

New help for local commuters

Beleaguered commuters in Berkeley and Dorchester counties will get some welcome relief this summer with express buses that link to existing bus service to downtown Charleston. It couldn't happen at a more opportune time.

TriCounty Links, formerly the RTMA [Rural Transportation Management Association], is expected to begin regular rush-hour bus service from Moncks Corner and Ridgeville, connecting with CARTA buses in North Charleston. The cost of a round-trip ticket will be a little more than the price of a gallon of gasoline.

The Charleston Area Regional Transportation Authority already has working agreements with TriCounty Links for routes serving rural Charleston County,

including Johns Island and McClellanville. The rural bus service is supported with grants from the county and federal government.

In this instance, Links won't simply be serving the rural area, but the growing Charleston metropolitan area. The Ridgeville service will connect with Summerville on U.S. 78 and the Moncks Corner route also will serve Goose Creek via U.S. 52.

Public response to mass transit is at an all-time high because of the record price for gasoline. The new bus service will benefit from the increased demand and could bolster support for comprehensive mass transit — including commuter rail — throughout the Charleston metropolitan area.