

## TRANSIT, continued from Page A2

get downtown and back. Also, Cherry Lift is available for those confined to wheel chairs, and CARTS connects rural Marion and Polk Counties.

I'd like to help get the rest of the transit stations up and going in South Salem, West Salem and where the rides are needed. Let's improve the frequency of stops, get weekend and evening services back and bus passes for the youth at the most efficient price tag.

*A big issue for the transit district is Moving Forward and the possibility of returning evening and weekend service. How needed is this service?*

**CB:** The return of weekend and evening transit services is being looked forward to by many people. A person can get

to their swing shift job now, but the last pickup is done before he can get off work. Hospital workers, Chemeketa students and others who work at 24 hour businesses are stuck. Extended services will help these folks get "unstuck" and will allow more people to enjoy weekend and evening events by leaving the car at home.

Employers will benefit because employees can get to work on time. Folks can ride the bus to church service, visit family members or connect to an out of town provider for those weekend trips. Let's make more reasons for people to want to live in our area.

**RS:** Weekend and evening service will have a positive impact on our community in many ways. Being a capitol city with weekend transit service will increase tourism opportunities. It will create jobs in the community and allow some people to worship in their respective

churches. It can stimulate the economy and all our small business. It will provide our seniors and disabled neighbors better access to our community.

I need a power wheelchair to get around, and I am transit dependent. My wife was hospitalized in Salem Hospital from Friday to Tuesday and I could not visit her until Monday. I cannot imagine how weekend and evening service would be a detriment to our community. It was needed in 2009 when it was cancelled and it is needed more today.

Even if it passes this fall, because of funding delays and transit procedures, hiring and training, the new service can't start before the second quarter of 2016, at the earliest.

*Implementing Phase 2 of Moving Forward would require more revenue, with payroll or property taxes being mentioned as the means to acquire that revenue. Which option do you prefer and why?*

**RS:** According to an independent consultant firm, the cost of weekend and evening service would run between \$5 million and \$6 million and is currently being audited by staff. The current prevailing opinion is \$5.2 million. The property levy or payroll tax could provide ample funding. The tax liability is similar in cost and I would expect future increases to offset any inflation would be included.

The property levy is limited by statute for a period of five years. The possibility of service

interruption is real if the measure is not renewed. A payroll tax is permanent and will ensure reliable transit service. The fare increase of January 2015 was the first increase since 2009. I think this illustrates prudent spending of public funds, especially with the unexpected costs associated with the Courthouse Square remediation and the construction of the Keizer Transit Center. Funding for student passes is also included in the Moving Forward Phase 2 proposal.

**CB:** To implement the Moving Forward Phase 2 would require additional revenue. To pay for a service that reaches the whole Salem-Keizer area in order to serve everyone who may potentially use it, implies that the cost should be spread

out among as many as possible. I favor using the means of a property tax levy, which does just that. Let's get this project going, then we can approach the Legislature together for the long-term solutions.

*Aside from that extra service, what would you like to see the transit district working on?*

**CB:** I'd like to see the transit district become a more visible partner in disaster preparedness. I'd also like to see the transit district invest more in youth internships, training up a transit savvy next generation.

**RS:** My ultimate goal would be to place a bus shelter at every place the bus stops, 15-minute frequency at every stop, added seating for disabled and seniors and a Keizer shuttle.

## BENDIN': 'The couple that motivated me were both 70 years old.'

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He kept competing throughout a 20-year stint in the Marines and racked the career in the late 1980s. Powerlifters typically peak between 35 and 45, but there was only one guy Suetos couldn't beat in traveling the California circuit.

"There was a guy named Jim Lem who was 50 and squatting more than 700 pounds," Suetos said. "The one time I thought I was going to beat him, he didn't realize he still had one more lift left. He ended up tying me and, when that happens, the lifter who checks in at the lower weight wins."

After more than 15 years on the sidelines, Suetos decided to take part in a meet in Medford in 2004. He won the whole thing.

Since then, he's kept up his regimen and competed several more times.

"Two years ago, there was a meet and I set two American records and all the Oregon state record alongside a world record in the squat for my age group," he said. That was his first world record.

He rededicated himself to the sport after having a stint placed in his heart last June, which he said "scared me to death."

After attempting another world record in December he found out he was in the wrong federation with different requirements. That's when he decided to give it one last go a month ago.

"I would have sworn someone was helping me get those last six inches," he said.

He's now contemplating dropping a few pounds and going for a few more records, but he also knows his time in the sport is waning. His knees and back can't withstand the rigors the way they once did.

As much as the thrill of competition gets him going, Suetos has found that inspiring others to stay in shape, and exceed their self expectations, is just as thrilling.

"I like nothing more than to see somebody learn, get better and feel good about themselves. All you have to do is be consistent. You don't have to go out and squat 500 pounds. Just walk 30 minutes a day, the circulation will improve energy and mental clarity," he said.

He said most of his best friends have been made in the gym while coaching and mentoring.

"The couple that motivated me were both 70 years old and competing in Medford in 2004. The oldest guy at the meet was 77," Suetos said.

## Big muscles, soft heart

By ERIC A. HOWALD  
Of the Keizertimes

So, how does a champion powerlifter and former Marine end up with two master's degrees and a job as a teacher?

For Vince Suetos it all goes back to being stationed in Okinawa, Japan.

"We would go out to various state-run places where the disabled kids were and the conditions were pitiful. We would go to orphanages and build buildings for them or provide activities for them," Suetos said.

Suetos and his wife, who was also a Marine, informally "adopted" one young girl who touched their hearts.

"When we went to her facility or she came to the base, we were the ones making sure she was involved," he said.

After retiring from the military, Suetos earned a master's degree in vocational rehabilitation and began working with developmentally disabled adults making the transition to independent living or new accom-

modations. Eventually, he ended up working with students in the Springfield School District.

He earned another master's in special education shortly thereafter and ended up working in the developmental learning center at McNary for five years. He's been back and forth at the school for the past several years, only interrupted by a pair of stints working as an independent contractor in Iraq and Afghanistan.

"I've been all over and seen how the developmentally disabled are treated in other parts of the world and it's tragic," Suetos said. "There are so many kids and adults with these types of conditions, and others think they aren't aware. But they know things and they have potential. If you don't give them an opportunity, they're going to lose that chance. I want them to have those opportunities. Sometimes you have to search and look and ask and investigate, but if you get the lights on high beam it really gets you going."

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