

Route 490 to Serve U of M, New Route 493 to Serve Marschall Road Transit Station Beginning Feb. 23

The MVTA is pleased to announce service improvements to the BlueXpress service. New pocket schedules will be available on buses by Monday, Feb. 16 and will follow the standard MVTA schedule format, including effective dates, a schedule timetable, a route map and information or notes about how the service operates.

Beginning Monday, Feb. 23, service on **Route 490** will be expanded to the University of Minnesota with three morning trips to the University

labeled the **490U** and three evening trips from the U labeled 490.

Additionally, a new Route 493 will provide service between downtown Minneapolis and the Marschall Road Transit Station (MRTS).

Route 493 will operate three morning & three afternoon trips between MRTS & Minneapolis. We will monitor and make adjustments as needed at a future service change.

Note: the last trip on the 490U also serves the Marschall Road Transit Station.



MVTA Transit Ridership Strong, Highest Ever at 2.8 Million Rides

Minnesota Valley Transit Authority (MVTA) saw record ridership again in 2014, with total of 2,812,265 rides in 2014, up 3.9 percent from 2013.

“The MVTA is very pleased with our 2014 ridership growth,” said MVTA Board Chair and Apple Valley Councilmember Clint Hooppaw. *“There is terrific potential in our suburban areas and we provide an excellent service,”* he said. *“The addition of such amenities as Wi-Fi on our buses, additional service to the University of Minnesota and operation of the METRO Red Line have all contributed to our growth.”*

Highest ridership routes are MVTA’s Route 460 (Burnsville to/from downtown Minneapolis) - some 15 percent of MVTA’s ridership; Route 477 (Apple Valley to/from downtown Minneapolis) - some 13 percent of MVTA’s ridership; and Route 444 (local service between

Burnsville/ Savage/Cedar Grove and Mall of America) - just less than 10 percent of MVTA’s ridership.

Two local routes (Route 438 – Eagan Circulator, and Route 440 – Apple Valley/Minnesota Zoo/Cedar Grove/VA Medical Center) and one all-day route (Route 475 between Apple Valley/Cedar Grove and the University of Minnesota) experienced the greatest ridership growth. Route 438 ridership increased from 7,376 in 2013 to 12,996 in 2014 (up 76 percent); Route 440 ridership increased from 28,786 to 43,039 (up 50 percent) and Route 475 increased

from 48,843 to 60,698 in 2014, up 29 percent. MVTA’s average daily ridership reached a high in September at 11,198 rides.

METRO Red Line, service operated by the MVTA under contract to the Metropolitan Council and funded by the Counties Transit Improvement Board (CTIB) increased from 130,733 in 2013 (with slightly more than six months of service since it opened on June 22, 2013) to 265,514 in 2014.

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Route 420 Change Effective Feb. 23

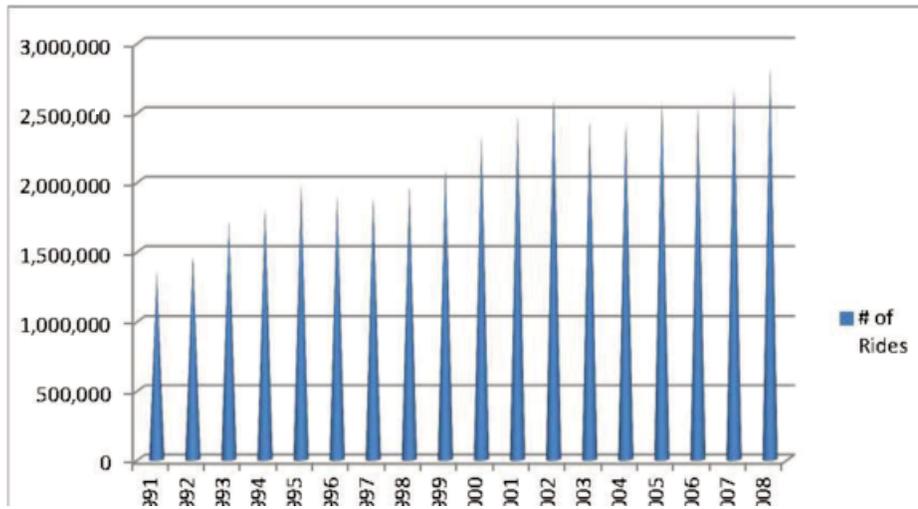
Effective Monday, February 23 Route 420 will use 145th between Chippendale and Shannon instead of Dodd.

Route 475 Change Effective Feb. 23

Effective Monday, February 23 the northbound Route 475 trip leaving Apple Valley Transit Station at 4:49 p.m. will use Bay D instead of Bay B.

New pocket schedules are available on buses, at Transit Stations or by calling MVTA’s Customer Service at 952-882-7500.

MVTA Transit Ridership Strong *(continued from page 1)*



“The economy proved stronger in 2014, and gas prices plummeted, but ridership remained strong,” said MVTA Executive Director Beverley Miller. *“We saw an increase in rides through the Cedar Grove Transit Sta-*

tion with the opening of Twin Cities Premium Outlets,” she said, *“and ridership to the University of Minnesota continues to grow.”*

BlueXpress ridership for 2014

was also up about one percent. New service in 2014 included State Fair Express Bus Service from the Marshall Road Transit Station.

Service changes in 2015 include the further integration of the Prior Lake and Shakopee BlueXpress Commuter service and the Shakopee Circulator (Route 496), addition of service to the University of Minnesota from Prior Lake and Shakopee, new service to/from downtown Minneapolis from the Marshall Road Transit Station in Shakopee, additional peak-period service between the Rosemount Transit Station to downtown Minneapolis, a potential-rider study of the entire MVTA service area, and a study of service needs in northern Scott County.

MVTA Celebrates 25th Anniversary

The MVTA is now 25 years old! MVTA was formed in 1990 and began to operate transit service in the south suburbs in 1991.

Throughout 2015, the MVTA will have celebrations recognizing the anniversary, highlighting service achievements, acknowledging growth of the system and hailing customer service initiatives.

“This is a huge milestone for the MVTA,” said Clint Hooppaw, MVTA Chair and Apple Valley Councilmember. *“MVTA has been innovative and creative from the get-go, and we will celebrate our efforts and look forward to many more years of providing great transit service,”* he said.

In its early years, the MVTA operated 14 daily routes (it’s now 29) with 88 trips per day (as of Jan. 1, 2015, we now operate nearly 10 times that number of trips - 822 trips).

Initially, service was only operated Monday through Friday, but now the MVTA operates four routes

seven days per week. When MVTA service began, there were express routes and seven vanpools.

Now, the vanpools are all operated by the region and the MVTA operates express, local and flex routes as well as the METRO Red Line BRT (under contract to the Metropolitan Council.)

The MVTA’s facilities have also changed significantly, said Beverley Miller, MVTA Executive Director. *“Most of today’s six park & rides and seven transit stations did not exist,”* she said. *“And, those that were around – Blackhawk and Eagan – have been reconfigured with increased capacity and a ground lease with tenants at Eagan Transit Station. We have also grown to operate out of two bus garages. All of these facilities have been significant construction projects,”* she added.

The MVTA Board, comprised of nine elected officials from the cities of Apple Valley, Burnsville, Eagan,

Prior Lake, Rosemount, Savage and Shakopee and both Dakota and Scott Counties, has adopted a mission statement to: **Provide mobility through an efficient, integrated network of equipment, facilities, and service.**

Activities throughout the year will include: Launching of a new MVTA Website (www.mvta.com), complete integration of Prior Lake and Shakopee service with the MVTA system, a non-rider survey covering the entire MVTA service area, a study of needs in Northern Scott County, opening of a bus lay-over facility in Apple Valley, continued State Fair Transit Service and more.

As part of the 25th Anniversary Celebration, the MVTA has also refreshed its “look” with a bold splash of color and the extension of the “swoosh” portion of the logo on letterhead, envelopes and business cards.



Facts and Figures about MVTA Riders

The MVTA and BlueXpress conducted on-board and on-line surveys between Nov. 5-16. The MVTA received some 1,155 responses and BlueXpress tabulated 165 surveys. We appreciate the excellent response from customers!

MVTA's top strengths were identified as: Nice, friendly drivers; frequency of service; clean, comfortable buses; reliability; and convenience.

Things riders "most" like about the BlueXpress service:

- Nice, friendly drivers
- Comfortable, clean buses
- Convenience, close to home
- Saves money, stress

MVTA's top areas needing improvement were identified as: Being on time; increased frequency of service; later/earlier service; weekend service; expanded service; and technology improvements.

Things riders like "least" about the BlueXpress service (many were also reported by MVTA riders):

- Late buses leaving Downtown Minneapolis
- Not enough buses (trip times, times of day, weekends)
- Crowded buses, Standing Room Only
- Service from Marschall Road Transit Station (*and as is included elsewhere, this service will begin Feb. 23*).

Both MVTA and BlueXpress riders identified the Single Technology Improvement that would encourage more transit use as the addition of Wi-Fi on buses. The MVTA is currently implementing free Wi-Fi on Route 490, 491, 492 and 493 buses and as noted elsewhere in this edition, the entire MVTA fleet will be equipped with free Wi-Fi by mid-year.

Service improvements that would encourage more transit use by MVTA and BlueXpress riders include:

- More frequent trips (57%)
- Earlier/Later Service (50%)
- Better Connections (23%)
- More Destinations (21%)

MVTA and BlueXpress riders continue to be "riders of choice" in that most have autos available and have incomes to support their preferred mode of commuting.

Here is a snapshot of the MVTA and BlueXpress riders:

Length of Ridership

	<1 yr	1-5 yrs	5+
MVTA	5.9%	21%	50%
BlueXpress	21.8%	49.7%	28.4%

Age

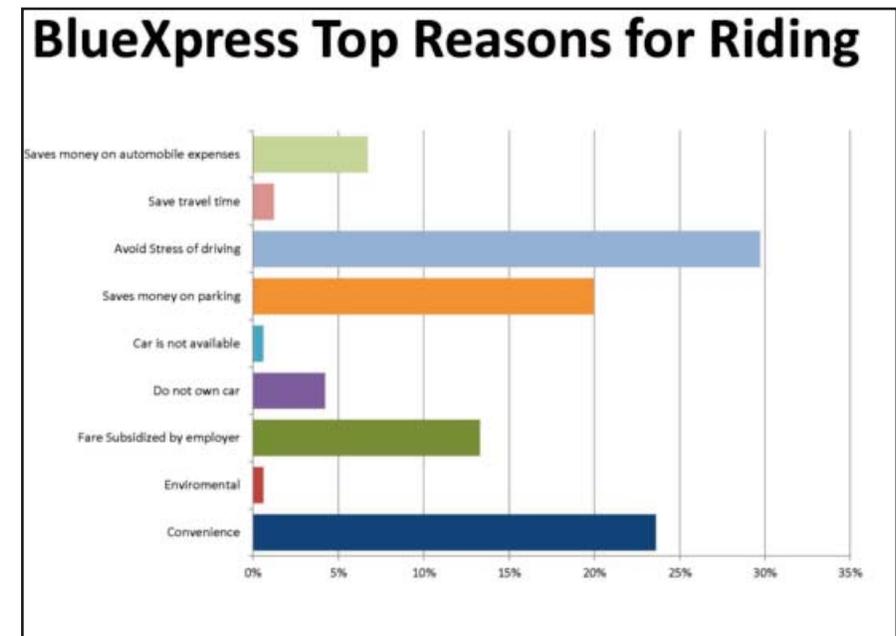
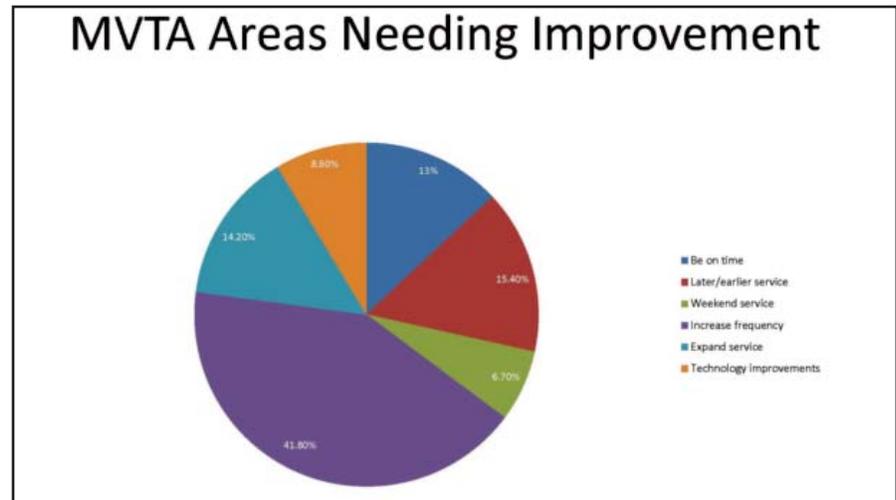
	<25	26-45	46-65
MVTA	17%	40%	40%
BlueXpress	5.1%	60.7%	30.8%

Sex

	Female	Male
MVTA	55%	21%
BlueXpress	45%	37.6%

Trip Purpose

	Work	School
MVTA	83%	11%
BlueXpress	98.2%	.6%



MVTA Board Elects Officers

The MVTA Board of Directors elected officers for 2015 at its organizational meeting on Jan. 28. **Clint Hoopaw**, Apple Valley Councilmember, was re-elected Chair. **Jon Ulrich**, Scott County Commissioner, was re-elected Vice chair. **Jane Victorey**, Savage City Councilmember, was re-elected secretary/Treasurer.

Other members of the Board include: Burnsville Councilmember **Bill Coughlin**; Rosemount Mayor **Bill Droste**; Dakota County Commissioner **Chris Gerlach**; Eagan Councilmember **Gary Hansen**, Prior Lake Councilmember **Mike McGuire**; and Shakopee Councilor **Michael Luce**.

The MVTA Board also adopted its meeting calendar for the year: meetings will take place at 4:30 p.m. on the fourth Wednesday of each month at the Burnsville Bus Garage, 11550 Rupp Dr., Burnsville, except in the months of April and September, when the MVTA Board meeting will take place on the fifth Wednesday of the month. The November and December meetings will be combined on Dec. 9. The February 25 meeting will take place at Casper's Cherokee prior to the MVTA's annual Driver of the Year Dinner.

Board agendas and packets are posted at www.mvta.com.

Miller Sponsors Free Rides on St. Patrick's Day, March 17

Miller Lite will again sponsor free rides on Monday, March 17 in recognition of St Patrick's Day. Free rides will be available on METRO Red Line buses and all MVTA Routes from 6 p.m. until the end of the service day.

Wi-Fi Continues to Expand

MVTA riders have been successfully using the Wi-Fi on about half of the MVTA fleet. Buses with Wi-Fi are easily identified by the window graphics.

BlueXpress buses should all have access to free Wi-Fi as of the Feb. 23 service change.

The MVTA Board approved the



additional technology needed to equip the remainder of the MVTA fleet with free public Wi-Fi and that work is expected to be complete by June 30.

Riders should only be accessing the "MVTA Public WI-FI" on buses. No password is required. Other closed networks may appear for use by MVTA's AVL System ("MobilLIQ_XXXX" or "MVTA_Busnumber") or may be non-MVTA networks.

Additionally, the MVTA's customer service has recently received reports that our portal software that controls access to the free WI-FI denies access on occasion. The MVTA's IT administrator is aware of this issue and is working with our software partner to resolve the issue ASAP.

Riders experiencing difficulty connecting to Wi-Fi should first confirm that the bus is so equipped (Wi-Fi graphics on exterior of bus). When contacting the MVTA, please include the time of day and bus number to assist in troubleshooting.

Please park in designated spots only at Park & Ride lots and Transit Stations

Please park only in designated parking spaces. Vehicles parked along curbs or in non-marked spaces at the end of a row make it difficult for other vehicles to pass safely. Cars parked in undesignated spaces may be tagged and/or towed.

Ticket Vending Machines

Ticket Vending Machines are now located at Apple Valley, Burnsville and Cedar Grove Transit Stations, as well as at the 140th and 147th St. Stations.

Riders can purchase a one-ride ticket, check the balance on their Go-To card or add value to such card at their convenience and the result is immediately available for use on the bus.

Simply follow these instructions:

- Press the "F" button (Go-To Option)
- Touch your card to the Go-To circle

below the screen

Select Add Stored Value or 31-Day pass
Choose an amount or pass type.

Insert cash or a credit card.

Touch your Go-To card to the circle again to complete the transaction.



Please be sure to take your receipt (or drop it in the trash), and you're on your way! Local fares, express fares and Day Passes are also available.

Customer Service at the Burnsville Transit Station is no longer accepting credit card payments with the convenience of the Ticket Vending Machine (which offers credit card purchases with no added fee).

Visibility Tips

Although our days are getting longer, many riders still find themselves waiting in the dark for their bus. Wearing light-colored clothing and shining a light (cell phone, flashlight, or 'bus beam') toward the bus



makes it easier for your driver to see you as the bus approaches your stop. Riders may request a Bus Beam, free of charge, by calling MVTA Customer Service at (952) 882-7500.

Be Respectful of Other Riders

Riders are reminded to talk quietly on cell phones and to keep volume down (even with headphones for music, videos, games, etc). Thank you!

News that Travels is published at least four times per year by the MVTA, Beverley Miller, Executive Director; Robin Selvig, Editor.

For more information contact the MVTA at 100 East Highway 13, Burnsville, MN 55337 or call (952) 882-7500. Web-site: mvta.com; E-mail: mvta@mvta.com.

MVTA Board Members are: Clint Hoopaw (Apple Valley City Councilmember and MVTA Chair); Jon Ulrich (Scott County Commissioner and MVTA Vice Chair); Jane Victorey (Savage City Councilmember and MVTA Secretary/Treasurer); Bill Coughlin (Burnsville City Councilmember); Bill Droste, Rosemount Mayor; Chris Gerlach (Dakota County Commissioner); Gary Hansen (Eagan Councilmember); Mike McGuire (Prior Lake Councilmember); and Michael Luce (Shakopee Councilor).