The month of June is celebrated nationally as Pride Month for the LGBTQIA+ community as well as Safety Month through the National Safety Council. We want to share the message that RideKC welcomes everyone and strives to provide a safe and inclusive place for our employees, our customers and our region. We stand together against violence and discrimination based on gender, sexual orientation, race or religion and work to make all modes of transportation a safe and enjoyable experience. During the month of June, RideKC will be PrideKC as we invite you to celebrate diversity and safety with us.
**PRIDE-RELATED KC EVENTS**

**June 21-25**  
**Out Here Now KC LGBT Film Festival**  
Unity Temple on the Plaza  
707 West 47th Street  
(Take Main MAX, 47 Broadway or RideKC Bikes/Scooters)  
A five-day event featuring ‘Gay Chorus Deep South’ and 50 other film premieres.  
More info at outherenow.com

**Wednesday, June 26**  
**Going Behind the Scenes with the Queer Eye Film Crew**  
1617 The Event Space at Nara  
1617 Main Street  
5 to 6:30 p.m.  
(Take the KC Streetcar, Main MAX or RideKC Bikes/Scooters)  
Join us as we go behind the scenes with the local production crew who brought Queer Eye in Kansas City to our screens.

**Friday, June 21**  
**The Queer Experience Opening Reception**  
InterUrban ArtHouse  
8001 Newton Street  
Overland Park, Kan.  
5 to 8 p.m.  
(Take 401 Metcalf-Plaza, 404 Metcalf-Downtown or RideKC Micro Transit)  
This showing of works and accompanying programs exhibit the experiences and perspectives of artists from many facets of the Kansas City LGBTQIA community, and provide a welcoming platform to share their stories with those in and outside of the queer community.  
**Free Event**

**Thursday, July 11**  
**B2B Network at WeWork with Mid-America LGBT Chamber of Commerce**  
WeWork Corrigan Station  
1828 Walnut Street, 3rd Floor  
5:30 to 7:30 p.m.  
(Take the KC Streetcar, Main MAX or RideKC Bikes/Scooters)  
The Mid-America LGBT Chamber of Commerce’s B2B Network offers current and prospective members the opportunity to meet other business professionals and community leaders, build new partnerships, make new friends and exchange best business practices in a fun and welcoming social environment.  
More info at maglcc.org

For more details, follow RideKC and KC Streetcar on social media.

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**PRIDEKC GEAR**

- **T-Shirt** $15
- **Tote** $10
- **Commemorative Pin** $5
- **Bike Wheel Insert** $10

*Please note. Since the way color is displayed on a screen varies from one monitor to another, there may be slight color variations compared to what your monitor displays. Colors will match PMS colors stated on artwork proof. If an exact color match is needed, please compare Pantone Color Codes to a Pantone swatch for final approval of color scheme. If you do not have a Pantone Formula Guide, you should be able find one at either your local library or printing shop (Kinko’s, Sir Speedy). Once final approval of the artwork is given, PinMart is not responsible for color discrepancies if the approved Pantone colors were used during manufacturing. For your convenience you can download a free version of Adobe Reader at www.adobe.com. Design concept includes up to three proof revisions.*
The Mid-America LGBT Chamber of Commerce is an organization that advocates, promotes and facilitates the success of the LGBT business community and their allies through the guiding principles of equality, inclusion, economics and education. The Chamber’s purpose is to create, identify and enhance business opportunities for LGBT and LGBT-friendly organizations, thereby fostering a more inclusive and vibrant economy in Mid-America.

The Kansas City Regional Transit Alliance is a non-profit organization that educates the public on transit accessibility, gathers public opinion, communicates, and advocates to expand, enhance, and improve today’s transit options. KCRTA maintains a constant dialogue with metro area public officials who ultimately bring the decisions to develop better public transportation to you. Our mission is to expand, enhance, and improve mass transit in the Kansas City region.
We welcome diversity and inclusion by making the safety and security of all transit customers a top priority.

In recent years, we have taken steps to ensure the safety and security of our transit system with measures such as:

- On board video surveillance on every vehicle.
- Participation in the “Safe Place” program to provide a secure zone for young people in need of immediate help and safety.
- KCMO transit police officers who quickly respond to incidents on buses and at bus stops with the ability to summon additional resources if needed.
- Daily police presence at the 10th and Main Transit Center downtown.
- Off-duty police officers to provide additional security throughout the transit system.
- Communication between RideKC headquarters and every bus, with the ability to make live announcements directly to a bus if a problem on board arises.
- Secret Rider program to monitor on board activity as a regular rider.
- District road supervisors available during hours of operation to respond to all incidents.
- Driver safety partitions in 100% of fleet enhance security for bus operators.
- Did you know all RideKC buses are designated Safe Place locations?
- Training for all operators including customer service, de-escalation and emergency management.
- Regular assessments of security operations with the Transportation Security Administration (TSA).
- Trespass Ban program to address passengers who repeatedly violate rules on the bus or commit offenses.
- Working with local social service providers to address passengers who are repeatedly disruptive due to substance abuse or mental illness.

RideKC.org | @RideKCTransit | Regional Call Center: 816.221.0660
What’s your story?
I studied religion at a Southern Baptist college and was ordained in that tradition but didn’t pursue a full-time ministry at that time. A decade later, a local seminary opened up in Topeka for people with full-time jobs. It was an opportunity to continue the ministry I was called to in the beginning, but now at a different stage in life.

I love serving people and doing what I can to help folks grow in their faith and to serve the community for the sake of other people.

I’ve also been in banking for 14 years, starting as a teller and moving up into compliance. At Academy Bank, we have a department of eight that handles the bank’s anti-money laundering program. I really enjoy working at Academy Bank and find my work to be deeply rewarding.

How do you spend your free time on board RideKC?
I am often praying, actually, but because I use an iPad, it looks like I’m just reading the news. Other times, I will listen to NPR or a podcast.

What do you wish everyone knew about RideKC?
When I started working downtown, it just made sense to ride the Troost MAX to work. I wish more people knew that we have excellent public transit in Kansas City! Riding the bus is inexpensive, it’s reliable, it’s clean, and I haven’t had any safety issues.

What are you looking forward to in RideKC’s future?
The extension of the streetcar to UMKC.

“Riding the bus is inexpensive, it’s reliable, it’s clean!”
COMMUNITY PROFILE
Ryan Webster
Hotel Concierge and Female Impersonator

What’s your story?
I’m originally from Michigan. I started drag in college as a fun little side hobby to get involved in my community a little bit more personally.

After moving to Kansas City in 2011, I spent a few years as an educator with the Kansas City Care Clinic doing HIV education and prevention work. I actually started catching the bus to be able to engage with clients for a program where I was working with disadvantaged youth. I needed to be able to connect them with as many resources as quickly as possible, so knowing the bus system was super important.

When I decided to leave HIV work, I started doing drag full-time. I was entertaining from New Jersey to New Mexico. It’s been a good opportunity for me to really engage with people of a lot of different walks of life from everywhere.

Last year I won the title of Miss Gay United States at large 2018, so I’m definitely cross-dressing my way to the top of life.

I got involved in hotel concierge work as a secondary career because it allowed me to utilize the contacts that I developed doing drag at night at a day job. It’s a nice balance.

For both drag and hotel concierge, it’s about creating those memorable experiences for people. As an entertainer, I get to take people from their everyday lives and help them live the fantasy. As a hotel concierge, I get to help bring the fantasy into whatever the guests are doing to make their excursions that much more magical and make it last forever as a memory.

Drag also gives me an opportunity use the stage as a platform to do something good, whether that’s doing volunteer work or getting information out to help the audience be more well informed citizens of the city we live in.

What does PrideKC mean to you?
It means a lot to know the agency who is responsible for your safety actually cares about who you are as a person. It’s not very often that a business of any kind makes a concerted effort to include protective measures for smaller communities that might typically get overlooked—whether that’s people of color, queer or transgender folks. Knowing that RideKC’s overall mission acknowledges me makes me feel included, and that’s awesome.

What do RideKC safety improvements mean to you?
It’s made my life easier. I hate driving. It’s nice to not feel like I’m at risk on the bus. And if someone does say something when I’m in a wig, I know that the circumstance will always work out in my favor.

Where are you typically going on RideKC?
I’m usually either headed to work or to the wig store.

What is your favorite destination on RideKC?
I like going to the zoo. Catching the bus on Prospect Avenue is also fun because I get to see that part of the city.

How do you spend your free time on board RideKC?
Reading! I almost always have my nose stuck in a book. Riding the bus gives me a few extra moments to just be alone with my thoughts and time is such a limited quantity in life. I also love to gab it up with whoever happens to be sitting in the seat next to me.

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What do you splurge on with the money you save by using RideKC?
Rhinestones. And I like lots of them! But riding the bus also allows me to do community work like putting together bags for Harvesters or doing a blood drive.

What do you wish everyone knew about RideKC?
How easy and cheap it is. Hotel Phillips has a partnership with RideKC [through the Employer Pass Program] so, as an employee, I get a discount on my bus pass. That’s kind of what led me to this particular employer—not only because of the discounted pass but the bus picks me up near my house and drops me off right outside work. I can get almost everywhere I need to go on the bus without a hassle.

“It means a lot to know the agency who is responsible for your safety actually cares about who you are as a person.”
“What do I splurge on with the money I save by riding the bus? Rhinestones!”
All youth coming to a Safe Place site are to be treated with the same care and concern. There is not a separate designation to identify “LGBTQ friendly” sites as Safe Place provides an outlet to safety for all young people in crisis. Safe Place communities are full of accepting, compassionate, and supportive providers who care about the safety and success of young people. If you are a young person in need of immediate help and safety, no matter your race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or any other way you identify yourself, you may go to any location with this sign to receive help.

LGBTQ youth have particular circumstances in their lives that may make them more likely to need Safe Place help. While Safe Place site personnel are unlikely to be aware of, or involved in a conversation about sexual orientation, they face increased amounts of family rejection, abuse, and bullying. This causes LGBTQ youth to be at greater risk for homelessness, sexual abuse, depression, and suicide.

While it is estimated that LGBTQ persons make up less than 10% of the total population, a disproportionate 20-40% of the homeless youth population identify as LGBTQ. Like other youth, LGBTQ youth become homeless for a variety of reasons. Among the most commonly cited are: family rejection, violence and abuse in the home, and aging out of state systems of care without adequate support.

Below are some suggested guidelines to assist your site in making an LGBTQ youth feel safe:

- Be aware of personal values and biases related to gender and sexual orientation.
- Do not impose personal values on the youth.
- Be open to using the pronouns/labels/language that a young person prefers. If a youth identifies as one gender or the other, please use the appropriate language for their identification. If you make a mistake, quickly correct yourself.

Find more information about Safe Place at NationalSafePlace.org
Pop Culture Sculptures Presents, “An Adventure in Color” Balloon Couture bringing the hues that shape our vibrant world to the runway. Partnering the perfect palette with PrideKC for everyone under the rainbow!

From the team that brought, “A Twist in Time” balloon fashion show to the metro, and hosted the opening ceremonies at the World Balloon Convention ‘18 in San Diego, comes an all new collection of looks that model the essence of our all inclusive community. Featuring your favorite photogenic queens in town, this pop-up fashion fantasy is sure to fill you with Pride!
COMMUNITY PROFILE
Andrea and Victoria Stirgus
RideKC Bus Operators

What’s your story?
Andrea: I was born and raised here in Kansas City, Mo. My father taught me to drive when I was six years old. He would tell me, “Don’t ever be dependent on no one to get around.” He didn’t want me to ever get stranded. If I can’t do anything else, I can drive.

I was pregnant at 14 and I got married very young in high school. I had two kids. My husband was in the service and we traveled a little bit, but I always drove. I worked for Jackson County DOT. I worked driving school buses. But I like being a bus operator and seeing the diversity. I like seeing different people. At other jobs, sitting in an office somewhere, I would never see the people that I see driving. You know, the good, the bad, the ugly. I like seeing all of that.

Victoria: I’m the youngest of nine. My mom passed away when I was five and we were raised by my grandmother and then my father. He passed away and my life took a turn for the worse. I hooked up with a young man and had four kids with him. I also became addicted to drugs.

In June of 2005 [while living in New Orleans], I was walking through my house and I heard a voice say, “Leave this place.” So I went to my sister the next day and I said, “I’m going to Kansas City, Missouri.” In August, we watched Katrina unfold on television from up here. It was like God said, “Move,” and I moved.

When I first moved up here, I did an interview with the local news and they asked me what is it that I wanted to do. I told them I want to drive y’all’s city buses.

I used to catch this one particular bus every night and Andrea was my driver. I would sit in the front and I could see her face and she could see mine and we would talk. We have been together ever since. Married for two and a half years, together for 14.

My weakness is her strength and my strength is her weakness.

When I was thinking about becoming a driver, Andrea pushed me. She said, “I think you can do this.” I didn’t have confidence in myself. I was scared. The real thing was, I was okay with being lazy. I was okay with where I was. She wasn’t okay with it though and so she brought me with her. And here I am.

Andrea (left) and Victoria (right) Stirgus

I love being out there talking to people. When a passenger asks me how I am doing, I say, “I’m grateful.” I love this job.

When I came out, my brother stopped speaking to me for four years. We were best friends. But eventually he saw I was doing good for myself and he was crazy about Andrea and the way that my life had just blossomed. He loves me today. It was like we never missed those four years.

I’m a praying fool. I believe in that man upstairs. You know a lot of people say gay people are going to hell. I don’t believe that. They told me to find a God to my understanding. My God loves me regardless. He brought me in this world. He knows all about me.

I feel like I went to drugs because I couldn’t say who I was. This is who
I am and I’m clean today because I’m being myself.

What does PrideKC mean to you?
Victoria: It means a lot. I’m glad to be given a voice because I’ve seen transgender people get harassed. We won’t allow that on the bus.

I’m grateful that RideKC is opening up to the gay community.

I don’t know if y’all understand how many lives y’all about to touch with putting this rainbow bus out there. Just this one bus. That’s a statement to the whole gay community.

They are going to know that on the bus, they don’t have to worry.

What do RideKC safety improvements mean to you?
Andrea: Driver and passenger safety on board the buses is getting better. The police presence, quick response time, operator shields, refresher training, making it a felony to assault us, all show an effort.

What is your favorite RideKC destination?
Victoria: Home! And there’s a bus route one block away.

What’s your most memorable RideKC experience?
Victoria: I was driving the Indiana route and I got ready to get off the bus and was singing “Let Go and Let God.” It’s a song that I sing all the time because I love gospel music. This young lady gets off the bus and she’s crying. So I said, “What’s wrong? Put it on my shoulders.”

She tells me she had four kids and she was hooked on drugs. This lady was telling my story to me! I said, “Here’s what you need to do. It’s time for you to turn to God. All you got to do is let go and let God like the song says.”

I was driving years later and she saw me and said, “You talked to me by the zoo! You’re the one that said I got to let go and let God. I got off drugs and turned my life around because of you.”

What do you wish everyone knew about RideKC?
Andrea: People that do not ride the bus think something bad is going to happen. They hear some crazy story, but those are rare. It’s mostly working people on the bus trying to get home or get to work.

Victoria: We are professionals and we are always thinking “Safety First.”

What is RideKC’s greatest recent win?
Victoria: Prioritizing protecting passengers and drivers.

What are you looking forward to in RideKC’s future?
Andrea: Prospect MAX!

“When a passenger asks me how I am doing, I say ‘I’m grateful’.”

-Victoria Stirgus
The KC Streetcar is a welcoming environment and open to the entire Kansas City community.

It is a safe, social space that encourages riders to explore downtown.

We are committed to the safety of all of our riders by staffing streetcars and streetcar stops with safety ambassadors and off-duty police officers. Each streetcar is equipped with cameras and all passengers must exit the streetcar at the Union Station stop.

The KC Streetcar, along with the City of Kansas City, KCATA, KCPD, KCFD and State emergency agencies, conduct regular emergency exercises to ensure that the team is always prepared for any scenario.

For a full list of our Code of Conduct and safety procedures, visit kcstreetcar.org.
COMMUNITY PROFILE

Chris Hernandez
Communications Director for the City of Kansas City, Mo.

What’s your story?
I’ve had an amazing journey! I’m from Kansas City. I spent a lot of time in local and news media. I moved to a lot of other cities during my career but then I decided to come home for love and family rather than continuing globe-trotting around the country.

I joined the communications team at City Hall running a division of the city manager’s office that handles all of the internal and external communications. We try to talk with residents and make sure they understand what’s going on in City Hall. I love talking and hearing from residents. We need to make sure that we are listening to folks about what they want and make sure we’re delivering on that.

What does PrideKC mean to you?
First off, let me just say that I think it’s great that a streetcar and a bus will have a rainbow on them during Pride Month because it’s really important to say that our transit system is a welcoming place. It is important to actually show that and to let people know that everyone is welcome aboard.

What do RideKC safety improvements mean to you?
The improvements encourage people to ride and that’s what we want. I think the incredible amount of development that is going on and people moving back into the downtown core rather than going away to the suburbs is really driving the idea that when more people ride public transit that creates safety. If you’re expressing to people that this is a welcoming place, that creates a sense of community, and that drives safety as well. You have a sense of community when people realize that this is for everyone and everyone should feel welcome. I think that’s a great thing.

What is your favorite RideKC destination?
Because I work downtown, I typically jump on the streetcar to go to lunch or a meeting so I don’t have to get my car out of the garage.

How do you spend your free time on board RideKC?
Reading and working on my phone.

What do you splurge on with the money you save by using RideKC?
Eating bigger meals at lunch!

What’s your most memorable RideKC experience?
It’s been three years, but when we opened the streetcar line, it was such a gorgeous day. Everyone was in such a great mood. It reminded me of what it was like when the Royals won the World Series.

What do you wish everyone knew about RideKC?
It’s friendly! The drivers are friendly. The people are friendly. Kansas City folks on the streetcar are always like, “Oh you must be a visitor or a tourist. Let me tell you which barbecue I like or give you directions to the buses.” And if you commute on any route for more than a few days, you will start recognizing people. You get the sense of community.

What is RideKC’s greatest recent win?
Linking up all the different modes of transportation.

What are you looking forward to in RideKC’s future?
The little space bubbles that we’re going to have zipping around. But that’s 2026? But seriously, I’m looking forward to the expansion of the KC Streetcar system.

“When more people ride public transit, THAT creates safety.”
RideKC Bike welcomes all people to use the service.

We are honored to take part in Pride Month and will continue to advocate for safe and accessible transportation options for all.

The RideKC Bike system is a new part of the RideKC family of mobility services, which operates a unique mix of technologies that extend the fixed-route transit system and gives local residents and visitors a variety of options for getting around Kansas City.

RideKC Bike features:

Smart, electric-bikes and e-scooters: operating in a hybrid docked/dockless system with lock-to technology that utilizes existing and new bike racks to ensure our devices are organized, thoughtfully deployed, and enhance public spaces.

Pedal bikes: operating in a traditional docked, kiosk-based system (formerly branded as KC BCycle) at 42 locations in Downtown, Midtown, 18th & Vine, the Plaza, Brookside, Waldo, and North Kansas City.

Bike Share for All: ensuring all Kansas Citians have access to bike—especially those impacted by disparities in mobility, health and economics.

Bike+Bus Pass: allowing commuters to transfer seamless between RideKC Bus, RideKC MAX, and RideKC Bike with an affordable monthly price.

Use promo code “PrideKC” for a free ride credit on e-bikes and pedal bikes through June by using either the Drop Mobility or BCycle app.
Theresa M. Van Ackeren
Owner of Family Bikes

What's your story?
I'm originally from Omaha, Neb. and biked everywhere when I was growing up. While I was in college my entire immediate family moved to the Kansas City area, so when I graduated, I came to Kansas City. I got a job at DST and that's where I spent 17 years working in mutual funds and project management. I hated my corporate job. One day I just said, “Bikes are fun. I'm going to open a bike store.” And so I quit that job and opened Family Bicycles. I like the freedom of owning my own business. I get to be me. And 11 years later, we're still here.

I am also the executive director of Revolve KC, which is a recycling nonprofit that provides bicycles to those who can not afford them. [All the unclaimed bicycles found on RideKC buses are donated to Revolve KC.]

What do RideKC safety improvements mean to you?
Part of freedom is being able to get to where you need to go. Being able to do that in a safe manner is freeing, especially being in a big city. So knowing that the transportation system in Kansas City is safe for all users really adds a level of confidence in moving about the city.

What is your favorite RideKC destination?
I'm usually headed to the Kauffman Center to catch the Kansas City Symphony but I like to just go to Union Station either by bike or car and take the streetcar to places downtown so that I don't have to drive in downtown.

What's your most memorable RideKC experience?
I took the MAX from Waldo to Celebration at the Station to see the Symphony on Memorial Day Weekend. The bus was packed but everybody was having a good time and it was a lot of fun.

What do you wish everyone knew about RideKC?
People who do own cars should at least use it every so often to alleviate traffic and make their lives easier for the day.

What are you looking forward to in RideKC's future?
I'm looking forward to the streetcar getting extended to the Plaza.

“Part of freedom is being able to get to where you need to go.”
What's your story?
I came to Kansas City when I was 19. I always wanted to live in the city. I started working for the police department in the jail. Then after about two years, I left that job to finish college. I had a couple years where I was trying to be a rockstar but that didn't pan out, so I had to get a real job again.

I started by cleaning ambulances but I got tired of that, so I did EMT school, but that was boring so I went through medic school. Twelve years later, I don’t think I’m going anywhere. Every day has different challenges.

I started to get into cycling because I was working in an ambulance standby at a triathlon event up north and I saw these people whiz by on their bicycles and I remembered riding bikes for fun as a family when I was growing up and I thought, “Well that’s fun. How hard can riding a bike be now?” I kept with it and really enjoy it now.

I’m interested in getting more people involved to create a sense of community. So, in the past, I’ve organized bike rides through the LGBT community center which included even novice cyclists.

What do RideKC safety improvements mean to you?
I think the city is getting better with multi-modal transportation, with pedestrian safety, with an increase in bike lanes and visibility for cyclists.

When you increase modes of transportation, that makes people safer. They’re able to make their doctor appointment or go to the LGBT community center. Being able to get places is an understated importance in a community.

The increase in bike infrastructure helps get more people who aren’t as comfortable riding on the road out and involved.

What do you wish everyone knew about RideKC?
Everybody can do it. You can have a car and still utilize public transportation. Even if you have a car, you can still be green for the day by taking public transit. And you won’t have to worry about parking.

What is RideKC’s greatest recent win?
Supporting multiple modes of transportation. So we have the streetcar, we have the bus, we have bike share, we have scooters. The more diversity you have in a public transportation system, the more diverse users you will get.

“The more diversity you have in a public transit system, the more diverse users you will get.”
Share your LGBTQIA+ public transit story with #PrideKC2019

More information at RideKC.org and KCStreetcar.org