

RIGHT: Linda Wysong deals with work as it relates to society. One 1984 piece was a tower built and dismantled in an afternoon to emphasize the choreography of work.

FAR RIGHT: Infrastructure tours are fascinating: The bus trippers visited the county gravel pit and got a demonstration from a road crew.

ROSS WILLIAM HAMILTON/THE OREGONIAN

Bus buzz

Touring Multnomah County is an art form

Ken Kesey said you were either on the bus or off the bus — a reassuringly binary view, but one which Linda Wysong's experience suggests is a tad simplistic.

After leading the first of two performance art bus trips, the Portland artist might be more inclined to say, "You're either on the bus, off the bus or *supposed* to be back on the bus, because I just blew my whistle, but are still milling around."

She was probably surprised to find herself with two whistles slung around her neck and wrangling a busload of 20 people across Multnomah County on a recent Friday morning. Not that she isn't used to hard work: She was a journeyman carpenter for years, and her art often explores work and its relation to society. Her new piece is called "On the Road" and was sponsored by the county (where Wysong is artist in residence) and the Regional Arts & Culture Council.

But an honest day pounding nails is perhaps easier than being the honcho of a performance art bus trip, which entailed — at least in this case — tasks such as trying to make the sound system work and searching for missing vegan vittles. She was also shepherding us through an impressive array of events and stops planned for a three-hour trip — the same duration as the ill-fated Minnow's, you might recall.

The itinerary included a com-

mand performance by a county road crew, chats from county functionaries, a tour of the sign shop, looking up our houses on computers in the county surveyor's office and watching a video of Code Enforcement officer Dave Thomson busting a rooster.

Which really suffered from not having a soundtrack, but served to point out that city code says thou shalt not harbor roosters or traffic in them — but you may have three or fewer chickens in the back

yard. It was a good example of Wysong's love for the unseen inner workings of society: Who knew that there was a Multnomah County officer whose job it is to roam the back roads in search of mosquito breeding ponds, rogue roosters, surreptitious smokers, illegal farm animals, outlaw dumping grounds, noxious vegetation and improper carcass disposal?

Wysong clearly relishes this sort of insider knowledge, and spent days riding along with Thomson, with surveyors, a road crew, a tax assessor, animal control officers and hanging around the county's sign shop. She tracked their peregrinations, snapped photos and took videos and copious notes.

"In Europe, the sense of place is tied into static landmarks — buildings and monuments," she said as the bus rolled down Grand Avenue to a meeting with library outreach specialist Jere White, who would tell us that in high-security



OUT THERE

John Foyston

