

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

President Obama announces 21st century high speed rail vision; WSDOT and FRA seek public input for Northwest Corridor projects

All of you know [high speed rail] is not some fanciful, pie-in-the-sky vision of the future. It is now. It is happening right now. It's been happening for decades. The problem is it's been happening elsewhere, not here.

President Barack Obama

On April 16, Pres. Obama – joined by Vice President Joe Biden and USDOT Secretary Ray LaHood – presented his Administration's Vision for High Speed Rail in America. The plan includes \$8 bill. in investment provided by the Recovery Act and an additional \$1 bill. over each of the next five years. The president acknowledged this is only a down payment on our country's HSR plans.

Here are some of the president's remarks:

"The Recovery and Reinvestment Plan we passed not two months ago included the most sweeping investment in our infrastructure since President Eisenhower built the Interstate Highway System in the 1950s. And these efforts will save money by untangling gridlock and saving lives by improving our roads....

"We also have to build a new foundation for our future growth. Today, our aging system of highways and byways, air routes and rail lines is hindering that growth. Our highways are clogged with traffic, costing us \$80 billion a year in lost productivity and wasted fuel. Our airports are choked with increased loads....We're at the mercy of fluctuating gas prices all too often; we pump too many greenhouse gases into the air.

"What we need, then, is a smart transportation system equal to the needs of the 21st century. A system that reduces travel times and increases mobility. A system that reduces congestion and boosts productivity. A

system that reduces destructive emissions and creates jobs.

"What we're talking about is a vision for high speed rail in America. Imagine boarding a train in the center of a city. No racing to an airport and across a terminal, no delays, no sitting on the tarmac, no lost luggage, no taking off your shoes. Imagine whisking through towns at speeds over 100 miles an hour, walking only a few steps to public transportation, and ending up just blocks from your destination. Imagine what a great project that would be to



President Barack Obama, flanked by Vice President Joe Biden, on left, and USDOT Secretary Ray LaHood, presented his Administration's vision for the development of high speed rail in the United States at an April 16 press conference.

Photo by Scott Bernstein, www.cnt.org

rebuild America.

"In France, high-speed rail has pulled regions from isolation, ignited growth, remade quiet towns into thriving tourist destinations. In Spain, a high-speed line between Madrid and Seville is so successful that more people travel between those cities by rail than by car and airplane combined. China, where service began just two years ago, may have more miles of high-speed rail service than any other country just five years from now. And Japan, the nation that unveiled the first high-speed rail system, is already at work building the next: a line that will connect Tokyo with Osaka at speeds of

over 300 miles per hour. So it's being done; it's just not being done here.

"There's no reason why we can't do this. This is America. There's no reason why the future of travel should lie somewhere else beyond our borders. Building a new system of high-speed rail in America will be faster, cheaper and easier than building more freeways or adding to an already overburdened aviation system – and everybody stands to benefit.

"That's why today, with the help of Secretary LaHood and Vice President Biden, America's number one rail fan, I've been told, I'm announcing my administration's efforts to transform travel in America with an historic investment in high speed rail.

"Our strategy has two parts: improving our existing rail lines to make current train service faster [and] also identifying potential corridors for the creation of world-class high-speed rail. To make this happen, we've already dedicated \$8 billion of Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds to this initiative, and I've requested another \$5 billion over the next five years.

"The Department of Transportation expects to begin awarding funds to ready projects before the end of this summer, well ahead of schedule. And like all funding decisions under the Recovery Act, money will be distributed based on merit....

"This plan is realistic....We're not talking about starting from scratch, we're talking about using existing infrastructure to increase speeds on some routes from 70 miles an hour to over 100 miles per hour – so you're taking existing rail lines, you're upgrading them. And many corridors merit even faster service, but this is the first step that is quickly achievable....

"The next step is investing in high (See **Obama**, page 4)



*From the desk of
the Executive
Director
by
Lloyd H. Flem*

First: A couple of requests; Rail Week; Gov. Gregoire, meet Gov. Doyle

Last November I received a generous donation to AAWA from the Chehalis Indian Nation in the form of a one-night stay voucher in a Family Suite at the Great Wolf Lodge, a family-oriented resort and water park (NOT a casino). The donation certificate arrived after our meeting and annual silent auction at Tacoma's Freighthouse Square. Water park rides and other "fun stuff" are included. Meals are extra.

The Lodge is located 17 miles south of Olympia, I-5 Exit 88. July 19 through August 22 and Labor Day weekend are "blackout dates" for which the Voucher is not valid. The Voucher is valid most other dates through November 11.

The retail value is over \$200. Bids (by phone or email to me) will start with a \$75 minimum. Bidding closes June 30.

Former long-time Amtrak executive Steve Roberts phoned me asking for information about the "cause of origin" of Amtrak's original (1977) Seattle-Denver-Chicago *Pioneer*. Roberts now works for Wilbur Smith Associates, a major rail consultant, and is assigned to look into restoration of the *Pioneer*. He believes it might have originated as result of Congressional request, perhaps from former Oregon Gov. and US Sen. Mark Hatfield. Roberts' phone number is 925-689-0813. Please phone him or me if you have any insights.



While AAWA was well represented at the 27 May Rail Stakeholder Meeting and FRA Rail Workshop (see separate story), many AAWA members, including officers and board members participated in the Cascadia Institute's three day "Rail Week" 27-29 May in Seattle, Portland, and on trains between and around. For those wanting a summary of the events, I will have same in written form and will do a report at the AAWA meeting in Vancouver, WA on Saturday 13 June.

Cascadia Director Bruce Agnew (also longtime AAWA member) and his staff put together an intensive program, full of influential speakers, attended by many important public decision-makers, and left me increasingly confident that it is a New World for passenger trains in the US, that the State of Washington will continue to pursue more passenger rail service, and that our state's well-earned piece of the unprecedentedly (but still just a "good start") Federal financial commitment will come through.

Participating were Sen. Mary Margaret Haugen (D-Camano Island), Rep. Judy Clibborn (D-Mercer Island), WSDOT Secretary Paula Hammond and (by video) US Sen. Patty Murray (D). All were enthusiastically supportive of increased passenger train service for our Northwest Corridor and of Washington State getting its slice of the Federal ARRA "Stimulus" money.

In Portland, US Rep. Peter DeFazio (D-OR) issued essentially a coach's pep talk about a passenger train future fully supported by an Administration for the first time since Abraham Lincoln. (Is there something about tall, slim, but athletic men from Illinois that makes for a pro-passenger-train president?!)

AAWA's Ron Sheck, PhD Geography, gave an excellent Thursday evening presentation on high speed rail in Europe. (After hearing Ron and Marilyn are moving to Ohio, I'm afraid I was badly outvoted by Ron's family when I objected to the Sheck's upcoming relocation! Ron has been a strong and steady force for passenger trains during his years in our state. Now Ohio will benefit from Ron's knowledge, experience and dedication. Thanks for your work here, Ron.)

Other sessions included representatives of ports and BNSF and UP sharing their views on passenger and freight trains sharing tracks. UP is now beginning to join BNSF in taking the pragmatic position that living with public-supported passenger train service and the investments they bring to railroad infrastructure calls for cooperation, not simply opposition.

Other meetings featured representatives of rail equipment manufacturers, including Antonio Perez of Talgo.

Present at several meetings was former Secretary of State Ralph Munro (R). Ralph's long-time and continuous support for our rail program has been of great importance.

An enjoyable field trip by Amtrak *Cascades* to Portland featured a ride on the new Westside Express Service, a Diesel Multiple Unit commuter train which serves suburbs southwest of Portland.

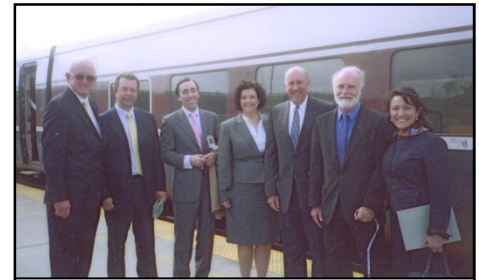
The FRA people were properly impressed with not only our statewide electeds, but mayors and council people from up and down the corridor. Notably present for one or more days were the mayors of Vancouver, BC, Vancouver, WA, Portland and Bellingham, as well as AAWA Board member and Mayor Rob Eaton, whose Leavenworth Amtrak station project is now finally underway.

An important part of the three-day conference was having John Nemeth and Andy Peri of Marin and Sonoma counties, northern suburbs of San Francisco, show how close cooperation among rail advocates, bicycle interest groups and others resulted in a 70% election win last November to fund a 71-mile rail and trail corridor. Many lessons

for us as we continue in our quest to save the now bifurcated Eastside Line for future commuter rail.

Among other things, we found the costs estimated by independent rail consultants hired by Cascadia were similar to those in Marin-Sonoma and much less than those the Puget Sound Regional Council and Sound Transit came up with.

John and Andy spoke to very supportive audiences in the communities of Woodinville and Snohomish. J Craig Thorpe's paintings explicitly illustrated "what can be" for trains and pathways on the Eastside Line, if we can learn from the experience of these folks who successfully dealt with an analogous situation. Thanks to AAWA's Loren Herrigstad and C.B. Hall for making initial contact with the Californians.



Pictured at Olympia/Lacey's Centennial Station on April 29 are Ralph Munro, former Secretary of State; Jose-Maria Oriol, Talgo CEO-Madrid; Antonio Perez, Talgo America CEO - Seattle; Paula Hammond, WSDOT Secretary; Wisconsin Gov. Jim Doyle; Lloyd Flem; and Nora Friend, Talgo America Vice President - Marketing.
Photo by Darlene Austin

On 29 April, I was privileged to meet Wisconsin Gov. Jim Doyle (D) at Centennial Station. Talgo executives had arranged for the very pro-passenger rail governor and his equally pro-rail WisDOT chief Frank Busalacchi to meet with our Gov. Chris Gregoire (D) and WSDOT Secretary Paula Hammond. The Talgo people, aware AAWA (then WashARP) and former Secretary of State Ralph Munro had been instrumental in advocating for our original Amtrak *Cascades* in the 1990s, wanted Ralph and I to have the opportunity to meet the governor of a state, which like Washington, has made serious investments in their intercity passenger rail program. Unfortunately, the photo does not include Busalacchi, whose advocacy for Federal passenger rail investments has been exemplary.



Hopefully, many of you will attend the AAWA meeting at Little Italy's Trattatoria in Vancouver, WA on 13 June. While Dan McFarling of AORTA will present their view on the proposed trans-Columbia River "mega-bridge," of equal importance will be advances in cooperation between AAWA and AORTA. In addition, in response to requests to reformatize AAWA "work groups" and continue the trend of getting more members involved in the multi-faceted and multi-skilled world of rail advocacy, meeting attendees will have the opportunity to sign on to help move rail forward in our Northwest. The restaurant needs a count, please RSVP to me or Jim Hamre by June 10. See you in Vancouver on the 13th!



The View Down the Tracks

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with Jim Cusick

Fifty Cents

Here we go again. Now that President Obama's high speed rail stimulus plan is gaining traction, out of the woodwork come the critics. Well, maybe not so out of the woodwork, because this critic is one we know and love. In the Opinion section of the May 20th USA Today, our old friend Randall O'Toole give his usual (repeat performance) diatribe against anything rail ("A high-speed rail mirage").

I'll come back to that in a moment.

But first, I think it would be important if I get my readers to repeat after me... "Fifty Cents"... "Fifty Cents"... "Fiiiiiiifty Cents."

This will bring you peace. This will bring harmony. This will console your psyche. Most importantly, when you chant this at the right time, you will gain the attention and respect of those around you.

You don't just want to blurt this out, completely out of context. You have to wait for the right moment to enlighten the unenlightened.

When to say this?

Whenever anyone is attempting to compare the cost of train travel to driving.

In my last column I went over the real costs, but if you spout out precise figures then it just causes eye glaze over. The reason you want to say "Fifty Cents" is because it's easy!

There are still many articles, some with even a positive message concerning rail travel, where they make travel comparisons by noting only the cost of gas in their calculations.

If you encounter someone who makes that mistake, just say in a quiet, reasoned tone... "Fifty Cents."

Of course, at that point they will ask you "What the heck are you talking about?"

I know AAA has a slightly higher figure, but use \$.50 because... The Math Is Simple!

Whatever the distance they are traveling, the cost per mile is half of that.

If they are going to a destination 100 miles away and returning, then calculating the cost of driving is simple - \$100 for the 200 mile roundtrip.

Roughly, that's the distance from Seattle to Bellingham and back. So when someone is comparing the cost of driving to taking the train, then 100 smackers is the cost to drive. A round trip fare on the Amtrak Cascades (at the highest fare, mind you) is \$64.

In pricing fares for rail travel, those who calculate the price point have to deal with more of people's perception of cost, than what is reality. If tolls were collected for road travel, then rail systems could price their fares at more realistic levels.

So, don't be afraid to give your...

Two Cents

Two... Two... Twoooooooooooooo...

Two cents per mile, the cost of the gas tax if you had to pay a toll per mile for the amount of gas you burn.

In a past column I referred to the fact that users of a particular freeway paid only 10% of the actual cost of the facility. This is if the lanes are built for "congestion relief."

Ten percent actually is the ratio of what it costs to provide a freeway lane versus the number of people who use the new lane. If you go back to my example of creating a new set of lanes to provide congestion relief for those on the freeway and charging a toll to "make it pay for itself," you will only be able to siphon off the excess drivers from the commute hours.

If you are happy with the way congestion is now, the ratio of who pays for what is more like 30%.

If we want people who pay the gas tax to actually pay for the urban freeway, then it would have to remain congested roughly 10 hours a day. And that's only if you figure there is hardly anyone driving in the midnight through 5 AM time frame. If you spread out the cars to have an uncongested freeway, then you could cover the cost even with the slack time. However, there had better be cars filling up the lanes to their uncongested (45 mph/2100 vph) limit for approximately 20 hours a day.

Heck, we're having a cow when SR 520 is only congested for 6 hours a day.

Which brings us back to Randall O'Toole.

I know we like to demonize people such as him, but they do provide a useful purpose. They keep us on our toes. Our only job is to be sure that we don't get bogged down in the minutiae.

In the article he states "Interstates paid for themselves out of gas taxes and most Americans use them almost every day." Non gas tax money was used to begin highway construction, and he completely ignores the money from other funding sources that go into maintaining them. The State Patrol in particular. Is he lying? Is he playing a semantics game?

Who knows?

The point is, I see these arguments presented time and time again. So, we must remain vigilant in our efforts to set the record straight. As Vladimir Lenin said once "A lie, told often enough, will eventually become the truth."

Snappy Answers

At a conference hosted by Dave Ross a few years ago, I stood up to make my point and, in painting the picture, it took me into a detailed explanation.

At that point he stopped me and said "By now, most of my listeners have tuned out."

It was frustrating because there is no real way to make transportation arguments without delving into some detail.

Everything cannot be meaningfully distilled down to a one sentence sound-bite.

What it got me thinking about, though, was exactly how to do that.

What I came up with I sent him in an email titled "Snappy Answers to Mobility Questions."

I think they're pretty snappy; they certainly are true but the problem is to be credible they still need explanations.

1) It's simple... It's obvious... Common sense... **No, it isn't!**

2) Building transit is "social engineering". **So is building roads.**

3) I paid for those lanes. **No, you didn't... we all**

did, but who gets to decide who drives in them? *This snappy answer is explained above.*

4) Donor states/Receiver states, Donor counties/Receiver counties, Donor subareas/Receiver subareas??? **There are no Subarea Equity rules in place for the gas tax.**

5) I didn't vote for light rail, why should I have to pay for it? **I didn't vote for the gas tax, either.**

6) Light Rail is expensive. **So are urban freeways (and so was the monorail, as we found out).**

7) Mass Transit projects don't reduce congestion. **Answer #1) Yes they do, but not as much as a new freeway lane would (surprised?); Answer #2) Neither does a freeway lane.**

8) Two freeway lanes can handle 65,000 vehicles per day, more than any rail system's daily ridership. **That's true. So if they're so efficient, what's the problem?** *This is also explained above. The freeways operate at about half their capacity and even then we whine about congestion.*

9) Build it and they will come (freeways). **What that should really be is: "Build it and it will fill up so quickly because it handles such a small amount each hour."**

10) I see buses running almost empty most of the time. **I see almost empty freeway lanes a majority of the day.**

11) Transit is subsidized. **Roads are subsidized.**

12) The gas tax is a user fee. **The gas tax is an excise tax on a commodity. A toll is a user fee.**

I hope these snappy answers are useful, but truth be told, I had to get a bit more detailed in my email to Dave in order to back up these claims.

In my next column, I don't plan to get into more detail with these snappy answers.

"Why NOT?" you ask.

I will be celebrating!

Because by the next newsletter Sound Transit's Central Link will have opened. Yahoo!!

Sound Transit will have a revised Sounder schedule, which will allow someone to commute from the north end (Everett, Mukilteo, Edmonds) down to the south end Sounder stations This you can actually do now.

However, the revised schedule will allow you to make the return trip north, by taking one of the reverse commute trains that will get you to Seattle in time to catch a north end Sounder. Yahoo!! Yahoo!!

And the second train will actually get to Vancouver, BC! YAHOO!!

Okay, I'm getting carried away, I have NO IDEA when that will happen, save for the time right around the Olympics.

Speaking of which, the rhetoric north of the border concerning the lack of movement by the Canadian Border Security Agency and the federal and provincial governments is heating up. There are many editorials in the papers north of the border in support of this train. I just hope there is a way for our friends up there to put some muscle into it.

Personally, I think that since the Vancouver Canucks aren't in the Stanley Cup finals, the players could stay in shape by "persuading" their appropriate government officials to "get off the stick" and get that second train into the station!

Stay tuned, and don't forget to "Keep your stick on the ice!"

Obama, from page 1

speed rail that unleashes the economic potential of all our regions by shrinking distances within our regions. There are at least 10 major corridors in the United States of 100 to 600 miles in length with the potential for successful high speed rail systems. And these areas have explored its potential impact on their long-term growth and competitiveness, and they've already presented sound plans. I want to be clear: No decision about where to allocate funds has yet been made, and any region can step up, present a plan and be considered.

"The high-speed rail corridors we've identified so far would connect areas like the cities of the Pacific Northwest; southern and central Florida; the Gulf Coast to the Southeast to our nation's capital; the breadth of Pennsylvania and New York to the cities of New England; and something close to my heart, a central hub network that draws the cities of our industrial heartland closer to Chicago and one another.

"Or California, where voters have already chosen to move forward with their own high-speed rail system, a system of new stations and 220 mile per hour trains that links big cities to inland towns; that alleviates crippling congestion on highways and at airports; and that makes travel from San Francisco to Los Angeles possible in two and a half hours.

"By making investments across the country, we'll lay a new foundation for our economic competitiveness and contribute to smart urban and rural growth. We'll create highly-skilled construction and operating jobs that can't be outsourced, and generate demand for technology that gives a new generation of innovators and entrepreneurs the opportunity to step up and lead the way in the 21st century. We'll move to cleaner energy and a cleaner environment, we'll reduce our need for foreign oil by millions of barrels a year, and eliminate more than 6 billion pounds of carbon dioxide emissions annually – equal to removing 1 million cars from our roads.

"I know that this vision has its critics. There are those who say high-speed rail is a fantasy -- but its success around the world says otherwise. I know Americans love their cars, and nobody is talking about replacing the automobile and our highways as critical parts of our transportation system....But this is something that can be done, has been done and can provide us enormous benefits.

"There are those who argue that if an investment doesn't directly benefit the people of their district, then it shouldn't be

made....But if we followed that rationale, we'd have no infrastructure at all.

"There are those who say, well, this investment is too small. But this is just a first step. We know that this is going to be a long-term project. But us getting started now, us moving the process forward and getting people to imagine what's possible, and putting resources behind it so that people can start seeing examples of this around the country, that's going to spur all kinds of activity.

"Finally, there are those who say at a time of crisis, we shouldn't be pursuing such a strategy; we've got too many other things to do. But our history teaches us a different lesson....President Lincoln was committed to a nation connected from East to West [by rail], even at the same time he was trying to hold North and South together. He was in the middle of a Civil War. While fighting raged on one side of the continent, tens of thousands of Americans from all walks of life came together on the other [to build a railroad]....And eventually, those two sets of tracks met."

Earlier Vice President Joe Biden and USDOT Secretary Ray LaHood also made comments.

Biden said, "I'm more happy than you can imagine to talk about a commitment that, with the President's leadership, we're making to achieve the goal through the development of high-speed rail projects that will extend eventually all across this nation. And most of you know that not only means an awful lot to me, but I know a lot of you personally in this audience over the years, I know it means equally as much to you....It's about time we took those railways and made them the national treasures they should be. They're the best way to reconnect and connect communities to each other to move us all forward in the 21st century."

LaHood (a former Republican Congressman from Illinois) said, "High Speed Rail will be one of the legacies of the Obama Administration – their transportation legacy."

NARP President Ross Capon was among the invited guests at the presentation in the Eisenhower Executive Office Building next to the White House. The vice president thanked NARP and other advocates and state and local officials present for their years advocacy.

The "Vision" is available at www.fra.dot.gov/us/content/31 and complete remarks by Obama and Biden are available at www.whitehouse.gov/blog/09/04/16/A-Vision-for-High-Speed-Rail/

On Wednesday May 27, WSDOT, Oregon DOT and the Federal Highway Administration (FRA) hosted a High Speed and Intercity Passenger Rail



WSDOT's Scott Witt, left, and ODOT's Kelly Taylor make their presentation during the morning session of the High Speed Rail Workshop. Looking on are Paul Nissenbaum from FRA and Stephen Gardner from Amtrak.

Photo by Warren Yee

Workshop (at a SeaTac Airport hotel, of all places!). All Aboard Washington was represented at the event by Harvey Bowen, Mike Skehan, Carl Jackson and Warren Yee.

In the morning, WSDOT's Scott Witt, Rail and Marine Office director, and ODOT's Kelly Taylor, Rail Division administrator, hosted a session on the current and future status of the Pacific Northwest Rail Corridor and the Amtrak *Cascades* service. Discussion included:

- The over one three quarter billion dollars already invested by the public in Oregon and Washington to provide expanded intercity and commuter rail service on BNSF and UP mainlines, with little support to date from the federal government.
- The mid-range and long-range plans for expansion of *Cascades* service.
- The strong partnership between WSDOT, ODOT, British Columbia, Amtrak, BNSF, UP and Sound Transit that has made the existing service levels possible.
- How the partnership plans to seek the Northwest's fair share of the HSR funds made available through the Recovery Act and the additional funds to be made available over the next five years.

The afternoon session was hosted by Karen Rae, FRA deputy administrator. The FRA provided an overview of the High Speed Rail Strategic Plan and how the agency would implement the plan. Amtrak's Stephen Gardner, vice president, Policy and Development, provided a national Amtrak perspective. Scott Witt and Kelly Taylor presented our plans for the Northwest Rail Corridor to FRA. There was a breakout session where the participants got together in small groups to discuss the high speed rail plans and provide input to FRA.

AAWA representatives asked questions and provided comments during question and answer sessions, and we also participated in the afternoon breakout session. We reiterated the local and state money invested already and the partnerships that have made possible our progress to date.

Scenes from National Train Day

The second annual National Train was celebrated on May 9 around the country. Amtrak started National Train Day last year to commemorate the May 10, 1869 completion of the first transcontinental railroad at Promontory, Utah. Here are some scenes of from events in the Northwest. All Aboard Washington hosted or participated in events in Seattle, Tacoma, Olympia and Kelso. NARP member Michael Ackley helped put together an event in Missoula, MT, a city without Amtrak service since 1979, and several thousand people turned out! In Portland, over 5000 showed up for an event that featured Southern Pacific locomotive 4449. This locomotive pulled the Freedom Train across the country to celebrate the bicentennial in 1976.



Photo by Ron Schauer

All Aboard Washington display at the Kelso Station. Ron and Pat Schauer and Tedine Roos hosted our table.

Hosting at Olympia's Centennial Station were Rich DeGarmo, Karen Keller, Marie Lewis and Loren Herrigstad.



Michael Ackley, left, hosts the NARP table in Missoula, where over 700 signatures were collected to support restored passenger train service to southern Montana.



Photo by Warren Yee

Hosting our table in Seattle were, from left, Jim Cusick and Harvey Bowen. Also assisting were Kathy Davis, George Barner, Rob Eaton and Lloyd Flem.



Photo by Jim Hamre

Zack Willhoite talks with a prospective member at the Tacoma Station.

Governors Chris Gregoire (D-WA) and Ted Kulongoski (D-OR) sent the following letter to USDOT Sec. Ray LaHood on May 11, 2009:

We write to applaud the bold vision and federal funding commitment of this Administration to support the existing and planned high-speed rail system in the United States. The \$8 billion for high-speed and intercity rail investments made available through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (AARA), further supported by the Administration's budget proposal to provide \$1 billion annually for FY 2010 through FY 2014 for high-speed rail development, are important infrastructure investments that will improve mobility, create and preserve jobs, and benefit air quality across our country.

(continued next column)

Washington and Oregon are celebrating the 10th anniversary of the Amtrak Cascades, our signature high-speed rail corridor service. This international corridor serves not only Washington and Oregon, but also Vancouver, British Columbia, and Canada. Growing through state and federal investment, this service has carried more than six million passengers over the last 10 years, and has shown an 82% increase in ridership since 1998. In 2008, ridership reached nearly 775,000 passengers, the most successful year in the history of the service. In November 2008, the on-time performance of the Amtrak Cascades reached a five-year high of 81.7%.

Amtrak Cascades services has grown to four daily round-trips between Portland and Seattle, with connecting service between Portland and Eugene and between Bellingham and Seattle. The service also includes one daily round trip between Seattle and Vancouver, with a second trip to be inaugurated before the 2010 Olympic Games in Vancouver. The Cascades service reduces traffic congestion, provides transportation options, creates jobs, and provides other economic benefits from the money spent by users upon reaching their destinations.

Between 1994-2007, \$782.5 million has been spent on the Amtrak Cascades rail line, safety and station improvements by Amtrak, Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway, United States federal funding sources, a regional public transit entity known as Sound Transit, localities, and the states of Washington and Oregon. In March 2007, the Province of British Columbia, BNSF Railway and Amtrak agreed to fund \$9.4 million in track and signal investments in Canada as part of the development of the second daily round trip between Seattle and Vancouver. The Amtrak Cascades has been and continues to be a great example of how public-private partnerships and regionally-based investment can produce a premiere passenger high-speed rail corridor.

Washington State, Oregon, and Amtrak have contributed \$316.4 million in operating support to the Cascades – bringing the total regional investment since 1994 to \$1.1 billion. Because of the region's long history of meaningful incremental investments in the corridor, federal funds invested to sustain and improve the system are greatly leveraged. Because the Cascades service has planned well for the future, both mid and long range projects have been identified and federal funds will be invested in projects that are ready to proceed.

As you develop the Department's strategic plan (See **Governors**, page 6)

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 Amtrak: www.amtrak.com
 Amtrak Cascades: www.amtrakcascades.com
 Sound Transit: www.soundtransit.org

All Aboard News

August 8: All Aboard Washington meeting at noon at Jim Hamre's home, 13307 104th Ave. Ct. E. on Puyallup's South Hill. Bring a pot-luck item. Hamburgers and beverages provided. Call or email Jim for more information. See p. 5. We will have railroadiana merchandise donated by several All Aboard Washington member for sale as a fund raiser. Bring your cash or checkbook.

All Aboard Washington welcomed the following new members in April and May: Bob & Marlene Schweighardt, Kennewick; Richard Crossland, Seattle; Norm & Marilyn Ward, Seattle; David Anderson, Seattle; and Walter Murry, Olympia.

All Aboard Washington members contributing to this newsletter include Zack Willhoite, Warren Yee, Harvey Bowen, Mike Skehan, Barry Green, Lloyd Flem, Ron Schauer, Ron Sheck, Mark Meyer, Darlene Austin and Jim Cusick.

If you haven't responded to our member survey and fundraising letter, it's not too late. We're still accepting your comments (and extra contributions). Our advocacy never stops, even though we are now moving more toward the offense now that the federal government is finally stepping up to the plate.

Do you want to be greener, save All Aboard Washington money and get your newsletter sooner (with color pictures)? Send your email address to Warren Yee (see p. 5) and we'll start sending you **WASHINGTON RAIL NEWS** as a PDF every two months in lieu of a paper copy.

All Aboard Washington
P. O. Box 70381
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Return Service Requested

All Aboard Washington received the following note from board member Ron Sheck. Ron has been active in AAWA since he moved to Seattle. Most recently, he worked for WSDOT, managing the King St. Station project and acting as the DOT rail liaison to Sound Transit.

I am resigning my position on the Board of Directors of All Aboard Washington. Marilyn and I are moving to Ohio to be closer to kids and grandkids. Three of the four sets are nearby in Toledo, Dayton and Pittsburgh. The other set is in Phoenix where we can escape the cold and snow of northern winters. That and other family and friends on the West Coast will provide the opportunity for a lot of train travel.

It has been a rewarding experience to be part of AAWA and WashARP. It is an exciting time for rail with the new federal policy shift backed by money. I think we are just seeing the tip of the iceberg. I only hope that WSDOT and the governor are on top of things to get a fair share of stimulus money. And hopefully we will see a return of the Pioneer and some new east-west service. As a starter, there should be a day train on the Empire Builder route to Leavenworth, Wenatchee and Spokane and a twice daily service from Seattle to Ellensburg, Yakima and the Tri Cities. Of course 13 roundtrips to Portland and four to Vancouver, BC are top priority.

AAWA needs to be pushing for completion of King Street Station. The City will get the job done, but it is important for AAWA to ensure that the final outcome is a train station, not offices or collection of shops.

I look back on a career that has allowed me to contribute to a lot of rail and transit across the country: the New Mexico Rail Runner; the Tampa Streetcar and Tampa Union Station; TriRail in South Florida; Link Light Rail and Sounder; King Street Station; and others. I am grateful for having had the opportunity. I will stay in touch.

Governors, from page 5

for high-speed rail, we ask that you consider applying the following criteria to evaluate projects proposed for ARRA or other funding, prioritizing projects that:

Expand and improve existing successful high-speed rail service; Demonstrate substantial public benefits, including advancing environmental climate change goals, energy savings and congestion reduction, particularly in areas adjacent to Interstate highway systems to provide travel options along with job creation; Reward the efforts of States that have demonstrated prior support for a high-speed rail programs on a State, regional and local level with a track record of positive growth in terms of service and ridership; Build on community support for high-speed rail service and expansion; and, Complete program-level ready to implement and construct projects.

We urge the Department to develop a strategic plan for inter-city and high speed rail that supports existing corridors with proven track records of successful service to the public and that builds upon prior effort and investment. These criteria will focus federal support and investments to high speed rail corridors that will maximize the benefit to the nation.

We will finalize our priority list of projects supporting our Amtrak Cascades Mid-Range and Long-Range Plans once the Federal Rail Agency application guidance and other regulations have been developed. We look forward to working with you and the President on building a high-speed rail network that will move our transportation infrastructure into the 21st century.

All Aboard Washington member Mark Meyer recently drove through Sandpoint, ID and discovered Amtrak is planning to move from its downtown station to one out in the middle of nowhere because Idaho DOT is cramming a bypass road between the building and Sand Creek. Somehow Amtrak feels getting a paved driveway and parking lot is inferior to the cratered dirt facilities currently existing. Amtrak appears to not be standing up to IDOT and demanding it be made whole after construction. Few in town are aware of this, including members of the city council. Mark is working this issue with local citizens and politicians.

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**MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION
RENEWAL FORM
ADDRESS CHANGE**

Basic Membership.....\$25.00 per year
Student/Fixed Income\$18.00 per year
Family Membership\$50.00 per year
Patron.....\$75.00 per year
Leadership or Business Circle.....\$100.00 per year
Extra Contribution.....\$ _____
(always welcome and appreciated)
Note: if you move, let us know in advance and save us 75¢ for address correction service.

Name _____
Address _____
City/State/Zip _____
Phone _____