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Members of Iron Workers Shopmen's Local 516 and IBEW Local 48 help unveil the first American-made streetcar in 58 years during a ceremony in Portland's South Waterfront District that featured U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood. The union workers are employed at Oregon Iron Works through its wholly-owned subsidiary United Streetcar LLC, and sister company Maranatha Electric. The streetcars are made from 70 percent U.S. parts and comply with all federal Buy American rules. United Streetcar soon will have contracts to make six more streetcars for the City of Portland and seven cars for the City of Tucson, Arizona.



New streetcars are union-made in America (Oregon)

U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood on July 1 helped unveil a new American-made — union-made — streetcar that soon will operate as part of the Portland Streetcar Loop Project.

The streetcar prototype was built by members of Iron Workers Shopmen's Local 516 employed at Oregon Iron Works through its wholly-owned subsidiary United Streetcar, LLC, and sister company Maranatha Electric, whose workers are members of International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 48.

It is the first streetcar made in America since 1951, when Harry Truman was president, television picture tubes were being tested for color, and automobile turn signals were a luxury add-on that cost extra.

"I believe this is the dawn of a new era for public transportation in the United States, a new opportunity to claim 'Made in America,'" LaHood told a crowd of political and city dignitaries, union officials, and union workers at the streetcar unveiling at the doorstep of OHSU's Center for Health and Healing in Portland's South Waterfront district.

LaHood, a former Republican congressman from Illinois, said the Portland project is the kind of project federal and state government should be investing in.

"It's a chance to generate good-paying union jobs right here in the region,"

he said. "This project demonstrates exactly the kind of synergy we need in the United States of America today. We must invest in transportation projects that preserve and enhance the unique characteristics of each neighborhood, just as the Portland streetcar does."

United Streetcar hopes the resurgence of streetcars in the United States will lead to more work. The Clacka-

mas-based company will soon have contracts to build six streetcars for Portland (\$20 million), and seven streetcars for the city of Tucson, Ariz. (\$26 million.) Manufacture of these cars alone will result in more than 250 jobs, United Streetcar President Chandra Brown told the Labor Press.

But not 250 jobs overnight. Fabrication of the Portland street-

cars is about six to nine months out, and Tucson cars could take years before manufacturing begins.

"It can be a long process, but it will happen," Brown said. "Our plan is to become the leading U.S. maker of modern streetcars."

Oregon Congressman Peter DeFazio, who attended the unveiling along with colleagues Earl Blume-

nauer, David Wu, Kurt Schrader, and Gov. Ted Kulongoski, said at least 80 cities have shown interest in the streetcar system. DeFazio chairs the House Subcommittee on Transportation.

Foreign-made streetcars have been running in downtown Portland since 2001. The streetcar loop operates on the west side running from Legacy Good Samaritan Hospital and Medical Center in Northwest Portland through downtown and Portland State University to South Waterfront serving OHSU's Center for Health and Healing, the Portland Aerial Tram and high rise condo developments in the district.

The extension project will add 3.35 miles to the eastside of Portland, connecting to the Lloyd District, the Central Eastside and the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry.

The actual construction phase of the extension is estimated to cost about \$77 million out of a total project cost of \$147 million.

City officials estimate the project will generate 1,290 mostly family-wage jobs over the next two years.

The Portland Streetcar Loop Project has received \$75 million in Small Starts funds from the Federal Transit Administration, along with \$360,000 in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act monies. Twenty-million dollars in lottery-backed bond revenues are being used to buy the six new streetcars.

