



News Briefs from
The Souhegan Valley Rides bus service
A door-to-door shared ride regional bus service

The Souhegan Valley Rides bus service is a door-to-door shared ride service using wheelchair-accessible buses and call center services subcontracted from the Nashua Transit System (NTS). Rides are available on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays to residents of Amherst, Milford, Hollis and Brookline who need assistance with transportation to non-emergency healthcare or social service appointments. Rides for shopping at Walmart in Amherst and Shaw's, Stop & Shop, and Market Basket in Milford also are available on Thursdays. The cost for a ride is \$2 each way and vouchers are available to those who cannot afford this nominal fare. For more information please contact the NTS call center at 880-0100 ext. 1 or visit www.SouheganRides.org or email any questions to Info@SouheganRides.org.

This regional community transit service was implemented in October 2008 by the Souhegan Valley Transportation Collaborative (SVTC). This initiative began as a local grassroots collaboration of residents concerned about regional community transportation options in general and the lack of affordable, wheelchair-accessible transit service in particular. The bus service was established with community support and financial investments from residents of Amherst, Brookline, Hollis and Milford, and from many local businesses and charitable organizations. All participating communities are guaranteed representation on the SVTC Board of Directors and a voice in guiding the evolution of this regional transportation service.

Over 2700 rides provided! As of October 31st, the Souhegan Valley Rides (SVR) regional bus service has provided 2702 rides to residents of Milford, Amherst, Hollis and Brookline in just over two years. SVR is experiencing a 63% increase in service as compared to its first year of operation. Milford residents continue to lead the way in using the bus service. In the past year, over 75% of the bus rides were provided to Milford residents. By far most of the shopping ride requests have been for trips to Market Basket in Milford followed by requests for trips to Walmart in Amherst.

Opportunity to volunteer! The SVTC Board of Directors is establishing an Advisory Board of interested volunteers to help steer the bus service as it rolls forward. This group will be focusing on making Souhegan Valley Rides a “household name”, strengthening our community connections, and exploring future options for the organization and service. If you are interested in learning more about this exciting opportunity, please contact Janet Langdell at Info@SouheganRides.org or (603) 860-1202.

SVTC community meetings rescheduled – During October and November, SVTC volunteers participated in the Milford Pumpkin Festival, the Southern NH Expo, and the Green and Healthy Expo co-sponsored by the Milford Area Seniors and the Milford Recreation Department. SVTC board members also staffed a bus service information booth at the Milford Middle School during the November 2nd elections. Due to this busy fall calendar, the community meetings originally planned for November 2010 are being rescheduled to January and February 2011. These gatherings are planned as forums to gather community input about the bus service and to celebrate the service’s second anniversary. All riders, residents, and interested Souhegan Valley neighbors are invited to attend. Dates and locations will be announced in the local papers and at www.SouheganRides.org.

Many thanks to Fitch’s Corner Farm Stand and Orchards! Thanks to the generosity and community spirit of David Milton, SVTC was able to handout locally grown Macintosh, Cortland and Spencer apples at the Milford Pumpkin Festival, and samples of locally grown and pressed apple cider at the Southern NH Expo. Farmer Milton recently purchased the former Woodmont Orchards in Lyndeborough and operates the farm stand at Fitch’s Corner on North River Road in Milford. Thanks Dave!