



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

## UCHRA SAS ASSISTS WITH MORE THAN 120 REFERRALS

The Substance Abuse Solutions team at UCHRA has already assisted more than 120 people since first seeing clients in July. In September, the City of Cookeville Police Department inked a deal to provide assistance to homeless/transient individuals. Visit [www.uchra.org/substanceabuse](http://www.uchra.org/substanceabuse) to learn more about the program

### *Out in the Field*



Cumberland Fellowship of Crossville, TN recently made a generous donation of non-perishable food and toiletries for the (CREVAA) program. Thank you!



Thank you, First Volunteer Bank, for the generous donation of canned food items to our AAAD program! These items will be used to refill the pantry from which items are provided to area seniors in need.

## TRANSPORTATION SERVICES DIRECTOR ANNOUNCES RETIREMENT AFTER 35 YEARS

In the late 1980s, the Upper Cumberland Human Resource Agency (UCHRA) operated approximately 60 buses total within the 14-county region. Destination offerings were few, save for the occasional Cookeville or Nashville trip twice per week and the budget hovered at \$800,000 with an empty fund balance.

Today, the agency's transportation department has approximately \$10 million in funding and another \$2 million fund balance.

"We are currently providing more transit trips and receiving more funding than any other rural system in the state," said Rebecca Harris, Transportation Services Director/UCHRA Deputy Director.



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## CONTINUED: REBECCA HARRIS ANNOUNCES RETIREMENT

"After 35 years at UCHRA it seemed like the right time to retire," she explained. "Transportation is constantly evolving and Cookeville possibly will be facing some changes in transit service with urbanization in the next two to three years. It seemed like the right time for the agency to transition prior to these changes. This will give the new director time to get familiar with all the services we provide as we move into the next phase of UCHRA public transportation."

When she first joined the agency in 1985, Harris started as a clerk in the workforce division before moving to the Community Services department. In 1989 she was named the County Coordinator of White and Van Buren counties and became involved in transportation. In September 2001, Harris was named the Transportation Services Director.

"Over the last 19 years as the transit director I have seen a lot of changes," she said. "Today, we go to Nashville five times a day, sometimes more. We have gone from 40 drivers to 140 and (from) 60 buses to 110."

Harris says that the majority of her role consists of working two, three, and five years out. Some of those plans include new partnerships to bring unique service offerings to the region.

Recently, UCHRA was named part of a unique partnership with Tennessee Tech University and others to develop an electrical vehicle testbed in the 14-county Upper Cumberland region of Tennessee. An all-electric E-450 shuttle bus will be operated by UCHRA as part of that project; the first all-electric vehicle in the agency's public transportation fleet.

That vehicle will first serve the campus of TTU and downtown Cookeville before moving out into the 14-county region. Harris says she feels like UCHRA's transportation program has a solid foundation and the new director will be poised to focus primarily on providing new and innovative transit services to the Upper Cumberland.

"There is a good team here," Harris added.

Meanwhile, Harris says she's looking forward to exploring other interests, spending time with family — her husband and children, Caitlin and husband Brandon; grandchildren, Annie and Owen; her mom, Shirley; sister, Melodie; and brother, Ronnie — and making lots of memories. "I have been so blessed to have worked with so many good people at UCHRA," she said. "I have made so many friends at and through the UCHRA over the last 35 years. My fondest memory though, (that) I will always cherish and be grateful for, is that I met the love of my life here; my husband, Tim Harris."

"Rebecca has been a great asset to the Upper Cumberland region," said Mark Farley, UCHRA Executive Director. "Her vision for public transportation has not only transformed this program but will have a positive effect on the citizens that we serve for years to come. Her experience and knowledge will be hard to replace."

Harris will retire from the agency at the end of the current calendar year.



Please join us in thanking Barbara Wheeler who is a volunteer in Jackson County nutrition program at the Fairview Senior center.

"I enjoy helping people in my community. I want to be able to feed people that are in need of a hot, nutritious, delicious meal."

In July, she played a vital role of coordinating reservations and volunteers to deliver 140 meals per day! Thank you, Barbara!

