

The Early Bird Still Flies on Western

BY JOHN LIVINGSTON

The \$6 all-day Early Bird rate is still available if you get to the Pike Place Market Parking Garage and get your ticket before 10 a.m., Monday through Saturday.

Parking lot manager Gil Maxey said he has decided to extend the 10 a.m. time through April or May. He moved the Early Bird cutoff from 9:30 to 10 a.m. last fall when the parking garage lowered its rates for the fall and winter season. Signs announcing the time change—posted by the elevators in the parking garage—said officials would wait until January 31 to see what the reaction was. Maxey said it is a success.

“We’ve gathered more volume than we’ve ever had,” he said. “Early Bird parking has increased by 33 percent in November alone.”

By dovetailing the 10 a.m. start time with the fall parking rate drops last September, instead of October, Maxey said he was able to get an early start on the Early Bird program. It benefits several groups of customers.

“During the winter, the craftspeople in the market have a later roll-call time (when they must be present before starting business), so the 10 a.m. time worked better for them,” Maxey said. “And not everyone (around the Market) goes to work at 9 or 9:30. Some companies have flex-time.”

Other factors are helping to keep the parking garage fuller in the off-season than in previous years.

“We lost the Creamery parking lot to construction (for new Pike Place Market housing project for senior citizens) and we had to put trucks in the Desimone

THIS JUST IN...

After press deadline, the Pike Place Market Parking Garage announced that all-day Early Bird parking rate will increase by \$1 to \$7 all day, effective Monday, Feb. 13.

The 10 a.m. Early Bird start time will remain in effect through May, according to parking lot manager Gil Maxey.

(open) parking lot that used to park at the Creamery,” Maxey said. “We lost five or six spaces there.”

The late start time for the Early Bird, and the \$6 all-day rates, won’t last forever. Each summer season, the all-day rates go up to \$7, and then \$8 (it could go higher) when tourists need spaces in the parking garage. “It varies from year to year. Normally, it goes up in May or June,” Maxey said. “It will depend on the volume is.”

Once the rates go back up, the cutoff time will go back down from 10 to 9:30 a.m. On Sundays, the parking rate will remain at \$5 all day, no matter how long a person parks.

Maxey added that there are no plans

whatsoever to restore one-hour free parking, which became a thing of the past last year.

Officials cited high crime and lost revenue as the reasons for ending the free parking. Maxey said the revenue picture is improving, to help pay the bonds for construction of the market. And he can make capitol improvements to the garage. “We’re still working on a video monitoring system, and have you seen the new paint job we did?” Maxey asked. “Each floor is color-coded. And the parking stalls are numbered.”

He said crime has also decreased dramatically after ending the free parking. “Loitering and car prowls are way down,” Maxey said. “I had declared an objective of zero car prowls, and in September, we didn’t have any car prowls at all.”

He said there are still a few car prowls each month, but the rate is way down, compared to last year.

For more Market parking information, including evening specials at Market area dining establishments, visit the Pike Place Market parking web page at <http://www.pikeplacemarket.org/site.asp?p=parking> or call 206-621-0469.

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