



News Release

Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation
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For immediate release: Jan. 12, 2024
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Kayak Launches New Milton-Freewater Bus Schedule, Route

MILTON-FREEWATER, Ore. – With the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR) taking over Milton-Freewater’s bus services in 2023, Kayak Public Transit will introduce a new bus schedule and route for the Northeast Oregon city on Monday, Jan. 15.

Kayak General Manager Vicki Croes said as part of a pilot program, bus service will begin at 10 a.m. Monday through Friday with the last bus of the day ending at 6:15 p.m. at the Kayak hub in Pendleton. The later operational hours are supposed to provide increased flexibility for Milton-Freewater residents.

Kayak’s revised route takes into consideration community feedback, eliminating underused stops and increasing stops that better serve the community, looping through Milton-Freewater municipal, shopping and residential areas with service to Walmart and Valley Transit Center in Walla Walla. The new route is expected to improve travel times and enhance overall efficiency.

While connecting to the Valley Transit Center four times daily, it will also connect to the Whistler regional bus twice daily.

Kayak officials said the transit service is committed to making public transportation accessible to all community members. The new schedule and route aim to provide convenient options for individuals with various transportation needs. And like other Kayak buses, passengers will ride for free.

Officials added Kayak values community feedback and that passengers are encouraged to share experiences and suggestions to help refine and improve services.

"Our new route and schedule are built with community feedback in mind," Croes said. "We are responding to Milton-Freewater residents’ requests for later and more frequent service. The community has let us know shopping and being able to get to appointments are high priorities. We are dedicated to improving Kayak’s bus service, visibility and experience for everyone. This pilot program is a testament to our commitment."

Feedback and comments can be submitted by emailing kayak@ctuir.org or calling 541-429-7519. Updates will be shared on Kayak’s Facebook page and website.

Owned by CTUIR, Kayak provides free and accessible transportation for the public in 19 rural communities in Northeast Oregon and Southeast Washington. All its buses are equipped with wheelchair lifts and bicycle racks.

The CTUIR launched its first fixed route in 2001 to meet tribal members' transportation needs. The agency expanded its capacity, took over maintenance responsibilities, developed comprehensive performance measurements and extended its service area. It was rebranded Kayak Public Transit in 2014.

The Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation is comprised of the Cayuse, Umatilla, and Walla Walla Tribes, formed under the Treaty of 1855 at the Walla Walla Valley, 12 Stat. 945. In 1949, the Tribes adopted a constitutional form of government to protect, preserve and enhance the reserved treaty rights guaranteed under federal law.

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Caption: A map depicts Kayak Public Transit's new route for Milton-Freewater beginning Monday, Jan. 15. Along with the revised route, bus service will begin at 10 a.m. Monday through Friday. Kayak Public Transit