



News Advisory

Blue Water Area Transportation Commission

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Despite National Dip

Local Bus Ridership Continues Steady Climb:

October Weighs in as Second Busiest Month

PORT HURON, MI — Blue Water Area Transit continues to show a steady growth in ridership, with October weighing in as the transit agency's second busiest month to date with 90,836 trips. The month represents a 35.4 percent jump in two years and an 8.5 percent jump in one year, with 67,073 trips in October 2007 and 83,738 trips in October 2008.

The transit agency's growth in ridership comes at a time when national averages are beginning to decline, with a slight dip of 2.6 percent in the first half of 2009. National figures from the American Public Transportation Association show 5.275 billion trips during the first half of 2008 and 5.139 billion trips during the first half of 2009.

The APTA also shows Blue Water Area Transit experiencing a 10.11 percent increase between the same two semiannual periods. BWAT had 539,300 trips during the first half of 2008 and 593,800 trips during the first half of 2009.

Local transit officials believe that people are attracted to low bus fares, easy-to-use bicycle racks, new routes and services, and extended hours that better match work schedules.

"We keep adding improvements in order to stay sensitive to our community's need for economical, comfortable, and user-friendly service," says Linda Bruckner, Blue Water Area Transportation Commission Board vice chair.

"Increased ridership is also good for the environment, because fewer cars are on the road and our buses run on compressed natural gas," explains Jim Wilson, BWAT general manager.

Compressed natural gas is an alternative fuel that saves money, promotes a clean environment by reducing carbon emissions, and reduces American dependence on foreign oil.

“An increase in the number of people choosing to ride the bus is a good thing for our entire community,” emphasizes Mike Latuszek, transportation planner for the St. Clair County Metropolitan Planning Commission.

BWATC beat its March 1981 ridership record for the first time in March 2008. Since then, BWATC has set five new monthly ridership records.

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American Public Transit Association Resources

APTA News Release: “*Recession Catches up to Public Transit Ridership, 9/25/2009*”
http://www.apta.com/mediacenter/pressreleases/2009/Pages/090925_ridership_report.aspx

APTA Transit Ridership Report, Second Quarter 2009, go to page 22 for Port Huron
http://www.apta.com/resources/statistics/Documents/Ridership/2009_q2_ridership_APTA.pdf

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.

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