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LEADING IN TIMES OF CHALLENGE WITH ELIZABETH PRESUTTI

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**LEADING IN TIMES OF CHALLENGE
ELIZABETH PRESUTTI
CEO
DES MOINES REGIONAL
TRANSIT AUTHORITY (DART)**

October 15, 2020 | [Leading in Times of Challenge](#)

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Leading in Times Of Challenge

Leading In Times Of Challenge with Elizabeth Presutti

Elizabeth Presutti is chief executive officer of [Des Moines Area Regional Transit Authority \(DART\)](#) in Greater Des Moines (DSM). In her role as CEO, Presutti oversees the largest public transportation system in the state of Iowa where she leads 300 employees. Presutti has worked in the transit industry for more than 15 years, previously in Charlotte, N.C. and Carlsbad, Calif.

Elizabeth Presutti Leadership Tips

While restructuring governance, transit service reductions and funding and organizational challenges have all been challenging for Presutti, leading through the COVID-19 pandemic has required the most action. Because DART is an essential service for the DSM community, she says she has felt an obligation to the community and to her employees in order to keep them safe and healthy. Presutti talks about different types of challenges she encountered including:

- Keeping employees motivated
- Keeping everyone safe
- Continuing to be empathetic/sympathetic in running the

DART's mission: encouraging riders not to use services instead of promoting ridership. Presutti says that DART pivoted accordingly from week-to-week. Some of the changes made included:

- Refraining from collecting fares to mitigate interaction between drivers and the public
- Boarding through the back door
- Reducing services
- Finding service supplementation
- Collaborating with Uber

DART's leadership team has continued to focus on flexibility, providing a calm working environment and remembering that the organization is there to serve throughout the entire pandemic. From a service standpoint, leadership has always tried to find accommodations, including leave options for high-risk employees, providing PPE and regular communication through video messages.

DART Electric Buses

Just a few weeks ago, DART unveiled its new electric bus, created in partnership with [MidAmerican Energy](#). By 2021, there will be seven

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vehicle on the production line. For Protetta, this was a pivot after recognizing that DART employees wanted to be involved in the build process as the pandemic continued with limited travel.

Listen to the entire podcast [here](#).

The Leading in Times of Change podcast is brought to you by the Greater Des Moines Partnership and hosted by Mike Jefferson. The podcast features community leaders from across Greater Des Moines (DSM). To listen to more Partnership podcasts, click [here](#).

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