



215 PLEASANT STREET BENNINGTON VT. 05201
(802)447-0477 WWW.GREENMTNCN.ORG

Who is Behind Our GMX Wheels?

By: Donna Baker

This second edition of our newsletter is proudly dedicated to our GMX vehicle operators! Permit us, on the following two pages, to introduce you to the most important folks here at the Network: Our drivers!

When you ride on the Green Mtn. Express (GMX) you are in excellent hands! All our full, part time and per diem drivers are experienced, dedicated and well trained. It is interesting and important to note what is required to work for us....A mandatory background check which incorporates various registries including: National Criminal, VT Dept. of Children and Families, The Adult Registry, VT Criminal Info Center, VT Human Services Exclusion Data Base and a state driver's license check. Our regular staff is also subject to random drug and alcohol tests. Compulsory classroom training for drivers includes: a 16 hour Passenger Assistance Course, CPR, first aid and monthly, mini sessions which involve topics such as: defensive driving, customer service techniques, proper use of restraints, lifts and the like.

In addition our bus drivers, for 16+ passenger vehicles must possess a Commercial Driver's License (CDL), this credential necessitates a certified physical exam and vision check every two years. We require our team to obey the rules of the road, have a common sense approach in challenging situations and we expect an unfailing demonstration of their excellent customer service skills.

A team in the truest sense of the word, our driving staff wears their logo clothing and identification proudly, they regularly and cheerfully assist one another, when the going gets tough and the safety of passengers is always paramount. Before a vehicle leaves our yard it has under gone a thorough pre trip inspection, by the driver, that involves checking lights, tires, fluids, cleanliness, snow removal and functionality of the wheelchair lifts and other essential accessories. Driving in unpredictable Vermont weather, over often difficult and unfamiliar terrain, can be demanding. For emergency purposes our drivers and management rotate on call 24/7. Because operators are cross-trained and familiar with most vehicles, we
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A Closer Look

By Susan Rushmore

Our 14 drivers, some of whose pictures appear on the next two pages, are the backbone of The Green Mountain Community Network and the folks who serve you directly.

We guarantee them to be safe drivers and friendly, understanding staff members who will do their best to accommodate you. They are all trained for assisting you if you have special needs.

But they are not just the people behind the wheel. They are your neighbors, your friends, your community members. We'd like to let you know a little about who they are, what else they've done in the community, what their interests are, and how they feel about serving the community by providing transportation.

Our drivers serve a diverse population on buses, in cars and in vans. They transport children, teenagers, adults and the elderly and are responsible for getting people to and from doctors. They also serve the disabled. All are trained in wheelchair assistance; all our buses are handicap accessible.

Where do they come from, and how long have they lived in Vermont? What do they do in their spare time? What else have they done? What kind of families do they go home to – children, wives, husbands, mothers, fathers? And why did they choose to work at GMCN?

We hope that that this edition of our newsletter makes you a bit more familiar with our driving staff and brings them into focus as the very human beings they are. As a rider on both GMCN buses and in cars, I have found these folks to be kind, compassionate, skilled workers and, like you and me, both ordinary and extraordinary people. I think you will find the same. Get to know us!



WE Our Drivers!



Nellie Miller has been a driver for GMX for 7 years. She previously drove a school bus and was an EMT for the Town of Hoosick Ambulance Service. She was born at Putnam Memorial Hospital but has lived close to her cousin's farm in Hoosick, NY for many years. She and her 8 year old daughter, Sydney, have 2 parakeets, a Malamute/German Shepard dog, a cat and a rabbit. Nellie likes to bowl in her spare time, and the things she likes about working for GMX are driving and helping people. Her laughter can always be heard around the Green mountain Express office. Green Mountain Express office.



Paul LaMontagne, a native of Rhode Island, came to Vermont 23 years ago and taught languages at Wilmington High School for many years. He has been driving for GMX for 4 years. He and his wife live in Bennington and have a son and a daughter, as well as 3 grandchildren who live in the area. Paul has a Malamute/Lab mix dog and an aquarium. He enjoys working in his woodshop, restoring furniture, old motorcycles, cars, and is currently restoring a Circa 1960s motorboat. He enjoys photography and is a Green Mountain RSVP volunteer.



Dawn Julius is an 8 year veteran driver at GMX. Her husband was working as a driver and called her to fill in for someone. She has never left! She loves her job and her co-workers, and wouldn't want to work anywhere else. She grew up in Bennington and has always lived here. She and her husband have four children, ranging in age from 16 to 26. They have a hound dog named Patches and a cat they call Jamie. Dawn enjoys bowling in a local league. Her best score is 175. Dawn is known for her sweet smile and her calm demeanor.

The mission of the State of Vermont Department of Transportation is to work with multiple state agencies and consumers to develop coordinated transportation services and programs that will achieve increased efficiencies and will be able to provide enhanced mobility and accessibility to a greater number of consumers, particularly those with special transportation needs.





Bob Smith is a native of New Jersey, but moved to Bennington 33 years ago because he and his wife recognized that it would be an ideal location in which to raise a family. They are glad for the choice they made. Their 3 children are grown now, and 2 are married. He is the proud grandfather of 8 year old Gretchen. Before becoming a GMX driver 2 years ago, Bob was the Postmaster of Bondville, VT. He loves to watch re-runs of the Dukes of Hazard and read T.V. Guide. He has a little 10lb. Poodle named Rocky, in honor of Sylvester Stallone. His co-workers are the best group with whom he's ever worked.

What is a Travel Trainer?

Our county is made up of a large population of elderly and disabled people. In order to assist them in their right to remain independent and in their own homes, we would like to enlist volunteers who will be trained by Green Mountain Express and will teach seniors and disabled persons how to ride the Green Mountain Express public transportation buses. Volunteers will be assigned to someone who wishes to learn the system. They will map out routes together, learn safety measures, the practical methods of independent travel, and how to pay and transfer. Then the volunteer will travel the buses with them until they are comfortable enough to take on the task themselves.

Access to transportation is the key to independence, productivity, and inclusion in community life for people with disabilities; without it they will become isolated and depressed. Often members of the disabled community depend on the goodwill of others for transports to work, school, medical services, social functions and anywhere else they may need or desire to go, this is often because of a lack of confidence, family concerns, or most important transit "know-how". In addition they often lack the ability to procure information themselves and in turn arrange for the appropriate transit services. Our goal is to give them the ability to become self-sufficient and independent. We are actively looking for volunteers who would like to become Travel Trainers. You may call Green Mountain RSVP at 447-1545 for further information.

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make every effort, to assign the appropriate vehicle for a given situation. Whether a snowy night at 3AM, a holiday emergency, beautiful summer weekend, or during customary operating hours, our drivers get folks where they need to go, when they need to get there, safely and conveniently, always with a smile and ready to extend a helping hand.

On an average weekday GMX provides two hundred plus rides all over Bennington County and beyond; this could not be accomplished without the dedication, cooperation and stamina of our "little" band of drivers! So, we thank them for their willingness to literally go the extra mile. We applaud them for their safety record, and we salute them for continually putting our riders first!

Enjoy learning who these wonderful, compassionate individuals are... when they are not behind the wheels of our Green Mtn. Express.... *We just thought you'd like to know!*

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