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Media Contact: Julia Schick, 440-283-9888
jschick@laketran.com

NEWS RELEASE

Geauga Transit launches “Wheels to Work” program to boost transportation access and workforce development

ODOT’s new Ohio Workforce Mobility Partnership program provides \$1.78 million transit investment for new service for Geauga County

Geauga County, OH – State and local officials gathered on Friday, October 18, 2024 at Geauga Transit in Chardon to celebrate the launch of a new “Wheels to Work” program, aimed at improving transportation access to jobs in Geauga County.

Funded by a recently awarded grant from the Ohio Department of Transportation’s (ODOT) Workforce Mobility Partnership program, the initiative is designed to provide reliable transportation for transit-dependent residents, including the Amish community, to employment opportunities at local manufacturers and businesses.

The program will feature two daily routes connecting Middlefield and Chardon, as well as a route along SR-422 to link Parkman and Auburn residents to jobs in Bainbridge and Chagrin Falls.

During the ribbon-cutting ceremony, Laketran CEO Ben Capelle expressed gratitude to Ohio Senator Sandra O’Brien, State Representative Steve Demetriou, and Geauga County Commissioner Jim Dvorak, who all delivered remarks in support of the new initiative.

“There’s a significant need for public transit to play a role in workforce development by providing reliable transportation to help local businesses recruit, and more importantly, retain employees,” shared Capelle. “The challenges are statewide which made this grant very competitive. We appreciate the support we received from our local elected officials here today that helped us secure this critical investment.”

The \$1.78 million infrastructure investment will bring long term economic and environmental benefit to both Geauga Transit and Geauga County. The funding will enable the purchase of three propane-fueled buses—the first of their kind for the agency—as well as cover operating and maintenance costs for the new service.

GEAUGA TRANSIT

(440) 754-5555

www.geaugatransit.com

12555 Merritt Road Chardon, OH 44024

Geauga Transit purchased the propane-powered Terra Transit buses from TESCO, a supplier based in Oregon, Ohio. Capelle noted that the new buses are expected to deliver fuel savings of approximately 35% and will contribute to improved air quality in the region.

“Propane is a cleaner-burning fuel, thanks to its lower carbon content,” Capelle explained. “More importantly, it is a cost-effective alternative to gasoline and diesel, which is why Laketrans and now Geauga Transit are committed to using this sustainable fuel source.”

Capelle also announced that Laketrans has secured additional funding through a federal Low-No Emissions grant for six more propane-powered buses, which are expected to enter service in early 2025.

This groundbreaking initiative is a step toward building a more sustainable and connected Geauga County, while addressing workforce challenges by offering reliable, eco-friendly transportation options for job seekers.

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Event Photos:

<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/e5i5zys293oygmv1ihk8l/AHbRNupV0fk0FaV4gZAqNQo?rlkey=3j3jchikz69btsbuial6ocnfo&e=1&st=14gwplfk&dl=0>

Proudly serving almost 30,000 riders each year, [Geauga Transit](#) is the regional transit authority for Geauga County. Through an intergovernmental agreement, [Laketrans](#) operates and manages Geauga Transit's door-to-door public transportation service.