

Hickory Transfer Center Public Hearing

This is to inform the public that Western Piedmont Regional Transit Authority operating as Greenway Public Transportation will hold a public hearing regarding the new Hickory Transit Transfer Center. The center is being constructed on property bordering 3rd Street, SW, located between 1st Avenue, SW and 2nd Avenue, SW in Hickory, NC. The facility is scheduled to open by March 2010 or later.

The funding for the new center is from the Federal Transit Administration, the North Carolina Department of Transportation, grants, and other sources. It will offer a ticket sales office, and restrooms. Existing bus routes and schedules will need to be modified in order to serve this location.

The public hearing will be held on December 10, 2009 at 10:00 AM before the Western Piedmont Regional Transit Authority Board of Directors at the main office located at 1515 4th St. S.W., Conover, NC 28613. Those interested in attending the public hearing and needing either auxiliary aid or services under the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) or a language translator should contact Eric Ben-Davies at (828) 465-7631 or by writing to Eric Ben Davies at 1515 4th St. Conover, NC. 28613 on or before December 7, 2009.

Public Comment: Interested persons may attend the public hearing on December 10, 2009 at 10:00 a.m., or provide written comment to WPRTA, Attn: Eric Ben-Davies, 1515 4th St. S.W., Conover, NC 28613, or by call Eric Ben-Davies at 828-465-7631. Written and verbal public comment will be received until December 17, 2009.

Media / Article Published – Biodiesel Bus

*By Richard Gould | Hickory Daily Record
Published: May 23, 2009*

HICKORY - Willie Nelson's tour bus runs on biodiesel and so does the Western Piedmont Regional Transit Authority's.

"It's good for the environment," Operations Manager Scott Young said, explaining the decision to fuel the bus with a fuel blend that's 20-percent biodiesel. "Using the new fuel will reduce tailpipe emissions considerably."

"We want to be a leader in the area in going after cleaner fuel technologies," Young said.

Western Piedmont Regional Transit Authority (WPRTA) runs four 35-foot busses with one kept in reserve. One of the four has been switched from traditional diesel fuel to a 20 percent biodiesel blend, Young said.

The bus began to use the biodiesel blend almost a month ago and it's early in the 6-month trial phase, but the bus is handling the switch well so far.

"We have had zero problems out of it and it has run flawlessly to this point," Young said. "We've been pleasantly surprised."

The bus' mileage has remained stable, Young said.

The city of Conover's public works department has provided the WPRTA with a refueling facility including a fuel tank and pump. They've also given Young some advice on bio-fueled vehicles based on their years of experience running it in their own vehicles.

The busses don't require any engine modifications or re-tooling to run on biodiesel, Young said, and if the test bus continues to perform well, he'll switch the rest of the fleet to biodiesel.

Every morning bus operator James Helton Jr. fuels his bus with 40 to 45 gallons of biodiesel and said it's doing well on the new fuel.

"It's got a lot smoother takeoff, better pickup and a smoother ride," he said. "I believe it's going to work."

The blend being used now is 20 percent biodiesel, but Young said he'd love to go with a blend with an even higher percentage of biodiesel.

The other drivers were excited about the blended fuel and are eager try it out in their own busses, said driver supervisor Kim Sadler.

Biodiesel benefits

A 20 percent blend of biodiesel with petroleum diesel and a catalytic converter will result in reduced pollution emissions, specifically:

- 31 percent reduction in particulate matter;
- 21 percent reduction in carbon monoxide;
- 47 percent reduction in total hydrocarbons.

Source: bioblendfuels.com

What is biodiesel?

Biodiesel is a vegetable oil-based fuel that runs in diesel engines — cars, buses, trucks, construction equipment, boats, generators, and oil home heating units. It's usually made from soy or canola oil, and can also be made from recycled fryer oil (yes, from McDonalds or your local Chinese restaurant). You can blend it with regular diesel or run 100% biodiesel.

Source: bioblendfuels.com