

www.AllAboardWashington.org

Publication of All Aboard Washington
A Not-for-profit Consumer Organization
"Moving forward... On Rail."



Gov. Bob Ferguson; U.S. Rep. Rick Larsen; State Reps. Jake Fey & Brandy Donaghy, & AAWA VP Harvey Bowen at the Seattle launch of the Amtrak Cascades Airo fleet Photo by Kimberly Bowen

Airo Launches New Era for Amtrak Cascades

Amtrak Cascades entered a new chapter this week as the first Airo trainsets were formally introduced during a series of launch events along the corridor, including a major gathering at Seattle's historic King Street Station. Federal transportation leaders, state officials, Siemens Mobility, Transportation Advocates, and Amtrak staff celebrated the arrival of a modern fleet that will begin revenue service on September 30. The Airo sets will initially operate on trains 503, 508, 516, and 519, replacing the Amfleet consists in use since 2025.

Federal Railroad Administrator David Armstrong Fink highlighted the national significance of the moment, saying the Airo fleet represents "a result of years of collaboration, innovation, and dedication." He emphasized that Cascades is the first corridor to receive the new equipment, calling it "the first step in the broader rollout across the country and an important part of a much larger transformation at Amtrak."

Governor Jay Inslee underscored the beauty and importance of the corridor itself, saying, "I think this is the most beautiful line anywhere in the United States. And having these beautiful state-of-the-art trains only makes that experience even richer."

Siemens Mobility North America President

Toby Bohr described the Airo design as "a new era for rail in America," built around comfort, accessibility, and reliability. He noted features such as onboard wheelchair lifts, fully accessible restrooms, sealed vestibules, and predictive maintenance systems designed to reduce downtime. "These trains represent the very best of American manufacturing, innovation, and collaboration," Bohr said. "The journey begins today."

WSDOT Passenger Rail Program Manager Kirk Fredrickson informed us that in addition to the eight trainsets on order for the Cascades corridor, Washington has arranged to purchase two additional Airo trainsets, to be funded 20% by the state. The originally ordered sets will finish arriving in 2026, with the additional pair following later in the program. With these deliveries, the Talgo Series 8 equipment is expected to leave the corridor in January 2027, fully replaced by the incoming Airo fleet.

The new trainsets offer 317 seats, a sizable increase over the interim Amfleet and Talgo Series 8 consists.

As riders step aboard the Airo fleet they can expect to experience what's been described as the most significant equipment upgrade in Amtrak history—one that positions the Cascades Corridor for growth, improved reliability, and a fully modern passenger experience.

AAWA Annual Business Meeting – Nov. 14

All Aboard Washington will hold its annual business meeting on Saturday, November 14, at the King Street Bar & Oven in Pioneer Square. This meeting is required under our bylaws and is the primary opportunity for members to hear updates on AAWA's work, participate in organizational decisions, and engage directly with the board.

The meeting will run from 11:30 AM to 1:30 PM, with arrival and seating beginning at 11:30. We plan to have two business sessions, from 11:45 to 12:30 and from 12:45 to 1:30, with a short break between them. Members may order lunch individually from the restaurant menu.

As the venue has limited capacity, RSVPs at AAWA.US/BusMtg are strongly recommended. If we know in advance that attendance will be higher than usual, we may be able to expand the space available to us. Registering helps us plan appropriately and ensures that everyone who wishes to attend can do so comfortably.

This meeting is open to all members, and we encourage anyone interested in AAWA's direction, governance, or advocacy priorities to participate. Please note that this meeting is in-person only. We will not be offering Zoom or other remote access, so members who wish to participate should plan to join us at the restaurant. If you plan to attend, please register at AAWA.US/BusMtg or with this QR Code.



AAWA Needs More Volunteer Leaders

For several years, All Aboard Washington has operated with a shrinking pool of volunteer officers, each taking on more responsibilities than the bylaws ever intended. The organization has managed to keep advocacy, membership communication, and basic administration moving forward, (See **Leaders**, page 2)

All Aboard Washington Officers and Contacts

Gary Wirt, Yakima – President.....garywirt@allaboardwashington.org
Harvey Bowen, Seattle - Vice President.....harveyb@allaboardwashington.org
Luis Moscoso, Tumwater - Second Vice President.....luism@allaboardwashington.org
Rocky Shay, Federal Way - Secretary.....harmons@allaboardwashington.org
(Vacant) – Treasurer.....treasurer@allaboardwashington.org
Robert Lawrence, Mill Creek - Membership Director.....robl@allaboardwashington.org
Membership Inquiries:.....membership@allaboardwashington.org
Charles Hamilton - Executive Director.....mailadmin@allaboardwashington.org
Harvey Bowen - Newsletter Editor.....harveyb@allaboardwashington.org
Contact us by phone:.....Western Washington (360) 529-5552
.....Eastern Washington (509) 213-0070
Mailing Address: All Aboard Washington, P. O. Box 70381, Seattle, WA 98127

Important Addresses and Phone Numbers

U. S. House of Representatives:
Washington, DC 20515
U. S. Senate: Washington, DC 20510
Capitol Switchboard (all members): 202 224-3121
State Legislature: State Capitol, Olympia 98504
Hotline for leaving messages: 800 562-6000
Amtrak Reservations/Information: 800 872-7245
All Aboard Washington: AllAboardWashington.org
Rail Passengers Association: www.narprail.org
Amtrak: www.amtrak.com
Amtrak Cascades: www.amtrakcascades.com
Sound Transit: www.soundtransit.org

Leaders, from page 1

but only through the extraordinary efforts of a handful of people. As we approach the end of 2026, the board is being transparent about how we reached this point: long-term turnover, increasing administrative requirements for nonprofits, and the absence of a stable pipeline of new leaders have all contributed to the current strain. The situation is not the result of any single event, but of accumulated structural pressure that now requires a broader response from the membership.

The most urgent need is for a Treasurer. This role is essential for maintaining AAWA's nonprofit status, managing accounts, filing required reports, and ensuring that the organization can continue to operate legally and responsibly. To make the position more accessible, the board is offering an Executive Treasurer option: the elected Treasurer would review and sign documents and checks every two weeks (or more often if preferred), while day-to-day bookkeeping could be handled by a contracted accounting service. This model reduces the workload while preserving proper oversight and compliance. The board is prepared to support whichever approach the volunteer prefers, and training will be provided. While the "Executive" Treasurer model reduces volunteer workload, it increases cost, and every dollar spent on contracted accounting is one we cannot spend on our mission.

AAWA also needs a President for 2027. The President's responsibilities include preparing agendas, leading meetings, coordinating with the board, and representing the organization in public settings. These duties can be shared or delegated, and the board has already discussed ways to distribute tasks so that the role is manageable for someone new to nonprofit leadership. With a clear agenda structure, established meeting cadence, and experienced board members available to assist, the President's role is far less daunting than it may appear from the outside.

The Nov. 14 annual business meeting will be a pivotal moment. Members will receive updates on finances, governance, and steps to stabilize operations. The meeting will also include time for discussion, questions, and nominations for officer positions. It is an opportunity for members to shape the organization's future, understand what the roles entail, and consider how their skills might fit into AAWA's leadership needs. Space is limited, so RSVPs are requested.

AAWA's work has always depended on volunteers who care about passenger rail in Washington and the Pacific Northwest. The board believes that with a few new leaders the organization can move into 2027 with renewed stability and purpose. Members who are interested in serving or learning more are encouraged to contact the board. With shared effort, AAWA can continue the advocacy and community engagement that have defined it for decades.

Interim Treasurer's Report

By Harvey Bowen, Interim Treasurer

AAWA's financial position is stable for the remainder of 2026. Based on current revenue, reserves, and expected expenses, we can meet all obligations associated with normal operations through the end of the year. This includes routine bills, insurance, required filings, and the basic costs of keeping the organization functioning. However, our outlook for 2027 is not yet assured. To continue operating at our current level, AAWA needs to maintain a minimum funding level of approximately \$3,000 per month. This run rate covers essential expenses only — not expansion, new programs, or additional advocacy work. Without increased member support, we will not be able to sustain this level of activity. We want to express our sincere thanks to all donors who have supported AAWA over the past several years. Their generosity has allowed us to continue our advocacy work during periods when our revenue was uncertain. That support has been essential,

and we are deeply grateful for it.

However, we cannot rely on a small number of donors indefinitely. To maintain our operations into 2027, we need additional members to take up this responsibility — through many modest contributions across our membership or even from a few new major donors. Every donation strengthens our ability to plan confidently for the coming year and ensures that AAWA can continue our work for more and better passenger and freight rail service in Washington State. See the back page for how to donate to support All Aboard Washington.

Advocates Participate in Airo Launch Events

By Harvey Bowen

The Amtrak Cascades Airo launch events on Saturday, Sept. 26 included a special train from Everett to Eugene. AAWA participants along parts of the route included President Gary Wirt, Secretary Rocky Shay, Board Member Patrick Carnahan, my wife, and me. While aboard, we explored the consist and spoke with elected leaders and aides, Amtrak, WSDOT, and Siemens staff about the new equipment and its upcoming service. Visitors to my table in the café car included Amtrak Board Member Elaine Clegg, WSDOT Passenger Rail Program Manager Kirk Fredrickson, Director of WSDOT's Rail, Freight, and Ports Division Jason Biggs, and friends and partners. Many attendees returned on the Coast Starlight, where our conversations continued.



VP Harvey Bowen, Kimberly Bowen, & Director Patrick Carnahan aboard Airo

Photo by Patrick Carnahan



WITH
JIM
CUSICK

Retro, eh?

You know you're getting old when you're in the retro camp.

So, does being old correlate to being wise?

Then again, when you know too much, do you just crank up the snark, because "Hey, I'm retired! What are they going to do, Fire me?"

The first thing I need to address is the way I reacted when I received the email from Harvey requesting an article.

I heard it in Jim Hamre's voice. Brings back the memories. The tragedy of losing someone before you think they should be gone carries the grief of the loss but also the legacy of their contributions. In reality, good people leave a lasting legacy, and we are blessed sharing the time while they were here.

Knowing all that I know about the Dupont tragedy, and the people involved, puts me in a complex emotional situation. As with Jim and Zach's passing, and that of our late esteemed executive director Lloyd Flem, the way to celebrate that legacy is for everyone to carry the torch forward.

Except, with me, it comes with some extra fuel, as will be evident later.

Know your argument, keep the bullet points in mind, and don't be afraid to challenge the status quo.

Re... Mr. Retro

Twenty five years ago I finished up my participation on the I-405 Corridor Program Citizens Committee.

There was no funding source assigned by the legislature when the FEIS was completed until 2014 with the first incremental increase in the gas tax. Given that delay, the 'improvements' to the corridor are just now

starting to happen. Starting almost 15 years later because no one had the gumption to tell the public that taxes would have to be raised.

People have questions, people have opinions, I supply the actual information.

It's not always what everyone wants to hear, but it is the history.



J. Craig Thorpe

The ERC

Ah Yes, the Eastside Rail Corridor. Living out its life as a biking trail. Now I see people with opinions claim Sound Transit dropped the ball not putting a train on the ROW.

I have to remind them that Renton's then mayor Jesse Tanner vetoed using the ERC for any transit option, saying "We let people know we don't want that damned railroad line used as a rapid transit line." (Marc Stiles, Daily Journal of Commerce, Oct. 16, 2003; full text available via DJC paywall or in-library at Seattle Public or King County Libraries.)

No Trees!

Trees have been removed going northbound on 405 and turning right to head north on SR527 at the Canyon Park exit in Bothell. If I'm reading my surveyor spray painted X's correctly, a whole s lot more will be removed along SR527. Having BRT access from I-405 meant enlarging the footprint of the roadway, and removing the trees adjacent to the business park properties, much to the consternation of the local residents.

At that time, the current Snohomish County chair Jared Mead had a Facebook post trying to explain what was going on. As I contributed my technical expertise to these posts concerning how these decisions were made, I mentioned to him that the original FEIS was completed at the end of 2001.

His reply: "2001?! I was not aware. I was still in elementary school back then."

Therein lies the problem! What people perceive versus what really happened. My purpose in life apparently, as always, is to not let history get changed. (WSDOT refers

to the individual master plans for SR167 and I-405, as the two have been lumped together now as The SR167/I-405 Corridor Program)

Do you know that when I refer to my past Mainframe Programmer experiences, I get asked "Was Y2K a hoax?" <sigh>

Yes, the Y2K problem was real. So don't get too smug whippersnappers! Remember, the same issues will be presenting themselves in Unix operating systems in 2038. Where does Unix operate? Except for most mainframe computers... EVERYWHERE!

Since history feels like it's repeating itself, I shall have to do the same, keep repeating myself!

Times ARE a Changin'

There is one change I've noticed recently, and that is - more people who don't see the automobile as the only mobility solution are speaking up. They are making some of the arguments I've always made.

Instead of accepting the standard arguments about what mode pays for itself, they are making the correct comparisons between modes by pointing out what funding is identical, but called different things. That's the key. Those who feel rail isn't a viable solution should be challenged. Publicly point this out.

The Push

A long time ago, on the Frank Shiers evening radio show (KIRO), Senator Jim Horn, (who was on the I-405 Executive Committee,) made a statement about BRT being chosen for transit on 405 as the superior alternative.

So, I called in.

On hold for a long time, getting disconnected a number of times, calling back until he picked up the line. Explained that the ERC wasn't chosen because BRT was technically better. It wasn't chosen because BRT never was compared to Commuter Rail on the ERC, because the City of Renton wanted that option dropped from consideration.

Know your argument, keep the bullet points in mind, and don't be afraid to challenge the status quo.

As Lloyd was fond of saying "Praise and Push."

What I'm saying is –

PUSH HARDER!

All Aboard Washington
P. O. Box 70381
Seattle, WA 98127

Return Service Requested

**Amtrak Cascades Airo
Trainsets begin revenue
service September 30th!**

All Aboard News

All Aboard Washington: Our Future is in Question!

For many years, AAWA has operated with a small group of volunteers carrying most responsibilities. That has worked, but we are now facing a crisis because we cannot find a volunteer for **Treasurer** or for 2027 **Board President**. Without a Treasurer stepping forward, this may be the last meeting of AAWA in its current form.

AAWA has survived many challenges over the decades, but this moment requires direct member involvement. Your willingness to help will determine what the organization can do next.

If we cannot fill the Treasurer role, the board will need to discuss major changes to how AAWA operates. Options include transferring our corporate responsibilities to another nonprofit, continuing as an informal club without 501(c)(3) status, or winding down entirely if no sustainable structure can be found. Members will have the opportunity to hear the implications and help guide the path forward at the Annual Business Meeting on **Saturday, November 14**.

Support All Aboard Washington

For nearly fifty years, All Aboard Washington has been a voice for better passenger rail in our state. We have spoken up when others stayed quiet, kept rail issues before elected officials, and maintained a steady presence in Olympia and across the Northwest. That work has always depended on the commitment of our members. AAWA has never been a large organization, but we have been an active one. Our meetings, outreach, and advocacy efforts are possible only because people who care about rail choose to support the cause. Many of you have done so for years, and your dedication has kept this organization moving forward through changing political climates

and economic challenges.

If you value the work AAWA does — the public meetings, the legislative engagement, the long-term push for improved passenger rail — I encourage you to contribute at AAWA.US, with the QR code here, or mail your donation to All Aboard Washington, P. O. Box 70381, Seattle, WA 98127.

Whether you can give a modest amount or something more substantial, your support helps ensure that AAWA remains a strong and independent voice for rail in Washington.

Our mission continues, and we invite you to be part of it.



Retro Print Edition!

For the first time in some years, All Aboard Washington is producing this printed newsletter — a one-off “retro” edition created entirely by volunteers. Many long-time members will remember when Washington Rail News arrived by USPS, and this special issue is meant to honor that history while giving everyone a fresh update.

This special edition is not a return to regular publication, but rather a tribute to the long tradition of Washington Rail News and the volunteers who kept it going for decades. We hope you enjoy this look back and this update on where AAWA stands today.