

New Transit Center in Downtown Scranton

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SCRANTON -- People in Lackawanna County will soon have a new place to catch the bus. Officials with the County of Lackawanna Transit System (COLTS), cut the ribbon Friday for a new transit center in downtown Scranton.

The Lackawanna Transit Center on Lackawanna Avenue, next to the Mall at Steamtown, will be the new bus hub for COLTS buses.

It will also be the place where you can catch a Martz bus to go out of the county or out of the state.

Friday's gathering in a brand new building in downtown Scranton was a long time coming.

"Some 25 years ago, an intermodal center was a mere idea in downtown Scranton," said COLTS executive director Bob Fiume.

Problems with funding stalled original plans for a public transportation hub, but after a year of construction, the Lackawanna Transit Center on Lackawanna Avenue is complete.

County bus passengers will be able to catch a bus there and Martz Transportation will be a tenant, moving its coach buses from across the street.

"A lot more room for us to maneuver these buses, because back there at the old terminal, it was getting tight in places because cars parked anywhere they can. Here they have a place where cars can go and they're not in the bus area," said Martz bus driver Randy Proctor.

The benefits for the COLTS bus riders are big. Right now at the current bus hub on Wyoming Avenue, there's very little seating and very little shelter.

"Like really cold, it's really bad," said one passenger.

"Especially during the winter, because it's really cold out in the winter," said Michelle Wickizer of Moosic. "Today it's really windy and cold, so it would help."

Riders now scatter under available awnings and some even sit on the sidewalk while waiting for a bus.

But soon, COLTS bus riders will be able to sit inside the transit center from 5 a.m. until 11 p.m. starting December 7 when the buses make the official switch over.

There are still some finishing touches to be made to the \$12.5 million facility.

"It's going to be nice because people are going to be warm, they're not going to be shivering like, 'oh, my God, when's the next bus?' They won't have to walk a distance, they'll be right there," said Kym Potter of Scranton.

The Lackawanna County transit center was built with other forms of transportation in mind, too. There is a taxi lane and the property also backs up to train tracks, if and when passenger rail begins in Lackawanna County.

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