



May 27, 2011

Cherriots and Union Reach Labor Agreement

After more than sixteen months of negotiations, Salem-Keizer Transit and the Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) Local 757 have completed labor negotiations with a signed three and a half year contract retroactive to January 1, 2010.

Salem-Keizer Transit and the union worked together to agree upon a contract that is fiscally responsible and provides fair compensation. Jonathan Hunt, President of ATU Local 757, gave positive feedback on the negotiation process, saying it "illustrates that when you work together, rather than against one another, compromise can be achieved."

The new contract includes a 2% wage adjustment in July of 2011, in January of 2012 and again in January of 2013. Union members have not received a wage adjustment since January of 2009. The previous contract expired December 31, 2009.

The new agreement covers 122 represented employees including: transit operators, journey mechanics, service technicians, service workers, and facilities maintenance workers.

The ATU Local 757 has been around for more than 94 years. Throughout this time health insurance has remained one of its top priorities. With the new contract, employee health care benefits are protected. Salem-Keizer Transit will save \$200,000 a year through a change to a higher deductible health care plan through a new insurance provider. Administrative staff will also switch to the new provider in July 2011. The contract includes incentives to reduce dependent coverage and a plan to discuss the pension benefit package.

Salem-Keizer Transit and the ATU successfully avoided arbitration which can be long, costly and detrimental to ongoing working relationships. By law, transit union members in the State of Oregon are not permitted to strike. A Legislative change in 2007 reclassified transit employees as subject to binding arbitration.

Throughout the negotiations, Salem-Keizer Transit staff's priorities were fair compensation for valued employees as well as a balanced budget. With the signed

contract, Salem-Keizer Transit is able to stay within its operating budget and service will not be affected.

Said Jerry Thompson, President of Salem-Keizer Transit Board of Directors, "Both parties are pleased with the results of the negotiations and are looking forward to focusing on what we do best - connecting people with places."