



News Advisory

Blue Water Area Transportation Commission

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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New Waves On New Buses!

Longer Buses Offer Roomier Ride

For Growing Number of Passengers

PORT HURON, MI — Local passengers have more room to ride along most Blue Water Area Transit routes thanks to new longer buses. The new 40-foot buses are serving all fixed routes except 2 and 4, where 30-foot buses continue to serve riders.

The new buses have a sleeker designed and more contemporary pattern of blue waves. An informal survey of some BWAT employees selected the new wave design to replace the one that has been used for 20 years.

The new buses arrived last month from Riverside, California, where they are produced by EIDorado National, a U.S. owned and operated company. The larger buses accommodate up to 37 passengers.

The agency's first 40-foot bus has served passengers along commuter routes to Macomb County for two years. Now, bus drivers navigating city streets with the longer buses will need to make a few changes.

"We've made a few minor route changes to help our drivers, but they won't affect riders waiting for their buses," says Mike Sly, operations manager. "These changes are necessary to avoid some sharp right turns."

Record-breaking increases in BWAT's ridership made the new longer buses necessary. The agency's ridership has increased rapidly since 2008, when their monthly ridership record exceeded 70,000 for the first time in its history. Today's monthly ridership record of 114,034 was set in March of this year.

BWAT purchased the new compressed natural gas buses with a portion of a \$3.5 million grant awarded in 2010 from the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality



Photo of new bus by Bonnie Lentz

**NEW BUS DESIGN (above) and
OLD BUS DESIGN (below)**



— more —

Improvement Program. The federal program supports highway and transit projects that improve air quality in areas that do not meet federal clean air standards. During the past five years, BWAT has received over \$6 million in CMAQ funding.

“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.”

“Buying more compressed natural gas buses enables us to keep our fleet new while we provide more transportation opportunities for local residents and tourists,” explains Jim Fisher, Blue Water Area Transportation Commission Board chair. “Compressed natural gas is an American fuel that helps keep our air clean.”

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.

CNG is a low-emission American-made alternative fuel that costs less and burns cleaner than either gasoline or diesel fuel.

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Photo of new bus by Bonnie Lentz

SAVE GREEN RIDE BLUE

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