Route 50 adds bus to cut crowding

GVSU spends extra $100,000 to prevent students from being passed en-route to campus from GR

By Kyle Meinke
GVL News Editor

Don't worry, relief is on the way.

After almost 20,000 riders per day taxed The Rapid during the first week of school — that's a 28 percent increase from the same period last year — an additional bus was added Wednesday to the Campus Connector route.

That means seven buses will now run the line per hour — up from five last year — and a total of 20 buses will service the Grand Valley State University routes.

The addition will cost GVSU about $100,000 for the year, but will decrease pickup intervals during peak times from seven to six minutes.

"We try not to just jump at adding another bus, but our routes are just too overcrowded and we know that," said Erin Babson, operations manager for GVSU. "We found out that it's occurring all day long. We tried to get creative, but at this point, there weren't a whole lot of other ideas."

The Campus Connector is the busiest route, registering almost 9,000 rides per day during the first week of this academic year. The route has become so busy that drivers are leaving people at stops because their buses reach capacity before arriving at their destination.

"We've been crowded in the past, but this is the first year (riders) have had to wait two and three buses to get on," Babson said.

Adding to the congestion is the addition of the Park and Ride stop at the Walker Fire Station, which Babson said has been "extremely full."

Other routes are experiencing heavy traffic as well. Routes 37 and 48 have split completely, with the 37 covering north off-campus housing and the 48 hitting the south. Off-campus routes registered a combined 9,000 rides during the first week of classes, up 38 percent from last year.

But ridership has been heaviest on Route 50.

Nick Lobaito, a senior history major from St. Clair Shores, Mich., said Campus Connectors have passed 9,000 rides per day during the first week of classes, up 38 percent from last year.

By Jenny Whalen
GVL Assistant News Editor

Poor event attendance and adverse weather has Battle of the Valleys — which pits Grand Valley State and Saginaw Valley State universities against each other to raise money for charity — was weakened by Monday's rain, but donations totals are where they participation in events that we were hoping for."

Only three teams competed in Alpha Sigma Phi's tug-of-war and about 20 people in the 5K run/walk. Workman said it takes for students to be accepting of trayless at Fresh Food Co.

"At first (students) complained they can't carry a tray around," said. "But after we explained that it's about sustainability, they're completely fine with it.

"Sustainability initiatives implemented by Campus Dining during the past three years, tremendous impact have come into play," said Deb Rambadt, sustainability manager for Campus Dining. One of the largest is a reduction of 28 pounds of food waste per person during the first week of classes.

"When (Campus Dining) are a large percentage of our students, food waste can add up," Rambadt said. Sustainability initiatives have reduced food waste and the level of conscious (students) select items in Fresh Food.

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Problematic boarding: Buses continue to be overcrowded despite changes in their routes, thus GVSU added a bus Wednesday to help.

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Busing
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over him at least five times in the first two weeks of classes because they were full.

"There just weren't enough buses for the volume of students," he said. "You could leave an 1.5 early, then still have to sprint to class. Every day there were at least one or two stops when

I was on the bus that the driver (couldn't) let someone on."

Rapid bus driver Gary Welch, now in his second year operating the Campus Connector, said he noticed a considerable jump in riders this year and has to leave people at the bus stop daily.

"It's definitely more packed this year," he said. "But so far (Wednesday), the extra bus has helped quite a bit. I haven't had to leave anybody at a stop yet,"

and my buses haven't even been that full."

Aaron Wynn, a computer science major from Rockford, Mich., has been late to work and classes because of the overcrowding.

"One time I had three buses pass by when I had class at 6 (p.m.)," he said. "I was pissed because there was nothing I
could do but wait."

The addition is expected to last the remainder of the academic year. No other changes are scheduled at this time.

The additional Route 50 bus will run from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. Monday through Thursday, and until 6 p.m. on Friday.

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Honor
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so terrible could hit the people in the United States." The devastation was "clear and devastating." Poverty strikes the states.

Professor John Pel GVSU's History Department, believes the "generation of guidance to future generations is more mature today."

of Sept. 11 at the events that followed.

"(Students) the lens of history when they were a child," he said and probably told because they were

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Tuesday's successful with competitors raising. Workman's

Interest in the is growing, but GVSU has raised for this goal. GVSU raised last year.

Director of Workman Bob Stoll fears this amount they would push students to limits.

"The Senate and goals of this early it is," he said. "I'm not sure to do if whole campus' said. "It's going to take lot of people to reach..."