



Coasting

John McCaffrey inaugurates Eugene-to-Florence bus run

A local entrepreneur wants beachcombers to leave the driving to his newly created Eugene-to-Florence busline—Oregon Coastlines.

John McCaffrey, a local auto repairman and Survival Center volunteer, plans to inaugurate the first regular Eugene-to-Florence bus service in five years on June 15.

His new busline, Oregon Coastlines Inc., will operate without the benefit of a government subsidy or a big-business budget, he says. The bus service will hold its non-profit status until they can get tax-exempt status. If not, the firm will switch to private-for-profit status, McCaffrey says.

By law, another non-profit organization must manage any profits the corporation earns as a non-profit firm, he says. Senior Services of Eugene is a likely candidate for that job, McCaffrey adds.

Oregon Coastlines' Thursday through Sunday round-trip bus service also will pick up passengers in Veneta, Noti, Walton, Mapleton and Honeyman State Park and will offer coast tours, a package delivery service and possibly a statewide charter service.

McCaffrey has lined up two Friday bus runs and one run for other days. A round trip fare will be \$10, with a 20 percent discount for senior citizens, he says. Bicyclists can bring their two-wheelers for an additional \$1, he adds.

Coastlines' fleet consists of a custom-remodeled, 24-passenger school bus and one or two yet-to-be-obtained maxi-vans. They will shuttle sightseers up and down the central coast during the three-and-a-half hour lay-

over between trips to and from Eugene.

The \$12 guided tours include admission to the Sea Lion Caves and stops at the Honeyman State Park dunes, Devil's Elbow State Park, Strawberry Hill and Cape Perpetua. Sack lunches will be sold.

McCaffrey remodeled his big, yellow bus for comfort, adding wood paneling, cushioned seats and a restroom. He wired the bus for sound with a new stereo system and installed a new engine.

Groups such as the University's Survival Center and Friends of the Oregon Coast, as well as youth groups such as Looking Glass and Big Brothers and Sisters, have already chartered the bus for trips.

These charters for non-profit groups are the main aspect of Coastlines non-profit status.

The idea for Oregon Coastlines came during a "kitchen table conversation" in November, more than a year and a half ago, McCaffrey says. He was considering self-employment opportunities, and talking with a friend (now a silent partner in Coastlines) led to feasibility studies of the service through surveys and help of the Oregon Association of Railway Passengers.

Ed Bergeron, LTD marketing administrator, says the LTD board never established a Eugene-to-Florence route because of a lack of public support.

Sonya Smith of the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) says the Green Bus Line operated

a Eugene-to-Florence service "five or six years ago" but stopped when subsidy money ran out.

John O'Connell, of the charter bus service O'Connell Enterprises, also eyed the Eugene-to-Florence run, and when McCaffrey filed for a PUC permit in March, 1981, O'Connell protested, called for a hearing and filed his own application, McCaffrey says.

McCaffrey says he managed to delay the hearing, and meanwhile O'Connell halted his plans for a Eugene-to-Florence run because a two-year \$26,000-a-year federal subsidy would not be available.

Considering the Reagan Administration's subsidy cutbacks, McCaffrey says he didn't count on government help and proceeded with his plans, receiving a PUC permit in January.

Coastlines now has a number of "working investors" with McCaffrey directing operations.

McCaffrey says his company won't operate in the black until next year.

But a depressed economy has not depressed his hopes for success, he says.

"I think it's in our favor."

He explained that people — especially students — who can't afford cars will take advantage of the busses' low fares. He also noted lack of competition from other firms.

"There's no one in the charter business who can underprice us," he says.

Coastlines also will treat some of the members of the two communities to free tours, he says. Groups, such as the Skipworth Detention Center, Eugene Mission and nursing homes, also will receive free rides.



John McCaffrey's Oregon Coastlines bus service offers Thursday through Sunday round-trips, with two runs on Friday.

Story by Steve Hooks

Photos by Bob Baker

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