



# Media Advisory

## Blue Water Area Transportation Commission

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Blue Water Area Transit Adds Large Commuter Coach** **That Offers Comfort and Convenience** **For Macomb County Commuters**

PORT HURON, MI — Blue Water Area Transit has a new 40-foot Orion V commuter coach that runs on compressed natural gas. This is the transit agency's first 40-foot bus and the agency is using it on the commuter routes to and from Macomb County.

The new bus, purchased with Federal and State grants, joins BWAT's fleet of over 60 CNG buses.

"This large bus offers a more comfortable ride for commuters who live in the Blue Water Area and travel many miles to their place of employment," says Jim Fisher, Blue Water Area Transportation Commission Board chairman and Port Huron City Council member.



*photo by Bonnie Lentz*

BWAT transports commuters to and from Macomb County via two routes: an I-94 express route, as well as an M-29 local route (with stops in Marysville, St. Clair, Algonac, Clay Township, Pearl Beach, Ira Township, Anchorville, and New Baltimore).

Both routes are paid for by a Federal program called Job Access and Reverse Commute that uses State and Federal dollars and does not require local matching funds.

Agency officials believe that the large capacity of the Orion V coach will allow BWAT to respond to increases in the demand for commuter service.

"Our services help commuters save money on gas and can also help families get by with one less car, which can be a huge savings," says Jim Wilson, BWAT general manager. "When less gas is used, our local environment also benefits. Our buses run on clean-burning compressed natural gas, so the positive impact on our environment is even greater."

The Orion V coach transports up to 38 passengers and is designed for comfort and convenience in a variety of ways that include:

- High-back, reclining, upholstered seating,
- Air suspension,
- Entryways that “kneel” to only six inches above the street,
- Overhead parcel racks,
- Individual reading lamps,
- DVD players with flat panel screens,
- Storage racks for three bicycles,
- Wheelchair lift for easy access,
- Ability to modify seating to include two passengers in wheelchairs.

Different companies produced the Orion V coach for nearly two decades (1989-2008). During that time, Daimler Buses North America acquired Orion Bus Industries.

“We acquired a 2007 model at considerable savings. It had been used as an engineering demo and it arrived in great shape, with only 14,000 miles on it,” explains Dave Frasier, BWAT director of maintenance and procurement. “We got a great deal on the price and paid about half of what we would have paid for it new.”

Additional information about Blue Water Area Transit services is available online at [www.bwbus.com](http://www.bwbus.com) 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 21 million riders and continues the tradition of innovation by producing its own compressed natural gas alternative fuel since 1996.

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