

WCCE

WASHINGTON COUNTY
COMMUTER EXPRESS

THE WCCE CONNECTION



May 2009

CONSTRUCTION UPDATE

Until mid June, traffic is being detoured off of US 45, due to the closure of both north and southbound on- and-off ramps at STH 145 for construction of roundabouts. The WCCE routes will be detoured off US 45 by using STH 60 and US 41. This detour will add approximately 3-5 minutes to all final Southbound arrival times. Southbound routes will first notice the additional 3-5 minutes at Richfield and Lannon Road Park and Rides. Northbound routes will notice the additional 3-5 minutes at Fair Park and West Bend Park and Rides. We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause you and will keep you informed of more detailed information as it is received.

TRANSIT—IT WORKS TRANSIT WEEK MAY 18—24

“Americans are riding public transportation at record levels, with 10.7 billion trips taken in 2008, the highest in 52 years.” said William W. Millar, president of the American Public Transportation Association. More than 73 million transit rides are provided by Wisconsin’s bus systems each year. The WCCE provided over 111,000 transit rides in 2008 and the numbers continue to increase. Transit is vital to the economic and environmental quality of life all Wisconsinites enjoy. By using Wisconsin’s transit systems, you help ease traffic congestion, improve air quality, reduce gasoline consumption, create economic opportunity, and enhance our state’s quality of life.

We are grateful to you, our commuters for using the WCCE on your daily commutes. In honor of National Transit Week and to say thank you, Washington County will be giving you reusable bags and water bottles during the week of May 18. This is also a way to help the environment by using the bags for shopping and the water bottles in place of throwaway bottles.

Commuters who ride public transit to work are now eligible to receive an increase in the monthly transit benefit offered by their employer. The maximum transit benefit is now equal to the parking benefit and increases from \$120 to \$230 per month. The change is a part of the economic stimulus package passed by Congress. Contact your HR Department for more information.

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WCCE

W201N13900 Fond du Lac
Richfield, WI 53076
262-677-3445 or
1-888-675-WCCE (9223)

**Washington County
Shared Ride Service**
1-888-285-TAXI (8294)

Comments:

info@RideWCCE.com

Website:

www.RideWCCE.com



WASHINGTON COUNTY
WISCONSIN

COMMUTER CHAT

The WCCE is a public transit service provided for the residents of Washington County. It began ten years ago and throughout those years, the individuals riding it have become part of a special commuter community. You spend a lot of time with your fellow commuters and have gotten to know some of them. We would like to introduce two commuters, one who has been riding since the beginning and one that started nearly three years ago.

Bonne Helminski

Meet long time commuter Bonnie Helminski. Bonnie began riding the Washington County Commuter Express (WCCE) just months after the service began. She had seen some advertising and as she wasn't real happy with her commute at the time (taking a Milwaukee County Freeway Flyer from the Pilgrim Road Park & Ride) thought she'd give it a try. From the beginning when she started her day with a comfortable ride on one of WCCE's coaches, boarding at the former Field's Furniture location in West Bend she has been a daily rider. Now she begins her commute at the Paradise Park & Ride.

If she would drive, she would have automobile and parking costs and

as her employer offers the Milwaukee County Transit System commuter value certificate (see separate article explaining the certificates) for her to use, it is a more economical and certainly more comfortable way to commute. Bonnie appreciates the timely schedule and if needed, the flexibility that the midday route home provides. At her suggestion, her sister uses the service to get to the occasional downtown meeting. Bonnie and her husband have lived in West Bend since 1986 and their son who lives in Milwaukee has used the WCCE to West Bend on a Friday evening and returns to the city Monday morning.

Having worked downtown since 1970, she knows a little something about the best way to get there, and for Bonnie, that's the WCCE.

Kelly Boyer

Meet fellow rider Kelly Boyer. Kelly has been riding the Washington County Commuter Express since the Fall of 2006 when her company moved from the Menomonee Falls area to Research Park in Wauwatosa.

Kelly enthusiastically lists many reasons for using the WCCE starting

with the fact that her 40-mile commute would add a lot of miles to her car as well as making oil changes necessary every 6 weeks and the price of gas just kept going up. That combined with the realization that 95% of the time she was the only one in her car made not taking the bus seem wasteful. In addition to the cost savings and environmental benefit, being able to multi-task while commuting allows her to make the best use of her time.

Kelly appreciates the WCCE because it allows her to relax and let someone else do the driving (in the carpool lane!), have work related discussions with co-workers who also ride, make new friends or even catch up on some sleep. It saves the wear and tear on her car, plus it inspires her to carpool when she needs to drive. She appreciates that she gets good cell phone reception so she can make calls on the way home, and once she is home, can get started with her evening plans having that out of the way.

Kelly is such a fan of the WCCE, that she helped us make our information available to others in the Research Park - thanks Kelly!

EMERGENCY RIDE HOME

Since the beginning of the WCCE Transit program, the Department of Transportation and Washington County have offered riders a way home in case of emergency, through the "Emergency Ride Home" program. The program will provide transportation to a WCCE commuter ONLY in case of an emergency; for example, illness at work or illness of a family member.

If you have an emergency and need a ride back to Washington County, you should:

- 1) Call the Washington County Taxi Service at 1-888-285-TAXI (8294).
- 2) Identify yourself as a WCCE commuter and request an emergency ride.
- 3) Once the taxi vehicle has arrived to provide you transportation, you will be requested to fill out a form.

The ER Program is provided strictly to WCCE commuters only. If the program privileges are abused, the program will be restricted or eliminated. We want our commuters to know that they will never have to worry about getting home. You can obtain an Emergency Ride Home card from your bus driver.

MEET JON EDGREN, THE WASHINGTON COUNTY HIGHWAY COMMISSIONER

Jon Edgren joined the Washington County team in January as the new Highway Commissioner. Included in Jon's responsibilities is oversight of the transportation program which includes the Washington County Commuter Express and the Shared Ride Taxi program.

Mr. Edgren's background includes 12 years of municipal engineering experience including being a consulting engineer for the town of Grafton and the town of Pleasant Springs. He has a bachelor's degree in civil engineering from the University of Wisconsin – Madison,

and maintains his strong Badger loyalty during basketball and football seasons.

He hit the ground running as he started his new position with the negotiations of the Richfield park and ride property and the task of becoming familiar with all aspects of the County's transportation infrastructure. Since starting, Mr. Edgren has spent a lot of time meeting with residents, reviewing the state of local roads, and overseeing the County crew's constant workload to make the roads safer and smoother.



Additionally, he has been working with the DOT trying to obtain Federal funds as part of the economic stimulus for the benefit of Washington County residents.

Mr. Edgren believes that Washington County has an efficient transit program, and looks forward to continuing to serve the residents of Washington County with cost effective transit operations with Joseph Steier, Washington County Transit Manager.

KEEP INFORMED THROUGH THE INTERNET AND TEXT MESSAGES

There are many ways you can stay connected to the WCCE and other transit commuters. One is the WCCE website at www.RideWCCE.com. This site is continually updated as changes occur on our system. An even faster way to find out about changes is to be on our email blast list. If you would like to be updated in case of route changes or kept informed on activities regarding the Washington County transit program, please send your email address to info@RideWCCE.com.

You might want to consider providing both a work and home email address if you don't have access to your work email from home.

Something new will be coming in a few weeks. You will be able to receive a text message alerting you of changes in routes due to weather conditions or road construction. We will inform you when this becomes available so you can sign up to receive text alerts.

Another way to get connected and keep informed is through the Southeast Wisconsin Transit Systems website—yourotherwheels.com

You can create your own profile and be sent updates on promotions and news affecting transit. They recently had a Smart Rider contest, where WCCE commuter, Chris was

a finalist. Other WCCE commuters have been involved in past contests.

You can also become a Facebook fan to the newly formed Southeast Wisconsin Transit Systems Facebook. Join by going to: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Southeast-Wisconsin-Transit-System/61969416649>

The WCCE is a member of the Southeast Wisconsin Transit Systems, which is a partnership between the six area bus systems. The partnership goal is to promote the benefits of riding along with being dedicated to providing affordable, convenient transportation to all.



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Still Driving?
TRY THE BUS!

1-888-675-WCCE RideWCCE.com

WISCONSIN AVENUE CONSTRUCTION

The City of Milwaukee is doing construction along Wisconsin Avenue between 4th and Broadway. It will continue through summer as they finish up road work and start streetscaping. The WCCE Downtown Milwaukee Route, both Eastbound and Westbound, will continue detouring off Wisconsin Ave. between 4th and Broadway Streets during this time. The bus stops of these routes will be moved from Wisconsin Ave., to a comparable stop on Michigan between 4th and Broadway. There might be a very minimal delay in the schedule. You will be notified of any changes through email, flyers on the motor coaches and your bus driver. Thank you for your patience and understanding.

COMMUTER ETIQUETTE

As the number of commuters continue to increase, resulting in more individuals on the WCCE motor coaches, it is important to remember to respect your fellow commuters with common courtesy. We are very fortunate to be using comfortable motor coaches instead of the traditional transit bus. For some riders, this is an hour commute each way. Some commuters are catching up on sleep or studying or working. Our goal is to help eliminate stress for our riders, not increase it. Listed below are guidelines to help make the commute an enjoyable ride for all individuals.

- All WCCE passengers are to act and behave appropriately while utilizing bus services.
- Be courteous of your fellow riders.
- Use only one seat per commuter unless extra seats are available; use overhead luggage compartments for extra items.
- When using cell phones, please use soft voices and be aware of your fellow commuters.
- Do not use loud voices or profane language.
- Remain seated until the bus has stopped at your arrival location.
- If a passenger becomes offensive, threatens others, or is otherwise disorderly, the WCCE provider will report the incident in writing to the County. The County shall have the right to refuse service or impose suspension from use of the WCCE.
- Appeals regarding suspensions or refusal of service can be made to the Committee in writing.
- Any comments or suggestions, please email us at info@RideWCCE.com

COMMUTER VALUE CERTIFICATE

Many commuters ask about the Commuter Value Certificate and how they can obtain one. Let us explain:

The Commuter Value Certificate program is administered by Milwaukee County Transit to Milwaukee-based employers. It enables employers to offer a no-charge and tax-free transit benefit to their employees. Employers purchase Commuter Value Certificates from Milwaukee County Transit after signing a Letter of Agreement which details their responsibilities while participating in the program. Employers then provide the Commuter Value Certificate to their employees.

The Washington County Commuter Express does accept the Milwau-

kee County Transit System Commuter Value Certificate. We do not accept the Commuter Value Pass.

REDEMPTION OF THE COMMUTER VALUE CERTIFICATE:

WCCE ticket outlets are authorized to accept the Commuter Value Certificates in exchange only for WCCE ticket strips. The Commuter Value Certificate has an exchange value equal to the cost of a standard Milwaukee County Transit System (MCTS) adult weekly pass or 10 adult tickets, but has no actual cash value, and cannot be used for cash refund, exchange, or cash-back transactions. The current value is \$16.50.

There is no cash refund or change given for the Commuter Value Certifi-

cates. The certificates are accepted only in exchange for WCCE Ticket strips.

For example, a WCCE ticket strip sells for \$27.50 each. A commuter may redeem two \$16.50 Commuter Value Certificates for one \$27.50 WCCE ticket strip. The Commuter Value Certificates will be accepted, but no cash refund or change will be given in return. Or, the commuter may redeem one \$16.50 Commuter Value Certificate and pay an additional \$11.00 cash for one \$27.50 WCCE ticket strip.

The reverse side of the Commuter Value Certificate should be completed by the commuter before redeeming, including the commuter's name, address, and telephone number.