Tiger Transit crosses 2 million mark

Tiger Transit reached a milestone in 2007 carrying more than 2 million riders, nearly tripling the number of riders the popular AU transit system carried only five years ago.

“More people are riding Tiger Transit than ever, and the numbers keep growing,” said David George, director of Parking and Transit Services. “Students, especially, have found that the buses are the best alternative for transportation to, from and around campus.”

Last year, the system carried 2,077,714 riders, up substantially from the 765,757 riders the system transported during the 2002 calendar year.

George cites several reasons for Tiger Transit’s success including improved service and reliability, more routes and shorter routes, additional buses and the installation of a GPS system, Trans-Loc. That system enables riders to monitor buses in motion and the routes in real time on a detailed map displayed on the Internet or a Web-enabled cellular phone.

“For many students, AU is really a commuter campus for all practical purposes. And we are trying to make that commute as painless as possible,” George said, citing service to parking areas and off-campus housing.

He said the university’s development of pedestrian corridors also has prompted many students to choose Tiger Transit instead of driving to campus.

“This has really increased the desirability of taking Tiger Transit because the bus will get you closer to campus than parking your car,” George said.

Tiger Transit came online in the late 1990s and began operating under Groome Transportation in 2000. Since that time, the system has seen incremental increases in ridership, which reached unprecedented numbers in 2007.

The Tiger Transit system operates a fleet of 42 buses on more than 20 routes from 7 a.m.-6 p.m. each class day during fall and summer semesters. On those days, the system operates a scaled-back night fleet to external campus destinations from 6:15 p.m.-10 p.m. Tiger Transit offers an abbreviated version of its services during the summer semester.

“For the most part, the feedback has been very positive,” Geoge said. “It is really nice to be part of something the majority of students like.”

Student workers for the transit system distribute surveys on various bus routes every day. George said riders’ feedback helps planners make decisions regarding the system’s future.
With a new concept for student housing taking physical form on the west side of campus, the AU Board of Trustees on Thursday began a discussion of a new approach to pricing policy for campus housing.

Informed that under traditional pricing formulas the new residence halls could cost students substantially more per semester than rooms in older buildings, Trustee Jack Miller of Mobile said the university will need a new approach to setting prices for student housing.

Miller, who championed the student village concept in which the new residence halls have an academic component, said he wants Auburn to avoid a two-tier pricing policy that could make the new housing affordable only to students from wealthier families. When the first buildings open next year, housing affordable only to students from wealthier families. When the first buildings open next year, students would pay $715 in conditional funds from the 2007-08 state budgets. The money came from funds set aside by the Alabama Legislature to assist community programs in each legislative district. In the case of AU, the funds were to be used for student housing.

The new approach to pricing was a recommendation of the AU strategic plan task force. The report noted the university will fare better with about two dozen measures to make the university more competitive with its peer institutions. The recommendations included a new housing policy that would allow for policy-making. To view the draft online, go to the AU home page, www.auburn.edu, and look for the “Strategic Planning” link in the Special Features section.

New Perspectives Lecture Tuesday, February 5

“Hearing Witness: Photography and the Civil Rights Movement, 1956-68,” Julian Cox of Atlanta’s High Museum of Art, 4 p.m., Jule Collins Smith Museum

Faculty Workshop Thursday, February 7

“Health and Safety Abroad,” Fred Kam of AU Medical Center and Diane Winkle of MEDEX, 11:45 a.m.-2:30 p.m., Foy 246; includes lunch; for workshop reservation, contact Deborah Weiss at weissd@auburn.edu

Faculty Forum Friday, February 8

Biggio Center presentations on college teaching and learning, 8 a.m.-1 p.m., Foy; see www.auburn.edu/biggio and click on “2008 Forum"

Faculty Workshop Saturday, February 9

“Creating the Cotton Gin: Machine and Myth in Antebellum America,” Angela Lakwete of History and Heritage, 4 p.m., Jule Collins Smith Museum

Coffee Talk Tuesday, February 12

“Caffeine, Connectivity and Revolution: Coffee Houses from the Enlightenment to the Internet,” N. Scott Haine of the University of Maryland, author of “The World of the Parisian Café,” 4 p.m., Foy 213

Upcoming Events

Meeting University Senate, 3 p.m., auditorium, Broun Hall

Discover Album Lecture “Inventing the Cotton Gin: Machine and Myth in Antebellum America,” Angela Lakowe of History and Heritage, 3 p.m., Special Collections and Archives Department, Draper Library

New Perspectives Lecture “Southern Folk Poetry,” Joey Brachner of the Alabama Center for Traditional Culture, 4 p.m., Jule Collins Smith Museum

Coffee Talk “Caffeine, Connectivity and Revolution: Coffee Houses from the Enlightenment to the Internet,” N. Scott Haine of the University of Maryland, author of “The World of the Parisian Café,” 4 p.m., Foy 213

New Perspectives Lecture “Traditional Signs in African American Cemeteries, Homes and Churches,” Judith McWilkie of the University of Alabama, 2 p.m., Jule Collins Smith Museum


Executive Director of Communications and Marketing: Darrell Dorroh.

The AU Report is published by the Office of Communications and Marketing at Auburn University. Issues appear each Monday during fall and spring semesters, and every two weeks in summer term, except on the Mondays of the first week of every major U.S. holidays. Copies are distributed free to campus mail to full-time faculty and staff and campus mail students. Subscriptions are available for a subscription fee during the first week of each semester or for a minimum of 12 issues upon publication date. Indirect inquiries, suggestions and news items to AU Report, 25 Sandfield Hall, Auburn, AL 36849. Telephone: 334-444-9999. E-mail: submit@auburn.edu.

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Meeting students AU President Emeritus Harry M. Philpott, who died last week at age 98, is displayed his style of presidential leadership through low-key interaction with constituents. This classic photo from the early 1970s, when students were protesting the Vietnam War and AU students were protesting the housing rules for women, shows Philpott’s effective use of humor to quell unrest and gain information for policy-making.

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Philpott remembered for leadership during pivotal era for the university

As a sign of Auburn’s emergence on the national scene, Philpott was the first Alabama educator in the 20th century to be elected president of the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges.

Known for his congenial manner, Philpott was often called a “people person,” and friends and colleagues describe him as accessible to and esteemed by faculty and students.

Auburn’s current president and first lady were among those students. “Susie and I received our degrees from Dr. Philpott, and we consider that a great honor,” said President Gogus.

“President Philpott always considered faculty as professional colleagues,” said Professor Taylor Littleton, who was vice president for academic affairs under Philpott. “Uniformly, faculty members had a sense of trust in his administration.”

White, who was director of University Relations for all but the first few months of Philpott’s administration, noted that Philpott, came into office with extensive experience in the academic arena.

But more important than Philpott’s knowledge and experience, White said, was his temperament. “He was even-tempered and had a very healthy respect for the faculty. He often said that teaching was a calling more than a profession, and he enriched the quality of the faculty a great deal as president.”

For example, early in Philpott’s administration, AU created its alumni professorships program to retain and attract well-qualified faculty.

In the move toward a broader curriculum, Auburn’s ROTC program became optional instead of mandatory for male students. Meanwhile, rules were changed to allow women to live off campus, and a broader curriculum presented more career options for women. As a result, AU saw enrollment of female students rise from 28 percent in 1965 to 42 percent in 1980 and 49 percent today.

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Four alumni chosen for Lifetime Achievement Awards at Auburn

The Auburn Alumni Association has named four AU alumni to receive its highest honor, the Lifetime Achievement Award. An induction ceremony on March 1 will honor the late Emory Cunningham, longtime publisher with the Southern Progress Corp. and later at Time Inc.; Beverly Kearney, one of the most successful female track coaches of all time; Lloyd Nix, a Decatur community leader for 36 years; and James Taylor Pursell, who helped revolutionize horticulture through development of new fertilization technology.

Deborah Shaw, AU vice president for alumni affairs, said nominees are selected not only for career achievement but for their integrity, stature and demonstrated ability.

Cunningham, who died in 2000, joined The Progressive Farmer Co. in Birmingham, Ala., shortly after his 1948 graduation from Auburn, and moved quickly through the ranks from salesman to advertising director to publisher. In 1968, he became president of the company, which became Southern Progress Corp., and started the successful “Southern Living” and “Cooking Light” magazines. Under his leadership, Southern Progress became the largest regional publisher in the world before being acquired by Time Inc., where he served as a senior vice president.

Kearney was a two-time All-American and qualifier for the U.S. Olympic team in the 200 meter before her graduation in 1981. She followed athletic success at Auburn into a career as one of the most successful coaches in the history of women’s track. Her teams at the University of Texas have won six NCAA titles and 19 conference titles, earning her National Coach of the Year honors four times. She was inducted into the U.S. Track and Field and Cross-Country Coaches Association Hall of Fame in December.

Nix, a longtime Decatur dentist and community leader, is a 1959 Auburn graduate and was quarterback of the 1957 national champion football team. He has been involved in the civic, religious and cultural life of Decatur and Morgan counties as former president of the Morgan County Dental Association, former chairman of the Council on Ministries of Central United Methodist Church and board member for the Alabama Institute Foundation for the Deaf and Blind. He also serves as a director for First American Bank and Alabama National Bank.

Pursell followed his 1952 Auburn graduation and military service by joining his father-in-law in the fertilizer business. He expanded the scope of the business, which became Pursell Technologies Inc., and led the company’s growth into one of the largest manufacturers of controlled-release fertilizers in the world.

Pursell influenced the direction of the industry through development of a continuous-feed fertilizer that is not impacted by weather.

Visiting speaker to discuss role of photography during Civil Rights Era in South

Julian Cox, an author and historian of photography, will present visual images of the Civil Rights Movement in the South in a public lecture at 4 p.m. Tuesday at AU’s Jule Collins Smith Museum.

In “Bearing Witness: Photography and the Civil Rights Movement, 1956-68,” Cox will also discuss the role of photography in media culture during the 1960s. His discussion will be based on research for “Road to Freedom,” an exhibition scheduled for Atlanta’s High Museum next summer.

The speaker is curator of photography at the High Museum, which has the nation’s most comprehensive holding of Civil Rights Movement photographs. Cox is also the author of several books and articles on photography.

The presentation is part of AU’s “New Perspectives: Alabama Art in the Open” lecture series.

Neoclassical look
Shelby Center, Auburn’s newest building, does not look the part. In overall appearance and in architectural details, the engineering technology complex was designed in the style of Ross, Ramsay and other buildings at AU from the first half of the 20th century. Shelby Center will be dedicated on April 18.

Office seeks nominations for top award in University Outreach

The Office of the Vice President for University Outreach is seeking nominations for the 2008 AU Award for Excellence in Faculty Outreach.

The award criteria stress the overall academic merit and demonstrable impact of the nominee’s outreach.

The recipient for 2007 was Christa Slaton of the Department of Political Science in the College of Liberal Arts, who was honored for assisting Uniontown citizens and public officials with community improvement initiatives, training of elections officials and other efforts on behalf of better government.

Previous winners include David Bransby of the College of Agriculture, Phil Browning of the College of Education and P.K. Raju of Samuel Ginn College of Engineering.

The recipient of the 2008 award will receive a $5,000 honorarium.

Nomination criteria and procedures are posted online at www.auburn.edu/outreach/award excellence.html. The deadline for nominations is March 10.

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