

Williamsburg Area Transit Authority Newsletter Issue 26

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Lee Hall Works to Connect WAT to HRT



Figure 1 WAT Gray Line waits in front of HRT Route 116 at Lee Hall

Every half hour on the hour and half hour, the WAT Gray Line connects with the HRT Route 116 to give WAT customers a connection to points east including Ft. Eustis and Patrick Henry Mall. Other stops on the HRT 116 include Oakland Industrial Park, Stoney Brook Shopping Center, and Jefferson Avenue and Denbigh Boulevard. Connections from the 116 include at Patrick Henry Mall include the Routes 107, 111, 113, 119, and 121. The 106 also connects at Warwick and Denbigh. The 121 connects back to the Williamsburg Transportation Center giving WAT customers additional connections to HRT along with the 116.

WATA Board Approves Budget for FY 2011

In action at the WATA Board Meeting January 21, a budget was approved for inclusion in the annual application for funds to the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation. It should be noted that although a budget is

approved that WATA is subject to the federal, state and local allocations which are to be determined over the course of the next four months. In what is considered now the “Great Recession”, revenues to support transit at state and local levels is down considerably and no additional funding is expected over the current fiscal year FY 2010. In fact, the total reduction applied for is \$508,000 from FY 10 and more cuts may be on the way. The good news is that WATA has secured federal funds (CMAQ) that should carry the current operations including frequency, Sundays and the Trolley Services through June of 2011. Also new funds were secured from the federal programs that will allow WATA to begin a Jamestown Route when the funds are available in fiscal year 2011. Service to Jamestown which would include the Settlement, Jamestown High School, Five Forks, and other locations on Route 5 and Route 31 could conceivably start as early as September 2010.

WATA Stakeholders to meet February 19

The WATA stakeholders will meet in public forum at the Quarterpath Recreation Center at 2 p.m. on February 19 to give input on WAT programs on the horizon including a pass program, new service areas, ideas for funding public transportation, and a long range vision approach. Any and all are welcome to attend and listen to presenters while taking a few minutes to air opinions and ideas. More detail will be provided on the WAT website and in future notifications.

Surry Connector has a good year



Ridership on the Surry Connector Service continues to grow as the route is now in its third year. Started in October 2007 with a rural demonstration grant from the state, the project is now dependent on federal rural transit funding, a local Surry match, and fares. Fare is \$1.50 one way. Ridership is up year to date 62% from FY 2009 or about 1,148 additional riders over the previous year comparing the data month to month. Thanks to our drivers and passengers for this unique service

WAT Employee Profile

A new feature for 2010 is our Newsletter Williamsburg Area Employee Profile. The first profile for 2010 is Full-time Bus Operator JoyceIn "Jay Jay" Austin.



Figure 2 Ms. Austin

Years as a WAT Driver: Six Years

Best Thing about Being a WAT Driver: Contact with the public, our riders. "I love our passengers"

Favorite Food: Cabbage

Favorite TV Show: Biggest Loser

Favorite Movie: "Ghost"

Favorite Book: Woman after God's Own Heart

Favorite Restaurant in Williamsburg: Golden Corral

Interesting Fact: Ms. Austin is married to Michael Austin, a Penske employee here in the Williamsburg location and they have one child "Mike-Mike"

Last Stop

The times for public transportation and organizations like WATA are "a perfect storm" of shrinking revenues from state and local sources in competition with education, safety, and other infrastructure needs. Meanwhile, the need and demand for transit has never been higher. We have a global issue of climate change which begs for new ways of reduced carbon transportation, congested roads, and ever increasing fuel prices. Transit can help, but can't do it alone. We are going to have to be creative in our future planning and financing involving the private sector, new technologies, and an overall commitment from our communities to provide a better quality of life that involves all modes of transportation from walking, biking, hybrid cars, and transit. Rail travel is popular again, but faces similar funding issues as transit. So as we move to a new year and a new decade, the challenges await and we here at WATA are ready to do our part.

