

# Night shift courted by COLTS

## County tries to attract fares on evening routes

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The County of Lackawanna Transit System is beginning a push to attract more Scranton residents to ride evening bus routes that connect city neighborhoods with commercial centers, colleges and hospitals.

COLTS added a second route to the Evening City Circle this year, but officials acknowledged use of the buses has not been as good as they would like. Two 18-passenger, handicapped-accessible buses make one-hour runs between 8 p.m. and 1 a.m. on weekdays — attracting about 25 people on average a night.

"We'd like to do better and we think we can," said Kurt Kempter, the director of development for COLTS.

The evening trips have been running since 1999, with the work subcontracted through Scranton-based Northeastern Transit Inc. A new route was added this year to serve South Scranton, but it hasn't caught on yet, Mr. Kempter said.

"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.

The southern route starts on the 100 block of Wyoming Avenue at the Mall at Steam-

town, runs along Pittston Avenue to the South Side Shopping Center on South Washington Avenue, then on to the Shoppes at Montage and Cinemark movie theater in Moosic. On its return trip to downtown Scranton, it runs along Davis Street and Main Avenue with stops in West Scranton.

The northern route starts on the 100 block of Wyoming Avenue, makes stops at all three hospitals and the University of Scranton, before heading north to the Green Ridge Shopping Center and Viewmont Mall.

The evening bus routes are paid for through fares of \$1.25 and subsidized through federal and state grants. Seniors over 65 ride free, and there are reduced fares for disabled people with Medicare cards or reduced fare identification cards.

Mr. Kempter said most riders currently are night-shift workers, many commuting to the city's hospitals. He sees possibilities to expand the service for college students who want to go to the mall or movie theater, and other commuters as well.

"I think we just need to start educating people about these routes, where they go and the times," said COLTS executive director Bob Fiume. "This is an important service. I think it's good to be able to get people to jobs late in the evening."

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