



# News Advisory

## Blue Water Area Transportation Commission

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Learn More on September 6!

### Blue Water Area Transit First in State to Use Quantum:

#### Wheelchair Passengers Gain More Independence, Safety, Dignity

Port Huron, Mich. — Blue Water Area Transit is the first transit agency in Michigan to use the fully automatic Quantum wheelchair securement system. With the new system, passengers quickly secure their wheelchairs or other mobility devices (such as scooters or Amigos) in a safe position after boarding a bus. Bus drivers no longer need to assist with the process, which will now take less than 25 seconds.

Quantum is designed to ensure new levels of rider independence, safety and dignity. Wheelchair-using passengers simply push a button to engage the system's automatic locking sequence. Quantum's arms move into position and secure the mobility device by gripping its wheels. The system continues to adjust its grip as needed during the bus ride.

"It is exciting that our local transit company is committed to two things: first, maximizing individual choice by using state of the art equipment and also raising public awareness by promoting this new resource," said Jim Whalen, executive director, Blue Water Center for Independent Living. "It is important that access be enhanced and that knowledge about it spreads."

BWCIL is a consumer driven organization that advocates, informs and supports all people with disabilities to live independently. The organization serves consumers in five counties (St. Clair, Lapeer, Sanilac, Tuscola, Huron).

"Our wheelchair passengers are very important to us and we are glad to be able to give them an easier and more respectful experience on our buses," said Anita R. Ashford, Blue Water Area Transportation Commission Board vice chair and Port Huron mayor pro tem.

"This new system helps us keep our buses on schedule, since drivers no longer need to leave their seats to help riders secure their wheelchairs," explained Jim Wilson, BWAT general manager. "When drivers no longer need to disrupt the boarding process, all of our passengers enjoy an improved travel experience."

Wheelchair passengers are no longer singled out by a driver coming back to secure a wheelchair. The process has often frustrated riders, because it always takes time. People with disabilities are now able to get on the bus and go, just like all the other passengers.

— more —

Quantum gives bus drivers the flexibility to manage wheelchair securement from dashboard controls at the driver's seat. If a passenger is unable to press the button, drivers can easily activate Quantum to secure a wheelchair or deactivate the system to allow a passenger to exit.

Wheelchair-using passengers are secured in a rear-facing position, which provides enhanced head and neck protection. This is the preferred method worldwide and is now being widely adopted in North America.

## **Public Invited to Learn More on September 6!**

The public is invited to learn more about the Quantum system on Wednesday, September 6, from 11 am to 1 pm, at BWAT's bus transfer center in downtown Port Huron. BWAT staff and a Q'Straint factory representative will be available to demonstrate and answer questions about the Quantum system.

Q'Straint is recognized as a global leader in developing innovative solutions to advance the safety and effectiveness of wheelchair passenger travel. For more information about Q'Straint and its Quantum securement system, contact Mike Laidlaw, senior regional manager, by phone (954-732-1524) or email (mlaidlaw@qstraint.com).

For additional information about Wednesday's Quantum program, contact Lee-Perry Belleau, BWAT operations supervisor, by phone (810-987-7373, ext. 128) or email (lbelleau@bwbus.com).

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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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# Quantum Photos

Courtesy Q'Straint ([thequantumleap.com](http://thequantumleap.com))



**Passenger is securely sitting in a BWAT bus, now that the new Quantum system keeps his mobility device in a safe and stable position.**



## **Rider Independence**

Passengers in wheelchairs simply press a button to activate the Quantum system. The one-touch operation is completed by the rider in under 25 seconds. The bus driver is able to stay in the driver's seat.



## **Driver Control**

If for some reason a rider is unable to press the button, the bus driver can manage wheelchair securement by using dashboard controls at the driver's seat. Drivers can secure a wheelchair for a ride or deactivate the system so riders can exit.



### Rear-Facing Position

As the preferred securement method worldwide, rear-facing securement is now being widely adopted in North America. This provides enhanced head and neck



### Continuous Grip

Quantum continuously monitors its grip on the chair's wheels. Throughout the journey, it automatically readjusts the grip to keep wheelchairs completely secure.

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