



Lane Transit District



October 14, 2004

Metropolitan Policy Committee
99 East Broadway, Suite 400
Eugene, Oregon 97401

Dear Committee Members:

Still in its infancy, a year and a half after hitting the road, the *Diamond Express* caught the attention of the Association for Commuter Transportation (ACT). At the 2004 ACT International Conference, LTD accepted, on behalf of the Regional Commuter Solutions Program, an Award of Excellence in the category of "Outstanding Service – Public / Private," presented to Lane Transit District for their role in creating the *Diamond Express*. *Diamond Express* is a commuter service operating between the Eugene-Springfield Metropolitan area and the rural communities of Oakridge and Westfir. Commuter Solutions and LTD's Accessible Services programs teamed up with stakeholders from Oakridge and Westfir to develop a service design that would help meet community transit needs of rural residents. And, it appears to be working!

Since the first trip from Oakridge to Eugene-Springfield in March 2003, ridership has grown steadily. There were 102 average trips per week during the first 6 months and 122 average trips per week during the last 6 months of operations. By March of 2004, there were enough riders using the *Diamond Express* that the 14-passenger vehicle was unable to accommodate everyone on all runs. There have been 6 days since June 2004, when a second vehicle has been put into service for the 5:30 return ride to Oakridge. A new 26-passenger vehicle is on order.

The *Diamond Express* demonstrates the potential for local partnerships to accomplish regional transportation goals. LTD has been the recipient of Special Transportation Funds for the Elderly and Disabled (STF) funded through the State of Oregon's cigarette tax since 1985. Through the STF program, LTD administers programs designed to meet transit needs of Lane County's senior citizens and citizens who have disabilities. More recently, LTD has been successful in receiving grants through the federal Small City and Rural Assistance Program to improve and expand these services to the general public. By tapping into the resource of the Regional Commuter Solutions Program expertise, the *Diamond Express* develops routing that assists both commuters and people who need additional assistance. On the midday run, the *Diamond Express* becomes a curb-to-curb service so that passengers coming into Eugene-Springfield can designate their drop-off and pick up locations.

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The success of the *Diamond Express* Service, and the national recognition it has received, would not have been possible without the commitment and coordination of LTD's Accessible Service Program in partnership with the regional TDM program administrator, Commuter Solutions. LTD would like to share this recognition with its regional partners.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ken Hamm", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Ken Hamm
General Manager

KH:tp:lg/sjh