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## **Introduction to GMCN** by Susan Rushmore

This is our first newsletter. We'd like to introduce you to the Green Mountain Community Network, Inc.

(GMCN), a private, non-profit 501C3 organization funded by grants, revenue-generating services and local fund-raising efforts. Our primary focus is to provide a variety of transportation services throughout Bennington County as the Green Mountain Express.

Our fleet consists of 6 buses, 5 vans and 6 cars. Vehicles are driven by paid staff and volunteers. Our drivers receive safety training, drug and alcohol testing and background checks. We are committed to safety, excellent, courteous customer service and out-of-the box thinking.

GMCN is governed and guided by a volunteer Board of Directors who are geographic representatives of Bennington County. We provide public transportation for everyone in the North and South Shires of Bennington County. Our routes extend from Manchester to Pownal and everywhere in between.

Rides cost from \$.50 for the short loop to \$2.00 for a long haul to Manchester. Children under 5 ride free. Discount coupon books are available (12 - \$.50 coupons for \$5.00).

Some of the bus stops are listed on page 3.

Our buses to Manchester and back run 7 days a week, start at 6:30 a.m. and finish at 6:53 p.m. Routes to Pownal begin at 8 a.m., Monday – Friday, 3 times a day, 5 days a week and end at 5:10. In Bennington, our fleet operates all day, 5 days a week, with limited mid-day service on Saturday. Another route covers the Shaftsbury-North Bennington area, 5 days a week, Monday – Friday, and we offer transfers from bus to bus, as well as meeting a connecting bus to Rutland in Manchester.

All buses will deviate from their regular routes up to ½ a mile on either side for riders who qualify under the American Disabilities Act. Please call ahead for this service. Our large vehicles are lift-equipped.

The Shopper's Express runs in Bennington on Monday, Wednesday and Friday, and in Shaftsbury/No. Bennington on Tuesday and Thursday. This bus goes to Aldi's/CVS, Price Chopper/Wal-Mart and Hanna-

ford. Please call ahead for a reservation; this bus operates door-to-door, with some restrictions.

Buses operate all year long, with the exception of Christmas, New Year's Day and Thanksgiving. In addition to our regularly scheduled stops, you may request a pickup on any route by waving at a moving bus. However, drivers will only stop where safe driving conditions permit. We suggest calling in advance to ascertain whether or not a stop is considered safe.

Our first bus shelter is behind Banknorth. By the end of the year, we hope to have additional bus shelters at major stops. Look for our new bus stop signs which have timetables, brochures and a complete list of stops.

Complete schedules are available on any GMCN vehicle and at major stops. A schedule can also be downloaded from our website:

[greenmtncn.org](http://greenmtncn.org). We would be happy to mail you one. Just call and ask!

We hope that this newsletter will be an invitation to everyone to try our services. We also provide transportation services for Medicaid, the Elderly and Disabled programs.



Become a  
Green Mountain Community Network  
Volunteer Driver Today

For seniors and disabled in Bennington County a few miles can seem like a thousand when they are faced with no means of transportation. The newly formed Green Mountain Community Network, Inc. wants to expand its Volunteer Driver Program which will make it easier for our seniors and the disabled to get to their appointments in a friendly, convenient, safe and reliable manner. Our developing pool of volunteer drivers will transport consumers to medical appointments, on essential errands and to social functions. These trips will be accomplished at a low cost, at a variety of times and generally in our volunteer's personal vehicle. The volunteer will receive a generous mileage reimbursement. What will make this new program unique is that when needed our volunteer drivers will wait for their passenger and will actually escort them to and from their business, before returning them safely home. Our volunteers will be able to offer the extras that can make any trip more enjoyable: a helping hand to the door with packages, lively conversation, and an arm to provide guidance and security. All volunteer drivers will choose the times they are available (time slots are open 24/7), both local and long distance trips will be offered, volunteers will not be asked to do any heavy lifting or to enter a consumer's residence. All volunteers will be interviewed, trained and screened. If you have some spare time, like to drive, own a car, enjoy meeting and helping people and would like to earn some extra dollars, please give us a call today at 802-447-0477. As a GMCN Volunteer, your generous gift of time, talent and transport will make a huge difference in the lives of many! We cannot provide this very necessary service without your help!

**Watch for details on other special services in future editions of our newsletter.**

## WHY RIDE THE BUS?

### Because...

- Families using public transportation can save more than they spend on food.
- Transportation accounts for more than 30% of U.S. carbon dioxide emissions.
- Public transportation in the U.S. saves approximately 1.4 billion gallons of gasoline and about 1.5 million tons of carbon dioxide annually that would enter the atmosphere if all the riders were driving their own vehicles.
- If just 1 in every 10 Americans used public transportation daily, U.S. reliance on foreign oil would decrease by 40%.
- Riding a bus is 79 times safer than riding in a car.
- According to a study done by the American Public Transportation Association, families using public transportation can reduce household expenses by \$6,200 annually. And, according to AAA, the cost of owning a new car, driving 15,000 miles a year, is \$7,834.

Green Mountain Express has a goal of providing to everyone safe, efficient, affordable public transportation. We welcome your questions and suggestions, and invite you to give try public transportation a try.



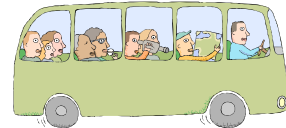
Improve your environmental  
footprint...

Ride the bus!

**YOU CAN GET THERE FROM HERE**  
**On the Green Mountain Express**  
**by: Eleanor Hanrahan**

**These are some of the places you can go on the Green Mountain Express.  
Our new schedule lists all of our stops.**

- **The Shopper's Express stops at Aldi's/CVS, Price Chopper/WalMart and Hannaford. This service requires a reservation; please call in advance.**
- **In Bennington Town, we stop at the hospital, United Counseling Service, the State Office Buildings, the High School, JC Penny, and the Walloomsac, Willowbrook and Applegate apartments. These buses run frequently throughout the day, 5 days a week (We offer limited service on Saturday).**
- **Pownal – 3 times a day, 5 days a week, stopping at Center Pownal and Winchester's Store.**
- **Shaftsbury, The Chocolate Barn, Lake Shaftsbury and Stewarts, 4 times a day, 5 days a week.**
- **Arlington and Manchester, 4 times a day, 7 days a week.**



**Donna Baker Leads Green Mountain  
Community Network**



Born and raised in Nashua, New Hampshire, Donna Baker served as the CEO of the Green Mountain Chapter of the American Red Cross for 24 years. She took the helm of the Green Mountain Community Network (doing business as Green Mountain Express) at its inception in February 2007 when it became a new stand-alone non-profit. For the past sixteen years Donna has been an adjunct faculty member at Community College of Vermont, where she teaches Effective Public Speaking and other non-profit management courses. She holds a master's degree in Human Services Administration from Antioch University and a certificate of organizational leadership from the JFK School of Government at Harvard University. She is the mother of adult twin sons, has a British Bulldog named Toby and several cats. In her spare time she enjoys cooking, golfing, nature photography and snorkeling.

**Amazing Stats!**

Green Mountain Express vehicles drive 400,000 miles per year.

They make 60,000 one way trips; of that, 22,000 are Medicaid trips.

The fleet consists of 6 buses, 5 cars and 6 vans, some of which are equipped with lifts.



"I take the express every week, and love being with friends as I ride and shop."  
S. Mills

Coming Attractions: Driver profiles  
New ideas from our readers  
Please send us your thoughts and questions.

**Printing courtesy of the Chittenden Bank. Our thanks and appreciation!**

Interested in learning more about Bennington County's transit system? If your organization, club or church group would like some transportation education, call 447-0477, ask for Donna Baker, and set up an informational meeting. We offer flexibility in terms of time and content.