Jerry J. Kane Bio
Agency for Community Transit

Jerry Kane has served as Executive Director of Agency for Community Transit (ACT), since 1985. In 1986, Jerry was asked to accept the position of Managing Director of MCT, which he holds to this day. In that time, he has overseen the development of a multi-modal public transportation agency which supports thousands of Madison County residents each day. This system includes the 24 public bus routes in its fixed-route system; the Runabout Paratransit service, providing life-sustaining mobility for registered elderly and disabled residents; the carpool/vanpool program for the St. Louis region known as RideFinders; and the development and maintenance of more than 137 miles of scenic bikeways in the MCT Trails system. Combined, these inter-connected transportation services provide critical access to employment, medical centers, job training, classes, recreation, shopping, and other vital programs in Madison County. Jerry is also a board member of the Metro East Park & Recreation District and has served on its board since it was formed in 2000.

Prior to arriving at ACT, Jerry worked for Specialized Services, where he supervised rehabilitation and job training programs for individuals with disabilities. His experience with Specialized strengthened his dedication to serving the disabled population – a commitment which has only grown stronger. It was also at Specialized that he observed firsthand how inadequate transportation for those individuals was preventing them from accepting and keeping jobs and gaining their independence. Ever the problem-solver, in 1985, Jerry, with the assistance of community leaders, created Agency for Community Transit, a not-for-profit entity, to operate a coordinated county-wide elderly and disabled door-to-door transportation service.

Under Jerry’s guidance, starting in the late 1980s and consummating in 1997, MCT assumed operation of all public fixed-routes, which had previously been operated by the Bi-State Development Agency. Doing so, gave MCT and Madison County residents local control over the planning and operation of the bus service. The system was quickly transformed to an intensely local operation, responding quickly to the demands of a growing and evolving Madison County. In so doing, Jerry oversaw the development of a hub-and-spoke transit system, whereby local bus routes “pulse” at five transit centers, (Alton, Edwardsville, Collinsville, Granite City and Wood River), allowing for transfers, and then depart from each center to serve various neighborhoods, like spokes of a wheel. Express bus service which operates direct, limited stop service in the drive times to and from Downtown St. Louis was also introduced and expanded at Jerry’s direction.

In 1993, thanks to Jerry’s leadership, and with the guidance of the Transit District Board, MCT began acquiring former railroad corridors for potential future light rail possibilities and interim trail use. One by one, Jerry and his staff pursued federal, state and local grants for trail acquisition and construction. Today, the 137 miles of scenic bikeways in the MCT Trails system consist of 9 unique, inter-connected trails all of which are separated from the roadways. With 49 bridges, 25 tunnels and 7 trail loops, the MCT Trails system is one of the most extensive, user-friendly Class I bikeway systems in the country. Thanks to Jerry’s bold vision, these bikeways which have preserved 1,500 acres of greenspace, not only serve as a sustainable recreation option for families, they have become a magnet for tourists and for new home buyers. An avid cyclist himself, Jerry has been instrumental in securing more than $40 million in grant funds over the last two decades for MCT’s world-class trails system. The MCT Trails were recognized by Focus St. Louis in 2007 with a “What’s Right with the Region Award” and in 2014, with the League of Illinois Bicyclists Innovation Award.

In 2007, the Leadership Council of Southwestern Illinois honored Jerry for his numerous achievements at its Salute to Southwestern Illinois annual dinner. In 2017, he was presented with a Sustainability Leadership Award from the Center for Sustainability at SIUE.