

Marketing transit service *Continued from page 9*

portation Center team—Pat Weaver, Tom Worker-Braddock and Dan Nelson—to provide information on history, background, projected ridership and preliminary route recommendations.

Bob Bourne of Bourne Transit Consulting then was brought in to create the implementation plan and, with input received from the community, finalized route locations, route timing and other details of the start-up service.

The initial campaign

Once the service was developed, CityGo's initial marketing campaign kicked into gear, lasting about three months. During this time, the agency used several tactics to inform the public: brochures, press releases, maps, a Web site, a logo, and specially-painted buses with the logo and "Go Green" theme.

To launch the start of the service, OCCK held a celebration with food, drinks, bus tours, and a ribbon-cutting ceremony. The ceremony was held on a cold Thursday in November, but still approximately 50 people attended.

Professional approach

OCCK hired Marketaide Services Inc., a marketing and research firm, to help

develop the marketing approach. Wallerius, along with Sarah Meitner, copywriter and PR coordinator for Marketaide, put together a solid marketing plan.

When asked why they hired Marketaide, Wallerius said, "I really wanted that professional touch on it. They put out a professional-quality product for everything they did for us."

Cost for the marketing effort

The marketing effort cost \$46,000 overall, with 15 percent of that spent on advertising. The majority was paid advertising, but the local radio station and newspaper ran free public notices about the service, and cut some other deals as well, such as two-for-one ads.

Future plans

To continue promoting the service, OCCK will develop other ideas for marketing, such as offering anyone wearing green a free ride on St. Patrick's Day.

OCCK also plans to formally evaluate the service after 6-9 months of operation. OCCK is determined to please the public and meet their needs. "We've actually changed stops because of public input," Wallerius said.

Citygo has three routes so far, and

is looking into adding another route eventually. The extra route would cover part of the city OCCK originally wanted to cover, but could not because of funding constraints. The fourth route was eliminated to accommodate 60 minute intervals during off-peak times.

During peak times (6am – 9am and 3pm – 6pm) the system runs in 30 minute intervals, and so far, it has been a success. "I would like to see every stop served at 30 minute intervals, but right now 60 minutes is working well for us outside of our peak times," said Wallerius.

Working with the public paid off

When asked if the community has been receptive to the new service, Wallerius said, "Yes, yes. I think all of the fears the general public had—about the bus stops and the stereotypical association with them—are gone."

But Wallerius is realistic. "Things will change, though," he said. "It's an ongoing operation." Frequent thought and reflection lead to better service and a better-run agency. ●

SAFETY

Assisting Your Passengers Onto the Bus

By Anne Lowder

Lift manufacturers share information you should know about your wheelchair lift.

Transit drivers face challenges in assisting passengers every day. One of those challenges is balancing passenger safety with passenger comfort and preferences, all while complying with federal and state laws and regulations. One of the most intense discussions that comes up at driver training sessions is about assisting passengers using wheelchairs onto the vehicle

with the lift: should they be inboard-facing or should they be outboard-facing? What does the law say? What do passengers say? And what do the lift manufacturers say?

The purpose of this article is to provide the facts—both what the ADA requires, and how best to serve your passengers safely. We reviewed the Americans' with Disabilities

Act which determines many of the requirements associated with passenger assistance. We also reviewed lift manuals of the two most common manufacturers for vehicles used by Kansas transit agencies. And, finally, we interviewed Rick Jacobs of the Braun Corporation for some more explanation on recommendations they make. Here are some questions and

Inboard facing of wheelchair passengers is not prohibited, but outboard facing of passengers is recommended by both Braun and Ricon.