

August 15, 2007

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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OFFICIALS CALL LOOP BUS ‘SUCCESS’ SCHOOL-YEAR SCHEDULE CHANGES AHEAD

With more than 5,000 riders in its first two months of operation, Tulare County and City of Visalia officials are calling the LOOP bus a success and are considering ways to further improve it as the school year begins.

“The LOOP is one of the best ways we have thought of to keep children out of trouble over the summer. It’s truly been a success,” said Tulare County Supervisor Phil Cox. “It was a great program — it really worked. But now, as the school year gets under way, we need to reevaluate the County’s LOOP schedule and how the bus will be used.”

The County’s LOOP route, which throughout the summer transported students from Ivanhoe and Goshen to recreation centers in Visalia, will no longer operate Monday through Friday, Cox said. County officials are currently working to revise the LOOP’s school-year schedule, to encourage children to attend HEART (Homework, Enrichment, Acceleration, Recreation and Teamwork) After-School Programs in Ivanhoe and Goshen and The Boys & Girls Club of Tulare County. The Ivanhoe Boys & Girls Club is scheduled to open Aug. 27 and will provide free after-school activities for children from 2:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. Monday through Friday at 15900 Avenue 332.

“One of the things we may do is continue to provide Saturday service to bring students into Visalia, but we’re still working out details. We also need to explore whether the LOOP might be of use to children in other parts of the county,” Cox said. “We’ll also continue to work on our partnership with the City of Visalia to assist children with transportation needs.”

The City of Visalia has also changed its LOOP schedule for the school year. Once school begins, its buses will operate from 2:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. Monday through Friday and from 12 p.m. to 6 p.m. on Saturdays.

The LOOP bus started back in June as a partnership between the City of Visalia and the county to get children 6-17 years old involved in safe and constructive summer activities. Funded by Measure R, the county’s LOOP bus transported children from Ivanhoe and Goshen to recreation centers in Visalia, while the city’s LOOP buses transported children to recreational centers throughout Visalia. Overall, LOOP buses transported a total of 5,194 riders in June and July — 1,024 on the county route and 4,170 on the city routes.

“The LOOP bus was a perfect example of how, over the next 30 years, Measure R will be used to help this county in a variety of ways,” said Ted Smalley, deputy executive director of Tulare County Association of Governments. “Measure R is not only going to help us improve our roads, it’s going to fund transit, bike/pedestrian and environmental projects that are going to help everyone in Tulare County.”

For more information on the LOOP, contact Dan Fox, transit coordinator of Tulare County Area Transit at 733-6291, or Monty Cox, transit manager for City of Visalia at 713-4100. For information on other Measure R projects please contact Ramon Lara or Elizabeth Wright at 733-6291.

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