

# Columbia County Breaks Ground on New Transit Center

By April Bamburg

It was rainy and gray, but less than dry weather did not stop supporters of the Columbia County Rider transit program from attending a groundbreaking ceremony that will allow the program to operate from a centralized location.

That centralized location, at the former Stimson Logging site at 1155 Deer Island Road in St. Helens, will include administration and dispatch offices, an area for vehicle maintenance and the first park and ride facility for Columbia County Rider that is their own.

On October 23, county and state elected officials, representatives of senior services and community members gathered at the site to memorialize a groundbreaking ceremony, and tour the new office space.

"The irony is not lost on me," said County Commissioner Tony Hyde, one of the event's featured speakers. "We're taking a spot that used to employ 50 to 60 people and turning it into a spot where we can transport people to another county to work. This is a trend we need

to turn around."

Commissioner Rita Bernhard noted in her comments that the county's transportation system started with a woman named Dorothy Churchill, working out of the back of her station wagon.



Col. Co. Commissioner Tony Hyde, State Senator Betsy Johnson, Senior Center Manager Cheryl Young, St. Helens resident Dan Garrison, ODOT Representative David Kim, Col. Co. Commissioners Earl Fisher and Rita Bernhard take shovels to the new Columbia County Rider Transit Facility location.

In June, the county purchased property with funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act and the Oregon Connect II Program. Both funding sources were obtained through the Oregon Department of Transportation.

Transit staff projects that the project will be completed by the end of 2010. Just one step in a larger project

"The connections made [for Columbia County, through Connect Oregon] are going to be transformative," said Senator Betsy Johnson. "This is a great opportunity for Columbia County to get out and get moving."

For local resident Sarah Brewington, the Columbia County Rider transit service has provided a bit of independence, according to her father, John. Sarah is wheelchair-bound. "Without it, people with problems like Sarah has would be cloistered in the community," John Brewington said.

For several months in 2008, the county conducted an analysis of the program, the routes and improvements that could be made to the transit system. As part of that analysis, officials held stakeholder meetings to gain input from community members, distributed surveys and considered the data.

The size, location, access to the highway and proximity were the factors that brought the site to the top of the list of potential sites for the county's new public transit hub.

Ultimately, the county would like to see a transit district formed, as this is the way to ensure that the program receives a consistent funding stream.

## New routes added in past few months

Vernonia residents may have noticed two new routes in the past few months—a flex route from St. Helens to Vernonia and a fixed route from Vernonia into Washington County. These routes began in July, and both have shown limited success, according to Henry Heimuller, Transit Director. "It always takes time to get the word out," he said.

There's also a need for a third trip to Washington County, one that would occur mid-day, Heimuller said. The service currently offers two trips, on commuter hours. "There is more need there for school kids, medical appointments," he said. "It's likely we'll see an increase in [need for that] service."

For information on trip schedules and transit services call (503) 366-0159 or go to [www.columbiacounty-rider.com](http://www.columbiacounty-rider.com).

"This article has been published at April's web site, <http://www.examiner.com/x-19696-Columbia-County-Buzz-Examiner>."

## PCC Schedules Classes In St. Helens

Portland Community College has scheduled two classes at St. Helens High School for winter term, January-March 2010. The two classes for this term are Math65 and Writing121. "We are hoping to get the word out in a big way and see how enrollment goes, then use that as a jumping off

point to start scheduling a slate of core classes," said PCC Community Relations Manager, Meryl Lipman.

Parents, students, teachers, and administrators are encouraged to spread the word about this new opportunity for college bound students. Registration begins November 20.



## West County FlexRoute

Our West County FlexRoute operates between Vernonia and St. Helens with stops in Scappoose. Routes have fixed stops and run on a circulatory type schedule. Extra time is built into the schedule to allow short deviations to assist anyone who may have difficulty getting to a FlexRoute bus stop.

**This Route only runs Tuesdays and Thursdays**

Leaving From	Depart AM	Depart PM
Vernonia City Hall & Senior Center	8:30AM & 11:00AM	2:00PM
Chinook Plaza, Scappoose	9:15AM & 11:45AM	2:45PM
OHSU/Fred Meyer	9:25AM & 11:55AM	2:55PM
Walmart, CCMH, Creek Side	9:45AM & 12:15PM	3:15PM
Columbia County Courthouse	9:50AM & 12:20PM	3:20PM
Old Town Parking	9:55AM & 12:25PM	3:25PM
17th & Columbia Blvd/ SHCFCU	10:00AM & 12:30PM	3:30PM
Columbia Commons/ DHS	10:05AM & 12:35PM	3:35PM
Ace Hardware/ Walgreens	10:07AM & 12:37PM	3:37PM
Rite Aid/Safeway	10:10AM & 12:40PM	3:40PM

**\$1.50 per boarding: General Public/Seniors/Students/Children**

**Also Available: Nehalem Valley Fixed Route Service  
Mon-Fri Vernonia to Washington County  
See website for schedule and fares.**

**Columbia County Rider**  
503-429-4304

**"Public Transportation for All"**  
[www.ColumbiaCountyRider.com](http://www.ColumbiaCountyRider.com)

## Twilight Fans Gather in St. Helens for New Movie

On Thursday November 19<sup>th</sup> Saint Helens, Oregon will be home to the *Twilight* saga again. A four-day movie release party, *Experience New Moon* kicks off with a VIP party at the Columbia Theater at 212 S. 1<sup>st</sup> Street in St. Helens.

Fans can spend the weekend with other Twilight fans in the original movie locations. Some of the more notable scenes from the movie--the Swan house, Bella and Edward's first date, the bookstore and dress shop in Port Angeles--were filmed in Saint Helens. A scene of Edward playing piano for Bella and a Forks High School office scene were also filmed in Saint Helens. The main street of Vernonia was downtown Forks, WA and also home to the Forks Police Station.

The four-day event benefits the Oregon Food Bank and includes screening parties, a walking tour of movie locations, a Volturi Ball, scavenger hunt, Twilight character look-a-like contest and more.

Nationally known Quilute storyteller, Anita Wheeler will share traditional Quilute stories during a special

session at the VIP Party Thursday night.

Most activities are free and family oriented. For a full list of events and more information, visit [www.experience-newmoon.com](http://www.experience-newmoon.com).

Twilight fans are thrilled about the event and are coming from as far away as Arizona and Texas. Reena Edame of Phoenix, Arizona says "I had planned to attend a big New Moon release event in another city but when I heard about the event in St. Helens, I couldn't make plans fast enough! I'm so excited to have a chance to be in St. Helens for New Moon and also get to do some location sight seeing."

A portion of the proceeds from the event will go to help The Oregon Food Bank and The Columbia Pacific Food Bank. Food donations will also be collected.

Experience Twilight is a family owned and operated business. Katherine and Steve Kidd and their daughter Jessica all play an active role in operations. They publish the Experience Twilight Tour Guide and ExperienceTwilight.com. Recently, they moved from Washington to Saint Helens, OR where they plan to open a *Twilight* merchandise store.

"Jessica and I are huge fans of *Twilight*. The movie made me fall in love with the Northwest all over again," says Katherine.

"We planned a mother daughter trip for Jessica's birthday and went to see all the sites where *Twilight* was filmed."

When researching the trip became time consuming and information was scattered, mother and daughter started blogging to share what they had found.

Then the blog turned into a paper print booklet that people could take with them. Now they sell a printed and bound book on amazon.com.

This Twilight fan duo has taken nine trips to various Twilight movie and book locations in the past year.

**BLUE HOUSE**  
**Cafe**

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and A World of Delights!

Tues. - Sat. 10-8, Sun. 10-4  
Closed Monday

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