In February 2008 the Greater Hartford Transit District acquired twenty-five new ADA Paratransit vehicles configured with four wheelchair positions and twelve ambulatory seats. These vehicles went into operation on March 2, 2008. The new vehicles received high praise from our Paratransit drivers and riders alike.

**TELEPHONE SYSTEM**

We have updated the telephone system at the First Transit/Wawarme Avenue location. The new features include but are not limited to; recording calls, time of calls, total calls by department, length of call, abandoned calls, and other features for monitoring purposes. The functionality of this new telephone system has already provided improvement between internal departments and externally with our passengers.

**DISPATCH DEPARTMENT**

In the upcoming months the dispatch department will undergo major reconstruction. Currently on a daily basis the dispatchers manage to handle an average of 1,300 rides in addition to receiving numerous telephone calls. This is an enormous responsibility that requires a quieter setting that currently does not exist at the facility. The reconfiguration of the area will provide a much more conducive environment for the Dispatchers to perform their duties. Once the internal construction is completed we invite our passengers to visit the facility. At that time please call: (860) 724-5340 and select 1, to arrange for a scheduled appointment.
The Customer Service Department can be reached in any one of the following manners:

1) Write:

   Customer Service Department
   c/o First Transit Services
   249 Wawarme Avenue
   Hartford, CT 06114

2) Telephone:

   (860) 724-5340 x 3104

   (All possible effort will be made to return calls daily. Any calls received after 3:00 pm will be reviewed on the following business day. Calls received on Saturday or Sunday will be returned on the following Monday.)

3) Fax:

   (860) 247-0071
   or
   (860) 247-0031

   Correspondence can be provided by Fax:

4) E-mail:

   jannelly.rivera@firstgroup.com

Please use the above methods of contact for inquiries, complaints, and commendations. All complaints will be investigated thoroughly, and a response will be made in a timely manner. If additional information is needed, the complainant will be contacted and updated on the progress of the investigation.

You may obtain a copy of this newsletter in an accessible format including: braille, audiocassette or Spanish by calling (860) 247-5329 extension 3011.

For a detailed brochure regarding ADA/Hartford Dial-A-Ride Paratransit Services, call the Reservation department at (860) 724-5340 and select 1.
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

(A) How many types of ADA Paratransit eligibility determinations exist, and what are their differences?

There are four (4) basic types of ADA Paratransit eligibility as follows:

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<td>If it has been professionally verified that it is functionally impossible for you to utilize public transportation (CTTransit) for any trip due to your disability, you would be eligible for ADA Unconditional eligibility. You would be qualified to use ADA Paratransit for any destination within our ADA service area.</td>
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<td>If it has been professionally verified that you have a temporary disability, and will be able to utilize the CTTransit city buses when you recover, you would be eligible for ADA Temporary eligibility. You would be qualified to use ADA Paratransit for any trip for a limited determined amount of time.</td>
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<td>If it has been professionally verified that you are able to utilize public transportation (CTTransit) for some trips despite your disability, you would be eligible for ADA Conditional eligibility. You would be qualified to use ADA Paratransit only for those destinations it is functionally impossible for you to use the CTTransit city buses. (The Greater Hartford Transit District reserves the right to limit the number of eligible destinations for an ADA Conditional eligibility.)</td>
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<td>If it has been professionally verified that your disability does not prevent you from using public transportation (CTTransit) for most or all trips, you would not be eligible for ADA Paratransit. In addition, if the limitations of your disability when using CTTransit cannot be verified by a physician or health care professional, you may be denied ADA Paratransit. Your disability must cause it to be impossible for you to use public transportation for you to be eligible for ADA Paratransit. Clients denied ADA eligibility are provided with the opportunity to appeal within sixty (60) days of the determination.</td>
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(B) May I bring someone with me when I use paratransit? Do they have to pay the ADA bus fare?

Yes, you may bring a personal care attendant or companion with you when you ride the ADA van. However, the person traveling with you must be picked up at the same location as you. Additional companions may ride with you on a space-available basis. If you are required to travel with a personal care attendant (“PCA”) who assists you with daily activities, that person may accompany you on the ADA Paratransit bus for free. Individuals traveling with you as a companion / friend are required to pay the standard ADA bus fare.

(C) Is it required for my wheelchair to be secured to the vehicle on ADA Paratransit?

Yes, Section 37.165(c)(3) of the DOT’s ADA regulations allow a transit operator to establish a policy that requires all riders to have the common wheelchairs secured while aboard a transit vehicle. Therefore, the operator may decline to provide service to a rider who refuses to allow his or her common wheelchair to be secured.

(D) What can I do if I am unable to lift my foot high enough to reach the low step on the ADA Paratransit van?

If requested, the Greater Hartford Transit District permits people with disabilities who do not use wheelchairs to stand on a vehicle’s lift to enter or exit the vehicle. This includes anyone who has difficulty using steps.

(E) What is a service animal, and are they welcome on ADA Paratransit?

Service animals are animals that are individually trained to perform tasks for people with disabilities. Service animals are working animals, not pets, and are always permitted on ADA Paratransit. The Greater Hartford Transit District may ask if an animal is a service animal, or what tasks the animal has been trained to perform. Please inform your Reservationist when scheduling your ride if you will be bringing your service animal with you on your ADA trip.

Event Calendar:

**ADA Participation Group Forum:**
- The District staff facilitates open forums that include invited and public members of the diverse community of persons with disabilities representing the Greater Hartford region.
- The meetings are well publicized and advertised.
- Meetings are of sufficient length to hear all persons who wish to make oral comments. However, the District has the right to limit comments to five minutes in length. Written comments are also accepted.
- The District provides follow-up status on significant issues that have been raised during the forums.
- Forums are scheduled every two months unless there is a change which would be announced in advance.
- For our next ADA Participation Group Forum please visit our website at: [www.hartfordtransit.org](http://www.hartfordtransit.org) or please call Customer Service at: (860) 724-5340 ext. #3104.

**Hartford Dial-A-Ride Advisory Committee:**
The Hartford Dial-A-Ride Advisory Committee meets the last Thursday of every month from 10:00 a.m. until 11:00 a.m. at One Union Place, Hartford, CT. (unless otherwise announced). If you would like further information, contact Maria Febles at (860) 722-8473.

**Connecticut State Independent Living Council (SILC) Annual Meeting:**
The SILC annual meeting will be held Wednesday, September 24, 2008 from 1:00 p.m. until 4:00 p.m. Please call Debbie Melaragno at (860) 523-0126 for more information.

**2nd Disability Convention and Expo:**
Saturday, September 27, 2008 from 10:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. at the Connecticut Expo Center. For more information contact Stan Kosloski at skosloski03@comcast.net.