November 5, 2009

Cherriots Donates Bus to Police Academy

On October 22, 2009 a Cherriots bus was retired after 23 years of service. The bus has traveled almost a million miles since 1986 and is now ready for a new career in public service. Its new job: a part of Scenario Village at the Oregon Department of Public Safety Standards and Training (DPSST).

The bus was donated to DPSST, more commonly known as the Police Academy, to be used in training law enforcement and emergency response personnel on how to respond to various situations that could occur on or around a transit bus. The over 200 acre DPSST facility includes a business village with an apartment, video store, bar, jail, pawn shop, bank, and many other 'storefront operations' that are furnished and equipped with items donated from local businesses and agencies. The facility also has a small residential area, rail cars, storage units, and a training track for driving scenarios.

The bus will be used in a variety of training scenarios, such as responding to a crime or a medical emergency on the bus. Having a real transit bus gives the students a way to train for the various scenarios they may encounter in real life. Lieutenant Vince Wan, the Tactical Safety Coordinator for DPSST stated, "Real life scenario training is critical to the success and safety of our law enforcement personnel. This type of training allows the student to encounter real life situations, make decisions, and then review how they handled the situation with their trainer, all without the actual threat of harm to them or the people they are trying to help."

DPSST has school buses that have been donated over the last couple of years, but this is the first transit bus. A transit bus has different seating, two doors, and the overall configuration of controls is quite different than those in a school bus. These details can make a big difference when decisions are critical and have to be made very quickly. In the words of Lieutenant Wan, "If you have been there before, it sure makes it better when you encounter a similar situation in the line of duty."