



News Advisory

Blue Water Area Transportation Commission

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Great News for Commuters!

Million Dollar Grant Keeps BWAT Buses Running

Along Regional Commuter Routes and for Extended Hours

PORT HURON, MI — The State of Michigan has awarded Blue Water Area Transit a \$1.1 million grant to provide commuters with improved services for one more year. The agency will continue bus service along local and express commuter routes to Macomb County, as well as extended hours designed to help commuters get to and from work.

BWAT will receive \$1,114,060 in grant funding from the Job Access and Reverse Commute program for Fiscal Year 2016 (October 1, 2015 – September 30, 2016).

Since JARC started in Fiscal Year 2008, the program has awarded BWAT more than eight million dollars (\$8,502,493). JARC does not require any local contributions and the Michigan Department of Transportation will provide all of the Fiscal Year 2016 funding.

"I'd like to thank the St. Clair County Board of Commissioners, the Port Huron City Council, the Charter Township of Fort Gratiot Board of Trustees, and especially State Representative Dan Lauwers, for all their help," says Jim Wilson. "These State funds are helping hundreds of low-income people get to their jobs."

The number of riders who use JARC services (approximately 162,600) has more than tripled during the past seven years.

"The growing popularity of these services tells us we're doing something right for our community," says Linda Bruckner, Blue Water Area Transportation Commission Board chair and Fort Gratiot Township trustee. "Greater access to jobs gives more people the freedom to live and raise their families here."

JARC funding supports a commuter route to Macomb County (23 Mile Road and Gratiot Avenue) for the usual fare of 80 cents (40 cents for seniors who are at least 60 years old).

Commuters can travel via an I-94 express route or an M-29 local route that stops in Marysville, St. Clair, Algonac, Clay Township, Pearl Beach, Ira Township, Anchorville, and New Baltimore. At no additional charge, commuters can then connect with the regional SMART transit system to reach Downtown Detroit, Wayne State University, or suburban cities as far away as Dearborn.

BWAT purchased its first 40-foot coach in 2010 to transport up to 38 passengers on commuter routes. The Orion V bus runs on compressed natural gas and is designed for comfort with high-back, reclining, upholstered seating and air suspension.

JARC funding also supports extended local service hours. Some bus routes start as early as 5:15 a.m. and run as late as 11:00 p.m. during the week and 3:00 a.m. on Fridays and Saturdays. These longer hours are designed to help local residents reach local jobs with early morning or late evening shifts.

Blue Water Area Transit continues a proud tradition of innovation in public transit that started nearly a century and a half ago. 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 and operates four public CNG fueling stations.

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BWAT's COMMUTER COACH is designed for comfort with high-back, reclining, upholstered seating and air suspension. The 40-foot Orion V coach seats 38 passengers and runs on compressed natural gas.



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