



# News Advisory

## Blue Water Area Transportation Commission

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### ***Fill'er Up with CNG!***

## **Blue Water Area Transit Gives Consumers and Business Fleets**

### **Local Access to America's Clean, Abundant Natural Gas**

PORT HURON, MI — Earth-friendly vehicles running on compressed natural gas can now fill up locally at Blue Water Area Transit headquarters, located in Port Huron at 2021 Lapeer Avenue. The station joins more than 550 others throughout the nation.

The transit agency's new fueling station is certified by the State of Michigan, open Monday - Saturday, 7:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m., and accepts Discover, Master Card, and VISA. The current price is \$1.68 per gasoline gallon equivalent.

"This is great news," says Mel Barclay, M.D., a retired University of Michigan Hospital professor from Ann Arbor who was one of the first customers to visit the station. An enthusiastic, self-proclaimed "CNG evangelist," Dr. Barclay owns two CNG vehicles, which he enjoys driving to his summer home in nearby Lakeport.

Natural gas is a clean, abundant, affordable, and domestic energy alternative.

"We applaud Blue Water Area Transit for providing public access," says Stephen Yborra from the advocacy group Natural Gas Vehicles for America. "This new fueling station will give consumers and business fleets the chance to utilize America's clean, abundant natural gas."

According to NGVAmerica, there are currently 130,000 compressed natural gas vehicles on U.S. roads, and over 8.4 million worldwide. One-in-five (20%) of all new transit buses on order nationwide now are powered by natural gas.

BWAT has been producing its own compressed natural gas since 1996. Its production process became more cost-effective and streamlined earlier this year with the purchase of a \$1.4 million compressor, made possible by funds awarded from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.



**"CNG Evangelist"**  
**Mel Barclay, M.D.**

*Photo by BMC Media,  
University of Michigan, 1999*

"This project helps us meet our goal of improving air quality throughout St. Clair County," BWAT general manager Jim Wilson explains.

Natural gas has been used as a motor vehicle fuel since the 1930s. In fact, at one time, all of the "Big Three" (Chrysler, Ford, and General Motors) offered passenger vehicles fueled by CNG (sold mostly to fleets).

The limited number of refueling stations in the United States has contributed to the slow growth of the CNG automobile market. During recent years, budget-constrained domestic automakers withdrew from that market in order to focus on developing hybrid and electric vehicle technologies.

Currently, there is only one CNG-powered automobile manufactured in the United States and available to today's consumer: the Honda Civic CX. However, makers of natural gas conversion resources are expanding throughout the country.

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

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