



Media 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

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CONTACT: Jim Wilson, BWAT General Manager: 810.987.7373

March Sets New Ridership Record!

Six New Compressed Natural Gas Buses

Will Serve BWAT's Growing Number of Passengers

PORT HURON, MI — Six new buses arrived in Port Huron from their Indiana manufacturer in April and will start serving Blue Water Area Transit's growing number of passengers this month. The new ARBOC low floor paratransit buses can hold up to 17 passengers and three wheelchairs. They will replace six Orion II buses that are twelve years old.

The number of passengers riding BWAT buses has increased at a record-breaking pace since 2008, when the agency's monthly ridership record was broken for the first time in 27 years. Since then, several new records have been set — including this March, when 114,034 riders beat that 2008 record by 49%.

BWAT has purchased its six new compressed natural gas buses with grant funds awarded by the federal Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program. The federal CMAQ program supports highway and transit projects that improve air quality in areas that do not meet federal clean air standards.

"CMAQ funds have paid for most of our compressed natural gas bus fleet," says Jim Wilson, BWAT general manager. "Our clean-burning CNG buses have been selected almost every year." During the past four years, BWAT has received over \$6 million in CMAQ funding.

The new ARBOC buses feature a ramp system that makes it easier for passengers to board with strollers and personal shopping carts. A low floor makes boarding the bus easier for passengers who find it difficult to take large steps upward.

"This is a wonderful use of federal dollars to expand the local infrastructure while improving air quality," explains Linda Bruckner, Blue Water Area Transportation Commission Board vice chair and Fort Gratiot Township trustee.



Photo by Bonnie Lentz, Blue Water Area Transit

— more —

Learn more about Blue Water Area Transit online at www.bwbus.com and www.facebook.com/bluewaterbus or by contacting dispatchers at (810) 987-7373.

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

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RIDE BLUE: SAVE GREEN



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