

AORTA Bulletin

A publication of the
Association of Oregon Rail and Transit Advocates

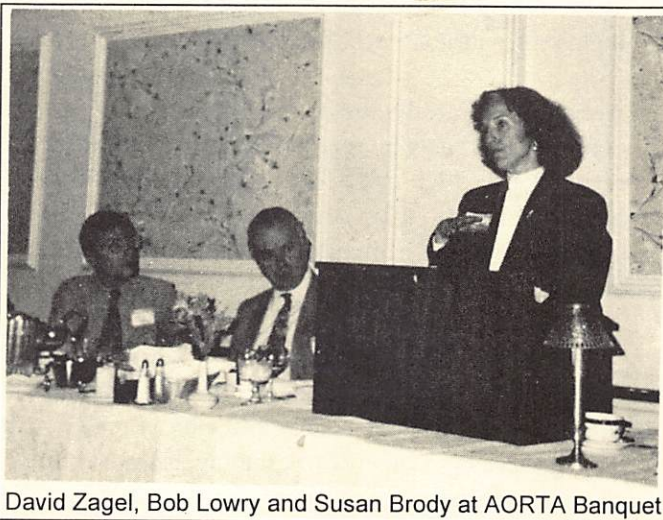
Issue 107

December 1995

Since 1976

Susan Brody addresses AORTA members at Annual Banquet

□ OTC to re-examine Oregon's funding strategy for transportation



David Zagel, Bob Lowry and Susan Brody at AORTA Banquet

Portland- Oregon Transportation Commission (OTC) Vice-Chair Susan Brody addressed AORTA members and guests at the 1995 Annual Membership Meeting and banquet on Saturday, October 21

Brody, who also serves as Chair of Oregon's High Speed Rail (HSR) Task Force, stated AORTA's "advocacy will become increasingly important in the future as we try to build more balanced transportation systems in this state." Even though the Oregon Transportation Plan "really advocates for a balance among transportation modes ... we are far from being at that place."

continued on pg 2 see "Brody"

E-Board approves Willamette Valley rail funds

Salem- On Nov 17 the Legislature's Emergency Board approved expenditure of \$3.9M to continue operation of the Willamette Valley rail/bus project through June 97. The action continues operation of Amtrak's *Mt. Rainier* (now *Cascadia*) and 3 daily round-trip buses between Portland and Eugene.

The project is a first step by the State of Oregon toward improving transportation services between Eugene and Vancouver, B.C. Ultimate goal is to develop high-speed rail transportation in the corridor, and improved transportation services throughout Pacific Northwest states and British Columbia.

Without the Legislative action, operation of the very successful service would have terminated Dec 31.

Circulation over 1200 and GROWING!

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Attend Region 8 NARP Meeting in Portland
Sat, March 16 at Red Lion Lloyd Center
see page 3 for details

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**Association of
Oregon Rail and Transit Advocates**
PO Box 2772, Portland, OR 97208-2772

a non-profit citizen-advocate group working for safe, fiscally responsible, environmentally sound transportation.
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AORTA works with the National Assn of Railroad Passengers (NARP), but AORTA is an autonomous body.

NARP Directors from Region 8 (AK, ID, MT, OR, WA), including Directors-at-large, are James Hamre, Hans Mueller, Ray Polani, Art Poole and Robert Stevens, Jr.

AORTA Annual Dues:

Introductory/senior/student/low income	\$ 10
Regular (family rate add \$5/addtl member)	20
Sponsor	100
Govt/corporate rate (budget under \$100,000)	50
(budget over \$100,000)	100

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BRODY continued from pg 1

“We see a powerful wave in our future: it’s Oregon’s growing population and economic growth. It’s bringing significant change...To catch the wave ... we have to prepare now so we can harvest the power ... and ride it all the way to the shores of prosperity.”

The OTC Vice-Chair believes transportation and landuse planning are two of the most important keys to “harvesting that power.” She says Oregon is in a unique position to take advantage of the developing global economy.

In August Gov Kitzhaber met with the OTC and announced the establishment of a multi-agency state special “Community Solutions Team.” The team is comprised of agency heads from ODOT, Land Conservation & Development, Department of

Environmental Quality, Housing and Community Development, and Economic Development.

Brody stated “it is clear we will not have congestion-free roads in the future ... that’s just not possible. We’re growing too fast, we have too many people, too many businesses. What we can do is make more livable urban areas, more livable neighborhoods, more livable rural areas, and ... work toward providing ... transportation mode choices ...”

“Transit, rail, rideshare, demand management are critical for our state’s future. Many officials would rather put more dollars into highways and forget about transportation choices.” But focusing on more highways will not work, stated Brody.

According to Brody, the people who want to continue emphasis on road building “fail to recognize the high price for automobile travel. We pay for congestion, air pollution, devoting vast tracts of expensive real estate to highways, roads, streets and parking lots.”

“... because you’re here tonight, you’re obviously interested in educating citizens in this state about the problems of auto dependency and what it really costs ... but there is so much work that needs to be done, there are really very few people in this state ..., including at the state level ... in the field of transportation, who [understand] what the costs associated with automobile travel are ... We need to do a better job of education and outreach.”

Brody explained that ODOT has been working on an interim funding package to continue the Willamette Valley rail & bus program (*see pg 1*). She cautioned, however, that “elected officials in Salem aren’t as enthusiastic as the public seems to be about having increased service.”

In September ODOT requested permission from the Legislature’s Emergency Board to spend \$1M in oil overcharge funds (*see Aug AORTA Bulletin*). The E-Board stated they would not grant authority to use the funds unless ODOT developed additional funding (\$2.5M) to assure continued operation through the biennium (until June 97). Plans are underway to secure federal “Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality” funds and return to the Legislature in November. ... *continued on page 4. See “Brody”*

Register now for NARP Region VIII meeting in Portland

The Annual NARP Region VIII Spring Meeting will be held Saturday, March 16 at the Red Lion- Lloyd Center. Registration fee for the event is \$20. Registration includes a "Butcher Block" buffet luncheon.

A no-host social hour begins at 12:30 PM. The buffet luncheon will start at 1:15 PM, followed by NARP and state ARP reports, election of NARP directors, and the featured presentation.

Please mail your reservation(s), including fee, as early as possible to: NARP 8 Meeting, c/o AORTA, PO Box 2772, Portland, OR 97208-2772. A late fee of \$4 will be charged for reservations received after March 10, and for persons without prior registration.

Red Lion-Lloyd Center's main entrance is located on NE 11th Ave near the MAX's Lloyd Ctr station. Tri-Met bus #77 provides ½ hr service from Union Station on Saturday.

Major rail event planned to celebrate 100 years of Union Station

□ Rail Sensation Events, Inc. asks for donations for painting by noted rail artist

Portland Development Commission (PDC), along with local rail groups, is gearing up to celebrate the 100th anniversary of Portland's Union Station.

While the national historic landmark will reach its 100th year on Feb 14, a major rail event to commemorate the centennial will be held May 10-12. In addition to the station itself, the event will include a wide variety of railway equipment, including modern and historical equipment. Current plans call for *several* live steam locomotives to be present.

PDC owns and maintains the station, and is responsible for helping to restore the structure to much of its former glory.

Local rail groups are advised to mark these dates on their event calendars. Information on space availability for displays and booths should be available in the next Bulletin.

A special kick-off event will be held on Feb 14, the actual anniversary date, to help publicize the May 10-12 event. February 14 is also Oregon's statehood day and Valentine's Day.

Rail Sensation Events, Inc (RSE) President Rich Carlson is seeking donations to help cover the costs of a project to honor the 100th anniversary of Portland's Union Station. RSE contracted with

Northwest railroad artist Craig Thorpe in December to produce an oil painting of the historic landmark.

The painting will be used to produce envelopes with full-color cachets. The envelopes, and a special commemorative cancellation, will be available for sale at the station on Feb 14, according to Carlson. RSE hopes to use Thorpe's artwork to prepare other commemorative items for the event.

Thorpe is well known for a variety of works, including three of Amtrak's last four calendars. Some of his work was the topic of an article, "Calendars for All Time," in the January 1996 *Trains* magazine.

Two of Thorpe's paintings have been used to produce commemorative posters (the Olympia-Lacey Station and the *Mount Baker International* with Talgo equipment). AORTA has a limited number of autographed *Mount Baker International* posters available for \$12 pp.

RSE was formed through the cooperation among AORTA, the Pacific NW Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society, and the Pacific Railroad Preservation Association. RSE is a non-profit, 501C3 corporation and all donations are tax exempt. Contributions should be mailed to: *RSE Station Painting, PO Box 2282, Portland, OR 97208-2282.*

Brody continued from page 2

ODOT is also looking to obtain funding for bus service along the *Pioneer's* route if that train is discontinued.

We "clearly need to demonstrate substantial state support for intercity rail in the 97 Legislature or we ... quite likely will lose our status as one of the national high-speed corridors ..."

Ridership on the *Mt. Rainier* extension (now called the *Cascadia*) has continued to exceed ODOT's most optimistic projections. During the first 11 months, the train has averaged 125 daily passengers, the buses have averaged 40 daily riders.

In an effort to create more revenue for the *Mt. Rainier*, package express is now offered, uncrated bicycles are allowed, tourist travel packages developed and discount tickets offered.

Brody thanked AORTA, especially Fred Nussbaum and Tim Wilson, for its involvement. She noted that AORTA was a "strong advocate for complementary bus service ... there was some resistance to [the bus service] at first- we weren't sure we could afford to do it ... [it was] unclear there would be a benefit." But Brody said the bus service "has been very important to the success of the train ridership, and I really appreciate ... your push" and that "you stayed with the program."

"Assuming we receive approval from the Legislature's E-Board in November, then we need to start focusing on the 1997 Legislative session. There are several challenges that lie ahead ...

Brody says we "clearly need to demonstrate substantial state support for intercity rail in the 97 Legislature or we ... quite likely will lose our status as one of the national high-speed rail corridors, at least the portion from Portland to Eugene.

"We're also going to fail to meet our commitment to Washington State... Washington State has really

stepped up to the plate ... both Oregon and British Columbia have... failed to meet their commitments ... It's critical ... we keep this as a corridor-wide effort."

Brody announced Albany, Salem and metropolitan Portland representatives will be added to the HSR Task Force. She also stated she "wants to formally have AORTA sit with us as a Task Force member. You clearly have been contributing ... and should be more formally at the table."

The merger of Southern Pacific and Union Pacific will present a challenge to the project, according to Brody. Merger means "more freight traffic on the rails, and that presents ... potential conflicts with passenger rail..." But the merger has a positive side too. Brody believes it may mean more investment in the infrastructure by Union Pacific.

Brody reported that Gov Kitzhaber has a "strong interest in developing a successful [transportation] funding package for the 97 Legislature." The Governor and the Commission will be looking at long-term funding options, not just funding for the next two years. She said the Commission will be "dramatically re-examining how to fund transportation... We're going to be re-looking at all our basic assumptions about financing transportation systems and looking at different pricing methods..." Brody stated, however, that she is not convinced that opening up the gas tax is the right solution.

Input from grassroot citizen groups will be very important during the next legislative session, according to the OTC Vice-Chair. Local governments and state agencies do not seem to have as much clout with the Legislature as they used to.

She warned AORTA to expect a strong push from the trucking lobby to repeal Oregon's weight-mile tax. Oregon is one of very few states that come close to charging heavy trucks their fair share for road maintenance, and the industry at the national level has targeted Oregon's weight-mile tax for fear it might spread to other states.

During the business meeting preceding Brody's presentation, Ken McFarling, Andrew Rux and Ed Rynerson were re-elected as Directors-At-Large.

By-Laws Amendments to be Considered

The AORTA Board will be considering several By-law changes meetings in January and February. Should the business not be completed at the February meeting, it shall be acted upon in March. Among issues to be considered are changing the term of membership from the calendar year to a 12-month period, the dues structure, the process for selecting officers, duties of officers, meeting agendas, and requirements relating to local chapters.

The Board will also be discussing and acting upon changes to comply with IRS 501C3 requirements for

tax-deductible corporate status. Revision to the purpose statement, which currently is limited to passenger transportation, will also be discussed. AORTA members and other interested persons are encouraged to attend board meetings.

Attend the board meetings in January, February & March to discuss and act upon changes to the by-laws.

Ride the Train to Mt. Rainier

In August Washington's DOT awarded \$1M to the City of Tacoma to help purchase 74 miles of railway line between Tacoma and Chehalis. The railway, currently owned by Weyerhaeuser Co., was formerly known as the Chehalis Western Railroad.

In 1990, Weyerhaeuser donated to the City of Tacoma 56 miles of track between Graham and Mount Rainier. This part of the line is already used by tourist trains operated between Mt. Rainier and Graham. Purchase of track between Tacoma and Graham will allow tourist train operation between Tacoma and Mount Rainier National Park.

Plans call for investing another \$4-6M to improve the Graham-Mt. Rainier section.

The line will also be used for freight traffic between Tacoma and Chehalis, and after track improvements are completed, to Morton and Eatonville. Shifting freight to rail will help reduce road maintenance costs. The tourist operation will reduce the number of automobiles clogging the National Park.

The City plans to purchase the line for \$3M. The Port of Tacoma contributed \$300,000; and Boeing contributed \$200,000 for acquisition.

The public-private partnership established the Tacoma Eastern Railway and plans to operate both freight and rail passenger (tourist train) along the scenic line. (Maybe this train will be renamed the "Mt. Rainier!")

Portland & Western Shortline Railroad

Portland & Western (P&W), a new railroad has joined the growing list of shortlines appearing throughout the nation. The Portland area operator leases 52 miles of Southern Pacific track connecting Portland with Hillsboro, Beaverton, Tigard, Sherwood, Newberg, Milwaukie and Lake Oswego.

P&W contracts with Willamette and Pacific, another Oregon shortline operator, for locomotive servicing, track maintenance and administrative services. The two shortlines connect in Newberg.

Both shortlines are subsidiaries of Genesee & Wyoming Inc. (G&W), a New York-based company. G&W operates nine shortlines in Oregon, Louisiana, Pennsylvania and New York. P&W began operations August 18. Tony Mogytych is vice president and general manager.

Portland & Western reopened the rail line between Sherwood and Newberg in 1995. The line, which crosses over Rex Hill, has been closed since 1994.

Satellite technology is applied to railways

W Kenneth McFarling

Most reprehensible in relationships among transport forms is the disparity of promoting off-track forms by expenditures from public treasuries, contrasted with insistence that proprietors and patrons of railways pay every attributable cost, including taxes to swell the general funds of those treasuries.

Accentuating the disparity is the virtual exemption of off-track forms from all taxes except those earmarked to be spent for their specific benefit--and having those payments also credited as compensation for using public facilities.

Too many politicians gain/hold office by acting as highly paid ax-grinder flunkies for wealthy "businessmen", and because most of those businessmen are exploiters of lavish subsidies, prospect that legislation worthy of respect will emerge seems small indeed.

Mitigation seems a bit more possible for another troubling problem: widespread ignorance of how scientific achievements are being applied to the practice of railway technology. Ignorance--and/or inclination to rationalize hostility toward railways by ignoring their attributes and potentialities--is especially distressing when manifested by individuals positioned to shape legislation and administrative practices. The situation calls for efforts to dispel ignorance and arouse pressure for remedial action among the voting public!

Publicizing examples of developments among practitioners of railway technology should improve public attitudes toward railways.

Some US railways already use satellite communication as a less expensive way to govern traffic, either in lieu of costly wayside signal and track circuit installation, or to supplement signals & circuits. (See sidebar.)

General Railway Signal Corporation (GRS), of Rochester, NY, has placed on the market a GPS (geographical positioning system) called "Transvision." The system uses satellite technology to locate elements of railway infrastructure in three dimensions.

Equipment is installed on a high-rail conveyance to gather information while traveling at up to 35 mph. Intervals between trains on most railways would allow a conveyance moving at that speed to gather data along a rather substantial distance without delaying revenue traffic.

Transvision equipment includes a receiver which accepts digital signals from orbiting satellites. The signals help establish the coordinates of an object focused upon by a pair of digital stereo cameras, targeted horizontally and parallel to centerline of the conveyance, and securely mounted on its roof. The cameras are automated to record digital data at 1-second intervals. (When traveling at 35 mph, distance between exposures would be 51.3 ft.)

Where line-of-sight between satellite and receiver is obstructed for no more than two miles (e.g., in a tunnel) dimensional accuracy to a distance of less than \pm one meter (39") is possible.

(That's far superior to aerial photos of its lines through the Cascades Southern Pacific once purchased: Track and all detail was totally lost in the shadow of trees bordering the railway.)

Establishing a portable base station to supplement satellites achieves "Differential GPS." Coordinates thereby obtained reportedly have accuracy of approximately \pm 20 cm (about 8 in).

[GRS source of this report does not indicate the degree of accuracy without a supplemental station.]

That distance is considerably more than

Though interaction with satellites can serve in lieu of track circuits for signals governing railway traffic, circuits continue to be used for activating visible and audible warning devices and gates at road crossings.

For a location where trains are likely to stop after entering a stretch of track including crossing signal circuitry, two consecutive circuits are in some instances provided. (The track circuit which reaches across a road is relatively short.)

If a train does not enter that second circuit within a predetermined interval, the warning devices cease to halt movement to resume on the road.

In some locations (e.g. NW Front Av crossing SE of Union Station) wayside instruments are installed to reactivate road-crossing devices in response to the frequency ("pitch") of a locomotive horn. When a locomotive is about to proceed, it need not enter the second circuit to restart devices; the person at the controls does so by sounding the horn, to give ample warning to motorists.

the permissible amount of track misalignment, and the maximum amount of superelevation normally encountered on a curve, and exceeds the offset distance from tangent line to the center line of almost any spiral transition curve within 100 ft of the point at which tangent changes to spiral (or vice versa). Recourse to more traditional field procedure would seem necessary for aligning track, including spirals, and for installing superelevation or vertical curves.

But the stereo digital data of Transvision appears to be of tremendous value for determining the bearings of tangents; the radii of the portions of curves which are circular arcs; the distance between centers of parallel tracks. (Distances close to the minimum for clearance requirements would necessitate the traditional method of measurement.) Transvision data should suffice for determining frog numbers of turnouts; for location switch points; wayside features (whether or not railway company property) and any other significant concern.

Stereomapping software allows calculation on a computer of distance between any two objects for which digital images appear on the monitor.

Four additional cameras, variously aimed, record video information. That information is correlated with digital data for identification. The combination provides a comprehensive database for every department responsible for infrastructure, whether it be track, bridges and buildings, signals, communication facilities, motive power/car service and repair, electrification, or whatever—including relations with

one another. The combination conserves both space and time, and reduces chance of error.

Videomapping software can provide a map showing whatever category of features the viewer selects. Pointing at a spot on the monitor display of track center line brings up the photoframe recorded at that spot. That characteristic of the procedure, coupled with dimensions obtainable from Stereomapping, obviates a tremendous amount of travel time, vehicle, lodging, and payroll expense, and field work in unpleasant weather sometimes experienced in traditional engineering department activity. Computer printouts reduce draftsman time.

Glossary

Frog: An element of track which provides gaps for wheel flanges where two rails intersect.

Frog Number: A number used to identify the angle between two intersecting rails in a frog. The number can be determined by placing your shoe across the frog so that heel and toe align with its two sides. From there, step off heel-to-toe the distance to the theoretical point (the actual point of the frog cut off). Because frog numbers are expressed in integers, this method is sufficient to determine frog number: It's simply the number of heel-to-toe steps.

Spiral transition curve: A curve of uniformly varying radius and superelevation. This provides a smooth transition between straight and curved track.

Superelevation: The amount of elevation of the outer rail above the inner rail in a curve.

Tangent: A straight section of track, or a straight line touching a curve at only one point, and without crossing it.

Shortlines and Quotes

- Why do the media and public officials often refer to passenger rail as "subsidized," but almost never make such reference to highway, air or inland waterway transport? Rail is the *only* form of transportation which must acquire, develop, maintain, police, signalize and pay taxes on their right-of-way. Every other form of transport relies on the public to cover these costs, and pays only "user fees" which offset only part of the costs of construction and maintenance. Who is *REALLY* subsidized?
- Did you know there are more miles of unpaved logging roads (315,200) in the Pacific Northwest and British Columbia than paved streets/highways (219,800)? In Oregon, there are 54,200 miles of paved roads, 72,800 miles of logging roads. And logging roads, like paved roads, continue to expand, degrading air quality, causing erosion, and reducing the long-term economic viability of the Northwest. *The Daily Astorian*, Dec 12, 1995.

NW Corridor Improvements

Effective Oct 29 the *Mount Baker International* (Seattle-Vancouver, B.C.) reduced travel time by 20 minutes. The daily train now departs Seattle at 7:15 am, arriving in Vancouver at 11:30 am. The train departs Vancouver, B.C. at 6 PM, arriving in Seattle at 10:15 PM. Patrons will see a new menu in the diner, including candlelight dining.

The *Cascadia* (formerly *Mt Rainier*) now features checked baggage service at Seattle, Tacoma, Portland and Eugene. Self-service bike racks are also available on the train. The name change, pushed by Sen Hatfield's office, caused grumbling in Olympia. According to the Oct 26 *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, some state officials complained they were not consulted.

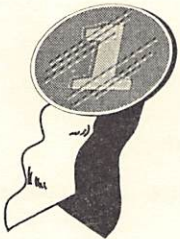
A reason given for dissension was that officials wanted corridor trains named after "familiar Cascade peaks." In 1994 the name of the *Mt. Hood*, funded by WSDOT, was changed to *Mt. Adams* "because it

is a Washington train and should be named after a Washington mountain."

The *Mount Adams* (Portland-Seattle) now boasts a special lounge car with large panoramic windows, feature length movies, at-table seating, a private meeting room for groups and parties, and an improved menu with premium local products. The *Mount Adams* also has self-service bicycle racks.

The Oct 29 schedule changed the *Coast Starlight* (Los Angeles - Seattle, via Klamath Falls, Chemault, Eugene, Albany, Salem, Portland) Seattle departure to 8:30 am (one-half hour later).

The Pacific Northwest is one of Amtrak's fastest growing corridors. During Amtrak's FY 1995, ridership grew 111.8%; revenue grew by 231%. That growth demonstrates what happens when the progressive leadership found in Amtrak West is allowed to improve, rather than cut back, service.



Commendations . . .

To *Willamette Week* which put into print how special interests are manipulating the South-North light rail alignment selection process in order to reach a pre-ordained conclusion. The Nov 8-14 issue listed 21 ways to make Portland a better place to live. Four of the suggestions were consistent with positions AORTA has taken/ supported: (1) Saving the bus mall, (2) Extending light rail to the airport, (3) Removing the eastside freeway from the riverfront, and (4) emphasizing bicycle and pedestrian movement..

On Saturday, Nov 18 at 8:50 am, AORTA Board member Ray Polani was enroute to AORTA's monthly board meeting. Ray was riding his bicycle west on E Burnside St. Without signaling, an eastbound automobile driver turned left from Burnside onto 30th Ave, immediately in front of Ray. The ensuing collision threw Ray over the automobile's hood, injuring him and damaging his bicycle. We are fortunate he sustained no broken bones. His injuries, were nonetheless severe; Ray continues to suffer from his injuries (Ray, get well soon!).

Tri-Met bus driver Jeff Lomax deserves special commendation for providing assistance. Mr. Lomax, driving a route 20 bus eastbound on Burnside witnessed the accident. He stopped promptly and provided assistance to Ray. He supplied paper for Ray to make notes about the collision, helped Ray onto his bus, loaded the damaged bicycle aboard, and took Ray to the bus stop a block from Ray's house. THANK YOU, JEFF LOMAX!!

Your assistance is needed in order to continue to provide praise for some of the many providers and citizens who help to make rail and public transit work in Oregon. Please send stories of service above and beyond the call of duty to AORTA Bulletin, PO Box 2772, Portland, OR 97208-2772.

LOCAL LINES: *News around the state*

Coastal Tidings

South Coast calls for improved transit

Coos Bay- An Oct 8 survey conducted by Oregon Department of Transportation revealed that Coos Bay area residents have a strong interest in improving local and intercity surface transportation. About 80% of respondents called for improved public transit. Residents indicated interest in bus service to connect Coos Bay (population 15,450), North Bend (9,840), Myrtle Point (2,740), Coquille (4,115), Lakeside (1,410) and Bandon (2,430).

The survey also indicated support for light rail, but a recognition that it is not feasible in the Coos Bay area. Bob Sherman, a senior transportation planner for ODOT, announced the survey results. The survey, conducted in a mall, was not a scientific survey. Oct 9, *The World*, Coos Bay, OR

Astoria paper calls for balance

Astoria- An article in *The Daily Astorian*, Dec 5, declared "Highways ride, railroads walk." The paper pointed out that while government leaders complain loudly about "government subsidies," they ignore subsidies to automobiles.

The author said that, long after our current leaders have left office, the nation "will lament the fact that our passenger rail system was starved . . . in the 1990's," and again when the nation has to face petroleum shortages. "If there is one verity about the future, it is that petroleum will eventually be in short supply."

"Look at all the fuss and bother created by the north-south Portland light-rail line. The inequitable relationship is that highways are exempted from budget competition while transit must fight for it. Highways and the car culture are the domestic equivalent of the Pentagon. If you are in uniform, you may have a key to the Treasury. If not, stand in line. As the *Times* said, 'Highway interests luxuriate in the myth that motor vehicles pay for their public costs at the fuel pump while rail systems unworthily seek public subsidies.

The paper said "we are fools not to be developing a high-speed rail system . . . from Vancouver, British Columbia, to Portland" [and Eugene!]. *Note: Work is proceeding toward HSR in the corridor; however, most of the activity is in the State of Washington.*

The editorial concluded, "Those who grasp the larger wisdom of nurturing a national rail network against the day when we will need it should not lose hope."

Complaint by a local oil dealer about the US Coast Guard's constructing an oil line triggered the editorial. It pointed out that the government-provided pipe helps bring petroleum to his pumps!

Intercity bus service returns to Astoria

Astoria- On again; off again: Intercity bus service returned to Astoria Dec 8. Pierce Pacific Stages Inc. is providing the new service. Tualatin businessman Mike Pierce owns and operates the company. Pierce hopes to expand service to include a loop linking Astoria with Lincoln City, and Salem; and linking Portland with Aberdeen (WA), Olympia, & Astoria.

Astoria had been without intercity bus service for 3 months. NE Oregon has endured a rapid turnover of bus operators, beginning in 1995 with RAZ Transportation, then Green Belt, and most recently Dash-Hound, Inc (see Aug 95 *AORTA Bulletin*).

Southern Oregon Signals

Officer on the Train?!

Roseburg- No, this is *not* part of the Operation Lifesaver program! Law enforcement officers from Roseburg took the train to the site of an altercation on Thursday, Nov 2. Two transients, camped along the South Umpqua River, had a disagreement-turned violent. Because the location was not accessible by road, police hitched a ride on a south-bound freight. They arrested a 41 y.o. male. Nov 12, *News-Review*, Roseburg.

Southern Oregon Newspapers Value Amtrak

Grants Pass- The Nov 6 *Grants Pass Daily Courier* and the Nov 8 *Herald and News* (Klamath Falls) reprinted a well written editorial supporting use of federal gasoline tax dollars to help fund railway passenger service. The *Statesman Journal* (Salem) originally published the editorial on Oct 30. See "Shortlines and Quotes" for excerpts.

Amtrak to Ashland

Ashland- Ashland resident Ellen Hegler is eager to see Amtrak service provided to Ashland and other Southern Oregon cities. On Nov 7 the *Grants Pass Courier* published a letter to the editor from Hegler, pleading for rail service advocates to contact their elected officials.

East Oregon News

Baker City- A Union County couple was killed southeast of Baker City Nov 1 in consequence of failure to exercise caution at a private grade crossing. A westbound freight train traveling 50 mph struck their pickup truck and horse trailer. A horse in the trailer also died, but the couple's dog survived.

The crossing was marked with a stop sign, and a sign warning drivers to "look twice for trains."

Efforts to close road crossings of railways with inadequate warning devices frequently provokes strong community opposition.. Oregon PUC's attempt in Oct to close a crossing east of Union (Union Junction Lane) ran into opposition from county commissioners and the city police chief.

According to PUC's Richard Hatch, three collisions have occurred at the Union Junction Lane crossing in the last 37 years. He indicated that state and local statistics suggest there will be a fatal collision unless the Union Junction Lane crossing is closed. PUC plans to provide train-activated warning devices at a crossing 2 miles away.

Oregon law (ORS 763.013) states "it is the policy of [Oregon] ... to eliminate crossings at grade wherever possible."

The National Transportation Safety Board reports that of 180,000 grade crossings in the US, only 1400 have train activated warning devices. *The Observer* (Baker City), Oct 31 and Nov 2.

Shortlines and Quotes

- "All modes should have equal access to transportation funds. Funds should be focused where they are most needed...This seems to be an obvious role for the federal government... Another way we can be sure we are making the best investments is to develop performance measures for our transportation system. For every other major investment in our nation we have indexes by which we can judge the effectiveness of our actions...Beyond federal legislation, transportation policy must also be affected on the state and local level... State and local funding should *enhance* the flexibility of local decisions, not bind them... transportation dollars must be strategically invested in a way that preserves or enhances environmental and aesthetic quality, conserves natural resources and makes communities more livable. Transportation investments and their relationship to land development continue to be key issues... Transportation investments must be integrated in a way that maximizes economic efficiency and productivity and provides for the efficient and affordable options for people and freight." *Emphasis added.* "STPP Principles for Transportation Policy," *STPP Progress*, Dec 1995.
- An improved rail system serving the entire Vancouver, BC - Eugene, OR corridor costs less than one new lane each way on I-5 between Seattle and Portland.." *Rail Connection*, Dec 1995, Washington State DOT.
- In 5 years WSDOT hopes to reduce Seattle - Portland rail travel time to 3 hrs, 17 minutes, with 8 daily round-trips. In 20 yrs, travel time would be 2 hrs - 30 minutes, with nearly hourly frequency. *ibid.*

Crime on Portland's Transit Mall

□ A Train of Thought:

by the editor

I do some of my best thinking early in the morning. At least, in my state of stupor, that is what I tell myself. Last night I had a dream. The dream caused some distress; I awoke in the early hours of 1996 feeling exhausted.

I had stopped at a neighborhood store. While in the checkout line, I observed a woman pick up a shopping bag, slip some merchandise into the bag, and leave without paying.

Outside the store she breathed a sigh of relief, exclaiming to her male companion, "we made it!"

Determined not to let the crime go unchecked, I grabbed the woman. She attempted to hand-off her loot, and the evidence, to her friend. Fortunately, this was a dream and my powers were unlimited! I pulled both persons back to the store where I summoned help from inside.

Something really bothered me. There was a lack of concern by other people, even the person at the cash register. They just didn't want to get involved. The shoplifters themselves seemed indignant. Why was I bothering them?! What business was this of mine!

Why was I having this dream?!

The Portland metropolitan area has recently completed a series of actions to determine what South/North light rail routes are to be considered when the draft environmental impact statement (EIS) is developed. No routes, other than those sanctioned, may be considered without the EIS.

Unfortunately, Portland has suffered a shoplifting crime of the greatest magnitude. And this is no dream! In terms of (year) 2005, the theft is about a billion dollars. That's just to correct the problem; it doesn't include lost benefits and increased costs associated with misdirecting public funds.

Throughout the process of so-called public hearings, it became clear the downtown routing decision had been reached long before any hearing.

At the hearing before the Tri-Met board, a key board member frequently "scolded" persons who had the audacity to express opinions different from what the king-makers had determined to do.

When AORTA Director Jim Howell simply and clearly explained how figures Tri-Met uses to evaluate future peak hour ridership in the mall exceeded realistic maximums, the board member proclaimed he couldn't understand the numbers. (His summarization of the testimony at the end clearly demonstrated he had not been listening.)

Fred Nussbaum explained how misinformation had been fed to citizen advisory committees.

Excepting a city commissioner and official appointees to the route selection process, every person testifying opposed the mall alignment.

Their desire is simply that the citizens of the state enjoy the best, most economical transportation system our limited resources can develop. The primary purpose of transit should not be to line the pockets of developers and land speculators, nor to pay off political debts.

After the "hearing," the vocal Tri-Met board member proclaimed the board was compelled to listen to the planners who had expertise. He said the board could not give credence to opinions of mere citizens who could not possibly be privy to the wealth of information such "experts" hold.

Many who asked that alternatives be included in the EIS have training and/or experience in transportation systems development. Among those who testified against the mall alignment, the only "lack" was of sufficient money to influence the outcome.

Long ago AORTA adopted a mission statement. Our primary goal is education. Portlanders have just had their pockets picked. I do not believe AORTA will just stand aside. To the king-makers who believe your chosen route is now "in the bag": You haven't "made it" yet!

Salem Amtrak Station

Phase I improvements to the Amtrak station in Salem have begun. Included in the \$500,000 project are a new roof and downspouts, new doors and painting for the exterior. Inside the building patrons will find toilet rooms and ticketing area remodeled, and the old baggage room demolished. Interior walls and ceilings will be restored, and mechanical and electrical systems replaced.

Phase 2 improvements call for a new attached express ??? shed, a new canopy on the track side, new furnishings and improved ticketing area.

The present building was constructed in 1918. A fire in 1885 destroyed the first building, built in 1871. It was located about 100 feet south of the present site. A fire in the early 1900's damaged a station constructed in 1889.

Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) releases high-speed rail (HSR) report


In May & June, the FRA conducted seven hearings on HSR throughout the nation. A summary, "High-Speed Ground Transportation Policy Outreach," was published Nov 22.

Seventy-six people attended the May 15 hearing in Portland. AORTA's Fred Nussbaum, Ray Polani and Ken McFarling participated.

The report says "Fred Nussbaum of AORTA stated that 'high speed ground transportation should be able to directly compete with national highway system

highways in the same corridor for the same federal funds.'"

WashARP stated "the federal government should live by its own ISTEA policies by integrating rail into national highway system planning initiatives." NARP argued that "the current system only ensures that the modes with trust fund access get bigger...the general public wants a sensible transportation system where investments are based on need rather than which specific mode collected the user fee."

 AORTA TIMETABLE	
7pm Tues Jan 23	Portland Planning Commission Hearing Policy changes & street reclassifications State Office Bldg, 1400 SW 5th, suite 1000
9 am Sat Jan 27	AORTA Board Meeting Rm 208, Union Station, Portland
6:30 p Thurs Feb 15	AORTA Portland Chapter Meeting Rm 208, Union Station, Portland
9 am Sat Feb 24	AORTA Board Meeting Rm 208, Union Station, Portland
Tuesday Feb 28	Union Station 's 100th Anniversary Rail Festival kick-off event
12:30 pm Sat Mar 16	NARP/AORTA/WashARP Spring Meeting AORTA Board meeting Red Lion Lloyd Center. Registration \$20
Fri-Sat-Sun May 10-12	Major rail event at Union Station celebrating stations' 100th anniversary
<p>AORTA Board normally meets at 9 am, 4th Saturday of each month, Rm 208, Portland's Union Station.. The Portland Chapter normally meets at 6:30 PM , 3rd Thursday of each month ,at the same location. Please call (503) 642-4077 to verify meeting time and location.</p>	

SF's BART offers "Rent-Alls"

The Oct 25 *San Francisco Chronicle* reported electric automobiles will soon be made available at some Bay Area Rapid Transit stations. The program will provide a total of 40 vehicles at stations in Ashby, Colma, Lafayette and Walnut Creek by next summer. A local software company has already leased 9 of the vehicles. Boston has a similar program.

The lightweight vehicles, built in Norway, carry 2 people, room for luggage/supplies, and have a top speed of 55 mph. Cost is less than \$10,000; the range about 65 miles per charge.

See Jan 95 *AORTA Bulletin* for an article by Tom Bender, Nehalem, OR, titled "Rent-Alls: A Key to Successful Transportation Systems."

Special Thanks to the following who helped contribute to this issue: Orval Etter, Sherman Lynch, Ken McFarling, Ray Polani, Art Poole.