

## News

### The wheels on the bus go where?

[Print Page](#)

#### *A new route for the PATS buses may be set*

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Selection of a route for the Eppson Center's Public Assisted Transportation Services (PATS) drew a step closer Tuesday night after Laramie residents came to ride the new bus and give input on the new route.

"We've actually got two new buses now and we are ready to start the other route," PATS Director of Transportation Don Owens said. "The idea tonight is that we take one bus on the existing route and the other bus is going to do a route that we just kind of thought up. Either one of them can be changed, but we kind of want to leave the existing route like it is right now because so many students for Laramie County Community College- Albany County Campus are on that bus."



People board one of two new PATS buses for their first run with passengers Tuesday night at the Eppson Center. Andy Carpenean/Boomerang photographer

One detriment to the current bus system is the amount of time needed for round-trip passengers. Depending on their destination, some riders are having to wait up to an hour for a ride home on the bus. Owens said he would like to see the new route cut that time.

"That (existing) route may stay at 55 minutes, but what we're going to try and do is set up another bus where we're going in the opposite direction, so if you're dropped off at Wal-Mart and want to leave in 30 minutes, we're going to try and fix it so you're not stuck there for that hour," Owens said.

An additional route could help alleviate the PATS appointment bus, which is near its capacity on many days, Owens said.

"Those buses are pretty much full and getting fuller all the time. That's why you see so many buses around town. But only one of them is driving a route," Owens explained.

Many residents at Tuesday's meeting said they would like to see a route that stops downtown, possibly somewhere on Garfield Street. Owens said that while busy traffic and seasonal events like Jubilee Days and the Farmer's Market may make it a challenge, it's a challenge that PATS is willing to consider.

"On any given day, it's real busy," Owens said. "The main thing we want to do is avoid connector streets. We really don't want to be picking people up on Grand Avenue or Third Street. But that's something we can definitely figure out."

No matter what route is chosen, Owens said there would be a need for education in conjunction with the expanded service.

"Now the way the route is set up is we've got a map that has stops on them. But there aren't really any stops on this route; it's more or less a waving down-type deal. But at the times the map says a bus will be at a certain stop, it'll be there. Part of the reason we do it that way is because of funding," Owens said.

While a route has yet to be set, Owens said that in such a small town, it should be possible for PATS to be accessible to anyone.

"Laramie is so small that we feel we should be able to get it fairly easy for everybody. They might have to walk a couple of blocks, but our hope is that we set it up to where it's pretty centrally located for everybody," Owens added.

For more information about PATS, contact Owens at 745-1511.