



News Advisory

Blue Water Area Transportation Commission

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Help With Jobs

Area Residents Have Received \$500,000

For Nearly One Million Miles of Job-Related Travel

PORT HURON, MI — A federal voucher program that has paid \$500,000 to provide area residents with nearly one million miles of job-related travel during the past two years is now finished issuing vouchers for fiscal year 2009. The program has helped nearly 600 area residents find and keep their jobs.

Voucher funds have been provided to the Blue Water Area Transportation Commission under a program called Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC), which is part of the federal transportation funding act.

Fiscal year 2009 is a twelve-month period that runs from October 1, 2008, to September 30, 2009. If JARC funding were renewed for fiscal year 2010, vouchers could again be requested starting on October 1, 2009.

To qualify for the voucher system, individuals must be permanent St. Clair County residents with incomes at or below 150% of national poverty levels or be receiving some form of public assistance. Drivers are reimbursed at the current IRS rate (55.5 cents per mile).

The voucher system pays for approved transportation along routes and during times not covered by existing bus services. Vouchers may be used to supplement bus passes for traveling:

- to and from work,
- for job-search activities, including interviews,
- for job-related activities, including physicals and return-to-work slips,
- for purchasing work-related clothing/supplies, or
- to work-related child care providers.

A second JARC grant provides expanded hours of service, with buses now running Monday through Friday until 10:00 p.m. in the regular service areas.

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A third JARC grant supports a new bus route between Port Huron and Macomb County. The new route operates Monday through Friday, with express service along I-94 and local service along M-29.

The three JARC grants awarded to the Commission provided just over \$1 million for FY 2009 and \$920,000 for FY 2008 (50% federal dollars and 50% state dollars).

“It is unusual to see such a large investment in our community without any required local matching funds,” explains BWATC general manager Jim Wilson.

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BWATC continues a proud tradition of innovation in public transit that has served Port Huron for more than a century. Port Huron was one of the nation’s first communities to operate an electrified transit 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, BWATC has carried more than 19 million riders and continues the tradition of innovation by producing its own compressed natural gas alternative fuel since 1996.



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