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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged inspects Flagler County buses, presents 2023 Driver of the Year award

April 10, 2024 – Flagler County on Wednesday welcomed the Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged for its annual bus inspection and to present driver Richard Briggs with the 2023 Driver of the Year Award for which he was named winner last Fall.

“It’s a great honor to present this to you,” said Flagler County Board of County Commissioners Chair Andy Dance, as he handed Briggs the engraved glass award. Briggs, who has worked for Flagler County going on seven years, had transported more than 31,300 passengers more than 281,000 miles without a complaint or accident at the time of his nomination.

Afterwards, Dance and Commissioner Dave Sullivan – who serves as Chair on the Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board – went on a ride along with Briggs and Transportation Disadvantaged Coordinator Summer Jones, as well as Palm Coast resident Jill Dempsey who is the official disadvantaged rider for the board and happened to turn 58 on April 10.

“I am legally blind, and this is my service dog, Sir Enoch, who is both a guide dog and a medical alert dog,” Dempsey said during the trip to pick up passengers who had scheduled rides through Flagler County Public Transportation. “I check for things that could be a hazard – something that could catch somebody’s cane, for example. I also use the service myself a minimum of two times a week.”

The bus stopped at the home of Yolanda Perez to bring her to her doctor’s appointment.

“Well, isn’t this a surprise,” said Perez, as she entered the nearly full bus. “I have lived here (Palm Coast) for 27 years. I’ve been a passenger for 15 years. He (Briggs) is always a perfect gentleman.”

Perez and Sullivan struck up a conversation about the county’s paratransit bus system – a demand response, shared ride, door-to-door service (there is no fixed route). It focuses on the elderly as well as people with disabilities, and transportation disadvantaged.

Andy Dance
District 1

Greg Hansen
District 2

David Sullivan
District 3

Leann Pennington
District 4

Donald O’Brien, Jr.
District 5

“You hear people talk about a regular (fixed route) bus service, but I wouldn’t be able to walk all that distance to Belle Terre (a likely route should it happen one day) to get to a bus stop,” Perez said. “It’s just too far.”

Sullivan was empathetic.

“What we have may not be perfect,” he said. “It does help a lot of people who might not have another option.”

Flagler County Public Transportation provides quality-of-life transportation for:

- Doctors' Offices
- Banks
- Stores
- Gyms
- Nail Appointments

Costs within Flagler County are \$2 per ride. Medical trips to Volusia, St. Johns, Jacksonville, and Gainesville available on select days at set roundtrip rates.

For more information, go to www.flaglercounty.gov/departments/transportation, or call 386-313-4100 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. weekdays.

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