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Blaine and Birch Bay's Community Newspaper



Meeting to focus on bringing passenger rail to Blaine

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By Jami Makan

An upcoming meeting in Blaine will focus on bringing an Amtrak passenger rail stop to the city.

Hosted by All Aboard Washington (AAWA), the meeting is scheduled to take place on Saturday, July 13 at the Semiahmoo Resort. An AAWA board meeting will occur at 11 a.m. and a luncheon will start at noon, featuring a panel discussion and presentations. The luncheon is open to the public, but attendees will be responsible for the cost of their own lunch.

AAWA is an organization dedicated to promoting the development of Washington's passenger rail system. One of the organization's priorities is to bring an Amtrak passenger rail stop to Blaine. On the Amtrak Cascades service, there are currently no stops between Fairhaven Station in Bellingham and Pacific Central Station in Vancouver, B.C.

Organizers believe a rail stop in Blaine would not only serve north Whatcom County, but would also serve those living in southern B.C. "For those who live in Surrey and White Rock, our theory is that it would be a lot easier for them to come across the border," said Lloyd Flem, AAWA's former director.

For this reason, organizers have invited officials from B.C. to the meeting, in addition to local elected officials.

"Local legislators from Whatcom County plus city officials from Blaine have to be the pushers," said Flem. "As a statewide rail organization, we are infamous for wanting more service and more stops, but what would be helpful is to get support from local elected officials, along with the municipalities of Surrey and White Rock."

Many businesses in downtown Blaine support the idea of having a station here, which would increase tourism and sales. "This is going to be an important meeting," said Bill Becht of Horseshoe Coins and Antiques, 810 Peace Portal Drive, who emailed state senator Doug Ericksen on June 10 to invite him to attend.

For more information, contact Luis Moscoso, AAWA's government affairs director, at luism@allaboardwashington.org or 206/200-8663.



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