FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MCT BOARD HOLDS EMERGENCY MEETING TO APPROVE CHANGES PROMPTED BY COVID-19 PANDEMIC
Board Approves Suspension of MCT Fixed-Route and Paratransit Fares Until Further Notice

PONTOON BEACH, ILL., MARCH 17, 2020… In response to the Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19), the Madison County Transit (MCT) Board of Trustees held an emergency meeting this afternoon, via Remote Link Conference Call, and approved a series of changes, including the temporary suspension of all fares on its MCT Fixed-Route and Runabout paratransit services. The temporary fare suspension will take effect at the start of business tomorrow morning, Wednesday, March 18, and will remain in place until further notice.

Suspending fares during the COVID-19 pandemic eliminates the passing of cash, tokens, and bus passes to and from passengers and drivers and significantly reduces driver-passenger contact.

The MCT Board of Trustees also granted Interim Managing Director SJ Morrison the authority to make future fixed-route service reductions which may needed on a temporary emergency basis. At this time, MCT is not proposing any service reductions but will be prepared to do so if needed. Effective immediately, the Board also approved the closure of the MCT Base of Operations to the public. All meetings, all individuals coming to complete applications, all interviews, all vendors, all pass sales, all Free Ride ID Sessions, and all lost and found visits at the MCT Base of Operations in Pontoon Beach will be stopped until further notice. In addition, the Board also approved the closure of all MCT Transfer Stations (Alton, Collinsville, Edwardsville, Granite City, and Wood River). The stations will continue to serve as transfer points, but the buildings will be closed to the public.

MCT Interim Managing Director SJ Morrison released the following statement:

“We are closely monitoring the situation regarding COVID-19, which is changing rapidly, and we are staying in close contact with the Madison County Health Department, sharing information as needed. The health and safety of our passengers, patrons and the communities we serve is our top priority. We know that MCT provides critical transportation to the community and that thousands of individuals depend on our services each day. Although we urge you to follow the CDC’s protocols and exercise social distancing, hand washing, to limit your time away from home and to avoid all contact with regularly used public surfaces, we understand that residents still need to reach grocery stores, social services, and loved ones by riding MCT. We take this responsibility very seriously and are making every effort to protect both our employees and the people we serve.”

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What MCT is Doing to Keep Employees and Passengers Safe:
In the last few weeks, as COVID-19 has spread quickly from city to city across the U.S., MCT has taken several steps to keep employees and passengers safe and healthy. In addition to the actions taken by the MCT Board today, they include:

- Continuing to clean and disinfect buses each night, especially commonly used surfaces such as handrails, seat backs, grab bars, and stanchions. (Keep in mind that once a surface is touched it is no longer sanitized.)
- Adding staff to disinfect surfaces at the MCT Base of Operations including doorknobs, tables, railings, vending machines, etc.
- Distributing disinfectant wipes, hand sanitizer, and gloves to employees, especially drivers.
- Increasing efforts to disinfect the inside of driver relief vehicles.
- Removing all timetables and other paper materials from the buses, as they are often used and then placed back on the rack. (All schedules can be found online at www.mct.org)
- Distributing information at the Base and on the buses from the CDC and the Illinois Dept. of Health about ways that individuals can stay healthy.

What You Can do to Stay Safe:
Everyone has a role to play in preventing the spread of COVID-19 and can keep themselves, their loved ones, and others safe by following recommendations from the CDC and other health experts.

- Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
- Disinfect shared surfaces and frequently touched objects
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth
- Cover your cough or sneeze, be sure to do so in your arm or a tissue
- Stay home if you feel COVID-19 symptoms
- Practice social distancing by staying at least six feet away from other people

The COVID-19 situation is changing rapidly, so please check www.mct.org for updates, to sign-up for MCT Text Alerts and/or MCT E-News. For questions call (618) 797-INFO (4636), or e-mail info@mct.org.

Madison County Transit (MCT) provides multi-modal transportation services for Madison County, Illinois. MCT operates a fixed-route bus service, connecting to MetroLink; express weekday commuter service directly to and from downtown St. Louis; and seasonal express service the Muny. For elderly and disabled residents who are unable to use the fixed-route buses, MCT provides complementary door to door service. MCT is also responsible for the construction and maintenance of more than 130 miles of bikeways that comprise the MCT Trails system, as well as overseeing RideFinders, the St. Louis region’s FREE carpooling and vanpooling program.

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