

NEWS

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A boost for rural North Dakota bus and van transit

Bismarck – Public transportation in rural North Dakota logged about 2.7 million miles in 2013, even though many rural residents aren't aware that public bus and van service is available, according to transit service providers.

"Anyone of any age can ride rural transit," explained Becky Hanson, the Transit program manager for the North Dakota Department of Transportation. "People seem to think these services are only for the elderly or disabled, but that's not true," Hanson said.

The Transit program and its 34 rural transit service providers across the state are trying to overcome this misperception through a new information program called, "You've Got a Ride North Dakota" which launches this month to create awareness of the availability and benefits of public transit.

The North Dakota Transit program's goal is to improve rural residents' access to education, work, shopping, restaurants, entertainment and health care through economical public transportation.

A number of the public transit providers in the state also provide senior care or other services for the aging, but provide services to many other types of riders. "We also get families to daycare, students to their college classes and take people right to their job-site," said Pat Hansen of South Central Adult Services, the public transit provider for Emmons, Logan and McIntosh counties.

Public rural transit serves all 53 counties in North Dakota. Only a few other states have public transit services in 100 percent of their counties. By comparison, only about half of the counties in Montana and Wyoming have public transit ([according to the 2015 Fact Book by the Small Urban and Rural Transit Center at the Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute](#)).

Most of the transit service miles in rural North Dakota are driven by "demand-response" as opposed to fixed-route bus service. Residents call in advance to request a ride, get picked up at their location and delivered to their destination.

youvegotaride.nd.gov

“Our motto is, we get you where you need to go. With statewide rural transit in North Dakota, you’ve got a ride,” said Susan Fossen of Benson County Transportation.

Information, schedules and phone numbers for rural transit providers can be found at youvegotaride.nd.gov. Those without Internet access can call 1-800-920-9595.

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