Light rail proposal could impact UA

By Erin Schmidt
Staff Writer

Transportation initiatives on the upcoming skeleton-built light rail could have a direct impact on the UA and the Rio Nuevo project.

About 51 people attended a forum last night in the ILC to discuss the impact proposals 200 and 201 could have on the UA and the city of Tucson.

Proposition 200 calls for a number of measures to improve transportation systems in Tucson, including vast improvements to the Sun Tran bus service, the construction of a light rail system in central Tucson, and the extension of the Old Pueblo Trolley from the UA through downtown.

Proposition 200 concerns measures to fund those programs, including increasing the city sales tax a third of a percent and increasing the sales tax on construction contracts by four percent.

Both of these propositions must pass for the programs to be implemented.

“Rio Nuevo can’t work without this plan. Not a single downtown in this country has been revitalized through the car, you need a good transportation system,” said Stephen Farley of Tucsonans for a Sensible Transportation Solution.

“If needs the extension of the trolley and the light rail. This plan will be an enormous economic generator for Rio Nuevo,” Farley said.

Rio Nuevo is a proposed downtown revitalization project.

John Dougherty of the Tucson Chamber of Commerce, who opposed the initiatives, said he is concerned that construction costs needed to install the light rail system on East Broadway Avenue would eat up the funding for Rio Nuevo.

“Because of the amount of money need to make changes to Broadway, and if federal funding falls through, there will be no money for Rio Nuevo,” Dougherty said.

Farley said that the light rail system, which has planned stops along East Sixth Street, would relieve traffic congestion in the uni...