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For Immediate Release

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Montpelier LINK Ridership Continues to Soar

New afternoon run begins operating in March to help alleviate bus overcrowding.

Burlington, Vermont: The Chittenden County Transportation Authority's (CCTA) commuter route that connects Montpelier and Waterbury to Burlington continues to grow, as Washington County residents look for an alternative to their automobile use. This service, called the Montpelier LINK Express, started in October 2003 and ridership has increased more than 24% from January, 2005 to January 2006.

Starting on Monday, March 6, 2006, CCTA will begin running a third bus to Montpelier in the afternoon, which will leave Cherry Street at 4:45pm and arrive in Montpelier at 5:57pm. This additional run will help alleviate some of the overcrowding issues that CCTA has experienced on the 5:15pm run, giving passengers another time option to make their way back to Washington County.

"The Montpelier LINK Express has proven to be a very successful route and even as gas prices fluctuate, ridership continues to increase every month," says Chris Cole, General Manager of CCTA. "Currently, this route has a farebox recovery ratio of well over 50%, which is extremely high for public transit services, especially one that has only been in operation for two and a half years," adds Cole. A farebox recovery ratio is a transit industry benchmark to determine what percentage of the route's operating costs is paid for by passenger fares.

Part of the Montpelier LINK Express success can be attributed to the fact that CCTA has built a network of commuter services. The Route 100 Commuter from Morrisville offers two transit connections in Waterbury; Lamoille County passengers wanting to travel to Chittenden County can transfer to the LINK Express and travel north; passengers wanting to go to Montpelier can board the Montpelier-Waterbury Commuter route at the Waterbury State Office Complex and travel south via Route 2. The Route 100 Commuter and the Montpelier-Waterbury Commuter are operated by the Green Mountain Transit Agency (GMTA), which is managed by CCTA. This commuter network offers residents as far away as Morrisville and Stowe a public transportation connection to jobs in Chittenden and Washington County.

CCTA's Montpelier LINK Express operates Monday through Friday, with buses leaving downtown Burlington and Montpelier during peak commuting hours. Stops are made at National Life, the park and ride lots in Montpelier (DET lot), Waterbury and Richmond, and the MCHV campus of Fletcher Allen Health Care. Buses traveling to Montpelier also stop at CCTA's PARC lot off Lakeside Avenue in Burlington. Fares on the Montpelier LINK Express are \$4.00 each way. Discounted 10-ride tickets and 31-day passes are available.

The Chittenden County Transportation Authority operates Chittenden County's public transit buses and provides 1.8 million rides per year in the greater Burlington area. CCTA has a fifty-one bus fleet, which services Burlington, Essex, Shelburne, South Burlington, Williston, Winooski and a portion of Colchester. The mission of CCTA is to make efficient transportation services available to all residents of and visitors to the Chittenden County region that are safe, accessible, reliable, clean, affordable and sustainable, thereby enhancing the quality of life for all. For CCTA route and schedule information, please call (802) 864-CCTA or log onto www.cctaride.org.