



Souhegan Valley Rides

*A door-to-door shared ride bus service
We get you there and back*

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Bus service welcomes new volunteers

Milford, NH – At a recent meeting of the Souhegan Valley Transportation Collaborative (SVTC), board members regretfully accepted the resignation of Jim Bélanger as SVTC's Hollis representative. Although he remains a strong proponent of local community transportation efforts, Mr. Bélanger will be spending most of his time in Concord as a newly elected member of the New Hampshire House of Representatives from District #5. Hollis resident Stan Swerchesky and Dick Burpee of Milford were unanimously elected to fill, respectively, the Hollis representative and the at-large positions on the SVTC Board of Directors. Mr. Swerchesky had been selected by the Hollis Board of Selectmen to fill the vacancy created by Mr. Bélanger's departure.

The SVTC Board of Directors has expanded its circle of volunteers by establishing an advisory board to help roll the bus service forward. Amherst residents Nan Stearns, Cynthia Dokmo and Pete Eiche, and Bill Parker of Milford became the first members of the newly created advisory board. SVTC is reaching out to other area residents to join the advisory board.

Speaking on behalf of SVTC, Janet Langdell, chairperson, said, "We are all very excited to welcome these neighbors onboard and look forward to benefiting from the fresh ideas and energy they each bring to the bus service."

The current priority for SVTC and its advisors is to build support in Milford and Amherst for the passage of warrant articles on March 8th to fund their community's share of the SVTC budget and thereby continue to participate in the Souhegan Valley Rides bus service. The cost to the Town of Milford to continue to participate in the service is \$35,000 and the cost to the Town of Amherst is \$5,500, based on each of their percentages of use. Hollis has already agreed to fund their share of the service through a motor vehicle registration fee, and, as they did last year, Brookline is expected to support the bus service through an item in their municipal budget.

Souhegan Valley Rides is the local community supported dial-a-ride type bus service available to all residents of Milford, Brookline, Hollis and Amherst. Rides are available within the four towns and to or from Nashua for health and social service related appointments and for limited shopping at four local plazas. The cost to the rider is only \$2



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each way, and rides must be scheduled at least 48 hours in advance. SVTC subcontracts with the Nashua Transit System to provide the handicapped accessible buses and call center services.

Souhegan Valley Rides provides an invaluable service to residents who, either temporarily or permanently, are unable to drive. The availability of this service allows residents to age in place more easily and provides support to caregivers. It is the type of transportation infrastructure that adds to the overall “livability” of our communities.

As of December 31, 2010, 2971 bus rides have been provided to residents of the four participating towns. Of these rides, 2147 rides, or 72%, were provided to Milford residents, and 330 rides, or 11%, to Amherst residents. Additionally, Hollis and Brookline residents used respectively 16% and 1% of the total rides provided.

For more information about the bus service or about volunteer opportunities with SVTC, please contact Marcia Nelson at 603-673-8482 or Carolyn Mitchell at 603- 673-1187, or email SVTC at Info@SouheganRides.org , or visit www.SouheganRides.org.



Front row from the left new Advisory Board members Nan Stearns and Cynthia Dokmo; back row from the left SVTC board members Dick Burpee and Carolyn Mitchell, new Advisory Board members Bill Parker and Pete Eiche, and SVTC board member Stan Swerchesky.

SVTC file photo 1-14-11