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NEWS RELEASE



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Big Blue Bus Ridership Grows As Price of Gas Continues Its Record-Breaking Climb

- ***Latest figures show a substantial increase in number of passengers, with some popular lines increasing by double and triple percentage points.***
- ***New data also reveals 86 percent on-time performance record.***

SANTA MONICA, Calif. - March 14, 2008 - Santa Monica's Big Blue Bus announced today that its most recent ridership figures show a substantial increase in the number of people who are choosing to take the bus around the transit agency's nearly 52 square-mile service area.

The latest data shows that between 2004 and 2007, ridership increased overall by 2.3 percent, which is higher than the national average. This translates into half a million more trips taken every year.

Weekday trips grew by 1.3 percent during the same period, thanks in part to large gains in such popular routes as the Crosstown Ride, which increased by 133 percent, Line 13 which was up 46 percent and Line 4, which showed a 22 percent increase.

The weekend figures showed even bigger gains, with ridership figures up by 9.6 percent on Saturdays and 7.3 percent on Sundays. This translates into 4,500 more people taking the bus on weekends.

In addition, the Big Blue Bus fleet carries an average of 51 passengers per vehicle hour compared with the national average of 26, as reported by Transtrack.

"I think people are realizing that taking transit makes a lot of sense, especially with gas prices so high and people having to spend so much more of their income now on filling up the tank," said Big Blue Bus Customer Relations Manager Dan Dawson.

"For less than a dollar, you can go almost anywhere the Big Blue Bus travels in its service area, which includes not only Santa Monica but cities all around Los Angeles, including places like downtown Los Angeles, UCLA and LAX," said Dawson. "The Mini Blue rides, which are smaller buses we operate on short routes to all the popular Santa Monica destinations, are also an excellent way to get around and do everyday errands and shopping within the city, with no hassles like trying to find a parking spot."

According to new figures released this month by the American Public Transportation Association (APTA), Americans took over 10 billion trips on public transportation in

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2007, the highest level recorded in 50 years. APTA noted that public transportation use is up by 32 percent overall since 1995, a figure more than double the 15 percent growth rate of the population.

With gas prices soaring past the \$4 mark in some places, and no end in sight to the skyrocketing cost of crude oil, the option of taking public transit is taking center stage both locally and across the nation as one of the most viable and low cost ways for people to save money while also helping to improve the quality of the environment.

A regular fare on the Big Blue Bus is 75 cents, with reduced prices available for students and seniors. Day passes, which can be used for multiple trips in a single day anywhere the Big Blue Bus travels, start as low as \$2.50, with seniors and student passes available for \$1.25. Day passes can be purchased at the Big Blue Bus transit store, and also at a variety of area libraries, schools and convenience stores.

The Big Blue Bus transit store and customer service center has seen a steady increase in traffic since it opened its doors in November 2007. Located near the Third Street Promenade at 223 Broadway in downtown Santa Monica, the store offers trip planning assistance, maps, schedules, and a full range of transit fares. The transit store is open from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday, and noon to 6 p.m. on Saturday.

"People can just drop in and we'll help plan their trips for them, whether it's the best route to take to get to work or school, or for one of our weekend getaways to events happening all over Southern California," said Dawson.

Using public transit, even occasionally, instead of driving a car is one of the most powerful personal commitments people can make to conserve energy and positively impact the environment, said Dawson.

"If every American took transit for just one out of every 10 trips, we would be able to reduce dependence on foreign oil by as much as 40 percent. That's a huge number."

Also of note in the latest data was the Big Blue Bus' on-time performance record, which is at 86 percent. On-time performance indicates the percentage of time buses arrive either ahead of schedule or on time at each designated stop. Such high on-time performance means that passengers are rarely kept waiting to board their buses.

"We're operating at a higher efficiency than most agencies across the country," said Big Blue Bus General Manager Stephanie Negriff. "We are always trying to improve the customer experience, and so being at the stops when we say we'll be there helps improve customer satisfaction and allows us to continue to be a reliable source of transportation for our passengers."

The Big Blue Bus services Santa Monica, Venice, Playa del Rey, Westwood, downtown and West Los Angeles, Westchester, Marina del Rey, Brentwood, Beverly Hills, Century City, Rancho Park, Pacific Palisades, Culver City, Palms, Westdale and Cheviot Hills.

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For more information about the Big Blue Bus, please visit www.bigbluebus.com, or call Customer Service at 310-544-5444 (TDD 310-395-6024). For media inquiries, please contact Francine Pares at 949-481-7559 or fpares@intelibrand.com.

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About the Big Blue Bus

The Big Blue Bus operates a fleet of over 200 energy efficient vehicles transporting more than 80,000 passengers a day across a nearly 52-square mile service area. Nationally recognized for its long-standing commitment to a cleaner environment, the entire fleet operates on alternative fuels, including liquefied natural gas (LNG), which helps cuts emissions by over 80 percent. Serving Santa Monica and the Los Angeles area since 1928, the Big Blue Bus has won numerous national awards for its customer service, safety and efficiency.