

## Health Connections BUS to Cranbrook

I Love Creston April 2019 FINAL

On Tuesday March 5<sup>th</sup>, I rode the BC Transit “Health Connections” bus from Creston to Cranbrook and return. My primary reason was to experience and report on this benefit for the residents of the Creston Valley.

The Town of Creston, along with Regional District of Central Kootenay Areas A,B, and C contribute to the RDCK Service 234 which has annual operations cost of approximately \$300,000 to provide this Health Connections service as well as our local BC Transit “handyDART” service and the fixed-route schedules.

On this day, I boarded bus #2324 and our driver Pat welcomed me aboard. We passengers each paid our \$5 for the return trip. We were 8 passengers on a 21 passenger bus and Pat explained that this was a lighter than normal trip as he usually has 12 to 15 passengers on his Tuesday and Thursday trips. We left the RDCK Community Complex at exactly 8:30AM and arrived in Cranbrook at 9:50AM. Pat drove his passengers to the main drop-off points: Safeway (Cranbrook Mall), then near the Green Medical Clinic, then East Kootenay Regional Hospital, Haven Gardens, the Joseph Creek complex and the Tamarack Mall.

He and I had coffee at the mall and he explained that he enjoys doing these two weekly trips and providing his years of driving experience (he is a retired tour bus driver and owner), conversation and assistance to his passengers. Some are regulars, one passenger travels monthly to the Haven Gardens Transition House for her appointment and the 10AM to 3PM time in Cranbrook allows her time to walk and do some visiting and shopping and then board the bus back to Creston. This service was created and is supported by IHA (Interior Health Authority) for patients to make appointments at their hospital as well as with physicians and specialists. Pat, as well as all of our drivers, do their very best to get their customers to their specific locations on time.

Today, one passenger was checking into the East Kootenay Regional Hospital and was planning to return on the Thursday ride if all went well. Another passenger was visiting her mother at Joseph Creek and was planning to return to Creston on Thursday.

A lot of us have our own vehicles and/or can arrange transportation to Cranbrook so this is not a program that we may not necessarily utilize. Seeing firsthand the independence that this service provides to our citizens was heartwarming and I realized that many of our Creston Valley residents may not know that this service is available to them. It is also important to note that this service is available to ALL residents in the Creston Valley. To book your space on this shuttle which runs every Tuesday & Thursday (excluding statutory holidays), phone BC Transit at 1-250-428-7750.

I appreciated the good conversation and the opportunity to be a passenger on this trip. I also thoroughly enjoyed having lunch at the Family Thai Restaurant and visiting with Udon, Mamm and Bass (of the former Kootenay Thai Restaurant in Creston).

In addition to the Health Connections route, BC Transit also offers the “handyDART” which is a Creston and area local service for door-to-door, shared service for people who are unable to take the fixed-route service. I plan to call the local information number and do a future report back on this route.

Thanks Pat and my fellow passengers for a great day!

*Don't hesitate to contact me by:*

*Visiting me at my office in Town Hall*

*Email me at [ron.toyota@creston.ca](mailto:ron.toyota@creston.ca)*

*Call me at 250 428 2214 (extension 227)*

**605 words**