

**NEWS RELEASE  
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## **Transportation Coalition to hold Community Picnic**

*Cape Girardeau* – The Transportation Coalition, led by United Way of Southeast Missouri (UWSEMO), invites the public to attend a Community Transportation Picnic on May 23, 2023, at Capaha Park Shelter # 1 beginning at 5:30 P.M. Attendees can enjoy free hotdogs compliments of the Cape Girardeau Transit Authority and learn about the exciting transportation updates in store for the community.

In late 2021, UWSEMO conducted research to help guide volunteers on a Community Investment Committee as they identified funding needs for UWSEMO’s 2022-2025 funding cycle. United Way Executive Director Elizabeth Shelton explains “Among employers, employees, and the many people served by the United Way network, transportation was identified as a barrier to all three of United Way’s focus areas – education, health, and income stability. Seeing an opportunity to address a major need in Southeast Missouri, we sought out transportation partners, community leaders, and social service organizations to form this Transportation Coalition.”

The Transportation Coalition is focusing first on needs in Cape Girardeau County where the Cape Girardeau Transit Authority (CTA) currently provides public transportation. Later, successful solutions will be explored for viability with leaders in other counties in the United Way service area. Since its formation, the Coalition has held a community meeting, conducted online, in-person, and print surveys, and provided a report of its findings. The group is now working to address transportation barriers in the community.

“When we held the community meeting in October at the Shawnee Park Center, we told the public we would update them as transportation improvements progressed,” CTA Accounting Manager Kelley Watson shares. “Thanks to local funding through the United Way and participation from the City of Cape Girardeau we have some exciting news we can’t wait to share at our Community Transportation Picnic!”

In addition to providing updates, the group will be asking for the public to provide input as to where they would like to see different bus stops within the City of Cape Girardeau as well as other suggestions to improve the public experience with CTA’s fixed bus route. Everyone who RSVPs and attends will be entered to win a \$25 CTA gift certificate. Community members can RSVP at <https://unitedwayofsemo.org/events/> or by calling 573-334-9634. Drawing will be held during the picnic; winner must be present. One entry per RSVP.

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