

Letters

Feds are ignoring will of people by supporting busway over rail

To the editor:

In response to the recent media stories about rail vs. bus I'd like to voice my strong opposition to the proposed busway, and my support to evaluate the merits of the rail system. Below are my reasons:

I prefer traveling by train over bus and car. Whenever I go to New York City, I drive to New Haven and take a train to NYC.

Our state and country is in the worst recession since the Depression. Taxpayers are paying millions of dollars in interest payments on debt that is overwhelming our ability to plan for the future. And government is nearing its capacity to borrow money. Given the scarcity of money how can anyone justify spending \$600 million (and climbing) to build a nine-mile roadway that is designed to benefit a "potential" of 4,000 more bus riders? By my calculations, this means we will be spending \$60 million a mile for this road. I have yet to hear anyone justify this outrageous sum of money.

In contrast, the proponents of the rail system have demonstrated the benefits of rail vs. bus are more compelling. Rail allows commuters to go to Hartford or to NYC, have shown far more people and communi-

ties will benefit from rail system than the proposed limited busway route, and rail provides an additional advantage of transporting freight for companies.

What is especially appalling to me is the attitude of a few elected officials to dismiss and ignore the common sense alternative of rail that enjoys widespread support from people and businesses - including New Britain and West Hartford. The strategy "to ram through" the bus route reminds me of the disgraceful tactics used by the Congressional Democrats when they attempted to pass the controversial health care bill around Christmas time. Despite polls showing strong opposition to their proposal, and the questionable methods for passing this legislation, our elected officials ignored the opinions of their voters and tried to pass this legislation despite the many concerns expressed.

Why are our current officials still pursuing the bus route in the face of widespread opposition, and when the credible alternative of rail should be at least evaluated? Why don't the busway proponents survey their voters to see which system "we" prefer and will support?

The proponents of the

busway have yet to show to the citizens of Bristol and surrounding communities how we will benefit more from a \$600 million busway? If this is such a strong proposal surely we will see the benefits.

I have talked to several proponents of the busway and they privately had said they prefer train over the bus. The reason for supporting the bus is based solely on not losing the federal funds. Doesn't this show that rail is the clear choice favored by people? Isn't this the job of our Congressional delegation to lobby and persuade the transportation department to reallocate funds from the bus to rail? Given the seniority of our Congressional representatives, surely, they have the influence and ability to accomplish this goal.

It's time officials do "the right thing".

These are the reasons why I - and many others - strongly support your opposition to the busway. Evaluating the rail system proposal makes sense. If this alternative is pursued, I anticipate strong support from more communities - including New Britain and West Hartford - for a rail system.

Whit Betts
Perkins Street

Hamzy voices support for passenger rail

State Rep. Bill Hamzy (R-Plymouth, Bristol) urged Connecticut's Congressional delegation, in a Feb. 18 letter, to support a federal funding request made by the Central Connecticut Regional Planning Agency's passenger rail project, a press release from his office said.

The study called the "Waterbury-Bristol-New Britain-Hartford Transit Alternatives Analysis and Scoping Study," would assess the benefits of expanding the existing Pan Am owned freight rail line to include new public mass-transit rail capabilities between the cities of Waterbury, Bristol, New

Britain and Hartford while expanding its existing freight capacities. Rep. Hamzy argued, the press release said, that expanding an existing 70 mile rail system between Waterbury and Hartford, with connecting stops in-between including a stop in New Britain, is much more cost effective per mile than the proposed nine-mile New Britain-Hartford bus way currently being considered by the state. Whereas the bus line would only provide passenger services while an expanded rail system could serve both freight and passengers.

"This project will address a significant defi-

ciency in our transportation system," Hamzy said in his letter.

Census bureau is hiring

By ELIO GUGLIOTTI
STAFF WRITER

As the state struggles with recovering jobs lost during the recession, there's at least one place in the area that's looking to fill more than 1,000 positions: the U.S. Census Bureau.

Bob Chattel, local census office manager for the bureau's New Britain office, said his office is looking for between 1,000 and 1,200 part-time workers to help in the collection of information for the 2010 census.

The New Britain office covers the local area, and the office is searching for people from the region including Bristol and Plainville.

Chattel said his office is looking for enumerators, workers to conduct in-person interviews with people who didn't return census questionnaires. Chattel added that his office is also looking for supervisor positions as well.

Enumerator positions pay \$19.75 per hour, and supervisor positions pay \$21.50 an hour. The jobs are part-time, between 20 and 40 hours a week. Chattel said the jobs would begin in May and last about eight weeks.

Applicants for the positions must be 18 years old, have a valid Social Security, be a high school graduate, and be able to pass a back-

ground check. Applicants must also be able to pass a 30-minute employment test.

Chattel explained the test is multiple choice and includes questions on grammar, problem solving, numbers, and map reading. He said applicants can take the test as many times as they want and it's free to take.

Chattel said his office will be recruiting for the positions up through May.

To schedule an appointment to take the employment test, call (866) 861-2010. For more information and to view a practice test, visit www.2010censusjobs.gov.

Leaky roof closes Forestville Post Office

By ELIO GUGLIOTTI
STAFF WRITER

The Forestville Post Office will be closed for the foreseeable future due to a leaky roof.

The post office, located on East Main Street, was closed Wednesday, Feb. 24. According to a press release issued by the U.S. Post Office, the heavy rains and snow of last week deteriorated the condition of the

roof at the post office. Officials were dealing with leaking roofs and standing water inside the building, the release stated.

The release stated there were no injuries and no damage was done to the mail as a result of the roof failing.

For the time being, anyone who has a post office box at the Forestville branch will be able to pick up their

mail at the Bristol Post Office on Main Street. The closing will not impact mail delivery and the blue mail collection box outside of the Forestville branch will remain in use, the release stated.

The U.S. Post Office leases the office space. As of press time, there was no time table as to when repairs will be made to the building.

Bristol's CERT team to meet March 10

Are you ready to face an emergency situation?

The Bristol CERT team will hold its monthly meeting on Wednesday, March 10

at 6:30 p.m. in the Bristol Public Library, Room 1, 5 High St., Bristol.

Sign up to form a new training class, all ages wel-

comed.

For more information contact, Capt. Tim Gamache at (860) 977-2152 or Lt. Nora Anderson at (860) 402-7974.

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