



May 1, 2009

Salem-Keizer Students to Ride Cherriots Free in 2009-2010 School Year

In partnership with Salem-Keizer School District, Cherriots has conducted a pilot program during the spring session offering students at six schools free bus passes. This enabled students to use Cherriots for their transportation needs, such as before and after school programs, sports or enrichment, or jobs. The bus pass program is designed to complement school bus service, not replace it. By encouraging students to use the bus, the partners hope to reduce car trips around schools and through neighborhoods.

In the first few weeks of the pilot, Cherriots saw an average student ridership of approximately 10,000 per week, greatly exceeding expectations. The pilot was used to determine the feasibility of offering the program district-wide. Thanks to an enthusiastic response from schools and students, the school district has decided to make the bus pass available to all middle and high school students (with the exception of Crossler and Walker students) next fall. Students will need to bring a signed permission slip to school to receive their passes.

Funding for the student bus pass program comes from the Business Energy Tax Credit (BETC) administered by the Oregon Department of Energy. By offering the pass to Salem-Keizer students, Salem-Keizer Schools will save approximately \$250,000 formerly spent on student bus passes.