cannot cross state lines.

Connect Cards are available for \$20 and can be purchased at the NARCOG Transit Office.

Information ON THE WEB

www.narvog.org
SOCIAL MEDIA
facebook.com/narvogal

Bass continues driving ‘to help others’

A wide smile stretched across his face, David Bass helps a handicapped client exit his bus. Throughout the process, casual conversation takes place. This is not unusual.

For Bass, this is a recurring theme that has been happening daily for 14 years since he joined the local public transportation workforce as a driver. Bass is a veteran driver for

the North Central Alabama Regional Council of Governments (NARCOG) Regional Transit Agency.

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Regional Transit Agency



Roots of local transit

Decatur once utilized robust trolley system to connect commerce

The picture looks like a scene from a West Coast city in the early 20th century.

Making their way through the

downtown streets, consumers take advantage of electric streetcars to reach their next destination.

But the scene is not from San Francisco.

It is from Old Decatur.

Like a few other cities in the Deep South, Decatur utilized a trolley system for its early transit system.

Relics from this robust trolley transit system still can be found today in Decatur’s historic downtown districts. Where streetcars once frequented the area, there now just are abandoned rail systems that are a reminder of days long gone.

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Advertising with RTA moves people

The North Central Alabama Regional Council of Governments (NARCOG) Regional Transit Agency has advertising opportunities available for businesses.

Local businesses can purchase

advertisement panels on NARCOG busses that run both urban and rural routes in Lawrence and Morgan counties, creating opportunities for mobile billboards.

Multiple advertising contracts

are available, ranging from \$184 to \$275 per month.

Funds generated from advertising sales are used by NARCOG to fund RTA services and programs.

Robby Cantrell | Executive Director

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NARCOG seeks volunteers to deliver meals

Senior citizens in Lawrence and Morgan counties need assistance.

The North Central Alabama Regional Council of Governments (NARCOG) is searching for volunteers to assist with the "More than a Meal" program, delivering nutritious meals to homebound seniors in the Region.

Through the NARCOG More than a Meal program, seniors who are 60 and older are provid-

ed a nutritious meal five days a week at their local senior centers. But for those seniors who are homebound, the meals are delivered to their homes.

Delivering these meals, however, requires help.

In Lawrence and Morgan counties, NARCOG is seeking volunteers to deliver meals to homebound seniors.

During the height of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and

2021, the number of volunteers decreased, prompting the NARCOG Regional Transit Agency (RTA) to depend primarily on its drivers to ensure homebound seniors received daily meals.

Now that some of the pandemic restrictions have been loosened, the agency has shifted back to its traditional services of providing transportation to customers. The RTA resumed non-essential trips on Nov. 1, 2021.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Volunteers are needed to help deliver meals to homebound seniors in Lawrence and Morgan counties.

To volunteer for this program, contact NARCOG Outreach Coordinator Justin Graves at 256-355-4515.

FROM PAGE 1: Bass

"I love the interaction with our clients," Bass said. "Being in a position to help others is probably what helps me come to work every day."

Bass retired from General Motors in 2006, where he was an assembly line worker in the local plant for almost three decades.

After retirement, however, Bass once again found the urge to re-join the workforce. That led him to respond to a job advertisement seeking drivers for the Morgan County Area Transportation System (MCATS).

In 2016, MCATS, along with the Lawrence County Area Transportation System, merged with NARCOG to form the Regional Transit Agency.

During his tenure as an RTA driver,



Bass is known locally for his positive, optimistic attitude.

"Mr. Bass is a wonderful person," NARCOG RTA Director Falguni Patel

said. "It's rare to see him without a smile on his face. Our clients really do appreciate him."

Like all of NARCOG's drivers,

during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, Bass continued to work in the public, helping ensure that clients had access to essential services, such as doctor appointments and dialysis treatments.

Bass said he felt a sense of duty to ensure his clients continued to have access to these services.

"The pandemic definitely threw us a curveball," Bass said. "It created some big challenges.

"But at the end of the day, we do this job for the people. Making sure clients can get to their dialysis treatments is extremely important. And when you drive clients every day, they kind of become like family. That's why I continue to work. I do it because of the people."

FROM PAGE 1: Transit

"Decatur had quite an extensive trolley system," said John Allison, who is the director of the Morgan County Archives.

"You could pretty much get anywhere in the commercial district that you wanted to go just by using the streetcars."

The trolley system in downtown Decatur began in the late 1800s with the use of streetcars that were pulled by mules. However, by 1903, the city had made the transition to electric streetcar lines that connected commercial routes on Church, Grant, Bank,

Vine and other streets; and began at an electric car barn at Second Avenue and Gordon Drive.

The irony is the old electric streetcar barn was located at the spot where Decatur and Morgan County's current transit system, the North Central Alabama Regional Council of Governments (NARCOG) Regional Transit Agency, now resides.

When the electric streetcar system was developed in Decatur, there were four lines that connected the city's primary commercial hubs.

Line One covered the shopping areas on Second Avenue, Old Decatur, Northwest Decatur and the Moulton Road areas. Line Two provided transportation four Easttown and the Goodyear Mill. Line Three was known as the Southtown Line, and Line Four gave service for the Second Avenue SE and Bank Street shopping districts, along with Old Decatur.

The trolley transit system in Decatur was phased out later in the century as automobiles became more widely available, but some of the old tracks still are visible.

"Whenever you see those (tracks), it creates a sense of nostalgia," Allison said.

Now, in 2022, Decatur's historic downtown districts once again have become a popular hub for local commerce.

As Decatur's downtown districts are experiencing this resurgence, Allison wonders what kind of impact a streetcar transportation system could make today.

"It's an interesting concept," Allison said. "There is a historical aspect, and things that create a sense of nostalgia are popular."