

Family

City takes first step toward new cable/internet/phone choices

CONTRIBUTED STORY FOR THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

• Will provide Portlanders with first ever choices for local phone, cable and high speed Internet service

On Wednesday, July 19th the Portland City Council considered granting temporary permits for as many as three new companies (RCN, Western Integrated Networks and Open Access Broadband) seeking permission to build and extend new, state-of-the-art wired communications networks to Portland residents. These networks represent the first new "wired" choices to be built to Portland residence since the telephone system was built at the turn of the last century, and the cable system was extended to Portland homes in the early 1980's. Each of the companies plans to "overbuild" the existing telephone and cable networks, and deliver an array of advanced, competitive "broadband" services to City residents, including local and long distance phone services (RCN), advanced cable television, video, and high-speed Internet services (all of the companies).

"The prospect of having real competition at last in residential phone and cable markets is exciting. The opportunity to have real choice in high speed Internet services is a thrill, particularly after Portland's long fight for choice and 'open access.' Competition should lead to better service and prices for phone and cable services in Portland," City Commissioner Erik Sten said.

The cost to "overbuild" a new wireline communications network to each home in the Portland area is estimated to be in the range of half a billion dollars. Each of the "overbuilders" seeking permits from the City plan to start construction this year. The citizen Mt. Hood Cable Regulatory Commission (MHCRC) recommended that the Portland City Council approve franchises for two (RCN and Western Integrated Networks) of the companies. Open Access Broadband's permit is outside the scope of the MHCRC's authority and will go directly to the City Council.

The companies have made it clear that their interest in Portland is not just fortuitous. The City 'went to market' last year to determine the level of market interest in a competitive residential communications network here. Partly due to escalating demand for 'broadband' Internet access, and in response to AT&T's refusal to roll out its high speed Internet service because of its dispute with the city over the open access issue, Portland sought interest in new telecommunications providers by issuing a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) in the fall of 1999. Eleven companies formally responded to the request.

CarSharing Portland expands north into Irvington

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In late July, CarSharing Portland will place Saturn sedan at the Nature's shopping center at 15th Avenue and Fremont Street. The car will be stationed near the Washworld parking lot on NE 14th, and will provide a second CarSharing alternative for neighborhood residents. There has been a car location at NE 10th Avenue and Schuyler Street since February of 1999.

"Our membership is increasing all over the city, and Irving is no exception," says CarSharing Portland president David Brook. "This new Fremont location will be useful for the many people in the neighborhood who don't need to drive every day and who want a convenient and economical alternative to car ownership."

Ride Tri-Met to Washington County Fair & get a free ride home

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Ride Tri-Met to the Washington County Fair & Rodeo and get a free ride home.

It's easy to reach the August 1-6 event by MAX light rail train, which runs every 10-15 minutes daily. Just ride it to the Fair Complex/Hillsboro Airport Station.

Bus line 48-Cornell also serves the Washington County Fairgrounds from, Hillsboro, Tanasbourne Town Center and Willow Creek Transit Center. Weekday service is every 30 minutes hourly on weekends.

In order to get a free ride home tickets, just take your Tri-Met receipt to Guest Information Services near the Amphitheater. The offer is limited to one tickets per customer per day, while quantities last.

For trip-planning information try Tri-Met's website at www.tri-met.org or call (503) 238-RIDE between 7:30 AM and 5:30 PM weekdays, TTY (503) 239-5811.

Looking for a home



Willie and Dominique Services to Children and Families are looking for an adoptive family for these two children. If you are interested in adopting Willie and Dominique or any other child for the State Office for Services to Children & Families. Please call 503/731-3147, ext. 2247.

Amusement rides must meet safety standards

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So you're at the county fair, where your twelve-year-old has just eaten a meal of popcorn, cotton candy and orange soda and now really wants to ride a huge machine that looks like a cross between a medieval catapult, a construction crane and a blender. You know it's a recipe for motion sickness, but aside from that, how do you know if the thing is actually safe?

Oregon law requires an annual inspection and permit process before amusement rides in this state can be operated at amusement parks, county fairs and the state fair, and other summer festivals and similar events. Permits are issued by the state Building Codes Division, which also keeps permit records and inspection reports. BCD issues the permits when the ride operator provides proof of insurance and proof of inspection by an amusement ride inspector, who is typically an independent contractor authorized by the insurer.

The inspection process for these rides is complicated, because the inspector must have a broad understanding of many different codes and areas of technical expertise. Computer, electrical, mechanical, boiler, plumbing and even medical knowledge may be required in order to evaluate a ride's condition and ability to operate safely. In addition,

the inspector must consider the specific design stress limitations of the ride and the physical stress limitations of the riders.

Ride owners must maintain detailed maintenance records for their rides, for review by the inspector. This allows inspectors to examine any major repairs or component failures that may have occurred between inspections to verify that any work done meets code provisions. The inspector then issues a report detailing any needed repairs. The report specifies whether the repairs must be completed before the ride can be operated or if they can wait until the ride is out of service during the winter season. If a ride is found to be hazardous or unsafe, the inspector can issue a stop order requiring corrections and a re-inspection before the ride is put back into service.

How can the public tell if a ride has been properly inspected? BCD won't issue an operating permit until the inspection report for that ride confirms that no defects considered dangerous to health or safety exist. The ride operator must then attach the permit to the ride in a location accessible and clearly visible to anyone wishing to see it. Permits must list the permit number, expiration date, name of ride, and model/serial number of the ride. In addition, permit colors change each year. For the 2000-2001 ride season, the permits are blue and gold.

The bottom line: Before boarding any amusement ride or allowing children to do so, check to see that the ride has a current permit posted. Anyone who sees a ride operating without a proper

permit or has questions or complaints about a ride should call the Oregon Building Codes Division at 503-378-4133. Oh, and maybe have the kids skip the orange soda!

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