



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

NEWS

URBAN MASS TRANSPORTATION ADMINISTRATION

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Special bus routes connecting unemployed residents of Detroit's inner city with suburban jobs will begin soon under a Department of Transportation grant.

Secretary of Transportation John A. Volpe announced today awarding of \$315,000 in Federal funds to the Southeastern Michigan Transportation Authority (SEMTA) to establish and operate the special routes, specifically aimed at providing access to jobs for hard-core unemployed.

The grant will be administered by the Department's Urban Mass Transportation Administration.

Specifically, seven routes will link points in the inner city residential area with seven suburban industries: three Ford Motor Company plants; two Chrysler Corporation stamping plants; McClouth Steel Company, and the Ling-Tempco-Vought Aerospace plant.

A unique feature of the project is that it tends to link small neighborhoods with specific job sites. Baltimore has a similar program, although their's is a "job retention" rather than a "job hiring" transit project.

The routes will be timed with shift changes. One-way fares will range from 30 to 40 cents.

The program was initiated when a study showed that thousands of suburban jobs went begging for want of adequate transportation for unemployed inner city residents.

Regular bus service between the suburbs and downtown Detroit passes up the inner city residential area, being by-and-large a direct link between the suburbs and Detroit's central business district, which is surrounded by the inner city residential area.

The new demonstration program will, in effect, provide a "reverse commute" link for the inner city residents.

Secretary Volpe said of the grant, "A major goal of this Department is providing adequate public transportation to persons who cannot avail themselves of private automobiles. This project fits that need perfectly.

"Unemployment is a major problem in our cities today, and inadequate transportation to jobs is a reason for urban unrest. This project is one more step toward lessening the problem of unemployment."

UMTA Administrator Carlos C. Villarreal said of the grant, "This is a very worthwhile project. It meets the criteria of our program efforts to have public transportation serve all the people of the city. Job transportation is a very high priority with us. We are pleased that the people of the Detroit region are moving ahead on this project."

The demonstration project will last 24 months, at which time it will be decided whether to extend the project or otherwise continue the special routes on a regular basis.

Total cost of the project is \$350,000, the balance of funds to come from local sources.

Four transit companies -- Detroit Street Railway, Great Lakes Transit, Metropolitan Coach and Lake Shore Coach -- will participate in the project. Eight public and private organizations conceived the project and will continue to advise on it, including the Neighborhood Service Program, Model Cities Board, Mayor's Committee for Human Resources Development, New Detroit, Inc., National Alliance of Businessmen, Greater Detroit Chamber of Commerce, Southeast Michigan Council of Governments and the Michigan Employment Security Commission.

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