

# Souhegan Valley Rides

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August 2009



## *Celebrate with SVTC in October!*

The Souhegan Valley Rides community transit bus service will mark a major milestone on October 1, 2009 when it celebrates its first year anniversary. This service, made available by the regional work of the Souhegan Valley Transportation Collaborative (SVTC), has been steadily rolling forward during the past year. Initiated to provide affordable, wheelchair-accessible rides to non-emergency medical and healthcare related appointments, the bus service expanded on July 1, 2009 to include rides for shopping on Thursdays. The success of this community service is measured by the level of community support and patronage you demonstrate for Souhegan Valley Rides – your voice in support, your ridership, your vote, and your willingness to share ideas on how together we can improve the bus service and make it a sustainable community transit resource.

SVTC will celebrate the bus service's 1<sup>st</sup> anniversary in October by holding community meetings on Thursday October 1<sup>st</sup> in Hollis (1 pm at the Lawrence Barn) and on Thursday October

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### Current Towns Served:

Amherst, Brookline, Hollis & Milford

### Schedule:

8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. (including travel time)  
Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday

### To schedule a ride:

Call 880-0100 ext. 1

At least 48 hours in advance on weekdays

**For more information, please call  
880-0100 then dial extension 1**

## NRPC receives grant from NHCF to assist SVTC

In July, the Nashua Regional Planning Commission (NRPC) received a \$15,000 grant from the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation to develop a strategic plan for the sustainability and expansion of the Souhegan Valley Transportation Collaborative (SVTC). This plan will summarize all key issues and concerns, develop recommendations for expanding the service, and identify a sustainable funding method. As part of the planning process, NRPC will be conducting a survey of local residents to assess community needs and opinions about transportation issues. This assistance from professional transportation planners is a significant opportunity for SVTC and the bus service in transitioning from a pilot program to a more permanent and sustainable service.

Although originally formed in 1959, the NRPC is one of nine New Hampshire regional planning commissions, established by the State Legislature in 1970 under RSA 36:45-53. The Commission consists of an appointed voluntary board of Commissioners from its member communities, as well as a professional planning staff. The Greater Nashua and Souhegan Valley member communities of NRPC are Amherst, Brookline, Hollis, Hudson, Litchfield, Lyndeborough, Mason, Merrimack,

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8<sup>th</sup> in Milford (time and place to be determined). The celebrations will include speakers and information about the service, as well as refreshments. These gatherings will be excellent opportunities for current riders, not-yet riders, and interested neighbors to share their ideas on how to improve the service, to ask questions about the service and to learn more about this valuable community resource. All are welcome!

The SVTC was formed by a group of concerned Souhegan Valley residents and members of the Granite State Organizing Project to create an affordable, wheelchair-accessible community transportation service in the Souhegan Valley that would provide rides for non-emergency medical appointments as well as rides for other essential activities. Research indicated that people from this area travel primarily to Nashua for their medical care rather than Manchester. There is currently no other organization that provides affordable, wheelchair-accessible rides for non-emergency medical appointments to any person of any age in Amherst, Brookline, Hollis, and Milford. SVTC raised grant funds and contracted with the Nashua Transit System to initiate the pilot program for a door-to-door, shared ride bus service in October 2008. Then in March 2009, residents of Brookline, Hollis, and Milford voted to financially support the bus service at Town Meeting. Brookline included bus service funding as an operating budget item while Milford residents approved a separate warrant article to fund the service. Hollis created a municipal transportation improvement fund by adding \$1 to automobile registration fees. The Thursday shopping rides program was added in July 2009 and offers rides to four local major shopping destinations: Wal-Mart in Amherst and Shaw's/Lorden Plaza, Market Basket, and Stop & Shop in Milford. SVTC remains committed to expanding the bus service to other Souhegan Valley communities, as well as to adding rides for other essential activities.

For the location and time of the Milford celebration or for information about how to get a ride to the celebrations, please contact Kaley Lentini of the Granite State Organizing Project at 603-668-8250. For more information about the SVTC or the bus service, please contact SVTC Chairperson Marcia Nelson at 603-673-8482 or tighemn@yahoo.com.

Milford, Mont Vernon, Nashua, Pelham and Wilton. NRPC provides its 13 member communities with comprehensive solutions to local environmental, land use, transportation, and regional planning issues as well as cutting edge mapping and data services. In addition, NRPC functions as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Nashua region.

NRPC's ability to collaborate with multiple parties results in planning that is innovative, inclusive, technically sound, and driven by public participation. Among many other local accomplishments, NRPC was instrumental in developing Milford's Nashua and Elm Streets Corridor Overlay District, completing the Route 13 Corridor studies for Brookline and Mont Vernon, and updating the Hollis Road Standards. The collaboration with SVTC is a natural fit as NRPC is the lead organization working on the development of a regionally coordinated transportation system for the Greater Nashua and Souhegan Valley areas.

NRPC will be celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in September. For more information about NRPC or the anniversary celebration, please contact Jill Simonetti, Public Outreach Coordinator, at 603-424-2240 ext. 27 or [jills@nashuarpc.org](mailto:jills@nashuarpc.org).

### ***Transit Tidbit:***

According to the U.S. Census Bureau<sup>1</sup>, in 2006 New Hampshire received \$126 for highway related projects and \$9 for transit related projects in per capita dollars of Federal Aid as compared to the U.S. average of \$111 for highways and \$29 for transit in per capita dollars. Moreover, Maine received \$133 for highways and \$16 for transit while Vermont received \$242 for highways and \$21 for transit in per capita dollars.

1. U.S. Census Bureau, 2009, Table 1052 Federal Aid to State and Local Governments for Highway Trust Fund and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) by State: 2006, page 670.



### Ridership Facts as of 07/31/09

#### Registered riders by Town

Amherst	34
Brookline	32
Hollis	90
Milford	169
Total	325

- \* Approximately 82% of the bus rides involve appointments located in Nashua, 16% in Milford and 2% in Amherst.
- \* About 72% of the riders are female, 76% are seniors and 34% use some type of assistive device such as a cane or wheelchair.
- \* In July, 6 Souhegan Valley residents were able to complete shopping activities using the bus service.

#### Total number of one-way rides by Town:

	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	May	June	July	Total Rides	Percent of Total Rides
Amherst	0	2	0	2	4	2	2	8	18	16	<b>54</b>	7.1%
Brookline	0	2	0	0	0	2	2	0	1	0	<b>7</b>	0.9%
Hollis	14	34	20	10	11	28	24	24	14	14	<b>193</b>	25.3%
Milford	30	49	40	60	42	52	55	57	62	61	<b>508</b>	66.7%
<b>Total</b>	44	87	60	72	57	84	83	89	95	91	<b>762</b>	

### *Many Thanks to Our 2008-2009 Contributors!*

#### *Please consider supporting our supporters!*

Without the support and interest of our contributors, the SVTC pilot program would never have “rolled out of the garage.” So three cheers and many thanks to the individuals and organizations who have so generously contributed to the implementation of this bus service!

- Amherst** The Bean Foundation
- Brookline** Brookline Community Church, Brookline Lion’s Club, Brookline Women’s Club, Hollis-Brookline Rotary, Jerry Farwell of C.L. Farwell Construction, Rich Vertullo of Vertullo Landscaping, Kevin and Cindy Gorgolione of Absolute Mechanical Systems and Loring Webster
- Hollis** Hollis-Brookline Rotary, Hollis Seniors, the Town of Hollis and The Marie Le Doux Foundation
- Milford** The Kaley Foundation, The Marchesi Fund, The Milford Hospital Association, The Milford Rotary Club and the Town of Milford
- Nashua** Dartmouth-Hitchcock
- Concord** The Endowment for Health

#### An important reminder to our current and potential riders

As a social services agency, SHARE meets the criteria as a destination for bus rides. If you have an appointment at the SHARE Center on Elm Street in Milford and need transportation, please consider using the Souhegan Valley Rides bus service.

#### Fare Voucher Program

Thanks to continued support from and collaboration with SHARE and the Hollis Seniors, SVTC is able to offer a voucher program for the bus fares. The vouchers are available for riders who are unable to afford the fare for each trip. To obtain a voucher, please mention the program to the NTS dispatcher when scheduling your ride. For more information, please contact Marcia Nelson at (603) 673-8482.



### SVTC Contact Information

#### **2009-2010 Board of Directors**

Marcia Nelson, Milford, Chairperson  
Janet Langdell, Milford, Vice-chairperson  
Jim Belanger, Hollis, Co-secretary  
Dennie Townsend, Brookline, Co-secretary  
Ellen Groh, GSOP, Treasurer  
Carolyn Mitchell, Amherst  
Ruth Heden, GSOP/At-large member

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 753 Hollis, NH 03049

**Souhegan Valley Rides** is published every two months (April, June, August, October, December and February). Please email any comments or questions and subscription requests to [SVTCnewsletter@comcast.net](mailto:SVTCnewsletter@comcast.net) or call (603) 860-1202.

### **Nashua Regional Planning Commission**

**Many thanks to NRPC** for adding a page to their website where you can find current and past SVTC newsletters.

<http://www.nashuarpc.org/SVTC/index.htm>

**For more information about issues, information and planning activities affecting our region, please visit the NRPC website at [WWW.NASHUARPC.ORG](http://WWW.NASHUARPC.ORG)**

The NRPC office is located in Merrimack at  
9 Executive Park Drive, Suite 201  
Phone 603-424-2240 ~ Fax 603-424-2230

### **SVTC Volunteer Opportunities**

To learn more about SVTC or to get involved in making the bus service a permanent resource in your Souhegan Valley community, please call Marcia Nelson at (603) 673-8482 or email us at [SVTCnewsletter@comcast.net](mailto:SVTCnewsletter@comcast.net)



### **GSOP Membership Campaign in the Souhegan Valley**

As part of an ongoing effort to strengthen its voice and numbers, the Granite State Organizing Project (GSOP) has initiated a membership drive in the Souhegan Valley. GSOP is a nonprofit, nonpartisan grassroots organization incorporated in 2002 that works to improve life in south-central New Hampshire. This advocacy group is comprised of religious, community and labor organizations representing 20,000 New Hampshire families. As an advocacy group with a united voice, GSOP members work on issues related to affordable housing, health care, jobs, education and other topics that affect the quality of life in south-central New Hampshire. If you, your church or other organization are interested in more information about GSOP or potential membership, please contact Kaley Lentini, GSOP Outreach Coordinator, at GSOP, 383 Beech St., Manchester, N.H. 03103, (603)668-8250 or [klentinigso@comcast.net](mailto:klentinigso@comcast.net).

### **Upcoming Community Events**

As summer draws to a close and fall approaches, there are many activities planned around the region. Here are just a few of the highlights!

#### **\* 62<sup>nd</sup> Annual Veterans of Foreign Wars Labor Day Parade in Milford**

**When:** Monday, **September 7<sup>th</sup>**, parade starts at 1 PM

**Where:** Parade kicks off from the Milford High School on West Street and proceeds down Elm Street, through the Oval, over the bridge, and up Mont Vernon Street to the VFW Post.

**Cost:** Parade is FREE; donations to support the cause are gladly accepted!

**Details:** This year's theme is "Honoring The Greatest Generation Veterans"; post-parade activities are planned at the VFW Post including a pig roast, chili contest and children's activities.

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## Upcoming Community Events (continued)

### ☼ **Milford Rotary Club's 41<sup>st</sup> Annual Pancake Breakfast**

**When:** Sunday, **September 13<sup>th</sup>**, 8 AM to 12 Noon

**Where:** Under the tent at the Edgewood Shopping Center parking lot

**Cost:** Donation \$5 per person, under 12 - \$3.50 at "the gate"

**Details:** All you can eat breakfast including plain and blueberry pancakes, sausage, coffee, orange juice, and milk. This event is one of the Milford Rotary Club's prime fund raisers of the year and helps support their many endeavors to fund local needs and charitable organizations, to provide scholarships, and to perform community improvement projects.

### ☼ **Cow Pattie Bingo sponsored by the Hollis Brookline Rotary Club**

**When:** Saturday, **September 19<sup>th</sup>** at the Hollis Old Home Days celebration

**Where:** Nichols Field, Hollis, NH

**Time:** To be determined (or whenever the heifers decide to do their business)

**Cost:** \$5 per ticket, \$20 for book of 5 tickets. You don't need to be present at the event to win.

**Details:** Tickets can be purchased at the Brookline Village Store, the Hollis Pharmacy, the Brookline and Hollis Transfer Stations, and from any HB Rotarian. This is a general fund raiser for the HB Rotary Club and helps to support their many community contributions.

### ☼ **An Evening of Music sponsored by the Hollis Brookline Rotary Club**

**When:** Saturday, **September 26<sup>th</sup>**, 7 PM to 9 PM

**Where:** Lawrence Barn Community Center, 28 Depot Road, Hollis, NH

**Cost:** \$20 per ticket

**Details:** This is a primary fund raiser for the HB Rotary Club to raise funds in support of Rotary International's Honduras Water Project and Polio Campaign. The evening will include performances by many locally and regionally known musicians and musical groups.

### ☼ **SVTC Community Meetings & 1<sup>st</sup> Year Anniversary Celebrations**

**When:** Thursday, **October 1<sup>st</sup>**, 1 PM at The Lawrence Barn Community Center, 28 Depot Road, Hollis

**When:** Thursday, **October 8<sup>th</sup>**, location and time in Milford to be determined

**Cost:** None

**Details:** Join SVTC in celebrating the 1<sup>st</sup> anniversary of the Souhegan Valley Rides bus service. These events will be excellent opportunities for current riders, not-yet riders, and interested neighbors to share their ideas on how to improve the service, to ask questions about the service and to learn more about this valuable community resource. Refreshments will be served. All are welcome!

For the location and time of the Milford celebration or for information about how to get a ride to the celebrations, please contact Kaley Lentini of the Granite State Organizing Project at 603-668-8250.

### ☼ **Milford Rotary Club's 31<sup>st</sup> Annual Senior Citizen's Chicken Barbeque**

**When:** Wednesday, **October 7<sup>th</sup>**, 12 Noon

**Where:** Place to be determined

**Cost:** FREE to area Senior Citizens! No reservations are required!

**Details:** Chicken barbeque with all the fixings served by members of the Milford Rotary Club to local Senior Citizens. Some have said that this BBQ Chicken is world famous – come on October 7th, try it for yourself and see what you think!

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## Upcoming Community Events (continued)

### ✿ 20<sup>TH</sup> Annual Milford Pumpkin Festival

**When:** Friday **October 9<sup>th</sup>**, 5 PM – 9 PM; Saturday **October 10<sup>th</sup>**, 10 AM to 9 PM  
& Sunday **October 11<sup>th</sup>**, 10 AM – 3 PM

**Where:** On the Oval and at numerous locations around downtown Milford, NH

**Cost:** Varies

**Details:** Presented by the Milford Do-It organization, this year's Pumpkin Festival promises to be the most memorable one yet! There will be a magic show, the famous talent show, musicians galore, a chili contest, the haunted trail, numerous children's activities and so much more. New this year will be a Beer Tasting event on Saturday at 5:30 pm featuring Milford's own Pennichuck Brewery. Please watch for further details about this great event in the local newspapers or visit <http://www.milfordpumpkinfestival.org/home.html> for more information.

**Editor's Note 1:** As I put the finishing touches on this edition of the Souhegan Valley Rides newsletter, plans are in motion at SVTC to have a float in Milford's Labor Day Parade and an information table at the Pumpkin Festival. We hope to see you all at each of these events – give us a wave as we roll along during the parade or drop by our table at the festival! - JAL

**Editor's Note 2:** As mentioned above, the theme of this year's Labor Day Parade in Milford is "Honoring The Greatest Generation Veterans". To learn more about the WWII Veterans who entered the service from Milford, visit the Wadleigh Memorial Library and ask to see a copy of "Milford in World War II 1941-1945" published by The Cabinet Press in 1949, or visit the Milford Historical Society from 2-4 pm on the second Saturday and Sunday of each month. For those of you from other towns, to learn more about the WWII veterans from your hometown, please contact your local VFW Post or American Legion Post, or visit your local library or historical society. - JAL

Remember the determination reflected in the World War II poster of Rosie the Riveter?

Perhaps that's the determination and level of commitment we need today as we confront so many local and national challenges and as we work together for a better future.

In advance of the Milford Labor Day Parade, SVTC extends sincere thanks to all World War II veterans. We are here free to work on our cause for community transit because you were there!



## Frequently Asked Questions

*The Souhegan Valley Transportation Collaborative and the Nashua Transit System are committed to making this a comfortable and reliable service. If you have ideas, suggestions, complaints or compliments, please let us know by calling us at 880-0100 extension 1.*

*Thank you for riding with us!*

### How the service works

- The van operates between 8:00 AM and 4:00 PM (including travel time) on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays.
- Riders are asked to pay \$2.00 each way. Exact Fare Only – No change can be given.
- Rides will be given to social service agencies, pharmacies and health care appointments, including doctor visits, dialysis, physical therapy, counseling and hospital services. Rides for local shopping are available on Thursdays only – call for details.
- Service is available to ALL residents of the four towns.
- Riders are asked to register for the service in advance and can register by calling 880-0100 extension 1.
- Riders will be picked up at home by a vehicle equipped with a lift.
- Service animals are permitted and Personal Care Attendants ride free.
- A rider may bring one guest if the guest pays the fee. NTS must be notified.

### What information do I need to schedule my ride?

- Your full name
- Your telephone number
- The date of your trip
- The pick-up address
- The drop-off address
- Whether you use a mobility device
- The times you would like to arrive at and return from your destination
- Whether a personal attendant/PCA or companion will be riding with you



### How far in advance do I schedule my ride?

Please call 880-0100 extension 1 at least 48 hours (weekdays only) in advance to schedule your ride.

**Rides needed on Tuesdays must be scheduled by the previous Friday, rides for Wednesday must be scheduled by the previous Monday, and rides for Thursday must be scheduled by the previous Tuesday.**

Riders can call up to **two weeks** in advance to schedule a ride to an appointment. For riders attending dialysis or other ongoing, regularly scheduled appointments, NTS's dispatching staff will work with the individual rider on extended bookings.

### What if I no longer need a ride?

It is very important that you call NTS if you are not going to need a scheduled trip by 5:00 PM the day before your scheduled trip. To cancel a trip, please call 880-0100 extension 1.

### Riding the Bus

Please be prepared to meet the vehicle at the curb if you do not need assistance. If you do need assistance getting to the vehicle, and have told us so, please be ready at the building entrance door that you specified while making your reservation. When boarding, please have EXACT FARE ready. For the comfort and safety of all passengers, eating, drinking, smoking and the use of other tobacco products are not permitted in the vehicles. Radios and cell phones are a distraction to the driver and other passengers, EARPHONES only, please.

### Other Important How-To-Ride Tips!

The vehicle may arrive anytime within a thirty (30) minute "window", up to fifteen (15) minutes before and fifteen (15) minutes after your scheduled pick-up time.

For example, if your pick-up time is scheduled for 9:00 AM, the vehicle will arrive between 8:45AM and 9:15AM.

Once you are inside the vehicle, the driver will assist you with your seatbelt, if requested, and secure your wheelchair if you have one.