

# Bus ridership doubles in one year

By Tonie Nathan  
For The News



"Ride the bus!" the friendly announcer urges. "Ride the bus!" the sign says. And, by gosh, Eugeneans are doing it!

Since October of last year, Lane Transit District bus ridership had doubled. And that, says Dave Rynerson, LTD administrative assistant, is encouraging. He says he's surprised it happened so quickly -- really just in the last three months.

The average daily "ridership" (total fare revenue divided by 25 cents) was about 2000 a year ago. It is around 4400 now with most of the increase taking place since October 16th when the whole system was reworked and the new routes were published.

Rynerson says research is responsible for most of the changes which have taken place. Generally, he's used ideas which have already worked in other communities. Along with LTD general manager Fred Dyer, a seven-man Board of Directors and the assistance of two consulting firms in advertising and design, Rynerson put together a "color coded," expanded service bus system which seems to be gaining community acceptance week by week.

The LTD has 43 buses, but only 36 are in use at any one time. Almost all of them have colored panels in the rear or a colored name plate matching the color of their routes on the schedules. Or the bus might have a 5 by 16 inch color card on its dash matching its schedule. Bus routes are also recognizable by name and number.



Photos by Joann Rankin

All buses go through the Eugene downtown area. From there they radiate out in all directions, frequently returning by a slightly different route. If you stay on the Green Line, you travel to Fox Hollow via Donald Street, but return along Willamette back to downtown Eugene again. You can stay on the bus ride to Valley River Shopping Center, Hwy. 99 and Oakway Mall. Or you can transfer to any other bus. The transfer is good for a one hour stop-over anywhere along the route. The cost is 25 cents (including transfer) and for children under 12 is 15 cents. Children under five travel free. There is also a special discount book available for senior citizens for 20 cents a ride. The discount books and schedules are available at all First National Banks and Citizens Banks as well as the LTD Eugene office. Rynerson says this is to be expected since a certain amount of "seed" money has to be spent to generate increased patronage of the buses.

At present, LTD is spending 50 cents for every 25 cents deposited in the fare box. The 50 cents deficit comes from a payroll tax paid by local businessmen and other tax allocations. However, with increasing patronage the revenue from fares should reduce the operating deficit since expenses do not increase with each passenger. It seems that two more passengers are needed for each paying passenger using the bus now if the LTD is to break even. This means a ridership of 13,200 or a reduction of expenses such as advertising, etc., which shouldn't be necessary once the bus patronage is established.

Rynerson says it's up to us. We can save ourselves the cost of parking downtown and worrying about traffic.

Like the man said, "Ride the bus!"