

Contact:**October 7, 2020****Patricia Feeny, Director of Communication****503-361-7515**Patricia.feeny@cherriots.org**Cherriots Becomes Oregon's Cleanest Public Transit Fleet***Salem Area Mass Transit District is now running buses on renewable natural gas*

Cherriots is now the state's cleanest public transit fleet now that it is using renewable natural gas (RNG).

Cherriots, also known as Salem Area Mass Transit District (SAMTD), contracted with the fuel provider U.S. Gain and has been using RNG in its fleet since spring. More than half of the district's buses now operate on RNG, which reduces harmful smog forming tailpipe emissions by over 90 percent and greenhouse gas emissions by more than 40 percent.

"Clean public transit is key as we move toward a healthier, more sustainable, and more equitable Oregon. Transportation is the single largest source of greenhouse gas emissions in Oregon, as well as other harmful pollutants that put vulnerable communities at risk. We need to rapidly decarbonize the transportation sector, including medium and heavy-duty vehicles like trucks and buses. I commend Cherriots for leading the way with cleaner, renewable natural gas buses," said Oregon Governor Kate Brown.

Switching to RNG is also giving SAMTD a significant financial benefit. "Thanks to the climate benefits of RNG, we're providing energy at a negative cost to Cherriots because of the revenue generated by Oregon's Renewable Fuel Standard markets," said Marten Mills, U.S. Gain Business Development Manager.

"This is a perfect example of the creative thinking and problem solving we need in our community," said Salem Mayor Chuck Bennett. "By eliminating costly diesel purchases and turning fuel consumption into revenue, we are lowering our transit costs and driving equity through one of our most important civic services."

The cost savings from using RNG will allow Cherriots to expand its bus service and will help to maintain affordable fare prices. "As a member of the Cherriots Board, one of my priorities is sustainability and this move to RNG allows us to double down on our commitment to be environmental stewards," said Board President Ian Davidson. "This is

a win-win for our community because our air will be cleaner and our impact to the global climate system is reduced even further.”

“Cherriots is a longtime customer and community partner of NW Natural’s. We congratulate them, and we’re pleased to share in their strategy of using RNG to decarbonize our services, and create a better product for our customers and communities,” said Kathryn Williams, NW Natural Vice President of Public Affairs and Sustainability.

According to NW Natural, RNG is a zero-carbon resource produced from local, organic materials like food, agricultural and forestry waste, wastewater, or landfills. As these materials decompose, they produce methane. That methane can be captured, conditioned to pipeline quality and delivered in the existing pipeline system to homes and businesses where it can be used in existing natural gas appliances, equipment, and vehicles. This process closes the loop on waste and provides a renewable energy option for the natural gas system, in the same way that wind and solar are used to generate renewable electricity.

Cherriots has 34 of its 64 buses running on RNG. The return-to-base fleet obtains RNG through U.S. Gain by transporting the gas from a landfill to the fleet through traditional natural gas infrastructure. U.S. Gain is a renewable fuel provider that specializes in acquiring low or negative cost RNG for medium and heavy-duty fleets throughout the United States.

About Cherriots

Formed in 1979 as a municipal corporation, Cherriots provides fixed route, paratransit, regional, on-demand, and rideshare services. Cherriots buses provide transportation services to 19 towns and cities throughout Marion and Polk counties with connections to other counties and cities, including Wilsonville.

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