



News Advisory

Blue Water Area Transportation Commission

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Blue Water Area Transit Recognizes 30 Millionth Rider

PORT HURON, Mich. — Blue Water Area Transit congratulated Cathelyn “Cathy” Callendar as their 30 millionth rider. This occurred during a ceremony on Tuesday at the transit agency’s downtown bus transfer center.

Three BWAT officials awarded her a one-year bus pass during the ceremony. They were Jim Wilson, general manager; Linda Bruckner, Blue Water Area Transportation Commission Board chair and Fort Gratiot Township trustee; and Anita R. Ashford, Blue Water Area Transportation Commission Board vice chair and Port Huron mayor pro tem.

BWAT’s ridership has taken an upward turn since 2008. That is when the agency broke its monthly ridership record for the first time in 27 years. This growing ridership led to BWAT reaching a significant milestone faster than ever before. The agency marked the last ten million riders in half the time it took to reach either the first or the second ten million rider milestones.

“We added the last ten million riders in just a little more than eight years,” said Wilson. “This compares with taking almost 17 years to reach our first ten million riders in 1993 and just over 16 years to reach our second ten million riders in 2009.”

Callendar is a frequent bus passenger who depends on BWAT for traveling around town and commuting from her Port Huron home to her job as a security guard. “Whenever I need to go somewhere, the bus drivers always give me the answer I need to board the right bus to get there,” she said. “The drivers are very helpful and I know many of them by name.”

“I just love riding the bus,” she added. “I usually read the newspaper and enjoy not having the responsibility of driving.”

BWAT’s milestone winner appreciates the new transfer center and how it has improved her riding experience. “I love the architecture... it’s just a beautiful building,” she observed. “It’s great to have a shelter that’s warm in the winter and dry when it’s raining.”

Before the new transfer center opened last year, riders waited outdoors to board buses lined up along Quay Street. The new transfer center also provides public rest rooms.

Commuters like Cathy Callendar can also save a lot of money. A person who takes public transit instead of making a daily commute by car will experience an annual savings of \$9,797. This is according to the most recent estimate by the American Public Transportation

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Association. These savings are based on the cost of commuting by public transportation compared to the cost of owning and driving a vehicle. Driving costs include the current national average gas price (\$2.38 per gallon, as reported by AAA) and the national unreserved monthly parking rate.

Blue Water Area Transit has just finished celebrating its 40th anniversary, as well as the sesquicentennial of public transportation service in the Blue Water Area.

William Pitt Edison (older brother of the celebrated inventor Thomas Edison) started the local tradition of innovation 150 years ago. He operated horse-drawn trolleys on several routes as the Port Huron & Gratiot Street Railway Company.

The Blue Water Area became one of the nation's first communities to operate electrified trolleys in the 1880s and then motor coaches in the late 1920s. Bus service started in 1927 and continued until an eight-year hiatus from 1968 to 1976. Since BWAT started publicly funded bus service in 1976, the transit agency has carried more than 30 million riders.

BWAT is Michigan's leading producer of Compressed Natural Gas, with the largest fleet of CNG fuel buses in the state. The agency started producing the alternative fuel in 1996 and now operates four public CNG fueling stations. The station located at its headquarters at 2021 Lapeer Avenue in Port Huron is open Monday-Saturday, 7 a.m. - 7 p.m. Three more stations are open 24 hours-a-day, seven days-a-week: in Marine City (516 S. Parker), in Capac (15041 Downey Road) and in Port Huron (1529 Hancock Street). The agency accepts Discover, Master Card and VISA at all four stations, which are certified by the State of Michigan.

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Cathelyn "Cathy" Callendar (far left) is presented with a one-year bus pass by BWAT officials (left to right) Jim Wilson, general manager; Linda Bruckner, Blue Water Area Transportation Commission Board chair and Fort Gratiot Township trustee; and Anita R. Ashford, Blue Water Area Transportation Commission Board vice chair and Port Huron mayor pro tem. The ceremony took place on Tuesday at the BWAT downtown bus transfer center.



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