



News Advisory

Blue Water Area Transportation Commission

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Blue Water Area Transit Breaks Ground: **Blue Water Transit Bus Center**

PORT HURON, MICHIGAN — Blue Water Area Transit held groundbreaking ceremonies for its new \$9.8 million transfer center at 11:00 a.m. on Monday, March 16, in the South McMorrان Place parking lot in downtown Port Huron.

Officials turned symbolic shovels full of soil during the program. Stevens Architects LLC, along with AECOM, are designing the project. DeMaria Construction of Novi is managing the project.

“We are looking forward to passengers being able to wait more comfortably for our buses,” says Jim Wilson, BWAT general manager, who led the groundbreaking festivities.

Passengers currently wait along Quay Street to board buses that travel along seven routes throughout the city of Port Huron and Fort Gratiot Township. The new center will provide passengers with heated waiting areas, restrooms, and bus schedule displays.

The number of passengers riding BWAT buses has increased at a record-breaking pace since 2008, when the agency’s monthly ridership record was broken for the first time in 27 years. Since then, BWAT has continued to set new ridership records each year.

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“When more people ride the bus, it helps reduce congestion and air pollution for those who travel along roads in their vehicles,” says Linda Bruckner, Blue Water Area Transportation Commission Board chair and Fort Gratiot Township trustee.

In addition to transit agency funds, the project is being funded from two sources: 70 percent federal funds and 17.5 percent state funds.

A community that makes public transportation a priority benefits in many ways.

“Public transportation is a vital resource to Americans, and a cornerstone of our nation’s economy,” according to Michael Melaniphy, president and CEO, American Public Transportation Association. “On top of individual financial savings, public transportation spurs economic growth for towns and cities, and also improves the environment and reduces our nation’s energy consumption.”

Blue Water Area Transit continues a proud tradition of innovation in public transit that has served Port Huron for more than a century. It was one of the nation’s first communities to operate an electrified trolley system in the 1880s and one of the first to operate motor coaches when they became popular in the 1930s. Following an eight-year hiatus, the current bus service began in September 1976. Since then, BWAT has carried more than 27 million riders.

BWAT started producing its own compressed natural gas in 1996 and now ranks as Michigan’s largest producer of the alternative fuel. It runs the state’s largest fleet of natural gas fueled buses.

PICTURED ABOVE (l to r): Dave McElroy, BWAT accountant; Don Brown, representing U.S. representative Candice Miller; Darren Murray, DeMaria vice president, commercial and industrial groups; Ray Straffon, former Blue Water Area Transportation Commission Board chair; Pauline Repp, City of Port Huron mayor; Anita Ashford, Blue Water Area Transportation Commission Board vice chair and Port Huron City Council member; Jim Wilson, BWAT general manager; Linda Bruckner, Blue Water Area Transportation Commission Board vice chair and Fort Gratiot Township trustee; Laura Mester, Michigan Department of Transportation chief administrative officer; Dave Frasier, BWAT director of procurement; Steve English, AECOM project manager.

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