



# News Advisory

## Blue Water Area Transportation Commission

2021 Lapeer Avenue Port Huron, MI 48060  
810.987.7373 fax 810.987.2431 www.bwbus.com

---

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 22, 2009

CONTACT:

Jim Wilson, General Manager: 810.966.4200 or [jwilson@bwbus.com](mailto:jwilson@bwbus.com)

### **Million-Dollar Funding Continues for Fiscal Year 2010**

### **Voucher Program Resumes October 1st**

### **To Help Area Residents Find and Keep Jobs**

PORT HURON, MI — Starting October 1st, low-income residents can once again be reimbursed for job-related mileage from a voucher program administered by the Blue Water Area Transportation Commission. The program helps pay for job-related trips that can not be taken on existing public transportation without additional accommodation.

“This program helps people who are really struggling to find or keep a job due to the high cost of buying gas at the pump — not to mention all the costs involved with maintaining a vehicle,” explains Jim Fisher, BWATC Board chairman and Port Huron City Council mayor pro-tem.

During the past two years, the voucher program has helped 570 residents with more than \$495,000 in reimbursement. More than half of those helped live within the City of Port Huron and Fort Gratiot Township.

The renewal of Fiscal Year 2010 grant funding allows the voucher program to start its third year, along with two other programs that also help low-income residents with transportation issues associated with finding and keeping jobs.

All three grants are under a Federal program called Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC), which is part of the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century. Together, they will provide \$1,114,060.00 in funds for Fiscal Year 2010 and continue the significant increase in public transportation service for St. Clair County residents that started in 2008.

“It is unusual to see this large an investment in our community without any required local matching funds,” says Jim Wilson, BWATC general manager. The funds are 50% Federal dollars and 50% State dollars.

JARC funding provides expanded hours of service, allowing BWATC buses to run until 10:00 p.m. on Monday through Friday, and also supports a bus route between Port Huron and Macomb County. The route operates Monday through Friday, with express service along I-94 and local service along M-29.

— more —

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.

The nine contracted agencies that provide 30-day referrals to BWATC brokers include: The Arc of St. Clair County, Inc. (The Arc), Blue Water Center for Independent Living (BWCIL), Community Action Agency (CAA, formerly EOC), Goodwill Industries, Michigan Prisoner Re-Entry Initiative (MPRI), The Michigan Works (M-WORKS), Michigan Department of Human Services (MDOHS), Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS), and St. Clair County Community Mental Health Authority.

Vouchers may be used to supplement bus passes for traveling:

- to and from work,
- for job-search activities, including interviews,
- for job-related activities, including physicals and return-to-work slips,
- for purchasing work-related clothing/supplies, and
- to work-related child care providers.

Residents are reimbursed at the current IRS rate (55 cents per mile). They can be reimbursed for up to 1,100 miles for each of the first three 30-day periods and up to 550 miles for all subsequent 30-day periods.

+++++

**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.

####



---

**Gloria Justice, *Writer for Hire***  
**Smith Justice Group, LLC Public Relations 2.0**  
**810.357.6817 GloJustice@SmithJusticeGroup.com**  
*social media strategies web publishing news releases*