



News Advisory

Blue Water Area Transportation Commission

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“Public transportation is an important contributor to the high quality of life in St. Clair County,” according to David Struck, planning director, St. Clair County Metropolitan Planning Commission.

75 Cents Still Gets You There!

Renewed Grant Supports Expanded Transit Services

That Start Early, Run Late, and Reach as Far as

Downtown Detroit , Wayne State University, and Dearborn

PORT HURON, MI — Blue Water Area Transit is pleased to announce that expanded services designed to help commuters travel to and from work will continue for another year. The agency will receive \$1,051,060 in grant funding from the Federal Job Access and Reverse Commute program for Fiscal Year 2012.

“These expanded services give local residents the chance to work in cities along the St. Clair River and as far away as Downtown Detroit and Dearborn,” says Jim Wilson, general manager, Blue Water Area Transportation Commission. “What’s really great is that riders pay our regular 75-cent fare to travel this far.”

A growing number of riders are using the expanded JARC services. Ridership has nearly tripled (from 51,561 to 138,090 riders) during the four years since the funding started in fiscal year 2008.

JARC funding supports a commuter route to and from Macomb county (23 Mile Road and Gratiot Avenue). Riders can travel via an I-94 express route or an M-29 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 Detroit’s SMART system to reach Downtown Detroit, Wayne State University, or suburban cities as far away as Dearborn.

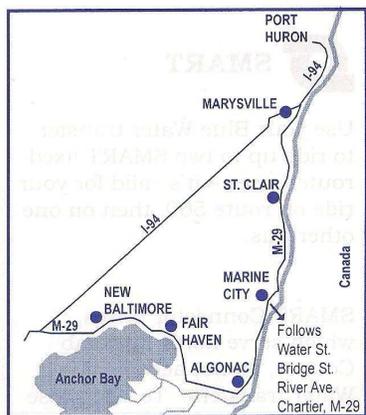
JARC funding also supports extended local service hours, with some bus routes starting as early as 5:15 a.m. and running as late as 11:00 p.m. during the week and 3:00 a.m. on Fridays and Saturdays. These extended hours are designed to help commuters connect with Macomb county routes and to reach jobs with early morning or late evening shifts.



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



By transferring to Detroit’s SMART transit system, local riders can travel as far away as Downtown Detroit, Wayne State University, and Dearborn – all for only 75 cents (35 cents for seniors, 60 and up)!



The BWAT Commuter Route travels via I-94 and M-29.

“Public transportation is an important contributor to the high quality of life in St. Clair County,” according to David Struck, planning director, St. Clair County Metropolitan Planning Commission. “The ability to get around without a car is an important element of community livability, which is all about residents having choices.”

Blue Water Area residents have benefited from extended transportation services made possible by nearly five million dollars (\$4,946,132) in JARC funding since fiscal year 2008. The program, which is part of the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century, does not require any local contributions and is entirely supported by outside resources (50% Federal dollars and 50% State dollars).

A third JARC-funded program reimburses eligible low-income residents for mileage for job-related trips that can not be taken on existing public transportation without additional accommodation. Vouchers can subsidize travel to and from work and other work-related travel, such as child care, job interviews, employment physicals, and shopping for clothing and supplies.

To qualify for the voucher system, individuals must be permanent residents of St. Clair County and have incomes at or below 150% of national poverty levels or be currently receiving some form of public assistance.

Nine contracted agencies provide 30-day referrals to the program: The Arc of St. Clair County, Inc., Blue Water Center for Independent Living, Community Action Agency, Goodwill Industries, Michigan Prisoner Re-Entry Initiative, Michigan Works, Michigan Department of Human Services, Michigan Rehabilitation Services, and St. Clair County Community Mental Health Authority.

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 22 million riders and continues the tradition of innovation by producing its own compressed natural gas alternative fuel since 1996.

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