



A moment to focus on the good our team is doing every day



HARRIS HONORED DURING ANNUAL TRAINING, AWARD PRESENTATION

Rebecca Harris, outgoing UCHRA Director of Transportation Services, was recognized for her contributions to the agency during the course of her 35 years of service. A new customer service award, the Rebecca Harris Diamond Award, was announced in her honor.

Out in the Field



UCHRA RECOGNIZES EMPLOYEES WITH SERVICE AWARDS

Of the awards, 33 were in recognition of years of service milestones. Sixteen employees celebrated five years of service; seven employees were recognized for 10 years of service; two employees for 15 years; five employees for 20 years; and one employee was recognized for their 25 years of service. Two employees were recognized for 30-plus year milestones: Terry Alley with 30 years of service and Rebecca Harris with 35 years. Two new awards were introduced this year: the Upper Cumberland Spirit Award, presented to Carol Watson, Fentress

County Coordinator. Watson is a 33-year employee of UCHRA. The second new award, named in honor of outgoing Director of Transportation, Rebecca Harris who will retire from the agency next month, was also presented. Mike Baines, Transportation Safety and Security Manager and 26-year employee of the agency, was selected as the award's inaugural recipient.

UCHRA NAMES HOLLY MONTTOOTH NEW DIRECTOR OF TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM

The Upper Cumberland Human Resource Agency (UCHRA) has selected Holly Montooth to serve as the new director of the agency's transportation program.

Montooth, whose most recent work experience is that of Mobility Manager for the Transportation Department, will officially take the helm of the department at the beginning of the new calendar year. Rebecca Harris, who most recently served as the agency's Director of Transportation, recently announced her retirement from UCHRA after 35 years with the agency.

"Mrs. (Rebecca) Harris has been an exemplary leader," Montooth said of her predecessor. "She has laid the groundwork to ensure the continued success of UCHRA's public transportation service for many years to come. Realizing that for all of us, Mrs. Harris has been a source of stability and strength. My first order of business will be to provide the same sound leadership following the transition."



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Montooth is originally from Jamestown, Tenn., and is a graduate of Alvin C. York Agricultural Institute. She began working at UCHRA in 2001; starting out in the Putnam County office where she assisted Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) clients and Child Care Certificate Program clients.

This diverse experience allowed her to work with all 14 counties within the agency's service area and to become introduced to the agency's Transportation Department.

"Prior to this move, I had been around the transportation folks and watched the operation from a distance for years," Montooth said. "It was during my time as a program manager that I realized how exciting the field of public transportation is." When the Mobility Manager position became available,

Montooth applied and was selected and has been immersed in transportation ever since.

She later returned to school, graduating from Tennessee Tech University with a bachelor's degree.

"I took a non-traditional path to achieve my goal of becoming a college graduate," she said. "My youngest son was six months old when I finally walked across the stage." It's an achievement, she says, that made her realize anything is possible when one works hard enough.

Over the years, she has also completed several training opportunities geared toward transportation including the Community Transportation Association of America Emerging Leaders Academy, Combined with her 19 years of experience within UCHRA, Montooth says her continued desire to succeed has prepared her for her newest and most challenging role to date.

As Director of Transportation, Montooth hopes to bring a sense of excitement to what the Transportation Department does.

"Folks might not realize it but the transportation industry is fun and very rewarding," she said. "To be able to take someone to and from work, to get them to their medical appointments, take them to a technical school or college, or simply provide them with a trip to the grocery store, there are so many ways in which transportation touches people's lives, I want to sing the praises of our employees and the services they provide while making sure that every person in the Upper Cumberland region realizes that UCHRA's public transportation services are available to them."

UCHRA employs approximately 170 transportation workers; 145 of those are drivers. In fiscal year 19-20, the agency provided more than 259,000 trips and drove more than 2.5 million miles.

It's an accomplishment, Montooth says, that is made possible through the coordinated efforts of the transit operators, mechanics, county staff, and management teams.

In the coming months, UCHRA will unveil it's newest opportunity to provide excellent customer service: a call center.

UCHRA is currently in the final stages of implementing the UC Public Transit Customer Call Center; providing friendly, easy access to connect clients to the transportation services they need. The installation of several ADA-accessible bus shelters are also planned for the Go Upper Cumberland bus routes.

Montooth says shelters will be equipped with solar lighting and bench seating for clients.



One of the agency's most anticipated transportation projects is Pick-up UC. Slated for a 2021 launch, Pick-Up UC will provide on-demand transportation in and around the Cookeville area.

Montooth and her husband, Wes, have two sons: Waylon and Wyatt. They currently reside in Rickman, Tenn. where they share their lives with "a host of animals", including Montooth's personal favorites: a little black dog, Gus, and a Russian boar named Rooter.

For more information about UCHRA's Transportation Department, visit www.ucpublictransit.com or contact your local UCHRA county office.