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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Umpqua Public Transit Names Ben Edtl Permanent CEO**

**Roseburg, OR** — Umpqua Public Transit (UP) is pleased to announce the appointment of Ben Edtl as the permanent Chief Executive Officer. Initially brought on board as Interim General Manager just four months ago during a critical period of financial instability, Edtl has successfully guided the transit district from near insolvency to fiscal and operational stability.

Board Vice Chair John Estill praised the decision, stating, "I've hired a lot of leaders in my private sector career and Ben is no doubt the best hire I've made."

When Edtl was first appointed as Interim GM, the district was confronting imminent insolvency, with funding withheld by the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) and insufficient cash flow to meet payroll obligations. The district also faced over 40 significant compliance violations, further complicating the financial crisis. Despite intense public scrutiny and media skepticism surrounding Edtl's lack of prior transit experience, the Board of Directors stood firm in their decision, confident in his extensive 20-year history as a successful CEO and business leader.

Today, under Edtl's leadership, the district is thriving. "Running a transit agency is not much different from any other private sector organization," Edtl explained. "We need a clear purpose, an understanding of who we are, and the right people in the right seats. The future for Umpqua Public Transit is bright."

Board Chair Michaela Hammerson, who abstained from voting to avoid potential conflicts of interest, expressed pride in the district's turnaround, noting that the unanimous vote from all voting Board members confirmed the collective confidence in Edtl's ability to lead effectively. Board Member Doug Mendenhall was not present for the vote.

"As Interim CEO, I promised to achieve 100% compliance within three months. Thanks to the support of our dedicated and savvy Board, we've accomplished this goal," Edtl added. "With compliance issues behind us, we're now positioned to secure additional funding, strengthen community relationships, and further improve service and local economic opportunities."

Edtl's personal connection to public transit, shaped by his youth spent in Portland relying on buses to attend school, work, and sports practices, reinforces his commitment. "I believe in the good public transit can bring to a community," he said. "Our mission is to create more freedom, more economic opportunities, and to make life better for everyone we serve."

Reflecting on the rigorous accountability standards implemented over the past few months, Edtl noted, "Under America First leadership, the district has been essentially DOGE'd; every penny accounted for, every allocation assessed. We've instituted a culture of responsibility to taxpayers who fund our operations across the state and the country as a whole. I'm proud of the work we've accomplished so far."

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