



News Advisory

Blue Water Area Transportation Commission

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Buses “On Time” With New Downtown Transfer Center

PORT HURON, MI — Blue Water Area Transit’s fixed-route buses are now running “on time” — thanks to the agency’s new downtown transfer center that opened last December. The improved on-time performance benefits the more than 2,000 passengers who transfer buses downtown daily.

“It’s great to be able to finally give our passengers a place away from traffic where they can transfer buses downtown,” says Anita R. Ashford, Blue Water Area Transportation Commission vice-chair and Port Huron City Council member.

In the new center, buses can enter from and depart in different directions. The buses also wait for passengers in two parallel lanes that are sheltered from nearby street congestion. In the past, buses waited in a single line along Quay Street before traveling along seven routes throughout Port Huron and neighboring townships.

The new configuration saves time by shortening the distance between the routes and the transfer center. Further, it saves time by shortening the walking distance between buses. It also eliminates congestion caused by such obstacles as oncoming traffic, trucks making deliveries, and special events and parades.

“Drivers had to navigate lots of obstacles when parking by the curb,” remembers Bonnie Lentz, BWAT operations manager. “It could be very time-consuming.”

The new center’s many resources, such as nearby restrooms, also contribute to improved on-time performance.

“We are looking forward to the convenience store opening this spring,” says Jim Wilson, BWAT general manager. “It will give passengers an easy way to buy last minute items before boarding buses.”

St. Clair County Community Mental Health will operate a convenience store in the center that will sell snacks and basic grocery items. When it opens, the store will provide a training opportunity for CMH clients.

BWAT's \$9.8 million transfer center project was made possible by support from federal funds (70%) and state funding (17.5%). It was designed by Stevens Architects LLC, of Port Huron, along with the global firm AECOM, and managed by DeMaria Construction, of Detroit.

The number of passengers riding BWAT buses has increased at a record-breaking pace since 2008, when the agency's monthly ridership record was broken for the first time in 28 years. Since then, BWAT has continued to set new ridership records each year.

Blue Water Area Transit continues a proud tradition of innovation in public transit that started nearly a century and a half ago. It was one of the nation's first communities to operate an electrified trolley 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, BWAT has carried more than 28 million riders.

BWAT started using compressed natural gas in 1996 and now ranks as Michigan's largest supplier of the alternative fuel. It runs the state's largest fleet of natural gas fueled buses and operates four public CNG fueling stations.

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