



**Staff Report**

For City Council Meeting - 2/7/2024

***Subject - Visitors - Sunset Empire Transportation District***

**Synopsis:** We were contacted by the SETD with a request to attend a Council meeting and provide the public with an update on what's been happening since the 2023 organizational changes. Executive Director Craig Johnston and Board Chair Debbie Boothe-Schmidt will be in attendance with a presentation.

**Recommendation:** N/A

**Legal Analysis:** N/A

**Financial Analysis:** N/A

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be the name "Chad", is written above the printed name.

Chad



# SUNSET EMPIRE TRANSPORTATION DISTRICT



**RELIABILITY**

**ACCESIBILITY**

**EFFICIENCY**

**SAFETY**

**COMMUNITY NETWORKING**



# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR INTRODUCTION

- Craig Johnston, Sunset Empire Transportation District Executive Director
- Over 25 years of transit experience in Oregon and Washington State. Oregon Transit Association Board Member.
- Started my career as a part-time relief operator and was most recently the Operations Manager at Basin Transit Service in Klamath Falls, Oregon.
- Began at Sunset Empire October 29, 2023.



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## BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

SETD is guided by a 7 Member elected Board of Commissioners:

- Debbie Boothe-Schmidt – Chair
- Tracy MacDonald – Vice Chair
- Pamela Alegria – Secretary/Treasurer
- Rebecca Read
- Charles Withers
- Guillermo Romero
- Paul Lewicki



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# SUNSET EMPIRE FACTS

- On March 24, 1993, the Clatsop County Board of Commissioners voted to create the district with the help of a state transit grant.
- Sunset Empire Transit is a Special District similar to Fire and Irrigation Districts within the state of Oregon.
- The District relies on Property taxes, Timber taxes, State taxes, Federal Funding, and bus fares to provide services to the citizens of Clatsop County.



RELIABILITY

ACCESSIBILITY

EFFICIENCY

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# WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO



Sunset Empire Transportation District operates all facets of public transportation with our own employees in Clatsop County. The leadership team of the District consists of an Executive Director, a Chief Operating Officer, a Finance Manager, a Mobility Manager, an Executive Assistant, and a Human Resources Manager.



Today: The District operates 4 Fixed route buses and 3 to 5 Para-transit buses for door-to-door service for seniors and persons with disabilities. The District serves a population of over 41,000. We averaged 500 daily riders before our services ceased. Since restarting services, we average about 250 daily riders.

RELIABILITY

ACCESIBILITY

EFFICIENCY

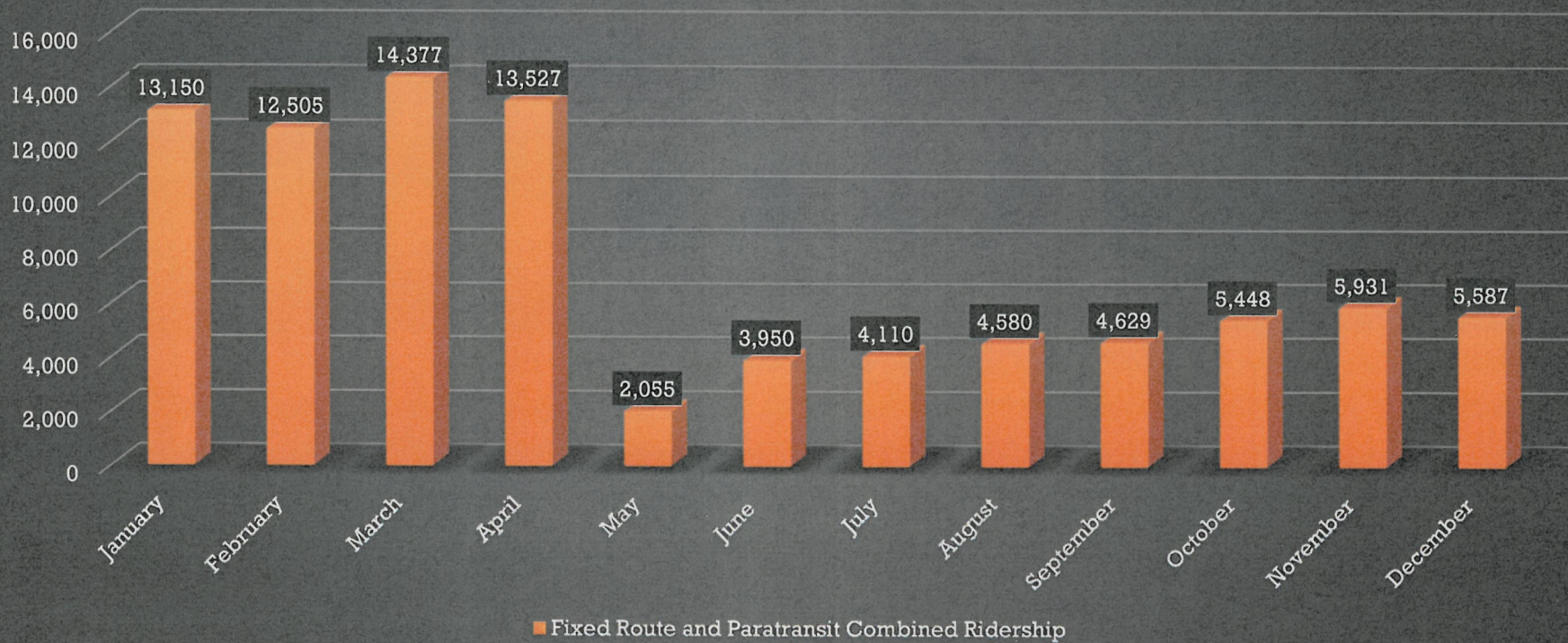
SAFETY

COMMUNITY NETWORKING



# SUNSET EMPIRE RIDERSHIP

## TOTAL RIDERSHIP BY MONTH 2023



RELIABILITY

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# THE FINANCIAL CRISIS-WHAT HAPPENED?

- In April of 2023 Sunset Empire ran out of money and shut down all services, but WHY did that happen?
- SETD was delayed in receiving Federal funding. During the delayed disbursement of Federal funds, SETD utilized state and local funds to meet payroll and continue serving the citizens of Clatsop County.
- The Board of Directors and ODOT were presented financial information that reported the district still had over 800K in funds available. The Board of Directors was not made aware of SETD's precarious financial position until mid-April 2023.



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# THE FINANCIAL CRISIS-WHAT HAPPENED?

- Eventually the state and local funds that SETD was using to provide services to the citizens of Clatsop county ran out, and SETD ceased operations on 4/29/2023.
- With the help of Governor Tina Kotek, State Senator Suzanne Weber and State Representative Cyrus Javadi, SETD was given a \$1,000,000 loan from the Oregon Transportation Infrastructure Bank to restart services the following week. This loan will be paid back on a quarterly basis through the year 2027.



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# THE WAY FORWARD

- Better Community networking with other community service providers and leaders! Cooperative and constructive expansion in the future to meet the needs and interests of OUR community.
- Transparency of SETD's finances through improved reporting and fiscal oversight. Accurate, current, and complete disclosure of the district's financial standing.
- Board approved policies that diversify the roles in our small organization. Budget oversight, travel restrictions, and whistleblower protections are now in place.



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# THE WAY FORWARD

- Divest of the Executive Director being the sole authority in all financial reporting and budget preparation.
- Required staff and Board of Commissioners training on District Financial Management. The Executive Director, Finance Director, and 6 board members have attended ODOT's Transit District Financial Management training.
- Having a reserve fund set aside to prevent any future disruptions of service.
- And Finally, a fiscally responsible restoration of services.



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# THANK YOU

## Contacts:

Craig Johnston  
Executive Director  
[cjohnston@ridethebus.org](mailto:cjohnston@ridethebus.org)  
(503)861-5399

Debbie Boothe-Schmidt  
Chair, Board of Commissioners  
[debbie@ridethebus.org](mailto:debbie@ridethebus.org)  
(503)338-3645

Jennifer Geisler  
Chief Operations Officer  
[jennifer@ridethebus.org](mailto:jennifer@ridethebus.org)  
(503)861-5364



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