



DRIVER *of the* MONTH



Gaylen Yates

At Arrowhead Transit we feel it's important to honor our drivers who provide good service to our riders. It's the norm among our drivers to go above and beyond. Each are given clear instructions as to what is expected of them as a bus driver, but nearly all of our drivers do more.

Gaylen Yates of Rush City was chosen as our Driver of the Month for November by Transit Manager Julia Dupla. "I didn't choose Gaylen because he outshines all the other drivers in Pine County," said Julia. "I chose him because he has such a good time with each of his riders. He loves to joke; and he knows just where the line is between making someone laugh and feel good about themselves; and hurting their feelings." "I have a good time with them," said Gaylen. "So I don't just like this job, I love it. I love the people. I treat everybody like I'd like to be treated myself."

Gaylen has a grandson with autism. Gaylen bought his first new motorcycle in 1995 and has ridden his motorcycles over three quarters of a million miles. Since his grandson turned 6 years

old, Gaylen takes him everywhere with him. (His grandson is now 19.) "He tells me I'm not funny. 'I'm not trying to be funny,' I tell him. 'I'm just telling it like it is.'"

Gaylen drives all the bus routes, including the contract routes where he takes people to a work/learning facility. It's on the contract routes where the riders say to him when he brings them back to their homes, "Gaylen, when are you going to be our bus driver again?"

When asked why he thought he was chosen as Driver of the Month, Gaylen said, "It's probably because of the contract routes. Julia gets notes from the staff telling her how much their clients like having me as a bus driver. --I treat them like my grandson."

It's not like he needs the work. Gaylen turned 70 in January. Before he started working for Transit he had both his knees replaced. He was retired from working for the City of Minneapolis where he repaired water mains. "But I was going crazy at the house.

"I've been working here for four years and nine months. When I think it's time to quit, I can't do it. Because it's not just the riders. We have a good crew working here. We're like family. We give each other a lot of guff, but we look out for each other. We talk a lot-- about everything."

"I have three gals in their 90's who ride the Dial-A-Ride. When I open the bus door and they see me, one of them calls out, 'There's the troublemaker.' 'Shh,' I say, 'You're going to give me a bad name.' They laugh, 'You already have a bad name.'"

If you see Gaylen, please don't give him a hard time about being named Driver of the Month. As you can guess, he's pretty sensitive to teasing. But do let him know, you appreciate him. It's drivers like Gaylen that make Arrowhead Transit such a good transportation system.

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