

BENTON HARBOR

Dial-a-ride hopes keep same services in 2007-08

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BENTON HARBOR — Dial-a-ride services in the Twin Cities are expected to remain at the current level with funding requested for the 2007-08 fiscal year.

The Twin Cities Area Transportation Authority, which operates Dial-a-ride and other programs, projects operating revenue of nearly \$1.414 million for the next fiscal year, which starts Oct. 1.

That's about \$20,000 more than the current budget, said Bill Purvis, TCATA assistant director.

Funding is being sought from various sources, including \$505,210 from the federal government, \$554,971 from the state and \$25,000 local. Other projected revenue sources are \$253,308 in fare box receipts and \$75,000 from TCATA.

Purvis said state funding has been falling every year but federal funding for TCATA's

public transportation program has remained steady.

"We're going to try to hold everything the way it is," he said.

Falling fuel prices have helped TCATA maintain its level of service and there are no plans to increase fares in the next fiscal year.

Purvis said fares were increased in 2005 for the first time in a decade. Handicapped people and those over 62 pay half fare.

Funding will continue for

two more years through the federal Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality program. It provides money for line haul routes, buses that run point to point at scheduled times.

The CMAQ program aims to help improve air quality in areas such as Southwest Michigan that area affected from "transport" pollution blown in from other regions.

TCATA provides service in Benton Harbor, St. Joseph, Royalton Township and parts of Benton Township.