

## Safe Ride 2006-2007

### **Overview:**

The Safe Ride Program is a student initiative from 2002 and was created following a student referendum. The program provides free late-night bus services to all students in order to reduce the risk of late night travel for students. At the start of the 2006-2007 school year Safe Ride expanded to Wednesday evenings and now runs Wednesday through Saturday from 11:00 pm through 3:00 am. We also added a fixed route to work the busiest routes within the service area. After safety concerns were raised in the summer of 2006 the committee voted to add a "Night Owl" service to accommodate students who have to park far from their residence halls and walk home after being out after 10:30 pm studying, shopping or coming back from student events. As of March 2007 the "Night Owl" program now runs Monday and Tuesday evenings. This program is a fixed route bus that runs from 10:30 pm through 12:30 am to provide transportation from the parking lots to the main residence halls on campus.

### **Collaborations:**

Safe Ride would not be possible without the collaboration between the Associated Student Government and Razorback Transit. Associated Student Government provides oversight and advertisement for the program and Razorback transit operations the nightly logistics. These two entities create a strong presence in the initiatives of Safe Ride but also the Safe Ride committee is collaboration in itself. The committee is comprised of members from Razorback Transit, Student Government, Student Involvement and Leadership, the Health Center, as well as general faculty, staff and student representatives. We are always looking for new avenues to publicize and different ways to improve the program and would be happy to collaborate with anyone in the local and campus community.

We have also been very fortunate over the last year to receive donations from the Women's Giving Circle and the DRJ II Memorial fund. These contributions have allowed us the opportunity to purchase new vans for Safe Ride and to publicize the program to students across campus and throughout the local community. These contributions have supplemented our costs this year and have allowed us to utilize the funds we receive through student fees to ensure the cost of the program is covered and to grow the program each year.

### **Publicity:**

The Safe Ride Committee utilized over \$5,000 on publicity materials this year. Safe Ride is advertised in various medias including promotional items given at orientation and pep rallies, flyers in local restaurants, bars, among student organizations, greek life, various departments on campus and within the transit systems. The Associated Student Government as well as Razorback transit have advertisements for Safe Ride on their websites, but the committee is looking to develop a website for Safe Ride itself, hopefully <http://saferide.uark.edu>.

### **What success measures did you outline for the program and how have they been met?**

At the end of the 2005-2006 school year, the Safe Ride Committee outlined objectives that they would like to see implemented to improve the Safe Ride program. The first goal was to add a fixed route that runs around the main corridors of campus including Razorback Road, across Maple Street, down through West Avenue, around the Square by Walton Arts Center and down Dickson Street. This goal was accomplished at the start of the 2006-2007 school year and has been a great success with over 1258 students that have ridden the fixed route through June 2007. The committee also saw a demand to expand the service to Wednesday evenings; we have had over 1062 ride the services on Wednesdays after the start of this service on August 30, 2006. The administrators of the service in Parking and Transit found that there was a lull in riders between 10-11 pm and an influx just at 2 am, therefore the committee recommended to change the service hours to 11 pm to 3 am, Wednesday through Saturday. This change in times has been very helpful to the effectiveness to the program, as the late night hours are some of the busiest for the Safe Ride Program. When the program was initiated in 2002, the committee was unsure of the success rate that would follow and therefore rented vehicles instead of purchasing them. Now, four years later the committee realized the demand for vehicles specifically for the Safe Ride Program, thus allowing the para-transit vehicles to be freed up to serve the purpose they were purchased for. We are happy to say that we purchased three twelve passenger vans specifically for the Safe Ride Program. We received these vans December 1, 2006. The Safe Ride Program has been busy this year and hopes to continue to grow and expand it's services in the years to come.

**How has this project been successful?**

While the ultimate goal of the Safe Ride Program is to offer students a safe ride home, we anticipated offering over 3800 students a ride on Safe Ride this year. However, we have surpassed our goal and for the 2006-2007 school year we had over 7762 riders. In 2004 - 2005 had over 3000 riders, and over the course of the 2005-2006 school year we served 3428. We are very excited that we have been able to meet and surpass our goals for this current year and hope to continue to grow the program through decreased wait time for students and improved services.

**The past, present and/or future outcomes of the project and where it stands to date.**

This program started in 2002, with the hope of giving students a safe ride home on Thursday, Friday and Saturday between 10 pm and 2 am. Over the past four years the Safe Ride Program has served over 13,500 students. The improvements to the program got underway this year with the new Wednesday night services, extended evening hours, a fixed route around campus, Night Owl services and the purchase of new vehicles. At this time the Safe Ride program continues to reach more and more students and the committee feels positive about the success in the future. At the end of this year, we had a very unfortunate accident in one our brand new vans. On Thursday evening May 10, 2007 one of the Safe Ride vans was struck by a drunk driver almost totaling the Safe Ride van. There were four students in the van as well as the driver, three of the four students and the driver were taken to the hospital for minor injuries the other walked away with minor cuts. The driver of the other vehicle was not a student but was arrested for failure to yield and DWI, the accident was proven to be the fault of the other driver. At this time the other driver's insurance company is assessing the damage and has offered to cover the cost of fixing the vehicle. We are very thankful that the students in the vehicle are all recovering well. We can honestly say that if the students had not been using Safe Ride and were driving or walking in the area they may have been less fortunate. For the upcoming year we will continue to assess the effectiveness and the costs associated with this program to ensure that students are truly getting a cost efficient, safe and effective program. We look forward to the start of the school year where we will establish our new objectives for the 2007-2008 school year.

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