

REVISED Press Release from the Souhegan Valley Transportation Collaborative
For Immediate Release to the Granite Town Quarterly
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News briefs from the Souhegan Valley Rides bus service

Over 3550 Rides, Possible Expansion and Volunteers Needed

2011 Rolling in as a Banner Year!

The first four months of 2011 ended on a high note for the Souhegan Valley Rides (SVR) regional bus service. SVR received a very generous grant from the Arthur L. Keyes Trust that will support the administrative activities of the bus service during the 2011-2012 fiscal year. In addition to getting clear-cut support for the bus service from voters in Milford and Amherst, SVR provided a chart topping 201 rides in March. As of the end of April, the grand total of rides provided since October 2008 was 3575. Milford residents continue to lead the way in using the bus service. Milford residents used over 72% of the total rides provided to date. Reflecting the bus service's primary focus, 80% of the total rides have been for healthcare related appointments. On average 5 to 6 new passengers have been registering each month for the service. Seventy percent (70%) of rides are for appointments in Nashua and 30% are for appointments in Milford and Amherst.

Possible Bus Service Expansion July 5th

The Souhegan Valley Transportation Collaborative (SVTC) has been working closely with the Regional Coordinating Council for Community Transportation #7 (RCC) and with the Nashua Regional Planning Commission (NRPC) to secure federal funding for local community transportation needs. Through the State of New Hampshire's allocation of federal Section 5310 funding, resources are available to each of the RCCs to help fund coordinated transportation services for elderly persons and persons with disabilities. The Souhegan Valley Rides bus service is in line to benefit from these funds.

If all goes as planned and the contract receives final approval in Concord, expanded service will be available on a trial basis starting July 5th. The expansion plan includes increasing service from three days per week to five days per week (Monday through Friday), and adding destinations and hours to the operating schedule. SVTC, NRPC, NTS and the RCC will be working together to improve the service in order to better meet the needs of our communities. Watch for more information in the next issue of the Granite Town Quarterly.

See you at the Thursday Lunchtime Concerts on the Oval!

On July 7th, Milford Do-It will kick off their summertime lunch concerts on the Oval program. SVTC plans to be there and we hope you will join us. If all goes as planned, the “Blue Bus” will be on display at the concert from 12 noon to 1 pm. This will be a great opportunity to learn more about the bus service and to share suggestions about how SVTC can improve this valuable community resource while enjoying some great music and a delicious lunch. We look forward to talking with any and all riders, residents, and interested Souhegan Valley neighbors. The Thursday lunchtime concerts on the Oval are a great event organized by Milford Do-It. Come join the fun!

Seeking Advisory Board Members

The SVTC Board of Directors expanded its circle of volunteers by establishing an advisory board to help roll the bus service forward. In January, Bill Parker of Milford, Amherst residents Nan Stearns, Cynthia Dokmo and Pete Eiche, and Brookline’s Reverend Tim Johnson of St. Mary’s Church became the first members of the newly created advisory board. SVTC is reaching out to other area residents to join the advisory board or to become “official” Friends of the Blue Bus. If you are interested or would like further information, please call Marcia Nelson at 673-8482 or email us at GetInvolved@SouheganRides.org.

Late Cancelations and No-Shows

Although the bus service has not experienced a severe problem with last minute ride cancelations and no-shows, we want to remind passengers that these events negatively affect the efficiency of the service and add to the cost of providing the bus service. SVTC pays for the bus when it is dispatched, even if the passenger does not show up for the ride. Late cancelations hinder Nashua Transit System’s (NTS) ability to schedule as many ride requests as possible. SVTC and NTS recognize that some schedule changes are unavoidable and ask that you call NTS as soon possible to cancel a ride, preferably at least 24 hours before the scheduled pick-up time. Passengers jeopardize their privileges to use the bus service when they repeatedly have late and same day cancelations or fail to show-up for scheduled rides.

How the bus service works

Souhegan Valley Rides (SVR) is an affordable, door-to-door, shared ride bus service that takes residents of participating towns to non-emergency healthcare appointments, social service agency appointments, and shopping at four local shopping plazas. The fare is \$2 each way per passenger and medically necessary companions ride free. Appointments can be in any of the participating towns (Milford, Hollis, Brookline and Amherst) as well as in Nashua. Passengers are asked to register for the service and this can be done easily over the telephone. Rides must be scheduled at least 48 hours in advance. Passengers need to call to cancel a ride when changes arise. For better service efficiency, cancelations should be called in at least 24 hours in advance of the scheduled ride. The buses and call center operations are subcontracted from the Nashua Transit System (NTS). To register, schedule a ride, cancel a ride or for more information please contact the NTS call center at 880-0100 ext. 1. General information about SVTC and the Souhegan Valley Rides bus service is available at www.SouheganRides.org or by calling Marcia Nelson at 673-8482.