



## PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Ketchum, ID - The Blaine County School District and Mountain Rides Transportation Authority have a unique partnership that allows Blaine County School District employees and students unlimited access to the Valley Route bus service during the school year. The partnership started in 2008 with 2500 student rides during the school year. The student ridership has increased 15 fold over the past 7 years to ridership over 40,000.

Blaine County School District Business Manager Mike Chatterton stated, "Since 2012, the Blaine County School District has contributed \$23,500 per year to underwrite the cost of students and staff riding the Mountain Rides bus. The Blaine County School District will continue to support the cost of students and staff riding the Mountain Rides bus this coming year. This is a valuable alternate transportation in addition to the student transportation system provided by the district."

Due to increased operating costs associated with accommodating the growth of this alternate transportation partnership, Mountain Rides will now charge \$20 for a student pass – this is a deeply discounted pass, which would normally cost over \$200, made possible by the fact that Blaine County School District is underwriting the bulk of the cost. For this upcoming school year students will need to purchase a special bus pass for \$20 to ride the Mountain Rides Valley and Hailey Routes during the 2015-16 school year. The new student pass will be valid for the whole school year from September 8, 2015 through June 10, 2016 including weekends and holiday breaks, which was not the case in the past.

Mountain Rides' Executive Director Jason Miller stated "this partnership has seen incredible growth over the years and has helped school district staff and students move more easily around the community, not to mention the positive impacts on community health and the environment." Miller continued "we are fortunate to have the base level of support from the school district, but we have seen the costs of providing this service continue to rise. The combination of funding from the school district plus revenue from the new \$20 pass will meet the financial needs of the service and is a good compromise solution that will allow the partnership to continue to succeed."

Passes will be available for sale at school registrations and by calling the Mountain Rides office 788-RIDE (7433) x103.

The increased student ridership over the last several years has necessitated a reminder of the behavior expectations and tips to reduce conflict. Mountain Rides expectations from students while riding the bus are as follows:

- Be courteous and respectful of others and the bus driver who is responsible for your safety
- No disturbing or distracting the bus driver while bus is in motion
- Use inside voices
- Stay seated while the bus is in motion and remain seated for the duration of your trip
- No standing if seats are available
- No food & drink on the bus
- At the bus stop...be safe, form a single line and stay off the curb – no cutting or pushing
- Wheelchair passengers get on first while students wait in line
- There will be times when students will have to wait for the next regularly scheduled Mountain Rides bus due to fixed bus capacity, or students can always consider taking the regular school buses

Mountain Rides Transportation Authority is the public transportation provider for Blaine County that manages transportation demand by providing access and mobility to those who live, work, or visit with service alternatives to the single occupancy vehicle that are environmentally sustainable, energy efficient, attractive, safe, convenient, reliable and cost-effective. For more information please contact Jason Miller at 208-788-RIDE (7433) x 101.