



# WASHINGTON RAIL NEWS

DECEMBER 2008/JANUARY 2009

www.AllAboardWashington.org

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

## Can Railbanked Corridors Be Rerailed for Passenger Trains?

Central to the fate of the King County "Eastside" section of BNSF's Woodinville Subdivision between Tukwila and Snohomish is the question of how easily rail service, passenger or freight, can be restored if the tracks are torn up in favor of a trail. The Eastside corridor is to be railbanked under the National Trails System Act of 1983. Since railroad rights-of-way represent an important transportation asset, the NTSA provides for their reservation for future rail service, should future need make that desirable. It appears there are no major legalistic or regulatory impediments to such restoration, but, for the Eastside, that's only the start of the story. Of all the potential hurdles,

lines offers only limited reassurance to those concerned about Sims' intentions. The historical record yields not a single case in which rail service, freight or passenger, has been restored on a railbanked corridor with a developed trail on it.

Active attempts are however being made right now in Montgomery County, Maryland (Washington, DC area) to construct a light-rail system on a short trail in the Georgetown Branch corridor, which CSX railbanked in 1988, and that case provides the best lessons for All Aboard Washington as it considers the ramifications of a possible removal of infrastructure on the Eastside.

In Maryland, the original light-rail plans for the Georgetown Branch took shape immediately after it was railbanked. Those plans succumbed in the early 1990s to funding and cost problems. The tracks were then removed and an unpaved bike-and-pedestrian trail, part of the Capital Crescent Trail system, was developed on three miles of the corridor.

The State of Maryland recently revived the light-rail plan. A draft environmental impact statement (DEIS) just issued concluded that two of the three alternatives for building this "Purple Line" – as well as three alternative bus rapid transit (BRT) scenarios, two of them likewise using the trail corridor – meet federal cost-effectiveness guidelines. Staff at the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (MNCPPC) feel some concern about BRT's capacity to accommodate the high ridership anticipated, given the route's many connections. (See **Railbanked**, page 5)

## All Aboard Washington rail conference a success

Earth As Only a Railroad Can Make It: The World and Environmental Sustainability; that was the theme of All Aboard Washington's Oct. 25 conference at Tacoma's Washington State History Museum. Here is a synopsis of all the extremely interesting information presented by our speakers and panelists.

Cesar Vergara, Principal Industrial Designer, Jacobs Engineering, New York City (when Vergara worked for Amtrak one of his projects was the industrial design our Talgo trainsets):

- Transportation is the most basic tenet of civilization. Without it, you have nothing.
- It takes the same amount of money to make something beautiful as to make something ugly.
- Design is intelligence made visible.
- Engineering moves a train. Design is only 1% of the cost but 100% of what people see.
- The car of the future is a rail car and there's a bike waiting for you at the other end.
- There are two criteria for designing a rail station. First, it should be easy to find. Second, it should be attractive.
- If we design trains and stations beautifully, they are easier to sell to the public. Stations build communities. However, some politician's commandment seems to be "Make it sure it looks as ugly and cheap as possibly so that my constituents don't give me hell."

Robert Eaton, Ph.D., Mayor of Leavenworth:

It's the job of a mayor to put all the pieces together. Extremists will never see the other side of the argument. The mayor's role is to find compromise.

- It's *old* lessons from Europe, not *new* lessons, that we need to learn. American rail lines are privately owned and primarily haul
- (See **Conference**, page 6)



Shots from websites supporting the Maryland Purple Line, [www.purplelinenow.com](http://www.purplelinenow.com), and the Sonoma-Marín Counties rail line in California, [www.sonomamarintrain.org](http://www.sonomamarintrain.org)



NIMBYism would likely be the highest.

King County Executive Ron Sims wants the railbanked corridor to become "the granddaddy of all trails," and a search for precedents for restoring any kind of rail service on railbanked



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

**Passenger train advances 2009+;  
Opportunities & Challenges,  
including for AA WA members!**

With the election of Barack Obama and Joe Biden, the USA will have, for the first time, an Executive Branch which has made strong, detailed commitments to a much more prominent role for Amtrak and the development of high speed freight and passenger rail. In a position paper done before the 2008 election, the word "railways" was the first transportation mode mentioned when listing infrastructure needs ([www.barackobama.com/pdf/issues/FactSheetTransportation.pdf](http://www.barackobama.com/pdf/issues/FactSheetTransportation.pdf)). Obama's Chicago home and Biden's decades-long daily use of Amtrak give evidence that the President-Elect and VP-Elect are serious about starting the long journey toward bringing our country into parity with the rest of the industrialized world outside North America.

At this writing no names have publicly surfaced for US Secretary of Transportation. But rumors floating among the passenger rail community give cause for hope. Names privately mentioned include people who have been strongly pro-passenger train in their professional work.

Congress will be at least as potentially pro-passenger train as before Election 2008. However, given the importance of bipartisan support for passenger trains (and other issues concerning conservation and environmental protection – most pro-rail elected officials are also "green"), in both the 2006 and 2008 elections some of passenger rail's best Republican friends were defeated, albeit by Democrats also likely to be pro-passenger rail. We lost this year, for example, Rep. Chris Shays (R-CT) and Sen. Gordon Smith (R-OR), one of the Senate's strongest proponents of the national network Amtrak trains in the West.

However, more good news was Congress's passage in early October of HB 2085, a vitally important railroad safety and Amtrak authorization bill. An increasing percentage of the American people also seem conscious of the need for "greener" transportation, whether

"clean cars" (see last issue of WA RAIL NEWS), transit, bike and pedestrian, or passenger trains. But an authorization is but a "Good Idea." Congress must be willing to appropriate the dollars to bring about the needed changes and rail development.

These great opportunities are met with serious challenges. As of this writing, the stock market continues to decline, businesses great and small are in trouble, 100,000s of people are losing jobs and home foreclosures multiply. These overall economic crises are likely to assume higher priorities of even the most pro-passenger-rail Administration and Congress. If these national, even international, economic problems get under some degree of control in months to come, then the opportunities for a big leap for passenger train service can be realized. Another challenge is the dramatic fall in motor fuel prices. No in-

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formed person predicted gasoline would ever fall below \$3.00 per gallon, yet \$1.89 has popped up in a few places in recent days. While ridership appears to remain strong on intercity and commuter trains (last summer's new riders discovered how pleasant taking the train was versus driving I-5 or I-405), will "cheap gas" influence folks into returning to their old (drive-absolutely-everywhere-alone) habits? But we can all celebrate the voters' wisdom in solidly defeating Tim Eyman's latest reckless effort to dictate poor transportation policy.

At the State level, the years of fine work of the WSDOT Rail Office (now State Rail and Marine Office) is acknowledged at the federal level. The Midrange Plan for the Amtrak *Cascades*, now pending, is just the latest example of careful work our state rail people accomplish. I represented AA WA as an appointed stakeholder to the development of the plan and, with valuable input from AA WA member CB Hall, crafted a paper which offered comments and suggestions on the plan. Copies of the plan and my paper are available for those of you truly interested.

If significant rail monies become available from federal legislation, Washington State will get credit for capital in-

vestments the state has made between 2002 and 2008, up to \$15 mill. per fiscal year, and not have to have the direct monetary matching contributions that states which have not made such investments will be required to make. These federal bucks and credits for past state rail investments are strictly dependent upon the passage of Amtrak appropriations in Congress.

While investments from DeeCee ("About time!", say rail advocates, state DOT rail staff and legislators who have appropriated state investment monies with relatively little coming from the Nation's Capital over the years) will be welcomed, the predictions of a growing state revenue shortfall make challenges to getting significant increases in rail investments from the Hill in Olympia even greater. But with a refocus on AA WA's traditional mission of working for intercity passenger train service, your Olympia office and you, rail advocates and members of AA WA, we need to politely but persistently remind our legislators that many of their announced goals for our state – environmental, economic and social – are served by moving passenger trains to a transportation role they occupy in most of the rest of the world.



We in key roles at All Aboard Washington plan to involve you, our members, more than has been the case in recent years. Your membership dues and loyal support are of greatest importance, but many, probably most of you can and should be more active in your advocacy for more passenger trains. Minimally, that means contacting our elected officials at the local, and particularly State Legislative and US Congressional levels. I've harped on this before and a few of you have responded, perhaps more than I have been aware. As previously mentioned in these columns, you need not have great writing or, if on the phone or in person, impressive speaking skills. In fact, sincere statements of your beliefs and ideas can be more influential with those elected to represent you in Olympia and DeeCee than an overly-smooth pre-prepared offering.

That said, I am always willing to assist, if you feel you need such, in content or style before you contact your electeds.

But there are many other constructive chores AA WA member can and will be asked to do to help forward the cause of more passenger train service and to help (See **Flem**, page 4)



## The View Down the Tracks

=====  
with Jim Cusick

### A Great Getaway

Well, winter is upon us. Shorter days, record rainfall, flooding. What can one do to escape the latest weather calamity? Sounds like a good reason to check out what's happening up north.

Now I know it seems counter-intuitive coming from someone in this newsletter, but with the availability of Amtrak's train 510 to Vancouver, BC, it seems only natural that it should be a train trip. A few hours viewing the extraordinary scenery along Puget Sound, a minute or two at Canadian customs, and next thing you know, it's like you're in a different country!

Well, they do speak English for the most part, and save for it being difficult for those of us south of the border to gauge how many layers of clothing to wear and that hockey is the dominant sports topic, a visit to Vancouver, BC is a great getaway.

The first thing you notice when you get through customs is how bright and active Pacific Central Station is. It's well lit, clean, beautifully restored, and busy with passengers from the various modes using it. It also has a number of food vendors and even a magazine store. Although not directly downtown, it provides a pleasant place to stay while waiting for a train or a bus or for someone to pick you up.

However, we're on our way into town, so it's just a short walk across the park to the Skytrain station, and then just a few stops to the downtown hotel. It's fairly effortless to move about in this fair city without a car.

With the upcoming Winter Olympics in 2010, construction cranes are as predominant as completed buildings. The construction of the new Olympic village next to False Creek (across from the old World's Fair Expo 86 site) also has a long-term urban renewal payoff.

Another useful feature is the water taxi system serving False Creek. This is a wonderfully quaint and novel way to navigate the area.

While east-west travel is the more tourist friendly, regular pedestrian commuters use the north-south routes regularly. A great place to visit is Vancouver's

version of Seattle's Pike Place Market, Granville Island.

At Skytrain's downtown terminus, Waterfront Station, which is also the West Coast Express commuter train station and the SeaBus terminal, the main lobby is the restored Canadian Pacific station, again a hub activity with stores and coffee, etc.

Hmmm, compared to Seattle, Vancouver is a city with vision! Compare if you will, their rail transit to Seattle's. Compare their water taxi service with Seattle's. Compare their intercity rail station to Seattle's.

And if that depresses you, remember Vancouver is only a train ride away. Well, now it's only one train, the morning 7:40 from Seattle, leaving Vancouver at 5:45 in the evening.

And if that depresses you...

**Compared to Seattle, Vancouver is a city with vision! Compare if you will, their rail transit to Seattle's. Compare their water taxi service with Seattle's. Compare their intercity rail station to Seattle's.**

### Time to call in the big guns

Not that I have anything personally invested in this, but even though people have an alternate bus option through Amtrak to get up north there is another train that almost gets there. After all, it's just a stone's throw from Bellingham, where the current *Cascades* 516 terminates, and that's the problem.

People are disappointed that they can't take a train up in the evening. As was reported in our last issue, the hang up seems so minor. Here you already have a facility, Pacific Central Station that can easily accommodate another train. That Canadian customs is considering the staffing necessary as a "new facility" on its face has the feel of a negotiating ploy.

Considering that a new flight into an airport or extended hours at a highway border crossing aren't considered a new facility, why then pick on Amtrak? I know that for years it's been the national political pastime to go after Amtrak, but to just single out this second train has no merit. There's that old "Barney the Purple Dinosaur" song playing again in the background.

Now I am just like all my readers, I have no inside track to negotiations between Amtrak and Canadian customs. All I can do is speculate. Since I don't have the hard evidence, the only thing I can do here is my usual:

Pontificate!

Leadership. Having this simple hang up stall what should be (in my opinion) only the start of at least four trains a day to Vancouver is just silly. There are those of us in the states that want to travel in a civilized, effortless and comfortable way to the upcoming Olympic festivities.

In private industry, this would simply require intervention from a superior who then surveys the situation, understands what the problem is, understands what is a viable solution, and puts it into action.

Problem one is that this isn't a private company. Things are even more complex because it spans the border of two countries.

What's at issue is that energy is being spent a lower level that could and should be resolved by those at a higher decision making level. Congressional representatives, Amtrak executives and US Customs officials should be meeting with their counterparts and with our friends north of the border. They could have this resolved in one arm wrestling match.

Now that "Amtrak Joe" Biden is vice president, I'm sure he could have this resolved in one short(?) negotiating session...well at minimum, we would know that everything would have been discussed once the agreement is reached.

So now that Election Day has passed, all is not necessarily gloomy down here, in spite of the latest news and weather reports.

### We're on the move!

Everyone knows that I've been the cheerleader for Sound Transit's efforts to build a viable rail system here in the Puget Sound area. Those of you that religiously follow my column know that I have always felt that the general public was ahead of the politicians and have supported a rail based solution.

And yes, I can say "I told you so."

I regularly proposed that Sound Transit put their own plan – without the roads component – before the voters. ST proposed and the public said **YES!**

Sound Transit's plan has passed, and that is a testament to both the hard work of the staff, the contractors, the Sound Transit Board and everyone involved in making the current system work. However, without appearing like a fawning fan, much credit has to be given to Joni Earl, since she is, after all, the public face of Sound Transit.

It is a testament to the successes of Sound Transit that the public voted in favor (See **Cusick**, page 4)

**Flem,** from page 2

our organization grow. They include, but are certainly not limited to: hosting information tables and keeping stocks of brochures at Amtrak stations and other public gathering places where such are appropriate; conducting research, whether from print and electronic media or from in-person meetings, valuable to the cause of passenger rail and AA WA; writing grants or accessing folks who have such skills (unlike most non-profit, tax-exempt organizations, AA WA has to date relied overwhelmingly on memberships and donations from members for support); simply serving as a greeter at AA WA meetings and other events where we are involved; serving as active liaisons to allied groups within the environmental, transportation, business, labor and civic communities; writing/calling newspapers, radio and TV stations with good news or counters to not-so-good news. (Example: airports socked in, passes closed, yet *Empire Builder* and *Cascades* running fine. Remind 'em there is an option to "fly or drive"!)

Most importantly, we have a good membership, somewhat over 500 members and member families. Every member knows one or more persons somewhat or very interested in having or increasing passenger train options in our state, region, nation, and throughout North America. In the next year, if each member just signed up one new member, we would of course double our membership and, more importantly, our impact on decision makers! Memberships make excellent and litter-free Holiday gifts! (Send us a note that it's a gift membership with the person's name and address and a check and we'll send the recipient their membership as a gift from you.)

A final bit of good news: Despite falling gasoline prices, highway travel is predicted to decrease this Thanksgiving. Same with airline travel. But intercity bus and rail are slated to increase! Those of you traveling by train during the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays, talk with your fellow passengers, thanking them and congratulating them in joining you in making the safe, comfortable and environmentally-sound choice to "get to Grandma's House." (For the Thanksgiving holiday, virtually all *Cascades* trains for Wednesday, Thursday morning and Sunday sold out more than a week in advance, including many of the ten extra one way trips Amtrak added over the five day holiday period.)



All are invited to two events to be held on Dec. 13 and Dec. 20 at Olympia-

Lacey's centennial Station. A regular AA WA meeting is scheduled for the 13<sup>th</sup>. A guest speaker from WSDOT, discussing the Mid-Range Plan for the Amtrak *Cascades*, has been invited. In addition, board members Bob Lawrence and Loren Herrigstad will report on recent conferences in Sacramento and San Francisco. It is also a fun time, with pizza, holiday cheer, and a pep talk by Old Coach Lloyd H. Flem. Time: 11:30 a.m. to about 3 p.m., convenient for Amtrak trains from both north and south.

The Dec. 20 meeting will honor both veteran and fairly new volunteer Station Hosts at Centennial Station. All AA WA members are welcome! Santa Claus will arrive, by northbound Amtrak *Cascades* at 10:18 a.m. Live music and Holiday goodies! Not only did the Capital Community build Centennial Station with little tax money, but has staffed it with volunteers, missing few if any trains, for nearly sixteen years! Again, our trains will allow most out-of-Thurston residents to join us via the mode of civilized travel!

**Cusick,** from page 3

vor of the new plan, even before Central Link was put into operation.

And you should no longer feel depressed about King Street Station either.

My moles have been telling me that since the City of Seattle has had ownership, things have been progressing quite nicely. Actually you don't have to be mole to see some of the behind the scenes things going on, which includes the rebuilding of the roof's drainage system; you can just look up.

King Street Station no longer has a microwave tower and the clock works. New scaffolding surrounds the tower, while work progresses underneath. If you view the station from the south, you can see the completed roof with new green terra cotta tiles. My moles have been telling me that the underlying structure is quite sound. Built to last.

So keep looking up, and to the future, because as King Street Station transforms itself into the crown jewel of Seattle, the work begins on designing an even bigger project, a rail transit system for the ages.

Sound Transit is asking about, and we should be participating in, the new thoughtful design of our future transportation solutions. If you check Sound Transit's website, you will see they are asking for public input into the design of the extensions.

And they are even talking specifically about the partnerships with others concerning the Eastside rail line.

Even if you are critical of certain Sound Transit Light Rail designs, then be constructive and participate. If you have praise for the things you agree with, then be constructive, PARTICIPATE!

It's time to take ownership.

Forget the latest "Stormwatcher" reports, I think the weather is looking pretty good!



After many years of delays and false starts, restoration of Seattle's 1906 King St. Station is finally under way in earnest. Scaffolding



Photos by Warren Yee

envelops the top of the clock tower as repairs are made. Replicas of the original green terra cotta roof tiles are quickly being installed on the roof. The new tiles alone make the exterior of the station look much nicer. The clock has been repaired (though temporarily stopped in mid-November as additional repairs and restoration of the operating mechanism and faces continue). The microwave dish has been removed from the tower. The exterior brick will be repaired and the entire exterior cleaned. The original exterior staircase to the Jackson Ave. level will be restored and the former upper parking lot turned into a plaza. The exterior work is scheduled to be completed by spring 2009. Full interior restoration of the main floor and seismic upgrades will commence by summer 2009 with completion scheduled for 2011. According to the city of Seattle's website, the \$26.5 mill. renovation will achieve the following goals:

- Restore the building's historic character and grandeur.
- Upgrade facilities to meet present and future needs of rail and transit users.
- Enhance passenger safety and security.
- Promote sustainable design with a LEED Silver building certification.
- Support efforts to transform the station into a modern transit hub.

**Railbanked**, from page 1  
 tions with other transit corridors and other uncertainties. The final policy decision on whether to proceed with the plan is expected next year.

The Purple Line route would extend well beyond the three-mile trail's termini, running 16 miles from Bethesda to New Carrollton. Resistance to the new transit line – which would essentially parallel the traffic-choked Washington Beltway – coalesced long before the DEIS gave the project the thumbs up, however, and can be expected to reach a crescendo as decision time approaches. Leading the anti-rail charge are the Town of Chevy Chase, which straddles the route, and a country club that borders it. Opponents have already invested over a million dollars in their efforts, with Chevy Chase earmarking \$400,000 to hire a New York consultant to plead the anti-rail case.

It's not as if the plan would wipe the three miles of trail off the map. Indeed, the proposal calls for preserving the trail, even when that means building a flyover to accommodate it where the right-of-way narrows so as to preclude placing trail and tracks (or busway) side by side. The plan also calls for paving the trail.

Given the upgrade for bicyclists, the Coalition for the Capital Crescent Trail (CCCT), which promotes the interests of both hikers and bikers, has taken a neutral stance on the plan. On its website, CCCT takes the view that the trail "must remain in the Georgetown Branch as high-quality trail" if the plan goes forward. The Washington Area Bicyclist Association has come out in favor of the plan. On its website, under the heading "Build the Light Rail Option," the group states that "the trail improvements that will come with the Purple Line...make this a win-win project for both trail users and the people who will ride the new transit line."

According to Tom Autrey, transportation planner at the MNCPPC, the plan's backers will have "a hill to climb" regard-

less of the support from bicyclists. Leading the pro-rail constituency, Action Committee for Transit has made what a representative, Ben Ross, terms "an enormous organizing effort," having thus far distributed 55,000 leaflets door to door and another 25,000 at transit stations, for example. Ross notes that support from bicyclists has flowed naturally from the favor bicyclists show towards alternative transportation. Unlike Autrey, he expresses confidence that the pro-rail argument will prevail.

Among the conclusions to be drawn here: little reason exists for bicycling advocates to object to a passenger rail plan if it assures cyclists of facilities equivalent to, or better than, what already exists. If all the stakeholders – bicyclists, pedestrians and rail passengers – get what they need, happiness should reign.

What complicates the issue in Maryland is that the foot-powered modes occupy the controversial three miles, to the exclusion, for now, of rail. Simple logic dictates that it would be better to transform the Eastside right-of-way into a multi-use transportation corridor at the outset, rather than inviting a situation like that in Maryland, where rail might have to plead for room, at some future time, in what was originally a rail corridor.

California offers a solution. In Marin and Sonoma counties (across the Golden Gate from San Francisco), public leaders with an eye on the future acquired a little-used rail corridor and asked voters to approve a sales tax increase to develop the 70-mile line for commuter rail and bicycle/pedestrian traffic – to upgrade the track and build the trail alongside it. Rail, bicycle and pedestrian advocates embraced the idea, and the vote, this past Election Day, ran nearly 70% in favor. Since the railroad is being upgraded, rather than built from scratch, expected costs are low – under \$8 million a mile for all capital costs, trail and 14 stations included.

"To a certain extent you're always going to have a problem with NIMBYs," says Chris Coursey, spokesman for the project agency, Sonoma Marin Area Rail Transit (SMART), when asked how the successful electoral campaign dealt with that locus of opposition. "We talked to them a lot, and talking about the benefits is the best thing you can do."

In addition to bicycle and pedestrian advocates, SMART's winning team included "environmental and business groups who'd never worked together before," Coursey adds. "It's amazing how many people want this to happen."

While neither the legalisms of rail-banking nor the interests of bicyclists and pedestrians pose real obstacles to new passenger rail service in dormant corridors, the objections of NIMBYs thus pose the thorniest political challenges. The basics of coalition-building offer the likeliest route to success. It's impossible to assuage people who genuinely hate trains passing by, but it's merely hard work to bring those many constituencies who support the rail-and-trail option on board – to build a political base broad enough to prevail over implacable abutting property owners who show up at every meeting and yell. If it can happen in Maryland and California, it can happen here in the green Northwest.

President-elect Barack Obama has a website, [change.gov/page/s/yourstory](http://change.gov/page/s/yourstory), where citizens can offer ideas on what you'd like the new administration to do and where you'd like the country to go. This is a good place to comment on transportation issues in our country and how rail in all forms needs to play an important role in revitalizing our nation's transportation infrastructure.

The American Assoc. of State Highway and Transportation Officials also has a website where you can comment to the new president on transportation issues: [www.itoldthepresident.org](http://www.itoldthepresident.org)

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 Amtrak Reservations/Information: 800 872-7245  
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# All Aboard News

**December 13:** All Aboard Washington gathering at **11:45 a.m.** at **Centennial Station**, 6600 Yelm Hwy SE, **Lacey**. Meeting is timed between the arrival of trains 11 and 500 and the departure of trains 507 and 516. Cost is **\$10 cash or check** for pizza and beverages.

In **February**, All Aboard Washington is planning a rail lobby day at the Legislature. Details will be available on this opportunity as plans are finalized.

**March 28** is the tentative date for our annual joint meeting with NARP, Assoc. of Oregon Rail and Transit Advocates and Montana ARP. Details are being worked out but the meeting will probably be in Essex or Whitefish, MT.

All Aboard Washington welcomed the following new members in October and November: Nora Friend, Washington, DC; Gary & Fran Harder, Olympia; Michael Draper, Seattle; Redmond Barnett, Tacoma; Thomas Irion, Pacific; L. Keith Stone, Tacoma; Dr. William Keppler, Edmonds; Brock Nelson, Portland, OR.

Members contributing to this newsletter include C. B. Hall, Warren Yee, Ron Sheck, Steve Spear, Al Runte, Tony Trifiletti, Loren Herrigstad, Jim Cusick and Lloyd Flem.

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

## Conference, from page 1

freight. European rail lines are government owned and primarily haul passengers.

- We need to rethink the use of public space. Slow down and walk. Leaven-

worth is revitalizing itself by opening up its public spaces and getting people out of their cars. Parking lots will be moved to the edge of town. The *Empire Builder* stop (in Sept. 2009) will offer a new travel option for visitors.

- Engage the environmental community, housing community and political community as allies.
  - Rail forms the spine of transit oriented development.
  - Public dollars utilized by public-private partnerships benefit the public.
- Brock Nelson, Director of Public Affairs, Union Pacific Railroad:

- Twenty percent of Union Pacific's gross revenue is plowed back into infrastructure and equipment.
- Forty percent of freight ton-miles move by rail, but rail consumes only 8% of the energy used for transportation.
- Since 1994, UP locomotive fuel efficiency has increased 20% while greenhouse gas emissions have decreased 20%. Since 2000, oxides of nitrogen emissions have decreased 60% and particulate matter emissions have decreased 40%.
- UP moves one ton of freight 790 miles on one gallon of diesel fuel. The railroad has implemented a Fuel Master program where engineers compete for best fuel efficiency.
- Implementation of Positive Train Control will increase rail capacity, operating efficiency and further decrease fuel consumption.

Antonio Perez, CEO, Talgo America, Seattle:

- Rail is 17% more efficient than air and 21% more efficient than cars.
- Talgo design is based on the idea of lightweight trains with a low center of

gravity. Over 3000 Talgo rail cars have been built in the last 60 years.

- Talgo wanted to begin work in a developed country that had abandoned its passenger trains in the Fifties. America was a natural.
- The Talgo equipment used on the *Cascades* travels 100,000 mean miles between failures.
- Spain currently has 1563 kilometers of high speed tracks and that will increase to 2230 kilometers by 2010.

The afternoon panel discussion was expertly moderated by Dave Ross of KIRO News/Talk Radio. The panel consisted of Jonathan Hutchison, Amtrak West Public Affairs; Bruce Agnew, Cascadia Project; Robert Eaton; Rep. Deb Wallace (D-Vancouver); Sen. Dan Swecker (R-Rochester); Antonio Perez; Martin Young, Sound Transit; Loren Herrigstad; and Lloyd Flem. Some key comments:

Hutchison: What separates American passenger rail from French rail is a matter of political will and public funding. We need to make Amtrak grow. We need to restore trains that were deleted from the national network years ago. We need more trains in this corridor.

Agnew: New highways will be tolled. New transportation capacity will be primarily rail.

Swecker: A weight and mileage fee levied on cars, if enacted, could go to rail.

Perez: Spain lacks government by initiative and referendum. The government makes the decisions. This makes high speed rail possible.

Herrigstad: We can't afford \$11 bill. to widen I-405. The Eastside rail line offers more bang for the buck.

Young: If there is a new stimulus package, don't send the checks to people to spend at Wal-Mart. Spend it on infrastructure to invest in the future and put people to work.

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