

Kitsap Transit

Connecting Communities

PRESS RELEASE

Kitsap Transit wins two First Places in national AdWheel Awards

American Public Transportation Association recognizes top COVID-19 campaigns

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BREMERTON, Wash. – Kitsap Transit was recognized with two First Place wins for its COVID-19 marketing and communications in the 2022 AdWheel Awards, a contest sponsored by the American Public Transportation Association (APTA).

Kitsap Transit’s campaigns focused on supporting the local response to the COVID-19 pandemic: The first campaign launched in February 2021 and highlighted the roles we all play in riding transit safely to slow the spread of COVID-19. The second campaign launched in June 2021 and offered a free bus/ferry pass to those who got vaccinated by a Kitsap partner clinic against COVID-19.



"A Viking Boards a Bus" launched the "We Are Kitsap. We Can Do This" campaign in 2021. Photo by Denise Knudson.

"It is wonderful to see national recognition of this great work," said John Clauson, Executive Director of Kitsap Transit. "We could not have pulled off these campaigns without the fantastic cooperation and talents of our partners."

As a federal mask mandate took effect in February 2021, Kitsap Transit launched "We Are Kitsap. We Can Do This," a campaign to remind the public about the role we all play in riding safely on transit. The campaign included messages on how we provide face masks and hand sanitizer aboard our fleet and use ultraviolet (UV) light to purify cabin air.

Anchored by six video spots, the campaign used humor and featured local community theatre actors and actresses and a violinist. The videos were delivered with closed captioning in English, Spanish and Tagalog and aired on YouTube, Facebook and cable television (live and streaming) from February

through August 2021. Kitsap Transit also placed 42 exterior transit ads featuring characters from the videos on its buses and created a campaign page on its website.

To pull off its vision, Kitsap Transit brought together DH, a Spokane-based marketing agency (Andrei Mylroie, Nico Archer, Shireen Khinda, Sean Finley and Adrian Rogers); North Woods Productions, a video producer in Kitsap County (crew: Ron Finney, Renee Smith, Denise Knudson, Richard Gillette); and Rana Tan from Bremerton Community Theatre.

About two dozen community performers also volunteered their time for the shoots (in alphabetical order): Gwen Adams, Paul Adkins, Chris Angkico, Christie Becker, Ali Budge, Aimee Budge, Jorge de la Cruz, Jim Goettler, Karen Hauser, Mark Jackson, Kirk Misich, Hadassah Nelson, Michelle Peterson, Danielle Priest, Deborah Rice, Katie Richardson, Eric Richardson, Nicholas Sparkman, Courtney Turnley, Troy Turnley, Giselle Vincent, Bruce Waterbury, and Nhi'Yeemah Young.

Kitsap Transit employees in Operations, Marine Services and Vehicle & Facilities Maintenance helped support the filming of the videos during regular service hours on Kitsap Transit property. Staff also assisted with the storage and transportation of costumes. To watch the videos, [click here](#).

“The campaign was about community and empowerment,” said Nico Archer, partner at DH. “I’m so glad APTA judges recognized Kitsap Transit’s unique strategy to use humor and levity to celebrate the Kitsap community’s identity while uniting passengers, operators and more in taking on safety measures to protect each other’s health.”

Starting in June 2021, Kitsap Transit launched a second campaign – “Get Vaccinated: Ride our Buses & Ferries Free for a Month” – to incentivize more residents to get vaccinated against COVID-19 after initial momentum had stalled.



Kitsap Transit partnered with Kitsap Public Health District, Peninsula Community Health Services and Kaiser Permanente Washington to provide signage, vaccination vouchers and branded giveaway items. Kitsap Transit set up an online process using Smartsheet to validate vouchers redeemed by customers before issuing them a monthly bus/ferry pass on an ORCA card. The promotion ran from June 2021 through April 2022, with clinics issuing more than 3,470 vaccination vouchers.

“Kitsap Public Health District congratulates Kitsap Transit on this well-deserved recognition for their ‘Get Vaccinated’ campaign,” said Keith Grellner, Administrator of the District. “Kitsap Transit has been a phenomenal partner and leader throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. From retrofitting their ferries and buses with air scrubbers, to outfitting their employees and the public with masks, and offering free

monthly passes to help encourage COVID-19 vaccinations, Kitsap Transit went above and beyond the call of duty. We are grateful to have Kitsap Transit in our community.”

The AdWheel awards go to APTA member systems for outstanding marketing and communications efforts that contributed to strategic organizational goals. Around 300 entries were evaluated by dozens of industry experts and first-place awards were presented in four categories, including Best Marketing and Communications on the COVID-19 Pandemic.

The first-place winners will face a final round of judging to determine the Grand Awards, which will be presented at APTA’s TRANSform Conference in Seattle in October.

“I am excited to congratulate the latest AdWheel First Place winners,” said APTA President and CEO Paul Skoutelas in a statement. “This year, public transportation has balanced COVID-19, fluctuating ridership and many other challenges. Under these trying circumstances, the first place AdWheel winners have used exemplary communications and marketing efforts to reach out to their communities, educate their riders and accomplish their organization’s goals, all while providing the best possible mobility services to communities across North America.”

About Kitsap Transit

Kitsap Transit has been operating friendly, convenient public transit since 1983. The transit agency for Kitsap County carried more than 3.84 million riders in 2019 across a multi-modal system of routed buses, passenger ferries, paratransit shuttles, vanpools, and worker/driver buses for the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard.

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