



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **Navajo Transit bus route linking Tuba City, Birdsprings to Flagstaff back in service**

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**TUBA CITY, Ariz.** – Regional transit is now back in service, effective April 18, linking the Tuba City and Birdsprings communities to Flagstaff -- just in time when residents are feeling the price crunch of record-level fuel prices.

Since taking office in January, Navajo Councilman Joshua Lavar Butler (To’Nanees’Dizi) has been urging the Navajo Transit System to get service back online for the Flagstaff route.

"The price of fuel is reaching historic levels at \$4 per gallon, and the use of mass transportation is greatly needed," Butler said. "My constituents from the Tuba City and surrounding communities rely on the transit system to attend classes at Northern Arizona University, and Coconino Community College, while others enjoy using Route 11 for commuting to work, shopping and entertainment."

About a year ago, the driver for the Tuba City-Flagstaff Navajo Transit route resigned. Since that time, the route was suspended until a qualified driver was hired to fill the position -- which has not happened yet.

Virgil Brown, division director for the Navajo Nation Division of General Services, explained the difficulty in finding qualified drivers.

"These last few months, we have been advertising for the transit driver position, and no one seems to qualify for the position," Brown said. "The personnel office handles the hiring process, and they determine whether a person meets the driver qualifications or not."

Recently, Brown said he talked with the former route driver who agreed to work on a part-time basis until a permanent driver is found.

The route runs Monday through Thursday, and begins at the Birdsprings Chapter House at 5 a.m., and arrives at Flagstaff Mall's east parking lot at 6 a.m. Then, it takes passengers to Tuba City, where it turns around at the hospital at 7:55 a.m. The southbound route departs at 8 a.m., and arrives at Flagstaff Mall at 9:50 a.m.

In the afternoons, the bus departs Flagstaff Mall heading northbound at 3:25 p.m., arriving at Tuba City Hospital at 5:05 p.m., then returns to Flagstaff, arriving at 6:29 p.m. After that, the bus departs the mall at 6:45 p.m. heading to Birdsprings Chapter House, where the bus is stored

overnight. The bus also makes intermediate stops between points at locations in Cameron, Grey Mountain and Winona.

Butler stated that once a permanent driver is hired, he will urge Navajo Transit Systems to extend operation to a five-day week so service will run Monday through Friday.

According to the AAA Daily Fuel Gage Report, the current U.S. average price of Unleaded Regular gasoline is \$3.84 per gallon, almost 25-cents less than the highest-recorded average price of \$4.11 per gallon, set on July 17, 2008. Contrary to the high fuel costs, riding Navajo Transit's Route 11 will cost only \$2 for the entire day.

“Once the college students and people who commute to Flagstaff from these communities find out this service is running again, I'm sure the routes will fill-up quickly, especially at what the price for gas is,” said Lee Bigwater, department manager for Navajo Transit Systems.

He said the Birdsprings route is running on a trial basis, and ridership will decide whether this route will continue on a permanent basis. Meanwhile, the search for a permanent bus driver for Route 11 continues. Applicants are encouraged to apply at Navajo Nation Department of Personnel Management.

For more information on current routes, access [www.navajotransit.com](http://www.navajotransit.com).

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