

Local NEWS



MIKE DEWBECK

GOING INTO BUSINESS: Kevin Bulley has given notice at his work and will be starting a wheelchair-accessible transportation service soon.

Access-a-van starts soon

Man plans to deliver wheelchair-accessible service

TRANSPORTATION
Rachel Boomer - The Daily News

Kevin Bulley thinks he can succeed where the taxi industry failed.

Next month, Bulley will swap his sales office for the driver's seat of a wheelchair-accessible bus, which he hopes will help fill the void left when Yellow Cab pulled the city's only accessible taxi off the road last November.

The 40-year-old has given notice to the car dealership where he

works and ordered refits on a new, \$63,000 Dodge van. He's planning to start picking up passengers in the first week of February.

"I'm not expecting big money," Bulley said, although he hopes there'll be enough business to eventually put two or three buses on the road.

"The one worry I have is that the demand will be overwhelming compared to the service I can provide."

In late November, Yellow Cab pulled the plug on its wheelchair-accessible taxi, saying it lost too much money. Since then, Halifax regional council has been debating how best to fill the gap.

Metro Transit is studying how it

would provide such a service, and will present a report to council Tuesday.

Bulley believes he can make money by picking up several passengers, up to four in wheelchairs and their able-bodied companions, on a pre-planned route.

The refitted passenger van will cost \$420 a day to run.

Bulley hasn't gotten his rates approved by the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board yet.

Lauchie Rutt, head of the Canadian Paraplegic Association's Nova Scotia chapter, has heard from four or five people who are looking to get into the business. He said Bulley is the only one he knows of who has

lined up financing.

"That's great news. There's a huge void in the system right now," Rutt said.

Danny Walton, who was quoted as \$150 for a one-way trip to the airport after Yellow Cab stopped offering accessible taxi service, said he would pay more than a regular cab for the convenience of getting around — within reason.

"If I had to go to Halifax return trip, I'm not going to pay \$70," said the Dartmouth resident, who is paralysed from the neck down.

"Fifty dollars to the airport, that's reasonable. That wouldn't bother me at all."
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