

August 2004

Pedestrian Countdown Timers Arrive

Bethesda's bustling and vibrant downtown just got a little safer to navigate on foot. Additional pedestrian countdown signals have been installed at key intersections.

BTS spearheaded the effort to acquire the new technology through a Smart Growth grant from the state of Maryland to Montgomery County. The additional timers cost a total of \$40,000.

"The countdown timers are important to making downtown Bethesda more pedestrian-friendly and creating a truly walkable community," said BTS Director Francine Waters. "The devices also support BTS's efforts to promote walking as a transportation alternative—whether it's walking to work, to the bus stop or transit station."

The countdown signals show pedestrians how many seconds they have to safely cross the street before the signal turns red. The number of seconds on each countdown timer is determined by the width of the road crossing.

In addition to the pedestrian countdown signal that was installed at Montgomery and Wisconsin Avenues in 2002 through a federal pilot program, these locations also now have the devices:

- ✓ Woodmont Avenue & Elm Street
- ✓ Woodmont Avenue & North Avenue
- ✓ Arlington Road & Edgemoor Lane
- ✓ Arlington Road & Moorland Lane

Montgomery County's pedestrian safety campaign focuses on what it calls the "Three E's"—enforcement, engineering and education. Countdown timers comprise one of the engineering steps to design a safer walking environment. ☞

There is Another Way!
www.bethesdatransit.org

BUP's "Finest Hour"

WWII Vets Beached in Bethesda

Dozens of weary troops scanned the scene as they spilled out of their stalled transport, squinting warily in the bright summer sun. They were in unfamiliar territory, facing unknown hazards.

"Everybody out. Stick close. Stay alert."

Their uniform collars grew moist as the sunlight revealed hostile expressions on the faces of the locals blocked behind the busted bus. Halted traffic was spreading two lanes wide and two blocks deep.

Sixty years earlier, these soldiers from America's greatest generation would have hugged their rifles close and set their shoulders to pushing their Army-issue bucket-of-bolts to the side of the muddy road.

The bus-pushing days of World War II were long behind these veterans from Philadelphia, however. They and their accompanying families were just trying to get to Bethesda's American Inn on Friday, May 28th when Murphy's Law intervened. They were looking forward to attending the World War II Memorial dedication the following day, when their charter bus broke down on Wisconsin Avenue near Montgomery Lane.

Tension turned to relief as Montgomery County Police officer **Dave Brown** (photo unavailable) arrived on the scene. Officer Brown called the Bethesda Urban Partnership (BUP) to help rescue the stranded vets.

BUP's **Walter Hernandez** (right) swung into action. While BUP has no towing rig, it does have a four-wheel drive truck. Walter hopped into the four-wheeler, sped to the scene and pushed the bus to the side of the road. (The bus was repaired in time to get the vets to the dedication ceremony.)



Walter then called BTS Director **Francine Waters**, who arranged for the Bethesda 8 Trolley to shepherd the vets and family members to the American Inn. Walter deployed a separate BUP vehicle to handle the group's luggage.

Within an hour after their anxious exit from the stalled bus, smiles had replaced squints on the vets' tired but flinty faces.

"The strong partnership between BUP, BTS and Montgomery County really saved the day for these honored visitors," said Waters.

Grateful for the help and surprised by the excellent service and care they received during this unexpected bump on the Memorial Day road, the vets were so impressed that they were already planning a return trip to explore Bethesda.

"I think they'll be using a different bus company when they come back, though," said Walter. "And I'm pretty sure I heard a couple of them say: 'Like General MacArthur promised—We shall return!'" ☞

"Thanks!"

BTS thanks **Ann Cantwell** at Jones Lang LaSalle (4800 Hampden Lane, One Bethesda Center) for her assistance during a recent Commuter Information Day.

Parking Store Opens

The Bethesda Parking Store has opened for business at the Cheltenham Garage (#42) 4720 Cheltenham Drive. Its hours of operation are 10:30am - 7:00pm.

The new store will provide cash keys, monthly parking permits, am-pm parking permits, residential permits, and temporary & visitor permits. The store also accepts parking ticket payments. Use cash, checks, or credit cards.

The store is a convenient resource for people who need vehicle parking. Of course, BTS strongly encourages the use of alternatives to solo driving.

Carpoolers can get a special money-saving parking permit. Carpool permit applications can be picked up at BTS and returned to BTS for review and approval. The application is complete when the approved paperwork is taken for processing to the Bethesda Parking Store.

Questions? Contact Dave Hill at BTS: 301-656-0868 x21.

Ozone Alerts = FREE Trips

When air quality gets really bad, Ride On offers a really good deal: FREE rides on any Montgomery County Ride On bus. Summer in the Washington region brings days when harmful ground-level ozone hits excessively high levels. Ozone Alerts call for everyone to curtail solo driving and stop other air polluting activities. Red Alert announced? Ride FREE on Ride On. ☞

Bethesda Transportation Solutions

(a division of Bethesda Urban Partnership) operates the non-profit Bethesda Transportation Management District under a contract with the Montgomery County Department of Public Works and Transportation.

7700 Old Georgetown Road, First Floor
Bethesda, Maryland 20814
(301) 656-0868 · (240) 223-0200 fax
www.bethesdatransit.org
fwaters@bethesda.org
Francine Waters, Director

Telework Award Goes to QRC Division of Macro International Inc.

The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) honored Bethesda-based QRC Division of Macro International Inc. with its 2004 Commuter Connections Employer Recognition Award for Telework. COG presented the award June 24, 2004 at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C.

The Montgomery County Council added to the company's recognition with a proclamation presented July 20, 2004. The proclamation cited the COG telework award. The firm was also recognized in April with a Bethesda Commuter Champion Award from the BTS Advisory Committee and the Greater Bethesda-Chevy Chase Chamber of Commerce.



D.C. Councilmember and COG Board Chair Phil Mendelson (left) and Maryland State Delegate Carol Petzold (D-19) congratulate Guy Garnett (center), Vice President of QRC Division of Macro International Inc., during the 2004 Commuter Connections Employer Recognition Awards.

"As an Internet and technology focused unit of ORC Macro, our systems staff has long been interested in the remote access and security technologies that make up the technological side of our telecommuting solution, and we were early adopters of these tools," says Guy Garnett, Vice President, QRC Division of Macro International Inc. "However, the reality is that in the 21st century, the technology is no longer rocket science: our virtual private network solution is 100 percent off the shelf. It is the people side—the creation of a telecommuting policy, plus employees and supervisors willing to put in their best effort to make the policy work for the company and the workers—that has made the program a success."

QRC Division of Macro International Inc., which employs 119 people in Bethesda, has offered a comprehensive transportation benefits package since March 2001. Currently, more than 33 percent of its employees participate in one or more commute programs. 14 percent of the division's employees telework full-time, and 45 percent telework on a part-time basis.

"Our telework program helps us recruit new employees and keep our turnover rate near industry lows," explains human resources manager Wendy Mock. "Personally, I'm excited to not have to say goodbye when people move away."

Mock cites employees like programmer analyst Kevin McIntire. He moved to Finland with his wife, Mirka, in order to be near her family. Thanks to the company's program, "He's still a valuable member of our team and teleworks on a daily basis," says Mock.

Contact Wendy Mock at wmock@qrc.com for more details. ☞