

# Soleful Family



Soleful Strutters, Soleful Brothers and Soleful Masters bask in the limelight on the beach in Seaside after scoring huge accomplishments in the Portland to Coast Walk Relay.

## Relay teams shine at Portland to Coast

Soleful Strutters, Soleful Brothers and Soleful Masters were all part of a "Soleful Family" scoring big victories in the Portland to Coast Walk Relay.

Congratulations to the Soleful Brothers who scored first place in the Men's Walking division; the Soleful Masters who took first place in the Men's Master Walking division;

and the Soleful Strutters who took fifth place in the Women's Walking division.

The Portland to Coast is the largest walk relay in the world. Over 400 teams, comprised of walkers in groups of 8 to 12 members, participated in the 132 miles course from

Oaks Park in Portland to Seaside on the Oregon Coast.

The two day relay was held Aug. 23-24. The event, which takes place along with the accompanying Hood to the Coast relay, raises donations for the American Cancer Society.

## TriMet's Expensive "Dead Air" Decision

TriMet's expensive hi-tech purchases have been repeatedly called into question. The effects of such unwise decisions ripple throughout the entire system, impacting safety, health, service and finances.

Take the case of TriMet's new \$35 million radio dispatch system that was rolled out in 2012. Months later, the system remains plagued with problems. Consequently, dispatchers must simultaneously monitor both the old and the new systems. Here is a look at the growing number of problems this pricey new system has caused . . .

**RISKS TO SAFETY:** Like air traffic controllers, TriMet dispatchers are responsible for the moment-to-moment safety of thousands of passengers, as well as fellow workers and the public. This job is now incredibly challenging in the face of:

- Emergency calls to dispatch that not only automatically "time out" after two minutes – even in the middle of an emergency – but also force operators to wait another two minutes before they can reconnect
- "Dead zones" throughout the system where none of the new radios work at all and instances where the entire system has gone dead for more than 45 minutes.
- Frequent failure of GPS tracking devices such that they misidentify where a bus is actually located
- An unworkable emergency phone procedure that delays police response times.

**COMPROMISES TO PASSENGERS SAFETY AND SERVICE:** Forced to rely on a flawed communications system and unable to respond to problems and emergencies, dispatchers operate in non-stop crisis mode. Passengers are put in dangerous situations, missing connections and experiencing late arrivals. Service is worsening. TriMet fares are already higher than fares in other West Coast cities. System expansion, \$30 million vending machines and \$35 million dispatching systems cut deep into TriMet's operations budget. To get more money, TriMet cuts service and raises fares—both of which lower ridership and revenue.

**THREATS TO WORKERS' HEALTH:** As a consequence of the chronic dispatch problems, workplace stress is taking an increased physical toll on dispatchers. They are experiencing more repetitive injuries and sick days. This results in staffing shortages, skipped breaks, increased overtime and cancelled vacations. That in turn, leads to even more stress and higher rates of illness.

Like many of TriMet's multi-million dollar purchases, management never consulted the dispatchers before buying this problem-plagued dispatch system. Instead, management ignored these workers' decades of experience. Now, it is the dispatchers, operators, passengers and taxpayers who are forced to pay the price of another flawed purchase.

Sincerely, Your Transit Workers

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 LOOK FOR US ON FACEBOOK

LET YOUR VOICE COUNT!

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[TRANSITVOICE.ORG](http://TRANSITVOICE.ORG)