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Riders who depend on HEB Transit thankful for the service



Mary Cole uses HEB Transit to get from her home in Euless to work in Bedford. | **Ron Jenkins** - Star-Telegram

BY ELIZABETH CAMPBELL

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When Glen Quetant settled in Hurst after Hurricane Katrina devastated New Orleans, he was stranded without a way to get to work because there is no public transit in the city.

Since New Orleans had public transportation, Quetant, 66, said, he never learned to drive.

Two years ago, he learned about HEB Transit from the Texas Workforce Commission. He now uses the service to get to his job at the Tuesday Morning store on Harwood Road in Bedford.

As he stepped on board the van outside his apartment, Quetant said he was grateful for the service.

"I had no way of getting to and from work," he said. "It helps me tremendously. There wasn't another option."

HEB Transit, operated by Catholic Charities Fort Worth, along with the cities of Hurst, Euless and Bedford and other faith-based organizations, provides rides to people who meet income guidelines and either can't drive or are in the process of buying a car.

Courtney Cartwright, transportation services manager for Catholic Charities said HEB Transit takes people to their jobs in Hurst, Euless and Bedford or to the CentrePort/DFW Airport and Hurst-Bell stations for the Trinity Railway Express so that they can get to jobs at Dallas/Fort Worth Airport, Dallas Love Field, Dallas or Fort Worth.

"HEB Transit is a transition service," Cartwright said. "We truly try to get people set up to enhance their lives."

The service was funded in part by a federal startup grant that expired last year. The idea is for the federal money to last until the service has sufficient funding from other sources.

Catholic Charities, 6 Stones, Mission Central and the three cities kicked in the necessary funding, and the service is flourishing. HEB Transit uses vans equipped for wheelchairs, small buses and even sedans to pick up its clients. Last year the service provided 1,400 trips to 90 riders, who must pay a \$2 cash fare each way.

Elizabeth Hillard, 26, of Euless uses the service to travel to the CentrePort/DFW Airport Station, where she catches the Trinity Railway Express to Dallas and then takes a DART train to her job at the Dunkin' Donuts at Love Field.

Hillard, who no longer has a car, said that it takes her about an hour to get to work each day but that without HEB Transit, she wouldn't be able to get there at all.

"It would be nice for this area to have public transit. That is why this HEB Transit service is so, so helpful," she said.

Mary Cole, who also lives in Euless, uses the service to get to her job at the Wal-Mart in Bedford where she works in the apparel and shoe departments.

Cole, 55, moved to Texas from Fredericksburg, Va.

"I am grateful to have the HEB Transit, and someday, the Lord will bless me with a car," she said.

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