

Spotlight on Twin Falls Transit

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Twin Falls Transit (TFT) came into being July 1, 2023. In just six months, they have made a huge difference in the lives of the Twin Falls community. Focusing on micro transit, a driver picks you up in a beautiful hybrid van that holds a total of six passengers. Passengers can utilize either on- demand or pre-scheduled service through their app (RideTFT), or by calling 208-974-7433. They offer services from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday through Friday and 7am to 9pm on Saturdays. A ride is only \$3, which is reduced to \$1 if you are 60 years or older or have a disability. Individuals as young as 12 can ride alone, and children of any age can ride with an adult. To further support their community, they offer an after-hours service on Friday and Saturday nights from 9 p.m. to midnight for \$10, which is considerably less than ride-share apps. Additionally, passengers can schedule a ride to the airport for \$10.

Twin Falls Transit had a goal of 2,000 riders for the first month. They had 3,200 riders, exceeding that goal, and have steadily grown each month since. October saw over 5,000 riders.

I had the opportunity to ride along with TFT and saw first-hand how this program is changing lives within their community. I met a Walmart worker getting a ride to work. He told me many of his coworkers think about quitting because they can't afford cars or have inconsistent transportation. He says now that he has found TFT he gets to work on time and has less stress because he doesn't have to worry about finding a ride. He has told many of his coworkers and friends about TFT; many of the riders I spoke with had this in common.

Many of the riders I met found running their daily errands much simpler with TFT. We went to the grocery store, took a rider to pay a bill, and gave a passenger a ride home after having lunch with a friend. All these riders said their day would have been so much harder, or impossible, without Twin Falls Transit. Inflation has made everything more expensive, including transportation. How would you choose if you could only afford a ride or the groceries you need?

Maxine Durand is the Transit Coordinator for Twin Falls. She started her job a few days before TFT launched. She wears many hats, having been on local TV and attended city council meetings, and every local fair and community gathering available to promote Twin Falls Transit. Her staff consists of interns from the College of Southern Idaho. Two of these interns were exchange students and they plan to take back what they've learned here to their rural communities, as they see the value and how it affects the lives of the community.

Let's not forget the drivers, who are the backbone of Twin Falls Transit. TFT gets applicants every day. After screening, they keep a short list of 80 in case they need to hire new drivers. They choose professional drivers who are kind and understand the service. Each ride and rider is a new experience, but their approval rating is high, and they are appreciated.

What can we do to help TFT? If you are in Twin Falls, please try riding. You will be hooked! If you have friends or family in the area, spread the word about this new service. If you know or represent an organization or group that would benefit, please contact Maxine (208-735-7347 or mdurand@tfid.org) if you'd like to give and support either through direct donations, time, or fundraising.



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