

The Edge News Journal

UTA board temporarily raises fees

By Deborah De Vos



TRAX and bus riders will have to pay a little more to offset raising fuel costs.

Starting on July 1 bus and railway passengers will be paying another 25 cents per ride for a total of \$2 dollars a trip and as much as \$2.50 next winter per ride, if diesel prices continue to go up.

The Utah Transit Authority's board of directors passed the temporary measure on May 21 to close a gap in the budget as a result of soaring diesel fuel prices. If the board had not approved the temporary measure, then UTA may have been forced to permanently raise fares or cut

UTA's new fees:

- Starting July 1 bus and rail passengers will pay 25 cents more per ride, bringing the cost of a ride to \$2 per.
- By winter a trip is expected to cost as much as \$2.50 per.
- UTA Board says it's temporary and based on fuel prices.

service to make up a projected \$5 million shortfall.

"The temporary fuel surcharge is tied directly to the cost of fuel," said John English, UTA general manager. "If gas should drop below \$3 a gallon, then the surcharge would also be rescinded."

Vice-President for The Disable Rights Action Committee, Barbra Toomer said that she doesn't see the price of fuel ever dropping back below the \$3 a gallon mark.

"My definition of temporary and UTA's definition of temporary are two very different meanings," Toomer said, adding that she considers UTA officials to be great "word-smiths". "I do not trust what UTA officials say because they've used words to deceive us for years—dating back to the first 25 cent raise that ended up going to rail, not bus service as insinuated."

English said that he was aware it would "seriously impact low-income people but for those with a Horizon Card, the surcharge will not be charged. "UTA has made its own cost reductions (about \$2.7 million) and has no other internal way to make up the difference the fuel costs have caused," he said.

Before the decision Toomer along with other advocates for the disabled and low-income residents of Salt Lake County spoke out against the action descending outside UTA's corporate headquarters on May 13 before a public hearing on the matter.

But left early when they heard UTA officials would not let them speak publicly at the microphone. Instead those with comments were told to give them to a court reporter for a later review by the board.

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Award presented to the independent living council

By Deborah De Vos

The U.S. Department of Labor's Center for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives recognized The Utah Statewide Independent Living Council on May 1 as a "Champion of Compassion".

USILC is a private, non-profit organization whose

mission is to promote full inclusion, independence and empowerment of people with disabilities through advocacy and system change, planning and organization, education, networking, resource development and independent liv-

ing service enhancement.

The "Champion of Compassion" award recognizes the partnership of faith-based and community groups with the Department of Labor.

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Roll with it baby...

By Deborah De Vos

If there is one message the Disability Outreach Committee is trying to get across to the residents of Salt Lake County living with disabilities, it's "Get on the Move!"

The Chairman of DOC's Board of Directors, Mark Miller, decided to put his wheels where his motto is by participating in the 2008 Magna Fun Walk.

"Having Cerebral Palsy and being confined to a wheelchair, I've never really been active in my community. I've voted and been to church but for the most part I've remained pretty much invisible," Miller said. "But when I was invited to help organize the sixth annual Magna Healthy Community Fair, I got behind it and jumped in with all four wheels."

Miller said he liked that the fair is designed to show everyone how to live a healthier life. "I believe it's important to keep pushing a 'take care of you' message,"

Miller said, adding that it was the fun walk and wanting to be amongst others that tugged at him. "Suddenly it hit me that just because I was in a chair, it didn't mean I couldn't participate."

On the morning of May 17, Miller pulled up in his motorized chair with other residents from Magna and around the Salt Lake Valley and "no one treated me like I was in a chair," Miller said. "I felt free and apart of something greater than just a walk, I felt like I too could represent a healthy life-style."

A fire engine from the



The Magna Fire Department and Salt Lake Bee mascot lead participants in the 2008 Magna Fun Walk

Magna firehouse and Old Glory carried by Barrie Christensen from the Magna VFW escorted the 100 or so participants down the middle of the road.

"It was great being part of the procession and riding up the middle of the street without worrying about being hit, but the best part was meeting so many good people united in such a worthy cause," Miller said, noting Miss Magna, Ashley Kelson, and her work with Diabetes education and prevention.

"This event has taught me that I can make a valuable contribution in my community. I hope that my example will encourage others to not let their disabilities prevent them from participating in any activity if they are inspired to do it—just roll with it baby."



Mark Miller rides along in the 2008 Fun Walk as part of the Magna Health Fair.

"It was
great being
a part of
the
procession,"
~Mark Miller



Miller's sign says DOC on the Move.

Improvements made to the Ticket to Work program

By Deborah De Vos

The Social Security Administration issued some final rules for the Ticket to Work program that are designed to improve the effectiveness of the program.

"These rules outline a new and improved Ticket to Work program and are based on learning from our experiences, listening to input from interested parties and responding to their suggestions," said Michael J. Astrue, Commissioner of Social Security. "Beneficiaries with disabilities will have greater flexibility and expanded choices in obtaining the ser-

vices they need to attain their employment goals."

The Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999 established the Ticket to Work and Self-Sufficiency Program.

The purpose of the program is to expand the universe of service providers available to beneficiaries with disabilities who are seeking vocational rehabilitation, employment and related support services.

These service providers are available

to assist beneficiaries in obtaining, regaining and maintaining self-supporting employment.

Available in all 50 States and the US territories, the Ticket to Work program is a component in a coordinated series of work incentives and initiatives that are designed to help overcome barriers to employment often experienced by beneficiaries with disabilities.

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It's raining, it's pouring, the veggies are growing

By Mark Miller

The sky was dimmed as the rain poured down but the colors outside appeared more vivid against the clouds and for a group of young men in the Magna community that included Greg White, Ron Bryce, Beau White, John Alfred, Marcus Bryce and Kavin Richards—it was a perfect day to give back.

On June 4, residents of The Pleasant Green Villa in Magna, were given a gift of a garden from the community volunteers to call their own, marking its third anniversary.

The PGV community houses ten disabled residents all on fixed incomes. One of the volunteer growers, Ron Bryce, said it was little wet, “[but] we were happy to help you out.”

The garden is one of the

events community volunteers just do to be neighborly, others include Thanksgiving Dinner, Christmas parties and dinners, treats on Halloween and football parties.

Utilizing two existing planter boxes built three years ago by community volunteers, PGV resident, Roy Davis said this year “we’re growing green peppers and tomatoes... [and] with the price of produce going up it’s going to be nice to have fresh vegetables soon for free,” he said.

Another PVG resident, Steve Vorwaller said he’ll tend to the garden, watering and fertilizing the plants when needed.

“I’ve been growing things for years,” Vorwaller said. “[I’ve grown] everything from peas to watermel-

ons and I’m happy to keep doing it.”

The residents on hand to witness the annual event were thankful to all who helped to provide the garden.

Mike White prepared the soil beforehand and said that “the plants were donated by Joe Richards who owns a small greenhouse in Magna.”

White also said the fertilizer was donated by, Joe’s brother, Dale Richards, who won the World Championship of Chariot Racing in Ogden Utah. “The plants should grow really well because the fertilizer came from champion horses,” he said jokingly.



Volunteers help Pleasant Green Residents plant their community garden.

“The plants should grow really well because the fertilizer came from champion horses,”
~Mike White



Pictured above first and last pictures : Volunteers brave the rain to plant a community garden for Pleasant Green Village residents. Centered is excited PVG resident and garden caretaker, Steve Vorwaller.

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“Through their deep commitment and caring touch, these groups have made a critical difference for so many who otherwise may have fallen through the cracks,” said Rhett Butler, director of the Center for Faith-based and Community Initiatives. “These partnerships model what is possible when government joins with the unique strengths with other local faith-based organizations to serve neighbors in need.”

USILC works in partnership

with the Independent Living Centers and the Utah State Office of Rehabilitation to enhance Independent Living opportunities throughout Utah.

Membership of the council consist of people living with disabilities, representatives from Independent Living Centers, a USOR representative, representatives of other disability related organizations, parents and advocates for people with disabilities.

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English said it was “unfortunate they decided to leave without comment” and that “UTA does hold many hearing in this way.”

But Toomer said that she felt it was not a public hearing it was a “UTA hearing, designed to control information and their public image.”

Disabled advocates are concerned that the rate increases will continue to hurt Salt Lake

County’s transit-dependent riders.

“Those who are on fixed incomes will now have to make decisions about whether they will eat a meal, make a needed trip to the doctor or purchasing the critical medication they need,” Toomer said. “No one should have to make these kinds of decisions.”

Letters To The Editor

Letters to the Editor:

Are printed on a first come, first served basis as a companion piece to Edge News Journal.

Send letters to:
docpress@gmail.com
We want to hear from you!



On May 25th I was able to fulfill a lifelong dream and attend the 92nd running of the Indianapolis 500. I also traveled alone for the first time by plane since I started using a wheelchair to meet up with a friend of mine in Indianapolis.

The airlines were very accommodating and gave me all the assistance I needed getting to connecting flights and transporting my wheelchair. The only thing they didn't have much of a sense of humor about was when I discovered at the gate that my driver's license that I was using for ID was expired. Anyway, it all worked out.

The race was a fantastic and because of a little pre-trip preparation I was able to make the most of the experience.

There is nothing like the sound of those 33 race cars roaring by on the front straightaway. I had arranged some special access passes so we were allowed on Pit Row and in Gasoline Alley to see the race cars. They are so loud earplugs are a must.

The weather on race day couldn't have been better, high 70s, slightly overcast with a slight breeze. It was a great event full of fun, activities and excitement all day.

Even though I was a little apprehensive at first about the travel I discovered that with a little effort, preparation and assistance I can still get to and enjoy events like this even though I now use a wheelchair.

Todd F. Clafin



Pictured left to right is DOC Chairman Mark Miller and Treasurer, Haley Cavanagh sitting at the DOC booth in the 2008 Magna Health Fair.

The Disability Outreach Committee would like to thank everyone who helped to make the 2008 Magna Health Fair a success. We were able to give out a lot of information to people who visited us at our booth, as well as connect with other Salt Lake County officials and area businesses.

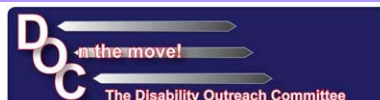
We feel our time and participation was well spent and we all look forward to attending again next year. As always we continue to work on the behalf of all men,

women and children living with disabilities to seek solutions for some of the challenges that they face. Your support and contributions are always welcomed.

Until next year we wish everyone good health.

Mark Miller

Chairman of the Board for
The Disability Outreach Committee



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Under the new rules the population of individuals eligible for a Ticket is expanded to include beneficiaries who are expected to medically improve and rules for Ticket assignment are changed to enable beneficiaries with disabilities to take advantage of a more effective combination of services from both State Vocational Rehabilitation agencies and Employment Networks.

The new rules also modify the EN payment systems to create greater financial incentives for service providers to participate, which Astrue said would improve beneficiary access to services and expand the pool of quality providers available to serve beneficiaries.

"Thus far, the results of the Ticket to Work program have been less than everyone expected and clearly less than Congress intended," Commissioner Astrue said. "We need to monitor the results of today's regulation closely but it is highly likely that Congress will need to revisit the statute in the next few years to achieve the goals that Congress intended."

In preparation for the new Ticket to Work program, Social Security is undertaking a major recruitment effort to increase the number of organizations functioning as ENs and initiating targeted outreach to promote the program to more beneficiaries.

To be put on our monthly email distribution list for The Edge, send an email to docpress@gmail.com. For story ideas, please email us.

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