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Newly launched art-covered Connective Corridor buses to offer free St. Patrick's Day Parade park-and-ride service

Three new Connective Corridor buses that feature interactive designs by Syracuse University students will roll out of production in time for Central New Yorkers to enjoy a free park-and-ride service for Syracuse's annual St. Patrick's Day Parade taking place Saturday, March 14.

Syracuse University and Centro are partnering to extend the regular Connective Corridor Route to Manley Field House between 9:40 a.m. and 6 p.m. on the day of the parade. Free parking will be available at the Manley Field House North lot located off Comstock Avenue near Colvin Street. Buses will leave every 20 minutes and drop off parade-goers at the corner of E. Fayette and Warren streets. Buses will also return from downtown Syracuse every 20 minutes from the parade, including service for those attending the After Parade Party at Hotel Syracuse.

"By offering this special events route to bring our community to the annual St. Patrick's Day Parade in a convenient, green-friendly way, we are fulfilling a key purpose of the Connective Corridor—which is to combine the resources of University Hill with downtown Syracuse to allow more people to sample the rich cultural gems our city has, such as the St. Patrick's Day Parade," said Marilyn Higgins, SU vice president for Community Engagement and Economic Development.

"The Syracuse St. Patrick's Parade Committee made 'greening' the event a priority this year by requiring participating units to limit their vehicle use and by encouraging them to use recyclable -- or recycled -- materials in constructing floats," said Claire Dunn, spokesperson for the Syracuse St. Patrick Day Parade Committee. "The community members who line the parade route and support the marchers are just as important to the success of the parade and we are delighted to have this essential support from our partners at the Connective Corridor, thus we hope families headed downtown for the parade will take advantage of this park and ride service."

The new buses are wrapped in a vibrant orange design created by SU students from the College of Visual and Performing Arts as part of a class project. The design features illustrations of various characters riding the bus, including Ernie Davis, Iron Mike, and a caricature of Otto, and covers all of the bus and part of the top with a character drawn climbing onto the roof. The students—Jessica Alpert, Adrienne Angelo, Matt Kalish, Ana Mihai, Heidi Olean, and Liz Weil—are VPA junior industrial design majors with the exception of Angelo, who is a

communication design major. Patrick Murray, a junior illustration major, contributed to the project by drawing some of the characters riding the bus.

“Our idea was to make the bus come alive for the people who see it along the Connective Corridor,” said Alpert. “We figured the best way was to literally put people on the bus, but make it interactive so it would get people talking about the bus.”

The winning design was selected by a community jury composed of representatives from SU, arts organizations and local businesses. “The design chosen was picked because while still abstract, it made reference to Syracuse, and it provided interaction that could be easily understood and recognized whether the bus was stopped, in motion, or by people looking down the street from high storied buildings,” said Denise Heckman, associate professor in the department of design at VPA, whose class participated in the design competition.

At 30-ft long, the new buses are smaller than the regular Centro buses, are more fuel efficient, and will eventually incorporate GPS technology to provide passengers estimated time of arrival at the various stops along the Connective Corridor.

The Connective Corridor is a signature strip of cutting-edge cultural development connecting the University Hill with downtown Syracuse. The Corridor will make investments in key locations to support historic landmarks, cultural institutions and private development in the city. These areas include the emerging arts districts along East Genesee Street and the Near Westside; Forman Park, the Fayette Firefighter’s Memorial Park and Columbus Circle; the nightlife of Armory Square; and the Civic Strip, where the OnCenter complex and the Everson Museum of Art tie into the center of downtown. The Corridor will showcase these assets and ignite a resurgence of economic development, tourism and residential growth.

For more information on the Connective Corridor, and for regular Connective Corridor bus schedules or the special event St. Patrick’s Day Parade free park and ride service, visit <http://www.connectivecorridor.com/>

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