



## CITY OF PRAIRIE DU CHIEN

### Municipal Offices

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## THREE-COUNTY COMMUTER BUS SYSTEM BEGINS DECEMBER 3RD

**(Prairie Du Chien, WI – November 29th 2012)** – December 3rd will mark the start of the three-county, fixed-route, commuter bus system to connect Vernon, Crawford, and La Crosse Counties. The Scenic Mississippi Regional Transit (SMRT) is the result of the collaboration of Crawford County Transportation Coordination Committee (TCC) and representative of Vernon and La Crosse counties. "December will give us the opportunity to get the routes up and running, gauge areas of demand and need, identify any obstacles to service, and refine the system accordingly," said Peter Fletcher, Transportation Planner with the Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission in La Crosse.

SMRT will operate three routes with buses running four round trips a day, five days a week with the one-way fare being \$3. SMRT is intended to provide affordable and reliable transportation in the region for purposes ranging from employees getting to work to people going to medical appointments. In addition, SMRT will increase the effectiveness of local transportation programs, according to Lynda Wilke, Mobility Manager, with the Vernon County Unit on Aging. "SMRT will complement the senior transit services we provide and increase their reach."

Running Inc. of Viroqua will operate the system. Running has experience throughout the region in providing transit services and is the parent company of eight transit companies. "This is an exciting opportunity for the three counties as well as for our company," says Justin Running. "We intend to make this the best rural transit system in the state." For more information about the schedules, stops, and buses, contact Running Inc. at (877) 444-6543 or visit the SMRT website at [www.rideSMRT.com](http://www.rideSMRT.com).

The system is funded with support from many local governments, businesses, institutions, and the Supplemental Rural Transit Assistance Program (STRAP), which is a Federal Transit Administration (FTA) program administered by the Wisconsin DOT. The FTA also supported the acquisition of the buses. Business supporters include Gundersen Lutheran, Organic Valley, Vernon Memorial Healthcare, Walmart, and Dairyland Power. "We thank all the partners in making SMRT a reality, and look forward to the list of partners growing as the operation matures," says Jeanne Christie, Director of the Aging & Disability Resource Center of Southwest Wisconsin, and Coordinator of the Crawford County TCC. Jake Miller of the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) adds, "the collaboration and cooperation in planning, funding, and operating SMRT that the TCC fostered is one reason that WisDOT decided to support it with STRAP funding as well."

### **About Schedules and Routes**

Running Inc. (877) 444-6543;

SMRT website at [www.rideSMRT.com](http://www.rideSMRT.com)

### **About the SMRT Vision and the Transportation Coordination Committee**

Peter Fletcher, Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission, (608) 785-9396, [peter@mrrpc.com](mailto:peter@mrrpc.com).

Lynda Wilke, Vernon County, (608) 637-5201, [lwilke@vernoncounty.org](mailto:lwilke@vernoncounty.org)

Jeanne Christie, Crawford County, (608) 326-0235, [jchristie@crowfordcountywi.org](mailto:jchristie@crowfordcountywi.org)

### **About the Supplemental Transportation Rural Assistance Program**

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