

Press Release



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OATS, Inc. Celebrates Sullivan County Driver for 15 Years of Service

(St. Joseph, Missouri, November 18, 2009) – It was a chilly day in November of 1994 when Jerry Todd began his career with OATS, Inc. At the time, Jerry was working part-time for the Pony Express courier service in the Kansas City area, where he had been for 22 years. His wife, Marlene, had already been driving for OATS for six years. When her manager called the house one day he mentioned he was short on drivers and asked Jerry if he knew anyone. It was then that Jerry decided to apply, and not long after, quit his job with Pony Express to devote his time fully to OATS. “I used to deliver papers and now I deliver people,” Jerry says.

The routes Jerry drives today are mostly medical, which Jerry finds very rewarding. Having suffered paralysis for about two years in the late 90’s from Guillain-Barré syndrome, a problem with the nervous system that causes muscle weakness and numbness in the body, Jerry is passionate about helping others. “I was driving for Pony Express as well as OATS and had put in a long day. The next day I was off and went to mow the yard. I got so weak my legs wouldn’t hold me up. By the next day I couldn’t walk, and within 2 days I couldn’t even feed myself.” Jerry spent a little over 11 weeks in the hospital, taking therapy. He started to regain his muscle strength, but it was two years before he had enough strength to return to work. “I was so bored not being able to do anything – I never wanted to be off work again,” Jerry says. “If I can work and die before I get a chance to spend the last pay check I’ll be happy.” Jerry, who just celebrated his 76th birthday, says he tries to walk at least 3 miles a day to keep his legs strong.



When asked about his time with OATS, Jerry says “I feel like OATS is a good organization. They are good people to work for - they’ve all been so great. I’ve really enjoyed it. I feel needed and am happy to help. It works out great as a retirement job for me.”

Jerry and his wife, Marlene, have lived the majority of their 55-year marriage on the farm where they raised two children. They now get to enjoy their six grandchildren. In his spare time, Jerry enjoys being outside in the yard and in the pasture cutting brush. He also takes great pleasure in aggravating Marlene.

Gwen Jackson, fellow driver, says that Jerry “is one of the nicest and most dependable drivers I know. He is always concerned with the well being and safety of his passengers.”

For more information about OATS, Inc., please visit their website www.oatstransit.org or contact Beth Langley, Area Manager, 2921 N. Belt Highway, St. Joseph, MO 64506, 816-279-3131.

NOTICE TO ALL PRESS AGENCIES: Please do not refer to OATS as “Older Adults Transportation Service” as this is no longer part of the official name. OATS is a public transportation system that is available to everyone, regardless of age, race, gender, color, religion, or national origin, and in fact serves a wide diversity of clientele.

OATS is a private, not-for-profit corporation providing specialized transportation for senior citizens, people with disabilities and the rural general public in 87 Missouri counties. OATS is funded, in part, by an allotment of federal funds from the Missouri Department of Transportation and through contracts with various agencies. OATS also receives rider donations and private contributions, which are tax deductible. OATS is an equal opportunity employer M/F/H/V.

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