



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Salem’s Union Street Railroad Bridge Re-Opens May 15

Residents are invited to participate in a family-friendly “Passport Adventure” May 15 and “Bridge to Work” Day May 18.

Sat., May 15, 2010 – Salem, Ore. – After a brief closure, Salem’s historic Union Street Railroad Pedestrian and Bicycle Bridge will officially re-open to the public on Sat., May 15. The Friends of Two Bridges, a local non-profit organization, has planned a special *Passport Adventure* for Salem residents in celebration of the re-opening.

On May 15, residents are encouraged to join the fun between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. in Salem’s Riverfront Park and Wallace Marine Park. Passport participants will begin by picking up event “passports” at any of the passport stops and then wander throughout the parks and across the Union Street Railroad Bridge collecting stamps in their “passports”. Passport stops include: A.C. Gilbert’s Discovery Village, the Tom McCall statue, the boat dock, the Eco Earth, the future site of Minto Bridge, Salem’s Riverfront Carousel, the Pavilion/Spray Fountain, the Union Street Railroad Bridge historical signage and the new trails at Wallace Marine Park. When “passports” are full of stamps, they are good for FREE one day admission to A.C. Gilbert’s Discovery Village over the weekend of May 15 and 16. Event attendees may park at Riverfront Park or Wallace Marine Park to participate in the festivities.

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 urban-area 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, encourages the use of alternative transportation modes, and 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.

During the recent six month closure, lead-based paint abatement and repair of the upper portion of the bridge was completed thanks to a generous contribution from ODOT’s Transportation Enhancement Program. The Oregon Transportation Commission approved \$3.5 million of economic stimulus funding, the City of Salem’s first stimulus funds, for the repainting of the bridge. This final phase is being completed by S & K Painting.

As a follow up to the event, the City will also be hosting a *Bridge to Work Day* on Tuesday, May 18 from 6 a.m. to 8 a.m. Salem workers and residents are encouraged to bicycle or walk to work utilizing the re-opened bridge.

For more information on the Union Street Railroad Bridge, the Friends of Two Bridges, or bridge related events, 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.

The Friends of Two Bridges is a non-profit grassroots group dedicated to the design and construction of the Minto Island Bridge and the Union Street Railroad Bridge. In addition to gathering support for conversion of the Union Street Railroad Bridge, the group worked on its ribbon cutting ceremony and an interpretive display. The group is also gathering support for funding the Minto Island to Riverfront Park bridge connection.

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