Southwest Transit
“Fall Back on Us”
2020
Ridership Promotion

Presented By:
Lisa Raduenz
LJR Transportation Consultants
About Southwest Transit

• Began service as an “Opt-Out” system in 1986
• Provides express and demand-responsive services within Carver County, Chaska, Chanhassen and Eden Prairie areas to local/regional destinations
• 7-Member Commission with one elected official, 1 appointed citizen from each community and ridership representative
• Newly-remodeled Administrative/Bus Garage/Maintenance Facility in Eden Prairie and five (5) park-and-ride locations
• 63 Coaches/24 Demand-Response Vehicles
Southwest Transit Services

- Express Buses to Downtown Minneapolis and U of M
- Local routes to Best Buy Headquarters, Normandale Community College and Southdale Mall (MOA, MSP and Shakopee to be added in 2021)
- Demand/Responsive services (SW Prime) throughout the service delivery area
- Contracted services to Carver and Victoria
- Prime MD (new service began in 2019)
Southwest Transit Facilities

- Newly-remodeled Administrative/Bus Garage/Maintenance Facility in Eden Prairie and five (5) park-and-ride locations:
  - Southwest Station (Eden Prairie)
  - Southwest Village (Chanhassen)
  - East Creek Station (Chaska)
  - Chanhassen Transit Station
  - Carver Station
Southwest Ridership

• 2019:
  • Express: 998,654 riders
  • Demand Responsive: 108,801 riders

2020 since COVID restrictions:
• Express passengers down 90-95%
• Prime passengers down 80% early on, as of September 2020 down 50%
Priorities During Pandemic

- Reassure riders that SW is doing all it can to keep vehicles, passengers and drivers safe in a clean environment.
- Continue to provide excellent customer service.
- Keep SW name and reputation out there for our communities and passengers when they are ready to come back onboard.
Fall 2020 Promotion Objectives

- Target customers that would likely return post-pandemic
- Identify rider concerns and provide timely information
- Address riders’ personal safety and cleanliness concerns
- Determine what items might be useful for isolated customers
- Keep to a consistent, upbeat and seasonal message/theme
- Provide an attractive, value-added and cost-effective set of incentives to our riders
What We Did

- Focused on riders who would use local service vs. downtown destinations
- Reviewed ridership pick up and destinations from local route and demand/responsive service to determine best promo areas
- Ensured parity existed by spreading the promotion among riders in each of three main Southwest service areas
- Developed theme, identified potential promotional items and potential partners/sponsors
How We Did It

• Contacted managers of senior active living locations to ask if the promotion would be of benefit and welcome to residents

• Worked with local Senior Community Coordinators to better understand needs and interests at this time

• Obtained estimate of number of promotional items needed

• Identified which items Southwest could provide

• Identified and solicited promotional goods from local businesses as partners

• Developed a reasonable timeline and estimated delivery date to provide sufficient procurement time
Planning

• Set a target of October 1 to stuff and deliver 250 “fall swag bags” to 4 locations with their permission

• Identified numerous promotional items for Southwest to contribute directly which were already available (masks, basting brushes, free ride coupons, etc.)

• Contacted and obtained donations from a variety of local/regional sponsors, especially grocery stores, small businesses and local nurseries/orchards
Fall Gift Bag Contents

- Southwest Transit reusable cloth shopping bag
- Gift tag with “Fall Back on Us” message and sponsor names, logos
- Southwest Transit face mask
- Southwest Transit personal size hand sanitizer
- 2 free transit passes and information on how to ride Southwest system
- Various SW promotional items—chip clips, basting brush, mousepad, etc.
- Caramel apple dip (purchased by Southwest Transit)
- Kowalski’s Markets: large bag gourmet popcorn, liter bottle of flavored sparkling water, large gourmet chocolate bar - various flavors
- Cub Foods: Pringles potato chips, flapjack mix
- Lunds and Byerly’s: Crackerjack,raisins and crackers
- Marshall’s Farm Market, Eden Prairie: 3 bushels of apples
- Minnesota Harvest Apple Orchard, Jordan: 1 bushel of apples
Southwest “Fall Swag Bags”
Gift Tag

**FALL BACK ON SOUTHWEST TRANSIT!!**

We know it has been a tough time for our friends and neighbors these past few months and we want you to know we are here to help. Did you know that Southwest Prison can provide you with a safe, clean ride with one easy call? You can call 952-797-7465 and we can provide easy directions on how simple it is to book your door-to-door ride anywhere in our Eden Prairie, Chaska and Delano service areas. It’s safe, easy and convenient!

**SO PLEASE, FALL BACK ON US!!**

We are sanitizing our buses and facilities each and every day, our friendly bus drivers and staff are wearing masks and socially distancing (that’s in a pleasant way!) from passengers, and we’ve made it simple and convenient to book and pay for your ride without risk. More importantly, we are constantly monitoring our passenger loads to ensure your safety each and every time you ride!

Whether you need to go shopping, visit a friend, see the doctor or dentist, or just stroll about town, we can help. In fact, we have designed the smallest bag of goodies—our way of selling your car and introducing you to Southwest Prisons. Find out more about how to take Southwest Prisons for granted when you visit swtransit.org or by calling us at 952-797-7465.

Please keep us in mind for your next outing, and use the enclosed **FREE TRANSIT PASS - ON US!!**

---

**CONTENTS OF THIS GIFT BAG HAVE BEEN GENEROUSLY DONATED BY THE FOLLOWING SPONSORS:** Please continue to support them.

- **Cub FOODS**
- **KOWALSKI’S MARKETS**
- **LUND’S & BYERLY’S**
- **LCP HARVEST**
- **Marshall’s Farm Market**
- **SouthWest Transit**
Southwest 2020
“Fall Swag Bags”

Total bags delivered = 220

- 65 @ Centennial Hills Senior Apts.- Chanhassen
- 65 @ Chaska Heights Senior Living - Chaska
- 50 @ Edendale Residence – Eden Prairie
- 40 @ Chanhassen Senior Center (two events)
Promotion Cost

- Staff time to identify customer targets, determine locations and develop theme/messaging
- Promotional items from Southwest’s on-hand supplies
- Purchase of hand sanitizer/caramel apple dip
- Printing of gift tags and labels with specific message and sponsor information

Out of Pocket Promo Expense: $900
Lessons Learned

- It is an enjoyable effort to solicit and put together a thoughtful, useful gift for our customers facing difficult times for staff/employee engagement.

- Costs for a shared promotional effort are not expensive.

- Donations from the private sector are generous—if they understand the reason for doing so and the target market, they are quick to donate and happy to do so.

- The key to making the gift interesting and exciting is to have a targeted message and nice gift wrapping, unexpected delivery.

- It’s a wonderful exercise in community-building.
Contact

To learn more about our marketing and promotional efforts, please contact Southwest Transit:

John Haggenmiller, Marketing
jhaggenmiller@swtransit.org

Len Simich, CEO - lsimich@swtransit.org

www.swtransit.org

(952) 949-2287