



# WASHINGTON RAIL NEWS

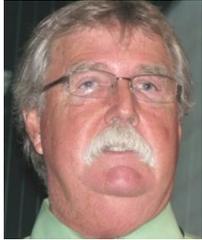
DECEMBER 2010/JANUARY 2011

www.AllAboardWashington.org

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

## BNSF's Terry Finn speaks at All Aboard Washington November meeting

The city-owned Centralia Amtrak Station hosted All Aboard Washington's official membership meeting on November 13. About 50 people were in attendance. Before the meeting many participants enjoyed lunch at McMenemy's Olympic Club Restaurant, directly across the street from the station.



We were welcomed to Centralia by Mayor Harlan Thompson, at left. The mayor noted that Centralia was in the middle of everything, north, south, east and west. The city is half way between

Seattle and Portland. The area was settled by George Washington, son a slave, in 1852. The Northern Pacific Railway's line from Portland to Tacoma crossed Washington's property in 1872. Realizing the importance of this point on the NP, he and his wife Mary Jane platted the city in 1875. For a history of Centralia visit <http://bit.ly/dKbCHI>.



Our featured speaker was Terry Finn, BNSF's director of government affairs for the Northwest. Lloyd Flem introduced Finn, at left, by emphasizing how fortunate we are to have BNSF as the host

railroad for the Portland-Vancouver, BC portion of the Northwest Corridor.

Finn started his remarks by noting that he has heard more about rail issues in the last 18 months than the previous 20 years. There have been significant changes in the way the freight railroads view passenger trains and public/private partnerships. BNSF has good relations with Amtrak and the various commuter railroads operating on its tracks. Each day 18,000 Amtrak passengers ride trains travelling BNSF's tracks. Of those, 3200 are in the Northwest, with an additional 10,000 people a day riding

Sounder between Everett and Tacoma.

Finn outlined the five principles BNSF follows for accommodating passenger trains on its freight tracks:

- Ensure that current and future passenger use of freight capacity is replaced and fully paid for.
- Ensure that all passenger rail access to freight rail assets is achieved through an arm's length, bilateral negotiation between the public entity seeking to provide service and the private freight rail carrier.
- Ensure that passenger rail use contribute fully allocated costs for use of freight lines.
- Ensure adequate commuter rail capital and operating funding is available to provide envisioned service.
- Provide separate right of way for high speed passenger rail in corridors which meet volume/frequency/speed targets.

Railroads are a very capital intensive business. When railroads earn lots of money, they spend lots of money improving their physical plant and equipment.

Amtrak on time performance on BNSF in 2009 hit 95%, the best in many years. The railroad is always working to improve on this. Finn noted that the downturn in freight rail traffic has certainly played a role in the improvement.

Projections for 2030 in the U.S.:

- Population to grow to 364 million
  - Vehicle miles travelled to grow by 150 percent
  - Freight rail to increase by 92 percent
- Challenges in meeting this grow:
- No national freight policy
  - No capacity growth
  - Congestion – all modes
  - Increasing fuel costs
  - Lengthening supply chains
  - Increased environmental requirements

In wrapping up his presentation, Finn highlighted several major projects being funded by the \$621 million in HSR (See Finn, page 6)



Photo by Jim Hamre

**Victory for the "second train" to Vancouver, BC!** On October 14, one day before Amtrak's deadline to post train offer notices for the Bellingham-Vancouver segment of trains 513 and 516, the Canadian Borders Services Agency announced it had "found" \$800,000 in its budget to continue providing immigration services for 516's late evening Vancouver arrival. The extension is for at least one more year. For more details on this victory, see Lloyd Flem's column on page 2 and the article in the Globe and Mail (<http://bit.ly/dxisGR>). The efforts to continue service without Amtrak and WSDOT being forced to pay \$1500 a day for CBSA services had support of both Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano and U.S. ambassador to Canada David Jacobson. Above, train 516 is at Kalama, WA on November 11, still running **all the way** to Vancouver, BC.

## AAWA urged Gov. Gregoire to pursue HSR funds being returned by other states

On November 12, in letter cosigned by AAWA Pres. Loren Herrigstad and Cascadia Center Director Bruce Agnew, we urged Gov. Chris Gregoire (D) to express to USDOT Sec. Ray LaHood our state's interest in high speed rail funds being returned by governors-elect in Wisconsin and Ohio. Here is our letter.

"Dear Governor Gregoire:

"We are proud of the direct role you took in helping convince the Canadian government to continue to waive the inspection fee for the second Amtrak train to Vancouver, B.C. Your letter to Public Safety Minister Vic Toews that articulated the economic benefits to B.C. helped save the day.

"We again need your advocacy for future high-speed rail (HSR) on the Amtrak Cascades corridor from Eugene, Ore. to Vancouver (See HSR Funds, page 4)



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

### **Big Victory; Big Challenges; Operation Lifesaver**

I first heard of the Big Victory early afternoon on October 14 from Jill McKinzie of Rep. Rick Larsen's (D-Lake Stevens) staff, who phoned me just minutes after the Canadian Border Services Agency (CBSA) reported they had "found" sufficient funds to cover the costs of providing officers to process passengers on Amtrak Cascades 516 for at least another year (commonly called "the Second Train"). Word soon spread rapidly that Ottawa, which had been insistent that Amtrak or the State of Washington must pay the \$1500 per trip CBSA "cost recovery" charge, was persuaded to make what rail advocates, elected officials and the business communities of Washington and BC almost universally considered the reasonable decision from all economic, environmental and political viewpoints.

The long-scheduled Passenger Rail Stakeholders Meeting at WSDOT on the morning of October 15 opened as a celebratory event, complete with a "champagne" (OK, G-rated apple juice!) toast to the Big Victory.

October 15 had been the "drop dead date." Had the Canadian federal government not agreed to assume the costs (for that which is certainly a Canadian federal responsibility) by that date, trains 516 and 513 would be gone north of Bellingham, with passenger rail service across the WA-BC border reduced to just one daily round trip. WSDOT Secretary Paula Hammond led the celebration and, in so doing, gave direct thanks to the efforts of rail advocates.

The saved "Second Train" was of course a Victory, but the struggle to save it has brought another Victory, that being the joining of allies from the two big North American neighbors to accomplish a positive end. From Gov. Chris Gregoire and BC Premier Gordon Campbell, to Sen. Patty Murray and Rep. Larsen, to state Sen. Mary Margaret Haugen and state Rep. Judy Clibborn, to many at WSDOT, to the Vancouver business community and news media, to the Pa-

cific Northwest Economic Region and Cascadia Center, to many mayors, to Amtrak and Talgo, to All Aboard Washington and others, we were a group that coalesced in a way that would not, had the mission of saving the train not been before us.

Exemplifying our coalition is this letter sent to me in November from Mr. Montgomery Burt, a TV news editor from Vancouver.

"Dear Mr. Flem:

"Thank you very much for all your work persuading Canada Border Services Agency to waive its \$1,500 fee and allow more Amtrak trains to cross the border. My wife and I were on vacation in Italy when we came back to hear the good news! Heather has clients in Seattle and taking the train is the best way to get there. She sits with her laptop and gets lots of work done while somebody else does

***The glow of the October 14 Big Victory was still present when a situation we had hoped was part of the unenlightened past began to raise its unpleasant head. That being the growth of a nation-wide movement hostile to investments in passenger rail in our country.***

the driving. (It's a gorgeous trip, too!)

"I should mention I wrote numerous letters to local, provincial, and federal politicians, and I work as a news editor at Global TV in Vancouver. Our transportation reporter and I feel strongly about the issue so we generated numerous stories and tried to keep it on the front burner as much as possible. Our news items and others in the local media got the word out and put pressure on our federal government.

"I've recently read Washington State and Oregon have received grants to develop high speed rail along the Pacific Cascades so, hopefully, CBSA's decision demonstrates we are committed to the project on both sides of the border. Heather and I have taken high-speed rail in our travels to Spain, France, and Italy, so I can just imagine what that would be like – whipping along to Seattle in just a very few hours.

"Trains are the green way to go so I am glad All Aboard Washing-

ton is a leader in that area.

"Thanks again and all the best with your organization."

Thank **YOU** for your great efforts, Monty!

In a similar vein, while we at AAWA have always worked with our Oregon counterparts, in recent months rail advocates, elected officials and other professionals associated with rail transportation from Oregon and Washington have met and are cooperating to a degree greater than in the past. While the Columbia River and the 49<sup>th</sup> parallel are political boundaries, they are not and should not be barriers to keep us from working together to move forward a rail system that connects us all.



Big Challenges: The glow of the October 14 Big Victory was still present when a situation we had hoped was part of the unenlightened past began to raise its unpleasant head. That being the growth of a nationwide movement hostile to investments in passenger rail in our country. First, anti-passenger rail articles in usually respected publications (The Economist, Newsweek). Then Republican gubernatorial candidates in Wisconsin and Ohio pledged to return their very significant ARRA ("stimulus") grants others in WI and OH had previously worked hard to earn. Actually, they wanted to keep the grants for "roads and bridges," claiming that pavement was valuable while rail wholly negative. Other prominent pro-rail Republicans, notably from our Washington, plus CA Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, USDOT Secretary Ray LaHood and nationally respected Mississippian John Robert Smith countered the antis with facts, logic and positive experiences with their states' rail investments.

But the anti-rail candidates won, as did a number of new members of Congress who seem to be taking aim at The Obama Administration's passenger rail initiatives, but not investments that benefit the rubber-tire mode. The problem now is some of the incoming US House Republican majority want to reclaim all ARRA infrastructure grants not spent or at least formally obligated. Most unspent ARRA transportation infrastructure dollars are for passenger rail projects! Why so? The Federal Rail Administration (FRA) is unlike federal highway, air, even transit agencies which have long records of having administered grants to their

(See Flem, page 4)



## The View Down the Tracks

=====

with Jim Cusick

### One more year

The first order of business for me is to express my appreciation to my esteemed fellow columnist Lloyd Flem, along with all the others involved (as mentioned in this newsletter), in getting our friends up north (eh?) to agree to waive the fee to be charged to the State of Washington and Amtrak for Canadian immigration staffing at the Vancouver, BC Station for the second *Cascades* train.

When the fee waiver by the Canadian Border Services Agency was set to expire at the end of September an interesting thing happened as d-day approached; it was extended for one more month.

Extending it gave me hope, because it told me that the parties involved were serious enough about a resolution. If people didn't believe it would happen, then wouldn't they have just "cut and run"?

It might be argued, even with the extension, when the reliability factor goes down, ridership is affected. People had stopped making reservations for September, too.

I heard it, of all places, on a train trip to Los Angeles aboard the *Coast Starlight*. This person I spoke with made comments that reflected what I had been suspecting. As far as he knew, the second train stopped at the end of September. I told him of the update, but in essence, the damage had been done.

Ridership is recovering and with at least a year of reliability, we'll see those numbers climb back up. Let's just make this train permanent. Then we can get on with scheduling that **THIRD** train!

One thing I discovered on my trip is that the *Coast Starlight* is a great advertisement for our Northwest wines.

The Pacific Parlour Car hosts wine and cheese tasting parties featuring products from the local areas the train passes through. The portion of the trip during the day in the Northwest offered Northwest wines, naturally.

Of course, one in particular that I enjoyed was the "Snoqualmie Whistle Stop Red."

What I noticed was that, at least for the reds, the Northwest wines seem more robust and full bodied.

The local California reds included one wine by golfer Greg Norman (whose nickname is "The Shark," by the way).

His offering is the "Greg Norman Petit Sirah," grown in the Paso Robles area.

Hmmph...Petit...?

Wimpy...Wimpy...Wimpy!!

A Pacific Northwest bias? Who me?

### Two years (roughly speaking)

When you can, pick up the August 2010 issue of *Railroads Illustrated* (White River Productions).

There are two articles featuring the Puget Sound area. One highlighting the Seattle area freight operations and the other featuring my personal favorite, the Eastside Rail Line.

It mainly discusses the current freight operations, and how Tom Payne and GNP Railway, partnering with the Ballard Terminal Railroad, are working hard to drum up new freight business on the Woodinville Subdivision.

***Tom Payne's reputation shows that he can make a success of this. We should be seeing some interesting things on the Woodinville subdivision in the next few years.***

Tom Payne's reputation shows that he can make a success of this. We should be seeing some interesting things on the Woodinville subdivision in the next few years.

And if the latest story in the Seattle Times discussing the [placement of Waste Management's new recycling facility in the Maltby area](#) is any indication, I have the utmost confidence in the revival of not only freight operations, but a viable passenger rail service.

Also, "on August 24, 2010, GNP filed a petition under [49 U.S.C. 10502](#) for exemption from the provisions of [49 U.S.C. 10902](#) to acquire the 'residual common carrier rights and obligations,' including the right to reinstate rail service over the Redmond Spur and a portion of the Woodinville Subdivision."

The preceding excerpt begins the document on the Federal Register website (<http://bit.ly/hc3W9i>), and is essentially saying that because of interest by two business, "Drywall Distributors, a supplier of drywall products, which anticipates receiving 40 carloads per year; and Building Specialties, a distributor of building products, located in the industrial park formerly served by BNSF, GNP Railway wants to reinstate freight service on this spur."

In an article in the Seattle Times concerning this request, the mayor of Red-

mond, John Marchionne, was unhappy with GNP's petition to restore service.

To quote the article: "The City of Redmond is not going to allow diesel engines to idle in our downtown."

The fact that the two businesses Tom Payne has worked with are not in the downtown area, makes his response puzzling.

To paraphrase a popular saying, "What would Rosemary Ives do?" [Ives is former mayor of Redmond.]

GNP isn't precluding any of the trail or passenger rail use of the corridor.

In fact, they have suggested a low cost way to have a bicycle trail adjacent to the rail line. This involves creating a trail sub-base with the leftover ballast from performing a track upgrade.

That makes the comment from David Hiller (Cascade Bicycle Club president) even more perplexing. Again, to quote: "GNP's plans pull the rug out from everyone....[T]he reason we were all pushing for protection of that corridor was to support public use and for a public benefit."

It seems GNP can make a profit on freight delivery, and still allow for that public use.

There is also talk of bringing back the Dinner Train, running it from Redmond to Snohomish.

One would think this is a perfect win-win situation and I hope politics don't derail the plan.

This is why it seems GNP Railway CFO Doug Engle made the comment in his testimony at the November 4, 2010 Sound Transit Service Implementation Plan meeting that "We have been stonewalled by the Sound Transit advocacy groups."

At the Sound Transit Capital Committee meeting on November 4, a report was given that included this tidbit: the East King Sub-area is suffering the least as far as reduced revenues due to the Great Recession.

This is where the \$50 million allocated to the Eastside Rail Line partnership is unarguably the best investment Sound Transit can make.

More often, though, opponents of the Eastside Rail Line use ST's cost estimates as a weapon.

Sound Transit's estimates involve building out the line to the level of current south line Sounder service, totaling \$1.3 billion. ST builds its infrastructure for the LONG TERM.

Remember when privately owned railroad companies built stations that way? Grand Central Terminal, Washington Union Station, Los Angeles Union Passenger (See **Cusick**, page 4)

**HSR Funds**, from page 1  
 couver, B.C. *We request that you share with U.S. Department of Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood, Federal Railroad Administrator Joe Szabo and Talgo executive Antonio Perez that Washington state has an interest in any reprogrammed HSR funding that might result from other states rejecting their funding allocated in the Recovery Act.* Our state's excellent technical applications secured nearly \$640 million in the first two rounds of funding, and we believe they should receive an equitable proportion of any redirected funding.

"As you know, Governors-elect Scott Walker and John Kasich of Wisconsin and Ohio, respectfully, have said they will reject over \$1.2 billion in HSR funding allocated as part of the Recovery Act. New York Governor-elect Andrew Cuomo has started the stampede to claim those rejected funds for job creation and green house gas reduction in his state. We respect and support Governor-elect Cuomo's political and policy advocacy for a strong federal program for HSR. But he and others should be reminded that Washington state was here first--with over \$300 million in direct state support for capital and operations investment as part of nearly \$1 billion in partnership investments in Washington, Oregon and British Columbia for the highly successful Cascades service since 1994. In the first two rounds of federal HSR, New York received \$177 million.

"Additionally, while both our states have Amtrak routes that connect Canada, our state has had a more engaged dialogue with U.S. Customs and Border Protection and Canada's Border Services Agency concerning train inspection and clearance systems which could result in significant travel time savings for service to Canada.

"Finally, on a related note, train manufacturer, Talgo, which has its U.S. headquarters in Seattle, has invested millions in a new manufacturing facility in Wisconsin. While we hope Wisconsin wakes up to the permanent job opportunities from train manufacturing, we recommend you pursue the relocation of the Talgo facility to Washington state--perhaps along the economically distressed area of southwest Washington. Our state has a long and successful history with Talgo--reaching back to the mid-1990s. The move would complement Amtrak's new maintenance facility in south Seattle.

"Thank you in advance for your ongoing efforts toward securing the region's HSR future."

**Flem**, from page 2  
 respective modes. Not so FRA, which until the AARA funds, was strictly a regulatory agency -- a writer and enforcer of rules. In my view, FRA been excessively cautious in

letting appropriated dollars leave DC, a caution that could soon derail most of the Administration's uniquely-good passenger rail initiative!

Washington state has an excellent partnership with BNSF, our host railroad. Our WSDOT rail people have done excellent planning and have numerous "shovel ready" projects which would put people to work at good jobs building the infrastructure we need and want. So AAWA and others are again gathering the coalition which saved the Second Train in an attempt now to save the \$621 million Washington justly earned and was granted as our portion of the ARRA passenger rail monies.

Passenger rail advocates seemingly can never rest. Ten months ago it seemed our country had entered a more enlightened time in terms of transportation -- in effect starting to join the rest of the industrialized world in investments in rail as well as roads and air transportation. But the antis have re-emerged -- with many of the same silly arguments we had hoped had been put away for good. Unfortunately, these arguments have gained traction in some quarters.

While All Aboard Washington and our allies want to help our pro-rail friends in WI, OH, and even in FL and CA, our main thrust is to work to "lock in" the ARRA rail grants our Washington state citizens and (and our Oregon neighbors) have earned. Ideally, we should have been building things months ago. Now, at this late date, making certain this valuable piece of our rail future does not disappear early next year is our goal. If you wish to actively join in this campaign, contact me...and soon.



Trains are extremely safe means of moving people and freight. The injuries and fatalities that occur in association with rail property are nearly always people in motor vehicles or on foot who break the law, trespass on rail property, or exhibit tragically foolish behavior. Operation Lifesaver is a railroad-sponsored effort to educate people, young and old, to not break the law, trespass, or behave foolishly on or around trains. I am a Certified Presenter of OL and had the privilege of doing a program for an Olympia Cub Scout pack and many of their parents a few weeks ago. The boys and the adults were very attentive and involved, and took the message seriously.

Perhaps we OL presenters can keep just a couple of people from injury or fatality. If so, all efforts are well worth it. Are you Interested in Operation Lifesaver as either hosting a presentation or becoming a presenter? I feel we as rail advocates have some obligation to help make our very safe mode even safer for the public. Let me know if you wish to become involved.

Please have a safe December, and let's keep supporting more and better train service in 2011.

**Cusick**, from page 3  
 Terminal.

However, this rail line can start just fine with the incremental build-up that AAWA and Cascadia Center are promoting.

Just as we wouldn't build an Interstate-grade, 4-lane divided roadway in the SR 9 corridor from Woodinville to Snohomish, neither would we want to start with double-tracking and large stations for this rail line from the outset.

It will work just fine with the smaller initial investment I've described before.

### How many years?

Well, I got to put in my 2 cents. Actually, I brought my family along, so we contributed our 8 cents!

We attended one of the first Sound Transit scoping meetings for North Corridor high capacity transit (Northgate to Lynnwood).

Yeah, that HCT part is just a technicality. It will be RAIL, it will be Link, or there will be Heck to pay!

One thing that struck me from looking at the aerial photos, which also showed the planned growth areas for the municipalities along the line, is that the Interurban right of way is the obvious alignment.

Many people at the meeting looked at the I-5 corridor and saw that as the obvious alignment, but it suffers from the same problem that would doom the "Freeway Monorail."

Nobody lives next to the freeway!

The Interurban Trail right-of-way is in the public domain, save for a few properties.

The most difficult segment would be getting from the Northgate station over to that right-of-way near SR 99.

From there, one of the few places that interrupt the trail is the properties next to the Aurora Village Transit Center (Home Depot, Office Depot, etc). The property owners have done some serious landscaping, altering the original grade by raising the height at the edge of the property near SR 104 nearly 30 ft. However, that height differential would be advantageous for spanning the highway and then rejoining the original alignment on the other side.

The other portion is near Halls Lake, at 212<sup>th</sup> St. SW. That property now has auto repair shops and a NAPA store.

There are other challenges. Road crossings, for instance.

However, this is also an opportunity to lessen drive-through issues for some neighborhoods, and in other places grade separation can possibly be achieved more economically by changing the road grade.

That is to say, rather than elevate the rail line, take a crossing arterial and create an over/underpass at that point. 220<sup>th</sup> Place SW comes to mind.

That might not seem as expensive as (See **Cusick**, page 5)

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

**Important Addresses and Phone Numbers**

U. S. House of Representatives:  
 Washington, DC 20515  
 U. S. Senate: Washington, DC 20510  
 Capitol Switchboard (all members): 202 224-3121  
 State Legislature: State Capitol, Olympia 98504  
 Hotline for leaving messages: 800 562-6000  
 Amtrak Reservations/Information: 800 872-7245  
 All Aboard Washington: AllAboardWashington.org  
 NARP: www.narprail.org  
 NARP Hotline: www.narprail.org/cms/index.php/hotline/  
 Amtrak: www.amtrak.com  
 Amtrak Cascades: www.amtrakcascades.com  
 Sound Transit: www.soundtransit.org

**Catching up on All Aboard Washington events from the summer**



The All Aboard Washington annual picnic was hosted this year by former Secretary of State Ralph Munro and his wife Karen. The August 14 event was at their Triple Creek Farm, just west of Olympia on Eld Inlet, the far southern end of Puget Sound. Above, Ralph explains the archeological digs that take place on his farm. The digs are a joint project of the Munros, South Puget Sound Community College and the Squaxin Tribe.



Left, Sid Morrison, former Congressman from central Washington and Secretary of Transportation for Washington, joined us at the picnic. He told us

to hang on as the U.S. is coming back to us on rail. Lloyd Flem noted that Morrison was there at the beginning and made the rail program happen at WSDOT. He led



WSDOT to having one of the best state rail programs in the country. This laid the foundation for the \$590 million in rail stimulus funding received from the federal government, as well as the additional fiscal year 2010 high speed rail grant of \$32 million awarded by USDOT in October.

Other guests included Ron Sheck, who concluded his long and varied career in rail transportation throughout the country at WSDOT as manager of the King St. Station rehabilitation project and liaison to Sound Transit rail projects, and Martin Young, manager of Sound Transit's Sounder operations. Ron is now retired in Ohio, he and his wife were in the midst of 65 day tour of the western U.S. and Canada.

Bottom left, AAWA members enjoy the various presentations at the meeting, held in one of the Munro's barns. Note the walls covered with Ralph's collection of political signs from all over the country, some dating back many decades.



All Aboard Washington hosted its first on-board-the-train meeting on September 11 on a trip from Seattle to Portland. Members also joined the excursion in Tacoma, Olympia and Centralia.

Above, Lloyd Flem addresses the members in a coach reserved for AAWA. Once in Portland, we were welcomed by members of the Assoc. of Oregon Rail and Transit Advocates and given a tour of Union Station by Amtrak personnel.



Above, a moment to relax during a tour of the Metropolitan Lounge, which is reserved for sleeping car passengers.

After the station tour people spread throughout Portland to enjoy lunch, ride MAX light rail and the Portland Streetcar, and visit Powell's City of Books, among other activities, before heading home on several different northbound Cascades. (All photos this page by Jim Hamre)

**Cusick**, from page 4

you'd think, since the proposed Willis Street Union Pacific grade separation project in Kent totals roughly \$40 million. Compare that to the \$47 million Bothell UW/Cascadia College interchange on SR 522.

If there were a station stop at the Aurora Village Transit center, then one could take the train to Costco or Home Depot. "Excuse me, make way, 12 ft. 2x4 coming through!... Yikes!... 'Doors closing...Doors closing!'"

I just wish it wouldn't take so long. Sometimes it feels like being stuck on I-5 in a snowstorm.

Of course, if you wanted to get from Downtown to the Airport on the day of the first snowstorm of 2010 on November 22, you would have been on Central Link. No service interruptions!

Rep. Rick Larsen (D-Lake Stevens) sent a letter to USDOT Sec. Ray LaHood also asking that Washington State be considered in any reallocation of returned HSR money, according to the Bellingham Herald: <http://bit.ly/fj3tJk>.

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## All Aboard News

**Late January:** Transportation Education Day in **Olympia** with Transportation Choices Coalition and other transportation groups. Gather at United Churches (unconfirmed), 11<sup>th</sup> and Capitol Way starting about 9:00 a.m. before heading out for meetings with our legislators. Travel on the *Cascades* and we'll provide transportation to downtown. Contact Lloyd Flem for the exact date, more details and to let us know you will be participating.

**February 12:** An All Aboard Washington meeting is in the planning stages. Information on location will be available in January. Contact Lloyd Flem for details.

**February 26** (tentative): Annual joint spring rail conference with Northwest NARP and the Assoc. of Oregon Rail and Transit Advocates. AORTA will host the meeting in **Portland**. Details and registration information will be forthcoming.

At the November 13 general membership meeting Jim Langston was elected to the All Aboard Washington board of directors.

Warren Yee, Rocky Shay and George Barner were reelected to the board. Two positions remain vacant. The board will consider filling them at its January 8 meeting.

All Aboard Washington welcomed the following new members in September, October and November: Bud Thompson, Tacoma; Matt Osborn, Centralia; Sean Porter, Seattle; John Neller, Renton; Steven Van Horn, Seattle; Fredrick & Norma Jean Renspies, Centralia; and David Anderson, Seattle.

All Aboard Washington members contributing to this newsletter include Zack Wilhoite, Harvey Bowen, Loren Herrigstad, Bruce Agnew, Ralph Munro, Ron Sheck, Lloyd Flem and Jim Cusick.

If members have not yet responded to our fall fundraising letter, we ask that you review it to see our recent accomplishments and learn about our goals and challenges ahead in 2011. Then please consider making a generous donation to All Aboard Washington so that we can continue working for improved and expanded passenger rail service throughout Washington and the Northwest. Remember you can donate online via PayPal. The link is at [www.AllAboardWashington.org](http://www.AllAboardWashington.org).

### Finn, from page 1

stimulus grants received by WSDOT:

- Completion of the Pt. Defiance Bypass, which will shift Amtrak service to the faster, though less scenic, inland route between Tacoma and Olympia. WSDOT is projecting the route change will happen in 2015.
- Tracking hardening will be done between Nisqually and Vancouver. This involve ballast, tie and rail upgrades, drainage repairs, removal of all temporary and many permanent speed restrictions at various locations, and precision track alignment and surfacing. Competition of all this work will result in faster running times, more reliable operations and a smoother ride.
- Vancouver yard improvements will include a new north-south mainline on the west side of the yard, a new bypass track on the east side of the yard for Columbia River Gorge traffic heading north, and improvements to the connection for Gorge traffic heading south to Portland.

Ken Moore, the main Amtrak agent in Centralia, gave highlights of his Amtrak career and operation of the Centralia station. He thank AAWA for its support of passenger rail service over the years.