

MONDAY, MAY 23, 2016

Getting There: Kootenai County residents asked about Citylink improvements, possible fares

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Four open house-style transit meetings:

Monday: Noon to 3 p.m. at the Post Falls Library, 821 N. Spokane St.

Wednesday: 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. at the Coeur d'Alene Public Library, 702 E. Front Ave.

Friday: 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. at the Kootenai County Administration Building, rooms 1A and 1B

May 31: 10:30 a.m. to noon at the Hayden Public Library, 8385 N. Government Way

Residents in Coeur d'Alene, Post Falls and surrounding communities are being asked to participate in a study of the future of Citylink, the small bus line serving the area.

The first of four open house meetings will run from noon to 3 p.m. Monday at the Post Falls Library, 821 N. Spokane St.

Citylink administrators and a consultant want to know what people would like to see in the future of transit service.

Potential route changes, stop changes, hours of operation, implementation of a cashless fare system and a transit center at Riverstone are all under consideration.

Also, Citylink is proposing the use of transit technology programs that allow riders to know when a bus will arrive at their stop in real time, along with other features.

“We are examining all aspects of the system,” said Kimberly Hobson, program specialist with the Kootenai County Transit Office.

The study is included in a service-and-fare-equity analysis, which is a rigorous process used to define transit needs and the fairness of the service to different elements of the community.

Officials would like to see transit be able to offer better access to education, jobs and health care.

Currently, Citylink in Kootenai County runs two free routes that originate at Riverstone and depart hourly. One bus goes to Post Falls, the other to Hayden.

Citylink is working closely with local governments and community groups. David Evans and Associates is providing consulting services.

The study has accumulated 650 survey responses so far.

Officials said they plan to complete the service-and-fare-equity analysis later this year.

No specific fare amount has been proposed.

Citylink in Kootenai County provided more than 188,000 rides last year.

The Coeur d'Alene Tribe operates the Citylink connections into Benewah County and tribal communities.

The interconnected services began in 2005.

In 2014, Kootenai County and the tribe spent \$1.7 million for land to build a transit center at Riverstone Drive and Seltice Way.

Holiday driving

AAA estimates that 38 million Americans will travel at least 50 miles from home this Memorial Day, which is the second-highest number on record to hit the road during the holiday.

This year will see an additional 700,000 travelers nationally compared to last year.

Nearly 34 million people will go by car, an increase of 2.1 percent over 2015.

Traffic volume is being boosted by some of the lowest fuel prices in 11 years.

The average price of gasoline in Washington is \$2.57 a gallon, 45 cents less than a year ago.

AAA said drivers nationally have saved \$18 billion on fuel so far this year compared with 2015.

Seat belt patrol

This year's holiday Click It or Ticket enforcement patrol for seat belts gets started Monday and runs through June 5.

Officers in the region will watch for people not wearing seat belts and hand out tickets as part of an effort to eliminate traffic deaths.

An Asotin High School student has been recognized for her work in promoting seat belt safety.

Stanzi Hay, a senior, spent time watching seat belt use at the school and realized about 90 percent of drivers used their belts.

She was concerned about the other 10 percent, so she developed a three-week campaign at the high school that she called “Buckle Up: Your Family is Waiting for You.”

She got seat belt use up to 96 percent by the end of the last school year.

The statewide rate for seat belt use is 95 percent.

Street work

In a Spokane street construction update, city officials said paving starts Monday on Havana Street from 37th Avenue to Glenrose Road, as a two-year project nears completion.

Elsewhere, the intersection of Rowan Avenue and Alberta Street reopens May 31.

In Spokane Valley, traffic on Mirabeau Parkway from Mansfield Avenue to the Mirabeau Park entrance will be cut to one lane for stormwater repairs and pavement patching from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. through Friday.

A similar lane closure will take place through Friday on Sprague Avenue from Argonne Road to the rail overpass from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m.