

Transit Riders Set New Bar for Tri-Met

For the first time in its history, Tri-Met's weekday ridership has surpassed the 300,000 mark.

The transit use record was reached in October through the increased use of 14 primary bus routes, many in north and northeast Portland, along with growing MAX light rail ridership.

Overall, Tri-Met's MAX and buses averaged 304,000 rides each weekday, a 7.1 percent jump from last October. Buses carried 219,800 riders, while light rail rides skyrocketed 18.4 percent to 84,200 weekday rides.

During the past three years, Tri-Met has boosted the number of primary lines from 4 to 14 that offer 15-minute service, seven days a week, which has led to significant growth in weekday and weekend ridership. These lines now carry 43 percent of all weekday and 53 percent of weekend bus rides.

Most new amenities such as shelters, customer information, low-floor buses and

traffic-signal priority devices were added to these 14 lines to have the greatest impact on the greatest number of riders.

"The tremendous growth on these lines tells us that when we focus our resources to provide more service and improve amenities, we attract new riders to transit," said Fred Hansen, Tri-Met general manager.

The bus lines are: 4-Fessenden, 5-Interstate Avenue, 6-Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., 8-N.E. 15th Avenue, 8-Jackson Park, 9-Powell, 12-Barbur Blvd., 12-Sandy Blvd., 14-Hawthorne, 15-Belmont, 15-N.W. 23rd Avenue, 33-McLoughlin, 54-Beaverton-Hillsdale Hwy., and 72-Killingsworth/82nd Avenue.

Additionally, Tri-Met's MAX Blue Line and Airport MAX Red Line offer at least 15 minute service every day. MAX carries 28 percent of Tri-Met's overall ridership.

For more information or trip planning assistance, see www.tri-met.org or call 503-238-RIDE weekdays between 7:30 a.m. and 5:30 p.m.

Art Students Evoke Emotions From 9-11

Symbols of the American flag woven onto images of delicate butterflies. Images of hands dancing rather than pointing at others. Christian and ancient Egyptian symbols combined with the protection of a sword and shield. These are some of the powerful designs created by students from The Art Institute of Portland who were asked to design a post-Sept. 11 postage stamp for a class.

When Shere Coleman presented the final project guidelines to her Principles of Visual Communications class at The Art Institute of Portland, she had little idea of the depth with which the students would tackle the assignment. And she is absolutely delighted with the results.

Students in three sections of the class were instructed to design a postage stamp around the idea of community, unity,



strength, and protection, given the nation's current political situation. The students had to design their projects so they were appealing for large-scale presentation, and had the capacity to be reduced to the size of a postage stamp.

They also were asked to research the rich cultural mix of



With emotions from the Sept. 11 attacks, students at the Art Institute of Portland design postage stamps around the idea of community, unity, strength and protection.

America, and to follow cultural traditions found in this country that were formed well before the country's actual inception.

The projects proved dramatically different from one another. One postage stamp resembled a quilt with many symbols from various cultures, such as images of log houses

that are common in African American quilts and flowers that are common in Hawaiian quilts. Another student mixed Japanese symbols of the universe with the Native American brown bear symbol of protection.

When brainstorming symbols of unity and strength, the first images student Solomon Woras thought of were the sun and the moon. His postage stamp design includes a dark night sky with the moon illuminating large trees and buildings.

"The buildings symbolize the comfort and the strength they provide us," Woras says. "The tree symbolizes the life it provides, the roots being the underworld, the middle of the trunk being earth, and the branches being the upper world and heaven...it encompasses our whole existence."

Workers Qualify for Extended Benefits

About 15,000 Oregonians and 41,000 people in Washington are eligible for up to 13 weeks of additional unemployment benefits.

Both states qualified for the Labor Department money because the jobless rate for September, October and November hovered over 6.5 percent.

Oregon's November jobless figure was 7.4 percent, the worst in the country.

The last time laid-off workers in Oregon collected extended unemployment benefits was February 1994, about the same time the state was emerging from

its last recession.

The extended credits allow laid-off workers who still have not found a job after 26 weeks to receive an additional 13 weeks of benefits. Payments will equal the weekly benefit amount of an individual's regular claim.

It's been eight years since Washington qualified for the extended benefits.

The state Employment Security Department mailed out applications Dec. 19 to those who are eligible.

People could begin receiving the extended benefits in both states as soon as Jan. 7.

Ockley Green Places Third at Tournament



The robotics team from north Portland's Ockley Green Middle School gathers behind the team banner at the state robotics tournament at Wilson High School.

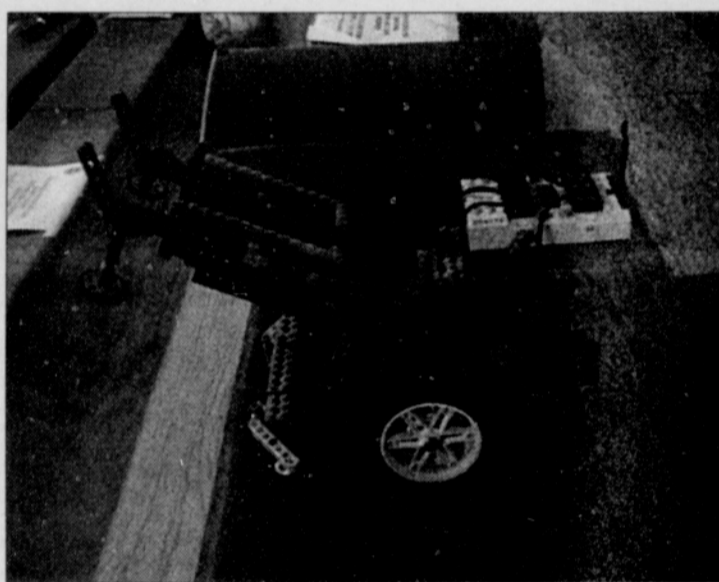
North Portland's Ockley Green Middle School placed third among 63 teams from around the state in the Oregon Robotics Tournament held at Wilson High School on Dec. 1.

The team, Robots of Ockley Green or ROOG, is made up of 12 students and seven advi-

sors, five of whom are from community businesses.

The students participate in the MESA program, which encourages and supports under-represented students in pursuing careers in mathematics, engineering and science.

The ROOG students spent



A robot built by students at Ockley Green moves across the floor in competition with other schools.

every Saturday since September at Portland State University learning how to build a robot, how to program it and then applying that knowledge to real-life situations.

They also researched related topics, presenting their findings and their robot to a panel of 20

judges.

The project also helped them learn other key skills such as teamwork, planning and preparation.

Last year, ROOG won a statewide balsawood glider competition, traveling to a national competition in Mesa, Ariz.

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