



News Advisory

Blue Water Area Transportation Commission

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Blue Water Area Transit Improves Downtown Area Surrounding New Bus Transfer Center

PORT HURON, MICHIGAN — Blue Water Area Transit's bus transfer center project included more than \$2.5 Million in improvements to the surrounding downtown area. The transit agency improved landscaping, lighting, parking, walkways, outdoor seating, and roads.

"Our goal was to make the area attractive and accessible to the more than 2,000 riders who board buses downtown every weekday," says Jim Wilson, BWAT general manager. "We've also made the area more appealing for all downtown visitors."

The \$9.8 Million bus transfer center project was made possible by support from federal funds (70%) and state funding (17.5%), in addition to BWAT funds.

"This is a strategic time to improve our downtown area," explains Anita R. Ashford, Blue Water Area Transportation Commission Board vice chair and Port Huron City Council member. "Developers are continuing to explore opportunities here."

According to the American Public Transportation Association, public transportation is a cornerstone of local economies. Every \$1 invested in public transportation generates approximately \$4 in economic returns, powering community growth and revitalization.

"People say we've given the area a real WOW factor," said Dave Frasier, BWAT director of procurement. "Our attention to detail has made the difference."

By paying attention to modern technology and historic details, the agency selected new high power LED lighting fixtures that capture the style of the early 1900s. The new lamps are located along the north and south sides of McMorran Boulevard.

Local contractors involved in the project include: AIS paving, Eagen Drywell, Edward J. Painting, Fessler & Bowman, Raymond Excavating, Sherman Nursery, Stevenson Electric and Zimmer Roofing.

The new bus transfer center allows riders to board seven fixed-route buses that travel within the city of Port Huron and Fort Gratiot township. BWAT also provides dial-a-ride service in Marysville and the townships of Port Huron, Fort Gratiot and Burtchville, as well as commuter service to northern Macomb County.

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Inside the new transfer center, the Sail In Café and Convenience Store sells snacks and “last minute” grocery items. It opened July 12 and is operated by St. Clair County Community Mental Health.

Port Huron and Burtchville Townships Vote August 2 on Renewal Bus Tax

Port Huron and Burtchville Townships will vote on whether to renew their respective bus taxes during the State Primary Vote on August 2. If approved, the bus tax will help pay for continued dial-a-ride bus service within the two townships.

Both townships are voting on a millage renewal. They are not requesting any millage increases for bus service.

Blue Water Area Celebrates 150 Years of Transit Service

Blue Water Area Transit is celebrating the sesquicentennial of public transportation service in the Blue Water Area, as well as its own start 40 years ago.

William Pitt Edison (Tom’s older brother) started the local tradition of innovation 150 years ago, in 1866, when his horse-drawn trolleys carried passengers from the Grand Trunk Railroad station to downtown Port Huron. The Blue Water Area soon became one of the nation’s first communities to operate electrified trolleys in the 1880s and then motor coaches in the 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 September 1976, the transit agency has carried more than 28 million riders.

Following in the steps of earlier leaders in innovation, BWAT started producing compressed natural gas in 1996 and now ranks as Michigan’s largest producer of the alternative fuel. The transit agency runs the state’s largest fleet of natural gas fueled buses and operates four public CNG fueling stations.

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