

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

Amtrak Cascades operations update from WSDOT at November AAWA meeting

Kirk Fredrickson was the keynote speaker at our annual membership meeting on November 8 in Centralia. He is WSDOT Rail Division's Cascades Operations Supervisor.

Fredrickson began by sharing that Amtrak's Customer Service Index for the Cascades is 91 (out of 100).

He is the lead on the On-time Performance Task Force. Representatives from all groups involved in operations on the Northwest Corridor meet every two weeks via conference call. The late train issue generates by far the most complaints from the traveling public.

When all the infrastructure projects are completed in 2017 and the two additional Seattle-Portland round-trips are added, a 20 year contract with BNSF will go into effect that commits the freight carrier to a minimum of 88% on-time performance.

WSDOT has a service assessment program. Employees ride the trains three times a week, putting themselves in the passengers' shoes. They monitor operations and document things like cleanliness.

The outside cleanliness of the trains is also a concern as this sets a passenger's initial perception of their trip experience. Amtrak's current wash rack cannot properly clean the Talgo train-

sets. However, Amtrak debuts a new laser guided wash rack in December that will do a better job cleaning the Talgos.

Fredrickson stated that Wi-Fi is a challenge in some of rural areas away from I-5. They use three carriers for the service. Each day an average of 1700 devices connect to the Wi-Fi. New software will throttle people using too much bandwidth so everyone can have a better experience. In October WSDOT ended Wi-Fi in British Columbia because of the high cost. Rogers Wireless charged \$12,000 a month. WSDOT is trying to persuade the BC Ministry of Transport or another entity to pick up the cost. For Wi-Fi from the BC border to the Columbia River WSDOT pays only about \$9800 a month.

WSDOT and Amtrak invested \$5.6 mill. in upgrades to the Talgo trainsets since 2008. New coffee stations will soon be installed that brew coffee on demand so it's always fresh.

Cascades food and beverage service had its best month ever this August, with revenue of \$425,000. Amtrak is working to improve service and revenue in the Bistro cars.

Fredrickson conducted a pop quiz: What items are the top revenue generators in the Bistro? Answers:

- Coffee
- Turkey Sandwich
- Sausage Bagel
- IPA Beer
- Vodka

The permanent Tukwila Sounder/Amtrak station is nearing completion. WSDOT provided \$8.6 million towards the construction costs. There are 40 dedicated Amtrak parking spaces near the south end of the parking lot. (See **Cascades**, page 5)

SMART's Herb Krohn speaks at October AAWA meeting

The October 11 All Aboard Washington meeting was held at the Kelso Intermodal Station. We were welcomed by city councilman Dan Myers. He provided a rail history of the area and told of the 1994 station restoration and the 2005 startup of the station host program that he leads.

Herb Krohn, state legislative board chairman of the Sheet Metal, Air, Rail and Transportation Union (which the United Transportation Union merged into), was our featured speaker. Highlight of Krohn's presentation:

The union is completely opposed the siting of a sports arena south of Safeco Field. It would be right in the middle of a rail yard and severely disrupt freight rail and port operations. This would be major step toward gentrification of important industrial land. Public ports were created a hundred years ago specifically to preserve land for industrial use and promote commerce.

Krohn takes a pragmatic view of construction of coal export terminals in Washington. He strives to build a bipartisan coalition to support these facilities. He is not anti-environment but if they aren't built here they will be built elsewhere, and sees the commerce and jobs created as important to our economy.

The US would be better off without a fossil fuel based economy but that is not going to happen for decades. There has been a tremendous shift in wealth from the US to the Middle East because of oil and we need to bring that wealth home. The refineries in our state are providing the fuels that run the economy of the Northwest. The union supports improving the safety of moving oil by train through expeditious removal of older [DOT 111 tank cars](#) – carrying volatile Bakken crude oil – from service.

One of Krohn's main concerns is safety. This is one area where the unions tend to be at odds with the railroads. They talk a good line, but don't show a strong commitment to putting action (See **Krohn**, page 5)



WSDOT's Kirk Fredrickson, left, talks with AAWA President Loren Herrigstad, center, while other members listen to the discussion.

Photo by Jim Hamre



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

A Half Full Cup; The Tilted Playing Field; Will Amenity Cuts Work?

American rail advocates can experience the same objective reality in two differing ways:

Optimists are pleased we have intercity and regional (commuter) passenger trains and rail transit and that investment in and ridership continue to grow, albeit in fits and starts. We praise and support those electeds and other folks of influence who favor continued investment and use of these trains. Optimists have a half-full cup.

Pessimists lament our relatively modest investments in passenger rail compared to nearly all other relatively prosperous industrialized countries. (Canada has good urban rail but has treated intercity Via Rail Canada, if anything, worse than Amtrak has fared in the US.) Pessimists fear anti-rail ideologues will succeed in reducing or eliminating support for passenger rail at all levels. Pessimists have a half-empty cup.

This column's readers and those with whom I've worked for three decades on passenger rail issues know I am usually of the half-full camp. This is not to say the half-empty people don't have a somewhat valid case. The highly-respected professional railway publication, *International Railway Journal*, is at once inspiring when it notes how passenger rail investment and ridership continue to increase throughout much of the world, and troubling to even us optimists on how North America lags by comparison.

Some half-full cup observations: Our WSDOT Rail Division continues its good work in putting Washington's very significant Federal rail investments into improved infrastructure on the Amtrak *Cascades* routes. My only suggestion is that their good work should publicly celebrated more and, with funding and staff, we'd like see additional projects. The mudslide problem, particularly between Seattle and Everett, is being actively addressed. We were well into what is usually our rainiest season before the first mudslide Nov. 24 resulted in BNSF's 48-hour passenger (but not freight) train an-

nulments. And on November 19, The *Coast Starlight* northbound was right on time at Olympia-Lacey!

The good news I celebrated at AAWA's annual meeting in Centralia November 8 and again at the AORTA fall meeting in Eugene November 15 is the existence of the Washington State Legislative Rail Caucus, a fully bipartisan group of our state's legislators who actively favor a larger role for trains in the movement of goods and people. Special kudos to co-chairs Democrat Luis Moscoso (Bothell) and Republican Matt Manweller (Moses Lake) for the energy and commitment they are putting into the LRC and its mission. Finally, the recent election results, while causing concern for some rail advocates at the federal

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level, should mean continued affirmative progress in Washington and Oregon in terms of both our Congressional delegations and our Legislatures.



Dan McFarling, in his presentation at AORTA's Fall Meeting, had as a theme the inadequate track capacity to properly accommodate existing and growing freight rail business and existing and planned increased passenger rail service. The freight railroads' elimination of rail infrastructure in recent decades, including the potentially vital BNSF Wilburton Subdivision (Eastside Line) is now seen as unfortunate. In my view, it seemed the major freight railroads incorrectly assumed they would survive carrying only a small number of mostly-bulk commodities, seemingly not counting on the inherent superiority of steel wheels on steel rails and growing problems associated with, particularly, the highway mode. Even as I question some of the more recent abandonments and track eliminations, I can understand why freight railroads would so behave in past decades.

Dan reiterated the unfortunate reality that highways, airports and waterways

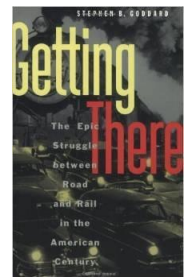
rely substantially "... on public funds to acquire, develop, maintain, police, and signalize all of their right-of-way." Railroads are the only mode expected to use **private** investment to acquire, develop, maintain, police and signalize their rights-of-way. In addition, while rail rights-of-way and improvements are taxed, the other modes receive tax monies. (In some cases railroads paid taxes directly used to build competing modes!) Historically, railroads desired to eliminate taxed property and infrastructure that was considered not needed for present or future rail use. But the congestion that is now adversely impacting both freight and passenger train service would be less had so much rail infrastructure not been eliminated.

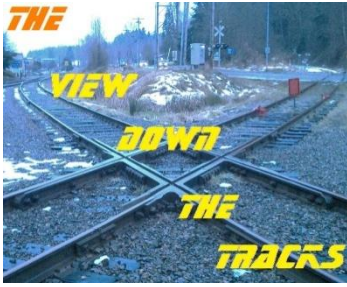
While freight rail pays its own way, we acknowledge most passenger trains are subsidized. We passenger train advocates believe the benefits of urban, regional, and intercity passenger rail service are worth the relatively modest sums of our taxes used to keep these safest, most environmentally-sound and socially-valuable modes operating. And we do get grumpy when a small-but-dedicated fraternity of somewhat influential anti-passenger-rail zealots attack public passenger rail investments while ignoring or even denying the existence of subsidies for all other transportation modes.

While I grant the following is a generalization, I submit that government policies have, from the early 20th Century, been negative toward the rail mode while essentially building and supporting other modes. Why so? Read the wonderfully-written book [Getting There](#), by Stephen B. Goddard, subtitled "The Epic Struggle Between Road and Rail in the American Century."

One theme is that the railroads were so powerful and arrogant in the late 19th and early 20th centuries that a justified populist uprising brought about then-needed government controls. As Goddard sees it, righteous anger at the railroads over a century ago helped bring about policies which blatantly favored other modes, particularly those favored by what Goddard calls "the Highwaymen." He chronicles the massive subsidies and advantages we drivers of cars, SUVs and trucks receive. Acquire and read this book; it's like a good historical novel, but is emphatically non-

(See **Flem**, page 4)





WITH
JIM
CUSICK

Go Organic

I should stop hanging out on the Internet. Or at least don't expect meaningful exchanges with faceless/nameless commenters.

However one exchange amused me.

In a discussion with someone who is of the opinion that no rail shall be built before its time, the issue came up of whether it is the transportation system that defines the growth, or that the growth defines what transportation system should be built. I am in the camp of the former, they of the latter.

They used the term 'Organic' in defense of in-fill density that supports an efficient frequent bus network. That bus network is somehow viewed by them in opposition to a rail based network between dense nodes.

Unless we're navigating on rivers, lakes and other natural waterways, or using unpaved foot or horse carriage trails, no housing development pattern can be considered organic.

Remember, the first 'sprawl inducers' were the privately owned and operated Interurbans and streetcars.

Tax supported paving of roadways put them out of business and changed the pattern of growth, now that every foot path or horse trail had the potential of becoming a paved route.

Man-made transportation systems can hardly be called organic.

Note that the random and uncontrolled development of land parcels along and around these small highways is what led to the Growth Management Act, compelling municipalities to ... well ... **PLAN AHEAD.**

Imagine that. Doesn't sound very organic to me?!

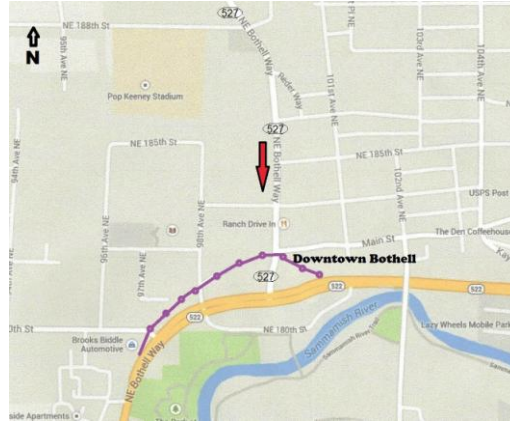
Or is it?

I think the City of Bothell has this problem solved!!

For review, I've included a map (top of next column) and an artist's rendition of the downtown Bothell redevelopment.

The area in question is where SR 522 (NE Bothell Way/Bothell-Woodinville highway), SR 527 (NE Bothell Way, connecting to the Bothell-Everett highway), and Main Street intersected.

The current route of SR 522 is shown,



along with the stand-alone Main Street.

I have added a purple dotted-line to show the approximate route of the pre-configured roadway, showing how all three used to intersect at a very walkable (but offensive to drivers) point just north of the current location.

Bothell does plan on extending Main Street to the west (in a straight line, but not shown) to connect with the road adjacent to the Bothell Regional King County Library branch.

The red arrow pointing down (or South) is the reference for the view shown in the next pictures.

The first one is the artist's rendition of what NE Bothell Way (SR 527 portion) will look like from that direction:



As you can see, this is a very impressive boulevard, and Bothell has completed construction of most of the right-of-way, including those business access-parallel parking-driveway thingys (most obviously visible on the left side of the drawing on the other side of the intersection).

This configuration is already built out, and for the center planting strip the city has even retained the trees that used to be on the west side of the highway. They just constructed the widening where the western sidewalk used to exist. The trees essentially replace those white fuzzy plants next to the red orientation arrow.

However, [Bothell's Prop 1: Parks and Open Space Levy](#) failed at the ballot box

since apparently 52% of Bothell residents support parks, but "believe it's deceptive for the city to combine parks and public spaces in one levy when 67 percent of the money will go toward the Multiway Boulevard and Main Street."

It's built out, save for one thing, the portion of the roadway where the red orientation arrow is.

So, how will Bothell finish this fine boulevard?

I now have evidence they are planning to grow their own highway!!

Exhibit A:



First you grow enough plant matter, then you cover it over, grow some more, repeat, again and again for approximately 200 million years, and voila!

Natural tar!! Just add aggregate and the road is ready to use.

Money is No Object

Time to dust off the [WSF led Edmonds Crossing project](#).

Now that we know the preliminary estimate of the [Edmonds train trench](#), at between \$250 million and \$290 million, I was far too generous with the train trench proponents.

The new ferry staging area that eliminated the traffic backups on SR 104, enhanced the safety of the ferry docking procedure, and eliminated at least half the train whistles was part of the original Edmonds Crossing plan.

The Edmonds Crossing project solved so many more of the problems that spending more on the train trench just to satisfy well heeled homeowners' complaints not only is a ludicrous proposal, it's a waste of taxpayer money to pursue it further.

Time to put this idea to rest.

It's Called 'Investment'

Since I'm the expert in investing (remember my advice to invest in 3-D printing?), and if my advice to add a third round trip to Vancouver, BC in anticipation of the NHL putting a team in Seattle (See **Cusick**, page 4)

Flem, from page 2
fiction.

The negatively tilted playing field of government policy persists. The Federal tax advantages urban commuters can receive from employer-provided benefits for driving and parking were temporarily matched by those for people using transit. Now the transit tax advantages have been reduced to roughly half that of drivers, sufficient to get some commuters out of the trains and buses and behind the wheel again. This is precisely the wrong policy for already massively-congested roads in metro areas.

Rail advocates in the Pacific Northwest, in concert with allies on these issues regionally and nationwide, need to continue the positive push for more even-handed policies for rail versus other modes at local, state and federal levels.



I can certainly empathize with Amtrak-DC in many ways. They must deal with the impacts of anti-passenger-rail zealots from a few "think tanks" that do influence some members of Congress. These zealots in extreme cases are opposed to passenger rail at any level and even make the silly claims that passenger rail systems in places like Switzerland and Germany are "failing." Some members of Congress, a bit less extreme, agree the Northeast Corridor trains (Boston to Washington DC) are important but most other intercity trains and all long-distance trains are wastes of taxpayers' money.

Amtrak's response now, as has sometimes been the case through its 43 years of difficult history, is to attempt to cut its way to, if not prosperity, at least survival. A [recent strategy](#) is to cut amenities for first class passengers on long-distance trains. Money supposedly saved is but a tiny percentage of Amtrak's budget and an infinitesimal amount of the Federal budget.

A question that needs to be asked: Will the dollars saved by removal of the amenities – dining car flowers, wine and cheese tasting and newspapers for first-class passengers, and other elements of a "civilized experience" – for what are costly fares – with no decrease in those fares – be a good long-term strategy? Most first-class passengers are financially comfortable and willing to pay for a high-quality train trip. If their costly trip becomes austere, will they ride much less-expensive coach, or stay home, or drive, or hold their noses and fly to their destination? I do not have an answer yet, but feel this again may result in decreased total income for Amtrak and resulting increased need for subsidies,

which gives more ammo to the antis!

A similar precedent was when Amtrak cut service of some daily trains to thrice weekly to "save money." Fact: The fixed costs of running trains are high relative to variable costs. Income from the thrice weekly trains – with substantially fewer passengers – dropped more than did the expenses of running them. Losses increased. Cutting service to save money did not succeed.

Despite our concerns with this particular and possibly some other policies, let us continue to urge Congress to continue supporting Amtrak and our Legislatures to continue investing in passenger trains. And, if we are tactful, perhaps offer a reminder that the transportation playing field could use some leveling.

Cusick, from page 3

wasn't enough, then I have an even bolder proposal.

One whose idea is not only shared by the rest of All Aboard Washington, but by people who have found that the altered schedule for (at least) the eastbound *Empire Builder* now takes them to eastern Washington at a more reasonable time of day, and more are making the decision to do just that.

My idea is:

More State-sponsored trains.

In fact, we don't even have to wait for the Legislature to propose something, (although I wish they would), we can have our own People's Initiative!

I say ...

Let's be like California

Not only did California voters pass [Proposition 108](#) and [Proposition 116](#) in 1990, they have embraced rail travel and even voted for more higher speed rail projects.

What were these propositions and what were their effects?

Proposition 108 – which was officially known as the Passenger Rail And Clean Air Bond Act Of 1990 – was on the June 5, 1990 ballot in California as a legislatively-referred bond act. We'd call that a Referendum in Washington State. Proposition 108 was for a bond issue of \$1 billion for passenger rail.

Proposition 116 was on the same June 5, 1990 ballot in California as an 'initiated state statute' (a la Tim Eyman). It authorized a bond issue of \$1.99 billion for passenger and commuter rail administered through the Public Transportation Account (PTA). The PTA account had been created by the Transportation Development Act of 1971.

Proposition 116 also stated that "certain revenues from gasoline sales taxes

must be placed in the PTA for transportation planning and mass transportation purposes."

Both these propositions meant nearly \$3 billion to invest in trains, tracks, platforms and a host of other rail improvements, giving California the robust, and growing, passenger rail system we see today.

Just like California, Washington State's support of the rail program – embodied by our Amtrak Cascades service – needs a boost with some Citizen Initiatives!

Are you with me?

Who has the more robust urban rail transit system?

Let's compare of the Seattle and Salt Lake City metro areas:

Largest city population:

- Seattle: 640,500
- Salt Lake City: 191,200

Metro population:

- Seattle-Tacoma-Everett-Bellevue: 3.6 million
- Salt Lake City-Ogden-Provo: 2.2 million

Number of light rail and streetcar lines operating:

- Seattle/Tacoma: 1 light rail line and 2 streetcars lines
- Salt Lake City: 3 light rail lines and 1 streetcar line

Miles of light rail lines:

- Seattle: 16 miles
- Salt Lake City: 45 miles

Daily light rail ridership:

- Seattle: 37,350
- Salt Lake City: 68,100

Commuter rail operations:

- Seattle: morning and evening rush hour service 5 days a week (4 hours during each part of the day)
- Salt Lake City: all day service 6 days a week (19-plus hours each day)

Daily commuter rail ridership:

- Seattle: 11,700
- Salt Lake City: 14,700



TRAX Blue line train in Sandy, UT. Photo by Warren Yee

Sound Transit is working to catch up our region with Salt Lake City, with light rail extensions to Lynnwood, Kent/Des Moines and Redmond under construction or in design. This will push ridership past 100,000 a day (though we are still 8 years from finishing all these extensions). Many still want to see Sounder

expanded to all-day, every-day service, and light rail and streetcars extended to more cities and neighborhoods.

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 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

Why are trains late?

By Dan McFarling, President

Assoc. of Oregon Rail and Transit Advocates

Some people like to blame the freight railroads. Some blame railroad dispatchers.

But the primary reason trains are late – and there are many – is US policy.

Rail is the **ONLY** mode of transportation in the North America that relies primarily on private investment to:

- acquire
- develop
- maintain
- police
- and signalize nearly all of their rights-of-way

And railroads must pay taxes on their rights-of-way, and on the improvements.

When there is an economic downturn, railroads downsize infrastructure to avoid losses or bankruptcy.

What about aviation, highways and waterways? They rely in part or in whole on taxpayer dollars to:

- acquire
- develop
- maintain
- police
- and signalize nearly all of their rights-of-way

And their rights-of-way and the improvements thereon are publicly owned and are thus tax-free.

When there is a downturn in the economy, one of the most common responses has been “let's stimulate the economy by ‘investing’ public dollars building new roads and airports and improving our ports.” Taxes paid by railway companies help cover the cost of these “investments.”

So, the next time your passenger train is late because we rely primarily on single track lines congested with freight traffic, don't blame Amtrak, or the dispatchers, or the freight railroad companies. Instead, work to change US policy so that we no longer discriminate against railway transportation. There should be a tax incentive, rather than a penalty, for railroads to increase capacity to meet future needs.

One way you can help change US policy is by joining and working with the Association of Oregon Rail and Transit Advocates and All Aboard Washington to improve our states' and our nation's transportation system. Use the links below. If you have any questions, or want to challenge any of the points raised above, please respond to me at [OregonRail@aol.com!](mailto:OregonRail@aol.com)

http://www.aortarail.org/index.php/get_involved/join_donate/

<http://allaboardwashington.org/join-us/join-or-renew-online/>

Cascades, from page 1

WSDOT and Amtrak are working with BNSF to ensure each *Cascades* train stops on the same track every day at Tukwila. Signs will inform passengers on which track their train is expected. When BNSF dispatchers make a track change it's a mess as passengers must trudge back down the steps or ramps with their luggage, through the underpass at the north end of the station, and back up to the other platform. This can turn a two minute stop into a ten minute stop.

Variable message signs will be installed on the platforms. In the event of a track change, the train conductor can send a text message to the signs with updated information. WSDOT is working with BNSF to allow track change information to automatically be sent from the dispatcher's work station.

WSDOT and Amtrak again operated one extra round-trip on the Wednesday before and Sunday after Thanksgiving. This year the extra trains used a Talgo trainset, which is available with the two Oregon-purchased sets now in the pool.

Looking to the future, when the infrastructure improvements are finished in 2017, WSDOT and Amtrak have been developing a schedule for the six daily *Cascades* round-trips (plus the *Coast Starlight*). People want to have a longer day in Seattle and Portland, including being able to get to Seattle well before noon. The plans for the new roundtrips have the first train of the day

leaving both Seattle and Portland around 6:15 a.m. – with an arrival around 9:30 a.m. – and the last departure of the day from each city at about 7:45 p.m. at the end of the day. With the additional roundtrips, slightly reduced running times, and better on-time performance, WSDOT projects *Cascades* ridership will increase from about 800,000 a year to 1.2 million.

Other presentations at the meeting included an update on the Eastside Line TRailway project from Bruce Agnew, an election impact update from Lloyd Flem, and a presentation from Dan McFarling on why it's so difficult to get there from here (for one of the reasons, see the article to the left).

Krohn, from page 1

behind the words. Crew fatigue is the biggest issue. Railroads push for increased productivity but don't provide paid sick leave and have unjustly harsh attendance policies. Currently, people that are sick or too tired to safely operate a train have to go to work or face disciplinary action.

The Union opposes BNSF's “Iron Triangle” operating plan. BNSF runs only empty grain, coal and oil trains eastbound over the Stampede Pass line. Nothing moves west over the pass. This means crews taking a train east to Pasco are then assigned a westbound train to Vancouver and, after a second layover, handle a train north back to the Puget Sound area.

The four top issues they are taking to the Legislature are:

- Better state regulation of train crew shuttle van drivers – BNSF requires little more than a driver's license for these drivers
- Crew sizes – no one-person train crews
- State rail regulations need to be consolidated under only one agency
- Maximum hours of service requirements for yardmasters

In closing, Krohn stated he and his union strongly support more and expanded Amtrak service in the Northwest.

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All Aboard News

December 13: All Aboard Washington will travel to **Portland** on Cascades 501. We will have a short business meeting on the train and a day of fun in the Rose City. Please join us. Some options include Powell's City of Books, downtown shopping, visiting the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry and the Oregon Rail Heritage Center (both accessible via the Central Loop streetcar line). Feel free to also join us discussing rail issues and strategies with our AORTA counterparts. Return on the afternoon train of your choice.

January 10, 2015: All Aboard Washington business meeting from **noon-4 p.m.** at **Basil's Kitchen**, Embassy Suites Hotel, 15920 W. Valley Hwy, **Tukwila**, adjacent to the new (nearly completed) Sounder/Amtrak Station. Program pending but we will have roundtable discussion with our members on issues of importance to AAWA and rail in our state.

Use our Northwest Corridor trains to and from all these meetings.

All Aboard Washington has recently welcomed the following new members: **Tom Newcomb**, Olympia; **Mimi Stieler**, Gig Harbor; and **Dan Myers**, Kelso. Help All

Aboard Washington expand its membership and mission by inviting family and friends to join us. Or, better yet, give the gift of a membership during this holiday season.

All Aboard Washington members contributing to this newsletter include: Dan McFarling, Warren Yee, Zack Willhoite, Lloyd Flem and Jim Cusick.

Reelected to the All Aboard Washington board of directors at our November 8 meeting in Centralia are: Jim Hamre, Karen Keller, Louis Musso, Stephanie Weber and Zack Willhoite. Newly elected to the board is Claire Bowen.

Thanks to all of you who made purchases at our silent auction at the November 8 meeting. The money raised will help to further our mission of support for intercity passenger train service.

All Aboard Washington participates in **AmazonSmile**. Making Amazon purchases through AmazonSmile can benefit AAWA. Amazon donates 0.5% of eligible purchases to us if you use AmazonSmile. Access the service through the link on the right side of our homepage.

Was your train

late today? The tell your US representative and your senators! NARP has a link from its homepage – narprail.org – that takes you to a [form](#)

you can quickly fill out and electronically transmit to Congress – even while still on your train. Since NARP brought this service on line in October thousands of people have told their representatives and senators about their late trains.



A new concrete platform for the Empire Builder is in service at the Vancouver Station. It's located to the east of the building. This work was done in conjunction with BNSF's upcoming project to improve operations by realigning the curve coming off the Columbia River drawbridge.

Photo by Jim Hamre