

The Sandy Post

Editorial & Opinion

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New numbers face Tri-Met routers

Tri-Met should become more community-responsive in the broader sense, if they're really serious about reversing a five-month decline in ridership.

Tri-Met, you may recall, is the publicly-owned bus line designed to service three counties. That broad service area also provides a large tax base to fuel the buses.

Tri-Met played the numbers well in carving out a big support base, while favoring more populated, bus-conscious downtown Portland with frequent shuttle service for commuters and shoppers.

Now Tri-Met is singing the blues, however, with a persistent five-month decline in ridership. The bus line served 5.4 percent fewer daily riders this January than it served last January.

The numbers should come as no surprise, really. Portland's city population has declined a corresponding 4 percent, according to new census information. Where did they all go? To the Portland suburbs, many of them — bedroom communities given secondary service by Tri-Met.

Meanwhile, population in Washington Co. increased 55.5 percent since the last federal census, and population in Clackamas Co.

increased 43.9 percent. Multnomah County? With Portland's decline, Multnomah Co. saw only only .75 percent population growth in the last 10 years.

Faced with a new set of cold numbers, how does Tri-Met respond to recent declines in ridership? They say that more persons are driving cars to work, now that gasoline prices have stabilized. They're promoting increased use of passes to get current riders to ride more regularly. They're buying 515 more radios and public address systems.

Meanwhile, bedroom communities like Sandy see the Tri-Met bus only four times daily on weekdays — never weekends and seldom if inclement weather dictates some reduction in route service. The Hoodland area, however, sees the bus in beautiful downtown Welches even less — meaning never.

We don't mean to suggest that the Tri-Met system is less than a worthy investment. Its service, however, should be enjoyed more equitably by all communities that fund it. Anything less would be something like taxation without adequate representation. (VB)

SUHS flap at least opens 'closet'

Recent debate over alleged drug, alcohol and disciplinary problems at Sandy High School can't be all bad. It's rallied high school boosters, unified students who've found a lot of good things to say about their school and brought a perceived problem out of the closet.

We're not sure whether the problem is that huge, because most Sandy High students and staff are pretty fine people. As for the others — those few perceived by Hoodland Lutheran parents to have problems — well, they're pretty special people, too.

The question is whether they need help. Also, who will provide it?

The Post did not invent the concept of Sandy teenagers with drinking, drug and disciplinary problems in school. We merely reported such charges, as perceived by a group of parents and local churchmen.

If there's any substance to the charges, then the problem should be handled by the community. The school can't do it all, nor can the students. And we're not talking about relative goodness or badness of the entire high school. We're talking, perhaps, about just a few troubled teenagers who may need help. But wouldn't even one troubled youth make the effort worthwhile?

Many callers and writers have responded to the charges reported in the newspaper. Some called for soul-searching and action. Others said the charges couldn't be true, because most Sandy teenagers

don't have such difficulties. We're glad.

But confronting such problems with defensive public relations seems a waste of effort. Nowadays everyone tries to reshape things with public relations. Combat "bad press" with "good press." But what does this really change? Only attitudes of a docile public, easily persuaded.

The true test of a culture is how it responds to bad news and helpful information. Is Sandy problem-oriented or solution-oriented? Does it curse the darkness or light a candle?

A cultural test for a community-responsible newspaper also hinges on this litmus test. We'd like to think The Post isn't afraid to bring up a dark subject, if there might be light at the end of the tunnel and someone willing to share the lantern. So it wasn't for shock-value that we printed the high school charges of the Hoodland Lutherans. We thought someone who perceived a problem was willing to cope with it and involve others in the problem-solving process.

Some other parents have rallied to their side in a battle of words. The high school recently held a surprise locker inspection, and at least one administrator rode one school bus one day to evaluate the charges.

So much for talk and problem evaluation. Now's the time for problem-solving — that is, if everyone's willing to admit that at least one local teenager might have a problem or two. (VB)

Salem scene:

State business up relatively

by JACK ZIMMERMAN
Associated Oregon Industries

Reports indicating improvement in Oregon's business climate are being received with skepticism by this state's sponsor of a study among the 48 contiguous states.

The study, commissioned by the Conference of State Manufacturers' Associations (COSMA), indicates Oregon has risen from a ranking of 39th to 35th between 1979 and 1980. It was conducted by the Chicago-based Alexander Grant & Company accounting firm.

"Arriving at a time our economy is severely depressed and appears likely to remain that way for many months to come, the Grant study should be good news," Ivan Congleton, president of Associated Oregon Industries and former president of COSMA.

Foremost among conclusions of that study, he said, was a recognition of the fact Oregon had for too long concentrated on livability at the expense of livelihood.

"Our preoccupation with the environment during the early part of the Seventies

damaged our business climate to the point professional developers declared Oregon and 16 other states among the country's poorest prospects," he said.

"That reputation has changed," he said, "largely because of attitudes of Governors Straub and Atiyeh toward the business climate. Many leaders in state government are recognizing the importance of jobs and payrolls. In that sense, our business climate is improving."

Congleton said results of the 1979 Grant Study only confirmed the state's poor showing indicated by Fantus in 1975. This year's Grant study — although showing a statistical gain — is no cause for rejoicing.

"From the standpoint of manufacturers, Oregon's business climate is still poor by nearly all of the comparison factors," he declared.

Factors and Oregon's ranking this year and last, respectively, are:

Percentage change in state and local taxes per capita — 25th from 46th.

State spending growth versus state income growth — 36th from 7th.



Letters to the editor:

Handguns, SUHS stir readers

Face problem

I can't help but laugh at some of the responses to the problems at Sandy High School. The answer to the problems seems to be that parents don't care and parents are at fault.

Here we have parents that are trying to say they do care and something needs to be done. Yet everyone is putting them down.

Wake up, parents. I've talked to enough parents to know these people are not the only ones who feel unhappy with the school situation. It's time to fight for a better education for our children in every way.

Sandy High School is no better or worse than most other high schools — or grade schools, for that matter. It's a fact that our children are coming out of high schools across the nation without an education.

Read the Reader's Digest (Jan., 1981, page 88) "Help! Teacher Can't Teach!"

Peer pressure, it has been said, is not a problem. Who among us can say that peer pressure at any age is not a problem at times. Any of us that has lived through teen-

age years, has felt peer pressure, I'm sure. Whether we've been strong enough to resist it is another matter. Our friends do influence our ways; and although the right thing to do is change friends, it doesn't always seem that easy.

I congratulate the Sandy Post for their coverage and encourage more people to send in their opinion on this subject, whatever it may be.

Lois Anderson
Sandy

Ban handguns

Imagine a law that would permit repeatedly convicted felons to buy and deal in handguns. Hard to believe? Believe it or not, in less than a month the handgun lobby will once again try to destroy our already weak handgun control law.

Such legislation was introduced two years ago by Sen. McClure and Rep. Volkmer as the "Federal Firearms Law Reform Act of 1979." More aptly called the "Federal Felons Relief Act," it was co-sponsored by 168 congressmen and 56 senators. But it has become apparent that few represen-

tatives actually reviewed this bill before deciding to co-sponsor it. Rather, they collapsed under the pressure applied by the National Rifle Association and its checkbook politics.

This legislation clearly would undermine law enforcement in this nation. NRA charges of excessive enforcement of our handgun laws backfired when hearings revealed that among their so-called victims were convicted felons and two people who considered an assassination of a presidential candidate.

Do the American people really want to permit mail-order sales of handguns? Do we want handguns sold to any indicted felon and to numerous convicted felons?

Americans do have a choice in this matter. But we must act now if we are to stop this insane aid to criminals. Last year, both Senator Hatfield and Senator Packwood co-sponsored this legislation. Write to them. Ask them to read the bill and urge them not to support it again. Also, send a short letter to your congressman with your opposition to this pro-criminal legislation.

Remember: Popular

apathy is special interests' best ally.

Edmund J. Perret II
Chairman, National Coalition to Ban Handguns
Washington, D.C.

Check off dollar

Governor Atiyeh has stated that he will veto the dollar checkoff, if the legislature should act to extend the law presently allowing citizens to direct the State Department of Revenue to set aside one dollar of their income tax for the political party of their choice.

Such a decision neither adds nor subtracts from the amount of tax paid. Half of the proceeds go to the state political party and half to the county party.

It seems out of character for Gov. Atiyeh to threaten a veto in such a blatant partisan manner. His actions are generally more evenhanded and indicative of concern for the common good. He knows that our political parties suffer from a lamentable lack of participation by the mass of peo-

ple. A relative few labor to develop party programs to find and support candidates for public office.

The dollar checkoff encourages public participation in politics and provides modest funds for state and county parties. Dollar checkoff funds come without special obligation for later favors to the givers of those dollars. When "fat cat" contributors make large contributions, they expect a later return in legislative favors and, in effect, purchase the public office designed to serve all the people.

Though there are more Democrats than Republicans and the former could expect more returns from the dollar checkoff, it also is true that Republicans had twice the funds that the Democrats had to expend in the November elections. Governor Atiyeh's threat to veto the dollar checkoff extension is a move against wide political participation by citizens and obviously is designed to favor his political party.

W. Pete Sulzbach
Sandy

Legislator's report:

Waste storage questions loom here

by WAYNE FAUBUSH
State Representative

People around the country are becoming increasingly concerned about the safety of managing and disposing of hazardous wastes, both radioactive and chemical. Consequently, it is increasingly difficult to find places to store hazardous materials.

In the November election, Washington voters passed an initiative with a 70 percent favorable vote that said the state of Washington would not accept any other state's low-level radioactive waste unless that state had entered into a compact with Washington.

Washington has one of only three storage sites in the nation. The other two are in Nevada and South Carolina. To site a new radiation dump will take a minimum of five years. This creates a great deal of pressure for the states using the Washington dump site to come to some type of agreement.

Washington's Governor Spellman called a conference recently to deal with issues of low-level radioactive waste storage to help us out of



our dilemma.

The reason the people of Washington are so concerned over waste storage is that much of the radioactive waste shipped into their state has been in leaky containers, or vehicles carrying materials were unsafe. This led to passage of the initiative.

Oregon has a chemical dump site in Arlington, used by both Oregon and Washington. Oregon prohibits the storage of low-level radioactive waste, however. The trade-off in waste storage sites seems to be a basis of negotiation between the two

states, so that Oregon may continue to send its radioactive wastes to Washington.

There are a number of problems to be addressed before a regional compact between the northwestern states can be made.

The state of Washington has the advantage now, because that state has the only useable radioactive waste storage facility. California, knowing that, would very much like to use that site. However, California generates more radioactive waste than all the other Northwestern states combined. That waste would have to be shipped through Oregon, and many of us aren't interested in having California's radioactive waste transported through our state.

The federal government has said that a state can be excluded from use of a storage facility only by creation of a compact among states, specifically excluding a state or states. For the states of Idaho, Wyoming, Montana and Oregon to reach an agreement with Washington and also prohibit California from using the site, the states must reach a compact that sets forth standards for everyone to

follow and that Washington will be happy with.

The time frame is very narrow, because Washington law takes effect in July of 1981.

The result of Spellman's conference was a tentative agreement by the northwestern states to reach as simple a contractual arrangement as possible with the state of Washington. The essential elements would be that Washington, the host state for the radiation storage facility, would dictate rules by which they would accept other states' radiation materials.

Those rules would cover packaging, handling of the material for safe transport, the actual transportation and monitoring of that waste while it's in transit. It would also include costs of the Washington facility. Most likely, the waste will be required to be compacted as much as possible.

The question of excluding California will have to be decided finally by all the member states.

All the packaging requirements are ones I feel Oregon will be able to live with, and actually benefit Oregon in several ways.