



# NEWS

## COMMUNICATIONS FOR REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION

VOLUME 4 ISSUE 1 WINTER 2007

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## Four Years of Service/ Almost 1 Million Trips

Four years is a long time by some measures. It is the length of a college career or the tenure of a United States' presidency. It is also the time that PART Express has been operating in the greater Triad; and, for those involved in helping build this system, it seems like just yesterday.

"The more people learn about PART, the more interest we receive from Triad residents," said David Morris, PART Operations Manager. "They find our Express service economical and less stressful. In addition, riders have said they are 'simply spoiled' by the service's convenience and comfort."

PART Express has been operating for 52 months and has exceeded the organization's short term goals and still recognizes a strong, steady increase in riders. "Ridership has grown from 6,000 monthly passenger trips in late 2002 to 26,000 by the end of 2007," said

Morris. "Same month ridership has increased every year with one exception. That's a remarkably strong record and a great measure of the Triad's transportation need."

"PART enhances the quality of life for Triad residents by reducing the number of cars on the road and reducing the demand for construction of more highways," said Brent McKinney, PART Executive Director. "That's a huge savings in public expenditures that benefits everyone."

PART Express provided over 700,000 passenger trips in its first four years. That is 700,000 trips not made my separate passenger vehicles. "Between our Express services and the RSVP vanpool program, PART is rapidly approaching the 1 million trip mark in its first four years. That milestone," said McKinney, "will be a great achievement to acknowledge during our fifth year."



## Trial Run in the Triad

*"Let's give it a try!"*

That was not only what PART hoped to hear from its patrons, but also its own response to the idea of extending service to Saturdays. So, on October 14th, PART operated a modified schedule of all its routes from 6:00 AM to 7:00 PM to test the demand for Saturday Service across the Triad. The ridership

was approximately 50% of a typical weekday.

**Look! Hop On A Bus.  
Try Saturday Service.**

**for** **Around the Triad** Saturday, October 14th

By Popular Demand, PART is Offering a Trial Saturday Transit Service to All Major P.A.T. Trips, See Schedule and Routes

www.PARTnc.org • 336.883.PART (7278) • 800.588.7767

Visit These Websites to Learn About Exciting Events Happening Across the Triad.

www.winstonalems.com	www.visitwinstonalems.com
www.greensboro.com	www.greensboronc.org
www.mintyncchamber.org	www.visitmooresville.com
www.highpointchamber.org	www.highpoint.org
www.kernersville.com	www.kernersvilenc.com

PART has continually received requests for operating some routes on Saturday. The greatest demand for Saturday service comes from weekend workers and students at local hospitals, restaurants, call centers and colleges. A strong demand also exists for recreation, visitation, shopping, special events and entertainment/dining.

## Point A to Point B and Beyond *“Seamless Mobility Promises A Smooth Ride”*

The PART Board of Trustees has authorized a study to evaluate the potential for creating “Seamless Mobility” for users of public transportation in the Triad.

Right now, anyone using public transportation in this region may have to juggle schedules, routes and fare structures of several different public transportation systems to get from one side of the region to the other. For those traveling longer distances, this can be a barrier to using public transportation.

Currently, the different fixed-route systems in the region are not coordinated regarding their fares and schedules. Neither are the para-transit systems coordinated; these systems provide transportation for handicapped or elderly citizens. The Seamless Mobility Study will look at what changes can be adopted in Guilford and Forsyth Counties among all these providers to create a more “passenger friendly” public transportation system.

“We need more effective public transportation,” said Doug Galyon, Chairman of the NCDOT Board of Transportation and

member of the PART Board of Trustees. “That requires coordination of fares, routes and schedules. We also need a more efficient system; that requires us to

look at how we collectively provide service and maintain our systems. A coordinated system can also better attract and channel federal and state funds for public transportation.” PART is currently drafting a scope of work for the Study. A consultant will be selected to begin work in early 2007 with a report due after several months. Funding for the Study is being provided by the NC Department of Transportation.

“This is an important step for our public transportation system in North Carolina,” said Brent McKinney, PART Executive Director.

“Other regions around the country provide coordinated, seamless, inter-city bus service, with some coordinating up to nine different providers. Soon, we hope the citizens in the Triad and elsewhere in North Carolina will enjoy this level of service too.” ■



**GTA**



**WSTA**



**Hi-Tran**



**PART**

## You Don't Have to Go It Alone

### *“Sharing the Ride Makes Sense and Saves Dollars”*

Carpooling and vanpooling are great ways to save money on daily commutes. They also reduce traffic congestion, and make everyone's ride to work faster and easier.

PART's RSVP vanpool program has grown to nearly 40 vehicles in its fleet in its four years of operation. Each van



carries between 10 and 12 riders. “A van with a dozen riders reduces commuting costs to roughly \$60 per person each month,” said David Morris, PART Operations Manager. “That's a huge savings over the cost of driving a personal vehicle.”

PART operates fourteen Park 'n Ride lots

## PART Express

### *“New Intercity Bus Routes Connected”*

PART has added routes on US 52 to Surry County and on US 421 to Boone. Both are proving popular.

The Surry Express began service on July 31 and the Mountaineer Express on August 24, 2006. “The rapid growth of ridership has exceeded our expectations. We knew demand was there for the busy US 52 corridor,” said David Morris, PART Operations Manager, “but we didn't expect so many people to begin using the service so quickly. Riders are telling their friends: it's fun, convenient, easy to use, and much less expensive than driving your own vehicle. People are choosing to park their cars today to save money and help the environment. Rural communities are seeing the benefits of this intercity bus service.”

The Surry Express services Mount Airy and Pilot Mountain with stops in Winston-Salem at Wake Forest University Baptist Medical Center, downtown, Stratford Executive Park, Five Points and several other surrounding locations.

The Mountaineer Express connects Boone with the Triad. It makes two round trips daily, seven days a week, which makes it different from all the other routes and schedules.

“One recent Friday afternoon, the Mountaineer Express bus was completely full with over 36 passengers,” said Morris. “Appalachian State University students frequently ride the bus to go home for the weekend. Their parents are delighted with the service.”

PART continually monitors demand and adjusts the service to meet it. Bigger buses have already been added to accommodate these heavier routes. ■

across the Triad with locations in Mount Airy, Pilot Mountain, Lexington, Mocksville, Thomasville, Reedy Fork (NE Guilford County), Kernersville, High Point, Winston-Salem and Greensboro. More lots in new locations will be added in 2007.

To learn how you can join a vanpool or create a new one, go to the Share the Ride NC link on [www.PARTnc.org](http://www.PARTnc.org). ■

# A Healthy Heart of the Triad Avoids Clogged Arteries

An extensive study of land use and the transportation infrastructure for the Heart of the Triad was coordinated by PART and completed in 2006. The project consultants reported to the Steering Committee four possible development scenarios along the Guilford/Forsyth County line surrounded by Greensboro, Winston-Salem, High Point and Kernersville. A draft final report was issued composed of the input and recommendations received from this committee of representatives of government jurisdictions, Chambers of Commerce, and business interests. The report proposes an effective way to develop this area for residential, business and commercial uses.

said, "If we do nothing other than let this area develop as has the rest of our regional community, it will end up with about 95,000 residents and businesses providing about 42,000-45,000 jobs. But if we carefully plan for land use, transportation and infrastructure, we have a good opportunity to provide housing for 110,000 residents, and potentially provide 140,000 jobs. With the mixed land use, people could live near their work. We estimate that about half of the trips these residents would take would be contained in the study area. That translates into fewer cars on the highways, reduced traffic congestion, reduced emissions, reduced need for infrastructure in other avenues, and



Planning consultants have noted that the Research Triangle Park is indeed one of the most successful such parks in the country, but no one lives there, they add. Consequently, the traffic congestion created at the beginning and end of each work day presents problems and sparks demand for construction of more and wider roads. Through the Heart of the Triad Study, planners hope to place residents near their jobs, schools, shopping and services as a way to improve the quality of life in the Triad.

"To benefit from the Study, the community has to implement it. Because we are working with multiple jurisdictions," said Brent McKinney,

*"That translates into fewer cars on the highways, reduced traffic congestion,...and improved air quality. Those are attractive payoffs for the Triad that can be accomplished through attention to the recommendations offered..."*

- Brent McKinney  
PART Executive Director

PART Executive Director, "the Steering Committee recognized from the beginning the need to determine a 'governance structure' which will oversee implementation of this plan." A governance structure could be any of several possibilities. It could be all the entities working together just as they are now with each jurisdiction presiding over its area and collaborating with others on Water and Sewer, roads, etc. Yet another possibility, the Steering Committee could establish a separate entity to govern development. The latter approach might be a foundation similar to what was used at Research Triangle Park. "In any case," concluded McKinney, "the Steering Committee and Elected Officials will recommend how to govern the area."

improved air quality. Those are attractive payoffs for the Triad that can be accomplished through attention to the recommendations offered by the Heart of the Triad Study."

You may see elements of the Heart of the Triad project by visiting [www.PARTnc.org](http://www.PARTnc.org). ■

PUBLIC REVIEW WELCOME.

## New Buses

As PART grows and expands its services, new, state-of-the-art buses are being added to the fleet.

PART added six new 40-foot Orion VII buses to its existing fleet of 14 in December 2006. PART buses seat



between 18 and 39 riders. Each is handicap-accessible with kneeling capabilities and quickly extending ramps for wheelchair access. Video cameras are mounted on each bus for added safety and security. Wi-Fi connectivity has also been added to translate commuting time into productive work time.

Though painted a striking black, the PART buses are distinguished from the world of public transportation by their comfort and routes. ■

Reflecting on the Study, McKinney



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### MISSION

TO ENHANCE THE  
QUALITY OF ALL  
FORMS OF  
TRANSPORTATION  
FOR EACH OF OUR  
CITIZENS THROUGH  
EFFICIENT USE AND  
PROTECTION OF  
OUR NATURAL,  
ECONOMIC AND  
HUMAN  
RESOURCES.

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RUBY REVELL  
STEFANY SOWELL

## Surry Express - The Best Deal In(to) Town

A recent economic analysis shows each Surry Express rider saves over \$600 a month in travel expenses. cents per mile (according to AAA), that one day trip saves each commuter \$34.32. For a five day week, commuting costs are \$171.60. That adds up to a personal savings of \$686 per month just for not driving to work! ■

Surry Express commuters travel an average of 66-round trip miles each day. At a cost of 52

## Bio-Bus Fueling An Education

PART is providing local bus transportation for Elon University students with the help of Federal funding. added to the fleet in 2006, and two more will arrive in early 2007. These new buses run on a 20% bio-diesel blend fuel stored

Students can take the buses around campus and to select off-campus sites for shopping or to meet other transit services.

The funding in large part through the US Department of Transportation pays for buses, fuel tanks and passenger amenities. PART manages the logistics of procurement and contracting.

A new Federal Grant has made provisions for six new buses. Four of the new vehicles were



in new fuel tanks already installed on campus.

“This is the first use of bio-diesel fuels by the University, and we believe the first in the county,” said Chuck Gantos, Director & Chief of Campus Safety and

Police. The use of bio-diesel fuel addresses the University’s concerns for improving the environment and reducing dependence on imported oil. ■