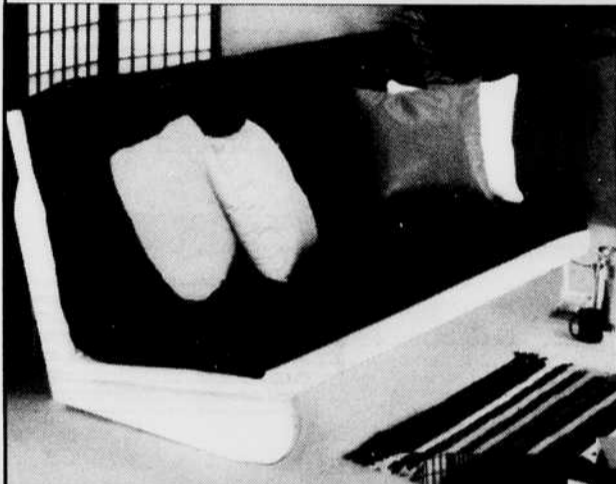


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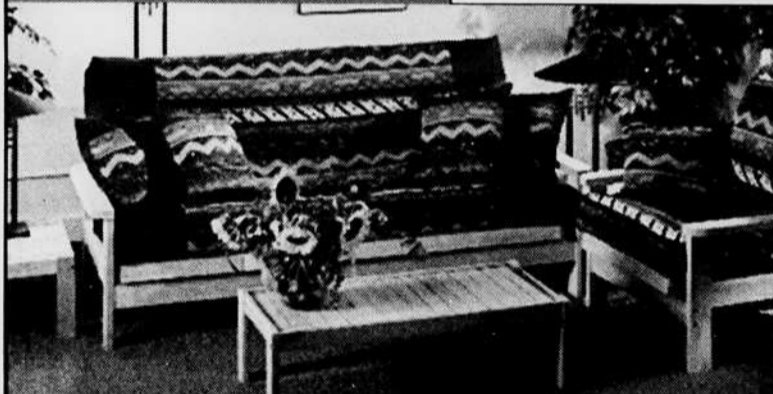
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LTD may get funds to buy new buses

Some city buses are six years past the limit of their intended age

By Tricia Duryee
 Freelance Reporter

Two million dollars that would allow the Lane Transit District to replace buses, which have in some cases outlived their intended age by six years, is currently on the floor waiting for U.S. Senate approval.

Rep. Peter DeFazio, D-Springfield, announced Thursday the bill was passed in the U.S. House of Representatives.

"It should go through the Senate without a problem," said Tom Bowden, field representative from DeFazio's Eugene office. Bowden said he believed it could be passed in the next couple of days.

To accommodate a 9 percent increase per year in commuter service routes for the next three years, LTD asked DeFazio to introduce a bill to replace some of the 102 buses that currently run routes in Lane County.

The bill originally intended to expand bus service. "They will replace some 16-year-old buses,

but there is no opportunity to add new routes or to expand services," said Phyllis Loobey, LTD general manager. "Other transit districts receive money in this manner."

According to Loobey, the new equipment will be much cheaper to operate. "Just as a car, buses are harder to maintain when they are old. A bus is designed to last for 12 years; [Our buses] will be 18 years old when we get the new ones."

As for the LTD schedule, Loobey said she thought the new buses could be out on the streets in 18 months. They will be equipped with electronic fare boxes that will read the magnetic strips on the back of some passes, including 30,000 UO student, faculty and staff cards.

Loobey also said she expected the buses to be more fuel-efficient. "They are required by law to build them to be low-sulfur diesel engines, which produce less odor. Today, standards are higher for buses than for auto engines, and we will get more people out of their cars."

The old buses being replaced will be up for auction to the city and the public.



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