

The MILEPOST

February 2020

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Getthere's five county service area

Vanpool Takes Off

Katie Blaine



Getthere's Transportation to Employment Program (TEP) partnered with the United Methodist Homes (UMH) Hilltop Campus to launch a new vanpool program in mid-January. Of the new service, Executive Director of the Hilltop Campus Ron Patti said, "UMH is excited to work with Rural Health Network to help our employees get to and from work. We feel this will provide current and potential new UMH employees with an affordable way to commute to work. We looked into providing a similar service but found that partnering with RHN cost pennies on the dollar in comparison."

For those that might be unfamiliar with the term, vanpools are like traditional carpools but instead of using an employee's personal vehicle, an employee drives an employer's or more often, third party-owned vehicle with increased seating capacity (hence, van). Employees can reserve seats in the van with pretax income for a set fee, sometimes offset by employer contributions, as well.

When available, vanpools are an important resource to help individuals gain and maintain employment when the cost of owning and operating a vehicle is prohibitive and/or when access to public transportation is limited and not conducive to work schedules. In addition, vanpools can help boost retention among employees, which saves businesses valuable time and resources. They also serve as a valuable employee benefit and recruiting tool that employers can offer prospective workers.

Additional support for Getthere and TEP is provided by Rural Health Network through New York State Department of Transportation and Federal Transit Administration programs, and the Empire State Poverty Reduction Initiative (ESPRI) through the Binghamton-Broome Anti-Poverty Initiative (BBAPI), which is a program of the United Way of Broome County.

Getthere Drivers Make a Difference

Nick Cecconi



[Click Here for Video](#)

Getthere has been assisting people with transportation through its call center since 2012 and with financial assistance through Connection to Care since 2013. In the fall of 2019, only a few months ago, Getthere began working with the Volunteer Transportation Center of Watertown, NY to recruit and train drivers to assist individuals in four of Getthere's five-county service area.

These drivers have already had a marked impact, saving thousands of dollars for trips that would otherwise be provided by taxis. Even so, as the video above will attest, our drivers' impact goes far beyond finances. They serve as important connectors for people in need of transportation and also to feel part of a community. Recognizing their importance, Getthere is currently looking to add additional drivers to its ranks, and make more valuable connections for people in need.

If you or someone you know is interested in serving as a driver for Getthere, please contact us at 1-855-373-4040 or getthere@rhnsnyc.org.

Helping Out in Otsego County

Justina Lewis, MTA

Working as a Mobility and Transportation Advocate at Getthere can be a very gratifying job. We spend our days answering calls and gathering information about our clients and their transportation needs. No one case is alike. You sometimes need to make multiple calls to gather more information so that you are able to assist that specific client. There are some cases that you work on and people you connect with that will always stick out in your mind. This was one of those cases for me.

Cassie was a very pleasant woman who seemed to have run out of options on her own. She said she does not drive and lives with her husband who works during the week. She has no other friends or family members in the area that would be able to take her to her appointments. Her medical condition prevents her from using public transit and she cannot cover the costs of taking a taxi on her own, even for relatively short trips.

This is where Getthere came in. Cassie was referred to us by the Office for Aging in Otsego County; They had helped her before but was unable to this time, unfortunately. She was going to be having physical therapy appointments multiple times a week and had no idea how she was going to get to them. The only option that she seemed to have left was taking a cab and she just couldn't afford it. With our help, Cassie was able to get to 26 physical therapy appointments in total. Cassie has expressed numerous times that she is very thankful for the services that we have been able to provide. Just knowing that her quality of life has improved because of something that we have been able to help her with is the most rewarding part of being an MTA.

A sTEP in the Right Direction

Late in 2018, Getthere rolled out a new program called the Transportation to Employment Program (TEP). Funding support from the United Way of Broome's Binghamton Broome Anti Poverty Initiative (BBAPI) and the Empire State Poverty Reduction Initiative (ESPRI) enabled this program to be offered to residents of Broome County.

After a successful first year, Getthere has secured funding to both expand the program into Chenango and Tioga Counties, and continue offering these services in Broome County. "It is our plan to eventually offer this service to residents of all five counties we serve," said Getthere Director Bill Wagner, "this program is about more than a ride, it offers individuals hope, a chance at employment and a chance to better their lives." Funding for the Chenango County expansion was secured with the assistance of the Chenango County Planning Department, while Tioga Rural Ministries recently agreed to support the expansion into Tioga County.

TEP benefits low-income residents that are unemployed, under-employed, or seeking employment, and who have identified transportation as a barrier to sustained employment. Additionally, residents who are employed but do not have affordable, dependable transportation are served. Referrals from this program come from Broome-Tioga Workforce, the Department of Social Services, and other agencies within the county that assist individuals seeking employment.

Announcements

NYSDOT Accepting Proposals for 5310 Funding

A million is being made available by The New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) for projects to improve mobility for seniors and individuals with disabilities. Funding is from the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program (USC. 49 Section 5310). The program provides financial assistance for transportation services planned, designed, and carried out to meet the special transportation needs of seniors and individuals with disabilities.

NYSDOT hosted two webinars to address specific application related questions earlier in February. For additional information, including all required application materials, please visit <https://www.dot.ny.gov/divisions/policy-and-strategy/public-transportation/specialized-transportation/5310/section%205310-application-material>. To be considered for funding, applications must be received on or before March 16, 2020.

Census 2020: America Needs You!

The Decennial Census is about to be sent out to households throughout the United States. Make sure to fill yours out and be counted!

Why is the 2020 Census Important?



Everyone Counts. The Census counts every person living in the U.S. once every ten years



Political Representation. The Census results are used to determine how many representatives each state has in Congress and are used to inform the redrawing of congressional district boundaries



It's Your Civic Duty. It is in the Constitution that everyone must be counted



Federal Funding. Census data is used to distribute \$675 billion in federal funds annually to states, counties, and local communities



Confidentiality. Federal law protects your Census responses. Your answers can only be used to produce statistics and cannot be shared or used to identify you or your household.



Answering the Census is the law, and it is important to our community. Please complete it accurately.

How is Census Data Used?



To determine funding for public services in our community



To determine where to build new infrastructure and community facilities



To determine where to open new companies, businesses, and stores



To write grant applications for community projects



To plan for emergency services

How & When do I Respond to the Census?

In March 2020, every household will receive an invitation to complete the Census, you can complete the questionnaire:



Online



By phone



By mail

Postcard reminders and a hard-copy questionnaire will be mailed throughout March and April. A Census taker will follow-up with non-responsive households.

MobiLinks

What Is a Smart Commute?

RideAmigos

The term "smart commute" is starting to displace the familiar "alternative commute" among in-the-know Transportation Demand Management (TDM) pros. As some leaders point out, the word "alternative" implies that solo driving is and should be the default mode. Instead, characterizing a particular mode as "smart" removes this distinction and uses language that reflects TDM's true values and objectives.[...] [Read More](#)

Head Start Program Transportation in Rural Areas

National RTAP

Head Start programs promote school readiness by enhancing the social and cognitive development of low-income preschool-aged children, including children on federally recognized Indian reservations and children of migratory farm workers, through the comprehensive health, educational, nutritional, social and other services[...] [Read More](#)

Binghamton Greenway meeting packed: One particular part of the plan has neighbors concerned

Jeff Platsky | Binghamton Press & Sun-Bulletin

A planned \$19 million pedestrian/bicycle path from MacArthur Park to Binghamton University hugging Route 434 received generally favorable reception Tuesday night, but one critical element came under sharp criticism. A 1,000-foot trail from the north side of Vestal Avenue to the Greenway path along 434 was questioned by neighborhood residents. The planned trail would take a diagonal route with an entrance at Ivanhoe Road and proceed east to the walkway. [...] [Read More](#)

News and Notes

Banner Year for Otsego County

Getthere cases on behalf of Otsego County residents increased for the third year in a row in 2019, and by a significant margin over its 2018 totals. Traditionally, Otsego has been the least frequent originator of Getthere cases, with 101 cases in 2017 and 193 in 2018. Its 473 cases this past year, however, were the third most of any county in Getthere's service area in 2019. Likewise, its 219 Connection to Care cases were also the 2nd. most in its service area, surpassing Chenango

County. for the first time ever.

Your Story Here!

Got a news tip for Getthere about transportation in South Central New York? An event coming up? We're always looking for stories, articles, and announcements, even brief ones, that let people know what's going on with transportation in our area. Give us a call or shoot us an email!

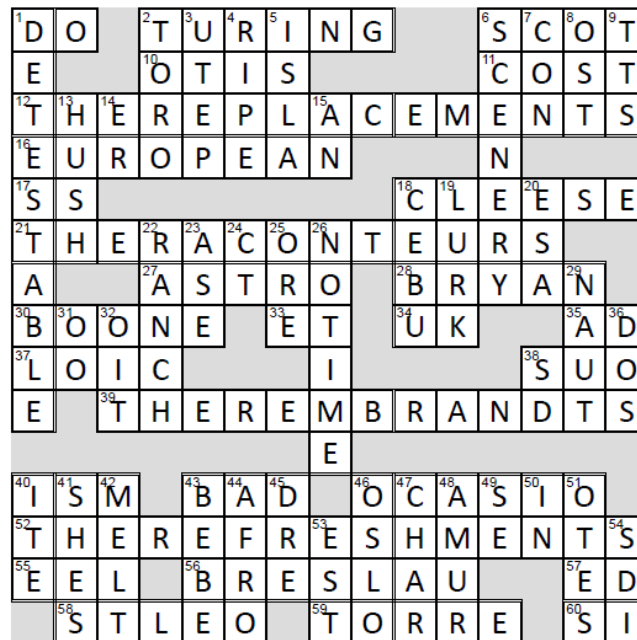
On the Horizon

Upcoming Events, Conferences, & Workshops

February 21 12 PM	Getthere Advisory Council Meeting	135 E. Frederick St. Binghamton, NY
March 10 7:30 AM	<u>Transit Awareness Day 2020</u>	Renaissance Hotel Albany, NY
March 17-20	<u>Shared Mobility Summit</u>	Hyatt Regency McCormick Place Chicago, IL
April 1 12 PM - 4 PM	<u>The Science of Smart Commuting</u>	The Internet

If you'd like your transportation meeting or event featured in next quarter's *The Milepost*, please contact us at getthere@rhnsny.org. Those interested in attending or learning more about Getthere's Advisory Committee meetings should contact Bill Wagner.

Room for Thirds Crossword Answers



You Can Help

Join in promoting our cause! You can help spread the word and gather feedback. Share this communication with others who may be interested or let us know who to add to the distribution list. Share your ideas and those you hear from others with us. Share mobility related news, events, and images representative of your area.

Partner involvement and support at the local, regional, state and national level has been critical to Getthere. We extend thanks to our numerous partners, stakeholders, and funders.

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Getthere Call Center hours: 7 am - 7 pm weekdays



Getthere is the mobility management program of
Rural Health Network of South Central NY

STAY CONNECTED

