

NEW SENIOR RIDE-WISE TRANSPORTATION SERVICE ANNOUNCED
May, 2013

Somerset County, NJ - Having easy access to affordable transportation is critical to senior citizens and disabled individuals who don't drive. More than half of all non-drivers age 65 and older and individuals with disabilities are isolated at home largely because travel options are limited, especially in rural and smaller communities.

To address the increasing transportation needs of the 65+ senior population and the under-served disabled population, RideWise developed *Senior RideWise*. This program provides subsidized rides for residents living in Somerset County who are 65 and older, or those with a developmental or physical disability.

"Access to transportation so individuals can go where they want, when they want, is invaluable to residents. The goal of this service is to provide a safe and comfortable ride for individuals who don't drive or who choose not to drive. Senior RideWise can help keep them connected to friends, family and the community," said Donna Allison, executive director for RideWise, the nonprofit agency that is funding the program.

Senior RideWise is available, by appointment, for rides to the grocery store, hair salon, bank, post office, pharmacy, medical appointments, work, and social/recreational trips. For an annual membership and discounted cost per mile charge, members can schedule rides with screened, professional drivers who will provide door-to-door service and assistance with packages and mobility devices, if needed. Rides are paid for using coupons, in lieu of cash, which clients purchase from RideWise.

Senior RideWise began in April 2012 as a pilot program serving residents in northern Somerset County. Earlier this month, it was expanded to serve residents countywide.

The program is an innovative response to a problem facing many communities. The senior population in the United States has doubled in the last 12 years and is projected to peak in 2030 at 71.5 million, or one in every five Americans. New Jersey alone will see a 60% increase in senior citizens. Statistics show that seniors who don't drive make 50% fewer shopping trips, 65% fewer social trips and 15% fewer medical trips. Persons with disabilities share these same challenges. A survey conducted by the Bureau of Transportation found that for over half a million people with disabilities, the reason they never leave home is because they cannot get the transportation they need.

Several things distinguish Senior RideWise from other transportation programs:

- Members can schedule rides with as little as 24-hour notice
- Drivers provide assistance *door to door* - not just curb to curb
- There are no limits or restrictions on the number of rides taken
- Rides are available for life-enriching not just life-sustaining trips

Participants in the program must reside in Somerset County. Travel destinations can be anywhere within Somerset County or within 5 miles of the county border. For additional information or an enrollment packet, contact RideWise at (908) 704-1011.

RideWise was formed in 1992 to provide and promote sustainable travel solutions that improve mobility, reduce traffic congestion and decrease carbon emissions. Learn more by visiting the agency's website at www.ridewise.org.