



News Advisory

Blue Water Area Transportation Commission

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Reaching Out to Our Community!

Sail In Café & Convenience Store Job Training Site

Serves Downtown Port Huron For First Year & A Half

Port Huron, Mich. — The Sail In Café & Convenience Store marks its first year and a half serving the downtown Port Huron community this month. The job training site opened on July 12, 2016, in Blue Water Area Transit's new transit center at 722 McMorran Blvd.

St. Clair County Community Mental Health owns and operates the Sail In as a job training site. SCCCMH staff train individuals who want to gain employment skills in the food service and retail service industries. Individuals learn skills in such areas as safe food handling, customer service, cashier operation and inventory.

"We operate this location a lot like our Galley Cafe, which has served as a job training site since 2008," said Debra Johnson, SCCCMH executive director.

The new café and convenience store fills a recognized need in an area that has been designated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture as a "food desert." This designation indicates that it is an area where affordable and healthy food is hard to obtain, particularly for those without access to transportation.

The Sail In is open to the public Monday through Friday from 6:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. and Saturdays from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

"We are glad to have the Sail In serving the community at our new downtown transit center. It's especially helpful for riders who catch their buses there," said Jim Wilson, BWAT general manager. "Seven of our fixed routes go directly to the Sail In."

BWAT operates seven regularly scheduled bus routes in Port Huron and Fort Gratiot Township. They all start from the Blue Water Transit Bus Center in downtown Port Huron. Riders can catch a bus anywhere in the system every 45 minutes. On-call service is also available to residents living in Marysville and the townships of Burtchville, Port Huron and Fort Gratiot.

The Sail In Café & Convenience Store offers a selection of meal and snack items, such as nachos, hot dogs, sandwiches, soups, salads, frozen yogurt, hot pretzels, cappuccino and slushies. A recent addition to the menu are fresh fruit smoothies made with your choice of extras, such as plant protein, energizer or multivitamin additives. It also sells groceries and toiletries, including such convenience items as milk, eggs and bread.

"Downtown diners seem to be really enjoying the convenience and quality offered by the Sail In," said Anita R. Ashford, Blue Water Area Transportation Commission Board vice chair and Port Huron mayor pro tem.

SCCCMH provides integrated behavioral and physical health services to individuals in St. Clair County. The local agency operates the Sail In as a training center for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and/or mental illness. Additional information is available online at www.scccmh.org.

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.

Additional information about BWAT bus service is available online at www.bwbus.com or by calling (810) 987-7373.

PHOTOS:

Sail In students and staff pose for a photo behind the counter at the Sail In Café. From left to right: Josh Feher (Sail In employee), David Kemske (student), Kyle Duffy (Community Enterprises job trainer), and Kim London (student).

Sail In front door.

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