



Media Advisory

Blue Water Area Transportation Commission

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Local Bus Ridership Continues To Climb: BWAT Reports 1.3 Million Rides Per Year

PORT HURON, MI — Blue Water Area Transit has attained new milestones in bus ridership, continuing a six-year trend of record-breaking increases in the number of riders served. The trend started in 2008 when BWAT broke its monthly record for the first time in 27 years.

“Everyone benefits when more people ride the bus,” says Anita R. Ashford, Blue Water Area Transportation Commission Board vice chair and Port Huron City Council member. “Fewer cars on the road helps keep the air cleaner and alleviates traffic congestion, for example.”

Last year, BWAT provided 1,287,985 rides. That is a 90% increase compared with 678,674 rides in 2006. The agency also broke its monthly ridership record last year with 122,555 rides in October.

The total number of riders that BWAT has served since current bus service began in September 1976 rolled past the 26 million mark this year in April.

“Riders benefit from our low bus fares (75 cents for adults), extended hours that better match work schedules, easy-to-use bicycle racks, and clean CNG-fueled buses,” explains Jim Wilson, BWAT general manager.

Throughout the nation, bus ridership is also rising in small communities according to the American Public Transportation Association. National figures for the first quarter of 2014 show a 2.1% jump in ridership in communities with populations of less than 100,000.

“Public transportation is a vital resource to Americans, and a cornerstone of our nation’s economy,” according to Michael Melaniphy, APTA president and CEO. “On top of individual financial savings, public transportation spurs economic growth for towns and cities, and also improves the environment and reduces our nation’s energy consumption.”

Blue Water Area Transit 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 26 million riders. The agency started producing its own compressed natural gas in 1996 and now ranks as Michigan’s largest producer of the alternative fuel. It runs the state’s largest fleet of alternative fuel buses.

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