



Media Release

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For Immediate Release

Corridor 11 Bus Back on the Road with Temporary Complimentary Rides within Muskoka

Muskoka, Ontario –Hammond Transportation is pleased to announce that as of December 3, 2012 the Corridor 11 Bus will be back on the road again — but warns that the fight for a full permanent license is not over.

After opposition by a current existing licensed carrier, Hammond Transportation halted service of the Corridor 11 Bus on October 17, which had been running as a short-term pilot project to assess demand, routes, pricing and scheduling. Although ridership was increasing steadily after its original launch on September 24, Hammond Transportation was not granted the temporary license they sought and suspended operations until an application for a permanent license could be submitted and reviewed by the Ontario Highway Transport Board (OHTB).

Now Hammond Transportation has been granted a permanent license, although it is not as extensive as hoped and will require further action.

“We were disappointed that our permanent license included some restrictions on ridership within Muskoka,” says Greg Hammond of Hammond Transportation.

A look at ridership shows that a quarter of all passengers on the Corridor 11 Bus rode between destinations within Muskoka and, based on passenger feedback, there is a real demand to provide service between the three main towns of Huntsville, Bracebridge and Gravenhurst. As a result of an unfortunate regulatory restriction, which was prompted again by opposition from a current existing licensed carrier, Hammond Transportation now has to make another application to the OHTB to have the permanent license amended.

“We are not going to give up on getting a license to service all of the destinations on our set route. One of the most positive outcomes of the delay has been public reaction. We received over 250 letters of support from a wide range of people – current riders, potential riders, politicians, agency partners,

religious leaders and more. All of these letters were included in our submission to the OHTB and helped to strengthen our case. We realized how strongly Muskoka feels about the Corridor 11 Bus and that makes us want to work even harder to keep it running,” says Hammond.

As a thank you to Muskokans for their overwhelming support and in order to resume a full schedule as soon as possible, Hammond Transportation is offering temporary complimentary rides to destinations within Muskoka between December 3 and December 21, 2012.

“Hopefully, we will be successful getting an amendment to allow riders to travel to all destinations within Muskoka and in the New Year, we will reinstate the full fare schedule. In the meantime, though, we felt it was important to thank Muskoka for backing us so strongly. We hope more people will take this opportunity to ride the Corridor 11 Bus and see what they think of the service,” says Hammond.

As of December 3, the Corridor 11 Bus will resume its twice-a-day run, Monday to Friday, from Huntsville to Barrie and back, making stops along the way in Bracebridge, Gravenhurst, Washago and Orillia.

According to Rick Williams, Commissioner of Community Services for the District of Muskoka, and a partner in the Corridor 11 Bus project from the start, the Corridor 11 Bus addresses a historical transportation gap. “Muskoka has long been underserved in terms of transportation and many of our clients struggle to find reliable and affordable transportation for essential services such as medical appointments or educational opportunities. We hope district health service and social service agencies really get behind this new initiative to help the people they serve.”

Due to the Christmas and New Year holidays, the Corridor 11 Bus will not run between December 22 and January 7. In the New Year, when the permanent license can be amended, a long-term schedule will be created based on feedback from the pilot period.

“Even in the few weeks it was running, we received a great deal of feedback about our schedule from riders and agencies and, after some first-hand experience, we can see how we might alter the timing to better serve our riders. We want to assure everyone that we will look at all suggestions and create the best schedule possible. We also want to take this opportunity to thank Muskoka for their strong and ongoing support. It’s an exciting project and we are extremely happy to be part of it,” Hammond says.

Seats on the Corridor 11 Bus can be booked by calling Hammond Transportation at 705-645-2583 or tickets can be purchased directly from the driver. For more information on prices, current scheduling and pick-up and drop-off locations go to www.corridor11bus.ca.

Media Contact about the Corridor 11 Bus:

Gregory A. Hammond

Hammond Transportation Ltd.

705-645-5431 ext 29

gregh@muskoka.com