CHRISTIANSBURG MONTHLY REPORT
December 2011

Tuesday Route Launch

On Tuesday, November 15th Blacksburg Transit launched the Tuesday route a connector service between the Warm Hearth retirement community and LewisGale Hospital Montgomery. Unfortunately the weather did not cooperate and was very similar to the weather when we launched the Christiansburg service, cold and rainy! In spite of the weather we had a great turnout with residents showing up to ride. The very first passenger used it to get to the Hospital for her volunteering position!

Prior to the launch of the service BT held several travel training sessions. Staff gave a short presentation about the service, educating Warm Hearth residents on stop locations, the route and what services are available to them. The sessions culminated with a short trip on the bus, allowing passengers an opportunity to familiarize themselves with boarding a vehicle, especially with mobility devices.

A Tuesday route passenger from Warm Hearth. Many of our riders were interested in traveling to Christiansburg to go shopping at the Mall or to get to Doctor's appointments.

"The bus service supplies excellent services to convenient stops over Christiansburg."

Explorer Gold Passenger, November 2011

Holiday Hours

Dates (FY 12)	Explorer Start	Explorer End	Go Anywhere Start	Go Anywhere End
Black Friday	7:15 a.m.	9:45 p.m.	7 a.m.	10 p.m.
Saturday after Thanksgiving	8:15 a.m.	10:45 p.m.	8 a.m.	11 p.m.
Fri 12/16	7:15 a.m.	9:45 p.m.	7 a.m.	10 p.m.
Sat 12/17	No Service		8 a.m.	11 p.m.
Sun 12/18	No Service		No Service	
Mon - Thurs 12/19 -12/22	7:15 a.m.	9:45 p.m.	7 a.m.	10 p.m.
Fri 12/23	7:15 a.m.	9:45 p.m.	7 a.m.	10 p.m.
Sat 12/24 - Christmas Eve	8:15 a.m.	6:45 p.m.	8 a.m.	7 p.m.
Sun 12/25 - Christmas Day	No Service		No Service	
Sat 12/31 - New Years Eve	8:15 a.m.	6:45 p.m.	8 a.m.	7 p.m.

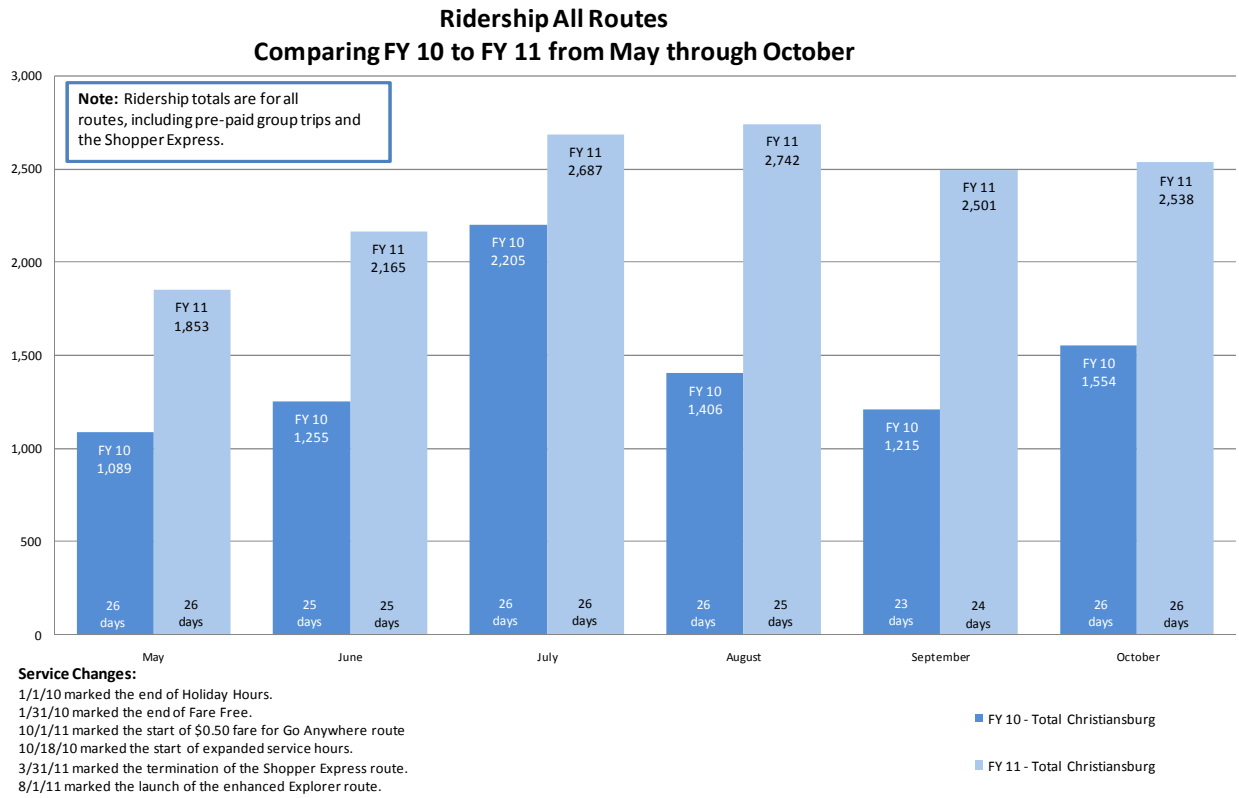
Ridership Review

The combined ridership total (including **Go Anywhere**, **Explorer** and **Commuter**) for October 2011 was 2,538, an increase of over 1,000 when compared to October 2010.

The chart below shows ridership for the last six months compared to the same six months last year. Ridership has increased significantly, typically doubling over the prior year, and continues to do so month after month!

Why do we compare month to month? It is important to compare month to month so that all variables (such as weather, number of service days, local events, etc) are as similar as possible. For example, comparing February to July would give an opposite weather conditions and a varying number of service days. Comparing different months also doesn't account for customer travel patterns which can change depending on which month customers typically take vacations; the weather; or simply whether Virginia Tech is in full service or not. Comparing the ridership of these two months would not provide an accurate evaluation.

> "I love that you guys do this for people that don't have a car or able to drive."
>
> James E. Smith Jr., Go Anywhere & Explorer passenger, Nov 2011

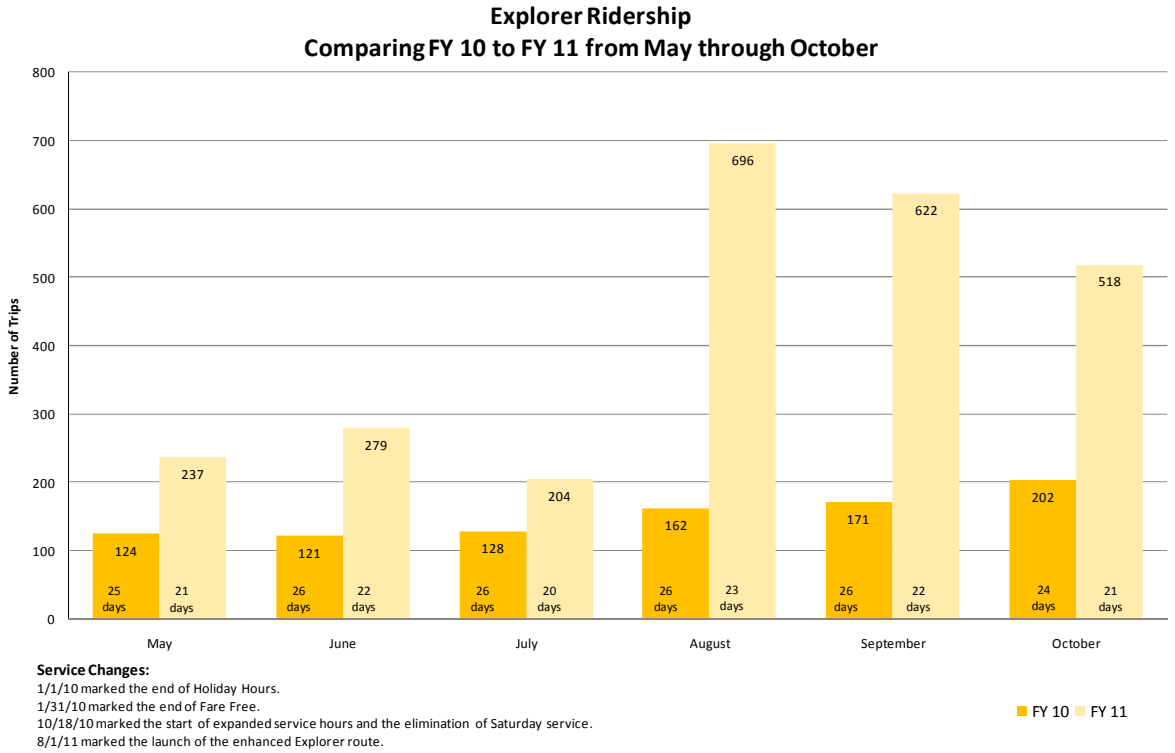


"Every Monday, on the Explorer route, a woman, who works at Christiansburg's Kroger, uses the service to transport her two children to daycare. Upon dropping off her children, she returns to work on the Explorer…Every time she boards the bus, the woman proclaims her thanks for the service and expresses her desire for BT to expand the Christiansburg service. Lastly, her oldest daughter, who is three years old, gets a big thrill to ride the bus."

Wendell Smith, Explorer driver, submitted November 2011

Explorer

Ridership on the Explorer route continues to exceed previous ridership totals for the same time frame.



Explorer Courtesy Stops

A total of 24 courtesy stops, or stops at locations off-route took place. Examples of locations served are: Red Oak Drive (two blocks north of Arbor Drive intersection with North Franklin), Wheatland Hills retirement home and to the High School on Independence Drive.

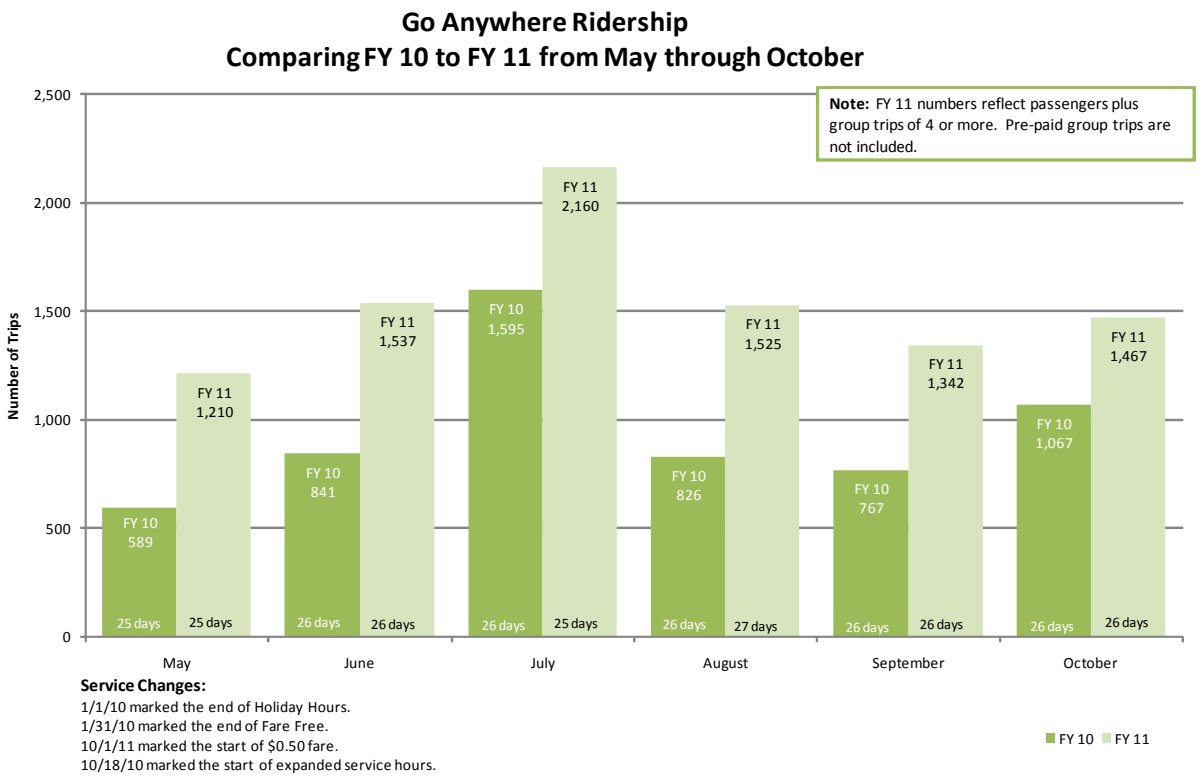
Go Anywhere

Ridership for October 2011 continued to increase over October 2010. Noticeably, the increase is not as large as earlier months. This can be attributed to the decreased fare that began in October 2010; once the reduction from $2.00 per trip to $0.50 per trip took place ridership began to increase fairly substantially.

During the month of October a total 68 same day trips were denied. These denied trips are anytime a customer calls in to request a trip for a particular day/time and we are unable to meet the request, additional options are offered but sometimes this still does not meet the customers' needs.

BT is currently looking at a better way to track this information to allow for better analysis so that we can determine if there are certain times of the day, certain days of the week/month that are more prevalent than others and determine if any patterns exist. We hope to have this in place by January.

"The drivers are always very professional and courteous!"
Steve Sandy, Go Anywhere & Smartway passenger, Nov 2011

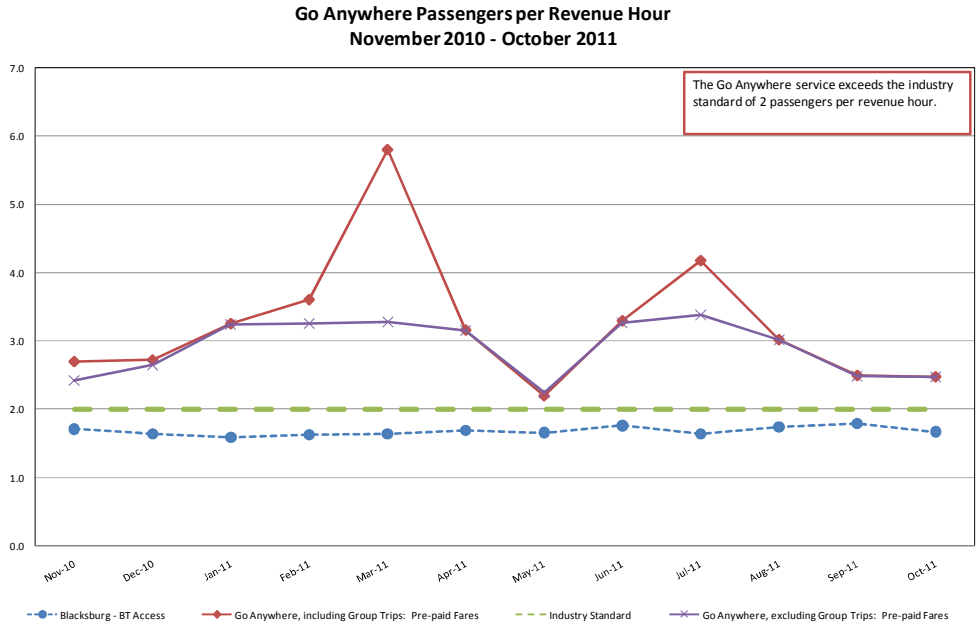


For the second year in a row, BT was able to provide service for the Ghost Tours Halloween event through the Go Anywhere route; 138 people were carried for this event!

"Bus is great and drivers are awesome, just early pickups [are] hard to get, but you're great!"

Lilmama33024, Go Anywhere passenger, Nov 2011

Artwork from the exterior of the Christiansburg buses.



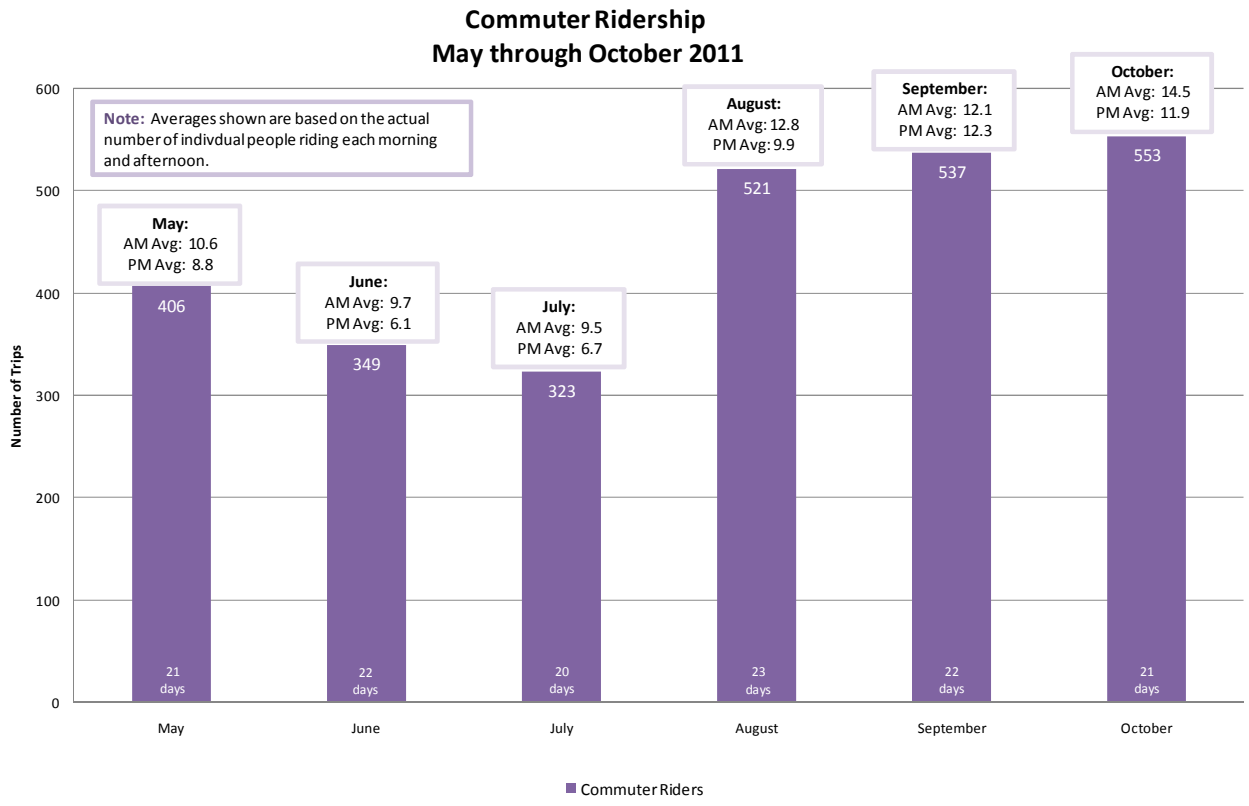
There were no Aquatic Center shuttles during October, resulting in the passengers per hour for Go Anywhere and the Go Anywhere pre-paid trips being the same rate for October (2011).

New Customers

New customers continue to sign up for the **Go Anywhere** service, bringing the total passengers signed up since November 2009 to 1,145! With a total of 23 months of service, we are still maintaining an average of 50 new passengers sign up each month!

Unique New Passengers - Go Anywhere Route

Month	Number of New Passengers Added
Pre-Route Match (4.2 months)	227
April, 2010	33
May, 2010	44
June, 2010	33
July, 2010	33
August, 2010	42
September, 2010	36
October, 2010	58
November, 2010	59
December, 2010	78
January, 2011	61
February, 2011	50
March, 2011	54
April, 2011	39
May, 2011	52
June, 2011	51
July, 2011	58
August, 2011	54
September, 2011	47
October, 2011	36
Total	**1145**
Average/Month	**49.35**

BT Commuter Service

The commuter route has now been operational for ten months with ridership continuing to increase. From what we have seen so far, ridership on the Commuter route is closely related to the Virginia Tech semester schedule. Targeted promotion of the service is planned, we would like to increase the number of regular riders and hopefully fill the bus!