

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

Rail grant agreement announcement for Washington State's \$590 mill. highlight of passenger rail advocates Portland meeting

About 100 passenger rail advocates gathered at the Multnomah Hotel Embassy Suites in Portland February 26 for our annual meeting. The highlight of the meeting was the breaking news that agreements had just been signed to obligate the \$590 million for high speed rail Washington State was awarded in January 2010. More on that later.

Our host for this year's meeting was the Oregon Assoc. of Rail and Transit Advocates. The meeting emcee was AORTA President Donald Leap.



Our featured speaker was Robert Doty, left, vice president and high speed rail program director for HNTB, a international engineering consulting company.

He is an international expert on HSR, having held senior positions for the Taipei (Taiwan) Rapid Transit system, the Korean HSR project and the Channel Tunnel rail link project from London to Folkestone. He has recently been involved with the 800 mile California HSR project, which aims to link Sacramento and the Bay area with Southern California. Speeds will

be up to 220 mph in rural areas and up to 125 mph in urban areas. This will be the largest public works project in U.S. history.

Doty's presentation centered on the proper way to engage and reach out to the public when developing a large scale public works project.

- Create a dialogue between the project group and people.
- Act early when local information and views can be taken into account resulting in Community willingness to share information and ideas.
- Conduct a constructive, honest dialogue sensitive to affected areas.
- Consultation process should not be confused with information giving.

There are four broad questions the public will ask as the project team works to explain what the project will do and how they can come to benefit from the project.

- Will you go away?
- Why should I listen to you?
- Will you listen to me?
- What will this do to/for me?

The project team address these questions in order with a clear and consistent message. You do not send out the engineering team as the first people to talk with the public about the project. You work to really listen to the public and incorporate feasible and achievable suggestions as part of the optimal solution.

Bob Stewart, Chairman of NARP was our second speaker. He traveled to Portland on the *Empire Builder*. (See **Rail Grant**, page 4)



Rail advocates enjoyed a great buffet luncheon and interesting discussions at our Portland meeting on February 26. *Photos by Jim Hamre*

Mudslide disruptions to Amtrak and Sounder: Time for Flex and Fix!

This winter has been terrible for Northwest Amtrak and Sounder operations (and passengers) because of seemingly nearly continuous mudslides along the BNSF mainline, both north and south of Seattle, since December. There have been slides near Tacoma, Vancouver, WA and Surrey, BC, but the worst area is definitely between Seattle and Everett.

Every time mud and debris comes down on host railroad BNSF's tracks, the company slaps a 48 hours moratorium on operation of passenger trains with passengers on them. And it doesn't matter if it's ten feet deep or only a couple wheelbarrows of mud: 48 hours. There have been nearly 200 Amtrak trains cancelled this winter between Portland and Vancouver, BC because of slides.

This "policy" comes strictly from BNSF corporate headquarters. It is not an Amtrak policy, not a state government rule, not a federal government mandate. And when you hear the media or others say something different, correct them if you have the opportunity. BNSF says its policy is need for safety reasons.

BNSF freights are only held up while the tracks are cleared and inspected. They are usually back running through the slide area in a couple hours. Even Amtrak and Sound Transit can deadhead equipment through these areas, as long as there are no passengers on the train. Amtrak will often do this with the *Empire Builder*, busing passengers between Seattle and Everett while the crew and checked luggage ride the train.

Although safety is the primary concern, if its only about safety, here are some things to ponder:

- What about the crews of the (See **Flex and Fix**, page 5)



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

Bipartisan Transportation in Our Washington; Concerning Kelso

Not only are rail advocates in our Evergreen State still cheering about the February 26 formal obligation of very significant federal ARRA Stimulus monies for growth and improvement of Washington's portion of the Northwest Passenger Rail Corridor, we are applauding the bipartisan support among state elected officials for these rail investments and for passenger (and freight) rail generally.

While Washington State government has serious well-publicized financial problems, the transportation budget situation is, at this time, less critical than that of other state funding. Nonetheless, the identified needs for transportation investments cannot be fully met by current revenue sources. But the leadership and members of the House and Senate Transportation committees (HTC, STC) have worked cooperatively to put together as-good-as-reasonably-possible budgets for the 2011-13 biennium.

The recent HTC and STC budget hearings were fine examples of bipartisan cooperation and collegiality. Committees chairs, Democrats from Western Washington, had obviously developed the budgets in concert with the committees' ranking members, Republicans from the Dryside. During the hearings, no efforts were made to pander to the ideologically-extreme "base" of either party. The committees appeared united to doing the best they could for Washington.

This refreshing attitude continued at a recent private dinner where the HTC and STC leadership plus key members, along with rail advocates, were present. Obvious was the mutual respect all had for each other, while acknowledging differences based upon the different constituents served and some differences in philosophy. What a welcome contrast from Wisconsin, Ohio, and Florida!

How about Washington's legislative support for rail? I have met one-on-one with nearly all members of the HTC and STC during this 2011 session. While a couple of reasonable questions about operational subsidies were raised by one or two members, the strident anti-

passenger-train statements coming from (mostly) newly-elected Republicans in other states and from some in Congress simply were not present. I did have a good story to tell: strong steady gains in ridership on the State-supported Amtrak Cascades trains since 1993, and national respect for the State's passenger rail program as manifested by the very significant level of grants from the ARRA monies for higher speed rail for Washington.

I was also able to hand-deliver letters signed by Washington state legislative transportation leadership, two Ds and two Rs, to Congressman John Mica (R-FL), Chair of the US House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, at a transportation field hearing in Vancouver, WA on February 21. The letters strongly endorsed our passenger rail program and our state's incremental approach to more and faster intercity service. It is hoped

The recent House Transportation Committee and Senate Transportation Committee budget hearings were fine examples of bipartisan cooperation and collegiality.

Rep. Mica, who has been enamored with a big leap to high speed trains, can also see the value of our incrementalism. Rail advocates present at the Vancouver meeting were very pleased with WSDOT Secretary Paula Hammond's strong endorsement of our rail program as a prominent part of her presentation.

In my meetings with HTC and STC members in the past two months I gave credit to our Legislature's many-year history of having made investments in passenger train service that proved successful and popular among a public supportive of multimodal transportation.

Eastern Washington HTC and STC members are mostly Republicans whose constituents have not received the level of rail investments that have occurred on the densely-populated, traffic-congested Blaine to Vancouver WA rail corridor. Nonetheless these Dryside GOP members understand that investments in rail infrastructure on the Wetside assist the movement of freight, which is of vital importance to their districts. They have been patiently hoping that daytime east-west passenger rail service, at higher speed, will happen in the reasonable future. All Aboard Washington applauds their patience and supports their wishes.

At the above mentioned private dinner, several of the legislators present openly thanked me for my having served

as a "rail educator" for all these years. However, Senator Mary Margaret Haugen (D-Camano Island), STC Chair, pointed out that I was point man for the hundreds of AAWA members who have helped build support for passenger trains in our state. Following testimony by Ralph Munro and me at the STC hearing, Senator Haugen again said while Ralph and I were most visible in Olympia, the many AAWA members were equally vital in forwarding rail in our state.

Meeting with legislators following February 26 (see lead story) took on a different tone. No longer was it necessary to say "If we receive the ARRA grants..." We could begin to savor the reward and look to the future.

Here are two added details from the HTC and STC hearings and the one-on-one meetings with legislators.

The hearings: Support for the rail portion of the State transportation budget (which included the federal ARRA grants) came not from just rail advocates, but from a variety of business, government and environmental interests. In the minds of influential people, passenger trains are an essential part of our transportation future.

The one-on-one meetings: Considerable concern was voiced about the negative impact of the mudslides on Amtrak and Sounder service. Several legislators were ready to consider legislative action! While I surely shared their concerns, I felt both WSDOT and Amtrak were working for some flexibility of the arbitrary 48-hour rule and future physical fixes of some of the worst slide-prone areas.



While All Aboard Washington disagrees with BNSF's, to date, inflexible 48-hour rule concerning response to mudslides, we acknowledge they have been a good partner over the years as Washington's rail passenger service has increased. As partners in the world of rail, AAWA offers to the BNSF family our condolences concerning the loss of good railroad men near Kelso on March 23. Trains are a marvelous and generally safe means of moving goods and people. But they are very large and powerful entities, and even those who understand their potential, must never waver from special care in and around railroads. Our special thoughts for those impacted by the Kelso tragedy.



A final happy note: The April 2011 (See "Flem, page 4)



The View Down the Tracks

with Jim Cusick

The train is arriving

Last year was a good year. Rail ridership was up, even without a spike in gas prices. Service disruptions were down. With the support of the current administration, it appeared that passenger rail is finally considered an integral part of this country's transportation system.

Since we showed willingness to support passenger rail, the State of Washington was awarded a healthy \$590 million in ARRA stimulus funds to help with much needed upgrades to improve our *Cascades* service with increased reliability and more frequent service.

Recently, the administration again showed its commitment to passenger rail by creating a plan for various high and higher speed rail corridors, and they backed this up with another round of grants to help states get their HSR (or HrSR) plans off the ground.

The Pacific Northwest is one of the designated HSR corridors and is eligible for more funding from the HSR Initiative. We weren't sure what we would get, since we were still working out how to make sure the ARRA funds were forthcoming. We have shovel-ready projects, we just needed to be sure the money "was in the pipeline," which appears to be the case.

Some of the HSR programs were to have benefited the Midwest states of Ohio and Wisconsin. Like Washington State, Wisconsin chose Talgo equipment to help achieve that goal. In addition, a new Talgo plant was built in Wisconsin.

And then there's Florida: the Tampa to Orlando High Speed Rail project was predicted to be turning a profit in 2021 and was even to have private investors involved.

But storm clouds were brewing and the rumblings from the 2010 elections were being heard in the distance.

Although I've talked ad-infinitum about the cost of roads vs. rail, it seems that people in the Midwest don't read my articles. (Well, maybe I know of a few.)

We were reading the lips of the Republican "No New Taxes" gubernatorial candidates in Wisconsin and Ohio. Even

though the money they were getting for their trains from the Feds wasn't from any new taxes their states were going to have to pay, they were on a mission.

And then there's Florida...

Now, granted there are two sides to any argument. One is that a free capitalist society will work for the common good. Unfettered by government interference, corporations will happily comply with pollution regulations and labor and safety laws, we all know that. Government intrusion is to be minimized and if money is being given to us by the government, with associated restrictions and rules, then it is to be shunned.

New Governor Scott Walker of Wisconsin is no doubt a champion of fiscal responsibility and even accepting federal dollars goes against that conviction. He

I've long been confused by candidates who run on an anti-rail policy, yet think nothing of accepting money (by taxing their constituents, by the way) to pay for roads.

claims that his state doesn't want to be saddled with the operational costs of the new train service.

John Kasich, Ohio's newly elected governor, planned to kill the state's 3C HrSR program for the same reason.

And then there's Florida's Governor Rick Scott, who seems to have forgotten the part about the private investment.

But here's where their logic fails. They want the funds to go towards building more highways.

Gas taxes, which we know have no correlation to how and where funds are collected and how and where they are distributed, are just that, a tax.

If they want more highways to be built, then wouldn't the onus be on them to do that with their own state funding? Would that mean, heaven forbid, they would have to raise taxes?

I've long been confused by candidates who run on an anti-rail policy, yet think nothing of accepting money (by taxing their constituents, by the way) to pay for roads.

I think it's high time to **publicly call BS** on any supposed fiscal conservative, Republican or otherwise, who calls the gas tax a user fee. A true capitalist would be championing private investment to build and operate toll roads. Essentially make them operate just like the railroads do.

More road surface isn't an entitlement; it has a cost. It's high time we make the vocal road proponents (and rail critics)

prove that theirs is an alternative that pays for itself.

At the very least, if they're going to walk the talk, then they should reject the Federal Government's handouts for road funding.

Instead of this being a partisan issue, for Republicans to battle Democrats, other Republicans should be telling them that if they don't want money for rail, how can they want it for roads?

Stand up...all of you enlightened train savvy Republicans! Why aren't you challenging their logic?

Wait, US Department of Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood is a Republican!

And he is doing just that.

The train has left the station

Since Wisconsin's and Ohio's governors both made good on their promises, and the uncertainty even caused Talgo to greatly alter its plans for the Wisconsin plant, it appears they have succeeded...sort of.

Secretary LaHood's reply to them sums it up nicely.

Quoting from the December 2010 issue of *Railway Age*, "USDOT Secretary Ray LaHood had a blunt message last month for those who want to spend their state's HSR grants on highways ... Use the grants for passenger rail or return the money to Washington."

Yeah, we know, which Washington? In this case both Washingtons will do!

And then there's Florida...

So where has the returned money gone? Besides New York, California, and Illinois...it looks like we get some.

Next Stop, Washington State

Although the money hasn't been committed yet, beyond to the original \$590 million we received, we will be getting an additional \$161.5 million in HSR funds.

Now that Florida Governor Rick Scott turned down \$2.5 billion, cutting off his nose to spite his face, we are petitioning for more!

Now what things can we do with our money?

I know what should be number 1: **RETAINING WALLS!**

If we could just keep the tracks between the two Vancouvers clear of mud all year round, but particularly between Seattle and Everett.

Before you say "Well, that would cost too much to benefit so few people," think about this: in Bothell, on SR 522, between downtown and I-405, there is a (See **Cusick**, page 4)

Rail Grant, from page 1

The train arrived Portland seven hours late due severe blizzard conditions across the upper Midwest and Rocky Mountains, but nevertheless he arrived safely.

Stewart said, "NARP need to aim high for the American rail passenger." NARP represents all train riders: grandmothers, business people, college students, families. All want to have better mobility via access to improved and greatly expanded rail passenger service.

He noted that President Obama, in his State of Union address in January, laid out a vision where 80% of Americans would be connected to high speed rail in the next 25 years. The president's 2012 budget proposal calls for federal spending of \$58 billion for high speed rail over the next six years.

The November mid-term election saw a strong anti-incumbent feeling among the electorate, with budget and spending issues pushed to the forefront. Passenger rail emerged as a red herring, with some elements labeling high speed rail as "government spending run amok." We particularly saw that in Ohio, Wisconsin and Florida. What is really lost in these states by giving up on passenger rail are jobs, industrial expansion and improved citizen mobility.

But these state's losses are other state's gains as USDOT Secretary Ray LaHood has sent the turned-backed money to states, including Washington, where the governors want more funding for high speed rail. Talgo, which opened a train manufacturing plant in Wisconsin because that was the first state to order its equipment, has announced it will move the plant to another state as soon it completes manufacture of the four trainsets it is currently building (two each for Wisconsin and Oregon).

Stewart concluded, "America needs transportation that meets the needs of all of our citizens!"

The most exciting news of the meeting came from Andrew Wood, WSDOT Deputy director of Rail and Marine office: WSDOT Secretary Paula Hammond had just signed the agreement with the FRA to guarantee our state's \$590 million in high speed rail funding. A second agreement, which was necessary to get the FRA agreement completed, was also signed at the same time. This agreement between Amtrak, BNSF and WSDOT outlines how rail investments will be made based on service outcomes and passenger rail performance benchmarks on rail lines shared by freight and passenger rail, such as on-time performance, faster travel times and frequency of service.

Getting these agreement finally signed means that work can begin this construction season on improvements needed to make the *Cascades* more reliable, to reduce running times, to improve safety, and to add

two additional Seattle-Portland round trips by 2017. For more details, see the WSDOT press release:

tinyurl.com/washHSRAgreement

Flem, from page 2

TRAINS magazine has an eight-page feature article full of praise for the Amtrak *Cascades* trains supported by the State of Washington. The article is a direct complement to what we have been saying the past several years and to the record of our *Cascades* service.

Cusick, from page 3

new entrance to the UW/Cascadia College campus.

This new interchange, with a very substantial retaining wall, cost the taxpayers \$45 million. The campus already had an entrance off Beardslee Blvd to the north. This road project did nothing to increase capacity on SR 522. In fact, there were no traffic issues on SR 522 at that spot. This project was solely for the purpose of giving drivers an alternate route to the college.

No one batted an eye.

Given that over 2000 people per day (six Amtrak, eight Sounder trips) make use of the BNSF Seattle to Everett corridor, no one has the right to question such an expenditure any more than no one questions the money spent on these massive road projects.

Yes, uphill property owners need to mitigate drainage issues properly, but this is a critical corridor that needs as much attention to making sure it is reliable as we give to places such as Snoqualmie Pass.

\$42 million indeed!

Another project in the works is one that piggybacks on Sound Transit's Sounder Lakewood Extension – Amtrak's Point Defiance Bypass project. This uses those tracks for rerouting Amtrak trains past Freighthouse Square (which would become the new Tacoma Amtrak station) and on up the Nalley Valley to run on the Prairie Line, all the way to where it meets up again with the mainline near the Nisqually River.

This avoids the congestion at the Nelson Bennett tunnel and with that, time slots become available for more *Cascades* trains. WSDOT has a tentative schedule which includes two more round trips between Seattle and Portland. When we reach seven round trips a day (six *Cascades* and the *Coast Starlight*), we get close to the "tipping point" for ridership.

Once train travelers – and potential train travelers – have enough options, ridership will increase substantially. It doesn't become a major planning issue for them. In some corridors, such as in California, they've even gone to unreserved seating since their trains are so frequent.

The economy has also contributed to the increase in ridership. As people count

pennies, they see the real cost of owning and operating an automobile, and can see the cost effectiveness of train travel.

Once the price of gas goes above \$4.00 a gallon, you will see another ridership spike, just like last time.

This scrutiny is, in part, why people are taking trains more. Maybe the sales pitch of "romance of the rails" can get them on board the first time, but the ease and cost of train travel is where they begin to realize the true benefit.

Train riders are, indeed, fiscal conservatives.

And then there's Florida...

I do have one question for our Republican friends in the three states above. We all know that in politics there has to be some lip service given to particular issues, to get enough people to vote for you, but I'm at a complete loss as to what part of their constituency's desires they are pandering to.

What desires do you think your constituents want?

The basic instinct of being addicted to oil? Never having to get one's arse out of their car? Loving the idea of having no consumer clout to keep the price of gas in check by choosing alternatives...because there are none? And we (WI, OH, and FL) will make sure things stay that way!?!?

God Bless Tim Eyman

These times will be interesting as the cost of providing service will be getting some serious scrutiny. How can we decide the value of a given service?

At All Aboard, it is our job is to make sure the road system gets a fair and complete airing.

And just what are we comparing?

Not Trains vs. Cars, but Ferries vs. Cars.

Due to the passage of Initiative 1053, our official unelected transportation czar (Mr. Eyman) had decreed that no taxes can be raised without the 2/3 majority of the legislature, and has also decreed that tolls and fares are considered taxes.

The governor had made a proposal for keeping the Washington State Ferry service working.

With that announcement, public discussion has been volley after volley from residents on the peninsula aimed at Eastern Washington, and vice versa.

We can be the reasoned arbitrators in the ferry vs. roads discussion.

If it comes down to the ferry passengers only paying 65% of the cost in fares, we can compare that to rural Washington drivers only contributing 25% (well, maybe 20%? 15%?) in gas tax to their roads.

What do we consider the fair "farebox recovery" for roads?

We might want to vote for more efficient roads, and be willing to pay for them.

And then there's Florida... and Wisconsin... and Ohio...

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

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 Amtrak Reservations/Information: 800 872-7245
 All Aboard Washington: AllAboardWashington.org
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 Amtrak: www.amtrak.com
 Amtrak Cascades: www.amtrakcascades.com
 Sound Transit: www.soundtransit.org

Flex and Fix, from page 1

freight trains and the passengerless passenger trains?

- Though hauling hazardous chemicals by rail is very safe, what about the potential of a slide derailing freight cars containing toxic inhalants or other hazardous material?
- Isn't a long, heavy freight more likely to cause another slide as it rumbles past than a short, lightweight passenger train?
- What makes 48 hours such a magic number?
- Why does the state DOT not automatically close down highways for 48 hours after slide?

All Aboard Washington has taken on the issue this winter. We are working with WSDOT and key state legislators, as well as with Amtrak, Sound Transit and BNSF. Our position is two-fold. We call it Flex and Fix: have flexibility in passenger train service suspensions while ensuring the safety of both train passengers and crew, and get the worst of the problems fixed!

"We're certainly looking towards solutions, both operational and in terms of physical changes what will allow for a permanent fix of the areas prone to slides," said AAWA Executive Director Lloyd Flem, in a C.B. Hall article at Crosscut.com. (tinyurl.com/PNWcorridorslides)

A project that is funded by our state's federal \$590 million Higher Speed Rail grant is one for \$94 million to "harden" the Northwest Rail Corridor infrastructure between Nisqually and Vancouver, WA. This project includes tie and rail upgrades, drainage improvements, surfacing and high precision track alignment to allow faster speeds and a reduction in both permanent and temporary slow orders. But this project is for naught if the mudslide issues are not addressed.

WSDOT has asked for federal money in the past for an environmental analysis to determine the repairs and mitigation needed to prevent mudslides from closing the tracks but has not received funding. The Rail Office is again seeking a \$10 million

grant to get this project moving. WSDOT is also working with the Federal Railroad Administration on whether some of the corridor hardening money can be used to start addressing the worst of the slide areas. WSDOT, as frustrated with the slides as AAWA is, has blogged on the issue: tinyurl.com/wsdot-mudslides.



Photo courtesy WSDOT

BNSF reasoning on the 48 hour company policy, no matter how bad the slide is, apparently stems, at least in part, from the fact the railroad has no geotechnical engineers stationed in the Northwest who could assess each situation. WSDOT, which has cataloged 3100 potential unstable slopes along our state highways, has a highly-trained staff of geotechnical engineers. The agency has offered to lend its employees' expertise to BNSF so that slides can be better assessed at the time of an incident, potentially leading to reopening the tracks sooner to passenger trains.

Even without more proactive assessment of slides, Amtrak and WSDOT are discussing with BNSF the idea of more flexibility in the closure window that would be based on criteria such as the size of the slide and whether it is next to water.

AAWA is also not satisfied with Amtrak and WSDOT operational concerns that don't allow train service to continue between, say Seattle and Bellingham, when there is a slide on the north side of the 49th parallel. Trains should be run for the convenience of the passengers, not the convenience of the operating department. Peo-

ple do not want to end up on a bus when they are expecting a train. Sometimes buses are not even available and Amtrak has to simply cancel trains with no alternate transportation offered. Several AAWA members returning on February 27 from the Portland rail passenger conference experienced this, not because of a slide but because of a freight derailment along the Tacoma Narrows. When Amtrak could not provide charter buses our members had to scramble for limited seats on Greyhound buses with hundreds of other displaced rail passengers.

AAWA will not let up on our efforts to get the mudslide issue on its way to a more satisfactory and but safe solution for all involved.

Flex and Fix!

Congratulation to Sec. Hammond

WSDOT Secretary Paula Hammond was unanimously elected chair of the States for Passenger Rail Coalition in December by the other state transportation directors.

As coalition chair, Hammond will work with other states and transportation advocacy groups to build support for continued funding for passenger rail programs.

"I want to work hard to communicate and influence national policy and programs to support our coalition because passenger rail is returning as a viable choice of travel in many of our growing states," Hammond said.

The States for Passenger Rail Coalition was established in 2000 and is an alliance of 32 state departments of transportation with a mission to promote the development, implementation and expansion of intercity passenger rail services. www.s4prc.org

All Amtrak Cascades trainsets now have Wi Fi available. Using your laptop or other portable device look for "AmtrakConnectCascades".

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All Aboard News

May 7: National Train Day. Events in the Northwest include at the Northwest Railway Museum in Snoqualmie and at Portland Union Station. Other events are still in the planning stages. If you are interested in representing All Aboard Washington at one of the Amtrak stations in our state, contact Lloyd Flem and he'll help get you set up (see page 5 for contact information). Also visit www.nationaltrainday.com for information on events. Last year, the Portland event was spectacular. So take a train ride to Portland (and register for Amtrak's Guest Rewards promotion to earn double and triple points on your travel this spring).

All Aboard Washington welcomed the following new members in February and March: Robert Whitbeck, Issaquah; Jeffery Paul, Shoreline; and Danik Sirotinsky, Seattle.

All Aboard Washington members contributing to this newsletter include Bob Lawrence, Stephanie Weber, Zack Willhoite, Barry Green, Warren Yee, Lloyd Flem and Jim Cusick.

A Special Thank You!

AAWA always appreciates our donors that give beyond our basic membership dues. Our thanks to everyone who does so. We are particularly grateful for the extremely fine monetary donation from Cindy L. Barber of New Hampshire. Mrs. Barber had lived in France and was impressed by the excellence of the passenger train service she used there. Upon her return to the U.S., she was able to make one-time donations to American organizations she felt were assisting our country to work toward more and better passenger rail service. All Aboard Washington is honored to be among the recipients of Mrs. Barber's generosity.

AAWA launches new website

All Aboard Washington has a new website! It was launched about two months ago, with the help of CHCS, a website development company, who graciously donated its time and efforts to help rebuild our website. The AAWA website now has a much cleaner look and feel to it. Check out the main page (www.allaboardwashington.org) feature articles and other news, which you can comment on. We have a new calendar of events which is viewable and printable in several different formats. Plus, you can add it to your own Google calendar for easy viewing. Our new website is integrated with our Facebook and Twitter accounts. You can also donate through PayPal to All Aboard Washington and coming soon you'll have the ability to JOIN AND RENEW ONLINE! We thank Charlie Hamilton and Darren Cohen of CHCS for all their hard work in helping us modernize our website. If you're in the market for some website work, we strongly recommend them (www.chcs.com).