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## NKU students to ride TANK for free

### Campus buys \$25,000-per-year bus pass for community

BY HOWARD MCEWEN | ENQUIRER CONTRIBUTOR

Northern Kentucky University has bought a \$25,000 bus pass for its entire campus community.

U-PASS, a program NKU launches this fall with the Transit Authority of Northern Kentucky - allows NKU students, faculty and staff to ride any regular TANK route or shuttle for free.

"Students don't have to do anything extra to take advantage of the service," said Chris Cole, NKU's director of media relations and communications. "There is no paperwork or activation process. They don't have to get a new ID card or fill out any applications. They just show their NKU All-Card and they ride for free."

NKU will pay TANK \$25,000 per year for the program that Cole expects to yield several benefits to the campus.

"The more students embrace the service, the less traffic congestion and parking challenges we'll see," Cole said. "It also sends a strong message that NKU is committed to sustainability. The university hopes to become a regional leader in this area, and this is just one of several early steps we're taking."

Cole noted that students who already have bought a parking pass but want to use U-PASS can obtain a full refund within the first three weeks of the fall semester. Classes begin Aug. 20.

TANK does not have estimates on the number of students using their system and doesn't expect U-PASS to require new routes. However, they do expect an increase in ridership.

"Based on the last couple weeks ... we expect an increase," said Gina Douthat, TANK's director of communications. "We've gotten a lot of response from people who have heard about it through the grapevine. We're really focusing on new students - people who are freshmen, because they haven't had the time to develop the habit of driving and parking there."

Douthat noted that U-PASS allows students to ride free on any TANK routes - not just to the Highland Heights campus.

In June, TANK and NKU's College of Informatics partnered to provide free Wi-Fi to five express routes.

On Aug. 1, TANK increased express route rates 25 cents to \$1.50. The Southbank Shuttle is \$1.25.

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