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## Hemet school district's busing program earns 'A' in economics

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10:00 PM PDT on Thursday, August 5, 2010

By **BRIAN ROKOS**  
 The Press-Enterprise

Michael Fogerty is in the home stretch of a 14-day marathon.

Fogerty, the Hemet Unified School District transportation director, and his staff are working 10- to 12-hour weekdays and eight hours on weekends, inputting data and building maps on computers that will provide districts in southwest Riverside County with busing service that will save them money and improve Hemet's bottom line.

The buses roll Aug. 11.

*Story continues below*



**Rodrigo Peña / Special The Press-Enterprise**  
 Michael Fogerty, Hemet Unified School District transportation director, builds maps on computers that will provide districts in southwest Riverside County with busing service that will save them money and improve Hemet's bottom line.

"Nobody I know does what we do," Fogerty said.

Hemet provides busing for 45,000 special-education and regular-education students in the Hemet, San Jacinto, Perris High School, Perris Elementary and Romoland school districts, and special-needs students in Nuvew.

Also, Hemet leased 34 buses to the Stockton district, and it provided transportation for the Conejo Valley district in Thousand Oaks because its drivers weren't certified to navigate mountain roads on a field trip into Riverside County.

"I'll do anything to make a buck," Fogerty said with a chuckle.

Hemet grossed \$9.8 million in the 2009-10 school year from outside work, Fogerty said. The net profit hasn't been calculated yet. But for a district that cut \$19.7 million in spending for 2010-11 and spent \$11 million on busing in 2009-

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10, anything is welcome.

Scott Shira, assistant superintendent of facilities for the San Jacinto Unified School District, said it would be far more expensive for the district to run its own buses.

"The Hemet folks do an excellent job in terms of customer service," Shira said. "We have had many, many situations where parents have questions or concerns about routes and bus stops, and not only do they (Hemet) return phone calls, they also take visits to the home, inspect where the bus stop is and recommend how to solve things."

Fogerty, 43, has been transportation director for eight years. He attended Hemet High and studied geographic information at Mount San Jacinto College.

Fogerty drove a school bus in Perris right after college, but he's now behind the wheel of a computer system.

Edulog allows Fogerty and staff, after inputting the location of all students, stops and schools, to draw the fastest routes that use the fewest buses to deliver the most students and reduce downtime for drivers.

District boundaries are almost meaningless. For instance, on Route 315, a bus will pick up about 60 students in Perris at 6:40 a.m. and drop them at Heritage High at 7:30. The bus will then pick up about 40 students in Romoland, making stops at 7:34 and 7:40, and then dropping them at Mesa View Elementary at 8 a.m.

The system, which cost about \$30,000 to buy and \$5,000 for an annual license, is sophisticated enough to prefer time-saving right turns over left turns.

Fogerty has two monitors in his office. One shows maps and the other a satellite view, which is important for identifying less-desirable dirt roads if chosen by the computer and locating houses on large pieces of land. Most busing serves special-needs students, who must be picked up and returned at home, he said.


"I like a challenge," Fogerty said. "I feel like I'm contributing something and saving some money."

Reach Brian Rokos at 951-763-3464 or brokos@PE.com

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**Steve Trevino**

I would like to know how charging parents over 500 dollars for their children to ride the bus that taxpayers bought could earn an A in anyone's book? Does anyone but me think this is a ludicrous amount of money for parents to have to pay to get their kids to school? Someone please explain.....

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**guenavere**

Is increasing the distance students have to walk improving the service?

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**concernedcitizen**

Interesting reading. Does the system also allow for changes as they occur or does the annual license fee cover changes in staff, routes, etc. as school years

begin.  
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