

COLTS buses turn on lights

Transit systems across the country have been slow to adapt to the migration to suburbs of population, jobs, commerce and entertainment. Most transit routes have been geared toward bringing people into central cities, with little regard for folks headed in the other direction.

Limited evening service provided by the County of Lackawanna Transit System since 1999, and a new route added this year, have attempted to counter that model. The routes originate downtown and provide convenient access to major suburban shopping and entertainment venues.

Unfortunately, ridership has been sporadic. But COLTS development director Kurt Kempter probably was right when he described the problem as one of marketing rather than need.

"We're working on getting the word out that this service is there. We think there's definitely a need for it — people just don't know it's there," he said.

One route runs south from the 100 block of Wyoming Avenue, stopping at various places in South Scranton en route to the Shoppes at Montage and Cinemark movie complex in Moosic. It returns along Davis Street and through West Scranton.

The other route starts on the 100 block of Wyoming Avenue, goes east to the University of Scranton and all three city hospitals, then heads north with stops in Green Ridge and North Scranton en route to the Viewmont Mall.

The trips are great values. They are free to anyone older than 65 and just \$1.25 otherwise.

The potential market is large — night shift workers, university students and older residents who don't have their own transportation. Mr. Kempter and COLTS are correct to perceive the need and to better market the service.

Parking fees opportunity

Another opportunity for COLTS exists in the impending and substantial parking fee increases in downtown Scranton, for garages and at street meters.

COLTS should market its services to downtown workers who face substantial cost increases and, possibly, consider downtown shuttle service from satellite lots outside the downtown.

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