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KALAMAZOO GAZETTE

Group studying county bus system

Monday, September 22, 2008

Kalamazoo

BY ROD SMITH

Special to Hometown Gazette

ALLEGAN -- A Holland-based nonprofit organization has undertaken a study of the Allegan County Transportation Department.

"Disabilitynetwork, in partnership with Allegan County Transportation, will be conducting a transportation study," said Kathryn Gillen, the network's public policy specialist.

Gillen said the study, which is already under way, will look "at the unmet needs of all of Allegan County." Although the network helps the disabled, the study itself will be for all residents of Allegan County.

The purpose is to develop a five-year strategic plan for the bus system. The study will continue through January 2010. Researchers will conduct community input sessions as well as surveys. They will work with different businesses, nonprofits and residents.

"We received the funding for this from the Michigan Department of Transportation," Gillen said.

To give feedback, call Gillen at (616) 396-5326 or e-mail her at kathryn@dnfakeshore.org.

The bus system opened under a grant program in July 2000. Earlier this year, Director Dan Wedge told county commissioners that, by the end of this year, he estimated the system would make 56,288 trips. It made 39,402 in 2007.

The system has three main routes. One main route is a diagonal route from Holland to Allegan to Plainwell. Another is a loop route from the County Services Complex at Dumont Lake to Allegan to Pullman to Fennville and back to the complex. The third runs north from Plainwell to Wayland and Dorr.

Buses will deviate by a mile from the route to pick up riders.

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