

Transit changes include CCRider users

Public transportation leaders in Clatsop, Tillamook, Lincoln, Columbia, and Benton counties have teamed up to improve transit connections between their counties. Beginning in January, the group will implement service changes to help make travel by transit more convenient.

The 'Coast to Valley Express', which is jointly operated by Lincoln County Transit and Benton County Rural Transit, will now add weekend service and provide a stop at the Amtrak station in Albany. Passengers riding the Coast to Valley Express route were previously asked to change buses at Ellmaker State Park near the Benton/Lincoln county line, in order to transfer from one transit service to another. However, these two transit agencies are now collaborating to provide direct service all the way from the Amtrak station in Albany to Newport on the coast, without the need for a transfer. "This has been our goal for a long time," notes Cynda Bruce, ex-

ecutive director for Lincoln County Transit. "Direct service should help make it easier for people to get between the coast and inland communities without having to rely on a car."

In the northern part of the five-county project area, Columbia County Rider (CC Rider) and Sunset Empire Transportation District (SETD) are also improving their connecting service. Both transit providers are adding weekend service along US 30 that will allow coordinated transfers at Westport.

CC Rider will begin offering Sunday service from Westport to Portland in addition to the current Saturday service from St. Helens to Portland along US Highway 30. The Westport connection will allow riders to transfer from SETD to the CCRider system, which will take riders along US Hwy 30 to downtown Portland.

Sunset Empire Transportation District is also working with Tillamook County Transportation District to add weekend

service along US 101 from Astoria, with coordinated connections in Cannon Beach and Manzanita. The new weekend US 101 service will coordinate with the new weekend US 30 service to provide full connectivity between Columbia, Clatsop and Tillamook Counties 7-days-a-week.

Other adjustments to connections between Benton, Lincoln, Tillamook, Clatsop and Columbia counties are also in progress, with more to follow as transit agencies continue to collaborate. All buses have bike racks for the convenience of those who want to "bike and ride".

The initial service changes are part of a larger project funded by a \$3.5 million US Department of Energy grant, which is aimed at increasing transit use by commuters and visitors in rural northwestern Oregon. Successful strategies piloted by the five-county transit alliance will serve as a national model for other transit providers across the country.

Senior Center News

The Vernonia Senior Center is rarely closed because of winter weather, but it can sometimes happen. If you are not certain whether we're open, you can check by calling 503-429-3912.

Planning is underway for Valentine's Day fun. Check the next Senior Center News column for more information.

It's also time to renew your annual membership or to join for the first time. Vernonia area residents, age 50 and over, are eligible, and the \$15.00 membership fee provides many important services for our community.

The Five Area Lunch is back on schedule, the last Monday of each month. January's get-together will be on the 30th, in Scappoose.

Now that the holidays are over, the center's activities have resumed their regular schedule:

- Lunch is served Monday through Friday at noon. A \$4.00 donation is suggested for those 60 and older, and \$5.00 for those under 60. Lunch to go is \$5.00; call ahead and place your order.

- Breakfast for all ages on Fridays from 7:30 to 9:00 a.m., at \$3.50 per person. Maple bars are also made fresh daily for \$1.00 each! If you want maple bars for a gathering of any kind, call 503-429-3912 a day or two ahead and place your order.

- Free blood pressure checks, courtesy of Columbia County Public Health, on the 4th Wednesday of each month from 11 a.m. to noon.

- Foot care is available on the second and fourth Fridays of each month. Call Marilyn Albro, R.N., at 503-429-0406 for an appointment. Foot care is \$15.00.

- Quilters and other needle workers gather on Tuesdays, any time from 10:30 to closing.

- The Golden Oldies entertain on Wednesdays (weather permitting) from before lunch until closing.

One final note: All coats are on sale for half price at the center's Thrift Shop! While you're there, don't forget to check out other great bargains on a wide variety of additional merchandise.

Vernonia Senior Citizens Center: 446 Bridge Street
Hours: Monday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
Thrift Shop Hours: 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
Phone: 503-429-3912

Columbia County Fair theme contest

The Columbia County Fair Board has announced a public contest to determine the theme for the 2012 Columbia County Fair and Rodeo (July 18 -22). This will be the 97th annual Columbia County Fair. The contest is open to all residents of the county.

Even though the Columbia County Fair has suffered some significant financial setbacks, this past year, due to the poor economy, it is an extremely popular annual event and one that the Fair Board would like to continue. The Board was forced to lay off the fair administrator, September 1st of last year, causing widespread spe-

culation about the fair's future.

Columbia County Fair Board Chair Deloris Bellingham said that, "regardless of these tough economic times, this important part of our rural heritage and culture will live on. The Columbia County Fair and Rodeo is crucial to the development of the youth in our county, and the fairgrounds are an important local institution for year around use, we will do everything in our power, within our limited budget, to keep it alive and well". "[We are] reaching out to the community in choosing this year's fair theme, to spread the message that the fair and rodeo needs everyone's help in mak-

ing the Columbia County Fair and Rodeo a continued success", Bellingham concluded.

The Grand Prize for the winner of the theme contest is a VIP prize package including one unlimited family season pass to the Columbia County Fair & Rodeo, a free season parking pass, and other prizes.

To contact the Fair Board, call 503-397-4231 and leave a message. Theme entries may be mailed to Columbia County Fair & Rodeo, P.O. Box 74, St. Helens, OR 97051. For Event Complex reservations call 503-397-2353.

Woodland Management course being offered by OSU Extension

The OSU Extension Service will be offering "Woodland Management 101", a six-session shortcourse for individuals who own forested property. The course will be held Wednesday evenings, February 1 - 29 in St. Helens. The class provides a basic introduction to planning, growing, and caring for a small woodland. Tree and

shrub identification, planting and maintenance, fish and wildlife, tax and business basics, harvesting and marketing and other topics will be covered.

Registration deadline is January 25 and space is limited. For more information, contact the OSU Extension Service, 503-397-3462.

VALLEY VETERINARY CLINIC



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Free presentation on Rock Creek

A free presentation entitled "Rock Creek - Limiting Factors Analysis" will be held Thursday, January 26, at 7:00 p.m. at the Vernonia Grange Hall, 375 North St.

Steve Trask of Biosurveys LLC will present information that identifies habitat conditions and dominant processes that limit the production of Coho salmon smolts in Rock

Creek. There will also be suggestions on how to enhance habitats, improve salmonid production and restore system functions.



PUB & BAR

**GOOD FOOD
GOOD FRIENDS
GOOD TIMES**

831 Bridge St.
Vernonia, OR
503-429-0214