



Press Release

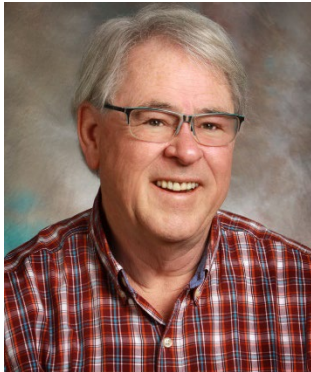
Blue Water Area Transportation Commission

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Blue Water Area Transit General Manager, Jim Wilson, announces retirement



James L. "Jim" Wilson, the General Manager of Blue Water Area Transit (BWAT), is retiring March 1st, 2021 after 30-plus years of service with the organization and 41 years in public transportation.

Under Jim's leadership and direction, Blue Water Area Transit has grown tremendously from a small, urban bus system of 21 buses and 44 employees to a full-service county-wide transportation system with 90 buses and 130 employees.

Jim's many accomplishments have brought millions of dollars of public transportation funding to St Clair County. The development of the downtown Blue Water Area Bus Center, a \$9.8 million project, has greatly enhanced the downtown area of Port Huron. The main bus facility, a state-of-the-art maintenance facility on Lapeer road, was constructed with \$15 million of federal and state funding.

The St Clair County community and environment have benefited from Jim's clean energy philosophy. The Blue Water Area Transit fleet of buses is totally powered by Compressed Natural Gas starting back to 1997. Also, BWAT recently secured a federal grant for two electric buses. This was the first grant awarded in the state of Michigan to public transportation for electric buses.

Jim began his public transit career in 1980, as an auditor for the southeast Michigan SMART Transit system. Jim became General Manager of BWAT in 1990. In 1994 he facilitated a separation of St. Clair County from the SMART system and established the current BWAT system.

Jim greatly enhanced the BWAT system in 1997 with the consolidation of 11 St. Clair County agencies' transportation services. These agencies include Community Mental Health, the Council On Agency, the Community Action Agency, Community Enterprises, the YMCA and others. With this achievement, Jim has brought millions of federal and state dollars to St. Clair County each year.

During Wilson's 30-plus years, BWAT provided over 25 million rides. The average monthly rider trips more than doubled during that time.

Jim's successful grant writing skills, his consolidation of community services and his outstanding staff development have positioned BWAT for a successful future in public transportation in St. Clair County.

Linda Bruckner, board president said, "Where public transportation goes, communities grow and Jim Wilson's dedication and leadership to public transportation in St. Clair County greatly reflects that."

"St. Clair County is a much better place thanks to Jim Wilson," she continued.

We congratulate Jim on his retirement and thank him for his many years of service to St. Clair County.

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Jim Wilson, Picture by Norton Photography