

Bus officials hope riders dump pump

*Counties to offer free rides on
Thursday to counter high gas
prices haunting drivers.*

BY DENISE ALLABAUGH
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Amid high gas prices, people can ride buses for free in Luzerne and Lackawanna counties on Thursday.

The County of Lackawanna Transit System and the Luzerne County Transportation Authority will participate in the sixth annual "Dump the Pump Day."

The slogan for this year's National Dump the Pump Day is "Dump the Pump: Save Money: Ride Transit."

Sponsored by the American Public Transportation Association with the cooperation of the Pennsylvania Public Transportation Association, the day encourages people to ride public transportation and save money instead of driving a car.

It started in June 2006, when gas prices were \$3 per gallon. The average price of a gallon of regular gas in the Scranton/Wilkes-Barre/Hazleton area is now \$3.65, according to AAA Mid-Atlantic.

Beyond the economic benefits, public transportation can reduce dependence on foreign oil, protect the environment and enhance the quality of life for people, said Stanley Strelish, executive director of the Luzerne County Transportation Authority.

COLTS will offer free rides on its routes all day on Thursday to promote the use of public transportation. COLTS staff will have giveaways and prizes at the bus hub in the 100 block of Wyoming Avenue in downtown Scranton.

Last year, COLTS had almost 4,000 additional riders on Dump the Pump Day and Executive Director Bob Fiume hopes for that kind of turnout again this year.

People who board LCTA buses on Thursday also will receive a free pass, good for unlimited use all day for all scheduled routes.

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