

NEW TRANSIT PROVIDER IN MONTOUR COUNTY

DANVILLE – Montour County residents who utilize Shared Ride transportation services will have a new provider effective July 1, when the Central Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (rabbittransit) assumes operations here.

Montour County Commissioners said the decision to move to rabbittransit was not about the quality of Montour County Transit's service but was driven by increasing regulatory requirements and their associated costs.

“We cannot thank our Transit drivers enough for their dedication to the people of Montour County. The job they performed was second to none and we feel anyone who has utilized our Transit system would say the same,” said Commissioner Chairman Kenneth Holdren.

However, attempting to continue as a small, stand-alone agency in the face of costly software requirements and manpower investments, Montour County could no longer go it alone, he said. “Partnering with rabbittransit made the most sense as they are already operating transit services throughout the area, including Columbia, Northumberland, Snyder and Union counties,” Mr. Holdren explained.

Montour County riders will continue to experience quality service under rabbittransit's leadership as well as expansion of services in the future, he said.

With the transition to rabbittransit, a new fare structure will occur effective July 18 as the implementation of software will move fees from a zone-based to a mileage-based system. Many riders will have no increase or see a minimal impact. Seniors will see no changes to the .75 cent co-pay for all medical trips, senior center trips and four necessity trips per month.

Most of the trips for riders who pay the full co-pay amount are within 10 miles of the rider's home, and this increase is .55 cents per boarding for seniors and persons with disabilities. Trips for riders who utilize the Medical Assistance Transportation Program (MATP) will continue at no cost. Riders are advised to confirm their co-pay amount at the time of their trip reservation.

It is important to note that the current fares, which have not been raised in over a decade, have not kept pace with inflation for transportation costs, said Richard Farr, rabbittransit Executive Director.

“This will be the first increase, in any level, of fares in eleven years in Montour County,” Mr. Farr commented. Even with the fare increase, Montour County “will still have the lowest fare structure in five counties.”

Mr. Farr pointed out the Public Transportation Consumer Price Index over this time period has been 27 percent. The new fare system is expected to generate 6.6 percent more revenue for the transportation system. Should fares not be raised, Montour County could be faced with the prospect of raising taxes to ensure the solvency of the transit program in the County, he said.

While riders will initially see little change in operating hours and locations, there are plans over time to expand hours of service and locations. Being part of a regional transit program may provide opportunities to offer additional service to more areas, Mr. Farr noted.

County residents needing to schedule a ride or sign up for services can call 1-800-632-9063 starting July 5 for services on or after July 18. Residents can still use the current Transit phone number of 570-271-0833 through July 17 to arrange transportation.