

TRANSPORTATION, MY WAY

Targhee Regional Public Transportation Authority makes getting around easy and convenient.

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Photos by Susannah Newsome

My husband and I only have one car. He takes the car to work in Rigby every day, so I do the ecologically sound thing and ride a bicycle to do our shopping, errands and to go to my part time job. This works really well, for the most part, in the summertime because I get exercise and fresh air and can go about my daily business.

Yet sometimes I have to go all the way across town, and since Idaho Falls is almost 18 square miles, you can imagine how challenging this can be. And in wintertime, well, a bicycle just isn't practical or safe. I can't afford to take a taxi everywhere, so I was really excited when I discovered the Targhee Regional Public Transportation Authority (TRPTA).

TRPTA has two types of services rolled into one: regular bus routes, called Fixed Routes, and Paratransit (curb-to-curb) service. Because I live within what they call the paratransit boundary (it's a purple line on the TRPTA map), I use the fixed route system. There are four fixed routes within the city of Idaho Falls—the Blue, Green, Yellow and Red routes. Buses move along the same route from 7 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. on set times and stops. Most of the bus stops are marked with placards, but you can download a map from the TRPTA website at www.trpta.org to determine the most convenient stops for you.

Here's some advice for using the fixed routes: 1. Get to the bus stop at least five minutes before the scheduled pickup time. 2. Look for the TRPTA bus sign at the stop and 3. Pay attention to the illuminated signs on the buses because the door-to-door buses look the same and sometimes they pass by the stops. Make sure you look on the front and side of the bus for your Blue, Green, Yellow or Red route bus.

All of TRPTA's buses are ADA compliant, so absolutely anyone can ride. I've seen teenagers, seniors, and commuters on the bus. Several of the TRPTA buses have a rack for bicycles, so I've even ridden the bus with the bike! TRPTA stops at a lot of the major



supermarkets and allows up to six bags of groceries on board, so it's a great service to use to do your shopping. TRPTA also allows strollers, packages and luggage on board, which makes it a great (and inexpensive) way to get to the airport.

The other service TRPTA offers is the Paratransit Service (curb-to-curb) for ADA eligible individuals who are within the paratransit boundaries. Paratransit rides aren't on a fixed schedule, so individuals can call for service when they need it, however pick-up and drop-off times are only available between 7 a.m. and 5:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. The ride must be scheduled the prior day by 4:00 p.m. because it's a custom service, and because it's public transportation sometimes your ride is shared with others.

Passengers outside the paratransit boundary are eligible for the curb-to-curb service, Demand Response (similar to the Paratransit Service). Like Paratransit Service, riders need to schedule a pick-up the prior day by 4:00 p.m. Available pick-up and drop-off hours are between 7 a.m. and 5:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. Service is available between Rexburg and St. Anthony (\$3.00) and between Idaho Falls and Iona (\$6.00). There's also Demand-Response service in Driggs, Rexburg, and Salmon. Prices vary by area, so call for information.

The TRPTA drivers provide exceptional customer care coupled with professional driving skills. Not only do they greet every passenger with respect, they're also sensitive to the needs of individuals that may require a little extra attention. By completing the Passenger Service and Safety training program each driver is able to help load passengers in wheelchairs and help those with disabilities. All drivers have professional commercial driving licenses and are trained in defensive driving. Plus they all are trained in First Aid and CPR, too.



TRPTA

With the convenient services TRPTA offers, all Idaho Falls residents are free to go about their daily life in a cost effective and environmentally friendly manner—all year round.

www.trpta.org