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CONTACT: JERRY BURKOT
202-225-3452

D.O.T. TO HELP TRANSPORT WEST VIRGINIANS, RAHALL SAYS

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- U.S. Rep. Nick Rahall (D-WV) announced today that the U.S. Department of Transportation will be awarding grants to several West Virginia social services centers to purchase or restore passenger vans used to transport local citizens.

"Under their Urban Mass Transit Administration program, the Department of Transportation will award funds to these centers to either purchase new vans or rehabilitate vans currently owned by these centers," Rep. Rahall said. "There is a small local cost-share involved but federal funds will cover the bulk of the costs for these vans."

D.O.T. has awarded \$9,960 to the Autism Services Center in Huntington for a 7-passenger van; \$20,400 to the Center for Independent Living in Beckley for a 16-passenger van; and \$18,656 to the Wyoming County Council on Aging in Itmann for a 15-passenger van.

Also slated to receive assistance to rehabilitate vans currently in use are the S.M.R.S. Mental Health Council in Beckley; Pinecrest Hospital in Beckley; and the Wayne County Community Services Organization, Inc. in Wayne.

"It is especially heartening to me to see this action taken by D.O.T. so early in the new Administration," Rahall observed. "Hopefully, this is a signal that many smaller communities such as ours will no longer be ignored or targeted in attempts to reduce the federal budget deficit."

The awards will be made to these organizations early next month.