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LAUREN WIMER | SENIOR PHOTOGRAPHER

The 1992 Thomas tour bus runs primarily on vegetable oil and promotes the National Outdoor Leadership School. Transforming the bus took less than one week and \$12,000. It also features three solar-powered modules.

Vegetable-oil fueled bus parks rock wall on campus

Members from a leadership school visit the University to speak about outdoor education, environmental issues

BY ANTHONY LUCERO
NEWS REPORTER

University students were introduced yesterday to a bus that runs on vegetable oil and saves enough energy to project film by using solar power modules, in addition to having a climbing wall on one of its sides.

The bus is part of a nationwide tour sponsored by the National Outdoor Leadership School, which offers worldwide courses that range from one week to a full semester. Students can study a variety of outdoor technical skills including backpacking, canoeing, caving, rafting, snowboarding and wilderness medicine.

"We want students to know that we teach technical outdoor skills and outdoor leadership skills," Ashley Lewis, a NOLS member, said. How did this bus become a spokesvehicle for a cleaner environment? For about \$1,200 and less than a week's labor, the NOLS crew was able to convert the engine of the 1992 Thomas tour bus to use a more efficient and safer fuel. The bus has a diesel tank that warms up the engine for five minutes; then, with a simple flip of a

switch, vegetable oil transfers to the engine to make it move.

"Diesel engines were originally built to use peanut oil," Nate Kratz, a member of NOLS, said. To prove his point, he said he configured his own 1975 Mercedes 300D to use vegetable oil. He added that his modified Mercedes gets 30 miles per gallon.

The bus doesn't have access to regular gas stations, but Lewis said it hasn't been hard to refuel.

"We go along — some places have people who want to help us with grease so they give us extra or show us where we can find some," she said.

The bus's solar array, composed of three separate solar-powered modules, can store up to three days of power if it is sunny for half a day. That energy is used to power the NOLS office, which includes three work computers and a projection screen for NOLS presentations.

"I think it's cool, and (conversion to) biodiesel is an amazing program," freshman Katie Goldberg, a general science major, said.

Students who join NOLS can learn more than one technical skill in a semester. According to the NOLS Web site, NOLS/University of Utah college credit can be earned through 400 colleges and universities nationwide, and many offer their own credits to students who take the courses. Students in the program range in age from 14 to 70, Lewis said.

NOLS also offers 15 full-tuition scholarships through SpinCo Medical Products. Lewis said scholarship applicants must be 14 to 22 years old and cannot have guardians who earn more than \$90,000 per year.

After taking a river kayaking course for a semester, Lewis said she joined the nationwide trek on the bus to introduce students to NOLS.

"It was so surreal being outdoors because it made you feel really small," Lewis said. "It gave me a real appreciation for outdoor conservation."

anthonylucero@dailyemerald.com

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Policy: Activist hopes change will spur others

Continued from page 1

University Law Professor Dominick Vetri wrote a memo to the Standing Committee on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Concerns advising it about possible policy changes. He agreed that transgender people were not adequately protected by the old policy.

"(The change) came about because of a real need that existed in the University community that I think is a result of changed times," Vetri said. "It seems more and more transgender people are coming out in the University community."

Vetri said he learned about discrimination toward transgender individuals when he sat on a Eugene committee that looked into the possibility of amending the city's non-discrimination policy in a

similar way. Although he said the city didn't adopt the changes, Vetri continued to research non-discrimination codes used throughout the country to protect transgender people. He later recommended that the University make a change.

"We thought it would be an appropriate thing to do for the University," he said.

Vetri said he was not aware of specific problems that necessitated the change, adding that it is a forward-thinking measure that will alleviate future potential for discrimination.

"I'm immensely pleased," he said. "It's better to deal with this affirmatively before problems crop up."

Chicora Martin, director of LGBT Educational and Support Services,

who also helped facilitate the rule change, said the policy met with little opposition.

"I think it's going to be a fabulous addition," Martin said. "It will formalize our commitment not to discriminate."

Martin said she hopes the change will spur other departments to look for areas where they may unknowingly discriminate against people on an arbitrary basis.

She also emphasized that University members who want more information on the policy can contact the LGBT Educational and Support Services office, the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer Alliance office or the Standing Committee on LGBT Concerns.

parkerhowell@dailyemerald.com