



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

NEWS

URBAN MASS TRANSPORTATION ADMINISTRATION

FOR RELEASE MONDAY
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UMTA 10-74

Phone: (202) 426-4043

Secretary of Transportation Claude S. Brinegar today announced a \$494,880 Urban Mass Transportation Administration (UMTA) grant to the City of Hattiesburg, Mississippi to assist in the purchase of six new 45-passenger, air-conditioned diesel transit buses, seven new 19-passenger air-conditioned buses, land, related bus equipment and the construction of a modern new maintenance facility. Acquisition of the new equipment will allow a public takeover of public transportation in the Hattiesburg area.

"Without citizen, and public support the future of transit in Hattiesburg and countless other cities throughout the nation is indeed bleak. Increased operating costs, and aging equipment with a resulting loss in ridership require public intervention to maintain and improve mobility for millions of Americans," Secretary Brinegar said.

Mississippi City Lines, Inc. the principal mass transportation carrier in the Hattiesburg metropolitan area, has been providing month to month service under an agreement by which the City of Hattiesburg provides the private company with an operating subsidy. Since the system's public transit franchise ended in 1971, continuation of service became doubtful. Because of the age and condition of the fleet, subsidies became necessary and the City was forced to look to alternatives in the operation of the system. In 1973, and faced with the possibility of a cessation of bus operations, citizens voted to provide bonds in support of transit in Hattiesburg.

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Frank C. Herringer, UMTA Administrator noted that the new buses will be the first air-conditioned equipment in the area. The buses, modern maintenance equipment and new facilities will significantly reduce operating costs. The attractive new buses, increased service and removal of the old maintenance facility from the downtown area is expected to increase patronage, decrease energy consumption and traffic congestion, and generally improve the environment of the downtown area.

The one-fifth local share of the project cost is being provided by City of Hattiesburg.

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For further information contact the UMTA Office of Public Affairs at (202) 426-4043 or Mr. A. L. Gerrard, Mayor, Hattiesburg, Miss. 39401. (UMTA Project No. MS-03-0005)

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