

On-time arrival

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The final touches of the Goldsboro-Wayne Transportation Authority transfer center are expected to be complete by the end of this week. The grand opening for the center is scheduled for Sept. 19.

Construction of Goldsboro's new 4,800-square-foot bus transfer center on Carolina Street was expected to be completed today, and after construction crews clean the site and put the finishing touches on it, they are expected to be gone by Friday.

A ribbon-cutting for the Goldsboro-Wayne Transportation Authority Bus Transfer Center will be Saturday, Sept. 19, at 11 a.m.

Walnut, George and Carolina streets also will receive a fresh coat of pavement by the end of this week, marking the completion of half of the city's projects funded by TIGER V grant money from the federal government.

The other half of the projects includes the ongoing renovations and construction of Center Street, which is expected to be finished by mid-October.

The transfer center will house the offices of the Goldsboro-Wayne Transportation Authority -- formerly known as GATEWAY -- and will serve as the starting and stopping point for all bus routes in the city.

Finishing touches were being put on the site at the end of last week as crews laid sod, painted the walls and paved driveways leading into and out of the center.

Project Manager Prentice Uzzell said new bricks for the sidewalks -- and fresh pavement -- have been laid on Walnut Street, and trees will be planted along the sidewalks as well.

GWTA Director Fred Fontana said the transportation authority will move its offices over to the new center on Sept. 12, and will open to the public on Sept. 21.

There will also be free bus rides offered on Sept. 21 and 22, Fontana said, to allow the public to experience the revamped and upgraded bus system.

"I think the new system with the updated routes will be easier for everyone to use," Fontana said. "We'll have a much nicer facility with a nicer appearance. If there are any issues that a rider might have, the staff will also be right there in the same building to help them. They will also have a much nicer waiting area if they have to wait on buses."

Fontana said moving downtown will improve the transportation authority's operations, and that the facility provides a "major upgrade" from GWTA's current office building.

There is a large waiting room in the middle of the center -- complete with overhead skylights -- and two wings that branch off to the north and south that will be utilized as office space for Goldsboro-Wayne Transportation Authority administrative staff.

GWTA buses will not be stored at the facility, but will be stored and maintained at the city's Public Works complex on Clingman Street.

There are several significant changes being made to the transportation authority's bus routes. There will no longer be names for the routes such as "Berkeley Mall Line," but rather the routes will be color-coded as red, purple, green, yellow and blue routes.

The blue line will make stops on Herman and Ash streets, North Spence Avenue, Berkeley Boulevard, at the Department of Social Services and the Peggy Seegars Senior Center.

The yellow line will make stops at H.V. Brown Homes, Goldsboro High School and the Peggy Seegars Senior Center.

The purple line will make stops at the Wayne County Courthouse, Seymour Homes, Slaughter Homes and the AMF bowling alley on Berkeley Boulevard.

The red line will make stops at Cherry Hospital, the Walmart on U.S. 70 West and the Little River Shopping Center.

The green line will make stops at the postal service office, Wayne Memorial Hospital, Wayne Community College and the intersection of Industry Court and North William Street.

The new routes will be posted on rideGWTA.com on Sept. 4 and will take effect on Sept. 21, when the new center opens to the public.

Regular bus fare for routes within the city limits is \$1, and reduced fare for persons with disabilities and senior citizens is 50 cents. To receive the reduced fare, the passenger will have to present a valid form of identification and a reduced fare card, which can be obtained from GWTA.

The transfer center's hours of operation will be from 5:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, and 9:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. on Saturday, and it will be closed on Sunday.