

Major 4th of July reorganization announced

Vancouver National Historic Reserve Trust President **Elson Strahan** held a press conference today to announce a major reorganization that will help ensure the continuance of the 4th of July at the Historic Reserve. Local fireworks stand operator **Edward Rinck** has signed a contract with the Reserve Trust and the 4th of July Committee, guaranteeing \$250,000 per year in support of the Independence Day event. This will be funded through Rinck's operation of the 4th of July Committee's fireworks stands. Rinck, as well as 4th of July Committee Executive Director **Jim Larson**, and **Mike Williams**, Comcast's Senior Director of Sales for Oregon and Southwest Washington, joined Strahan in making the announcement.

Edward Rinck is a successful entrepreneur, who not only has a demonstrated track record of profitable fireworks stand operations, but who also owns the very popular Cold Stone Creamery stores in the area. Rinck was aware of the event's publicized financial challenges and, in offering a guaranteed funding level for the 4th of July celebration, said, "I have been enjoying this event for more than thirty years, and it has given my family many happy memories. It's an event that the community looks forward to each year, and I am honored to be involved with one of Vancouver's oldest traditions. I have been fortunate to have my businesses thrive over the years, which has allowed us to support local non-profit organizations. We thought this could be another opportunity to give back to our community to show our appreciation."

Strahan noted that while the reorganization facilitated by Edward Rinck's agreement to run the stands formerly managed by the 4th of July Committee, the event would still depend on input from Jim Larson, who has committed to working with the Historic Reserve Trust for at least two more years.

Empty buses are filling up

By Tauf Charneski

An empty C-TRAN bus initially suggests a waste of "hard-earned" taxpayer money.

Serious reflection suggests quite the opposite. An empty bus, now becoming more of a rarity as C-Tran ridership continues to climb, is a sign that someone, often more than one, has been taken to a destination, otherwise unobtainable, or that the bus is on its way to pick up at least one, and usually several passengers providing transportation, otherwise unavailable, to another destination.

Each weekday C-TRAN buses provide roundtrip transportation for approximately 9,000 persons. The daily average of trips provided in 2003 was 19,000 passengers.

The transit agency provided the community with 6,910,000 passenger trips during 2003. That's the equivalent of giving every man, woman and child in Clark County 18 individual rides.

Of the 6.91 million passenger trips, over one out of five, 1.32 million, were rides to and from Portland. But C-TRAN's busiest route, Fourth Plain, nearly equaled all the rides between Vancouver and Portland, 1.3 million passenger trips.

Counting the Vancouver to Portland service, Fourth Plain, and all other C-TRAN fixed routes, more than half—56 percent—of the riders used C-TRAN as a way to get to and from work.

Since C-TRAN, and all transit agencies in the state, lost tax support from the motor vehicle excise tax, eliminated by voter-approved Initiative 695, passengers have been picking up costs. The share riders have picked up of the cost of operating the system has increased 51 percent since 2000.

The per passenger cost of operating C-TRAN is \$4.22. The amount paid by each passenger is \$2.96. C-TRAN's cost per vehicle mile is \$80.82. Passengers pay \$74.67 of that cost.

The .03 percent sales tax increase C-TRAN is asking of voters on Nov. 2, would cost county residents three cents on a \$10 purchase. More specifically, the sales tax increase would add \$90 to the cost of a \$30,000 motor vehicle, a fraction of the cost of the former motor vehicle excise tax repealed by I-695. Most of that tax was used for other purposes and it was meant to be a tax on motor vehicles in lieu of property tax on motor vehicles. It has never been replaced.

Clark County launches new website for newcomers

On average, about 28 people a day are moving to Clark County. How do these newcomers find out about voter registration, auto and pet licenses, phone service, utilities, cable television, and how to get around in Clark County? Now they can check out a new feature in the *About Clark County* section of the county's Web site at www.clark.wa.gov. Called *Welcome to Clark County*, this feature does more than profile county government. It contains links to lots of relevant information about what it's like to live here, including facts about local school districts, housing, neighborhoods, parks, the job market, historical sites, and much more.

"Our county is one of the fastest growing regions in Washington state," says PIO Director Lianne Forney. "We thought it was important for potential residents and new residents alike to have a place to find information they need. People who have been here a while may find the links useful, too."

News briefs

The speed limit on I-205 will be temporarily reduced from 60 mph to 50 mph for a two-mile segment in the vicinity of the NE 134th Street interchange. This reduction is necessary as construction activity increases on the NE 20th Avenue overpass. The speed limit reduction will be in effect for about six months. The NE 20th Ave. overpass north of 134th Street is being widened to include additional turning lanes and bike lanes. 📍 📍 📍 The public is invited to attend the Fisher's Creek Park ribbon cutting ceremony on Sat., Oct. 30, 3-4:30 p.m. The park is located at SE 42nd Street and SE 182nd Ave. Light refreshments will be provided. The Fisher's Creek Neighborhood Association, in a unique development agreement, is financing maintenance of the park for three years.

Tuesday headlines from at home and around the world:

[Mount St. Helens VolcanoCam \[updates every five minutes\]](#)--USDA Forest Service, [Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument](#)

[Voters get busy--Columbian, Don Jenkins](#)

[Lunar eclipse tomorrow--Columbian](#)

[Murray & Nethercutt in town today --Columbian](#)

[OK near for hospital expansion--Columbian, Julia Anderson](#)

[Industry downturn affects amphitheater performance-Columbian, Brett Oppegaard](#)

[Alawi blames U.S. neglect for ambush -- New York Times, Richard A. Oppel, Jr.](#)

[NPR 5-minute hourly news updates \(Audio\)](#)

Tuesday on the air

49th Legislative District Senator Candidates—2 p.m. CVTV

49th Legislative District State Representative, Position 1—2:30 p.m. CVTV

49th Legislative District State Representative, Position 2—3 p.m. CVTV

18th Legislative District Senatorial Candidates Debate & Candidate Forum(10/11)—3:30 p.m. CVTV

Red Sox at St. Louis (LIVE) — 5:30 p.m., Fox Channel 12

City Minutes—5:30 p.m. CVTV

Vancouver Planning Commission (LIVE)—7 p.m. CVTV

Town Tabloids and the weather

Bill Riedel feisty as ever. 📍 📍 **Heidi Young** counting the days until summer. 📍 📍 **Addison Jacobs** seeking a computer with a heart. 📍 📍 **Shanna Germain** back from the brink. 📍 📍 Tuesday, more cold, more showers, more falling leaves, 53. Wednesday, rain prevails, turning to showers late, cooler, 54. Thursday, mostly grey & drizzly, warmer, 57.