



# WASHINGTON RAIL NEWS

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2015

www.AllAboardWashington.org

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

## BNSF update, Amtrak takes feedback, NARP's new President highlight rail advocates' Glacier Park meeting

The joint Northwest rail advocates meeting of the National Association of Railroad Passengers, the Association of Oregon Rail and Transit Advocates, and All Aboard Washington was held on June 6. The location was the beautiful and historic Glacier Park Lodge at the edge of the Rocky Mountain front in East Glacier, MT. About 60 people were in attendance.

Art Poole, Vice Chairman Emeritus-NARP once again acted as the master of ceremonies. The main presenters on the program were:

- **Virginia Loranger**, Regional Field Director – U.S. Sen. Jon Tester (D)
- **Kyle Schmauch**, Northwest Field Representative – U.S. Sen. Steve Daines (R)
- **Zack Gambill**, Director of Veterans Affairs – U.S. Rep. Ryan Zinke (R)
- **Bridget Smith** – State Representative (D-Wolf Point) (Transportation Committee)
- **Diane Myers**, Supervisor of Rail, Air Quality and Studies Section – Transportation Planning Division – Montana Department of Transportation (MDT)
- **Tamara Noel**, Senior Manager Passenger Operations – BNSF Railway
- **Mark Murphy**, General Manager – Long Distance Business Line – Amtrak
- **Morrell Savoy**, Deputy General Manager Central Region – Amtrak



Amtrak's Morrell Savoy, from left, Mark Murphy, Jim Brzezinski and Rob Eaton took questions and comments from the audience instead of giving a formal presentation. The format was well received by everyone present.

*Photo by Warren Yee*

- **Jim Brzezinski**, Route Director for *Empire Builder* and *California Zephyr* – Amtrak
- **Bob Stewart**, Chairman – NARP
- **Jim Mathews**, President and CEO – NARP

Here are highlights from the presentations.

All three representatives of Montana's Congressional delegation voiced their bosses' support for intercity passenger rail service and the *Empire Builder* in particular. Meeting attendees suggested support must be stronger and "a shot across the bow" in initially voting against Amtrak funding, as Rep. Zinke did, is not helpful. Zinke did later vote for Amtrak funding. The two senators had recorded video presentations. Sen. Daines noted that he had met with NARP Montana Council Member Barry Green, NARP President Jim Mathews and NARP Chairman Bob Stewart in April during NARP's Day on Capitol Hill.

Diane Myers highlighted MDT's roles in rail and transit in the state. MDT has modest programs for aid to transit and to short line railroads. The state is concerned with the shipment of oil by rail. MDT is performing a rail grade separation study.

Tamara Noel thanked everyone for being passenger rail advocates. She admitted there has been a strained relationship between BNSF and Amtrak but the railroad continues to invest billions of dollars a year in capacity improvements, much of it being spend along the *Builder's* northern corridor route.

Sixty-three Amtrak trains a day traverse 6300 miles of BNSF tracks. BNSF also hosts Sounder, Metrolink (Los Angeles), (See **Meeting**, page 5)

# Thank You

Thank you to all our members who took time to complete the SWOT survey and return it. On July 11 the AAWA Board spent over 4 hours reading through the 40-page report of your responses. It has given us quite a lot to consider. Here is a synopsis of your remarks:

### INTERNAL STRENGTHS:

- Legislative advocacy was our top strength
- Devoted members – that's you!
- Well-respected Executive Director and committed leadership
- Newsletter, both in print and digital

### INTERNAL WEAKNESSES:

- Lack of marketing campaign
- Meetings that do not appeal to everyone
- Little growth in membership

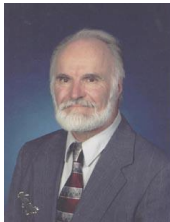
### EXTERNAL OPPORTUNITIES:

- Develop a marketing campaign and brief, easily understood mission statement
- Cooperate, coordinate and collaborate with other organizations
- Offer 'tiered' membership fees
- Complete a Strategic Plan or 5-year plan

### EXTERNAL THREATS:

- Lack of public interest
- Public fear about train incidents (particularly freight)
- Poor legislative outcomes
- Insignificant awareness from Eastern Washington

At our September 12 meeting we'll have a chance to hear from a gentleman who has studied organizations (see page 6). He will share what he's learned about (See **Thank You**, page 3)



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

## All Aboard Washington: Past, Present, Future

### Past:

My habit of saving stuff – which means boxes of written material cluttering our Olympia home – reveals the affirmative role All Aboard Washington (AAWA) and the Washington Association of Rail Passengers (WashARP), by which AAWA was known as prior to late 2006, has played in the development of Washington State's intercity rail passenger program.

I have exhumed a large pile of documents, letters – both received and copies of those sent – pictures, notes, studies, legislation, awards and more, some from the early 80s and some from recent days. In those early times of WashARP activity, passenger trains were thought to be of importance by few, if any, members of the Legislature or employees at what was still essentially then the Department of Highways.

I recall derisive chuckling from legislators in a “highways” committee meeting when one of their brave colleagues dared to suggest passenger rail might be looked at. In the months that followed, WashARP ventured slowly and carefully, meeting with three legislators, one R and two Ds, who felt passenger trains were a mode of transportation worthy of consideration.

In 1985, WashARP's then-President Chuck Mott was aware I had served as founding president of the Washington State Farmers Market Association and helped to bring farmers markets to a place of state-wide public acceptance by the mid-80s



**Funded by WSDOT, reinaugurated Seattle-Vancouver, BC service, originally christened as the *Mt. Baker International*, made its debut on a hot Memorial Day weekend in 1995.**

*Photo by Jim Hamre*

rather than another source of derisive chuckling which greeted farmers market advocates in the mid-70s. Chuck asked that the WashARP Board enlist me, by then familiar with the Olympia scene, as WashARP's Executive Director, with a token stipend, starting on December 1, 1985.

WashARP's initial campaign did not succeed. We had hoped to reinstitute Amtrak service from Seattle to Vancouver, BC in time for the Canadian city's 1986 World's Fair. Neither the state or Amtrak was then willing to fund what was assumed to be some losses in operations. Efforts to secure private funding from entities which might have benefitted from this international train went nowhere. But we learned a bit more about working our State Capitol. It would take another nine years of efforts, but with a

***Slowly but steadily in the late 80s, a few more legislators became convinced that intercity passenger trains might be a good idea.***

great boost from Congressman Al Swift (D-Bellingham), our state funded its first Amtrak round trip between Seattle and Vancouver in 1995, which restored the passenger rail connection between Cascadia's three major cities.

Slowly but steadily in the late 80s, a few more legislators became convinced that intercity passenger trains might be a good idea. And by good fortune, four members of a governor-appointed Rail Development Commission were WashARP members, including the late greatly-respected Seattle Councilman George Benson. They asked the RDC chair to have Chuck Mott and I do a presentation to the RDC lauding intercity passenger rail. Until that time, only commuter, transit, and freight rail were being looked. Following our presentation, intercity rail was part of the RDC mix.

Months later, I clearly recall one curmudgeonly state senator tried to kill the intercity rail portion of the bill which grew out of the RDC, but a colleague of the same political party “rescued” the intercity portion. It passed, was signed and rail was rolling!

Two key WSDOT people, Jim Toohy and Jim Slakey, were very helpful and supportive our efforts during these early years. Thanks, gents! Another major factor that helped forward our cause statewide was the campaign to build Olympia-Lacey's Centennial Station. Centennial replaced a three-sided shed in a dangerous location two miles southwest of the current classic-designed depot, whose volunteer station hosts have not missed meeting a train since Centennial opened in 1993!

Most of the principal volunteers in the campaign to fund and build Centennial were WashARP members. The important exception was construction manager Bob Bregent, a dedicated rail advocate who worked and to this day works closely with AAWA.

While WSDOT provided the final funds required for an advanced septic system, the remainder of the funds came from local Thurston County governments, people and businesses. No federal funds whatsoever, nor any major grants were involved in building Centennial. Amtrak honored the Thurston County depot by having it become literally its poster child: the 1993 Amtrak calendar featured the fine painting of Centennial by Bellevue artist J. Craig Thorpe! Conservative state senators were so impressed by this community “barn raising,” they felt intercity passenger rail warranted their support.

Another very significant event was bringing modern “higher-speed” trains for a demonstration in the Pacific Northwest, Dr. Hal Cooper, an innovative engineer (and AAWA member), on his own dime, met on our East Coast with executives from the Swedish-Swiss

firm ABB and persuaded them to work with rail people in Washington State to bring ABB's X2000 train here for a demonstration. Washingtonians loved it. The Spanish firm Talgo felt Northwesterners would love to see and ride their trains also. The Talgos came here and we loved them too. Doubters about whether Washington State should invest in these European-style trains became increasingly few. The question was not whether, but how much should be invested.

During the 90s WashARP's slogan “Praise and Push” became one that other state passenger rail advocacy organizations adopted.

Rapidly increasing population brought increased transportation challenges. Governor Gary Locke formed the Blue Ribbon Commission on Transportation. WashARP's Chuck Mott was appointed to the BRCT. Chuck's extensive knowledge and experience with both rail and truck transportation meant his views helped to counter and even partially convert some others on the BRCT to the value of public investments in rail whose initial positions were simply “more roads.” Substantially due to Chuck, intercity passenger rail was a solid part of what emerged from the BRCT.

WashARP worked closely with Amtrak, including key execs in DC and LA. WashARP members lobbied members of Congress in an effort to get a level of funding even remotely similar to what passenger rail receives in nearly all other industrialized counties. (OK, VIA Rail Canada has it worse than Amtrak.) WashARP/AAWA members have been deeply involved →



**WITH JIM  
CUSICK**

**(Jim's column will return next issue.)**

with the National Association of Railroad Passengers (NARP), including on NARP's Board.

We have nearly always worked closely with WSDOT. With the obvious risk of leaving out some vital people at WSDOT, I'll just mention a few from the past: Gil Mallory, Jeff Schultz, and to our continuing sadness, our three late friends, Ken Uznanski, Steve Anderson, and Ray Allred.

For many years I walked Olympia's Capitol Hill praising that which the Legislature had passed in support of passenger rail and the growing success of passenger rail, and gently pushing for increased investment while praising the growing success. One difficult moment was when a state senator introduced a bill totally eliminating the entire rail program! When hearing that, I burst into the offices of three rail friendly senators of the same party as the anti-rail member and was assured the anti-rail bill would go nowhere. The friendly senators were of course right. Tempest over.

Being independent, we could praise in candid ways awkward for state employees. WSDOT Secretaries Sid Morrison and Paula Hammond were not only supportive, but achieved national status for their support of state-level rail programs. Again, leaving out many supportive legislators over the years is dangerous, so I'll mention but one: the late Ruth Fisher. Oh, and praises to the State Transportation Commission, the members of which were always supportive of our efforts and of a state role for rail from the 90s forward.

During the 2000s, WashARP became AAWA, our state's rail program continued to grow and thrive, and the American public began to increasingly rediscover the importance of passenger rail, whether rail transit, regional ("commuter"), or intercity. Anti-rail reactionaries in Congress have continually tried but failed to kill Amtrak. The American people simply are not content with just "fly or drive."

In 2007 at NARP's spring meeting in Washington, DC, I was honored to receive the John R. Martin Passenger Rail Advocacy Award. While this award was personal, it really represented respect for all WashARP had accomplished in the previous two decades. I see it as similar to a point guard in basketball (which I was in a very limited career!) getting the league's MVP. Would not have happened without a good team to work with. That team was there.

When President Obama's American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (ARRA – "the Stimulus") became law in 2009 with about \$8 billion for passenger rail AAWA was concerned that our Washington would not get a deserved piece of the very significant pie. Two AAWA members with considerable political experience and clout, Ralph Munro and Bruce Agnew, plus your executive director, flew to DC. (US major airlines are fast, safe, and nowhere near as pleasant as the train, we all agree!) We met with all but one of our Washington Congressional delegation, urging them to be assertive about the excellence of our state Rail Program and to ensure that we got our just share of the ARRA rail money.

Our case was not hard to make. The WSDOT Rail Office had done a fine job of incrementally building the Amtrak Cascades, had exemplary partnerships with BNSF, Amtrak, Talgo, ODOT and others, and had made comprehensive plans that FRA had to respect. Our effort sought to emphasize those points with our delegation.

### Present:

The WSDOT Rail Division continues to do superb work in administering the \$800+ million Washington received from Obama's ARRA rail money. In fact, our rail people have had to break new ground in working with the FRA, which had traditionally been a regulatory agency, not one administering large grants. The FRA was deeply concerned about "making mistakes." Our WSDOT rail folks helped FRA find its way, as I see it.



**BNSF rebuilds the junction in Vancouver, WA in April 2015. Major track changes here will speed freight and passenger train movements.**

*Photo by Jim Hamre*

Most of those federal funds for our state were for [improvements on the BNSF Railway](#). They are designed to improve the operation of the Amtrak Cascades and the long distance trains. But while the very substantial investments by BNSF on their rail infrastructure will benefit passenger trains, they will also help the operation of freight trains. The investments do not suddenly disappear after a passenger train goes by.

Past and present, and also in the future, AAWA will continue to be an independent rail advocacy organization. We gladly work with, but not for WSDOT, Amtrak, BNSF and UP, the rail brotherhoods, Sound

Transit, the short lines and regional freight roads, other transportation advocacy groups, and others. We will attempt to support the positions and efforts of such groups, but can and do differ in detail.

We certainly support Amtrak, but also support the idea of intercity passenger trains developed by others as well. We lament that Amtrak still has strident opponents in Congress and in some "think tanks" as well. The most annoying thing about most Amtrak opponents is their braying about Amtrak subsidies, while ignoring or excusing much larger subsidies, direct and indirect, for most other transportation modes. Many congressional opponents hail from rural districts which simply don't have Amtrak service. But there are ideologues, many in urban areas, who feel, even when gridlocked in traffic and with thirteen times the likelihood of being killed (per million passenger miles) than on a train, they are practicing "freedom," while those whizzing by in a fast, safe regional or intercity passenger train are subject to un-American "collectivism."

Few if any AAWA members oppose public investments in road, air or water transportation. We are simply weary of the unique negative standard to which passenger rail is still often held. And as ombudsmen for AAWA members and other existing and potential riders, we will not hesitate to bring to Amtrak's attention issues of concern while defending and supporting Amtrak in the broad sense.

We fully support all the work the WSDOT Rail Division is now doing. We praise the great efforts of Rail Division head Ron Pate and his dedicated team. And our Rail Division has not only our state to be concerned with; they have overall responsibility for the whole Northwest Corridor. Ron Pate also is a leader of the national States for Passenger Rail Coalition. We'll also push a bit as we praise, knowing that added funds and staff would be needed to accomplish some things AAWA members would like to see. See "Future" on page 4.

I've publicly stated the best development for rail advocacy in our state in many years is the bi-partisan Legislative Rail Caucus (LRC). Started in the House, but now also in the Senate, this informal but active group, led by two Democrats and two Republicans, favors a strong state interest in freight and passenger rail, eastern and western Washington, short line and mainline. AAWA has always had a major interest in freight rail, usually supportive, except on those rare occasions when behavior of BNSF or UP seemed directly negative to passenger rail service. Our support for the short lines, which rarely if ever impact passenger service, is constant. With the advent of the LRC, we have increased our interaction with freight rail issues.

A huge asset to AAWA now, as in the past, is the seemingly tireless efforts of →

Bruce Agnew. While a long-time, active WashARP/AAWA member, Bruce's efforts through his Cascadia organization and the valuable contacts he has in Snohomish and King counties continue to be of great importance to our work.

A concern some leaders of AAWA and I have is an apparent decrease in rail advocacy urgency among some of our membership. A thoughtful AAWA Board member felt that since Western Washington has within the North American context, fairly good Amtrak service (Seattle-Portland: five round trips daily, all at convenient times), there is perceived to be less need to publicly educate, lobby, work as hard for intercity train service as was the case some years back.

The numbers of you coming to Olympia or writing Congress in behalf of more/better intercity passenger trains has seemingly decreased since we have "pretty good" trains now and we'll get more 2017. Hopefully, we can increase the numbers of you as more active advocates next year. Decision makers need to hear from us. At the state level we have the Legislative Rail Caucus as sure allies.

A change that is and continues to pass me by is the entire world of electronic media. I still prefer newspapers, quality magazines, books, radio and even TV news and comment. I still write letters and mail them USPS. My cellphone is the flip type and even that has many "features" I don't use or care about. My Old School biases are strong. The print media usually require some careful thought, whether I concur with the thought or not. The print media tend to have more carefully drawn views than today's texts, tweets and blogs. Some of the most moving letters written in English were from young Civil War soldiers with grade school educations. But my lamentations about changes don't bring more about passenger rail service to the Northwest and nation!

I accept the need for AAWA to utilize the dramatic changes in communication that have occurred in recent years. An entire generation of younger people, and many not so young, now get much of their information and interaction by means that didn't exist a couple of decades ago. NARP has adopted these new media. AAWA is also doing so and even its executive director is being pulled along!

#### Future:

Earlier this year AAWA engaged the services of a consultant, who, in cooperation mostly with President Karen Keller, produced the SWOT survey and analysis of the information that came out of the responses.

SWOT means Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats. SWOTs have been done by major institutions in both the public and private sectors, and independent interest groups such as ours. The conclusions

will assist **HOW** AAWA moves forward. It is not going to change **WHAT** we do.

One conclusion is the need by some of our members to have more input into the organization. This concurs with the concern addressed above about an "apparent decrease in rail advocacy urgency." The SWOT showed that many of the 16% who returned it (actually rather good) wanted greater involvement with AAWA. A good lesson for AAWA's leadership! We'll greet with handshakes.

AAWA is fortunate in having among its board and other active members those whose professions deal explicitly with contemporary electronic and social media. AAWA's Charlie Hamilton received NARP's John R. Martin Award for his technical expertise in helping NARP upgrade its electronic membership databases.

While we propose to update how we operate, our goal will continue to praise work being done and urge for more trains, and more timely trains. While we are not advocating true high speed rail for our Northwest Corridor, we will stump for a more significant reduction in Amtrak *Cascades* running times between Seattle and Portland than that being proposed following completion of the ARRA projects in 2017. The Point Defiance Bypass completion (better efficiency, worse scenery!) coupled with the more than ample time padding in current schedules, along with over a three-quarter billion dollars in improvements should yield considerably more than ten minutes time savings between Seattle and Portland!

We understand the addition of station stops on the *Cascades* can be counterproductive in some respects. But a station at Blaine to serve the 750,000 British Columbia residents who live between the border and the Fraser River is worth careful evaluation. Our Canadian neighbors would need to fund improved infrastructure north of the 49<sup>th</sup> sufficient to cut running times by at least the time required for the station stop.

While the SWOT's purpose was more how than what AAWA does, the most mentioned train service desire was instituting a daytime train from Spokane to Puget Sound, with specific emphasis on the old Northern Pacific route through Stampede Pass and the Yakima Valley. This was mentioned by many respondents from west of the Cascades as well as the few from Eastern Washington that participated. Residents from Cle Elum, Ellensburg, and Yakima have echoed these wants, as well as legislators from Central and eastern Washington, including those active in the Rail Caucus. This new train service would require significant investment in the line, plus funding for WSDOT staff and train operations. We are not naïve that this would be an easy pull, but I clearly remember the negatives that greeted WashARP's 1986 efforts to bring back train service to Vancouver, BC.

Another goal of AAWA members is preserving and restoring rail infrastructure on the Eastside Rail Line, the one-time BNSF line between Renton and Woodinville east of Lake Washington. While I found a majority of legislators favor this, and it is in line with state transportation policy established in the mid-90s, part of the King County establishment, politically potent Eastside NIMBYs, and trail only advocates constitute a powerful cabal against trains on what would be a strategically needed second north-south rail route through one of the densest and fastest-growing urban areas in the country.

Finally, the two completed Talgo trainsets that Wisconsin Governor Walker decided he didn't want, after the Spanish company built them in a factory in the heart of one of Milwaukee's poorest neighborhoods, are available at a bargain price. True, these trainsets, which were built at the same time as the two Oregon secured as part of the *Cascades* train inventory, are not required right now. But AAWA is concerned that when there is a need for future trainsets, any other equipment, including different Talgos, will be significantly more expensive than these Wisconsin Talgos.

The above five items we are "pushing" should in no way imply that AAWA does not fully support the current work of the Rail Division and our supportive State Legislature. We are so far ahead now of where WashARP was thirty years ago when Congressman Al Swift said we were "alone, crying in the wilderness" on behalf of more passenger train service. We are no longer alone but we must continue with, if not a cry, at least some vigorous vocalizations.

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#### Thank you, from page 1



**President Karen Keller leads a discussion of the SWOT at the July 11 meeting.**  
*Photo by Warren Yee.*

why some thrive and others fail. **You are encouraged to attend.** The next step will be a *Board-only* session in October where we will begin to plan to implement some of your suggestions. Thank you again for the time you took to give us your opinions. We want to be a better and stronger organization with your help and support.

Karen Keller  
AAWA President

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All are evening numbers, except Lloyd's, which is available 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. daily.

### Important Addresses and Phone Numbers

U. S. House of Representatives:  
 Washington, DC 20515

U. S. Senate: Washington, DC 20510  
 Capitol Switchboard (all members): 202 224-3121

State Legislature: State Capitol, Olympia 98504  
 Hotline for leaving messages: 800 562-6000

Amtrak Reservations/Information: 800 872-7245

All Aboard Washington: AllAboardWashington.org  
 NARP: www.narprail.org

NARP Hotline: http://www.narprail.org/hotline--blog  
 Amtrak: www.amtrak.com

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

## SMART commuter rail and our Eastside Line

By Robert Lawrence

There is a more effective alternative to waiting until the end of this century for Sound Transit to eventually build light rail to connect Everett to Redmond, Bellevue and Renton via the former BNSF Eastside Line (Woodinville Subdivision). It's happening in California and it'll only take about 8 years from voter approval to start of operations.



Artist rendering of the shared corridor for SMART rail and a bike/pedestrian trail

In Northern California on the west side of upper San Francisco Bay, Sonoma and Marin counties have created [Sonoma Marin Area Rail Transit](#) (SMART). It's a 2008 voter-approved passenger rail and bicycle/pedestrian path project located in the two counties. It will serve a 70-mile corridor from Larkspur (on the shore of San Francisco Bay) north to Cloverdale, with a first phase running 42 miles from San Rafael to Santa Rosa and the Sonoma County Airport. Future phases will extend south to Larkspur and north to Cloverdale.

Federal and other funding now in place will allow construction from Santa Rosa to the Larkspur Ferry Terminal, where commuter ferries leave for San Francisco. Scheduled completion date is still to be determined.

Train testing is now under way on the North end above Santa Rosa. The trains are being built by Sumitomo (Nippon Sharyo) in New Rochelle, IL. They are FRA safety compliant and will use Positive Train Control.

Like the [Eastside TRailway proposal](#), the SMART project is utilizing an existing freight railway right of way. In this case, it is the former Southern Pacific/Northwestern Pacific Railway, now operated by a new

NWP freight shortline. The rebuilt line will remain single track with passing sidings. Work includes subgrade, ballast, rail, ties, tunnels, bridges, signaling, communications and new bike paths. Also included is a rebuilt swing bridge – brought from Texas – to span a navigable waterway.

Sound Transit is building the 1.6 mile Link light rail extension from Sea-Tac Airport to 200<sup>th</sup> Street for about [\\$240 million a mile](#), while SMART has an estimated [capital cost](#) for clean DMU train service and a bike-pedestrian pathway of \$541 million – \$7.7 million a mile.

SMART will offer two ways to get out of US Highway 101 congestion and reduce greenhouse gases. First, they have ordered 14 clean-diesel, energy-efficient DMU train sets that will run at a top speed of 79 miles per hour. Second, SMART includes a bike and pedestrian system that will run adjacent to the train service, allowing bicyclists to commute throughout the North Bay for the first time ever.

Start of service for phase one between Rachael and Santa Rosa is scheduled for late 2016.

As proposed by Eastside TRailway (AAWA is an active participant), our region needs to seriously consider and move forward with clean DMU service with a bike/pedestrian path in the Eastside Corridor.

### Meeting, from page 1

Northstar (Minneapolis) and Metra (Chicago) commuter rail services. Noel stated Amtrak and commuter rail services are BNSF's number one priority. The Passenger Operations Department's vision statement: *"To be the best Passenger Operations Team in the industry – measured by safety and on-time performance, composed of highly trained, highly motivated personnel, committed to continuous improvement and capable of fully realizing the potential of the passenger operator agreements."*

BNSF Chairman Matt Rose and other executives receive daily reports on the performance of Amtrak trains operating across

the system.

The railroad has been a leader in developing and installing Positive Train Control but huge obstacles remain to get the complex system operational by the Dec. 2015 deadline.

Amtrak's Mark Murphy, Morrell Savoy, Jim Brzezinski and Amtrak Seattle's Rob Easton took questions and comments from the audience instead of having a presentation, with Eaton taking notes. Murphy: "What's important to you?" Some top comments:

- Hatchet job done on first class amenities on long distance trains.
- Need Wi-Fi on long distance trains.
- Cars need deep cleaning more often.
- More marketing of long distance trains.
- Get rid of all the plastic in the dining cars; hypocrisy for Amtrak to claim it's a green travel choice.
- Need to improve customer service consistency. Still too variable between trains.
- PA system use remains inconsistent. Too few announcements or too many.
- Crews are doing a good job of controlling and putting off troublemakers.
- Lounge cars seem to be understocked. Items run out en route, hurting revenue and making for disgruntled passengers.
- Unstaffing Grand Forks, ND a bad decision.
- Need Metropolitan Lounge in Seattle.
- Amtrak needs to better counter incorrect and negative media reporting.

NARP's Jim Mathews outlined the work NARP has been doing since he became president last Sept. They are working hard to correct problems with the membership interfaces and provide true self service for many membership issues. NARP is expanding its grassroots effort with local rail advocates, political leaders, transportation leaders and business groups.

To see the speaker presentations go to [allaboardwashington.org/2015narpmeeting](http://allaboardwashington.org/2015narpmeeting).

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## All Aboard News

**September 12:** All Aboard Washington meeting from **noon-2:00 p.m.** at **Basil's Kitchen**, Embassy Suites Hotel, 15920 W. Valley Hwy, **Tukwila**, adjacent to the Sounder/Amtrak Station. See the article on this page for details about this meeting and our speaker.

**October 10:** All Aboard Washington board meeting from **noon-4:00 p.m.** at **Basil's Kitchen**, Embassy Suites Hotel, 15920 W. Valley Hwy, **Tukwila**. Most of our time at this meeting will be used for continuing board discussions of the SWOT analysis and to develop plans to implement various parts of it. Everyone is welcome to attend.

**November 14:** All Aboard Washington annual membership meeting from **1 p.m.-4:00 p.m.** in the community room at the **Centralia Amtrak Station**. More details about the meeting will be in the next newsletter.

Use the Amtrak *Cascades* and *Coast Starlight* to and from our meetings.

All Aboard Washington recently welcomed the following new members:  
**Janice Rudnitski**, Seattle; **Bill Hood**,

Seattle; and **Roy Treadway**, Lacey.

All Aboard Washington members contributing to this newsletter include Karen Keller, Robert Lawrence, Zack Willhoite, Barry Green, Warren Yee and Lloyd Flem.

### Dr. Curtis Horne at Sept. 12 AAWA meeting

*By Karen Keller, AAWA President*



I'm proud to announce that Dr. Curtis Horne will be our featured speaker at the September 12 AAWA meeting at Basil's Restaurant in Tukwila. His message will focus on

his studies of how associations and groups succeed or fail in meeting ever-changing challenges. He will also address marketing and membership, two topics that ranked high on our SWOT survey.

After WWII Dr. Horne's family moved from Bismarck, North Dakota to Everett, where he graduated from Lake Stevens High School. He went on to earn a BA degree from Western Washington College of Education, an MA degree from Central Washington University and a PhD from the University of Idaho. He taught elementary grades in Skagit County and junior and

senior high school in Pacific County. He has served as vice principal and has held several central office positions including superintendent of schools.

In retirement, Dr. Horne's consulting practice has served major corporations, associations and governmental entities.

Dr. Horne resides in Port Angeles with his wife Carolyn. They are parents of two daughters and grandparents to five granddaughters and one great grandson.

Our September 12 meeting will begin at noon and we plan to finish by 2 p.m., allowing us to catch *Cascades* trains 507 southbound or 506 northbound.

WSDOT and Amtrak have improved Amtrak *Cascades* [train 509 schedule](#). The southbound train now departs Seattle at 6:05 p.m. (previously 5:30). This allows more time in Seattle for those making a day trip and it restores the connection from afternoon Thruway bus from Bellingham and intermediate points. In cooperation with BNSF, WSDOT and Amtrak have also reduced running times on some *Cascades* runs by 10 min. through mid-September.

