



WASHINGTON RAIL NEWS

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www.AllAboardWashington.org

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

Northwest Corridor infrastructure update

David Smelser, Cascades HSR Program Manager for WSDOT, provided All Aboard Washington updates on the capital investment projects on BNSF during his presentation at our Dec. 14 meeting and in a Jan. 22 interview. This work is mostly funded by the \$820 mill. in federal ARRA funding. Here is an update:

Corridor Reliability Upgrades:

These projects improve the tracks between Nisqually and Vancouver, WA and between Everett and the Canadian border. WSDOT funding adds onto the routine annual work BNSF funds, and includes new rail and ties, ballast cleaning and drainage improvements. The projects will result in improved track quality, travel times and passenger comfort.

Mudslide mitigation: This work is between Seattle and Everett. BNSF completed two containment walls last year and a third one will be built this summer. Walls at three more locations are not yet funded for construction.

Advanced Wayside Signal System: This project upgrades signal system components from analog to digital at all control points, sidings, turnouts and other locations. Work is underway north of Seattle and is just starting south of Tacoma. It prepares the way for installation of Positive Train Control.

Blaine Swift Customs Facility: This project constructs 9000 feet of new main track and reconfigures the existing mainline into a second siding so that freight trains being inspected by US Customs won't interfere with passenger trains. Construction starts this summer.



BNSF crews perform regular track maintenance in Puyallup in late January. WSDOT funds additional work to speed up the corridor improvements. Photo by Jim Hamre

Mt. Vernon Siding Extension: This work will more than double the current siding from 4600 feet to 9300 feet and allow an additional point where freight and passenger trains can more easily pass each other. Construction began last fall and will be completed by this winter.

King St Station Track Improvements: This project will complete station track upgrades by adding new automated signals and interlockings; upgrading the tracks, including the west track that is currently not used for passenger boarding; and possibly convert the easterly stub track to a through track. The results will provide increased capacity and flexibility. WSDOT has contracted with Amtrak for the design engineering. Construction is scheduled to begin in Nov. 2015.

Tukwila Station: Sound Transit is currently constructing the permanent Sounder/Amtrak station, while the cities of Renton and Tukwila are constructing the first phase of the Strander Blvd extension under the BNSF tracks and to the east. BNSF is doing grading work for a third main track. Completion is scheduled for late 2014.

Pt. Defiance Bypass: This project builds on what Sound Transit had already constructed to extend Sounder service from Tacoma Dome Station to Lakewood. It included completely rebuilding the track infrastructure from Lakewood to Nisqually, installing a second track from 66th St in south Tacoma to south of Bridgeport Way in Lakewood, and relocating the Tacoma Amtrak Station to

Freighthouse Square. The project has three goals: more service (BNSF will not allow additional Cascades on the Pt. Defiance line), better reliability and reduced running times. It has generated controversy in Lakewood as many in the city feel they are getting more (and faster) trains without any benefit. Though FRA has approved environmental documentation for the project Lakewood continues to fight in court, with a hearing scheduled for March.

Rep. Steve Bergquist speaks to All Aboard Washington



Photo by Jim Hamre

State Rep. Steve Bergquist (D-Renton) spoke at the Jan. 18 All Aboard Washington meeting in Tukwila (which is part of his district). Bergquist, first elected to the legislature in 2012, is a member of the House Transportation Committee. He comes from a family with four generations of railroaders but it still learning about current rail transportation issues facing our state.

Bergquist fully supports at least sustaining state rail funding at levels needed to continue the existing service and expand it as planned in 2017. He does think that passing a new transportation package this session is unlikely. Bergquist strongly favors the need for better long term transportation planning, but says you have to build it one step at a time.

The representative and AAWA members had a good discussion on a host of rail issues that helped Bergquist expand his knowledge and his understanding of our positions. He noted that passenger rail expansion is a great opportunity for both his district and for our state.

WSDOT and its architect generated more controversy in Tacoma with the preliminary designs for the new Tacoma Station. The agency is now working closely with the city and the community on a design that compliments the 100 year old former Milwaukee Road Freight House.

Kelso to Longview Jct: This work constructs a third main track from near the Kelso Station south to Longview Jct and upgrades existing tracks, eliminating a major chokepoint as trains move to and from the Port of Longview. Construction is expected to begin in early 2015.

Kalama – New Sidings: This project will upgrade and extend siding tracks at (See **Update**, page 6)



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

The Amtrak Cascades: Funding, Costs and Benefits (Warning: Another Professorial Lesson!)

Two important pieces of Federal legislation from a few years back are having a major impact on intercity passenger rail in our state. Very affirmative, as most of my readers know, is the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009. Washington was third in the level of AARA funding for rail, led only by California and Illinois. Much of the \$800 mill. AARA funding is being invested in infrastructure projects on the BNSF mainline which serves the route of the Amtrak *Cascades*. A more mixed blessing for our state is the Passenger Rail Improvement and Investment Act (PRIIA) of 2008. As part of PRIIA Section 209, as of October 1, 2013 on Amtrak routes of less than 750 miles – the *Cascades* are a prime example – the states began paying most of the costs that were formerly borne by federal funds through Amtrak.

Let's first look at the mixed blessing, PRIIA, then at the very affirmative ARRA.

The increase in partisanship and ideological extremes in the US Congress (moderates of either party are an endangered species in DC) have brought about a slash and burn attitude in the Nation's Capital. Opposition to programs that are seen to benefit constituents represented by "the other side" is now standard. A common whipping boy is Amtrak. A substantial number of members of Congress, particularly in the House would, if they could, eliminate all funding for our only national intercity rail system. These anti-Amtrak people rarely complain about taxpayer subsidies for street and highway, air, and inland waterway programs, however.

Anti-Amtrak statements often contain rather astounding factual errors. One prominent House critic has claimed the losses on Amtrak food service alone were a sum that nearly equaled the entire Federal Amtrak budget, which includes capital investments, interest, operating subsidies on some routes and other expenses. Can/should Amtrak food costs be tightened? Yes, but reasonable efficiencies are not served by wild exaggerations.

Another Amtrak critic, a senator this time, should have failed Economics 101, if indeed he passed. In few economic activities does the concept of scale economies apply any more than in the case of rail transportation. The cost of infrastructure and equipment is quite high. In the case of

passenger trains, basic costs of labor and overhead are, to a great degree fixed for the operation of a given train. An Amtrak *Cascades* train carrying 50 passengers costs essentially as much to operate as one with 250 on board. Yet the latter train would have roughly five times the revenue! Yet this senator made a simplistic conclusion based on apparent ignorance of the economic principle of fixed vs. variable costs. The senator took the total annual costs of the operation of a train which served his state, divided by the total annual passengers, then announced that since the loss per passenger trip was \$xyz, each added passenger would cost the taxpayers another \$xyz! In reality, each added passenger would incur very little, if any, added cost, but would bring more revenue, lowering the taxpayer subsidy.

With the state having to pick up those costs formerly assumed by Amtrak, our WSDOT has strategies which seek to save our taxpayers money. A most important strategy, where we as rail advocates can help, is to educate, encourage and market our trains.

Back to Washington State: With the state having to pick up those costs formerly assumed by Amtrak, our WSDOT has strategies which seek to save our taxpayers money. A most important strategy, where we as rail advocates can help, is to educate, encourage and market our trains. Filling seats, some of which are empty, particularly TuWTh in the winter, would add revenue with little or no added expenses (as discussed above), reducing state subsidies. This past Thanksgiving, fewer EXTRA *Cascades* trains were provided than had been the case in recent past years. Four extra rather than eleven extra trains were scheduled. They essentially sold out and an actual operational profit of \$25,000 was realized, with fewer trains and crew costs, with revenue only slightly less than that realized from past Thanksgiving extra trains. Some people would have liked more trains for last Thanksgiving, but the economies of the situation were properly, in my view, considered.

I have been reading through the long and very detailed agreement between Amtrak and WSDOT for the provision of rail passenger service based on PRIIA Section 209. I cannot blame Amtrak for acting like any large corporation, given the pressure

from Congress to cut costs. And like any large corporation, Amtrak will attempt to have others, in this case states like ours, assume as many costs as can be negotiated. Here I praise our WSDOT Rail Division for good, tough, but fair negotiation. I have no hesitation in telling our state legislators that our state rail people are working hard to decrease the added funding that Washington will have to provide to maintain operation of our trains.

I say this while stating there are no villains among the FRA, Amtrak, nor BNSF, which behaves like any large corporation, attempting to maximize their advantages while minimize their costs when partnering with the public sector. Looking for a villain? I nominate an ideology, found in only the USA and Canada among the economically advanced and rapidly developing nations, of keeping intercity passenger rail a "third-class citizen" among transportation modes.

As I labor through the legalese of the Amtrak-WSDOT agreement, I see many places where I perceive efforts to achieve a fair deal for our state as well as for Amtrak. Kudos for good efforts, people.



The ARRA funding for our state is certainly affirmative, from the rail advocate standpoint. The State, in cooperation with BNSF, is managing 20 projects. WSDOT and ODOT are working closely together to provide an integrated Corridor. (We all hope BC becomes more involved, including serious investment north of the 49th!) WSDOT's Rail Manager Ron Pate is the leader of the entire Northwest Corridor as well as one of three chairs for the nationwide group of all states which assumed responsibility for the intercity passenger trains.

The goals for the ARRA investments in the Northwest Corridor are two additional round-trips, Seattle-to-Portland, 88% or better on-time performance, and a ten minute decrease scheduled running time Seattle-Portland. OK, the term "High Speed Rail" will not apply to our corridor when the listed goals are achieved by 2017. Top speed will still be 79 mph. (Many of us would like to see some mileage at 90, in places between Nisqually and north Vancouver, WA). But while three-digit top speeds make headlines, the number one desire of existing and potential passengers, including in surveys done by AAWA, is on-time reliability. Now 88% is not Swiss or Japanese on-time, but is something BNSF dispatchers and Amtrak operators are under contract to provide. Six Amtrak *Cascades* round trips (plus the *Coast Starlight*) are not southwest German levels either, but, along with the improved on-time reliability, will get many more people in train seats in 2017. One virtue of our *Cascades* is the excellent reliability of the Talgo-built (See **Flem**, page 5)



WITH
JIM
CUSICK

Smart Growth Isn't

The everlasting debate over transportation issues invariably comes down to a discussion of 'Smart Growth,' and then the argument over how you achieve it.

We look to old, established communities, marvel at the walkability of the downtown areas, their proximity to good transit, usually some sort of rail station, and we say: "Gee, isn't it wonderful how nice this town is. They sure planned this well. Why can't we do that nowadays?"

Blame McAdam & Benz.

No, they're not some devious ambulance chasing law firm or some folk duo.

It started with John Loudon McAdam, the Scottish engineer who pioneered the modern method of road construction in the early 1800s. Now we generally refer to a road using his method as simply 'asphalt'.

Even the aviation industry wants to get in on the act, since "tarmac" is a slang term for tar-penetration macadam.

Many people still use the term 'macadam' in reference to anything with a roadway-like surface.

Karl Benz is the person who, if one is pressed to use the term 'inventor,' could be considered the first person to create a usable self-propelled mobile carriage – the Automobile.

These old towns and cities grew around the railroad stations because the only way to navigate long distances with any comfort and timeliness was by rail, be it interurban, long distance or heavy commuter service.

When the speed and comfort of the private auto, along with road surfaces that didn't become impassable goo in the wintertime, made driving competitive with the for-profit rail companies, it changed the landscape dramatically.

Not only did people have taxpayer funded 'free' highways (no fares) to get to and from the train station, they also had high-speed, limited access roadways parallel to the rail lines.

Prior to the advent of these two inventions, density was limited by how far someone wanted to walk, or travel on their horse (or as a passenger on the horse cart, if you didn't have a place to park your horse for the duration of the trip).

It wasn't 'smart growth' they were practicing, it was more like 'dumb old growth.'

There were no choices at the time.

Now we have the choice.

The problem is: what criteria do you use

to choose?

The answer is hidden in the dollar amounts.

And I mean ... **HIDDEN.**

The cost, that is, the straight up dollar cost of automobile ownership, and the straight up cost of supporting that use via the highway system is muddled by the way it is funded, both personally and governmentally.

Most people don't think that it costs roughly 50¢ a mile to drive. They only see it as the price of gas.

Along with that price of gas, the taxes collected are blended in with the gallon price. Most people don't even know that 35% of the cost of any local/arterial project is funded by property taxes, or whatever revenue bucket a municipality has at its disposal, not the gas tax.

What you see is ... well ... what I showed you in my last article (October/November 2013 newsletter).

Pictures of Dumb Old Growth

Let's do a quick review of the pictures I posted the last article for those of you without Internet connections or otherwise the ability to access Google Maps. Remember the hints I said were in the upper right corner?

Here is a bird's eye view that encompasses some of those pictures:



The first ground level picture showing the single family housing neighborhood has the sign "Green Knolls est 1924," and a partial of the street name.

In relation to the above view, that photo location is actually out of the picture to the left.



This is the Green Knolls neighborhood and the sign is for Scarsdale Avenue.

Scarsdale, NY is just one of many bedroom communities in the New York City metropolitan area.

Green Knolls, in the Town of Eastchester, is about a mile away from Metro North Commuter Railroad's (MNRR) Scarsdale Station.

The pastoral street level picture of the baseball field and river/greenbelt, which is visible in the birds-eye view in the upper left, also has its hint in the upper right of the street view. It is the top floor unit of the Garth Manor apartment/condo complex.

The baseball field is just about 1/8th mile downhill from the Green Knolls development.

The street view of the parking garage is at the other end of the road that begins at the baseball field, and is at the cusp of the retail/business end and the residential housing portion, and in the upper right is a portion of the Northgate apartments. (Far right in the bird-eye view, and the last complex, at the edge of the business district.)

The street is Garth Road, and the residential living portion contains approximately 2,000 units.

Garth Road has always been the preferred street for apartment dwellers, and when the trend was towards converting these to condos, this became a very desirable place to live.

But let's not stop there, because as we move along Garth Road, of which most is actually in the Town of Eastchester, towards the business/retail district, we cross over to the Village of Scarsdale (at approximately the parking structure picture).

The street view of the business district of the village of Scarsdale has another portion of an apartment complex peeking out in the upper right (the Heathcote Inn apartments), but out of the picture, to the left, are brand new luxury condominiums on Christie Place (2 bedroom, 2.5 bath).

What makes them worth over a half-million dollars apiece? Maybe that they are a walk across the street to the MNRR

Scarsdale Station.

So where was the picture of the waterfall taken? Aren't we in some high-density nirvana that is an abso-

lute to support a rail system?

Gosh golly gee ... that picture is of the Bronx river, as it passes adjacent to the Scarsdale train station. Yes, just beyond the trees, in the glare of the morning sun, is the train station.

To the left of the waterfall, on the other side of the Bronx River Parkway, is the town of Greenburgh, and this area to the west of the river and parkway is all single family development.

In fact, so is most of the area surrounding the high-density housing you see in all these pictures.

In this view of the southbound platform, just beyond the bushes, is that same waterfall.



(See **Cusick**, page 5)

Another Amtrak ridership record in 2013; Cascades drop for second year

Amtrak carried a record 31.6 mill. passengers in fiscal year 2013 (ending Sept. 30). This is its 10th ridership record in the last 11 years. Ridership was up 1.0% over 2012's passenger count of more than 31.2 mill. Ticket revenue increased to a record \$2.11 bill., up 4.2% from \$2.02 bill. in 2012.

According to Amtrak, the company is an economic engine that returns nearly three dollars to local communities it serves for every dollar of federal investment. See Amtrak's [Oct. 14, 2013](#) press release for more details.

Empire Builder – The *Empire Builder* slipped a bit in 2013 to 536,391 passengers, down 1.2% from 2012. However, revenue was up 1.1% to \$67.39 mill. as Amtrak continues to increase fares on this train, particularly in sleepers. Strong ridership to and from the Bakken oil fields of western North Dakota and northeastern Montana helped offset general ridership losses resulting from the *Builder's* horrible on time performance. This is a result of the huge increases in freight traffic on BNSF's northern lines, mostly from the movement of Bakken oil, and from the massive capacity improvements the railroad is making to handle the increased traffic. The hoped-for timekeeping improvements with the winter construction suspension have not materialized, due in part to severe winter weather in the upper Midwest. Amtrak has now indefinitely suspended all same day connections in Chicago from the *Builder* except for the *Lake Shore Limited*. In Portland, the connection from the *Builder* to the southbound *Coast Starlight* has also been suspended. This will have a negative impact on ridership because of the many people that transfer between trains.

Coast Starlight – The *Coast Starlight* saw a strong 5.5% ridership increase over 2012 in 2013 to 479,522. The train's gains keep it second in ridership among the national network trains, behind only the *Builder*. Revenue totaled \$42.79 mill., up 4.8%.

Amtrak Cascades – For the second year in a row, *Cascades* ridership dipped. In 2013, the total was 811,692, down 4.0% from 2012. Revenue dropped to \$29.27 million, a decline of 5.2%. Reviewing the station data above, much of the loss of ridership appears to be north of Seattle. This almost completely can be laid on the nearly 80 separate mudslides between Seattle and Everett during the fall and winter of 2012-13 that resulted in

Amtrak Station Data

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

Station	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	12-'13 % Change
Bellingham	70,990	72,033	62,562	59,490	64,091	55,325	-13.68
Bingen	2,959	2,835	3,253	2,420	3,147	3,629	15.32
Centralia	23,663	24,279	23,270	21,998	23,331	25,132	7.72
Edmonds	31,204	30,770	31,845	30,472	32,896	29,250	-11.08
Ephrata	4,365	4,020	3,574	3,063	3,874	3,750	-3.20
Everett	48,420	46,785	44,103	42,288	44,576	43,115	-3.28
Kelso-Longview	28,330	27,406	28,603	26,972	26,560	28,892	8.78
Leavenworth		3,370	9,149	8,028	12,751	9,231	-27.61
Mt. Vernon	24,280	24,935	18,662	18,747	18,561	16,719	-9.92
Olympia-Lacey	58,133	59,884	60,415	58,094	61,322	63,065	2.84
Pasco	29,202	24,765	24,992	22,598	25,535	25,423	-0.44
Seattle	668,037	648,774	655,036	672,485	672,351	640,054	-4.80
Spokane	59,001	47,670	49,058	46,798	62,773	63,975	1.91
Stanwood		818	4,639	4,134	4,237	4,255	0.42
Tacoma	124,351	122,763	124,451	124,252	123,063	126,027	2.41
Tukwila	22,292	22,265	24,892	26,549	26,759	29,434	10.00
Vancouver	97,554	97,889	98,395	99,001	99,363	98,473	-0.90
Wenatchee	20,945	19,301	16,062	13,664	15,895	14,420	-9.28
Wishram	1,814	1,330	1,570	2,128	1,567	1,570	0.19
TOTALS	1,315,540	1,281,892	1,284,531	1,283,781	1,322,652	1,281,739	-3.09

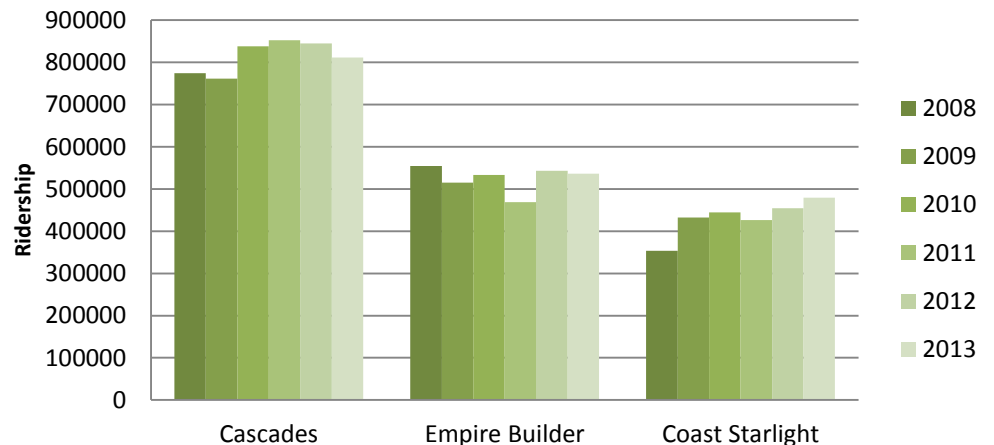
Leavenworth service started Sept. 26, 2009; Stanwood service started Nov. 21, 2009.

dozens of *Cascades* trips being cancelled or truncated. The issue between Seattle and Portland remains the lack of available seats the days people want to travel: weekends, holidays and in the summer. This situation will have to wait until 2017 to improve, when the more than \$800 mill. in federally funded infrastructure improvements are finished and two additional Seattle-Portland roundtrips are added. In early January 2013, Oregon DOT restructured *Cascades* service between Portland

and Eugene that it hopes will help boost ridership on that segment of the Northwest Corridor. Travelers now have a morning southbound departure from Portland and a mid-afternoon departure from Eugene that continues to Seattle. The Portland Visitors Bureau has wrapped the table car on one of ODOT's new Talgo trainsets with graphics to promote tourism. ODOT maintains a [website](#) to track which *Cascades* runs are operating with the new trainsets.

Trains Serving Washington State

Six Year Totals
(federal fiscal year)



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Amtrak Reservations/Information: 800 872-7245

All Aboard Washington: AllAboardWashington.org

NARP: www.narprail.org

NARP Hotline: www.narprail.org/news/hotline

Amtrak: www.amtrak.com

Amtrak Cascades: www.amtrakcascades.com

Sound Transit: www.soundtransit.org

Flem, from page 2

equipment. Planned new locomotives will certainly improve total train reliability.

One concern is the very modest goal of but a ten-minute decrease in running time between Seattle and Portland, as found in the current ARRA agreement. It is hoped by rail advocates and by supportive legislators, among others, that following the very significant improvements to the BNSF-owned infrastructure, including the Point Defiance Bypass, that trip time can be shortened by more than just ten minutes.

But Progress is being made! Rail advocates should spread the good news, ride our trains, educate and encourage others about the advantages of our intercity passenger trains.



A number of AAWA members (and other passengers) waiting for southbound 509 following the Tukwila meeting were delayed Saturday Jan. 18 when a man reportedly sitting on the tracks in Auburn to have his picture taken (!) was hit and killed by northbound 506 (whose equipment turns in Seattle to become 509). A tragedy for many, including the engineer and conductors of 506. The AAWA members' delay was of minor consequence all told, but the lesson about safety on and around railroad tracks and crossings continues. A few of us make Operation Lifesaver presentations. Rail advocates should also be advocates for reasonable care around trains and rail property. I plan more OL presentations in the very near future.



Growing controversy exists concerning the proposed major increase in long BNSF freight trains hauling coal and now petroleum along our Northwest Corridor. The AAWA board voted overwhelmingly to remain neutral on the coal trains. Our position is to neither endorse nor oppose the trains, unless they are of a number and scope to materially hinder the performance of our passenger trains. The current agreements between BNSF, Amtrak and WSDOT in effect guarantee such will not occur. Particularly since massive public funds will have

been invested to ensure good passenger train reliability, we will closely monitor what happens. Some individual AAWA members are strongly opposed to the growing number of coal and petroleum trains. As individuals, we are of course free to voice our non-neutral positions.

Cusick, from page 3

People walk to the station, people take the bus to the station, people get dropped off at the station, and guess what, people drive to the station and park their cars.

Everybody's an expert (except, of course if you actually work for the railroad)

How can people really take the comments on blogs and newspapers seriously?

Remember, comedian Steve Allen did a whole sketch on "The Steve Allen Show" consisting of reading the Letters to the Editor in the NY Daily News.

Case in point: My favorite place, the Eastside Rail Corridor – aka the Woodinville Subdivision – east of Lake Washington.

When those who would rather there not be trains on that corridor pressed their case, they would show the poorer sections of track.

Obviously, according to their expertise, this doomed the corridor for any rail use.

After all, who would run trains on something that looked like that picture (right)?



When retired BNSF Operations Director Read Fay was commissioned to perform an analysis for the Cascadia Center to lend some railroading expertise to balance the analysis done by Sound Transit, there were those on the blogosphere that derided the Cascadia's analysis as not being complete, or of inferior technical expertise.

Now Sound Transit's analysis was cor-

rect using the tools they had at hand.

From the Cascadia's comments to Sound Transit:

"PSRC/ST has indicated that their costs are based on their "Standard Cost Library" which was used for projects in the ST2 plan. Cascadia's figures were generated from conversations with large railroad contractors active in the Pacific Northwest."

To remind everyone, BNSF (and their predecessors) ran passenger trains, and currently runs high-tonnage freight trains. (Yeah, I know, like I needed to remind this group.)

But what this points to is ...

Don't you think a railroad operations director would know what the H-E- double-toothpicks his railroad is capable of?

Well, let's revisit that track picture with the poor drainage.

Since the photograph of the "poor drainage around the railroad tracks" was taken, there has been some maintenance to alleviate the problem. Given the high tide mark, this is a persistent issue.

I actually wrote about this spot in a previous article, noting how great things work when various entities pull together.

If you regularly visited this area before the work described in that article was completed, you would have know that there were about 100 yards of this goop in the area.

Where is it, you say?

About 95 yards south of the crossing for SR 104/Main St. in Edmonds.

That's correct, near the Edmonds-Kingston Ferry approach and the Edmonds train station.

The same place that sees coal, oil, intermodal, Amtrak, Sounder ...

Let's put it this way ...

Those who reside next to railroad right-of-ways, self serving critics, or others on the Internet who see opportunity in the failure of one supposedly complimentary mode for the benefit of their own parochial interest, are obviously the experts.

Because we all know real railroaders are just foamers in disguise!!

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All Aboard News

March 8: All Aboard Washington business meeting from **noon-4 p.m.** at **Basil's Kitchen**, Embassy Suites, 15920 W. Valley Hwy, **Tukwila**, adjacent to the Amtrak Station. Please RSVP to Harvey Bowen, if you can (harveyb@allaboard-washington.org). Put "March 8 RSVP" in Subject or Body of your email. Planned speakers are Rep. **Hans Zeiger** (R-Puyallup), member of the House Transportation Committee; and **Johan Hellman**, Executive Director, Government Affairs for BNSF.

Use the *Cascades* to and from the meeting.

April 5: Why has high-speed rail moved so slowly in the US? Join with All Aboard Washington, Assoc. Oregon of Rail and Transit Advocates, and National Assoc. of Railroad Passengers NW Division as we explore this issue. Our meeting will be the downtown **Portland Embassy Suites** (historic Multnomah Hotel), 319 Pine St. Meeting from **noon-4:30 p.m.**

The program will feature **Anthony Perl**, Director of the Urban Studies Program, Simon Fraser University,

British Columbia; and **Robert Stewart**, Chairman, NARP.

Registration information will be forthcoming. It is also available at aortarail.org/index.php/events/.

Use the *Cascades* to and from the meeting.

All Aboard Washington has recently welcomed the following new members: Stephen Hayden, Ellensburg; and Stuart Russell, Bremerton. Growing our membership is a key to our continuing successes. You can help by encouraging friends and family to join our cause, or perhaps you can give a gift membership.

All Aboard Washington members contributing to this newsletter include: Dan McFarling, Lloyd Flem, Mark Meyer, Mike Morrison, Zack Willhoite and Jim Cusick.



Update, from page 1 the Port of Kalama to eliminate many conflicts with trains moving to and from the Port of Kalama. The Toteff siding extension work is expected to begin in late 2014. The work to the north should begin in spring 2015.

Vancouver Yard: Many projects are being built in and around the BNSF's Vancouver Yard to improve the movement of both freight and passenger trains and to improve access to the Port of Vancouver. The trench project provides a grade separation between the north-south mainline and trains entering the port from the Columbia Gorge line. This work involves construction of a track under the north end of the Columbia River bridge in a waterproof trench to keep the river at bay. These trains now must cross the north-south line at grade. Other projects provide for yard improvements, including a new connecting track from the gorge line to the north.

Thank you

Your contributions in 2013
are making a difference in
Washington State

In 2014, All Aboard Washington will
continue to build on our successes
in 2013 as we work to expand and
improve intercity passenger rail
service in our state and throughout
the nation.