



News Advisory

Blue Water Area Transportation Commission

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Blue Water Area Transit Wins Two Federal Grants

For Green Projects Promoting Use of Clean Fuel

PORT HURON, MI — Blue Water Area Transit has been awarded \$1.3 million in funding from the Federal Transit Administration's Clean Fuels Grant Program, which promotes the use of clean fuels to help maintain air quality standards.

Both grants will support the expansion of local resources for fueling buses with compressed natural gas. Added improvements include portable CNG refueling stations to serve remote areas in the county and a new CNG compressor to replace the agency's oldest compressor. The new stations will be located in Marine City and Yale.

"This is a wonderful use of Federal dollars to expand the local infrastructure that helps us improve air quality," explains Linda Bruckner, Blue Water Area Transportation Commission Board vice chair and Fort Gratiot Township trustee. "This focus on several isolated pockets will allow us to better serve the whole county."

Natural gas is a clean, abundant, affordable, and domestic energy alternative that saves money, reduces carbon emissions and lowers our nation's dependence on foreign oil. BWAT is Michigan's largest producer of CNG and runs the largest fleet of alternative fuel buses in the state.

The FTA awarded 36 Clean Fuels grants to 35 urban and rural transit providers throughout the country, for a total of \$90 million. Only one additional Michigan provider received funding. Recipients were chosen through a competitive selection process based on ability to help communities maintain national air quality standards for ozone and carbon monoxide while supporting clean fuel technologies. BWAT is the only transit agency nationwide to have two projects selected for funding.

"This award helps us get closer to reaching our goal of operating a fleet of buses that all run on eco-friendly CNG," says Jim Wilson, BWAT general manager.

Officials at the Council on Aging, Inc., are looking forward to the arrival of the new refueling stations, which will allow them to use CNG buses for senior centers in Marine City and Yale.

"This is wonderful timing, since we are about to receive three more CNG buses," says Laura L. Newsome, CoA executive director. The Council operates a fleet of about three dozen buses that were obtained with state and federal funding in cooperation with BWAT. Only three of those are cost-saving, eco-friendly CNG buses, which arrived in December 2008.

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“We appreciate Jim Wilson’s continued tenacity in obtaining funding that has been such a tremendous benefit to our community,” says Laura L. Newsome, CoA executive director. “Mobility is a prime factor in meeting our mission of keeping seniors living independently in their own homes. We are grateful for our ongoing, successful relationship with BWAT that has helped make this possible.”

Last year, CNG refueling resources were made available to the general public. Earth-friendly CNG vehicles may be refueled at BWAT headquarters, located in Port Huron at 2021 Lapeer Avenue. The transit agency’s fueling station is certified by the State of Michigan, open Monday - Saturday, 7:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m., and accepts Discover, Master Card, and VISA. The current price is \$1.95 per gasoline gallon equivalent.

BWAT 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, BWAT has carried more than 21 million riders and continues the tradition of innovation by producing its own compressed natural gas alternative fuel since 1996.

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Earth-friendly Compressed Natural Gas is stored by high-pressure tanks at Blue Water Area Transit’s headquarters at 2021 Lapeer Avenue in Port Huron. The alternative fuel saves money, promotes a clean environment by reducing carbon emissions, and reduces our nation’s dependence on foreign oil.

As Michigan’s largest producer of alternative fuel, Blue Water Area Transit uses a wide range of equipment that includes this natural gas compressor. The agency has produced compressed natural gas to fuel its buses since 1996.



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