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From the Director:

In an editorial published by *The Lima News*, readers may have come away with the implication that the ACRTA is asking for the voters trust without a defined plan for sales tax funds. We would like to take a moment to set the record straight and dispel some misinformation.

The sales tax request was placed on the ballot after many attempts to secure additional, external local funding. Facing over \$1 million in cuts, we have aggressively sought to reduce costs wherever and whenever possible. We have looked to raise funds through avenues small and large – everything from renting out our extra office space, to selling honey buns in our terminals between rides.

The quarter-percent sales tax was our best option, as it is the smallest amount a transit authority can request by Ohio law. It would generate roughly \$4 million of funding going toward two goals: continuing service and expanding service.

About \$1.9 million will be dedicated to continuing current services as they are today, replacing the expiring federal grants, and ensuring employee retention. The remaining \$2.3 million will be dedicated to expanding service. This includes starting routes 1 hour earlier (5am), and upgrading to 30-minute service on our 4 busiest routes. This \$2.3 million also includes the cost of the four new buses (\$500,000/each) needed to expand the busy daily routes. If the sales tax passes, this expansion would happen within a year.

In the future, sales tax revenue could also be used for other transit-related projects in our communities, such as updated bus shelters or new sidewalk and streetscape projects. Ultimately though, the ACRTA will need to immediately make major service cuts if the sales tax levy is unsuccessful. We are asking for support from our community, not its “blind faith.”

Sheila Haney, Executive Director
Allen County Regional Transit Agency