Rapid moving into Allendale explored

$110,000 grant to allow Ottawa County to explore linking all existing public transportation in West Michigan

By Jenny Whalen

Though numerous businesses and housing developments extend beyond 48th Avenue, public transportation does not. But a solution to this discrepancy in development is in development. Two years ago Allendale Township, the Chamber of Commerce and Grand Valley State University partnered together for a one-year experiment in which the Rapid bus route was extended into the business district of Allendale.

At the end of the experiment year, data regarding riderhip in relation to expense was compiled, but the project was deemed too costly to continue.

"From what I understand, expenses (of the experiment) exceeded what the partners believed was worthwhile in regards to the number of riders," said Phil Brummel, administrator of the Allendale Department of Planning & Community Development. "They did not believe the expense was warranted."

In 2007, a $110,000 Service Development and New Technology Grant was awarded to Ottawa County by the Michigan Department of Transportation. The grant will allow the county to complete a needs assessment and feasibility study of public transit services in West Michigan.

There's a movement afoot to be able to take a number of bus routes that will interconnect in Allendale and then be able to go downtown.

PHIL BRUMMEL
ADMINISTRATOR OF
ALLENDALE PCD

Expanded busing: An Ottawa County study will examine the need and feasibility of expanding busing into Allendale, and linking existing public transportation throughout West Michigan.

DPS officer honored for sexual assault prevention

By Lauren Fitch

The Lakeshore Alliance Against Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault awarded officer Gwen DeGraaf the Agency Professional Award on Oct. 21 for her work preventing dating violence and sexual assault.

An officer for the Grand Valley State University Department of Public Safety since 2004, DeGraaf was recognized at the seventh annual "Together We Can" Appreciation Dinner attended by more than 100 people from Ottawa and Allegan counties.

DeGraaf's services include legal counsel for victims of domestic violence, work as a rape aggression counselor for victims of domestic violence, and in its 11th week of operation.

University General Fund budget refinanced for stability

Budgeting: GVSU's Operating Expenses, education and general, for the 2008 academic year.

Students often request DeGraaf's assistance in dealing with assault cases and obtaining personal protection orders.

Wassenberg, associate director of the Women's Center, said DeGraaf deserved the award. She described DeGraaf as full of energy and good ideas, and then be able to go downtown, Brummel said. "At least that is the attempt."

The Ottawa County study will look at the linkages between existing transit systems and consider the need and feasibility of connecting the systems of Muskegon Area Transit, Holland Area Transit, Grand Haven Harper Transit and the Rapid in Grand Rapids.

"(The study) will look at three things, the need and feasibility of providing some level of transportation to parts of the county without their own transit programs, connecting existing transit providers and providing transportation for people who do not have transportation to work," said Meghan Rauscher, transportation planner for Ottawa County.

Conducted by Nelson and Nygaard Associates, the study will examine whether expanded transportation is needed, how such transportation can be implemented and what the overall costs of such an endeavor would be to the county.

As this project has gone about, we
See Buses, A2

See more: Go to the
editorial on A6
DeGraaf's recognition.

"Her prevention efforts in domestic violence and sexual assault have been noticed not only by the campus community but by the larger community as well," said Capt. Brandon DeHaan, assistant director in DPS.

DeGraaf plans to continue partnerships with other organizations on campus like the Women's Center and Eyes Wide Open. She also hopes to expand the RAD program and focus more on providing education for men as well as women.

See more: Visit Lanthorn.com for a web exclusive on President Haas' e-mail

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