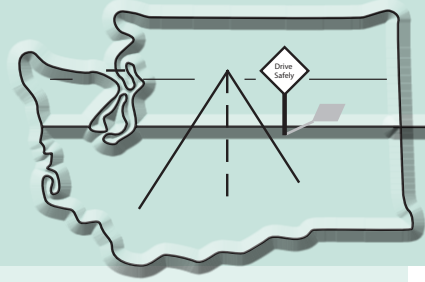


Good Roads & Transportation



WSGRTA

Established in 1899

Inside this issue

Ferries Drydocked	2
Tacoma Bridge Closure	3
Biggs Bridge Closure	3
Legislative Breakfast	4

President: *Jim Tobin*

President Elect: *Mark Kushner*

Past President: *Bill Garing*

Secretary: *Rick Door*

Treasurer: *Robert Schuster*

Executive Admin: *Carrie Hay*

Editor: *Ken Nelson*

Membership Mtg. & Legislative Breakfast

Jan 31, Feb 1

Red Lion Inn - Olympia, WA

Register online at
www.wsgрта.com

2008 Meeting Schedule

April 17 - Ellensburg

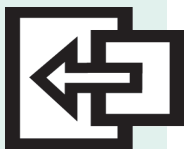
July 17 - Ellensburg

109th Annual Conference

Sept 18 & 19

Location to be Determined

November 20 - Ellensburg



Jan 2008

Message From the President

It is truly an honor to serve as President of the Washington State Good Roads and Transportation Association. As I take time to reflect on the past and look into the future of the Organization I am reminded that the basic principles that Sam Hill used to found the Good Roads Organization are still very crucial to the vitality of Washington State "An organized system of quality roads is necessary for farmers and the overall economy". Over the years the principle has been expanded to include other modes of transportation required to move goods and people throughout the State.

We are in an era of need. Washington is growing faster than anticipated. Our once adequate highway system has reached or is reaching saturation. At a time when Federal Funding has declined due to the completion of the Interstate system that was started in the 1950s by President Eisenhower, the burden has shifted to the States. The voters, while reluctant to increase taxes in many areas, did approve a much needed gas tax increase and reaffirmed their wishes by defeating an attempt to overturn their vote.

While the revenue from the increase is substantial, it does not even come close to solving the impending needs of WSDOT throughout the State. The west side of the State is grid locked, there are several mega projects in the Puget Sound Area that require funding, the East side of the State while not as populated at this time is rapidly eroding a highway system that cannot be properly maintained due to lack of funding. The cities and counties throughout the State have been hit hard by growth and funding cutbacks. They did not get any relief from the last tax increase.

My goals for the Association for the upcoming year are fairly simple. I would like to continue the goals set last year by our President Bill Garing, to increase membership, and develop a legislative agenda that can be carried forward. I would also like for our organization to become proactive rather than reactive. We could do this by prioritizing the issues of our members and selecting the areas we want to focus on. I firmly believe our organization can be utilized as an education forum for voters. We now have a revamped and very user friendly website, thanks to our Executive Administrator, Carrie Hay, that can be utilized to get out information.

The biggest ingredient to our future success is information from our members. I would encourage each and every one of you to participate, let your concerns be heard, and join us in a united voice to support transportation issues in Washington. We have a broad membership base of public agencies, private engineering firms, labor unions, contractors and individuals that have expressed their interest in transportation. If we can agree on the priority needs for the State we can make a difference.

I look forward to hearing from you and would like to take this opportunity to wish all a very happy and prosperous New Year.

Jim Tobin



Garing hands the reigns off to Jim Tobin

GOOD ROADS AGAIN? (TRIAL BALLOON)

As most of you know, the Washington State Good Roads Association was formed by Sam Hill in 1899, and was instrumental in “getting us out of the mud” among other road and highway related accomplishments. In the mid 1970’s there was a lot of discussion within the Association concerning our support for all forms of transportation; not just roads. This resulted in a 1977 name change to the Washington State Good Roads and Transportation Association. I was all for it at the time.

Some of us have come to realize that this has tended to dilute our support of good roads. I believe we all still agree that the other modes of transportation are very important. However, they all depend on good roads to be effective. Bus transit needs good roads to run on; passenger rail, air, water and pipelines need good roads to get their passengers and products to and from their stations and terminals.

Most, if not all these other modes have a well-developed and effective fan base. If WSGRTA concentrated on good roads – and that means local roads to Interstate highways – we could be more effective for all modes. Maybe it’s time to remove “Transportation” from our name and stick to what we’re good at.

Bob Schuster

I-405 EMERGENCY REPAIR

The Dec. 3 rainstorm created a large sinkhole off the shoulder of southbound I-405 at Benson Road / Main Avenue South in Renton. Engineers determined the 400-foot-long culvert that carries Thunder Hills Creek under I-405 was failing. If it was not repaired, another significant storm could overwhelm the culvert and lead to significant damage to I-405. Contractor Tri-State Construction, working under an emergency contract, closed lanes and installed a 2,000-foot-long pipe and drainage system to divert the water away from the damaged culvert so crews can replace the culvert. The first run of pipe adjacent to the northbound lanes of I-405 in Renton near Benson Road was completed by Dec 21, just in advance of the incoming weather system. WSDOT is spending considerable time monitoring congestion in the work zone while watching the skies, watching the pumps, and hoping for the best. Work to replace the failed culvert will start in January or early February and take about six weeks to complete.

Coolidge Era Steel Electric Ferries Drydocked

SEATTLE - As inspections on its Steel Electric class ferries have progressed, Washington State Ferries (WSF) reports updated information on the status of the two ferries that are in drydock at Todd Pacific Shipyards in Seattle for inspection and maintenance work.

The Quinault and Illahee have been in drydock since November 28. Since then, crews and shipyard staff have worked around the clock to prepare and inspect external and internal hull spaces of both vessels to find any steel problems. Removing paint on the vessels’ 80 year-old riveted steel hulls allows WSF to determine the feasibility and extent of needed repairs.

On Tuesday, November 20, Washington State Secretary of Transportation Paula Hammond announced that WSF would pull all four of the Steel Electric class vessels out of service due to concerns about their safety. Work on the Quinault revealed significant hull pitting along the keel that WSF believes likely extends to all four Steel Electric class vessels. This decision led to vehicle service being suspended on the Port Townsend-Keystone ferry route.

Ongoing work is revealing more pitting and corrosion. “As work has progressed on the Quinault, inspections have revealed additional steel that needs to be replaced and the extent of needed repairs continues to grow,” said Paul Brodeur, WSF Director of Vessel Maintenance and Preservation. “These are old vessels and until all the paint is removed on the hull we will not know the full extent of the problem.” At this time, 70 percent of the paint on the hull has been removed and WSF has discovered that at least 45 percent of the Quinault’s hull will need to be replaced before the vessel can return to service. This percentage may increase if WSF finds more pitting as it completes inspection of the Quinault and Illahee over the next few weeks.

In the same dry-dock at Todd Shipyard, workers are hydro blasting the Illahee’s hull to remove the paint and inspect the steel underneath. Early inspections of the outside of the vessel show that there are areas with pitting that require repair, similar to what has been found on the Quinault.

“These new developments add complexity to our decision about how much to invest in these 80 year-old boats,” said Paula Hammond. “We are moving forward quickly with plans to replace the Steel Electric class vessels, and I understand how difficult it is for residents of Port Townsend and Whidbey Island to be without vehicle ferry service. We will continue to do everything we can to keep our communities informed and to work closely with them and policy-makers as decisions are made and new information becomes available.”

WSF plans to use emerging information about the condition of the Quinault and Illahee to inform decisions about next steps. “We continue to assess the full range of hull pitting and this will help determine the extent and the cost of needed repairs. As we move (cont. page 4)

Biggs Bridge Closure

The Biggs Rapids-Sam Hill Bridge on US 97 over the Columbia River closed on January 2, 2008. The Washington State Department is replacing the existing deck with a more durable concrete deck.

Weight restrictions began in March and continue. Weight restrictions limit the use of the bridge to vehicles weighing less than 40 tons, and a maximum of 8.5 tons per axle. Weight restrictions will be removed when the bridge reopens for the summer of 2008.

The full closure of the bridge happened on January 2, 2008. The bridge will remain closed until the north and main spans of the deck can be replaced; the bridge will be reopened by Memorial Day 2008. Then, after Labor Day, the bridge will close again for the replacement of the bridge deck on the south end of the bridge.

Crews will avoid closing the US 97, Biggs Bridge during the summer months. Community input was critical in the decision to not close the bridge during the summer tourist season. Over the past several years, the bridge's deck has begun to crack and deteriorate, and it continues to worsen despite several maintenance projects. WSDOT has decided to accelerate construction of this project to Fall 2007.

During construction, detour routes will be available. Detour routes include US 197 Dalles Bridge via I-84 or State Route 14. Another option for eastbound traffic is to cross at the I-82 Columbia River Bridge.



Over the past several years, the bridge's deck has begun to crack and deteriorate, and has worsened despite several maintenance projects.

More Info:

<http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/Projects/US97/BiggsBridge.htm>

Tacoma Bridge Closure

The Washington State Department of Transportation was forced to close the 94-year old Murray Morgan Bridge in Tacoma to all vehicular traffic due to structural deterioration. Traffic is routing over the nearby State Route 509 bridge. WSDOT bridge engineers have conducted a comprehensive inspection of the bridge. They found additional structural deterioration and determined that the bridge must be closed to vehicular traffic to ensure public safety.

“Governor Gregoire and I both believe that public safety is a top priority and our aggressive bridge inspection program demonstrates our commitment,” said WSDOT Secretary of Transportation Paula Hammond. “Sometimes these inspections reveal information that forces tough decisions. After years of working with the city to keep this bridge safely open to traffic, information from our most recent inspection indicates that WSDOT must close the bridge immediately. I understand that the 11th Street corridor is important to Tacoma’s economic development and I will continue to work closely with city officials and community members to support their interests.”

The 1,748-foot-long Murray Morgan Bridge, formerly called the 11th Street Bridge, spans the Thea Foss Waterway. As early as 1997, the city and WSDOT have been in discussions about the future of this corridor and whether to replace, rehabilitate or remove this structure. In 2002, WSDOT reduced the bridge from four lanes to two lanes and imposed a 10-ton weight limit to prohibit all heavy vehicles, except emergency response vehicles, from crossing the bridge. The exemption for emergency response vehicles is no longer allowed due to the current condition of the bridge.

The decision to close the bridge was a difficult one given the bridge’s historic past and the high level of interest from local residents to keep it operational. Opened to traffic in 1913, the bridge was built to provide access from the downtown area to the industrial area in the tide flats. In 1997, WSDOT opened the SR 509 cable-stay bridge, which today carries about 28,000 vehicles over the waterway daily. In comparison, the Murray Morgan Bridge currently carries about 1,300 vehicles daily.

The Murray Morgan Bridge is only one of the nearly
(Cont. page 4)

**Washington State Good Roads
& Transportation Association
PO Box 6514
Kennewick, WA 99336**

509 948-9606
info@wsgрта.com
www.wsgрта.com

PRSR STD
US POSTAGE PAID
PASCO WA
PERMIT #27

(Ferries page 2 cont.)

forward, our first priority is the safety and service needs of our customers,” Hammond said.

WSF owns four Steel Electric class vessels – Quinault, Klickitat, Illahee and Nisqually. These vessels, built in 1927, predominantly serve the Port Townsend-Keystone and San Juan Islands inter-island routes. They are the only ferries in the system capable of operating in Keystone’s narrow and shallow harbor. Governor Gregoire’s 2008 supplemental budget proposal of \$100 million for the construction of three new ferries will allow the state to retire the 80 year old steel electric ferries, the oldest vessels in the fleet.

(Tacoma Bridge Closure Page 3 cont.)
3,200 bridges on Washington State’s highways that WSDOT inspects on a regular basis. Most bridges are inspected every two years, however for several years WSDOT has inspected the Murray Morgan Bridge every six months because of its poor condition.

For more information visit: www.wsdot.wa.gov/regions/olympic/murraymorganbridge.htm.

I-5 Closure Costs \$ Millions

According to the Seattle Times, State Transportation Secretary Paula Hammond estimated the I-5 closure’s economic impact at \$4 million a day. But it could be much higher, depending on how many trucks ended up stuck or diverted by floods.

Legislative Breakfast 2008

The Legislative Breakfast is an event you don’t want to miss. Our 2008 gathering on January 31 and February 1 will again feature key Washington leaders communicating information on Washington transportation legislation and projects. The event will again be held at the Red Lion Hotel in Olympia.

Senate Transportation Chair Mary Margaret Haugen, House Transportation Chair Judy Clibborn, and Secretary of Transportation Paula Hammond will be speaking at the meeting.

Sign up on the web at www.wsgрта.com

TIB Selects Projects

The Washington State Transportation Improvement Board (TIB) selected over \$68M in projects for FY2009. The Washington State Legislature created the Transportation Improvement Board to foster state investment in quality local transportation projects. The TIB distributes grant funding, which comes from the revenue generated by three cents of the statewide gas tax, to cities and counties for funding transportation projects. You can view the complete selected project list here:

www.tib.wa.gov

Hot In-Place Recycling Part of Future?

Hot In-Place Recycling is an environmentally friendly method of paving that utilizes the existing asphalt. Basically it heats, grinds up, remixes, softens, places and compacts the existing surface either as a base course or wearing course. It is an effective way of dealing with ruts, patches, cracking, oxidation, and pavement geometry. New aggregate and or asphalt can be added if needed. It needs warm weather to work, a good base, and room enough for a long equipment train. More info: www.arra.org

WSGRTA Survey

Take a few minutes and respond to the survey at:

WWW.WSGRTA.COM



Senator Mary Margaret Haugen has served in the Senate since 1993 representing the 10th District. The Senator is the Chair of the Senate Transportation Committee and Co-chair of the Joint Transportation Committee. She also serves on the National Conference of State Legislators Transportation Committee. Sen. Haugen is a lifetime resident of Camano Island.



Representative Judy Clibborn is a resident of Mercer Island and represents the 41st Legislative District. Rep. Clibborn is the Chair of the House Transportation Committee. Her Legislative priorities include reducing traffic congestion and increasing road safety.



Paula J. Hammond has dedicated her 28 year professional engineering career to the transportation system of Washington State. Paula was officially sworn in as the new Transportation Secretary on November 5, 2007. She has previously served WSDOT in many positions including Chief of Staff, Assistant Secretary, and Highways and Local Programs Director.



WSGRTA

PO Box 6514

Kennewick, WA 99336

**If you have any questions,
please call: (509) 948-9606**

www.wsgрта.com