

# START seeks funds for new bus wraps

Bank rescinds offer to trade wraps for ads.

*By Cara Froedge*

The START bus service will ask nonprofit organizations and area businesses to subsidize new graphic wraps on buses after an offer from a local bank fell through.

Michael Wackerly, START director, said Rocky Mountain Bank will not be funding the wraps of new buses. The bank offered earlier this month to pay for wraps on seven new buses in exchange for some advertising, including on the outside of the buses.

But after the START board met last week and decided to ask Rocky Mountain Bank to fund just three wraps — without advertising on the exterior — so other organizations could have the opportunity to subsidize wraps, the bank rescinded the offer.

“They were more interested in doing something long term rather than just doing three buses,” Wackerly said.

Instead, Wackerly said he expects the START board to enact a program in which organizations and businesses

can subsidize the wraps. In return, they would be given free advertising inside the bus and publicity. There would be no advertising placed on the exterior.

“At this point, Rocky Mountain Bank is going to be notified of the program and of this opportunity to resubmit a proposal just like everybody else,” Wackerly said.

At Thursday’s meeting, the START board decided to wrap the scenic prints around only 25 percent of the windows of new buses.

The wraps cost between \$8,000 and \$10,000 per bus to install.

In the past, buses have been fully wrapped, featuring such icons as mountain views and action sports.

In October, START board members learned that funding shortages might mean the end of wraps on new buses.

Previously, the federal government footed 80 percent to 90 percent of bus costs, with the town and county funding the remaining 10 percent to 20 percent. But there may not be any federal funding for new buses.

The agency has a new bus scheduled to arrive in early December and plans to buy seven more within 12 to 18 months.