



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Union Street Railroad Bridge Opening Event April 18
A family-friendly event to open Salem's new pedestrian and bicycle bridge.

Sat., April 18, 2009 – Salem, Ore. – After a year of construction and several years of planning, Salem's historic Union Street Railroad Pedestrian and Bicycle Bridge will open to the public on Sat., April 18 at 10 a.m with a parade and a community celebration. The new bicycle and pedestrian bridge will connect Salem's Wallace Marine Park in West Salem to Riverfront Park on the East side of the Willamette River (137 acres of public parks).

The event will begin at the north end of Riverfront Park, off of Union Street in downtown Salem, at 10 a.m. Event attendees can park at Riverfront Park, in downtown Salem, or at Wallace Marine Park. *Please note that Union Street Railroad Bridge access will not be available until after the parade. If attendees choose to park in Wallace Marine Park, they must walk across the Center Street Bridge to attend the opening ceremonies.

The ceremony will feature music by the 234th Army Band and presentations by Salem Mayor Janet Taylor, Senator Peter Courtney, Senator Jackie Winters, Congressman Schrader's Field Representative for Marion County, Jon Pugsley, Councilor Dan Clem, and Friends of Two Bridges Chair, Hazel Patton. A formal ribbon cutting will follow the presentations and then the inaugural bridge parade will begin! The bridge parade will be led by the North Salem Color Guard and will feature Mayor Janet Taylor on the SANYO electric hybrid enloop bike, followed by the 234th Army Band. Event attendees will be joined by local mascots, including A.C. Gilbert's Discovery Village's "Bubble Girl," Salem's Riverfront Carousel's "Ambassador," and the Salem-Keizer Volcanoe's "Crater" to complete the procession across the bridge. Following the parade, attendees will enjoy cookies, coffee, hot chocolate, and family activities in Wallace Marine Park.

Several local businesses will be offering special opportunities for attendees in honor of this momentous occasion: The Willamette Queen Sternwheeler will be offering a 9:45 a.m. Union Street Railroad Bridge Ribbon Cutting Cruise for \$5.00 per person; A.C. Gilbert's Discovery Village will be hosting a FREE day for families from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Dragon Boat Club representatives will be available at the docks in Riverfront Park to answer questions about the boats and club involvement; and Downtown and West Salem merchants will be open for Saturday shopping and meals. More information regarding specific supplemental activities can be found at <http://www.willamettequeen.com/index.html>, <http://www.acgilbert.org/upcomingevents.htm>, and <http://www.godowntownsalem.com/>.

The new pedestrian and bicycle bridge will provide 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 and the conversion connects their trail systems into a single, safe, and family-friendly network. The project improves bicycle and pedestrian safety and accessibility in Salem and it will also encourage use of alternative transportation modes, promote 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 this project, railroad ties and tracks were removed and decks, railing, and lighting were installed.

The City is moving forward with planning for lead-based paint abatement and repair of the upper portion of the bridge. This work is scheduled to be complete in 2010 due to the generous contribution from ODOT's Transportation Enhancement Program. The Oregon Transportation Commission recently approved \$3.5 million of economic stimulus funding, the City of Salem's first stimulus funds, for the completion of the bridge. Design plans and discussions are underway to proceed with the lead abatement phase later this year.

For more information on the Union Street Railroad Bridge and the Friends of Two Bridges, please refer to 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 three major service areas, Revitalization and Urban Renewal, Federal Programs, and Real Estate Services. 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.

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