



Coalition members protest UTA on Sept. 26.

Audit report triggers criticism from disabled advocates

and those in charge need to take responsibility.”

Senate President John Valentine, R-Orem said one thing was clear from the audit, “we need to change how UTA is governed,” he said. “I think the audit really is leading to more state oversight.”

With 17 percent of the operating cost coming from fares and sales tax subsidies covering 83 percent of UTA’s service the auditors suggested UTA set a minimum recovery ration and raise fares even if that meant a slower growing ridership.

“The agency should give additional consideration to the need to minimize the taxpayer subsidy of transit service,” wrote Rick Coleman, audit manager.

But the audit also found UTA’s service is more costly at \$4.35 per passenger compared to \$3.39 in Denver and \$2.25 in Phoenix, because their (UTA) bus routes serve areas less populated than that of other cities.

Toomer said curbing the compensation of top UTA executives would be a better place to start. “They complain about not having enough money and cut lines and service because of it but then over compensate their executives -- paying more than other cities in comparable positions,” she said.

The audit showed that UTA has an executive bonus program based on goals that in 2006 paid \$39,860 to UTA General Manager John English, which included \$60,526 in incentives that include life insurance and 401 (k) contributions - in addition to his annual \$267,000 salary.

The audit questions whether bonuses should be based on goals when other factors like rising gas prices influence overall ridership.”

“Various entities pay a lot of money to help students and employees with [bus] passes...that bonus money could go to helping more in need,” Toomer said. “I think it’s obscene to pay English so much and remember it’s the board that sets his pay and determines raises or bonuses.”

President of UTA’s board of trustees, Orrin T. Colby said the senior executives for UTA were responsible for brining in federal funds and “should receive the additional compensation -- Utah consistently ranks among the top states for attracting federal transit grants,” he said. “There are some who’d argue that the amount is too little.” continued pg 3

By Deborah De Vos

Falling on the heels of the Utah Transit Authority’s 2007 route cuts that left many disabled riders without transportation, the Utah Legislature released an audit report that among other things said there was a lack of board oversight, a budget that depends on sales tax, high executive salaries and unreliable passenger data.

Audit Supervisor with the Legislative Auditor General, James Behunin, presented the Legislative Audit subcommittee with the findings on Jan. 25.

“It’s quite an indictment against the board,” said Barbara Toomer, spokesman for the Disability Rights Action Committee. “These are the people who we rely upon to help provide a service to the transit-dependent -- the audit findings show it’s no longer about service

The truth about cell numbers being released to telemarketers

By Deborah De Vos

If you’ve received a message in your e-mail that says something like “Cell phone numbers are going public tomorrow.

All cell phone numbers are being released to telemarketing companies tomorrow and you will start to receive sales calls.

To prevent this, call

the following number from your cell phone, it is the National Do Not Call list. It will only take a minute of your time.

It blocks your number for five years....Help others by passing this on to all your friends...it only takes 20 seconds.”

Don’t bother. “It’s a hoax,” said the Federal Trade Commission in an advisory they issued in

October.

The FTC put out the advisory to give consumers the facts.

“If you’ve received an e-mail telling you that your cell phone is about to be assaulted by telemarketing calls...rest assured this is not the case,” said Mitchell Katz, public relations representative, Office of Public Affairs for the FTC.

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“Telemarketing to cell phone numbers has always been illegal and will continue to be so.”

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Above: "Seriously evan" performs on Dec. 17 at Cypress High School.

SLC band highlights competition and fans

By Mark Miller

The Cypress high auditorium's stage was filled with electric guitars, drum sets and speakers on Dec. 17 with a group of teenagers off to one corner in a huddle around 19-year-old Joel Brown.

The event?

The Cypress High School Battle of the Bands.

Sitting tall in his wheelchair with a guitar in his lap -- Brown spent a few moments with fans laughing, shaking hands and hamming it up for the cameras.

"We have a good time playing our music...they [fans] all seem to like it," Brown said.

Brown is lead singer and guitarist for the band, "Seriously evan," which got its name from an experience Brown's younger brother Evan had when he (Evan) was 11-years-old.

Evan had written a girl a Valentine's letter, but when he reached the closing salutation he found himself in a challenging predicament.

"He was going to sign it 'Love, Evan,' but was too embarrassed and he thought mom would be angry about it,"

Brown said. "And he didn't know how to spell sincerely so he signed it 'Seriously, Evan.'"

Seriously Evan is made up of Brown, Chaz Walgamott playing bass and Rich Larsen on drums.

"We've been around since July of last year," Brown said. "We've written several songs and played at many events that include the weekly Saturday night improv show 'A Work in Progress' at the Empress Theatre (9104 West 2700 South).

Brown also said that he's not always been interested in music.

"When I was younger, my mother tried to get me to join the choir but I refused because it just wasn't 'cool,'" he said. "In sixth grade I had a friend who had a guitar and drum set in his home -- that interested me."

Soon after his reintroduction to music, Brown said he joined his school's Jazz band, which led him to form his own group.

Paralyzed in a car accident at the age of nine, Brown's sense of humor and optimism

outweigh the fact that he is a paraplegic. "...all those who have desires to hit me in the legs; may have at it," Brown said in a blog on his Myspace website. "My disability doesn't slow me down."

In addition to being a singer / songwriter, he has also been a student body president and a motivational speaker.

"I see a future in music," Brown said, adding that this fall he plans to attend the University of Utah for music study. "I hope to one day become a rock star."

Aware of the fact that not all who try to become a professional rocker make it, Brown said he has a back up plan, "I could become a teacher," he said.

Brown considers himself just a regular guy that believes everyone has disabilities in life. "We all need to stand up to our problems that disable us and overcome them," he said. "Keep Rockin'."

Seriously Evan and future performances can be found at www.myspace.com/evanseriously.

"We all need to stand up to our problems that disable us and overcome them,"
—Joel Brown
Seriously evan

Health care reform bill redirected to a task force

By Deborah De Vos

A plan to reform Utah's health-care system topped the list in this year's legislative session, but changes on the hill has redirected the initiative into a task force for further study.

Gov. Jon Huntsman Jr. said in his State of the State address, Jan. 22, that he would make health care reform his top economic priority because "it's critical to the economic well-being of the state," he said.

With more than 12 percent of Utahans going without insurance (306,500) and

rates and premiums rising, Huntsman said the economy can not withstand the double burden.

"The status quo is unsustainable," Huntsman said, recommending a \$30 million appropriation to start the initiative. "In a state that prides itself on practical solutions, this issue is crying for a fix."

Sen. David Clark, R-Santa Clara introduced a "Health System Reform" bill (HB 133, drafted with the governor's office) to begin a "multi-year reform of our health

care system," he said.

The strategy behind the bill was to get stakeholders like insurance providers, together to develop a new, affordable reform plan.

Joined by Sen. Sheldon Killpack, R-Syracuse, the three (Huntsman, Clark and Killpack) have worked to win support for the kind of health care reform that's "not just about mandates or government intention," Huntsman said.



UTA continued from front page...

Joined by the directors for the Coalition of Religious Communities, Crossroads Urban Center and Utah Jobs with Justice, Toomer said a letter was composed to address these issues and ask the UTA board to investigate the payouts.

"We have not had a response to our inquiry," Toomer said. "It has brought light to things we've been shouting about for years."

Toomer also said besides the salary issues, there were flaws by UTA officials and "experts who were brought in from other states to give advice on which lines to cut," she said. "Those 'experts' knew little about our area or the needs of riders and the audit shows overstated calculations."

Behunin said that UTA's methods for collecting ridership data was questionable and "none of them is reliable."

As a result, the audit shows UTA's counting methods had overstated ridership on TRAX by 20 percent and risen 46 percent over the last decade, which UTA's numbers showed a 57 percent increase.

Some recommendations to UTA in the audit included having board members be appointed by the governor and Legislature, have the governor appoint the board chair, have the public elect board member or have the Legislature review UTA's budget, establish standards for fare box recovery and consider some of the strategies used by other states to address a lack of oversight and accountability of the UTA Board of Trustees.

for registration.

"You must call from the phone number that you want to register. If you register online, you must respond to a confirmation e-mail," Katz said.

The FTC works for the consumer to prevent fraudulent, deceptive and unfair business practices in the marketplace; as well as provide information to help spot, stop and avoid them.

To register a number or get more information go to www.donotcall.gov.

UTA officials have not formally responded to the audit or letter sent by disabled advocates but Senior Media Relations Specialist, Carrie Bonzacks said the audit is something that UTA goes through every 6 to 7 years and not spurred by anything. "It was just our turn," she said. "We're reviewing all of the data and discussing the issues at this time."

At deadline a new bill addressing the issue had not been introduced in the current legislative session.

Health care reform continued

"Through personal responsibility and making an effort to improve our own health to make better decisions."

The overall goal was to find ways that will best insure more people, expand access to current health care and tax credits that could create a \$750 credit per household, which would enable families to start changing the way they buy and use health insurance.

Current changes to HB 133 tosses control to



DRAC members protest UTA on September 26.

lawmakers to lead the reform process -- the original version put the Governor's Office of Economic Development in charge and they (legislators) want a task force to study the mandate.

The flip flop of control could mean more time before Utahans see a health care reform plan.

"In some cases, task forces have been a bit of a black hole...I prefer the original version of the bill, but I'm going to stay focused on the issue of health care until the state develops a long-term fix," Clark said.

Huntsman said he'd do all he could to move a reform plan forward.

cell phones continued front page

The government does not maintain a national cell phone registry but cell phone users can add their numbers to the National Do Not Call Registry the same as land line users.

Registration is effective within 31 days of adding the number to the list and is active for five years. There is no cutoff date or deadline

County library's website "disabled ready"

In January the Disability Outreach Committee (DOC) was asked to help the Salt Lake County Library system update their website, www.slco.lib.ut.us, to include links for the disabled.

Magna Library Manager, Trish Hull said the objective was to offer as many library services to as many people as possible anytime of the day or night.

Hull credits DOC's board members for the new service. "It was Mark [Miller, DOC Chairman] that made us aware that there was a problem," she said, adding that under the "Disability" tab all it said was "see Law."

Miller found the Access Utah Network, www.accessut.org, contained the best links for disabled service and informa-

tion. "The website contains some of the best disability links I've ever seen," he said. "Libraries have proven to be great resource tools for the disabled; this is just one more way they continue to improve it."

On Jan. 31, the SL County Library system added the new link.



DOC chairman, Mark Miller demonstrates a new we too for the disabled.

Prescription drug discount cards available

The United Way and other community organizations and agencies are handing out prescription drug discount cards to people who have no health insurance or need to purchase medicine, not covered by their insurance, to reduce the cost of their medicine.

There is no enrollment, eligibility or fee.

One Familywise card is good for the entire family and it is valid for five years. No personal information is collected or shared. The average savings for people using this card has been 39 percent or \$20 per prescription, (even though it states 20 percent on the card). People won't save every time over the pharmacy price but they will about 8 times out of 10.

United Way is trying to reach everyone in the community that needs a card. If you are an organization or know of an organization that would be willing to help distribute these cards **please contact Tim Fuhrman at United way, 736-7727 or timf@uw.org**. He will provide you with a supply of cards to give out. **Individuals may also pick up cards at United Way located at 150 West Temple, Ste.30.**



Family Links Conferences 2008

Announcing the Family Links Conferences 2008 sponsored by the Utah Parent Center and co-sponsored by Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (CHADD) of Utah together with various other disability organizations and state agencies.

These conferences have been created to help parents of children and youth with disabilities. Family Links North 2008 will be held on Friday and Saturday, Feb. 29 and March 1 at the Mount Jordan Middle School, 9360 S. 300 E. Sandy, Utah.

Friday's Keynote Speaker: Douglas Maughan "Caring for the Caregiver."

Saturday's Keynote Speaker: Michael Ballam.

This year's conference will feature: breakout sessions, disability-specific tracks, networking opportunities, exhibitor fairs and much more.

Check with www.utahparentcenter.org for more information on registration and updates.

Warning: jury duty scam

Salt Lake City police are warning the public of a scammer claiming to be a court officer that uses intimidation methods and accusing them of missing jury duty, to get his victims to give up personal information.

Several states residents have received the calls and police say it's from someone telling them they failed to serve their jury duty and a warrant was issued for their arrest.

They go on to ask the victim for personal information such as their Social Security number, date of birth and credit card numbers have the warrant canceled.

Police say that if anyone has questions to the validity of jury duty claims, hang up and contact the court directly.

DOC says goodbye and thank you



**Fifteenth President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints,
—Gordon B. Hinckley**

"You are good. But it is not enough just to be good. You must be good for something. You must contribute good to the world. The world must be a better place for your presence. And the good that is in you must be spread to others."

—Gordon B. Hinckley

The Disability Outreach Committee (DOC) joins the public in mourning the loss of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints leader and advocate for the disabled, Gordon B. Hinckley.

Hinckley passed away of natural causes on Jan. 27, he was 97 years-old.

During his 13 year presidency, the church made tremendous strides in becoming more accessible and helpful to the disabled. Whether it was remodeling church houses or providing vocational training to thousands across the US, the church promoted disability awareness everywhere.

The church recently updated their website, <http://disability.lds.org/disability>, to include a "Disability Resources" section.

"This Web section on disabilities has been created to offer support, comfort and an in-

creased level of acceptance toward those with disabilities," The First Presidency wrote. "This Web page and the related content material and supporting links have been prepared to help members of the Church more fully understand the challenges of our brothers and sisters of all ages who may have disabilities of body or mind."

DOC would like to take this moment to thank the leaders and members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints for their continued support of the disabled.

—Mark Miller, Chairman
Disability Outreach
Committee

Letters to the Editor:

Are printed on a first come, first served basis as a companion piece to Edge News Journal.

Send letters to:

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We want to hear from you!

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