

For Portlanders, we suggest, it hardly matters. In January, Adams admitted lying to voters in the 2008

should have been cause for Adams to resign; it remains so, regardless of what Kroger's investigation shows or whether Adams should resign.

Something to write home about

It's not hard to see why U.S. Rep. Earl Blumenauer was nearly ecstatic Wednesday when Ray LaHood, the transportation secretary, announced the approval of \$75 million to begin work on Portland's eastside streetcar line.

Blumenauer isn't the only one with cause for celebration. The streetcar has been one of Portland Mayor Sam Adams' goals since he joined the City Council five years ago, and Rep. Peter DeFazio, southwest Oregon's congressman, who chairs the House Transportation Committee's highways and transit subcommittee, was instrumental in guiding the 3.35-mile project through the congressional funding maze. Oregon's U.S. Senate delegation helped, too, and Sens. Ron Wyden and Jeff Merkley are positioned to be of further help. And, of course, the state of Oregon has provided a \$20 million match.

But this has been something of a lifetime project for Blumenauer, a Democrat representing Portland's east side in Congress, who first began

discussing the idea a quarter of a century ago, even before he joined the Portland City Council, his last stop before Congress.

For one thing, this approval means that Portland may now aspire to a streetcar "system" rather than just a "line" where there was once, in the early part of the 20th century, an interconnected rail-streetcar network.

The project will mean nearly 1,300 jobs in Portland during the duration of construction, plus 30 local jobs building coaches — the first constructed in the United States in 57 years — for the system.

The funds are a vindication of sorts for Blumenauer, whose interest in urban mass transit and other transportation issues (remember the bicycle caucus anyone?) has spanned all of his time in public service — as an Oregon legislator, city commissioner and member of Congress.

Early in his career, Blumenauer teamed with the late civic activist Bill Naito, who also championed a streetcar revival. LaHood's decision is the

culmination of four years of behind-the-scenes congressional and bureaucratic wrangling, much of it done by Blumenauer.

He sees the eastside project as the starter seed for a national orchard of relatively cheap, relatively simple streetcar systems that could transform cityscapes for the better, while furthering the nation's environmental and anti-global warming goals. This is not just some off-in-the-future daydream, either. The eastside project is at the head of a list of "small-start" shovel-ready projects from Seattle and Tucson, Ariz., to other cities across the nation.

Among the intended consequences are the jobs created or sustained in this area, from the construction work we mentioned earlier to the consultants, designers, planners, engineers and the like who have settled in at Portland firms but who travel all over to spread the expertise. Yes, some new jobs for Portland, but for Blumenauer, the beginning of an urban-transit revolution.

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CAP-AND-TRADE ECONOMICS

An affordable salvation

The 2008 election ended the reign of junk science in our nation's capital, and the chances of meaningful action on climate change, probably through a cap-and-trade system on emissions, have risen sharply.

But the opponents of action claim that limiting emissions would have devastating effects on the U.S. economy. So it's important to understand that just as denials that climate change is

costs would be much higher. Strange to say, however, such assertions nearly always come from people who claim to believe that free-market economies are wonderfully flexible and innovative, that they can easily transcend any constraints imposed by the world's limited resources of crude oil, arable land or fresh water.

So why don't they think the economy can cope with limits on greenhouse gas emissions?

INTELLECTUAL ACHIEVEMENT

Thinking about genius

Some people live in romantic ages. They tend to believe that genius is the product of a divine spark. They believe that there have been, throughout the ages, certain paragons of greatness — Dante, Mozart, Einstein — whose talents far exceeded normal comprehension, who had an other-worldly access to transcendent truth.

novels and literary biography. This would give her a core knowledge. She'd be able to chunk Victorian group, Magical Realists in and naissance poets into another. information into patterns. or