

Washington Rail News

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Publication of the Washington Association of Rail Passengers
A Not-for-profit Consumer Organization
"...getting the Pacific Northwest on the right track."

Amtrak Cascades service launches Dec. 1 Dedication of first Talgo trainset scheduled for Nov. 9

The new custom built (in Spain and Seattle) Talgo trainsets will go into service from Eugene, OR to Vancouver, BC on Dec. 1. The four trainsets will be named for Northwest mountain peaks: Mount Rainier, Mount Baker, Mount Hood and Mount Olympus. The trains will be powered by streamlined F-59 locomotive from General Motors' Electromotive Division. The trains will be used for three of the daily Seattle-Portland round-trips (with one schedule extending to Eugene) and the one Seattle-Vancouver, BC round-trip. (The Superliner *Coast Starlight* will continue to ply the tracks between Seattle and Eugene on its way to Los Angeles each day.) Plans are underway to add a second daily run between Seattle and Vancouver, BC in 1999, allowing same day connections across Seattle by train for the first time since 1981.

Amtrak Cascades doesn't just mean new equipment, improved amenities and improved service—it's another step toward fast frequent Amtrak service on the Pacific Northwest Corridor. The new trains and continuing improvements to tracks, signals and crossings will allow Amtrak West, in partnership with the DOTs of Washington and Oregon, to offer faster and more frequent train

service in the future.

Amtrak Cascades are uniquely Northwest. The trains were designed with the help of local residents. They offer the things the public said they wanted: laptop plug-ins, foot rests, redesigned seats with a better recline mechanism, recycling bins, checked

baggage service, storage for bicycles and skis, fresh local food, and full compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (including access to the diner and Bistro). Each train will also have Custom Class service available. For a small surcharge you'll have wider seats with two-and-one seating; more leg room; cup holders; use of the Metropolitan lounge at Portland Union Station; priority boarding; and complimentary newspapers, head phones, snacks

and non-alcoholic beverages.

On Monday Nov. 9, the Mount Rainier trainset will be dedicated in a ceremony at King Street Station. The event is tentatively scheduled to begin at 11 a.m. All WashARP members are invited to attend. After the ceremony, the trainset will be off to the Northeast Corridor for high speed testing and certification by the Federal Railroad Administration. The trains are capable of 125 mph but will continue to be limited to the current 79 mph maximum. In the future, top speeds may climb to 110 mph in selected rural areas when appropriate safety measures are put into place.

VIPs and the media will get to experience the new trains and services on special runs scheduled for Nov. 30. Trains will depart Seattle for Eugene and for Vancouver, BC. Ceremonies will also be held in Portland en (See **Launch**, p. 4)



WashARP's First Tom Martin Memorial Award

Presented to Bob Drewe! September 24, 1998 in Seattle

It was with great pleasure and a bit of theatrics that WashARP Executive Director Lloyd Flem and Vice President Mike Skehan presented outgoing Sound Transit Board Chair Bob Drewe! an award for transportation excellence. Bob Drewe! has served as chair for over three years through the ballot proposal drafting, the successful vote and the early organizational years, getting a new and large agency up and running. The foundation placed by Snohomish County Executive Drewe! is solid, providing this area with the framework for a vastly improved public transportation system, portions of which go into service next year.

The award is also a fitting remembrance for longtime WashARP member Tom Martin and his family, as he too was instrumental in laying the foundation of our organization. (See the April/May 1998 issue of *Washington Rail News* for Chuck Mott's tribute to Tom.)

A hand crafted "steam whistle," made by Frank Hutchins of Seattle using bellows and pipe organ harmonics, was presented with a brass plaque honoring Bob Drewe! for outstanding "**Contributions towards achieving a balanced and efficient Public and Private Transportation System during his tenure as Board Chair at Sound Transit. Your efforts will be appreciated by future generations.**"

Needless to say, the blowing of the whistle was met by ohhs and ahhs from all in attendance at the meeting.

Photo by John Dewhirst

*From the
Executive
Director's Desk
by
Lloyd H. Flem*

**The View
from Else-
where;
Election '98;
Our "Rail
Family";**

Cheers for Olympia

Invited by Amtrak DC to help host staffers of leading U. S. Senators and Congresspeople, Darleen and I were pleased to show off our state and rail corridor to more than a score of these bright, mostly-young people from all over the country on a sunny and perfect train trip on the temporarily Superliner-equipped *Mt. Baker International* on Friday August 28.

On board, Amtrak West CEO Gil Mallery assigned me to be a de facto geography prof; a comfortable role, given that that was a reprise of my profession of a couple of decades ago. As I also knew of and about the staffers' bosses and their views on rail, we enjoyed fruitful conversations.

We heard from our visitors strong praise for our state and our exemplary and successful partnership in developing our Northwest Rail Corridor. These politically sophisticated young folks had a recurrent question: Why isn't your state's Congressional delegation taking the lead in support for federal investment in intercity rail as do the delegations from the **Northeast** Corridor? I had no ready answers. While some in our delegation are surely supportive and vote for Amtrak funding, others have been harsh critics. And nobody from our current delegation is leading the pro-Amtrak charge like, say, Cong. Spencer Bachus (R-AL), Sen. Kent Conrad (D-ND), Cong. James Oberstar (D-MN) or Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison (R-TX) whose states, far from the Northeast, have less Amtrak service than we enjoy here in the Northwest!

This brings us to Election '98. WashARP does not endorse candidates. As individual citizens, we do and **should** work for and donate to people who share our views. And we need to help elect or reelect those who "vote correctly," even if they may not rank rail or even transportation as one of their top issues. We should also cut some slack for candidates for state or federal office who appear to know little about rail and transportation policy and funding. Most, frankly, know less about rail than do the members of WashARP.

Help to educate these people who, after all, have dozens of issues they need to address.

However, some guidelines: If, in answer to Amtrak or rail funding questions, one get but a rote history of "huge Amtrak subsidies" or how "only one Amtrak route makes a profit" without mention of the other modes' infinitely greater public investment; they don't mention the need for balanced transportation or our Corridor's successful rail partnership; or they say "trains won't cure traffic congestion in my district/state," assume the candidate is no friend of WashARP's views and consider his or her opponent for your support.

If however, there is agreement that passenger trains should be part of a transportation mix; or that our state's program is a success and should continue; or even "please keep me informed about rail; I am interested in learning," WashARP members should consider helping these candidates.

For aspirants for the state Senate and House, gently remind them of a late 1994 independent survey that showed intercity rail and high-capacity transit were the two most popular choices for new transportation investment, significantly above adding road capacity. Also, that they "should be proud" (words of seven out-of-state Congressional staffers) of our state's role in building our nationally-lauded intercity rail program.

Former U. S. Sen. Mark Hatfield (R-OR), a consistent Amtrak supporter, gently chided Oregonians who, a few years ago, had not communicated with their delegation of their desire for investment in passenger rail. Private griping is worthless. Politely but persistently visit, write, phone, fax, e-mail incumbent candidates. **Donate** time and money to the campaigns of our existing or likely friends. Work to educate all on the need for and advantages of rail as a growing part of future transportation. Only a few weeks to go. Help make the difference.

While the tedious soap opera continues in our national politics a significant change has occurred in the government of a major ally. Helmut Kohl, the chancellor of Germany for sixteen consecutive years, was recently voted out of office in favor of Gerhard Schroeder. Kohl's party, similar to moderate Republicans in the U. S., was fully committed to investment in pas-

senger rail and other environmentally sound transportation modes. Schroeder is actively seeking an alliance with the strong and vocal Green Party. This probably means even more emphasis will be placed on clean, safe and environmentally efficient transportation modes. Rail and transit would certainly benefit. How Germany's recent move toward greater private investment in rail will fare under the Schroeder government remains to be seen.

We in North America should remain educated on how important capitalist democracies approach their transportation challenge. Provincialism by policy makers is no virtue.



Having taken Talgo corridor trains on two mid-September business trips to Seattle (nearly flawless; I cannot fathom why anyone would drive alone to a mid-day event in downtown Seattle when our trains offer a superior trip in every way), I increasingly see that we here in Washington State have a closely-cooperating "rail family" more than elsewhere in North America. On-board Amtrak crews, workers and management at the Pacifica Talgo plant in Seattle, Amtrak regional management, WSDOT people (from Sid Morrison to new interns), BNSF folks with whom we deal, hired consultants and service providers, key legislators and community leaders all are pulling together to help grow and improve rail service in our state. WashARP's role: to praise, push and educate and thus gently nudge those with narrow parochial rail or transit interests back into working for the broad success of the larger cause. Other states, even in the West, look to our successes. When asked, I say our culture of cooperation, mutual understanding and "everyone wins" has taken us far.



Cheers for Olympia: yes, cheers for Maine Sen. Olympia Snowe (R), who has consistently supported Amtrak, despite her state having no Amtrak service. (Hopefully, the Train to Maine next year!) But here, I want to applaud my soon-to-be ex-hometown, our state Capitol City. Family situations have engendered a move 30 miles south to Chehalis, where the WashARP office will also be established, near a bus stop in the heart of Chehalis' cute compact old downtown, easy walking to City Hall, Library, Courthouse, Museum (in (See **Lloyd**, page 5)

TRACKSIDE TALK

With Mike Skehan

The Commuter Rail Section met at Andy's Diner on Sep. 17th. Eleven members were present, including two new members. Welcome aboard Paul Cory, recently arrived from San Diego (with a wealth of information on the Coaster commuter rail service), and long time WashARPer Hal Cooper.

Bob Whalen and Rob Morrison both brought the group up to speed on progress in both the North and South corridors. Rob presented the findings of Sounder's recent market study. Many more people in both corridors want to use the system for travel "other than" commuting to Seattle. Stations along the South corridor are well on the way to final design, and the EIS scoping for the North corridor should be done in November, with a Federal Transit Administration approval date of mid '99. Bi-level cars are being built by Bombardier, and engines from GM's EMD should now be under construction. Maintenance facilities will be contracted to Amtrak at the new King Street Station yard south of Safeco Field, with BNSF crews running the trains. A final track operations and capital improvement contract with BNSF is close to being done (still no details to report, but no surprises are expected).

WashARPer Eric Griswold completed his search for stations around the country where Amtrak and commuter rail share the same facility. Many thanks to Eric for his detailed work and we wish him well on his extended studies in Europe (jealous!!). We look forward to a well functioning Tukwila Amtrak/Sounder stop in late '99.

The Ballard station Technical Advisory Committee is now formed, with Rob attending on our behalf. We really want to make this stop happen.

Work has begun on a Section work plan for next year, with some good directions provided by members. I hope to see more faces at the 3rd Thursday meeting on November 19, as all pledged to bring two new members with them.

See you then and keep up the good work.

Rebirth of a train station: Seattle's historic King Street Station

By Kristine Hill, President
King Street Station Foundation

King Street Station is Seattle's front door. Designed by Reed & Stem and built in 1906, King Street Station represents an architecture of hope. Its 245 foot clock tower, modeled after the Campanile in Piazza San Marco of Venice, Italy, speaks to us as a cultural landmark. Today, King Street Station whimpers in agony and begs for attention. Thanks to a team of government agencies, transportation providers, and private experts, King Street Station is well on its way to full redevelopment and will once again be a proud welcoming gateway for the city of Seattle and the Puget Sound region.

After years of redevelopment feasibility studies, a partnership of the Washington State Department of Transportation (DOT), Amtrak, and the King Street Station Foundation is pursuing the full redevelopment of the station. Building this partnership has required patience and persistence. Incremental events that seemed like discrete decisions have now coalesced to create the right environment for the rehabilitation of this historic structure. What were these seemingly discrete actions?

- ◆ The Washington State DOT and Amtrak began making investments in fast, frequent rail service in the Pacific Northwest Rail Corridor, including track construction, signalization systems, improved local transportation connections, grade crossing upgrades, and the introduction of Spanish built Talgo trains. As a result, ridership is growing at a double digit rate in the corridor.
- ◆ King Street Station is at the heart of the Pacific Northwest Rail Corridor with 17,000 passengers a day expected to connect through it by 2007. Redevelopment needs at the station captured the interest of members of the Washington State Legislature. The station was designated a "Facility of Statewide Significance" and, in spite of these tough financial times for transportation capital projects, the legislature persevered in identifying funds to contribute to the project. Dedicated legislators continue to focus their attention on King Street Station

and its hard-working role in the transportation network.

- ◆ South downtown Seattle began to witness significant redevelopment, with new office buildings, a new baseball park, and a new football stadium planned or under construction on all sides of King Street Station. Sound Transit's Commuter rail program will serve King Street Station directly, while Light Rail will service will be across Fourth Avenue at the International District Station. Sound Transit selected the Union Station site directly across the street for their new headquarters.
- ◆ The City of Seattle launched plans for a significant investment in street and sidewalk improvements immediately surrounding King Street Station to afford better access for customers.

All of this activity is in the heart of the historic Pioneer Square and International District neighborhoods of south downtown Seattle. Working with valuable and sometimes fragile communities, the numerous projects underway require an enormous commitment from all project sponsors to work together.

It is apparent that it would be foolish *not* to prepare King Street Station for a return to its role as the premier transportation hub in Seattle. King Street Station, like so many other stations, fell victim to 1950s and '60s "modernization" attempts. Enter the talented team headed by Otak, Inc. and Hardy Holzman Pfeiffer (HHP) Urban Designers and Historic Preservation Architects. Retained by DOT and Amtrak, the project team went to work in the spring of 1997 to evaluate the building and design the redevelopment of King Street Station. During the same year, the Great American Station Foundation awarded its first financial grants to 10 qualified applicants and King Street Station was among the first recipients to receive this financial award. By the end of 1997, findings indicated the structure itself could be rehabilitated, seismically upgraded, and all of its historic finishes could be either restored or recreated. The full redevelopment of King Street Station carries an estimated price tag of \$45 mill.

Thus DOT and Amtrak needed another partner in the redevelopment efforts. A group of local business people banded together, and the King Street Station Foundation was formed in support of the redevelopment project. ■

The Foundation is governed by a 19-member Board of Directors with a mandate to secure ownership of the building to ensure that it is held in the public trust, and to raise the balance of funds needed for the project from the civic and corporate community.

We are well on our way to meeting our goal of re-opening King Street Station in a fully redeveloped condition in early 2001. We are working out inter-agency agreements and joint construction management issues with the Station's neighbors. With the initial infusion of construction funding by Amtrak, work on the track and platforms began this summer. The City of Seattle's investment in street and sidewalk improvements will follow early next year. We will continue to phase construction and seek additional sources of funding until King Street Station is fully redeveloped and once again is a proud gateway to Seattle and the Puget Sound region.

(Updated by the author and reprinted with permission from the Great American Station Foundation newsletter.)

Sounder station update— Seattle to Tacoma

By Mike Skehan

First Sounder commuter trains will begin running by late next year. Stations are all moving forward into the design stage with construction to begin early next year. At a minimum, each will have platforms, shelters, kiosks, bike lockers, some surface parking, and other necessities of running a commuter railroad.

Each station will look different, using local landmarks and themes as the keys to design. The following gives an idea of the progress along the line.

King Street: Existing Amtrak station will be renovated and restored (adjacent article). A new pedestrian bridge above the tracks will connect to 4th Ave, Union Station and the light rail line.

Tukwila: Platforms on BNSF mainline, south of I-405, will accompany a 12 acre site, adjacent to Boeing's new corporate campus (HQs are out!). Surface parking and a new Amtrak station will form the foundation of a transportation crossroads from Sea-Tac Airport to the Eastside and from north to south with commuter train and bus service. Light rail may also serve this location, if the city has it's way and an extra \$100 mill. can be found. The station budget is \$13 mill. and MBT Ar-

chitecture has been select for design work.

Kent: It seems the fat lady has sung on the North versus South siting controversy. The site between Smith and James Streets was selected, along with a city funded parking structure. Several locations for the garage are being considered, along with a pedestrian bridge to cross the tracks. MBT is also the architect for this project. The garage portion will be complete about a year after the station opens. The budget is about \$11 mill.

Auburn: The site selected is along A Street between Main and 3rd. Plans for a new transit center, a parking structure with retail shops on the first floor, and pedestrian and bike access have resulted from a year long effort by community and downtown interest working together. Anil Verma Associates is doing the design, with a budget of \$9.4 mill.

Sumner: The site is south of Maple Street in downtown. The local advisory committee is about to select a final design, in keeping with Sumner's history. Surface parking will be on the east side of the tracks on vacant land. The budget is \$5.5 mill., with design being done by Merritt/Pardini of Tacoma.

Puyallup: An intermodal station straddling both sides of the BNSF mainline, west of Meridian Street (at the original NP station site) and costing \$9.9 mill. is being designed by Merritt/Pardini. Pierce Transit and Regional Express routes will use the new transit center for connections throughout Pierce County, as well as vastly improved service into King County.

Tacoma: The Freighthouse Square site on the Tacoma Eastern (former Milwaukee Road) line has been chosen for the station although no contracts have been let for design. Temporary platforms, west of the existing Amtrak station on the BNSF line, will have to suffice until final design of the light rail and commuter rail lines at the Tacoma Dome Transportation Center are finalized by Sound Transit. Amtrak may some day use the Freighthouse Square station if the decision is made to use the BNSF Prairie Line through Lakewood in lieu of the Point Defiance line.

For further information visit Sound Transit's web site at www.soundtransit.org or call Julie Shibuya at the Commuter Rail office: (206) 689-7657.

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route to Eugene and in Bellingham en route to Vancouver, BC.

Then the big day, Dec. 1, arrives and our new trains start regular service. Travelers on the first day of service will receive commemorative boarding passes and a custom class upgrade coupon for future use. On board each train strolling singers will perform and hold giveaway contests. Prizes include Amtrak souvenirs and food items from partner vendors. All passengers will receive free non-alcoholic beverages throughout the day. Customers can sign large "first day—Amtrak Cascades" signs that will then be displayed in the stations along the route.

Brief "thank you" ceremonies will be held at each intermediate community along the route sometime during the day.

Also watch for the special Toys for Tots trains on a middle weekend in December.

Amtrak West and WSDOT need your help. All WashARP members are invited to volunteer in two ways:

- Construction skills are needed to build displays for the ceremonies. This work will be done at King St. Station and will take place over a six week period starting in mid-October.
- Hosts and helpers are needed for the dedication ceremony on Nov. 9, the VIP runs on Nov. 30 and the first day of service on Dec. 1.

If you want to volunteer a little or a lot please call Clarice Nakata Hall at 206.784.7324 or e-mail her at nakatahall@aol.com.

Federal funds for Sound Transit remain skimpy

The Senate has approved \$60 mill. for FY99 and the House only \$38.5 mill. as the federal share of funding for Sound Transit. A conference committee is at work ironing out the differences as we go to press. Sound Transit had requested \$124 mill. Rep. Frank Wolf (R-VA), chair of the House transportation appropriations subcommittee is impressed by the local commitment to Sound Transit and the project's mix of transit options. Eighty percent of the project cost is projected to be from non-federal funds, just the opposite of what most transit agencies try for. However, this hasn't translated into adequate funding as of yet.

Lloyd, from page 2
the old NP station), banks, other professional services, a fitness gym, a great smoke-free restaurant and brew pub (live jazz and blues music) and the best men's store in Southwest Washington! (New office address and numbers next issue.)

We will miss Olympia's greater cultural and political diversity. I praise the Olympia City Establishment's vision of a balanced, sustainable transportation future. No city government in the state has more consistently given active support for state and federal investment in intercity passenger rail. Olympia is still alone in having developed and built a fine and needed rail station substantially with private funds. Efforts of our Amtrak Depot Committee to have other cities build or improve their stations by means other than just taxpayer monies have not yet succeeded. (The immense job of restoring King Street Station to rightful glory will doubtless require some private and independent funding. I have great respect for the job Kristine Hill is now doing in the efforts to give Seattle and the state a proper flagship station.) And Olympia alone staffs their Amtrak station with trained, unpaid volunteer Station Representatives. Other Amtrak towns with unstaffed stations have not yet even accepted Olympia's offers to assist them in organizing such a program!

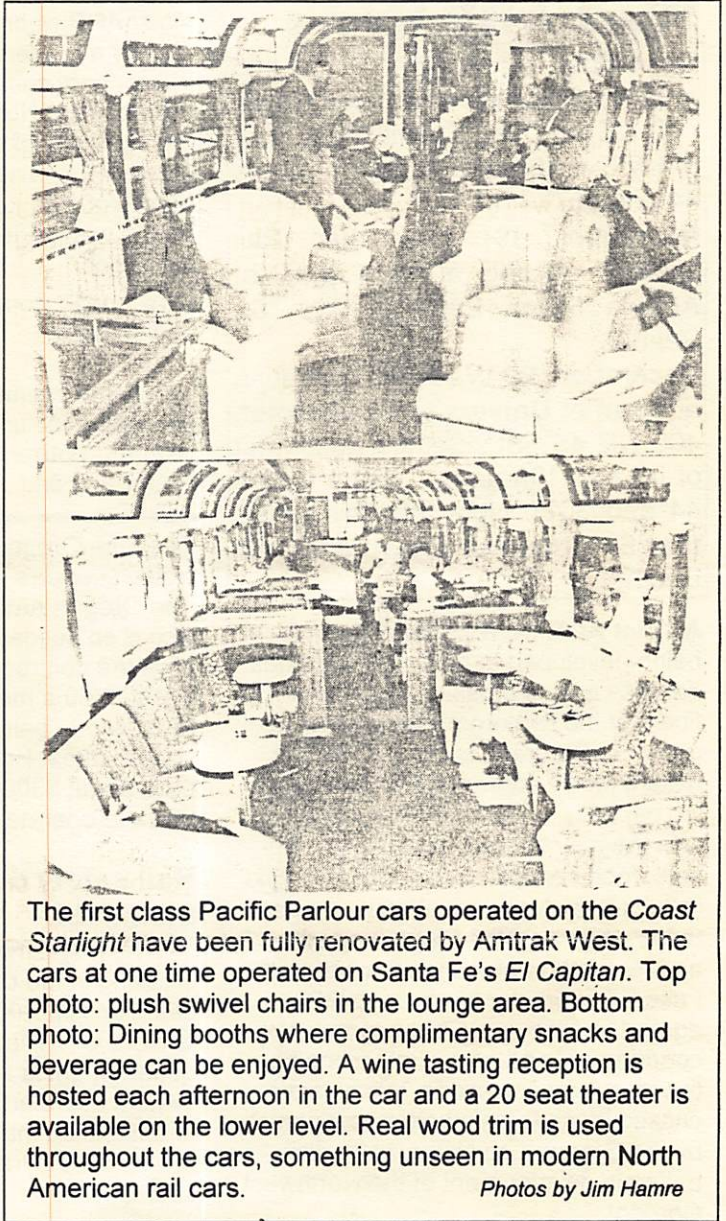
As one deeply involved with Olympia's entire Centennial Station saga, I recall the "Old Amtrak's" benign neglect; they then assumed we could "never" overcome the multiple hassles and hurdles to resite and build a fine facility ourselves. And if we insisted upon replacing the East Olympia shack, Amtrak wanted us to build a McDepot, just like the small and undistinguished structure that now serves Tacoma. (Amtrak had suggestions, but no funds for us!) The Olympia area instead built a classic that literally became the Amtrak Poster Child in 1993, as its calendar subject from our own J. Craig Thorpe's painting. (Forever thanks Bob and Buck!) Though helpful in originally planning for Centennial's Station Representative program, Amtrak was sure if "would never

work" over time. But under WashARPer Rich DeGarmo's consistent hand, the excellence of this volunteer effort continues unabated.

Note: I needle my good friends at Amtrak over their past "can't work, won't work" rhetoric. The "new Amtrak," particularly Amtrak West, is more open to innovation than was the hypercentralized beneficent dictatorship of a decade ago.

Olympia is second only to Seattle in WashARP membership; much of this interest was a result of the several years' effort to build Centennial Station.

An *old* "conservative value" holds that when a community works for and participates in something, it is owned, treasured and used for more than when it is simply given to them. Ironic that Olympia, criticized as a bastion of "big government" ↘



The first class Pacific Parlour cars operated on the *Coast Starlight* have been fully renovated by Amtrak West. The cars at one time operated on Santa Fe's *El Capitan*. Top photo: plush swivel chairs in the lounge area. Bottom photo: Dining booths where complimentary snacks and beverage can be enjoyed. A wine tasting reception is hosted each afternoon in the car and a 20 seat theater is available on the lower level. Real wood trim is used throughout the cars, something unseen in modern North American rail cars.
Photos by Jim Hamre

Important Addresses and Phone Numbers

U. S. House of Representatives.. Washington, DC 20515
 U. S. Senate Washington, DC 20510
 Capitol Switchboard (for all members) ...202 224-3121
 State Legislature..... State Capitol, Olympia, WA 98504
 Hotline for leaving messages800 562-6000

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Chuck Mott, Mt. Vernon...President360 422-5323
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All are evening numbers, except Lloyd's, which is available 24-hours a day (answering machine).

liberalism," is to date a singular example of traditional conservatism, having put together a proud community transportation asset like few, if any, other places in the country. (The public sector, local and state, surely did help, I must add.)

Thank you Olympia. I'm proud to have been a resident for the past 18 years and will visit you often in the years to come.

Amtrak's FY99 funding was still being decided at press time by House and Senate conferees. The House number must stand and the Senate language on the definition of capital must prevail. Call!

WashARP News

November 14: WashARP meeting at noon at **University Plaza Hotel**, 400 NE 45th St., Seattle (just west of I-5 Exit 169 and on Metro routes 44 and 307).

November 19: Commuter Rail section meeting at **6:30 p.m.** at **Andy's Diner**, 2963 4th Ave. S., Seattle.

December 5: WashARP meeting at noon at **University Plaza Hotel**, 400 NE 45th St., Seattle (just west of I-5 Exit 169 and on Metro routes 44 and 307). Note that this is the **first Saturday**, as is our tradition in December.

A Joint AORTA-WashARP agenda is being developed to help rail advocates address issues crossing state lines. Officers of the two organizations met together in Centralia on Aug. 1. Issues we are jointly addressing include seating capacity limitations in the corridor with the new fixed-consist Talgo train-sets; food service on the corridor trains (particularly during meal hours on some trains when only the Bistro is used); and restoration of train service to Salt Lake City from the Northwest. We agreed to meet more often to improve coordination and communications between our organizations. We also discussed ideas to gain better acceptance by the Oregon Legislature to participating in development of the Northwest Corridor.

WashARP webmaster Warren Yee has started a moderated e-mail list where subscribers can discuss rail passenger issues in the Northwest, including the development of faster and more frequent rail service in the Northwest Corridor. You can join by going to the following web page and following the instructions:

www.onelist.com/subscribe.cgi/pnwpassrail

WashARP members contributing to this newsletter include Stan Suchan, Mike Skehan, Warren Yee, Jerry Sheldon, Bob Krebs and Jeff Schultz.

Does the Oregon DOT Rail Office subsidize Oregon's highways? Indirectly. The Oregon Amtrak Thruway bus service is so successful that ODOT only pays the contractor operating the buses about \$750 a month, with the rest of the revenue being generated from passenger fares. However, the contractor pays about \$3000 a month in road use taxes to operate the Thruway buses.

Rail safety developments in the news

The first "smart" rail-highway grade crossing in the U. S. was recently dedicated on Amtrak's Northeast Corridor in Groton, CT. The crossing has four quadrant gates and an in-cab warning system that alerts the engineer to obstructions on the tracks at the crossing in time for the train to be brought to a safe stop.

The state of North Carolina is developing a "sealed corridor" along its future high speed rail corridor between Raleigh and Charlotte. The program includes the use of four quadrant gates, long arm gates, median barriers and curbs, video enforcement, crossing closings and consolidation, grade separations, and studying and analyzing driver behaviors. The use of four quadrant gates and median barrier approaching one crossing in Charlotte reduced the number of **weekly** violations from 43 to one. WSDOT is investigating these technologies for use in the Northwest Corridor. A pilot video monitoring and data collection project is just getting underway.

The Federal Railroad Administration has implemented new track safety regulations. The railroads must now adopt written procedures and provide training for installing and maintaining continuous welded rail. CWR is subjected to high compressive and tensile forces because of the lack of joints. This can cause buckling or pull aparts as the temperature changes. Internal inspection of rail for defects will increase on many lines. Inspections will now depend on tonnage passing over the track as well as time intervals.

The railroads and unions, with prompting from FRA and the National Transportation Safety Board, are starting to address the issue of train crew fatigue, including items such as hours of work, days off, schedule predictability and away-from-home lodging.

Washington Association of
Rail Passengers
P. O. Box 70381
Seattle, WA 98107

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