

Duke Power Says Losses

Piling Up As Buses, Awaiting Commission Decision

By Donald Alderman
 Almost 100,000 people who rode Durham city buses September a year ago didn't ride buses this past September, according to a Duke Power transit supervisor, and company bus system losses continue to mount.

"We're still running in the red as far as operation costs are concerned," said Charles Brown, 35, supervisor of transit operations for Duke Power. "A good percentage of the losses are as a direct result of the Commission's ruling. We probably will lose more this year than last."

Durham's Duke Power Company owns the local bus system, operating it under a franchise from the city that is tied to the company's franchising to supply electrical services. But the bus system has been losing money for years, and has become an urban hot potato that nobody, including city government, wants.

Back in February, Duke Power cut out night bus service, following approval by the Durham City Council, but a group of citizens sued the company, and the N.C. Utilities Commission ordered Duke Power to restore night bus service, pending public hearings and a permanent decision by the Commission.

The Utilities Commission regulates the sales and services of utilities in North Carolina.

And so the question of the quality of Durham's transit system hangs in the balance, awaiting a decision from the Commission, expected sometime next year.

Meanwhile, several things are taking place, but it is not clear exactly how any of them will ultimately relate to the final resolution of public

transit in this city of slightly more than 100,000 people.

Recently, Mayor Charles Markham appointed a 13-member committee to study the transit question. The committee is composed of representatives from the public, private, and educational sectors, including disabled persons and senior citizens.

According to Markham, the committee's purpose is to examine the city's transit needs and develop methods of meeting those needs.

Dr. Tyrone Baines, vice chancellor for University Relations at NCCU and a member of the mayor's committee, said: "We are studying the whole question of how to promote transit services to the community. We are looking at what other cities are doing, having transit experts to share their views with us. Once we have gathered information, we'll begin to ask some of the basic kinds of questions of how to provide the best transit service, and we expect to make some recommendations to the city council."

It is not clear at this point exactly how long the committee's study will take, or when the council will receive recommendations.

The city's transit staff is also gathering information, conducting studies, and will likely present recommendations to the council.

It is not clear what type of relationship, if any, exists between the mayor's committee and the transit staff.

On another level, Duke Power has taken some steps, according to Brown. He says the company greatly increased its transit advertising budget this year to about \$42,500 in an effort to

attract more riders. But with about \$30,000 of the budget spent, according to Brown, ridership has decreased rather than increased.

Brown acknowledged that the city needs good transit service, and added that at some point the taxpayers and the city council may have to decide whether the service should be publicly or privately operated.

Duke Power currently operates the only two privately owned transit systems in the state, the one in Durham, and one in Greensboro.

Most transit systems across the country are publicly owned, principally because passenger fares don't generate enough money to keep the buses running. In recent years, the federal government has subsidized both the public purchasing of transit systems, capital costs to improve local systems, and operating deficits.

But under the new Reagan administration guidelines, most federal subsidies for transit

systems are either completely eliminated or severely curtailed. This puts Durham between a real rock and a hard place as far as transit is concerned.

On the one side, you have Duke Power that considers the transit system a municipal albatross. Duke Power, frankly, wants out of this business that loses the company more than \$1 million annually.

On the other side, you have citizens, many of whom are dependent upon the transit system for vital transportation, such as going to and from work, shopping, doctor and hospital visits, etc.

It was a coalition of groups representing these citizens, called the Durham Citizens Roundtable Coalition, that filed the suit to stop Duke Power from eliminating night bus service.

The citizens group says Duke Power knew the bus system is a losing proposition when the electric company signed a 30-year contract in 1973 to provide transit

services. Therefore, Duke Power shouldn't be allowed to back out of that agreement.

Then, of course, there's the city whose position appears to be to provide the mere minimum bus service, whatever people will set

tle for. In the middle of all this, however, is a seldom mentioned group that likely holds the key to the success or failure of transit in Durham. These are Durham's drivers, both those who live here and drive

private cars wherever they go, or who live in surrounding communities and drive to Durham to work, shop, play, etc.

According to state transit officials, cities where bus systems have been largely turned

around are places where a whole new category of riders has turned to the buses.

These new riders include people who work downtown and who find the bus more convenient and less expensive than driving.



The Ladies Auxiliary of the Gray Club are among concerned community organizations contributing to the Lincoln Community Health Center's building fund. Mrs. Ann Reed, outgoing president (left) presents a \$400 check to J.S. Stewart, project chairman, as incoming president, Mrs. Barbara Lassiter observes. Active distaff component of the local retired-military, the ladies realized portions of the gift through conduct of a dance and a football trip.

Tax Seminar To Be Held At NCCU

Gift To Lincoln

The antagonizing and hectic task of reporting to Uncle Sam besets us once more. Taxpayers are once again faced with the arduous tasks of wading through new tax regulations and triple checking the bottom line of their tax forms. It can be a gruesome experience if you are a small business owner. Most owners avoid this annual task by hiring an income tax specialist to do the job. Although many business owners will not complete their own tax returns for 1982, it is important that they be aware of both their own tax obligations as small business owners and of any changes in tax regulations that can affect their businesses.

Two evening sessions on "Taxes and Small Business" will be held in the Business Department, NCCU. The sessions will be held on Monday and Tuesday, December 6 and 7, from 6 p.m. until 9 p.m. each evening in room 223 of the C.T. Willis Commerce Building on the campus of North Carolina Central University. The C.T. Willis Commerce Building is located on Campus Drive.

"Taxes and Small Business" is sponsored by the National Association of Accountants, North Carolina Central University School of Business, the Durham Business and Professional Chain, and the North Carolina Minority Business Development Agency. The workshops are free of charge. However registration is required.

For registration and further information contact Ms. Andrea Harris, N.C. Department of Commerce, Minority Business Development Agency, 430 N. Salisbury Street, Raleigh, 27611 or call (919) 733-2712.

Essence Survey Of Women

(Continued from Page 12) in summarizing the responses. "We have a tradition of overcoming obstacles and winning against the odds. Apparently we have internalized these strengths and now know that we can skillfully play just about any hand that modern life deals us."

We Welcome Your News

News about events in your community should be in our office not later than Monday at 5 p.m. of the week of publication.

We WILL NOT guarantee the return of unsolicited photographs.



By the way..

By Joe Black

President Franklin D. Roosevelt, in an effort to uplift the morale of America's citizens during World War II, said: "We have nothing to fear but fear itself." But nothing stays the same and today those words have little meaning for many who are approaching the age for retirement.

Senior Citizens have many things to fear: insufficient funds, robbery, loneliness, poor housing, inadequate nutrition, and plain indifference from society. But we should not let it be like that in these United States of America. Because through the years the older citizens have worked hard on many jobs; weathered the storm of bias and hatred; paid taxes to support this nation; fought in wars to preserve democracy; and endured the slams of bias as they struggled to open doors so that Blacks coming behind them could work at new and better jobs.

And yet many of us stand by silently and watch them struggle to live their remaining years with some dignity and pride. We can help by writing our political representatives and telling them that the Social Security laws must be amended so as to be relevant to today's economic requirements. We can alert the police about hoodlum elements that steal Social Security checks, snatch their purses, or break into their homes because they are old and defenseless. And we can take the time to extend the hand of friendship and a friendly hello, or an offer to run an errand.

The suggestions are simple, economical, and real, and my friends, don't ever forget that the hands of time continue to move, and soon they will be you.

Joe Black

Vice President
 The Greyhound Corporation

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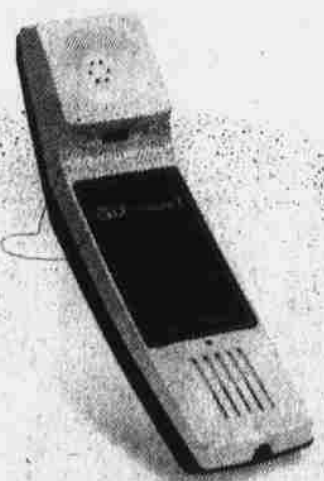
Other gift ideas:



Pac-man® Phone
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Solitaire® I
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