

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."

WashARP Working to Fulfill Mount Vernon's Skagit Station Plans

By C.B. Hall

WashARP has been working to resolve problems that have plagued Mount Vernon's intermodal Skagit Station since the facility's ceremonial inauguration last August. Plans for the station—envisioned as serving Amtrak and local and intercity bus providers—have snagged on belatedly discovered design problems and the lease terms demanded by the City of Mount Vernon

WashARP has followed up with a letter to Larsen's district manager, Jill McKinzie, to delineate possible engineering solutions to the thorniest problem, access by intercity buses, and to call for a fairer offer to Amtrak. The fact that even the most elaborate solution will cost only a tiny fraction of the facility's \$7 mill. price tag gives cause for optimism that a fix will be found soon.

Some progress occurred at the beginning of January when Skagit Transit (SKAT), the local bus service, reached agreement with the city on renting space in the building and moved in. For train users, this means that SKAT personnel will keep the building open from 7:00 am to 8:45 pm on weekdays, allowing Amtrak patrons to wait in the building for all four daily train arrivals. Formerly, Amtrak travelers could get inside for only two

of the services, when the Mount Vernon Chamber of Commerce, another tenant, was open for business. The facility continues to be available when the Chamber's office is open on Saturdays and Sundays (SKAT does not operate on weekends) from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.—in each case serving the 9:21 a.m. northbound and 10:53 a.m. southbound trains. The building is closed on holidays.

For now, the elegantly lettered word "Tickets" thus stands over an empty alcove in the hall of the magnificent new station. We look forward to seeing an Amtrak ticketing machine in that alcove and to the entry of intercity bus providers into the facility, so that the station will fulfill its mission of facilitating easy travel to and from the resurgent downtown of this growing Northwest Washington community.

Another record year for Amtrak: 25 mill. passengers *Empire Builder* booms while *Cascades* show modest growth and *Coast Starlight* struggles

Amtrak ridership set a record for the second year in a row in federal fiscal year 2004 (ending Sept. 30). Showing that there continues to be strong demand for passenger rail service in this country, Amtrak carried 25,053,564 people, an increase of 4.3% over 2003. The record came despite the four successive hurricanes that swept across Florida and the Southeast, disrupting service almost continuously for nearly two months. Other service interruptions resulted from the political conventions in New York City and Boston, and the August tunnel fire in the Oregon Cascades that shut down the *Coast Starlight* for over a week.

"We are very happy with our ridership numbers. The increases have been across all our services—corridor trains as well as long-distance trains," said David Gunn, Amtrak President and Chief Executive Officer. "The numbers show that people like their trains, and our challenge over the near term is to



Cascades 504 pulls up to the newly-restored Eugene station on a mid-January day to board passengers for its 9:00 a.m. departure to Portland.

Photo by Jim Hamre

keep our costs under control while improving the service for our passengers."

(See **Record**, page 4)



Dedication Day at Mt. Vernon's Skagit Station in August 2004.

Photo by Jim Hamre

for usage of the station building, which the city owns. The facility's design makes convenient access for full-size intercity buses difficult and even dangerous. Meanwhile, Amtrak and the city have come to loggerheads over the money the latter wants in return for Amtrak's tenancy in the station. Before the facility was built, the city and Amtrak had agreed that the rent would be \$300 per month. The new mayor and his administration have told Amtrak they want \$550 per month, which many have described as rent, but which Eric Stendal, the city's administrative officer, terms "a pro rata share of the station's operating expenses." Negotiations between the two parties had reached a standstill.

In the hope of advancing a solution, WashARP representatives met with staff of Congressman Rick Larsen (D-Everett) on Dec. 29. Since then,



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

The Good Work Continues; Urban Rail? Yes; Holiday in Centralia!

With January, the new legislative session has opened. Based upon the meetings I've had with legislators to date, my prediction of bi-partisan support for continuing rail investments from your elected representatives in Olympia remains accurate. WashARP remains fully supportive of not only the partially state-funded Amtrak Cascades passenger trains and other passenger rail investments, but also of the little-noticed but economically important, low-budget, very legislator-popular freight rail assistance investments. While the passenger rail improvements are particularly sought by legislators from the counties along the Northwest Corridor, from Whatcom to Clark, the freight programs are more favored by Eastern Washington and the more rural, often economically-less-prosperous parts of the Westside. The environmental, social and, particularly, economic benefits of the freight programs make them, in the words of a prominent state senator, "One of the best expenditures of any kind the state makes."



A recent transportation opinion piece in a Seattle daily made several points with which I concur, including the need for more statewide and regional transportation investments and restoring a can-do attitude toward transportation. What I disagree with is the idea that increases in highway lane capacity should be the principal form of transportation spending and that urban rail is or cannot be effective in the Puget Sound region. Opponents of rail habitually make the argument that "Region X" doesn't have sufficient population density to warrant rail investments. In fact, Region X can be geographically defined in such a way to make almost any political point. Southern Nevada, as a "region" still has among the least dense population of any part of the US, yet the rapidly-growing city of Las Vegas, as a region, has sufficient density to justify private investment in a monorail. If existing population density is seen as a criterion for urban rail, one must look, not

at a "region" which may include water, mountains, forest and farm land, but at the given corridors and neighborhoods to be served by the proposed rail, which, in the case of Seattle, Tacoma and even the more developed parts of the Eastside burbs, certainly have sufficient density to justify rail investments.

But even more important than a given population density of some defined place at the moment is the historical fact that transportation investments of all kinds CREATE, not necessarily respond to, patterns of population, economic development, and movement of goods and people! The economic patterns of 19th-century Native Americans west of the Mississippi, though more developed and sophisticated than Euro-Americans wanted to believe, nonetheless did not warrant investments in trans-continental railroads. I wonder if nay-sayers told President Lincoln there "isn't enough density." But Lincoln wisely saw rail as the means to open the West to commercial and economic development, and whole states came into being substantially because railroads, built into and across areas with "insufficient density," gave access to national and international

I wonder if nay-sayers told President Lincoln there "isn't enough density" [to build the transcontinental railroads].

markets which literally caused the economic development and resultant population density to more than support these post Civil War "public-private partnerships."

A century ago, urban rail, then developed by private enterprise before government taxed and regulated it into submission and before government gave massive subsidies to rubber tired modes, built rail lines radiating out from city centers into countrysides that then surely "lacked enough density." The results were a generation of suburban cities which grew immediately around and explicitly because the commuter trains were there, and even today are among the most attractive and high-property-value communities in the metro areas of the Midwest and East. That transportation infrastructure creates and is not just a response to population and economic development is also true for highways. The Interstate Highway System, which evolved in a way President Eisenhower did not intend and of which he did not approve, caused dramatic changes in population patterns and movement flows in and around American cities, large and small.

The case for investment in urban rail should thus be based on whether the inevitable patterns of movement and development resulting from such investments would be beneficial to the greater areas served. The same argument should be made for road investments.

Finally, opponents of urban rail cite, regardless of how successful and popular the new generation of urban rail is proving to be (with remarkable successes in the South and West, traditionally seen as near-exclusive domains of single-occupant-vehiclehood), that the trains only constitute a small percentage of the total trips in what these critics define as "the region." But what percentage of the trips are accounted for in the corridors and neighborhoods served by the rail? The new Houston light rail is said to carry nearly half the trips in the corridors it serves. That, not the percentage of trips in the sprawling metroplex, justifies Houston's light rail investments. And what of highway investments? Reasonable estimates maintain I-5 and I-90 in Central Puget Sound carry only two percent each of the total three-county-area trips. I do not advocate not spending on highway infrastructure; I simply ask that

reasonable analysis precede decisions of how much be invested into any transportation form.



Now, moving happily away from the above kind of analysis this ex-geography prof has engaged in, let's go for a train trip! WashARP advocates not just public-sector investments in rail. While freight rail remains predominantly a private-sector mode, passenger rail also succeeds as a result of private sector, non-profit and of course, individual consumer participation. WashARP is pleased to see the private sector's increased understanding and utilization of passenger trains as a means of support for business. Among the best examples of this reemergence is the Olympic Club Hotel and Theater in downtown Centralia, located just steps from Centralia's classic 1912 Northern Pacific station.

This Centralia landmark was purchased by Portland-based McMenamins, a firm that has done an admirable job of restoring several traditional eating-lodging establishments in the Pacific Northwest. The beauty of the Olympic Club is that no destructive "updating" or "modernizing" was done during the 40's through the 70's, an era when much vandalism in the guise of "improving" classic commercial architecture occurred. Much (See Flem, page 5)



The View Down the Tracks

=====

with Jim Cusick

The View from under my car

It's okay, you won't have to hear any profanity. However, it is taking a lot of effort not to, after the work I've just had to do. What is it, and why am I talking about my car in this column? Is it because I want to just whine? Maybe.

The point I want to really make is about longevity. Not only my longevity (keeping my blood pressure down when I'm working on my five cars), but how we view the longevity of the transportation systems we rely on. To do that, let's take a trip down Route 13, which is a typical car maintenance trip: the Bad Luck Highway! Maybe I can enlighten others, as penance for my under-the-car utterances.

So, have you ever had your rotors turned? Sounds like fun, doesn't it? Back in the good old days when "Deetroit Iron" ruled the road and disc brakes were a new option, when a brake job required it, you had to have the rotors turned, (i.e. trued on a lathe). However, you would have to pay twice as much as you would to have the older style drum brakes (the drum) turned. Why, you ask? Because drum brakes only had to be trued on one side, the inside. The reason disc brakes cost double was because a disc rotor has two sides. The rotor had to be set up a second time and turned a second time.

Industrious toolmakers came up with a fitting for the lathes that enabled machinist to cut both sides at once. So why does it still cost more to have a rotor turned than a drum? Because it's what the market will bear.

Of course, if you're asking why I'm whining about my rotors, when the difference for turning them is only a few dollars for us DIYers, it's because I had to buy new ones. The problem is, that on this particular car, the hub and the rotor are not separate pieces like they were in the good old days. It cost me four times as much to replace them as it would have if the design wasn't changed. Why did they change what was a perfect design in the good old Deetroit Iron days? Because it's what the market will bear.

Why does it seem that whenever there is any small problem in our oil supply the price of gasoline immediately

goes up, but takes forever to go down. It's because the oil companies are just engaging in the time honored practice setting the price at ... what the market will bear.

What the market will bear.

The question is, as Transportation Consumers, why have we set up our transportation market so that we don't have choices? In the old, old days—I mean, even older than my youth, when the railroads were the dominant force in the economy—there wasn't much choice, and when the railroads ruled, it wasn't really the good old days.

So what makes it different nowadays with the car companies dominating things? Because, now we do have a choice. We have the options. If we don't have the transportation competition in the marketplace, then we end up paying more for that single transportation product. Competition is good, monopolies are bad, right? I would like to exercise my consumer clout in a competitive marketplace. If my tax dollars are going to subsidize transportation, which they do for roads and transit, then the playing field should be level. Marketplace indeed.

The real value in investing our tax dollars is the long-term simplicity of design offered by the rail solution.

Take a look at a rail car

Am I saying buying a rail car as it would easier to work on? Hardly! However, if you want to impress your non-rail friends, have them watch a freight train go by one day while you explain to them that rail cars go through hundreds of thousands of miles of hard usage before they require maintenance. Railroad companies need to plan for longevity. They rely on the low maintenance simplicity of design that provides a rugged platform to build on.

When designing a transportation system, it becomes apparent that when compared side by side, relying on roads is the high maintenance, high cost solution. Each lane has such short term limited capacity that it constantly needs to be "redesigned." This redesign is in the engineering and construction required to add lanes, which gets paid for by taxes.

The real value in investing our tax dollars is the long-term simplicity of design offered by the rail solution. When the time comes to deal with the inevitable increase in commuters, what makes the best economic sense? Do you simply add more cars to the train (or more trains), or do you "redesign" the system?

When something works because of its simplicity of design, why should it be changed? I was asking that very question when I was working on my car, although not quite using those same words.

Sound Transit Train Two

I'm forced to admit that my estimates of the ridership of the Everett-Seattle Sounder run were overly optimistic. It appears that the simplicity of the commute is what auto commuters need to make that changeover. Although, in this case, only one Sounder train into Seattle and one Sounder back is not the simplicity they are looking for. Even with the Rail-Plus program available, which had expanded the options, and the availability of bus service to the two stations in the event that one could not catch one of the trains, there are still people who have a basic need. Their need is to only have to think about taking Sounder, down and back. I've had numerous conversations with quite a few people about why, although they love the train, they don't take it regularly. Even though I've explained the RailPlus-Cascades alternative, and the way the bus could deliver them to the trains stations, albeit in a slower or less reliable fashion, they crave that simplicity of having multiple Sounder trains available.

Now they will. Well, more correctly, by September, after Sound Transit and BNSF work out the new train's schedule. If a temporary stop can be agreed upon and built at Mukilteo, then we should see a healthy increase in ridership if both can be brought online at the same time.

Sound Transit Train To...

Somewhere!! At last, now that the Port of Seattle, Sound Transit, and the City of SeaTac have come together on the agreement on the requirements needed to bring Central Link to the airport. This agreement between all three of these agencies is a great example of how working cooperatively can create a solution that benefits all involved. Even those who will still have to drive to the airport will benefit by the project because there will now be a way for them to circulate away from the airport baggage claim drive, since the events of 9-11 don't allow them to park on the drive itself.

The plans also include a pedestrian bridge to the SeaTac city center, and even upgrading the ramps to SR 518. We all know how that merge can be as thrilling as landing during a thunderstorm.

The ultimate benefit of this agreement is that it shows how things can be accomplished (See **Cusick**, page 5)

Record, from page 1

Amtrak *Cascades* ridership for calendar year 2004 totaled 603,059, up 2.3% over 2003. Total Northwest corridor ridership was 689,592 in 2004, down 0.3% from 2003. This slight dip resulted from ridership losses in the corridor on the *Coast Starlight*, particularly northbound (over 20%), because of on-time performance issues and service disruptions. Most *Cascades* trains continue to show at least modest growth in ridership. But the brightest spot is the Seattle-Bellingham roundtrip. It continues to steadily increase the number of passengers carried. Ridership in 2004 on northbound 516 increased 12.3%



Train 7, the westbound *Empire Builder*, arrives at the Everett Intermodal Station on the day before Thanksgiving, 2004.
Photo by Jim Hamre

over 2003 and 27.5% over 2002. Southbound 513 was up 9.7% over 2003 and 23.6% over 2002.

The main impediment to ridership growth in the Northwest Corridor is lack of available seats between Seattle and Portland during peak ridership times in the summer, on weekends and over holidays. WSDOT and Amtrak plan to improve the capacity issue this summer by adding a fourth daily *Cascades* roundtrip between the two cities. This can be achieved by increasing utilization of the existing five trainsets. Negotiations with BNSF on the adjustments to the schedule are underway. WashARP thinks that, with hundreds of millions of dollars invested in infrastructure improvements in the corridor, some additional schedule tightening is possible. However, a potential stumbling block to the added roundtrip recently came to light. Former Gov. Gary Locke's final budget to the Legislature moved the funding for the added trip from this July to July 2006. WashARP will be addressing this situation with legislative transportation leaders and Gov. Christine Gregoire.

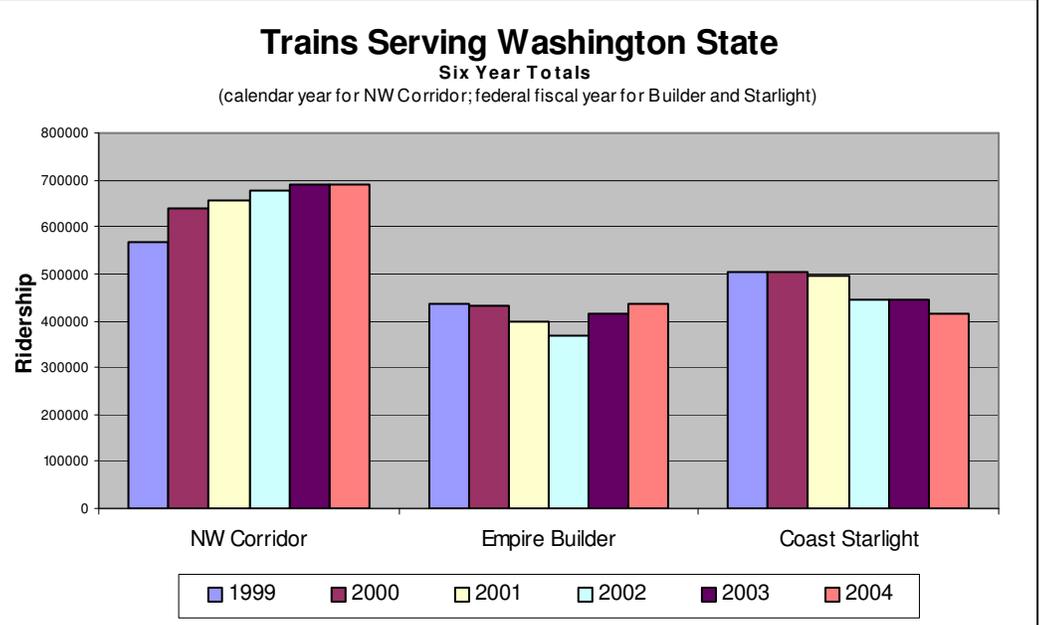
The 75th anniversary edition of the *Empire Builder* continued its strong

Amtrak Station Data

Six-Year Washington State On & Off Totals (calendar year)

Station	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	'04-'03 % Change
Bellingham	22,345	54,129	46,521	44,602	48,594	55,033	+13.3%
Bingen-White Salmon	1,155	1,452	1,254	1,171	1,190	1,460	+22.7%
Centralia	19,286	18,769	18,174	16,825	19,644	19,771	+0.6%
Edmonds	20,138	25,213	24,492	26,209	25,869	25,415	-1.8%
Ephrata	2,552	2,989	2,294	2,225	2,462	2,773	+12.6%
Everett	27,653	31,863	30,196	29,639	37,895	37,339	-1.5%
Kelso-Longview	22,468	22,654	21,261	21,849	21,289	20,573	-3.4%
Mt. Vernon	9,589	16,421	15,874	16,123	15,964	17,186	+7.8%
Olympia-Lacey	39,241	41,543	39,846	42,095	43,180	41,613	-3.6%
Pasco	14,122	15,474	14,413	13,134	16,355	18,710	+14.4%
Seattle	575,924	632,078	625,419	602,436	627,534	628,836	+0.2%
Spokane	39,624	40,927	36,331	32,523	39,284	40,106	+2.1%
Tacoma	111,699	113,667	104,355	99,950	106,840	106,180	-0.6%
Tukwila			2,389	6,405	9,017	11,470	+27.2%
Vancouver	59,359	62,956	63,375	64,315	68,123	71,487	+4.9%
Wenatchee	15,228	13,950	13,652	12,388	14,543	15,094	+3.8%
Wishram	717	863	820	595	938	1,154	+23.0%
TOTALS	981,100	1,094,948	1,060,666	1,032,484	1,098,703	1,114,200	+1.4%

Station data and Northwest Corridor ridership provided by Carolyn Simmonds, WSDOT Rail Office
Station totals include Thruway bus ridership numbers.
Coast Starlight and *Empire Builder* ridership provided by Amtrak.



growth of the last three years, carrying 437,191 passengers in 2004, up 5.2% from 2003. In fact, in 2004 the *Builder* surpassed the struggling *Coast Starlight* as the most popular national network train. The *Starlight*, with ridership dropping 6.5% to 415,598 in 2004, is not the *Starlight* of Gil Mallery's days as the president of the Amtrak West business unit. First class amenities have been cut and the Pacific Parlour Car is too often

missing, but the serious blows have been struck by Union Pacific and Mother Nature. UP continues to struggle to operate its railroad with too much freight to move on too little infrastructure with insufficient locomotives and train crews. The train's poor on-time performance is a major detriment to retaining ridership and it drives up Amtrak's costs because of the need to accommodate passengers who miss (See **Record**, page 6)

Flem, from page 2

of the original 1908 charm, including decades of "good" wear and tear, is present.

In addition to a family-friendly restaurant, the Olympic Club pub features some great custom-brewed ales—Real Men choose the Terminator Stout; a light beer it ain't—a theater featuring both classic and recent-run films and a traditional railroad hotel, with 27 restored rooms with porcelain sinks in the rooms and bathrooms, like in Europe, down the hall. Room prices are very reasonable. Special room packages include billiards, movie admissions, breakfast and grownup beverages. An asset is the absence of TVs and phones in the rooms. (Guests who insist on bringing cell phone, laptops or pagers will not be placed in the stocks, but some would argue they should be!) Besides enjoying the great ambience of the Olympic Club complex, what does one do in Centralia? Well, the Amtrak station and Olympic Club are in the heart of Centralia's famed antique shopping area. Within short blocks are scores of antique and collectable shopping opportunities. Also in the downtown are large murals on Centralia's history, including that featuring George Washington, the African-American founder of the city, statues of the National Guardsmen who lost their lives in the infamous 1919 "Centralia Massacre" and, directly across from the statues, a mural celebrating the Wobblies, who were on the other side of the 1919 troubles. A few blocks away is the Veterans Museum, which honors the contributions and sacrifices made by American military forces in the 20th century.

All eight Amtrak trains serving the Northwest Corridor arrive in Centralia at convenient hours. While from either north or south a day trip to the Olympic Club and Centralia can be enjoyed, I recommend an overnighter package, so the hotel, a movie, the complementary breakfast, and downtown Centralia can be experienced at leisure. Centralia merchants welcome train travelers. If you go, be certain to inform anyone and everyone you arrived by train and that you are a member of WashARP.

For Olympic Club hotel reservations,

phone 360-736-5164 or 866-736-5164. Email: olyreserve@mcmenamins.com. Web site is www.mcmenamins.com. Wife Darleen and I will be celebrating our upcoming anniversary with an Olympic Club/Centralia weekend.

The above is an unapologetic ad for a commercial enterprise and for one small city's business community. I would equally promote other places which also emphasize their commitment to passenger rail. Mt Vernon and Kelso have similar potentials, with their heart-of-downtown Amtrak station locations. One would hope they would follow Centralia's example.



In answer to a WashARP member's concern about what is considered excessive dwell time in Seattle (sorry Emerald City friends, but your town is not always everyone's ultimate destination!), I have met with DOT Rail Office leadership who says improved scheduling with shorter stops in Seattle are planned for the near future.

Several WashARPer's are currently doing important rail advocacy work in cooperation with, but essentially independent of the Olympia office. While you pay me to do much of the on-the-ground work in Olympia, my efforts are only effective when you and other rail advocates add your efforts. In that regard, please phone, write, or email me concerning your interest in coming to Olympia and meeting with your legislators. I'll do all I can to make your visit productive.

Public thanks to Tumwater WashARPer Loren Herrigstad, who served as my most valuable assistant, chauffeur and sometimes valet during the several months of physical limitation I experiences as a result of severe lumbar disc problems. I am more mobile now, easily walking the kilometer to/from the Capitol. but would not have been as productive for our cause without Loren's assistance.

Finally, keep Sen. Bob Oke (R-Gig Harbor) and former Rep. Ruth Fisher (D-Tacoma) in your best wishes and prayers. Sen. Oke, a valued member of the Senate Transportation Committee, retains his wit and positive outlook as he works at overcoming a serious medical condition, while

continuing as a responsible voice for transportation. Rep. Fisher, doubtless the single most important legislative advocate for both intercity and urban rail in the past generation, now has severe health challenges. WashARP honored Ruth with our Tom Martin award for exceptional service to passenger rail at a special WashARP meeting in Chehalis in December 2003. We need to continue to honor her years of work in behalf of the rail renaissance in Washington.

Cusick, from page 3

completed when those involved work together. Where you end up when people dig in and won't compromise is...Nowhere.

Now the question is, what will Sound Transit do with the plans for all those shuttle buses that were to go from the Tukwila Link station to the airport. They should still plan to use shuttle buses, but instead use them to go from the Tukwila Sounder/Amtrak station to the airport. They could use a lot less, since they'd only have to meet the scheduled trains instead of the much more frequent Link service.

Sound Transit Phase Two

So, now that Sound Transit has been having their open houses to gather comments on the Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS), who have you brought along to make those rail positive statements? I hope you've been able to talk those mildly supportive friends into putting their ideas down on paper. At the same time, they can find out all the information that Sound Transit can offer, if they already haven't found out from you.

In fact, not only have I gotten one of them to attend the meeting, I even talked him into taking Sounder to get there!

As a final note, this year will prove to be the Year of Rail, with all the building going on for Central Link, King Street Station, and the expanded Sounder service. It will be nice to report all that good news this year.

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All are evening numbers, except Lloyd's, which is available 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. daily.

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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
WashARP:	www.washarp.org
NARP:	www.narprail.org
NARP Hotline:	www.narprail.org/hot.htm
Amtrak:	www.amtrak.com
Amtrak Cascades:	www.amtrakcascades.com
Sound Transit:	www.soundtransit.org

WashARP News

February 12: WashARP meeting **11:30** at the **Panorama City** retirement community in **Lacey**. Cost: \$15 (cash or check) for the luncheon; includes room rental and other meeting costs. Key political leaders are scheduled to attend. Driving: from I-5, north or south, take exit 108 (Sleater-Kinney Rd. south). Travel about 1 mile to Panorama City entrance, about 500 feet past 14th Ave. on the left. Follow Information Center signs to the Restaurant building. Proceed through the main entrance to the Garden Room on the second floor. Train: from and to the north, use trains 11 and 506. The main program will fit between train arrival and departure. Pickup at Olympia-Lacey station will be provided. RSVP requested; call or email Lloyd Flem (see page 5 for contact info).

March 17: Commuter Rail Group meeting at **6:30 p.m.** at **Andy's Diner**, 2963 4th Ave. S., **Seattle** (just north of Spokane St. and on Metro routes 23 and 174).

March 19: Joint NARP Region 8/WashARP/AORTA/MTWYarp meeting in Portland. A registration flyer with full details will be mailed soon. Contact Jim Hamre if you need more information.

April 9: WashARP meeting at **12:45 p.m.** at **Andy's Diner**, 2963 4th Ave. S., **Seattle** (transit information above).

WashARP welcomes the following new members in December: Lauren Weber, Tacoma; Robert Stafford, Redmond; and Kevin Marek, Anacortes.

WashARP members contributing to this newsletter include: Jeff Schultz, C.B. Hall, Lloyd Flem, Jim Cusick, John Carlin, Warren Yee and Tony Trifiletti.



Brian (center), our capable and efficient waiter at Andy's Diner for many years, is presented with an Amtrak *Cascades* gift certificate by Pres. Tony Trifiletti at the December meeting in appreciation of his fine service. Photo by Warren Yee

Record, from page 4 connections or have to be bused to catch up with the *Empire Builder* or *Sunset Limited*. Floods and fires have also caused service disruptions in the last year. Early last month, severe rains and flooding caused major damage to the UP coast route south of San Luis Obispo, CA, shutting down Amtrak service to Los Angeles on that line. The damage will take at least six weeks to repair. *Pacific Surfliner* service is expected to resume Feb. 8 as far as Santa Barbara but *Starlight* service between the Bay Area and Los Angeles is not expected to resume until the end of Feb. Pictures of the destruction can be viewed by going to www.uprr.com/newsinfo/index.shtml and clicking on West Coast Service Updates.

2005 funding finally resolved

Funding for Amtrak (and much of the rest of the government) for 2005 was finally approved by Congress Dec. 6, more than two months into the fiscal year. Am-

2004 WashARP financial report

Income

Renewals	\$13,904.16
New members	1,315.50
Appeal and donations	14,414.73
Memorials and grants	0.00
Meeting registrations/fees	4,525.20
Miscellaneous	1,574.00
Merchandise	248.00
Interest/dividends	761.69
Total	\$36,743.28

Expenses

Executive & Communications directors	\$30,818.21
Newsletter postage	839.90
Newsletter printing	2131.59
Miscellaneous postage	1783.20
Miscellaneous printing	32.55
Membership promotion	436.05
Meeting expenses	3,863.80
Supplies	868.39
Miscellaneous expenses	273.83
Total	\$41,047.52

trak funding is flat-lined at \$1.207 bill. but is subject to a loan repayment and other reductions. Sen. Patty Murray (D-Shoreline) once again played a key role in keeping Amtrak's funding near last year's level. However, Congressional appropriations continue to be more than \$300 mill. below what David Gunn says is needed to maintain existing service, repair and overhaul equipment and infrastructure, and make needed new capital improvements. Somehow passenger rail supporters in and out of Congress have to figure out how to take funding to the next level. Overwhelming public support for intercity rail service doesn't seem to mean much to too many in Congress.

Washington Association of
Rail Passengers
P. O. Box 70381
Seattle, WA 98127

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_____ Basic Membership\$25.00 per year
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_____ Family Membership\$35.00 per year
_____ Patron\$50.00 per year
_____ Extra Contribution\$ _____

(always welcome and appreciated)

Note: if you move, let us know in advance and save WashARP 75¢ for address correction service.

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