



WASHINGTON RAIL NEWS

APRIL/MAY 2007

www.AllAboardWashington.org

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

Mostly positive news from our Northwest regional rail conference

A good crowd of 128 people attended the joint spring rail conference hosted in Tacoma on March 17 by All Aboard Washington. Members from NARP Region 8, Montana Assoc. of Railroad Passengers, and the Assoc. of Oregon Railway and Transit Advocates were also in attendance.

AAWA Pres. Tony Trifiletti, master of ceremonies, started off the program with praise for WSDOT and Amtrak work for passenger rail in the Northwest and recounted his recent trip from Los Angeles. As usual, the Union Pacific did a terrible job of handling the *Coast Starlight* but the on-board experience remain good.

Jonathan Hutchison, Amtrak's western director of government affairs, started his presentation by recapping the fairly good year Amtrak had in FY 2006. To date for 2007, ridership is up 4.3% and revenue is up 10.4%. Amtrak's federal allocation this year is \$1.29 bill. and the company has requested \$1.53 bill. for 2008. What Amtrak really needs is a multi-year federal reauthorization so it can better plan for the future. Senators Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ) and Trent Lott (R-MS) have again introduced a six-year reauthorization, S. 294. (Neither Washington senator has yet become a cosponsor of S. 294.)

Hutchison noted that Amtrak Pres. Alex Kummant, in recent Congressional testimony, called the national network trains "national treasures" and, though there may be changes, he hopes to grow these trains in the future. Hutchison flatly stated, "I would not work for Amtrak if that were not the case." He noted they aren't the big money losers portrayed by the critics. While operating costs are higher than for corridor trains, the capital costs are lower. He said S. 294 requires Amtrak to study restoring the Seattle-Portland-Denver-Chicago *Pioneer*, axed in bad faith by a previous Amtrak administration.

The biggest challenge, particularly for the national network trains, is on-time performance over many of the host

freight railroads. Every minute of lateness increases operating costs \$12 for national network trains and \$6 for corridor trains. Last year, poor on-time performance increased costs by \$40 mill. and the problem also depresses ridership and damages the Amtrak brand.

Up next was Scott Witt, the new State Rail and Marine Director at WSDOT. His background in the private sector involves



Amtrak's Jonathan Hutchison, left, answers a question at the annual rail conference in Tacoma on March 17.

Photo by Jim Hamre

trucks, rail, marine and air service. He presented an overview of our state rail system and its capacity constraints. Witt explained that all rail functions, passenger and freight, have be reconsolidated in his office.

The state Transportation Commission recently completed its "Statewide Rail Capacity and Systems Needs Study." The study was commissioned by the Legislature, who wanted an answer to the question "Should the State continue to participate in the freight and passenger rail system, and if so, how can it most effectively achieve public benefits?" The report's answer is "yes" and it then outlines the "how." Witt said freight and passenger rail are one system and competing interests must collaborate for collective success. The full report can be accessed at www.wstc.wa.gov/Rail/default.htm.

Ron Sheck, WSDOT project manager for King St. Station, then provided an update on the restoration project. Now that BNSF has transferred ownership to the city of Seattle, the \$29 mill. first phase is

ready to continue. Separately, \$15 mill. in track and signal improvements in the station vicinity are also proceeding. Coming in the next several years are a new roof; restoration of the clock tower; upgrades to the Jackson St. plaza and entrance, including the grand staircase; a seismic retrofit; removal of the false ceiling in the waiting room; relocation and upgrades to passenger facilities; and restoration of the historic wall and ceiling finishes.

Long term, the vision implements the King St. Transportation Center, with an intercity bus terminal, regional and local buses, light rail and streetcar, taxis, pedestrians, bicycles and parking.

Dave Johnson, NARP's assistant director, then gave us an update on the national political scene. He started by asking, "What is the outlook for Amtrak?" The answer: "A new Congress means new opportunity!" However, funding is very tight and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said no big new funding programs will be passed. The administration budget is addicted to oil, but instead should be focusing on passenger rail as a way to reduce our dependence on oil. Amtrak consumes less energy per passenger mile than air or auto. Johnson discussed NARP's work in 2006, including Congressional visits, upgrading its website, a new phone bank system, countering former USDOT Sec. Norm Mineta's national campaign against Amtrak and communicating passenger dissatisfaction with Amtrak service. He presented a handout detailing all the ways rail advocates can help the cause. Much of this information is available on NARP's website www.narprail.org.

We also heard updates on:

- All Aboard Washington's efforts to save an intact Eastside Line from Al Runte. We're still in the fight!
- Leavenworth's plan for an *Empire Builder* stop from Rob Eaton. BNSF and Amtrak have approved the stop and fund raising continues.
- Activities in Montana and Oregon.

A big thank you to everyone who volunteered to help at the meeting and who donated items for our successful raffle.

(Barry Green contributed to this report.)



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

Working the DeeCee Capitol Hill for Rail; Power Politics on the Oly Capitol Hill; Tommy T for Prez?

When asked to travel to Washington DC to lobby in behalf of issues favored by the freight railroads, my agreement to do so was based upon a thorough understanding that I, while certainly addressing the freight railroads' positions, remain independent and be able to "customize" my approach, varying the emphasis based upon the Congressional district and senator or representative with whom I was meeting. In my experience, lobbyists for the rail industry, whether management or labor, tend to stick doggedly to a prepared script, whether dealing with a rural conservative or a metropolitan liberal. While integrity dictates one plays the same tune, the competent musician varies his interpretation based upon the room he's playing.

Go21, the rail industry-sponsored organization responsible for gathering pro-rail but non-industry people to lobby for rail issues, agreed that I could also have All Aboard Washington Board member Loren Herrigstad make the trip and help Work the Hill as well as assist with travel and accommodations logistics, if needed.

The Go21 folks set up four meetings: Senators Patty Murray (D-Bothell) and Maria Cantwell (D-Edmonds) and Representatives Rick Larsen (D-Lake Stevens) and Jim McDermott (D-Seattle). (Murray personally met with us; the other meetings were with staff.) But Loren and I felt we would give the freight railroads more than their money's worth. In addition to the above four, we met with staff people of six additional Congresspeople plus nearly a half hour in person with our Congressman Brian Baird (D-Vancouver)! We also chatted with staffers of two pro-rail Republican House members who survived last November's Democratic electoral tsunami, Chris Shays (CT) and Mike Castle (DE). (In praising their pro-rail, pro-conservation positions, I received a warm handshake from Shays and a nice letter from Castle. Not often do East Coasters get affirmative notice from West Coasters.)

So, instead of four contacts, we ac-

complished thirteen meetings times two of us!

The three issues were, stated simply, an extension of an existing tax credit bill for shortline and regional railroads, the institution of a tax credit program for the Class Ones (BNSF, UP, etc), and opposition to reregulation which would slow down the continued investment in rail infrastructure that is of interest to the rail industry and to the nation's economic and environmental well-being.

Seven to ten railroad industry people plus Loren and I met with the senators, only a couple plus us with Larsen's and McDermott's staffers, while Loren and I were a duo in the other meetings. Even in the Senator meetings, we AAWA guys were able to add our take on the issues. And, yes, while supporting the freight railroads, we also got in some bits for passenger rail, urging support for S. 294, this year's Lautenberg-Lott passenger rail bill.

And, yes, while supporting the freight railroads, we also got in some bits for passenger rail, urging support for S. 294, this year's Lautenberg-Lott passenger rail bill.

We emphasized the importance of Federal support for rail – without the adjectives "freight" or "passenger" – and that our state DOT, Legislature and Transportation Commission continue to justifiably ask, "Where are the Feds?" when it comes to dollars matching those our Washington has been pretty good at supplying.

Given AAWA's differences with BNSF on the Eastside Line issue, were we able to support what were in effect BNSF positions on the above three issues? Of course. Had we not agreed with those positions we would not have traveled to DeeCee. But did I also take several opportunities to remind BNSF reps about their opposition in 1991 to even having the state save the "no value" Stampede Pass Line and the near-identical rhetoric they are now repeating about the Eastside Line.

Because of obligations on the Oly Capitol Hill, we had to fly. These flights, I guess, were about as good as it normally gets. No extra waiting, reasonably on time, and I was fortunately placed, both ways, between two normal-sized men, so the mini-space allotted one in coach was tolerable, if barely. Will be traveling to DeeCee again in late April. How? The mode of grownups in the rest of the civilized world...by train...all the way! We will be able to see and experience our vast and varied country in comfort and with great people – those who travel sleeper

on Amtrak's National Network trains! How can the oh-so-busy jetsetters have any understanding or appreciation for America if all they see are sterile airports and the interior of even Boeing's best?



Back home in Olympia we experienced power politics at work. In this case power politics working at cross purposes to what we feel is in the public interest. I was able to get a bill heard before the House Transportation Committee (HTC) which could have the effect of saving an intact Eastside Line. (Not as easy as one would hope, given that state money and resources have not been directly involved.) I had good bi-partisan sponsorship. The Spirit of Washington Dinner Train, which of course runs on the Line, the Grain Growers and I testified in favor of the bill. (I had previously met with most HTC members and felt most agreed with saving the Line.) BNSF and King

County offered "concerns" with the bill. As originally written, the bill lacked specific means to save the Line but, if passed by the House, could have been strengthened in the Senate. But before the HTC vote, the bill was further weakened, becoming but a measure that could possibly

aid in saving from removal future rail lines, but lacking any teeth in terms of the Eastside Line. It passed the HTC 25-1.

But powerful King County interests evidently felt even our little benign feel-good bill was somehow threatening to their plans for the elaborate deal that would result in the "Granddaddy of all Trails," among other things. Powerful Folks from King County in person urged Very Powerful Folks at the Capitol to bury the bill. Done.

In a straight vote to save an intact Eastside Line I believe we could have easily prevailed in the Legislature. But whether in DeeCee or in Olympia, speakers, majority leaders, committee chairs and their friends always have had extraordinary power. It could be argued that processes today are a bit more democratic than in the past. However, political muscle can usually prevail over a majority; it did in this case.

A little accomplishment of AAWA's campaign to preserve the Eastside Line is the movement of the public debate in our direction in two ways. First, BNSF is now conceding the physical vulnerability of the mainline from King Street Station north to Edmonds, a reality not publicly (See **Flem**, page 6)



The View Down the Tracks

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with Jim Cusick

A lie told often enough...

If it's written down, then it's admissible as evidence in a court of law, right? (It must be the truth Vladimir, it says so right here on the cover of the National Enquirer.) So what happens when it's part of the public record of a government meeting?

If you view the "summary" of the Puget Sound Region Council's (Eastside) Corridor Advisory Committee (CAC) meeting on December 1, 2006 where Tony Trifiletti, Craig Thorpe, Al Runte, Steve Pyeatt and I presented our analysis of the situation you will see how the CAC characterizes our thoughts.

In my case, in particular, the summary reads: "Mr. Cusick stated that on the Eastside, the rail option was not explored as a commuting option. Instead, bus rapid transit (BRT) was chosen solely for cost effectiveness."

Here is what I, Mr. Cusick, actually said: "During the I-405 program, the BRT option was chosen as cost effective **because it was compared to ST's \$4.6 billion light rail plans for the I-405 Corridor.** Commuter rail wasn't studied because Renton and the Kenndale Neighborhood Association requested that the BNSF corridor option be dropped from consideration, and it was. The BNSF corridor option never made it to the cost/benefit analysis."

Following my presentation, the representative from Renton asked to see the letter from Renton, which I had a copy of, and stated for the record that the City of Renton no longer agrees with the position put forth in that letter.

Now, why should I worry about whether I've been misquoted? Do you think I should take it personally, as if what I say is gospel, and how dare I be misrepresented? Well, I think I can handle it, but here is where the subtle changes take root and stories can change.

While watching a Regional Transportation Improvement District (RTID) presentation on one of the government channels, another old favorite appeared. And it will work its way back to being an untrue, but oft repeated statement until it's no longer questioned.

In that presentation, during the question and answer session, a member of

the public noted that on the Eastside there were no "dark lines" on the map (signifying High Capacity Transit routes). The staff people from Sound Transit and from RTID responded that BRT was the HCT of choice on the Eastside because it was determined to be the most cost-effective. (And naturally, I was talking back to the TV at that point.) When it was asked how much the users were paying, the Sound Transit representative noted that bus fares cover approximately 30%, and light rail fares about 45%. The RTID representative said that the user fees for the roads were license fees and gas tax.

Here we go again.

What happened to tolls? Are tolls not considered a user fee? Is that option falling out of the discussion only to be replaced by the old favorite misrepresentation of the gas tax as a user fee? Read-

She said "We don't care about the technical stuff or the politics, all we want to do is be able to ride [light rail]."

ers of this column have heard me say, ad infinitum, how cost allocation and usage make tolls the most equitable.

Railfans need not apply

During Al Runte's interview on KIRO radio with David Goldstein in January, Ron Sims' communications director, Sandeep Kaushik basically dismissed supporters of keeping rails intact on the Eastside's Woodinville Subdivision as railfans. Now whether that was just David Goldstein leading Mr. Kaushik, the issue is that it seems to be the easy way to dismiss the opinions of rail supporters. Essentially, there seems to be a general public opinion that if you so much as think rail travel is an economical, relaxing, environmentally friendly, useful and, heaven forbid, enjoyable mode of travel, then you must be a stary eyed train lover.

All Aboard Washington is an organization of serious people, including retired railroad professionals. Are they "rail fans"? No more than anyone who appreciates automobiles, whether it's their utility appreciated by the Soccer Mom, the Auto Detail enthusiast who polishes his car every chance he can, the race fan, or the people the following commercial is geared towards.

Zoom Zoom Zoom

I hope I don't sound like I'm complaining, but am I just getting old (and nostalgic)? If you listen to the music in the Mazda commercials, the tune includes someone singing "Zoom – ZOOM

– zoom". My first reaction is that it sounds quite childish. I thought that you have to be at least 16 years old to drive, and probably a bit older to be able to afford your own car. This commercial obviously appeals to a young, young crowd. Okayfine!! I'm getting old.

This commercial does prove a point, and that is that while we all think the technical issues such as reliability, comfort, affordability and others are important in the car buying decision process, they are only bit players. What really sells this mode of transportation is emotion. How does the car feel? How does someone driving it feel? How do people feel when they see me driving it?

Aren't the advertisers going after the buyer's enthusiasm? Isn't that the point? So why is it so negative to be enthusiastic for rail, but just great for cars? If being a railfan is pie-in-the-sky and not to be taken seriously in the transportation process, then someone needs to put a wet towel on Bob Drewel. When Sounder was being introduced to the north end, you couldn't have asked for a more enthusiastic "railfan" in the decision making process. And his pictures in the local media on that day prove it!

Let's Ride

Things are getting about as real as they can get for Central Link light rail. In Seattle's SODO district, Sound Transit is in full test mode with the light rail cars, and they are operating at speed, under their own power. This should be a great exercise for the public to get used to having quiet, fast, reliable rail transportation.

What will the public think? How will they feel? Will they understand all the technical issues involved? Do they care?

After the unveiling of the Link light rail vehicle, a number of people were checking out the inside, and while inside, a group of us "transportation experts" were chatting with someone from the Seattle *Post Intelligencer*. She said that she wasn't a reporter, but was there to photographically record the event. She dissuaded us from bending her ear with all the technical and political discussions, and made one statement that was simple and poignant.

She said "We don't care about the technical stuff or the politics, all we want to do is be able to ride this."

It's that simple, isn't it. Give us the train, and we'll ride it!

UK Rail Lessons for the Northwest (Part 2)

By Loren Herrigstad

(In part one, which was in the February/March 2007 newsletter, Loren explored all the things being done right on the United Kingdom's passenger rail system. He now offers us ideas on how the UK model can be applied to the Pacific Northwest.)

We are bigger than we think

If they were situated in the UK, Seattle (at 3.1 mill. population including Tacoma) and Portland-Vancouver WA (2.6 mill.) would be the 2nd and 3rd largest metro areas behind London (8.3 mill.)! And Vancouver BC (2.1 mill.) would be 5th behind metro Birmingham (2.3 mill.) and Manchester (2.2 mill.)! The Seattle area is **15 times larger** than Inverness, Scotland in population, yet Seattle has about a **third** the level of Inverness' train service, and just **1/8th** the per capita rail ridership!

A closer comparison to Seattle though can be found in Leeds, England. Leeds has a metro population of 725,000 over a 217 square mile area, and a downtown workforce of 120,000. By contrast the concentrated Seattle-Bellevue-Everett area has a population of 2,450,000 over an 1,806 square mile area and Seattle has a downtown workforce almost twice as large as Leeds' at 230,800. You can already see that metro Seattle has a greater need for more distant, rapid and high-volume transportation than Leeds does!

An amazing 30 passenger trains **an hour** pass through relatively small Leeds during a typical day, fanning out in eight different directions. Of those about 15 are local suburban or commuter trains that run every 30 minutes (and more frequently at rush hour), five are longer-distance rural trains that run every 1 to 2 hours, and ten are intercity express trains that run every 30 to 60 minutes. Metro, the West Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive, has so successfully grown local commuter services in the upper Aire Valley some 15-20 miles west of Leeds – by funding new trains and more frequent services – that Metro now boasts that an amazing 75% of upper Aire Valley commuters come to downtown Leeds by rail! And freight trains still pass through Leeds, too. They are shorter, typically 20, 50 or maybe 100 cars, but the dominant cargoes are the same as ours – unit trains of containers and bulk commodities like coal.

To put Leeds' example in local terms – if Seattle had this level of service, we would be looking at a passenger train leaving downtown Seattle every 1 to 3 minutes. We would have commuter trains

every half hour or less to Everett, Tacoma and Bellevue via Renton **and** Everett; regional trains every hour to places like Bellingham, Olympia, Grays Harbor, Ellensburg and Wenatchee; and intercity expresses every 30 – 60 minutes to Vancouver, BC, Portland and Spokane! We already have trainloads of people going to all these places all day long – they're just going by car instead of train!

This is what World Class Passenger Rail Service looks like. As you saw earlier, Seattle has almost twice as large a downtown workforce as Leeds. It is time for us to get over the **fiction** that our Northwest region and metro areas are not just as big and populated as in Europe, and is in need of just as much train service as Europeans have. We can't muster more than 24 commuter and intercity trains per weekday out of Seat-



Here is the north concourse of the Leeds Station. With 17 platforms, it is the largest station outside of those in London. There are a number of retail establishments catering to the traveling public including two McDonalds, a Burger King and, yes, even a Starbucks. (So where's the Starbucks at Seattle's King St. Station?!) Parts of the station date to 1869. There were major renovations and expansions in 1938, 1967 and 2002. The 2002 work cost £245 mill. In 2005, 14.7 mill. passengers passed through Leeds Station. For more information: www.answers.com/topic/leeds-city-railway-station and www.networkrail.co.uk/asp/879.aspx
Photo by Gregory Deryckere

tle, and yet smaller Leeds has that many trains in less than an hour!

Another interesting fact is that we are paying higher per passenger rail subsidies than the British! UK Southern Railways (a single franchise) is subsidized 7¢ per passenger mile, while Amtrak *Cascades* is subsidized at 9¢ per passenger mile. So we are already paying European subsidy levels per passenger moved, but are not receiving European levels of rail service.

Do we want World Class Rail?

The twin advents of global warming and the now clearly anticipated decline in oil resources pose important questions for Northwest rail advocates. Are we willing to envision and push for a big

enough role for rail, as the UK is doing, that will help us to make the changes in oil consumption and auto usage it's looking like we'll have to in the future? Or, will even we advocates continue to limit trains to a marginal and small secondary role far behind the almighty auto for as long as the oil lasts and the seas and storms stay the same?

If educators and parents are telling the governor and Legislature that "the status quo isn't good enough" in education and are demanding sizeable improvements to Washington's education system why are we not demanding equally sizeable improvements to Washington's rail system and the start of at least spending reductions for our expensive, inefficient and perhaps even dangerous and fateful over-reliance on highways?

To me, trains are a key way out of both global warming **and** our addiction to declining oil. But to really work, trains **must** become as convenient as a second car – not as inconvenient as using an airliner. We must think bus, not plane – in terms of ease of ticketing, boarding, and schedules – if trains are to be widely used and useable by Northwest residents and visitors. This means "show up and go." Train reservations and check-ins shouldn't be needed, but seats can still be reserved on longer distance and express trains for an extra fee. Trains must also run frequently – every hour or even every half-hour or less – to the point where most people don't have to think about schedules anymore. "There's another one in just a half hour."

While initial capital investments will rise, operating subsidies per passenger mile will drop, as the British experience shows, and we will "Get more Bang for the Public Buck!" However, our overall spending on transportation and energy consumption, and thus our production of greenhouse gases, will fall, helping us to be more economically efficient and competitive with our European and Asian rivals.

As even the British are now discovering as their rail network reaches capacity, no single entity, not the Federal government, not the state, not ports or local governments, nor the freight railroads can alone address our Northwest rail investment and funding challenges. But, together through partnerships, we can!

Government, and even business, will respond and carry out the public's will. But we the public have to first express (See **UK**, page 6)

Northwest Amtrak review

The year 2006 saw continued strong growth in ridership on the Seattle and Portland to Chicago *Empire Builder* (up 4.2% over 2005 to 497,020), a modest dip in *Cascades* and total Northwest Corridor ridership (down 1.1% to 629,996 and down 3.8% to 683,074, respectively), and a long continuing decline for the Seattle-Los Angeles *Coast Starlight* (down 10.8% to 331,939).

Amtrak's relaunch of the *Builder* in August 2005 continues to pay dividends as revenue growth continues to outpace the ridership growth. Revenue was \$48.7 mill., up 15.6% over 2005. The strong numbers are not only a result of the improvements to the train and the service, but also to superior on-time performance by host railroads BNSF, Canadian Pacific and Metra (60.0%).

The decline in *Cascades* ridership is a disappointment, especially since a fourth Seattle-Portland roundtrip and through Bellingham-Portland service was introduced in July. However, ridership appears to be rebounding in the last half of 2006. Revenue for last year totaled \$16.5 mill., up 8.9%. Factors restraining ridership growth included the cancellation of 170 trips in 2006, mostly in January and February and mostly weather related (mud slides). Poor on-time performance (48.0%) is also impacting ridership. Here BNSF is shares much of the responsibility (north of Portland) with Union Pacific (south of Portland).

There's little good than can be said about the poor *Coast Starlight*. Union Pacific failures at train operations and routine track maintenance are legendary, driving the train's on-time performance down to 3.9%. Despite all the problems revenue was up 1.3% to \$27.7 mill. Good news for the future: Amtrak plans to make the *Coast Starlight* the next national network train to be relaunched, hopefully in mid-2008 if on-time performance can be improved.

Nationally, Amtrak saw ridership increase 1.1% to 24.3 mill. and passenger revenue increase 10.8% to \$1.37 bill., an all-time record.

Ridership and station activity data provided by WSDOT's Carolyn Simmonds and by Amtrak.

Amtrak Station Data

Six-Year Washington State On & Off Totals (calendar year)

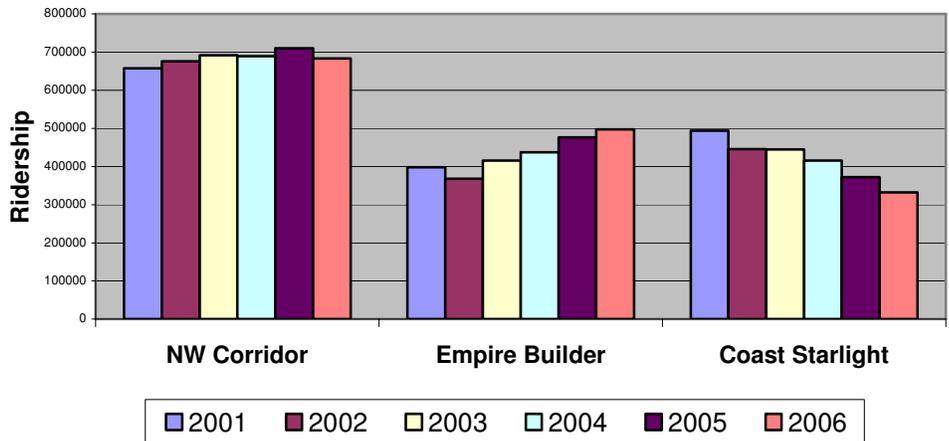
Station	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	'06-'05 % Change
Bellingham	46,521	44,602	48,594	55,033	56,087	53,798	-4.1%
<i>Bingen-White Salmon</i>	1,254	1,171	1,190	1,460	1,938	2,037	+5.1%
Centralia	18,174	16,825	19,644	19,771	19,089	18,783	-1.6%
Edmonds	24,492	26,209	25,869	25,415	28,404	28,617	+0.7%
Ephrata	2,294	2,225	2,462	2,773	2,985	3,072	+2.9%
Everett	30,196	29,639	37,895	37,339	39,532	39,961	+1.1%
Kelso-Longview	21,261	21,849	21,289	20,573	20,956	20,851	-0.5%
Mt. Vernon	15,874	16,123	15,964	17,186	21,172	21,316	+0.7%
Olympia-Lacey	39,846	42,095	43,180	41,613	42,404	43,371	+2.3%
Pasco	14,413	13,134	16,355	18,710	22,056	22,128	+0.3%
Seattle	625,419	602,436	627,534	628,836	650,061	583,766	-10.1%
Spokane	36,331	32,523	39,284	40,106	42,491	41,862	-1.5%
Tacoma	104,355	99,950	106,840	106,180	102,255	101,413	-0.8%
Tukwila	2,389	6,405	9,017	11,470	14,214	15,566	+9.5%
Vancouver	63,375	64,315	68,123	71,487	72,266	73,981	+2.4%
Wenatchee	13,652	12,388	14,543	15,094	18,157	17,310	-4.7%
Wishram	820	595	938	1,154	2,446	1,403	-42.6%
TOTALS	1,060,666	1,032,484	1,098,703	1,114,200	1,156,513	1,089,235	-5.8%

Station totals include Thruway bus ridership numbers.

Trains Serving Washington

State Six Year Totals

(calendar year for NW Corridor; federal fiscal year for Builder & Starlight)



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 Amtrak *Cascades*: www.amtrakcascades.com

All Aboard News

May 12: All Aboard Washington meeting at **12:45 p.m.** at **Andy's Diner**, 2963 4th Ave. S., **Seattle** (just north of Spokane St.; on Metro route 23 and 174, and near the busway). Invited speakers: Rep. Jay Rodne (R-North Bend) and Rep. Maralyn Chase (D-Shoreline).

June 9: All Aboard Washington meeting at **1:00 p.m.** at the **Lewis County Historical Museum**, 599 NW Front St., **Chehalis**. Transportation will be provided from and to the Centralia Amtrak Station for trains 513 and 516. AAWA member Jeff Schultz will share pictures of his rail trip in India (featured in the March *Trains* magazine). Cost is \$15 and includes lunch and admission to the museum. For more information contact Lloyd Flem (see page 5).

All Aboard Washington welcomed the following new members in February and March: Paul Perkins, Seattle; Carole Slesnick, Bellingham; Barbara & David Nordfors, Seattle; Richard Brooks, Bellevue; Donald Hanley, Kirkland; Patty Spahr, Renton; Herbert Curl, Jr., Seattle; Gary Miller, Puyallup; Debbie DeRose; Portland, OR; Dawna Lahti, Edmonds; Kathy Davis, Des Moines; and Lars & Carolyn Saxegaard, Bellevue.

All Aboard Washington members contributing to this newsletter include Lloyd Flem, Jim Cusick, Ron Sheck, Rob Eaton, Al Runte, Bob Krebs, Tony Trifiletti, Loren Herrigstad and Warren Yee.

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(formerly Washington Association of Rail Passengers)
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Flem, from page 2 admitted in past months. And King County, the PSRC, etc. now speak of "saving" the Eastside Line property for future high-capacity transit, "if needed." Months ago it was, in effect, "Trail forever." However, the books are not totally closed on this issue. Stay tuned.



Former Wisconsin Governor Tommy Thompson has announced his candidacy for the 2008 Republican presidential nomination. Thompson is surely a long shot at best. Among other things, he is unlikely to gather the staggering sums of money leading candidates of both parties are accumulating. Of interest to passenger rail advocates is Tommy (as he is universally known) as an enthusiastic supporter of intercity passenger rail, both as governor and as chairman of the Amtrak Board.

I recall a Seattle dinner during Tommy's tenure with the Amtrak Board where he delivered an impassioned pro-passenger rail speech that turned the normally-sedate dinner guests into a stomping, cheering mob about ready to storm the barricades in behalf of investments in passenger trains. (Yes, I stomped and cheered!)

Tommy's Iowa-delivered announcement speech talked affirmatively of issues, energy and environment, that would suggest a continued support of passenger trains, but he did not specifically mention rail. I've contacted his campaign people with pointed questions in that regard. If Tommy retains passenger rail as a high-priority issue, and if his campaign gets any traction in Iowa, where he is concentrating his current

efforts, this could be of considerable interest to passenger rail advocates. Never has there been a major party presidential candidate for whom passenger rail is a top concern. Again, stay tuned.

UK, from page 4 that will! We have to first envision and believe that trains can play a real role as a major, even primary, means of regional transportation. Then we have to organize, plan, support, and work to make it happen – line by line, station by station, new train by new train.

We Americans made a once seemingly impossible trip to the Moon because we decided to. We can have World Class Rail, too. We are big enough. We simply have to decide to.

And across the English Channel...

During testing of France's next generation TGV (Traine a Grande Vitesse, a new world rail speed record was set: 574.8 kilometres (357.2 miles) per hour. The TGV narrowly missed breaking the overall world train speed record of 581 kph (360.8 mph), set in 2003 by a Japanese Maglev train in testing. France's everyday TGVs have been operating at up to 320 kph since 1981 on a network that now stretches over some 1600 kilometres. And Japan's Shinkansen have been plying the rails since the mid-1960s. Other countries with high speed operations in service or planned include Germany, Sweden, Great Britain, Italy, Spain, Belgium, China, South Korea, Australia, Argentina and Mexico. Amtrak's *Acela Express* reaches 150 mph in a few areas between Boston and New Haven, CT. You'd think after 40 years of trailing all these countries our Federal government would be embarrassed. You'd think.

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