

TRICOUNTY LINK

Route takes buses to Cross

BY DAVE MUNDAY
The Post and Courier

A new bus route that started Monday connects the rural areas of Berkeley County with Moncks Corner, North Charleston and even downtown Charleston for the first time.

It's the latest expansion for TriCounty Link, the area's rural bus service.

"This is breaking new ground," Executive Director William Hutto said Monday. "We're going into an extremely rural area. This opens up opportunities that were not there before."

The buses run Monday through Friday between Santee Cooper's Moncks Corner headquarters and its Cross generating station on the other side of Lake Moultrie. The buses also stop at Bonneau Town Hall and the IGA store in St. Stephen.

A partnership with Santee Cooper and grant money made the new route possible, Hutto said. The grant money is from the Federal Transit Administration's Job Access Reverse Commute program.

Bus tickets cost \$2.25 each way. Weekly passes are \$18 and monthly passes \$70.

Santee Cooper bought advertising on two new buses. In exchange, workers at the Cross station who live in the Moncks Corner area can get discount bus tickets, Santee Cooper Communications Director Mollie Gore said.

Santee Cooper helped TriCounty Link start a route between the Moncks Corner headquarters and North Charleston last year. Commuters can catch an express CARTA bus to downtown Charleston from North Charleston.



ON THE WEB: Go to postandcourier.com to see the route and schedule.

To promote the new route north of Moncks Corner, riders can enter drawings for prizes, including a 42-inch flat-screen television, through December.

A number of officials took part in a ceremony for the new route Monday morning outside Santee Cooper's headquarters. They included Goose Creek Mayor Michael Heitzler; Berkeley County Supervisor Dan Davis; state Rep. David Umphlett, R-Moncks Corner; and representatives of Santee Cooper, the state Department of Transportation and the League of Women Voters of South Carolina.

The League of Women Voters has backed TriCounty Link's efforts since the rural routes started a year ago, President Barbara Zia said.

"By supporting public transportation, our state and local officials can help create jobs and stimulate economic growth, help reduce the nation's dependence on foreign energy, protect the environment and contribute toward a better quality of life for our communities," Zia said at the ceremony.



PROVIDED/SUSAN RICHARDS

TriCounty Link, the Charleston area's rural bus service, introduced a new mascot Monday. Linky, a Lowcountry tree frog, helped unveil a new bus route between Moncks Corner and Cross.

TriCounty Link also serves the rural areas of Charleston and Dorchester counties.

The new Moncks Corner route also was an occasion to roll out a mascot for the rural bus service. He's a Lowcountry tree frog named Linky.