



# AORTA Bulletin

A publication of the  
Association of Oregon Rail and Transit Advocates

Issue 150

February 2011

Since 1976

## NARP NW Regional Membership Meeting in Portland “Tracks to Prosperity,” Saturday, February 26 *by Mike Morrison*

Portland, OR- **AORTA** will be hosting the National Association of Railroad Passengers (NARP) Northwest Division membership meeting in Portland on Saturday, February 26. The luncheon meeting features guest speakers Robert Stewart, Chairman, National Association of Railroad Passengers (see article on pg 6) and Robert Doty, California High Speed Rail Authority.

Mr. Doty is an international expert on high speed rail, formerly serving as Director of Systems Engineering for the Taipei Rapid Transit System, Project Manager and Chief Negotiator for Korean High-Speed Rail project, and Project Manager for Systemwide Works for the Channel Tunnel Rail Link.

The Northwest Division of NARP includes Alaska, Colorado, Idaho, Kansas, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Washington, Wyoming.

The event begins at 11 am at Embassy Suites (formerly the historic Multnomah Hotel), 319 SW Pine Street, Portland, Oregon. It is a short walk from Portland’s Union Station, and has convenient light rail and bus access.

The fee is \$39/person if paid by February 18, and includes registration and opulent luncheon buffet of local Willamette Valley specialties. Fine Northwest wines and microbrews offered at no-host bar. Planning is underway for an informal social event

*...contd on pg 2, see “NARP Conference”*

**Take Amtrak Cascades to Vancouver, BC**  
**Daily train service to and from Portland!**  
*All Amtrak Cascades trains now offer Wi-Fi!*

## Oregon Talgo trainsets not threatened *by Floyd Smith*

Talgo reports there is no jeopardy to the two trainsets, now under construction for Oregon, from the recent rejection of stimulus money by Wisconsin’s governor.

“Our lease in the manufacturing facility in Milwaukee does not expire until September of 2012,” explained Nora Friend, Talgo’s public affairs vice president, “and the trains for Oregon are scheduled to be delivered before September of that year.”

Friend struck an optimistic tone

while commenting on the trainsets being built at Milwaukee: “Talgo’s project with Oregon is not affected by the politics in Wisconsin.”

However, she did lament the effect on Midwest travel resulting from rejection by Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker of \$810 million of rail stimulus money under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

“It was unfortunate to Talgo that the new governor, Mr. Walker, chose not to expand Wisconsin’s rail plan

*continued on page 2, see “Talgo”*

## Myth Busted: Roads not paid for by gas tax

Portland, OR- A new report, “Do Roads Pay for Themselves?” released Jan 4 by the Oregon State Public Interest Research Group (OSPIRG) disproves the common misperception that road-building is paid for by user fees, showing that federal gas taxes cover barely half the costs of building and maintaining roads, a fraction which is likely to fall steadily.

Among the findings of the report:

- Federal gasoline taxes were originally intended for debt relief, not roads.
- Over the last 63 years, highways, roads and streets have received more than \$600 billion in subsidies in excess of the amount raised through gasoline taxes.
- The amount of money a particular driver pays in gasoline taxes bears little relationship to his or her use of roads funded by gas taxes. Drivers pay gasoline taxes for the miles they drive on local

*...continued on Page 3*



*photo by Dave Jannuzzi, MD*

**Bill Burgel speaks at SEDCOR Economic Business Forum in Salem meeting. See article on page 3.**

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A nonprofit citizen advocate group working to educate the public about the need for safe, fiscally responsible, environmentally sound transportation. Incorporated as the **Oregon Association of Railway Passengers.**

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**AORTA Annual Family Picnic**

It has been a few years since **AORTA** held its "Annual Membership Picnic." We would like to resume this tradition! The **AORTA** "Annual" Picnic has been an event in which members, family and friends have gathered together for a low-cost, informal event. Some of **AORTA**'s most successful events germinated from past picnics. One of the most memorable "picnics" was aboard a specially chartered Budd rail diesel car traveling from Tillamook into the Cascades Range, with impromptu snowball fights and glimpses of the rail line's history.

Most recent family events have been held at Willamette Park in southwest Portland. But because most statewide events are held in the Portland area, interest has been expressed in holding this family event outside the Portland area.

If you have a suggestion for what we should do, or where we should do it in 2011 ... after Memorial Day, but before Labor Day, please send or email your suggestion to **AORTA**. July 23? Let's have a little fun in 2011! (Thank you, Ken Peters!)

**"Streetcar City"**

OPB program on  
**Portland, Oregon**  
to be televised  
**9 pm, February 28, 2011**

Friend went on to applaud passenger rail development in the Pacific Northwest: "We hope Washington state continues strong with its rail expansion plan and we commend Oregon for being the only state that will actually have some new trains to show for the ARRA funding by 2012." Oregon's two new Talgo trainsets are for use on the Cascade Corridor, running from Eugene to

*NARP Conference, continued from pg 1*

Friday evening, Feb 25. All registered participants will be invited.

To register, please send your check (payable to **AORTA**) for \$39.00 today for each registrant to:

**AORTA**

PO Box 2772  
Portland, OR 97208-2772

Payment must be received by February 18, 2011 to receive advance purchase discount. Payment at door: \$48.00 (space is limited). Please include email address (if possible) and phone number for each attendee.

Hotel accommodations are available from a special block of rooms for this event by calling 1-800-673-8792 (1-800-HILTONS). The guestrooms are under "**AORTA**." Booking can also be made on the Hilton website; enter "**AORTA**" under Group/Convention code. The special rate is \$139.00 per night, but reservations need to be made early.

See you in Portland February 26!

**Mark Your Calendar!**

**National Train Day**

*"The Kid in You"*

**Free public event**  
Portland Union Station

**Saturday, May 7, 2011**

*Tentatively: 10 am - 4 pm*  
*Live steam, interactive exhibits*

Vancouver, B.C.

"The Oregon Department of Transportation and groups such as **AORTA**," said Friend, "deserve a lot of credit for advocating and continuing to persevere in promoting passenger trains as the sensible additional choice for transportation, and everyone in this country deserves to have rail's greener choice for transportation."

*Talgo, continued from page 1*  
and use its ARRA grant earmarked for the expansion of the Hiawatha line (Chicago-Milwaukee) from Milwaukee to Madison," said Friend. "The entire Midwest regional rail plan anticipated that the new line to Madison would ignite the larger project connecting Chicago all the way to the twin cities in Minnesota eventually."

## Track improvements result in temporary schedule change

by Jon Nuxoll

Amtrak's *Coast Starlight* schedules are temporarily adjusted through April to allow for extensive Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) work on its Willamette Valley mainline.

According to Brock Nelson, UPRR director of public affairs, UPRR is replacing 77,000 ties, replacing ballast, and removing and installing new rail along its mainline running through Albany, Eugene and Oakridge. The Oregon project creates local jobs, and costs UPRR \$10.7 million, part of \$3.2 billion of UPRR systemwide capital investment in 2011.

The project is resulting in temporary changes to Amtrak's northbound and southbound *Coast Starlight*. Both are scheduled for about two hours later at all stations than their traditional schedules through April 1.

The change results in temporary loss of the northbound *Starlight*'s Portland connection with Amtrak's eastbound *Empire Builder*. AORTA President Donald Leap requested Amtrak reinstate the *Builder* connection with a Klamath Falls-Pasco bus, but Amtrak declined, citing concerns about potential bus delays on winter roads.

The maintenance project has also resulted in temporary cancellation of Amtrak's 6:15 p.m. northbound departure from Portland, Cascades No. 508, replaced with an earlier 5:15 p.m. departure as Cascades No. 514.

Thruway bus connections from Eugene have been adjusted to allow for the earlier northbound connections. The track work is also resulting in periodic substitution of buses for Cascades No. 504 between Eugene and Portland on selected dates.

**Editor's Note:** Schedules on UPRR are also impacted by trackwork near Santa Barbara, CA.

Membership dues and contributions help keep **AORTA** on track in 2011!

## Myth Busted, continued from page 1

streets and roads, even though those proceeds are typically used to pay for state and federal highways.

"Oregon needs to make difficult choices about how to fund our states' troubled transportation system. The first task is to discard common myths about how roads are paid for," said Jenn Lavelle at OSPIRG.

This year, Congress will again address funding for the nation's Highway Trust Fund, which has been bailed out four times with \$35

billion from general funds since 2008. Federal gas taxes have not increased since 1993 and revenues are expected to remain flat as Americans continue to drive less and use more fuel-efficient cars.

"Highway advocates often inaccurately portray highway spending as financially conservative by falsely labeling gas taxes as "user fees" that pay for roads," said Lavelle. "Making funding decisions based on myths and political gain rather than what Oregonians really need only leads to waste."

Full report available at [www.AORTArail.org](http://www.AORTArail.org).



**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF RAILROAD PASSENGERS**

TRAINS: A TRAVEL CHOICE AMERICANS WANT

### Tracks to Prosperity: Annual Membership Meeting

**NARP NORTHWEST DIVISION: Alaska, Colorado, Idaho, Kansas, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Washington & Wyoming**

see article on Page 1 and AORTA website

**Saturday, February 26, 2011**

Embassy Suites Hotel (Former Historic Multnomah Hotel)  
319 SW Pine Street.

Portland, OR (Convenient Light Rail Access)

11:00 AM Registration/Exhibits/Networking

12:15 PM Luncheon, Speakers, Presentations

4:00 PM (Approximate) Adjourn

#### Buffet includes

House-made Soup

Organic Spinach Salad with Thyme Mushrooms, Local Goat Cheese & Carlton Farms Bacon

Frisée, Red Wine Vinaigrette, Hazelnut, Marionberry & Local Gouda Cheese

Apricots, Parmesan Crotons, Organic Arugula Salad, Local Apples & Pears

**Tortellini with Smoked Salmon** and Creamy Pesto Sauce

Garlic Bread Sticks

**Pendleton Flat Iron Steak** with Garlic Mashed Potatoes and NW Wild Mushrooms Jus

**Herbed Roasted Chicken** with Roasted Rosemary and Leek Potatoes

Mocha Mousse Cake & Marionberry Cheese Cake

Fine Northwest Wines and Microbrews offered at no-host bar

#### Register Today!

\$39/person if received by 2/18

\$48 after 2/18 (space is limited)

Use enclosed form, or go to the

**AORTA** website, to register today!



**OREGON IRON WORKS, INC.**  
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## SETD Director Cindy Howe offers resignation Board refuses to accept Astoria transportation center planning underway

Astoria- Cindy Howe, Executive Director of Sunset Empire Transportation District (SETD) resigned January 6, however the transit board voted to not accept her resignation. Howe, who has served as Director since 1995 when the district operated only one route, is now on paid administrative leave. Howe also serves her community in many volunteer capacities, including as an actress with Astor Street Opry Company, and on the boards of Coastal Family Health Center, Clatsop Economic Development Resources and Astoria's Riverfront Trolley Association.

Under Howe's leadership, SETD has been evaluating three locations for the district's new \$3.9M transportation center. Under consideration are: (1) the former Thriftway store building at 909 S. Holladay Drive, (1) a vacant lot on Roosevelt and 12th Avenue, and (3) property adjacent the Seaside School District bus barn in the 1900 block of North Roosevelt Drive.

OTAK, a Lake Oswego engineering firm, is completing conceptual drawings for each of the potential locations. In addition to being a facility for bus loading and unloading, there is interest in providing for a child care center and in a

South Campus for Clatsop Community College. "Both of these ideas could be good marriages for a transit center, allowing parents and students direct access to facilities they frequent," stated **AORTA** Vice President Dan McFarling.

The transit center will include about 1,000 square feet for waiting room, restrooms, SETD offices and ticketing. SETD expects to coordinate their center with the bus service from Portland and with Tillamook County Transportation District (*The Wave*) to ensure good connectivity.

SETD provides service on seven routes, including as far south as Cannon Beach.

Service (two daily round trips) between Astoria and Portland's Union Station is provided by NorthWest POINT (see schedule and service map in May 2010 **AORTA** Bulletin).

Tillamook's "Wave" provides service as far north as Cannon Beach, as far south as (Otis) Lincoln City, and east to Portland's Union Station.

The timeline for the transit project includes having a property purchased and the beginning site work underway by March of 2011. The new facility would be up and operational by December of 2012.

## Washington's Paula Hammond elected chair of States for Passenger Rail Coalition

Olympia, WA- Washington state Secretary of Transportation Paula Hammond was unanimously elected chair of the States for Passenger Rail Coalition by state transportation directors in December 2010. As coalition chair, Hammond will work with the 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.

Oregon is one of only two states with nationally designated high speed rail corridors that does not

## Ralph Munro recuperating

-Floyd Smith

A good friend of Northwest rail advocates, Ralph Munro, is recovering nicely from a difficult December heart surgery. The longtime former Washington Secretary of State who sparked the Northwest's collaboration with Spanish train-maker Talgo spent the holidays recuperating at his Olympia home.

In recent weeks, Munro has been working to ensure that Washington, Oregon and British Columbia pull together for support of true high-speed service between Eugene, Oregon, and Vancouver, British Columbia.

Munro was one of four prominent State of Washington Republicans who recently urged Republicans in Wisconsin to support high speed rail efforts in their state.



Membership dues and contributions help **AORTA** educate decisionmakers and the public about the need for improved rail and transit services, building a stronger economy for Oregon!

belong to the States for Passenger Rail Coalition.

The coalition played a major role in helping to advance the \$8 billion in new funding for passenger rail projects in the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. Washington state has successfully invested these federal dollars, plus state money, in a passenger rail system that has growing ridership and expanded service between Seattle and Vancouver, B.C.

*adapted from WashDOT News Release*

## Burgel: “Walk that dance” between the state & railroads

by Floyd Smith

Noted rail authority Bill Burgel told a Salem business audience that improving passenger service depends upon respecting the natural “public-private tension” between state authorities and the railroads.

“You have to walk that dance with them,” Burgel told some 200 executives attending the Jan. 13 luncheon of the SEDCOR Economic Business Forum in Oregon’s capital city. He further said that rail advocates must speak with one voice.

Burgel implied the pathway to expanding passenger rail service is not easy and not fast, further noting, advances in Washington state have been far greater because of the longstanding collaborative spirit that exists between railroads and public policymakers there—nurtured by train advocates.

The evidence for this is the significant disparity in Obama stimulus funding promised Oregon and Washington for the higher-speed passenger corridor that links both states. Washington is expecting more than \$750 million for improvements because of advanced planning and past spending that arose from close cooperation between entities there; Oregon some \$10 million.

The question of improving Or-

gon’s passenger service arose at the end of Burgel’s address, when rail promoter and Salem impresario Britta Franz demanded to know: “What can we do now?”

Her pointed question was reminis-



cent of her outspoken request for action this past September at a Salem conference—Rail NOW!—of which she was a key sponsor. Burgel was a speaker at that event too.

Burgel is a civil engineer with a 40-year history of service to the rail industry, including work for Oregon’s principal railroad Union Pacific. He was also rail operations manager for an Oregon-Washington rail feasibility study. And until recently he was a vice president of rail operations for HDR Engineering at Portland. He recently has started his own rail consulting company known as the LLC Burgel Rail Group.

In other comments, Burgel brought good economic news to the Salem business gathering: “The railroads are definitely looking to expand in terms of freight.” He said as fuel prices continue to rise, more

and more freight hauling will move from trucks to more cost-effective trains.

Burgel cautioned that the proposal to use Oregon Electric’s right of way through Lake Oswego may not allow for high-speed rail in that section of the Cascade Corridor. “Oregon’s Rail Division is currently studying the

various alignments between Eugene and Willsburg Junction to determine the optimal high-speed alignment,” he later explained. “These alignments include the OE, the Union Pacific and perhaps others. It will be difficult to achieve high speeds along portions of the existing OE rail alignment especially between Tualatin and Willsburg Junction that passes through Lake Oswego.”

**If you have not already,  
please renew your AORTA  
dues for 2011.**

## AORTA receives \$5,000 gift

AORTA’s financial standing received a much-needed boost from a donor with no apparent connection to our organization.

A rail advocate in Lebanon, New Hampshire, sent AORTA a check for \$5,000 this past December to the delight of Treasurer Ken Peters, who routinely reminds the board of

our organization’s tenuous financial condition.

Heaping thanks on AORTA’s benefactor, Vice President Donald Leap responded in writing: “Your gracious goodwill will long be remembered, and we will keep you informed through our newsletter of the work we are doing to improve

transportation for the people of Oregon and beyond.”

Art Poole, a director of the National Association of Railroad Passengers and of AORTA, learned that the donor had made similar donations to other state rail advocacy nonprofits.

## LTD opens second Springfield BRT route AORTA endorses expansion

by Jon Nuxoll

Lane Transit District began service on its second bus rapid-transit (BRT) route in early January. The new line goes between downtown Springfield transit center and Gateway district in north-west Springfield. The route includes Sacred Heart River Bend Medical Center and a new Gateway transit center.

“EmX” (“Emerald Express”) runs every ten minutes on weekdays, with longer intervals evenings and weekends.

This is LTD’s second EmX route. In 2007 LTD opened its first, between downtown Eugene and Springfield. The first route runs along Franklin Avenue on the north edge of the University of Oregon campus.

EmX buses run direct from Eugene to Gateway via the Springfield transit center, allowing for a single-seat ride.

EmX makes limited stops. Routes run partly along dedicated rights-of-

way; other segments travel in mixed traffic. High-level platforms to reduce boarding times and ticket-vending machines are also at EmX stops. A single ride is \$1.50 and a day pass is \$3.00, consistent with LTD systemwide fares.

LTD is planning a third BRT line to west Eugene, along the West 11th Avenue corridor. The proposed line is drawing opposition from many neighboring businesses. Opponents say they fear loss of parking space and question reductions in LTD regular service while building EmX. LTD counters that EmX will reduce overall congestion and that EmX funding is coming from earmarked federal funds, not operating costs. The Eugene City Council is expected to act on EmX proposals in coming months.

**AORTA’s** board endorsed EmX expansion at its January meeting, citing public transit’s role in reducing traffic congestion and reliance on oil.

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## Rail transit bills introduced in Oregon State Legislature

*Salem-* Two bills in the 2011 Oregon Legislature are of particular interest to rail and transit advocates: HJR 5 and HB 2860.

HJR 5 refers a constitutional amendment to voters which allows taxes from motor vehicle fuel and ownership to be used for “transportation projects for the purpose of preventing or reducing pollution and congestion ...” This “includes, but is not limited to, ... highway, transit, rail and aviation capital infrastructure, bicycle and pedestrian paths, bridges ... and other projects that facilitate the transportation of materials, animals or people.”

In the Senate, SJR 13 would allow such taxes to be used for “providing public transportation services, facilities and operating expenses.

HB 2860 creates a 5-member Rail Advisory Council for advising ODOT and the Oregon Transportation Commission (OTC) on passenger and freight rail issues. The Council would make recommendations for “improving coordination of freight and passenger rail and intermodal services,”

and “strategies for improving passenger rail services...” The Advisory Council would be appointed by the Governor.

HB 2860 directs the Council to study the feasibility of creating a bi-state passenger rail authority. The Authority, in conjunction with the State of Washington, would plan improvements and operation of passenger rail system that serves Cascadia Corridor.

### **Other bills of interest:**

HB 2502 would redirect the only funds now dedicated to Amtrak Cascades Service to Oregon State Police. Loss of rail funds, however, would increase roadway traffic and the need for policing.

HB 2251 prohibits ODOT from spending any more money on the I-5 Columbia River Crossing until “monies needed to cover Oregon’s share of the ... costs of completing” the project are guaranteed. Earlier, after the Legislature turned down ODOT’s request for CRC planning funds, ODOT used other “discretionary funds” to continue the planning.

## Bob Stewart to speak at NARP Conference in Portland

The National Association of Railroad Passengers’ Council of Representatives elected Robert J. “Bob” Stewart as the association’s Chairman in May 2010.

Stewart previously was Vice Chairman—Mission Accomplishment. He has been a member of the Association since 1970, joining the board in 2002 and becoming vice-president (later vice-chairman) in 2004.

Art Poole of Coos Bay, Oregon, replaces Stewart as Vice Chairman—Mission Accomplishment. Poole is a long time director and past president of **AORTA**.

A native of Mountain Lakes, NJ, Stewart holds a bachelor of business administration degree from Baldwin-Wallace College (Berea OH). He served in the U.S. Marine Corps. He and his wife Virginia live in Fort Myers, Florida. He is retired from ARCO Chemical Company where for 29 years he had various sales and marketing positions, including Sales and Development Manager for Asia. Earlier, he held sales and training positions at Procter & Gamble. He holds a Florida Real Estate license.

A past president of the Tennessee Association of Railroad Passengers and member of the Tennessee State Rail Passenger Advisory Council, Stewart belongs to numerous rail advocacy organizations.

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“The Kid in You”

**Free public event**  
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