



June 24, 2011

Legislature Ends Student Bus Pass Program

The Cherriots student bus pass program will come to an abrupt end June 30th, a victim of state budget cuts.

The Cherriots bus pass program was funded by the Business Energy Tax Credit (BETC) program through the Oregon Department of Energy. It allowed thousands of middle and high school students to ride Cherriots to get to and from school every day.

Legislators facing a huge statewide budget shortfall decided this week they could no longer direct state funds to the BETC for school transportation projects. Based on the existing statute, Salem-Keizer Transit thought the program would continue for at least another year, beginning this September and running through June 2012. The action of HB 3672 rescinded that provision.

"We are sorry that this program is coming to an end. It has been a real benefit to our students," said Jerry Thompson, Salem-Keizer Transit Board President. At a time when the school district has already had to make difficult sacrifices, the loss of the bus pass adds one more barrier to quality education for many students. Families with fewer resources will be hit the hardest.

Cherriots service will continue to operate. Service to schools will be unchanged. At this time, it is too early to predict the net effect on our service.