



News Advisory

Blue Water Area Transportation Commission

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Mark Kresin from Black River Café

Recognized as Bus System's 20 Millionth Passenger

PORT HURON, MI — Blue Water Area Transportation Commission officials recognized Mark Kresin today as the 20 Millionth passenger who has ridden their buses since the local service started nearly 33 years ago. Kresin was awarded a pass that will allow him to ride the bus free of charge for one year.

"I'm so honored and glad to see so many people have been riding the bus," said Kresin, who often travels by bus to work at the Black River Café in downtown Port Huron. Sometimes he rides one way on his bicycle and the other way on the bus (using the bicycle storage racks on the bus during his ride).

Kresin grew up taking the dial-a-ride downtown from his home in Lakeport, and later formed the habit of riding mass transit to work while living in New York City, Denver, Portland, and Sarasota. It is a choice he believes offers a "wonderful alternative that makes good sense and is a wonderful way to protect the environment."

"I like bringing the day's newspaper with me," he adds. "I do enjoy my bus ride. It's a chance to sit back and relax in your own world."

"This milestone has arrived sooner than we would have predicted a few years ago," says BWATC general manager Jim Wilson. "During the past year, our community has been riding the bus in record-breaking numbers that have rapidly pushed us to this historic 20 millionth rider mark."

BWATC ridership started its upward climb last March, when the existing record of 71,559 riders was broken for the first time in 27 years. In March this year, there were 94,876 riders, representing a 24% jump since last March and a 47% jump since March 2007.

"We are seeing a huge jump in our ridership, probably because people are discovering how easy, comfortable, and economical riding the bus can be," says Jim Fisher, BWATC Board vice chairman and Port Huron City Council mayor pro-tem.

Following the ceremony, the St. Clair County Council on Aging, Inc., hosted a reception in their Port Huron Senior Center in downtown Port Huron.

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BWATC continues a proud tradition of innovation in public transit that has served Port Huron for more than a century. Port Huron was one of the nation's first communities to operate an electrified transit 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, BWATC has carried more than 20 million riders and continues the tradition of innovation by producing its own compressed natural gas alternative fuel since 1996.

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Photos are by Rose Norton.



BWATC Officials Recognize the 20 Millionth Rider to travel on their buses since service started in 1976. Standing (left to right): Jim Wilson, BWATC general manager; Jim Fisher, BWATC Board vice chairman; Mark Kresin, 20 millionth rider; and William Smiley, BWATC Board chairman.



BWATC's 20 Millionth Rider, Mark Kresin, stands and waves from the bus he rides to and from work at the Black River Café in downtown Port Huron. He's holding a huge, ceremonial-size bus pass representing the smaller version he received from BWATC officials. The pass will allow him to ride the bus free of charge for one year.