

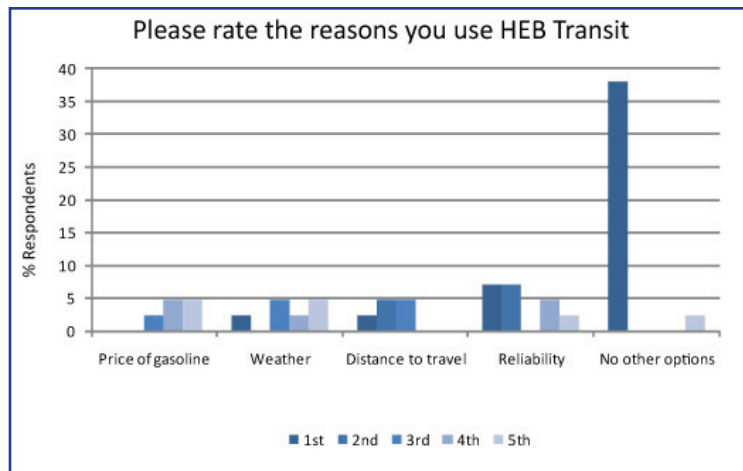
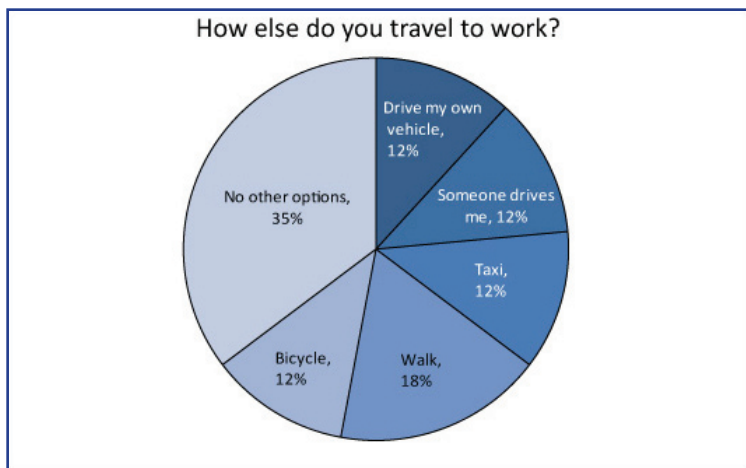
# Next Stop: Mobility



HEB Transit has been helping the transportation disadvantaged in Hurst, Euless and Bedford find transportation solutions since August 2006. And the service has grown and improved substantially since the first passenger was picked up. In fiscal year 2009, its third year in operation, the program provided 4,074 trips to 135 riders. This continued the trend of increased ridership year-over-year, surpassing the 3,780 trips provided in fiscal year 2008.

In October 2009, HEB Transit conducted a survey asking a select number of riders 15 questions about the service. Results from two of the survey questions are shown below. A complete analysis of the survey is available on the Web site, [www.hebtransit.org](http://www.hebtransit.org).

HEB Transit makes it easier for people to hold down jobs by removing one of the major barriers to employment – reliable transportation.



Riders appreciate the help offered by HEB Transit. According to the survey, 84 percent of respondents believe the service is “outstanding” or “good.” It is also clear that HEB Transit is reaching its intended audience, as nearly 79 percent of HEB Transit passengers do not own a vehicle. HEB Transit was founded to provide transportation to work and work-related activities for people in the Mid-Cities without access to their own vehicles. With limited public transportation services in the area, many are forced to call a taxicab to get to work. This is expensive and cost-prohibitive for people with limited incomes and many times leaves them without a job. HEB Transit fills the transportation gap between home and workplace and provides individuals the opportunity to be self-sufficient.

To learn more, visit [www.hebtransit.org](http://www.hebtransit.org).



## Christian Connection

Inside a brightly lit room, down the hall from the church sanctuary, Henry DelCastillo stands talking about a program close to his heart. A few years ago, he and a group of volunteers from Bedford's Christian Connection, the outreach ministry of St. Michael Catholic Church, realized that in addition to food and employment, there was another need in the Mid-Cities that was holding many back from self-sufficiency – transportation.

Without reliable transportation, it is difficult to seek and maintain employment. Most cannot afford regular taxi rides, and it is difficult to depend on friends or family for more than an occasional ride.

So with the help of a public-private partnership involving the North Central Texas Council of Governments, United Way of Tarrant County, Christian Connection and many other organizations, HEB Transit was introduced in 2006. Today, it provides much-needed transportation to work and related appointments for the transportation disadvantaged in Hurst, Euless and Bedford.

“The whole HEB [Transit] idea was born here,” DelCastillo said. “I used to be a volunteer here. This is where it all started.”

The development of the service was a team effort, and cooperation continues to be the key to its successful operation.

Mary Regan, a volunteer at Christian Connection, said HEB Transit has provided a necessary boost to the employment prospects of many people living in the area.

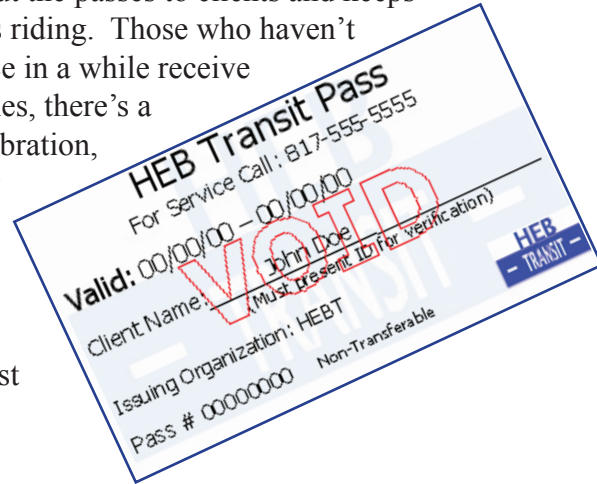
The program is especially helpful, she said, to one-car families where more than one person needs to get to work.



*Pictured from left: Pat Zielinski, Ann Battle, Mary Regan and Elizabeth Chanoine*

*HEB Transit is funded by a Job Access/Reverse Commute grant administered by NCTCOG and other partner organizations, including the cities of Hurst, Euless and Bedford.*

Regan mails out the passes to clients and keeps track of who is riding. Those who haven't used the service in a while receive calls. Sometimes, there's a reason for celebration, such as former clients acquiring their own cars. Sometimes, people have lost their jobs.



Christian Connection is one of several partner organizations from which people may receive passes to ride HEB Transit. With a sluggish economy, employment services have become a major part of Christian Connection's responsibilities. And rides are available for people seeking to further their education or improve their job skills.

Elizabeth Chanoine, Christian Connection Coordinator, said the church maintains a long list of employers who have openings. The recession has necessitated job placement becoming an even more important part of the ministry's work.

She said it's crucial for people to not only have jobs, but transportation to them. It's difficult for people without transportation to even apply for assistance. The service has many success stories to celebrate. And Chanoine's favorite part of HEB Transit is hearing the stories of people who relied on the service at one time but now have cars of their own.

Indeed, HEB Transit has helped people save money so they can provide their own transportation. But even as people transition away from the service, the need to provide rides to low-income workers remains. And as long as the volunteers of Christian Connection are there to help run the program, those needs will be met.