



NEWS RELEASE

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Hill Country Transit District Receives U.S. Army Community Partnership Award

Belton, TX — On December 9, 2025, Hill Country Transit District (HCTD), operator of The HOP, was recognized by the U.S. Army's Community Partnership Award for its work with Fort Hood to expand transportation access for soldiers and their families.

The award was presented at The Pentagon in Washington, D.C., in the Hall of Heroes. Each year, the Army recognizes a small number of partnerships that improve quality of life for service members while supporting mission readiness.

HCTD was recognized for its Intergovernmental Support Agreement (IGSA) with Fort Hood, one of the first transit-focused agreements of its kind within the Army. The partnership has helped establish a model for how transit agencies and military installations can work together to address transportation needs.

Through the agreement, HCTD implemented a flexible transit system that combines fixed routes with on-demand virtual bus stops, allowing riders to access service in a more efficient and responsive way. Unlike traditional on-base shuttle systems, the service connects soldiers and their families to the broader regional transit network, improving access to jobs, healthcare, and other essential services.

The program has experienced significant growth since its launch. In its first year alone, more than 220,000 riders used the service—an extraordinary increase compared to approximately 3,000 riders the previous year. By the program's two-year mark in March 2026, ridership had surpassed 425,000 trips, significantly exceeding the initial goals established by installation leadership. Alongside this exceptional ridership growth, the service has maintained 99% on-time performance, an average 12-minute wait time, and a strong 4.5 out of 5-star customer rating. Throughout the program, HCTD has also leveraged real-time operational insights to continually





refine the service, ensuring it evolves to better meet the transportation needs of the installation and the broader military community.

“This recognition reflects the work our team and our partners have put into building something that truly serves the community,” said Raymond Suarez, General Manager of Hill Country Transit District. “We’ve focused on creating a system that is flexible, reliable, and accessible, and it’s making a real difference for the people who depend on it every day.”

Hill Country Transit District provides public transportation services across Central Texas and continues to develop solutions that meet the needs of both the civilian and military communities it serves.

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About the Hill Country Transit District (The HOP): Hill Country Transit District, known as The HOP, is a regional public transportation provider serving Central Texas. As a political subdivision of the State of Texas, The HOP offers fixed-route, commuter, demand response, and specialized transit services across a 3-county region, including both rural and urban areas. With a mission to provide safe, reliable, and accessible transportation options, The HOP connects individuals to work, school, healthcare, and essential services—strengthening communities and supporting regional mobility. For more information, visit www.takethehop.com.