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University Marketing and Communications

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## **EIU-Operated Shuttle Service Success Allows for Shelter Additions**

*Aug-21-2009*

Based on first-year operation costs, Eastern Illinois University made a sound decision when it decided to operate its own shuttle bus service for students.

"Previously, we contracted with an outside company for the service. And over the two previous years (2006-07 and 2007-08 academic years), on average, operating expenses exceeded revenue collected by \$20,000 annually," said Dan Nadler, vice president for student affairs. "Last year (2008-2009), we turned that around and operated without a loss."

Now, as Eastern begins its second year with its own service, using leased buses and university personnel as drivers, the university is in the position to add shelters and an extra stop on campus for the benefit of its users.

Based on observations/suggestions from the drivers themselves, the university has added an additional stop for riders at University Apartments. Stops will now be located at the north and south sides of the complex.

Also, four additional 5-by-10 shelters, identical to one already located northeast of the MLK Jr. Union, will be installed at campus stops -- one each at Ninth Street Hall, Greek Court and at each of the two University Apartments stops.

Eastern will continue to use two 2007 Ford Starcraft-Allstar shuttle buses provided by Midwest Transit Equipment Inc., based in Kankakee. Each bus holds up to 16 passengers, with additional room for up to two wheelchairs.

The university is responsible for general upkeep (e.g., oil changes, windshield wiper replacement, etc.) of the buses. If more major problems occur, there are local businesses equipped to handle the repairs as per the agreement made with Midwest Transit.

Eastern began offering shuttle bus service to its students in 2002. By choosing to operate its own service in 2008, the university hoped to keep a handle on operating costs.

"Our goal continues to be excellent stewardship of student fees and cost avoidance in the future," Nadler said.