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Hazleton Standard Speaker

Editorial
2/16/10



Regional transit makes sense

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Geologists call it the Moosic Saddle.

The rise between Luzerne and Lackawanna County roughly follows the same line as the Great Wall of Avoca, the imaginary, largely impregnable barrier between the Greater Wilkes-Barre and Greater Scranton areas that has traditionally blocked most cooperation across county lines.

There have been breaches, of course, including the bi-county airport and cooperation in sponsoring the minor league hockey and baseball teams that have made PNC Field and the Mohegan Sun Arena possible.

Now officials in the two counties are pursuing state funding for a study on the possible regionalization of their public bus systems.

A merger or cooperative agreement between the Luzerne County Transportation Authority and the County of Lackawanna Transit System, which might also involve the municipal bus system in Hazleton, could save money for both county governments and ease travel between the three largest cities in our region for the elderly and low-income residents who are the primary customers for public transit.

LCTA and COLTS do cooperate on a small scale now, with COLTS buses serving several towns in northern Luzerne County and providing a vital link between the two systems.

But anyone wishing to use public transit between the two counties today, especially if the trip starts in the farthest reaches of either county, faces a slow, arduous trip with many stops along the way.

A merger could conceivably include express service between Wilkes-Barre, Scranton and Hazleton that would speed travel between those urban centers and expanded service to regional entertainment centers such as the ballpark, the arena and the Mohegan Sun casino.

A bi-county public transportation system would be one more small step toward the regionalization that is so central to Northeastern Pennsylvania's revitalization.

We say, "Saddle up."

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Family, friends mourn slain teen

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City police seek answers in deadly shooting

Hazleton police continue to investigate a fatal shooting that happened in the city early Saturday morning. Police had no new information on the shooting that claimed the life of Lorenzo Soriano, 19, of Hazleton. Lorenzo was shot in the street around 3 a.

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