



## Last Stop

### Is Political Leadership Rewarded or Ridiculed?

**Eric Wolf, General Manager**

A state senator in Harrisburg recently stated that gas taxes and other user fees must be increased to pay to maintain roads and bridges. He had the courage to say out loud what everyone in the state legislature already knows but is afraid to utter. He will probably be rewarded for his bravery by being condemned and ridiculed across the Commonwealth.

#### The Facts

PennDOT is responsible for almost 40,000 miles of state-owned roads equal to total road mileage of New York, New Jersey, and all New England states combined. County and municipal governments are responsible for almost twice as many miles.

Blair County's Act 44 allocation from PennDOT for highways and

bridges was \$4.1 million last year and will decrease by 63% to \$1.5 million this year.

There is general agreement that Pennsylvania has a \$3.5 billion gap in transportation funding that cannot be eliminated through belt-tightening or fancy accounting.

#### The Problem

I would agree that this is a tough year to propose an increase in gas taxes and other fees, but if it doesn't happen now, if Harrisburg decides to kick this particular can down the road yet again, it could be years before we get a solution.

We are already falling farther and farther behind in maintaining our highways and bridges. The more we delay, then the more they deteriorate and the more expensive it becomes to rehab them.

I don't know about you, but I'm driving roads every day that looked fine last fall but need some serious work after the winter we just had.

#### The Solution

Modest increases in the gasoline tax, license and registration fees, along with public-private partnerships and tolling of new or expanded roads will address the problem without unfairly burdening any single geographic region or group of motorists.

Poll after poll reinforces the idea that if people can see a connection between user fees like a gas tax and improvements to roads and bridges, they will support an increase.

The question is "will we support our elected officials in Harrisburg in making a tough vote to solve this difficult problem?"



Altoona, PA

# The Trip Sheet

## Service Improvements To Begin June 13

On June 13, AMTRAN plans to institute service improvements to the bus system based on feedback from our customers.

#### Customer Survey Results

Last year, an outside firm did an in-depth survey of AMTRAN customers to find out what changes they would like to see for the bus service.

The overwhelming response was for shorter trip times, fewer transfers, one-seat rides to the grocery store, and more direct service to Wal Mart, Logan Valley Mall, and Logan Town Centre.

#### System Re-design

Based on those survey results, AMTRAN staff have spent the last six months re-designing the bus system to meet those customer needs. Our drivers have provided valuable input in making these improvements.

Beginning June 13, every route will include at least one grocery store so customers can have a one-seat ride to the supermarket. Most customers will be able to ride to Logan Valley Mall and Wal Mart without transferring. Return trips from Wal Mart and the mall will also be shorter. (Details inside.)

#### Customer Information

We want our customers to have a clear understanding of how the service improvements will affect them. So we've included some specific route information inside this newsletter.

There is additional information on the service improvements available 24/7 on AMTRAN's website [www.amtran.org](http://www.amtran.org).

You can also call AMTRAN Customer Service with your questions at 944-4074 Monday through Saturday from 5:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

#### Public Meetings for Customer Feedback

AMTRAN has scheduled five public meetings April 2-7 to meet with customers face-to-face to explain the service improvements and to get their feedback.

Three of the meetings will be held at the Trolleyworks Conference Room across from the AMTRAN garage on Fifth Avenue and easily accessible on the Eldorado, Broad, Pleasant Valley and Crosstown routes. Two meetings are on a Saturday and one meeting is on a weekday evening with a guaranteed ride home.

The Public Meeting schedule is inside this newsletter.

#### No service cuts or layoffs this year

Transit providers across the country are cutting service due to government funding reductions. For now, AMTRAN has no plans to cut service hours for the next fiscal year beginning July 1. AMTRAN plans to implement these service improvements with the same number of buses and the same number of drivers as we have now. However, if there is not a funding solution from Harrisburg soon, AMTRAN customers will be looking at significant service cuts a year from now.

Change Service Requested

amtran is the smart choice. take the bus!



www.amtran.org  
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In This Issue ... Service Improvements

## Service Improvements by Route

Look under the name of your current route.

### *Flash*

The new Flash will start earlier and will run until 4:00 p.m. connecting Penn State Altoona, Martin's Chestnut Avenue, Altoona Hospital, downtown Altoona, then to Logan Town Centre via 17th Street and back again.

From 4:00 to 9:00 p.m. (late August through early May), the Evening Flash will connect Penn State Altoona, Martin's Chestnut Avenue, Altoona Hospital to downtown Altoona and back again.

### *Eldorado & Broad*

The current Eldorado & Broad will be replaced with the new Crosstown route which will serve downtown Altoona, Fifth Ward, Broad Ave, 6th/7th Ave, 58th St, Logan Valley Mall, and Wal Mart with no transfer needed. The bus will turn around at Wal Mart and will return to downtown Altoona via the same route.

### *Crosstown to Logan Valley Mall*

Customers who now ride the Crosstown to the mall will ride the new Crosstown with a direct one-seat ride to Logan Valley Mall and Wal Mart and back.

### *Crosstown to Greenwood*

Crosstown customers who ride to Greenwood will ride the new Greenwood route with direct service between downtown Altoona and Martin's Bellmeade.

### *Pleasant Valley*

Most customers will continue to ride the Pleasant Valley with direct service to Logan Valley Mall and Wal Mart with no transfer needed. Customers on 6th & 7th Avenue (past 22nd Street) and on Logan Boulevard will take the new Plank Road route to

Martin's Plank Road and Logan Valley Mall.

### *Fairview*

Fairview customers will get significantly better service via the new Flash and new Pleasant Valley connecting to Martin's Chestnut Avenue, Altoona Hospital, and downtown Altoona with a direct one-seat ride to Logan Valley Mall and Wal Mart (via Pleasant Valley) or to Logan Town Centre (via Flash).

The Evening Flash will connect Fairview to Penn State Altoona, Martin's Chestnut Avenue, Altoona Hospital, and downtown Altoona from 4:00 - 10:00 p.m. (late August through early May).

### *Hollidaysburg/Duncansville*

The new Hollidaysburg route will run every trip from downtown Altoona to Logan Valley Mall, Wal Mart, Martins Wye Switches, and Duncansville to the Courthouse in Hollidaysburg and back again.

### *West Plank and Logan Town Express Routes*

Customers for Logan Valley Mall and Wal Mart can take a direct one-seat ride on the Pleasant Valley, Crosstown, and Hollidaysburg. Customers for Logan Town Centre can take the Flash.

### *East End and Juniata*

No changes to the East End or Juniata routes. They will be through-routed with the Plank Road route to Logan Valley Mall.

### *AM to Work Bus and Home Run*

No changes to the AM Work Bus. Home Run customers will now utilize the new Night Owl from 4:00 - 10:00 p.m.

## Penn State Altoona Service Improvements

Penn State Altoona will be served by the Crosstown, Flash, and Pleasant Valley routes which will connect the Ivyside Campus to the Downtown Campus every 20 minutes until 5:00 p.m. Monday through Saturday with less frequent service after 5:00 p.m.

The Blue and White Loops will be every 20 minutes Monday through Friday until 5:00 p.m. with less frequent service thereafter.

### *Other connections and evening service*

Penn State students will be able to connect to Logan Town Centre, Logan Valley Mall, and Wal Mart from the Hawthorn Shelter with no transfer necessary in the daytime. The last Night Owl trip will leave Logan Valley Mall at 9:00 p.m. Monday through Saturday.

## Public Meeting Schedule

### Saturday, April 2

10:00 am - 12:00 noon and 2:00 - 4:00 pm

Trolleyworks Conference Room

across from the AMTRAN garage via Eldorado, Broad, Pleasant Valley and Crosstown routes.

### Tuesday, April 5

5:00 - 7:00 pm

Trolleyworks Conference Room

If you can get to this meeting using a regular route, we will make sure that you get a ride home.

### Thursday, April 7

9:00 am at Green Avenue Tower

11:00 a.m. at IDA Tower

## More Direct Service to Important Destinations

Our customers told us that they want more direct service to Wal Mart and Logan Town Centre. They also want one-seat rides to the grocery store. Our service improvements are a direct response to these customer requests.

### *Wal Mart and Logan Valley Mall*

The Crosstown, Pleasant Valley, and Hollidaysburg routes all connect the Downtown Transit Center directly to Logan Valley Mall and Wal Mart with no transfer necessary. Return trips will be shorter and more direct as well.

### *Grocery Stores*

Every bus route will have a direct one-seat, no transfer ride to at least one grocery store.

Martin's Chestnut Avenue via Flash, Pleasant Valley, and Juniata routes. Weis Valley View via East End and Greenwood. Giant Eagle Logan Town Centre via the Flash. Martin's Plank Road via Plank Road. Weis Park Hills via Pleasant Valley. Martin's Wye Switches via Hollidaysburg. The Save a Lot is on the Pleasant Valley route. Martin's Bellmeade via Greenwood.

### *Altoona Hospital and Station Medical Center*

Altoona Regional Health System (Altoona Campus) will get direct one-seat, no transfer rides on the Flash and the Pleasant Valley routes.

Station Medical Center will get direct one-seat rides on the Flash and Greenwood routes.

### *Evening Service*

The new Night Owl route will connect major destinations until 10:00 p.m. Monday through Saturday.