



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Mon., Sept. 28, 2009

CONTACT:

Nicole Wahlberg, Public Information Manager
City of Salem – Urban Development Department
Tel: 503-588-6178, ext. 7552
Email: nwahlberg@cityofsalem.net
Website: www.cityofsalem.net

Union Street Railroad Bridge Temporarily Closes for Improvements November to May

One of Salem's newest attractions will temporarily close for further restoration.

Mon., Sept. 28, 2009 – Salem, Ore. – Last spring, the City of Salem was awarded \$3.5 million in stimulus funds from the Oregon Department of Transportation's Transportation Enhancement Program for the second phase restoration of the Union Street Railroad Pedestrian and Bicycle Bridge. In order to complete this work, the bridge will temporarily close to the public from mid-Nov. 2009 to mid-May 2010. During the closure, encapsulation of lead-based paint, painting, bridge repairs, and installation of security cameras will be completed. Closure signs will be posted at the entrance on both sides of the bridge. Salem residents are invited to attend the Oct. 12 Salem City Council meeting where the bridge construction funding, timeline, and an overview will be presented.

The new pedestrian and bicycle bridge provides a critical half-mile link in the bicycle and pedestrian circulation systems for the community, the region, and the state. Two large urban parks: Wallace Marine (114 acres) and Riverfront (23 acres), book-end this bridge, connecting their trail systems into a single, safe, and family-friendly network. The project has improved bicycle and pedestrian safety and accessibility in Salem and encourages the use of alternative transportation modes, promotes healthy forms of exercise (like running, cycling, skating, and wheelchairs) for both local and out-of-town users.

The Union Street Railroad Bridge was built across the Willamette River in 1912-13 by Southern Pacific Railway to connect Salem to the West Willamette Valley. The bridge was acquired by Union Pacific Railroad in 1996 and was purchased by the City of Salem for one dollar in 2004. The bridge was put on the National Register of Historic Places in January of 2006. In April of 2008, Carter & Company, Inc., a Salem contractor, began reconstructing the historic landmark. As part of initial project, railroad ties and tracks were removed and decks, railing, and lighting were installed.

For further information on the bridge and the restoration efforts, please contact Todd Klocke at 503-588-6178 or tklocke@cityofsalem.net. Construction updates will be available online at www.cityofsalem.net/unionbridge.

The City of Salem's Urban Development Department is committed to enhancing community prosperity through an array of programs in its four major service areas: Real Property Services, Housing and Social Services, Economic Development and Downtown Revitalization. The Urban Development Department: manages the City's urban renewal areas (URA) and redevelopment projects within the URAs; administers federally funded block grant and housing programs; provides loans and grants to eligible businesses, homeowners, and renters; and manages leases, acquires, and sells properties for the City.

###