



WASHINGTON RAIL NEWS

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A Not-for-profit Consumer Organization
"Moving forward... On Rail."

Updates: Northwest Corridor infrastructure improvements and 2007 ridership numbers

In a Jan. 22 meeting with Ken Uzanski, Kevin Jeffers and Jeff Schultz of the WSDOT Rail and Marine office, All Aboard Washington received an update on infrastructure improvements planned and under construction in the Northwest Rail Corridor over the next several years. These improvements directly support improved Amtrak *Cascades* operations and (eventually) additional frequencies. Here are the highlights.

Customs Facility Siding in Blaine: construction is expected to start in July to improve the siding used by Customs officials to inspect freight train cargo. The improvements will allow more reliable passenger service through the area.

Mt. Vernon siding extension: this project has been delayed while waiting for the Utilities and Transportation Com-

mission to rule on closing the Hickox Rd. grade crossing, which has local opposition. If closure approval is given, the siding will be extended to 9000 feet so passenger and freight trains can pass, reducing delays to the *Cascades*.

Stanwood siding and station: the siding is being upgraded to make it more usable but BNSF wants it extended before allowing the new Stanwood station to be built, a \$16 mill. expense that is not budgeted at this time. The construction of the Stanwood station is also held up because of the Federal Railroad Administration trying to force level boarding for all passengers at all stations. Despite near universal opposition and rail transit already being the most handicapped accessible form of transportation, FRA is not listening. (There are nearly 50 station projects throughout the

country being held up because of this issue. In the Northwest, we operate passenger rail cars with four different door heights; which type are we supposed to use for "level boarding" design?)

PA Jct. in Everett: curves will be flattened and three additional yard tracks will be built to speed up trains, resulting in less blockage of the mainline. Construction will begin this spring.

Ballard: double tracking and crossovers between the tracks are under construction. This is a Sound Transit project.

King St. Station and SODO district: the cutover of the relocated mainline (to the east side of the passenger train maintenance base) will happen this summer. Sounder station (See **Updates**, page 4)

Storms scuttle Amtrak service

by Jim Long

Extreme winter weather fell hard on the Pacific Northwest in early December, bringing heavy rainfall and snowfall to Oregon and Washington. Beginning late on Dec. 2, back-to-back storms gripped the region, causing fatalities and imperiling hundreds. Landslides and high water blocked Burlington Northern Santa Fe tracks used by Amtrak north and south of Seattle, wreaking havoc on train service, mainly in Washington.

According to BNSF spokesman Gus Melonas, a land slide near Felida (between Vancouver and Ridgefield) blocked both main lines about 2:30 a.m. on Monday, Dec. 3. Although crews had one of the two main tracks cleared by 10:00 a.m., a 48-hour moratorium on passenger trains is customary in slide situations, to permit unstable soil to settle and reduce the risk of recurring slides. Additional rainfall can prolong the closures until soils can drain and stabilize.

Northbound *Coast Starlight* trains were terminated at Eugene, with alternate transportation to points north provided by motorcoach. As conditions worsened, a 20-mile stretch of Interstate 5 near Centralia was blocked by floodwaters up to ten feet deep, making travel by motorcoach impossible, while also submerging the BNSF main line through the area. Amtrak announced that the *Coast Starlight's* alternate transportation would not serve points beyond Portland.

On Dec. 5, Amtrak *Cascades* service north of Portland was canceled with no alternate transportation possible. Service south of Portland continued to operate. The Seattle section of the *Empire Builder*, which at first was terminated in Everett due to slides between Everett and Seattle, was later cut back to Wenatchee because of further slides. Alternate transportation continued to serve all stops for trains 7 and 8. Sounder commuter trains operating between Everett and Seattle also were canceled. The Portland section of the *Empire Builder* was unaffected by the storms.

By late on the 5th, Amtrak announced that most Amtrak *Cascades* service would resume on Dec. 6, except for trains 506 and 507 between Portland and Seattle. Passengers on the affected 506 and 507 train (See **Storms**, page 5)



The *Coast Starlight*, with its first class Pacific Parlour Car, above, passes the state History Museum in Tacoma in March 2007. Amtrak plans to relaunch the *Starlight* on May 10 with refurbished equipment and upgraded amenities, meals and services. This matches the upgrade to the *Empire Builder* in 2005. To the delight of many riders, Amtrak will keep and overhaul the nearly 50 year old Parlour cars (originally build by the Santa Fe RR as lounge cars). The *Starlight's* on-time performance over Union Pacific has markedly improved since last fall, but still remains more spotty that it should be, especially since Amtrak needs to grow ridership and revenue by selling a world class experience. Unfortunately, a massive mudslide in the Oregon Cascades on Jan. 20 has closed UP's tracks for at least several weeks. Inexplicably, Amtrak, after providing a bus bridge from Eugene to Klamath Falls for six days, has shut down the entire Seattle-Los Angeles operation of the *Coast Starlight* for the duration of the closure.

Photo by Zack Willhoite



*From the desk of
the Government
Affairs Director
by
Lloyd H. Flem*

Progress in Saving the Eastside Line; They Do Work Hard; Starlight and Builder

What a difference a year makes! Last winter All Aboard Washington's initial efforts to reverse what we deem to be the negative decision to tear up the tracks on BNSF's Woodinville Subdivision (popularly called the Eastside Rail Line) were greeted with such comments as "No use, it's all over; the tracks are gone"; "You people may be right, but nobody else cares"; "The tracks no good and dangerous"; "A trail is what people want and need."

While advocacy of intercity passenger rail service remains our primary mission, preserving an irreplaceable rail corridor with tracks intact, which runs north-south through the heart of the booming and traffic-congested, east-of-Lake Washington suburbs, became an important focus for us. And it is quite rewarding to see this campaign is bearing some fruit.

In King County, AA WA Chairman Chuck Mott, newly-appointed Exec. Dir. Al Runte (the nature of the work I have done for over 22 years will not change at all; I now have the more accurate title of Government and Corporate Affairs Director), President Tony Trifiletti, nationally famed artist J. Craig Thorpe, Board member Loren Herrigstad and other AA WA members have reached out to the public in Central Puget Sound through meetings, media and countless one-on-ones with influencers and decision makers from the public and private sectors. While I made a couple of presentations in King and Snohomish counties, my work has centered in Olympia and with our Congressional delegation.

What happened in Olympia on Jan. 24 at a House Transportation Committee (HTC) work session and hearing symbolized the progress made by AA WA's overall efforts and similar efforts by Bruce Agnew's Cascadia group in preserving an intact Eastside Line. Last year the HTC passed a bill, SHB 2344, with but one dissenting vote, the intent of which was to preserve rail corridors but did not specify the Eastside Line, nor were there "teeth" in the bill which would go after those who would rip up the tracks. But even that bill did not get out of the House Rules Committee. Despite this overwhelming HTC support for preserving rail corridors, the office of the King County Executive, the Puget Sound Regional

Council and BNSF assumed the "Granddaddy of all Trails" would totally replace this admittedly now "imperfect" but crucial rail resource, with the vague possibility that "...if there is need in 20-30 years, perhaps some kind of high-capacity transportation could be built on the Corridor."

Two counters to that: First, the need is now! Would a multi-billion dollar project increasing capacity on parallel I-405 in an attempt to address severe traffic congestion be pending if there was no need? Secondly, whether the proponents of the vague future placement of (one assumes) rail on the trail are naïve or know the reality, once tracks are torn up in the US economic and political interests have virtually always been able to keep the rails from being reinstalled, even when it's shown it is strongly in the public interest to do so. As one who likes to have faith in decision makers, I hope it was naïveté.

Back to Jan. 24. The HTC meeting featured three panels on rail issues, dealing

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with Eastern Washington's Palouse River and Coulee City RR, rail infrastructure needs in Clark County and the Eastside Rail Corridor. Important was the universally pro-rail statements and questions of the HTC members, from conservative Eastern Washingtonians to liberal Puget Sound representatives.

Of prime interest to us was the Eastside Rail issue. Panelists were from BNSF, the Port of Seattle and the King County Executive's Office. All three offered copious praise of each other for the agreement they have worked out. From our viewpoint, it is rather good, a major leap from last year's Trail-not-Rail dogma. Now, the Port will assume ownership, and, in bright red ink in the brochure the three produced for the HTC meeting, the words "Rails remain in" (while options are evaluated). There is also support for a return of the Dinner Train and for dual use (rail and trail). The picture-rich brochure depicted "opportunities and challenges to both trail and rail use." A big improvement in public statements.

Following the three panels, SHB 2344 was reintroduced. Prime sponsors last year and this year are Rep. Deb Wallace (D-Vancouver) and Rep. Jay Rodne (R-North Bend). Rep. Rodne left the HTC dais to appear as a witness. (Legislators often do that to advance their bills.) He obviously supported HB 2344 and specified the intent was to preserve the Eastside Rail Line. He strongly emphasized the line is needed for

some form of passenger rail, not just a recreational trail.

The only public witnesses were myself and contract lobbyist Bill Stauffacher, representing BNSF. I of course supported HB 2344's intent to "preserve rail corridors" as an affirmative first step. Praise for the three-party agreement to keep the rails intact came next, including mention of those on the King County Council and Port of Seattle who have opposed destruction of the rail infrastructure. As an exponent of old technology and an ex-Geography prof, I had old-fashioned paper maps of the state which depicted in glaring detail, the rail line abandonments that occurred in the state between 1970 and 2000. (Thanks to the short line renaissance and state assistance, the hemorrhaging of our rail infrastructure has slowed since 2000.)

While emphasizing my overall good relations with BNSF, I couldn't resist; I had to zap BNSF for their efforts in 1993 to eradicate the Stampede Pass line, including their

attempts to discourage the state from acquiring the "No value, never needed, worn out rail line." But following the state's desire to preserve the line and some "interesting" dealings with Washington Central Railroad, BNSF retained Stampede Pass, correctly now touting it as an essential statewide transportation resource, and last year asked for \$25 mill. in state

funds to help upgrade the line!

My maps highlighted Stampede Pass, now seen as important by all, and the Eastside Rail Line, about which near identical language has been used by BNSF and others as being "No value (as a railroad), never-needed, worn out." I conceded the big railroad company's right to abandon the line, as it does not meet the Class One railroads' current hook-and-haul long-distance-only corporate strategies. But I was emphatic that the public sector had an obligation to preserve viable rail lines and reiterated that as established state policy.

Rep Rodne will introduce my amendment to HB 2344 which would mandate the state DOT to rebuild any portion of the Eastside Rail Corridor removed or severed to accommodate completion of a highway project. This of course refers to the Wilburton tunnel situation. Until now, the established line has been the state saves \$25 mill. by NOT restoring rail at Wilburton. (Although the cost quoted by the King County Executive representative had inflated to \$40 mill.!) I made the case at this hearing and will make it even more strongly when the amendment is formally heard that, whether \$10 mill. — a more likely figure — or the unlikely high \$40 mill., the cost of keeping the rail line intact is but a fraction of one percent of the cost of increasing capacity for the parallel transportation corridor, I-405! (See **Flem**, page 5)



The View Down the Tracks

=====

with Jim Cusick

Tim Eyman will Reduce Congestion!

Since the Roads and Transit Proposition 1 failed, I have been breathlessly waiting for the alternate solution from the critics, and God bless 'em, Tim Eyman has come through for us. I have to give him credit, he's not afraid to step up and tell it how he sees it.

He sees...

The carpool lanes open to everyone during the non-peak hours. I've never really figured out the logic of this proposal. Peak-hour naturally assumes congestion. Conversely, non-peak is when it's **NOT** congested. So, what's the benefit to the single occupant driver of having another lane when the freeway is not congested? Promises of congestion relief are about as empty as the freeway is off-peak.

He also sees cities and counties dedicating 10% of any auto related sales tax raised to go towards road improvements.

There are two problems with this.

One is the idea that earmarking taxes for a specific use based on the product being purchased is completely impractical and politically indefensible.

If you specify auto related taxes to go towards roads, then what is stop anyone from saying that their pet project should be funded with taxes on items that might be related to said project.

Think about it for a minute. You can't read while you're driving, so why not earmark all taxes on reading material towards transit, where most reading is done.

While we're at it, let's earmark taxes on shoes to go towards the building of pedestrian facilities.

Taxes on Band-Aids can go towards hospitals.

Ad infinitum.

The other problem with this part of the initiative is that it doesn't address what other projects you **TAKE THE MONEY FROM!**

Of course, that part is for the elected officials to figure out. According to Mr. Eyman and his supporters, that's their job. Support his initiatives and your work is done. No pesky research to do. No pesky legislation to understand (even at a summary level). No pesky city or town

council meetings to attend.

Just "send them a message" via the Tim, and plan to shoot down any proposed solution until they get the message.

Congestion seems to be more in our thinking, rather than a mobility issue.

One piece of this initiative I can agree with is the idea that municipalities should work together to create better traffic signal timing to keep traffic moving. Paying for it is another issue, since I'm not a big fan of "for profit" red light cameras, especially if there is no statewide statute for the actual time duration of the yellow light.

Will Tom Payne Reduce Congestion?

Since the news was made public of Mr. Tom Payne's backing of All Aboard Washington on the offer to purchase the Woodinville Subdivision, we can now deal with the specifics. When the plan for

Of course, [finding the money] is for the elected officials to figure out. According to Mr. Eyman and his supporters, that's their job. Support his initiatives and your work is done.

operation of a commuter rail service is proposed to the Port of Seattle, we will fill in the blanks that were left out in the Puget Sound Regional Council's (PSRC) 1992 Eastside Commuter Rail study, and the truncated analysis done on the I-405 Corridor Program's study.

Unfortunately, I can't include the PSRC Corridor Action Committee's analysis of the full corridor, since there seems to be no ridership statistics in their report.

Beside the (ahem) great minds at All Aboard Washington, there are many good ideas and critical observations that I have seen from knowledgeable people.

Having succeeded in keeping the rails intact for now by bringing this issue into the public light it behooves us at All Aboard Washington to educate the public as to how commuter service can be accomplished.

Your first job is to read this column, and NO, your work isn't done. You know that the preliminary numbers have shown that rail service on this corridor is viable given the costs that have been explored.

What Mr. Payne proposes is what many of you have thought all along, and this is that commuter rail on the Woodinville Sub does not have to be fully built out with two track service and elaborate stations to begin with. Service can start with very simple stations, parking areas,

and rail equipment such as Colorado Railcar's diesel multiple unit (DMU) trains (www.coloradorailcar.com).

Will commuter rail reduce congestion? Don't shortchange rail's ability to actually make an impact. When I-5 was partially closed for repairs in the downtown Seattle area last year, the south Sounder service increased by a few thousand riders a day. Before you say, "Big Deal, the freeway was so wide open at that time, that there was no way the few thousand additional trips Sounder picked up made that much difference!", make sure you check your facts. Just go back a few issues of this newsletter to where I talk about WSDOT's definition of congestion.

Sounder needed to only pick up 1000 riders to make a difference, given the service times, because the difference in vehicles per hour (VPH) of a congested roadway and a non-congested commute is approximately 1000 VPH. If you've forgotten the numbers I've told you...well...you'll just have to go back and research it!

Rail Connections will Reduce Congestion!

I recently had a conversation with a shoe salesman about the railroads. Don't ask why. He made one very, very interesting

comment of which I will paraphrase.

"I'd take the train around this area (Puget Sound) if it made the circle" What circle is that? "You know, around the lake, down to Renton, through Seattle, Everett, and [Snohomish]."

Great idea! I should have signed him up as an All Aboard member right then and there.

Other than the "Great Loop," one very important connectivity issue has to do with more than just rail transportation. That's the connectivity of different modes. One of the many things I've found out from the traveling public recently is how mysterious it is when they try to plan trips on the train. It's obvious that when you take a plane somewhere, there is always a way to rent a car when you get there. Although we never think of the costs involved in taking a long auto trip, we do know that a car will be there at the destination...ours.

Why should it be that if you take rail transportation you have to be the transit guru for all associated trips after that? We can't be rail chauvinists, it should be easy to change to any mode, on almost any leg of a trip. Yes, we know rail is the class way to travel, but there are plenty of times when we need a bus, a sidewalk, a plane, a boat, a taxi, and yes, even a private auto.

Provide easier connections to the train and more of the public will connect with the train.

Updates, from page 1

tracks will finally get power switches, but the Amtrak tracks will not for a while yet. The track reconfigurations will mean train equipment will no longer have to cross the mainline when moving between the maintenance base and the station and will eventually allow platforms to be extended to the south, increasing capacity at the station.

Pt. Defiance Bypass: this project will move *Cascades* service off the scenic water level route along Commencement Bay and the Tacoma Narrows. The aim is to provide faster service by moving the trains between Tacoma and Nisqually to a more direct route with little freight interference. WSDOT has advanced phase one of this project to do it in conjunction with Sound Transit improvements needed to extend Sounder service from Tacoma Dome Station to Lakewood. Major grade crossing improvements are needed on this section to increase train speeds up to 60-79 mph. Work will begin this summer but all improvements are not projected to be finished before early 2012, at the soonest. The Tacoma Amtrak station will be relocated to Freighthouse Square as part of this project. It will cut six minutes running time between Tacoma and Olympia/Lacey.

Tenino: an additional set of crossovers will be installed with construction beginning this summer.

Kelso to Martins Bluff: this major project would add a third main track (for passenger trains with speeds up to 110 mph) and additional storage tracks at the Kalama grain export terminal. With limited funding available, the Legislature directed WSDOT to phase the project. DOT will begin working with BNSF, the ports of Longview and Kalama, and local leaders this spring to develop a plan. Construction will not begin until 2013.

Vancouver: improvements in the Vancouver rail yard will begin with upgrades to an old siding to make it more functional. The 39th St. grade crossing through the yard will be replaced with a bridge though construction has been delayed until at least October due to issues with purchase of right-of-way.

Overhaul of the Talgo trainsets continues. The Mt. Rainier trainset is currently getting new seats, carpeting, sidewalls, safety upgrades and other improvements. Each trainset will cycle through the program with completion scheduled for late October. Until then the Seattle-Vancouver, BC trains will continue to use Superliner equipment.

More information on these project can be found at www.wsdot.wa.gov/projects.

2007 Amtrak Ridership & Revenues

Northwest Corridor (*Cascades* and *Coast Starlight* Eugene-Seattle): 734,357 riders, +7.5% over 2006.

Amtrak Station Data

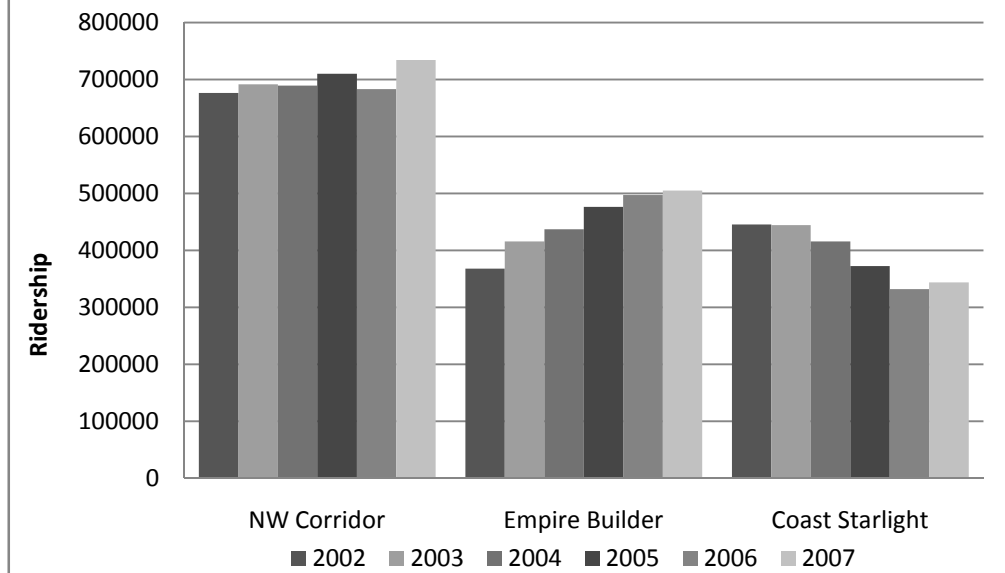
Six-Year Washington State On & Off Totals (calendar year)

Station	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	'07-'06 % Change
Bellingham	44,602	48,594	55,033	56,087	52,356	51,315	-2.0%
Bingen-White Salmon	1,171	1,190	1,460	1,938	1,924	2,307	+19.9%
Centralia	16,825	19,644	19,771	19,089	18,816	21,060	+11.9%
Edmonds	26,209	25,869	25,415	28,404	27,320	27,543	+0.8%
Ephrata	2,225	2,462	2,773	2,985	3,469	3,923	+13.1%
Everett	29,639	37,895	37,339	39,532	40,047	41,567	+3.8%
Kelso-Longview	21,849	21,289	20,573	20,956	21,411	23,519	+9.8%
Mt. Vernon	16,123	15,964	17,186	21,172	20,206	19,328	-4.3%
Olympia-Lacey	42,095	43,180	41,613	42,404	44,205	49,659	+12.3%
Pasco	13,134	16,355	18,710	22,056	27,147	28,072	+3.4%
Seattle	602,436	627,534	628,836	650,061	609,104	634,193	+4.1%
Spokane	32,523	39,284	40,106	42,491	46,096	48,484	+5.2%
Tacoma	99,950	106,840	106,180	102,255	102,703	110,869	+8.0%
Tukwila	6,405	9,017	11,470	14,214	16,082	18,887	+17.4%
Vancouver	64,315	68,123	71,487	72,266	74,907	84,766	+13.2%
Wenatchee	12,388	14,543	15,094	18,157	19,992	19,085	-4.5%
Wishram	595	938	1,154	2,446	1,403	1,683	+20.0%
TOTALS	1,032,484	1,098,703	1,114,200	1,156,513	1,089,235	1,186,260	+5.2%

Station totals include Thruway bus ridership numbers.

Trains Serving Washington State

(calendar year for NW corridor; federal fiscal year for Builder & Starlight)

*Cascades*: 676,760 riders, +7.4%;

\$18,165,351 in revenue, +9.9%.

Empire Builder: 504,977 riders, +1.6%;

\$53,177,760 in revenue, +9.2%.

Coast Starlight: 343,542 riders, +3.5%;

\$29,171,278 in revenue, +5.2%.

Amtrak system: 25,847,531 riders,

+6.3%; \$1,519,130,083 in revenue,

+10.8%.

Despite Amfleet and Horizon equipment subbing for the Talgo trainsets when they were removed from service to repair non-structural cracking in August and the resulting slight dip in ridership August-October, the *Cascades* again set ridership and

revenue records in 2007, as did the entire Amtrak system.

The beleaguered *Coast Starlight* had its first year-to-year ridership increase since 1998 when what was once the pride of Amtrak's national network trains (a title now passed to the *Builder*) carried 518,800 passengers. Hopefully, as Union Pacific continues to catch up on deferred maintenance and Amtrak works to get UP to properly operate the train as they prepares for its May relaunch, people will rediscover the joys of riding this train.

(Thanks to WSDOT's Carolyn Simmonds for station and Northwest Corridor information.)

Storm, from page 1
segments were accommodated on other trains. *Empire Builder* and *Coast Starlight* service was slated to resume also, although passengers were advised to expect delays. Full *Cascades* service resumed Dec. 7.

Flem, from page 2
Mitigation costs for the I-405 project will likely be in the hundreds of millions. Saving a potentially valuable adjacent transportation corridor is bargain. "Saving" even up to \$40 million in this case is a classic example of penny-wise, pound-foolish.

I concluded that our position does not preclude dual use and that the Cascade Bicycle Club has endorsed rail and trail. HTC Chair Judy Clibborn (D-Mercer Island) was, as always, gracious to all presenters. Again, thanks to our primary advocates on the committee, Reps. Jay Rodne and Deb Wallace.

BNSF's Stauffacher politely testified that the Federal Surface Transportation Board supersedes state actions on rail abandonments. Quite true, but not relevant. Proposals are for the state to preserve an intact rail corridor, not tell a private company it cannot sell its assets.

Following the hearing, the two BNSF men approached me and were extremely cordial. They represent a powerful but mature corporation which understands they will encounter differing views, but also knows All Aboard Washington is a respected prorail entity which is most often their ally on broad rail issues.

A different but strong bill has been proposed in the Senate. It would mandate that public agencies, such as cities, counties or ports, **NOT** destroy rail infrastructure they control without explicit state permission. And this bill has teeth! I will of course support it. Stay tuned and stay active. Your legislators in Olympia do listen to their constituents.



Washington's citizens, with their naturally varied interests and viewpoints, will not always agree with what their elected officials do or don't do. One can and sometimes should differ on what is done in the public sector. And citizens should politely inform electeds of the citizens' viewpoints. But what I strongly disagree with is the assertion that elected officials don't work at their jobs. As one who haunts the Capitol when the Legislature is in session, I can assure you that your legislators and their staffs devote long and intense hours daily to what they believe is the business of

our state. Any doubts? Come on down to Olympia during the week and try to find any goofing off. Virtually none. In fact, a few years back, those in Olympia's "hospitality" industry (Read: those who serve lots of booze) were whimpering that the Good Ol' Boy legislators of decades past have been replaced by men and particularly women who publicly party little, and have iced tea and Perrier with their lunch and dinner!

Differ with your Olympia elected on issues if you like. Lament, as I do, when partisanship sometimes becomes an end in itself. But acknowledge most legislators are dedicated to their jobs and work hard.



Plans to upgrade the *Coast Starlight* may happen but mudslides in the Oregon Cascades have temporarily ended through service from the Northwest to California. Lack of any alternative routes, when one goes down, is a problem that can plague both passenger and freight railroads. Maybe someday incentives to preserve, rather the incentives to abandon rail lines can come to pass. That the deck is still stacked against the rail mode compared to all other modes is a big and long-standing problem.

The *Empire Builder* is Amtrak's premier long-distance train. But concerns about lack of time for adequate maintenance on the hard-working *Builder* equipment has been brought to my attention. Hopefully the Northwest's two long-distance trains can soon return to full schedule and receive the care they warrant.

Forward, from page 6
cultural alliances far beyond rail's familiar friends." The Eastside Rail Line survives because of All Aboard Washington, Runte notes. "Today, the media calls us first."

Building on our success in 2007, in 2008 Runte will expand our outreach to include the following:

- Above all, we will keep the media and our elected officials fully informed about the Eastside Rail Line. These efforts will be coordinated with the intense efforts Lloyd Flem provides working with legislative representatives and senators, DOT officials and the governor's office in Olympia. Now that the Port of Seattle has agreed to buy the line, Runte says, the critical process of public input begins anew. As in Olympia, All Aboard Washington will remain at the forefront of educating leaders and the me-

dia. Dr. Runte will prepare opinion pieces, attend public hearings and meet with our elected representatives.

- A vital new thrust will be education. An experienced fund-raiser in educational circles, Dr. Runte will propose a major national conference on passenger rail, including invitees from around the world. Our politicians need to hear what the world is doing in rail – and see it. Seattle is the perfect venue, with major trade alliances bridging Europe, Asia and North America. Runte will further plan a series of smaller educational efforts, including escorted trips to see rail abroad. Here again, if we want railroads to be taught and defended, we ourselves need to educate the educators, business and civic leaders. They need to believe in our permanence, and we need to meet them daily. A planned downtown Seattle office will confirm our commitment.
- Another major thrust will be professional fund raising. Dr. Runte has developed many positive relationships with foundations and philanthropic organizations, particularly those organizations committed to protecting and preserving our natural environment. He will personally approach these organizations to show how railroads work to reduce global warming and demonstrate how their financial support to All Aboard Washington will achieve positive results for their environmental agenda.

Simply put, All Aboard Washington is not taking its success for granted. Success is never a time for standing still. If we wish to grow our organization, both in membership and credibility, we have to reach a broader public, Runte says. Much of his writing and activism, since the 1970s, has been directed to environmentalists, educators and preservationists. He has written for every major newspaper in America; his books are known throughout the world. In our fight for the Eastside Rail Line, our opening salvo was Dr. Runte's op-ed in the *Seattle Times*. In Dec. 2007, with the line still in jeopardy, the *Times* published his second op-ed on the issue. Never in the history of All Aboard Washington have we enjoyed such credibility.

Your board agrees it would be foolish to squander the investments made in the past year. Please join me in welcoming Dr. Al Runte to his new position. With Al's help, we firmly believe the best for All Aboard Washington is yet to come.

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Amtrak Reservations/Information: 800 872-7245
All Aboard Washington: AllAboardWashington.org
NARP: www.narprail.org
NARP Hotline: www.narprail.org/cms/index.php/hotline/
Amtrak: www.amtrak.com
Amtrak *Cascades*: www.amtrakcascades.com
Sound Transit: www.soundtransit.org

All Aboard News

February 23: Annual joint meeting with NARP Region 8, Assoc. of Oregon Rail and Transit Advocates and Montana ARP in **Portland**. The registration flyer was be sent out in late January. Use *Cascades* train 501 southbound and train 508 northbound. The Portland Visitor Association is now offering a 2-for-1 deal on *Cascades* service to Portland. Use promotion code H750 when making reservations with Amtrak. Restrictions apply and the number of seats available is limited. Registration deadline is Feb. 15. Contact Jim Hamre for more details (see contact info on p. 5)

May 10: All Aboard Washington meeting in **Seattle**. This is also the date of Amtrak's *Coast Starlight* relaunch festivities. We will be planning our May meeting around that event. Details in the April/May newsletter.

All Aboard Washington welcomed the following new members in December: Donald Leap, Portland, OR; Mark Miller, Seattle; Wayne Hom, Seattle; Dennis Schlenz, Lacey; Hitoshi Maruyama, Kenmore; Erik Griswold, Claremont, CA; Mort Gould, Aberdeen.

All Aboard Washington members contributing to this newsletter include Chuck Mott, Tony Trifiletti, John Carlin, Warren Yee, Lloyd Flem, Jim Cusick, Zack Willhoite, Jeff Schultz, Ken Uznanski, Steve Spear and Ron Sheck.

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

Return Service Requested

Noel Hancock, a long time All Aboard Washington member and rail advocate, passed away Nov. 16, 2007. He was born Jan. 16, 1295. Noel served on our board of directors for many years and was a member of our directors club, an honorary group of former board members. Chuck Mott said, "All of the officers, directors and members of All Aboard Washington mourn the passing of Noel Hancock. Noel was an active and enthusiastic supporter of our rail advocacy organization and always encouraged people to ride passenger trains." Noel, an Army veteran and Purple Heart recipient, was also a charter member of the Amtrak Customer Advisory Committee, where his work focused on senior citizen and long distance train issues. "This included extensive travel on Amtrak trains and providing detailed reports of these trips. As was characteristic of Noel, he wrote reports which were comprehensive, but emphasized the positive aspects of the equipment and service as well as mentioning any concerns. Noel saw these train trips as he seemed to see all of his life experiences, dwelling on the affirmative," said Lloyd Flem. Steve Spear, a neighbor of Noel's in Pacific, recalled, "Noel often spent his mornings sitting on the corner of Ellingson and "C" Streets in a folding chair he kept behind a utility box. From this corner, he would wave at morning commuters and watch Sounder, Amtrak and BNSF trains pass by. He was a very kind person. I will miss him."

Flash: Ron Sheck, King St. Station project manager, reports the city of Seattle and BNSF were to finally transfer station ownership to the city the week of Jan. 28. This will at last allow restoration to again move forward. (Coincidentally, the Jan. 2008 Amtrak national timetable features King St. Station and the Seattle skyline on its cover.)

2007 WashARP financial report

<u>Income</u>	
Renewals	\$17,188.52
New members	972.00
Appeal and donations	18,525.93
Memorials and grants	3,200.00
Meeting registrations/fees	7,877.00
Miscellaneous	3,052.25
Merchandise/Auction/Fireworks	4,625.76
Interest/dividends	390.24
Total	\$55,811.70
<u>Expenses</u>	
Executive director	\$23,635.00
Eastside Line Special Project	11,077.12
Newsletter	2,905.68
Miscellaneous postage	1,215.03
Website	335.83
Membership promotion	2,830.80
Meeting expenses	5,722.92
Supplies	885.17
Miscellaneous expenses	1,390.15
Total	\$49,997.70

All Aboard Washington again boldly moves forward

By Chuck Mott

On January 12, by unanimous vote of the Board of Directors, Dr. Alfred Runte was named executive director of All Aboard Washington, to begin on a contract basis. Based in Seattle, Al Runte's responsibilities will complement Lloyd's Flem's duties in Olympia as government affairs director. Both directors bring high levels of varying, effective talents and responsibilities to their respective fields in the rail advocacy community.

Dr. Runte offers more than 40 years of experience to our organization, including a close alliance with environmental groups. "The railroad community needs to broaden its horizons," Runte said. "We need to stop talking just among ourselves. In 2007, All Aboard Washington achieved enormous success by tackling that cultural roadblock. We stopped preaching to the proverbial choir and successfully courted the beliefs of new parishioners. We built political and (See **Forward**, page 5)

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_____ Extra Contribution..... \$ _____

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