



NEWS RELEASE



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Grand Opening Celebration for Eco-Friendly Big Blue Bus Transit Store Set for December 5

“Greenest Store in Downtown Santa Monica” to Feature Trip Planning Service, Transit Fares and Earth-Friendly Merchandise

SANTA MONICA, Calif. – November 28, 2007 – The city of Santa Monica is ready to roll out the red carpet for the grand opening celebration of its unique new customer service destination called “blue: the transit store.” The event will take place on December 5 at 11 a.m. on the Third Street Promenade in Santa Monica.

The public event is being held to showcase the transit store to the Santa Monica community, and will feature appearances by city officials, local environmental groups and other VIP guests, a ribbon cutting, transit-themed giveaways, live music, blue-themed refreshments and tours of the popular Mini Blue buses.

“We’re so pleased with how the transit store turned out, and especially with all the latest green technology that’s been built into it,” said Big Blue Bus General Manager Stephanie Negriff. “The store has a lot to offer, and we hope everyone will stop by and take a closer look.”

Negriff emphasized that locating the store in the heart of two bustling shopping districts like the Third Street Promenade and Santa Monica Place Mall was one of the best ways to make transit accessible to a large number of people. The store’s convenient location is a big plus for regular transit riders and potential riders who are “transit curious.”

“The downtown location just seemed like a natural, and judging by the comments we’ve already received, we think the store’s going to be a big success,” said Negriff.

The transit store is located at 223 Broadway just west of the Third Street Promenade in the center of the “transit mall” in downtown Santa Monica, and is within two blocks of almost every Big Blue Bus line. It serves as the new home for the Big Blue Bus customer service team, and offers trip planning, maps, schedules and a large variety of bus fares, including Day-Passes, Little Blue Cards, EZ transit passes, Student Punch Cards and Metro EZ Passes.

An added benefit of moving the customer service staff to the new location is that it allows for extended service hours from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday, and noon to 6 p.m. on Saturday.

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In addition to offering transit fares, the store also features a custom-designed line of earth-friendly products including paper products made of seeds that grow California wildflowers, organic T-shirts and transit-themed merchandise. To help celebrate the grand opening, a free Mini Blue pass is being offered for every purchase of \$10 or more through December 31.

A highlight of the store's retail offerings is a collection of special limited edition vintage bus token jewelry specifically designed for the transit store and hand tooled by Santa Monica artisans Susan Ryza and Sharon Keasling. The jewelry is available in 30 different styles, and includes necklaces, bracelets and earrings, made primarily from materials such as recycled glass beads, semi-precious stones, natural seashell and wood beads, and leather. The tokens used in the jewelry are actual Big Blue Bus tokens dating from the 1930s through 1950s, which were found earlier this year in a vault at the transit agency's storage facilities. The tokens have been recycled to create a piece of Santa Monica history that anyone can enjoy wearing.

The 900-square foot store, designed by noted Venice, California architect Warren Wagner, doesn't miss an opportunity to incorporate green technology and materials wherever possible. According to Wagner, who has been involved with the passive solar design and sustainable building movement for more than two decades, the store is a showcase for environmentally conscious retail development.

"There are certain materials that I like to use in projects, like photovoltaic solar panels and strawboard, and I was pleased to be able to incorporate these into the transit store design," said Wagner. "We also wanted to use Eco-surface recycled tire flooring because it just seemed completely appropriate for a transit store."

Wagner said part of the challenge for the project was designing a multi-functional space that had to fit seven employees, public seating and retail space – all within a former hair salon.

"That's a lot of usage for a small space, but when you're inside the store itself, it feels very airy and spacious, partly because of the day-lighting strategy we used and also because of the high ceilings and light-colored materials."

Some of the energy efficient and sustainable elements used in the transit building include:

- Recycled rubber tire floors
- Recycled paper and plastic counters
- Renewable formaldehyde-free strawboard walls and cabinetry
- 3Form eco-resin stair infill panels
- Operable louvered windows for natural ventilation
- Low-VOC (volatile organic compound) paints and finishes
- Windows and ceilings designed to allow natural daylight in
- Solar photovoltaic panels to provide off-grid energy for exterior signage

The grand opening transit store event will take place Wednesday, December 5 at 11 a.m. on the Third Street Promenade at the intersection of 3rd Street and Broadway in Santa Monica. The ribbon cutting ceremony will take place directly after the official program at approximately noon at blue: the transit store, located at 223 Broadway in Santa Monica.

For more information or high-resolution photos of the transit store and the antique bus token jewelry, please contact Francine Pares at 949-481-7559 or fpares@intelibrand.com. Additional Big Blue Bus information is available at www.bigbluebus.com and www.bigbluebus.com/shopblue/.

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