

Hybrid-electric bus line receives early funding of \$14.8 Million

by Bend_Weekly_News_Sources

Eugene, Ore. — Eugene will receive \$14.8 million in funding one-year ahead of schedule for the Emerald Express expansion, Oregon Senators Gordon Smith and Ron Wyden noted today. The Senators are top proponents for funding the project, which will create a new hybrid-electric bus line between Eugene and Springfield.

“The new line will boost job opportunities and bring communities closer together,” Senator Smith said. “Project planners are smartly buying hybrid-electric busses, showing their commitment to the environment and avoiding high fuel costs. When complete, local residents will have a very enjoyable way to travel about town.”

“A great transit system such as Bus Rapid Transit will promote smart growth, create jobs and keep our air clean by moving more people with fewer cars on the road,” Wyden said. “Just as Light Rail has been an economic engine for the Portland area, Bus Rapid Transit holds the same potential for Eugene and Springfield. Downtown Eugene has long been an economic catalyst — the new station in Springfield connected by rapid transit to downtown Eugene will help spur the economic revitalization of downtown Springfield.”

The Pioneer Parkway Emerald EmX BRT project is a proposed 7.8-mile, \$37 million extension of the Franklin Corridor BRT, which runs between Eugene and Springfield. The project will branch out from Springfield Station north along the Pioneer Parkway to existing and new residential and employment areas in the Gateway area of Springfield. The line will pick up passengers every 10 minutes at 14 new stations via hybrid-electric vehicles. The extension will serve an anticipated 3,700 daily passengers when it is scheduled to open in 2010.

The U.S. Department of Transportation awarded the money through a program that awards money to smaller cities with transportation projects. Senators Smith and Wyden have vowed to continue working with local officials to obtain funding and complete the line expansion.

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