

MEDIA RELEASE

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City of Wilsonville-South Metro Area Regional Transit (SMART) Awarded \$1 Million Grant to Buy New Clean-Fuel Buses

WILSONVILLE, OR — The City of Wilsonville’s South Metro Area Regional Transit (SMART) agency has been awarded a competitive grant in the amount of \$1,058,250 by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) for the purchase of new buses through the U.S. Department of Transportation’s “Clean Fuels Grant Program.”

SMART was one of only 27 public-transit agencies nationwide—and the only transit agency in Oregon—to successfully compete for the grant award under the \$59.3 million FY2012 Clean Fuels Grant Program. Demand for FY2012 funding was competitive, with the FTA receiving 146 project applications totaling \$516 million.

The Clean Fuels program is intended to fund transit-agency efforts to improve air quality by supporting low-polluting fuel and advanced propulsion technologies for transit buses, including clean fuel, biodiesel, hybrid electric, or zero-emissions technology buses. The funds awarded to SMART will be used for the purchase of two Diesel-electric hybrid full-sized buses and two natural-gas powered mini-buses. The City will provide a local 17% match in the amount of \$216,750 to secure the federal funds.

Congressman Kurt Schrader (OR-5) said, “This is another great transportation project that will improve connectivity, livability and safety not only in Wilsonville, but in communities across the region. Investments in our transportation and infrastructure are smart, long-term investments to make right now to enhance our state's economy and create jobs for hardworking Oregonians.”

Mayor Tim Knapp said that, “The City Council is pleased that our staff worked diligently to compete for federal funds that positively extend the impact of local taxes. Utilizing clean-fuel

vehicles can improve the quality of life for Wilsonville residents and commuting workers while advancing more efficient transit services.”

SMART Director Stephan Lashbrook said, “The City worked hard on this grant application and it will enable us to replace four aging and inefficient buses—some with nearly one million miles on their odometers—with modern, higher efficiency vehicles. In addition to reducing pollution, these new buses will reduce operating costs and improve reliability for our customers. We are absolutely thrilled that SMART was selected to receive this grant.”

Local backing for the City’s grant application was strong, and included letters of support from Rockwell Collins, Sysco Food Services, Wilsonville Chamber of Commerce and Xerox.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

About the Clean Fuels Grant Program (5308): Section 3010 of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), Pub. L. No. 109-59, 119 Stat. 1144, 1572 (2005) (also known as the “Surface Transportation Act”) amended section 5308 of title 49 United States Code, commonly referred to as the Clean Fuels Grant Program, from a formula-based to a discretionary grant program.

The program has a two-fold purpose. First, the program was developed to assist nonattainment and maintenance areas in achieving or maintaining the National Ambient Air Quality Standards for ozone and carbon monoxide (CO). Second, the program supports emerging clean fuel and advanced propulsion technologies for transit buses and markets for those technologies.

Eligible applicants under this program are designated recipients, which are entities designated to receive Federal urbanized formula funds under 49 U.S.C. 5307. Applicants must be in areas that are maintenance or non-attainment for ozone or CO.

SAFETEA-LU grants authority to the Secretary to make grants under this section to assist recipients to finance eligible projects such as the following; (1) Purchasing or leasing clean fuel buses, including buses that employ a lightweight composite primary structure and vans for use in revenue service. The purchase or lease of non-revenue vehicles is not an eligible project. (2) Constructing or leasing clean fuel bus facilities or electrical recharging facilities and related equipment. Facilities and related equipment for clean diesel buses are not eligible. (3) Projects relating to clean fuel, biodiesel, hybrid electric, or zero-emissions technology buses that exhibit equivalent or superior emissions reductions to existing clean fuel or hybrid electric technologies.

Funds made available under this program cannot be used to fund operating expenses or preventive maintenance. Between FY2010 and FY2012, this program has provided a total of \$211.8 million for 92 projects across the United States.

ABOUT SMART: Operated by the City of Wilsonville and funded primarily by the business community through a local payroll tax, SMART carries over 350,000 passenger trips per year and maintains a fully wheelchair-accessible fleet of 30 vehicles that include three 40-foot buses with an average age of eight years; eight 35-foot buses with an average age of 18 years; thirteen 26-foot buses with an average age of seven years; and four vans with an average age of six years. Ridership on SMART has increased by more than 20% over the last two fiscal years, with rising fuel prices and an improving economy cited as contributing causes.