

Fewer young adults driven to obtain license

As gasoline prices have skyrocketed, the number of young drivers on the road has decreased and public transportation has gained popularity

Emily Walters

Arts & Culture Editor

Obtaining a driver's license is a ritual in the United States, marking a time when teens are able to gain more independence from their parents – if they so choose, that is.

It may seem strange that the number of people who decide to get their license soon after turning the legal age has been dropping, but upon examining state law, the reason becomes obvious: the rules of the road for young drivers are much stricter than they used to be.

Combined with the rising cost of automobiles, insurance and gasoline, it is no wonder that the newest generation of potential drivers has largely chosen public transportation and being chauffeured by their parents over spending a few thousand dollars each year to sustain a car.

According to the Oregon Department of Transportation, the number of people driving in Oregon between the ages of 1 and 21 decreased from 256,736 in 1999 to 242,044 in 2006 – the last report year – which is a drop of over 14,000 young people.

Drivers of issuance are individu-

als who have had driving privileges or activity within the report year.

It is unsurprising that there has been such a large decline in the number of newer drivers because the license restrictions for those below 18 years of age have become rigidly stern, especially over the past several years.

The social aspect of driving, such as going out with friends, has been blocked by the law that drivers under 18 cannot have any passengers below the age of 20 in their car for the first six months, unless they are part of their immediate family. The second six months are not much better; only three passengers under 20 are allowed.

Another major restriction on teenage drivers' freedom is that,

for the entire first year, they cannot drive between the hours of midnight and 5 a.m. except in certain situations, usually pertaining to school and work.

In addition, the high financial costs of owning and maintaining a car – not to mention filling it up at the pump – are a significant issue for many high school and college students.

Clackamas student Aaron Ihde said that he spends only \$50 on transportation each month because he does not drive.

"It is a lot cheaper to ride the bus than to pay for gas and insurance and all that," Ihde said.

The Oregon Department of Transportation shows that the price to maintain, run and make pay-

ments on a new, small-sized car, is approximately \$8,400 annually, or about \$700 a month. Students typically do not work enough hours or at a high-enough-paying job to be able to afford to drive on a regular basis.

Oregon is one of the leading states in sustainability awareness; "going green" has recently become a huge trend in the Portland Metro area. A means of being more environmentally friendly – while also spending less money for the daily commute to work or school – is public transportation.

While using public transportation is less convenient than driving an automobile, the savings is remarkable.

For instance, the South Clackamas Transportation District,

a small bus service that runs a line from Molalla directly to college, costs only a dollar a way. Its Web site states that "if you compare the cost of gas, parking and auto maintenance to the riding a bus, you will probably find that riding the bus is much more economical."

"I just ride the bus because it is cheaper than riding in my car," said student Kent Hall, who said driving to school because of gas prices.

TriMet also has a large service that runs frequently through the Clackamas, Washington and Multnomah counties. An adult zones annual pass for TriMet only \$836 – contrast that with the cost of owning a car.

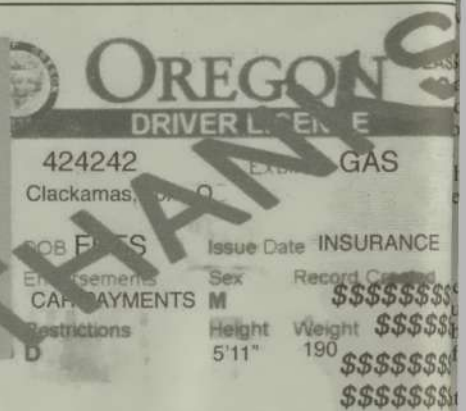


Photo Illustration by Robert Crawford Clackamas Print

Musical festival jazzes up the week at Clackamas

Several musical events bring much-needed harmony to the college on the last week of winter term before finals take place

Jess Sheppard

The Clackamas Print

March is the time for music at Clackamas, especially jazz.

The Chamber Choir performed at the Unistus Winter Concert, held at Milwaukie Lutheran Church, March 9.

March 11 marked the Third Annual Northwest Invitational High School Concert Band Contest. Oregon high school bands competed at the Niemeyer

Center for qualification in the Oregon School Activities Association State Band Championship.

The main musical event of the month is the Jazz Festival, which will take place over the span of three days.

The first component of the festival is the 25th Annual Vocal Jazz Festival. On March 13, talented high school jazz groups from all over the Northwest will meet in the Niemeyer Center from 9 a.m. to 11 p.m. Admission is \$5 per person.

"We're really happy to be celebrating the 25th Annual Vocal Jazz Festival," said Classical Choral Music Director and Conductor Lonnie Cline. "It's a quarter of a century of jazz."

The second and third day of the festival will cover the 37th Annual Instrumental Jazz Festival. Musicians in the second group range from middle to high school in age.

Geographically, they range even farther. Some participants are from Oregon and nearby Washington; others will travel from as far away as California,

Idaho and Canada to compete at Clackamas.

As with the vocal festival, admission is \$5.

The competition begins at 8 a.m. on both days and continues until 6 p.m. At 7 p.m. each day, Clackamas' jazz ensemble will perform, and the three winners of the day will engage in a playoff at 7:30 p.m. to decide who will claim the first trophy.

Afterward will be a performance by members of the Bridge Quartet, a band of local jazz musicians including Music Department Chair Tom Wake.

March 17 will see the Chamber Ensemble Concert in the Niemeyer Center. The concert will feature the Chamber Ensemble student group directed by Gary Nelson.

The performance will be held in room 100 of the Niemeyer Center at 7:30 p.m. Unlike the shows happening this month, no admission is charged, but a donation is requested.

Events

TODAY - TOMORROW: Student-Directed One-Act Plays, Comedy Improv and Stand-up Comedy performances take place in the McLoughlin Auditorium at noon, with an evening performance Thursday at 7:30 p.m. For more information, call ext. 2356.

TOMORROW: Top high school vocal jazz ensembles from around the Northwest gather at the 25th Annual Vocal Jazz Festival from 9 a.m. to 11 p.m. in the Niemeyer Center. Admission is \$5 per person. For more information, call the music department at ext. 2434.

FRIDAY - SATURDAY: Young musicians from middle, junior high and high schools in Oregon, Washington, California, Idaho and Canada will compete during the 37th Annual Instrumental Jazz Festival from 8 a.m. to 11 p.m. in the Niemeyer Center. Admission is \$5 per person. For more information, call the music department at ext. 2434.

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