



# Media Advisory

## Blue Water Area Transportation Commission

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Blue Water Area Transit Awarded \$3.5 Million: Largest Grant Ever For The Transit Agency From Federal Program That Improves Air Quality and Reduces Traffic Congestion**

PORT HURON, MI — The Southeast Council of Governments has awarded a \$3,553,000 grant to Blue Water Area Transit. The grant comes from a federal program designed to improve air quality in areas that do not meet federal clean air standards.

This is the largest grant that BWAT has received from the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (more than double last year's \$1.5 Million and more than triple fiscal year 2007's \$1.0 Million). It will enable BWAT to purchase up to eleven new buses.

"Buying more compressed natural gas buses enables us to keep our fleet new while we provide more transportation opportunities for local residents and tourists," explains Jim Fisher, Blue Water Area Transportation Commission Board chair and Port Huron City Council member. "Compressed natural gas is an American fuel that helps keep our air clean."

This year's grant represents more than one third of the \$10 Million that SEMCOG awarded to transit agencies within its seven-county region.

"CMAQ funds have paid for most of our compressed natural gas bus fleet," says Jim Wilson, BWAT general manager. "These funds are awarded for highway or transit projects that improve air quality, and our clean-burning CNG buses are selected almost every year."

Using CMAQ funds from prior years, the agency has just placed an order for 25 new compressed natural gas buses to update the fleet that serves the community.

"We ordered three kinds of buses from three manufacturers," explains Dave Frasier, BWAT director of maintenance and procurement. "Riders will benefit from features such as wider entryways for easier handling of wheelchairs and improved security features."

Additional information about Blue Water Area Transit services is available online at [www.bwbus.com](http://www.bwbus.com) or by contacting dispatchers at (810) 987-7373.

— more —

**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 21 million riders and continues the tradition of innovation by producing its own compressed natural gas alternative fuel since 1996.

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