

Good Roads & Transportation

Message From the President

It is a pleasure for me to have the opportunity to serve as President of our organization. I look forward to a year of exciting changes and challenges in the transportation industry. The infrastructure in our state needs plenty of work. In my 30 years of transportation work I have never witnessed such complicated issues as infrastructure needs, cost escalations, and doubt about the future.

Just a few short years ago the transportation industry was buzzing along, anticipating good times, and seeking consultants and contractors to do all the work created from the 5¢ and 9½¢ gas tax increases. We had 16 years worth of projects funded and cities and counties even got a little boost. How quickly the times and events have changed! Instead of 16 years of projects to work on, we are delaying or cutting the list short. Instead of new city/county projects with their new revenue, projects are being delayed as costs for asphalt, steel, and oil have increased multiple times. In addition, with a slow economy and the \$4.00 gasoline costs the projected revenue to support the new projects was never collected and added to the state coffers. Further clouding the progress of needed transportation solutions for people and freight are environmental and climate change issues which are taking a share of the funds and time.

So what is our organization doing to face these and other transportation challenges? First, we are continuing to meet throughout the year to keep ourselves and others educated with up to date information about these topics. Please visit our web-site (web site #) for a current list of meetings during the year, topics of interest, and speakers for upcoming events.

Next, we are introducing our legislative issues to address these challenges at our annual legislative breakfast scheduled for 7:00 a.m., Friday February 6th, 2009 at the Phoenix Inn, Olympia. Our "draft" list of issues is below and they will be an action/discussion item prior to the legislative breakfast.

- 1) Remove the sales tax on road projects.
- 2) Added gas tax as an alternative funding package.
- 3) Support the federal and state stimulus package for transportation projects.
- 4) Streamlining the permitting process.
- 5) Support the phasing out and eventual ban on studded tires.
- 6) Support for alternative funding sources including tolling.

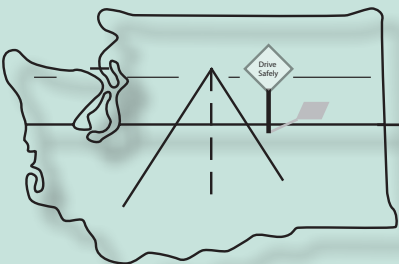
This year the Washington State Good Roads and Transportation Association will be celebrating its 110th year of service and education. Our association is a diverse group of public service individuals, contractors, consultants, and private sector folks who are trying to make a difference in transportation. If you, or someone you know is interested and wants to get involved give us a try.

You can contact me at 509-943-9185 or our WSGRTA office phone at 948-9606 with any comments or questions. What an interesting time to serve in this crazy world of transportation!

Mark Kushner



Ken Nelson confers with President Kushner



WSGRTA

Established in 1899

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President: Mark Kushner

President Elect: Rick Door

Past President: Jim Tobin

Secretary: Dennis Piatek

Treasurer: Robert Schuster

Executive Admin: Carrie Hay

Editor: Ken Nelson

www.wsgрта.com

2009 Coming Events

February 5, 2009 | 7 pm
Membership Meeting
Phoenix Inn - Olympia, WA

February 6, 2009 | 7 am
Legislative Breakfast
Phoenix Inn - Olympia, WA

Regional Vice Presidents:

Mt. Baker - Bill Garing

Sno-King North - Kim Williams

Sno-King South - Tim Pearson

Olympic Region - Jay Spady

Urban Corridors - Bruce Nurse

Pierce County - Earl Liss

Southwest - Ron Green

North Central - vacant

South Central - Fred Bennett

Eastern - Carlos Reyes



Jan 2009

STIMULUS PACKAGE

Is it stimulus or pork, drastically needed investments in infrastructure, or wasteful spending on bridges to nowhere? An assortment of "ready to go" projects have been prepared and the backlog of projects on the shelf is astounding. The debate over stimulus package is raging for sure, but one thing is certain, Americans everywhere are concerned with the status of the nation's infrastructure. A recent poll by "Building America's Future" (a bi-partisan non profit) showed an amazing 94% of Americans are concerned about our nation's infrastructure. 81% are prepared to pay 1% more in taxes to rebuild America's infrastructure. Accountability is their single highest priority (61%).

Americans also understand that infrastructure isn't just roads and highways. Indeed energy facilities ranked first, roads and highways second, and clean water treatment facilities third. And they are far more interested in getting the projects right, than in doing them quickly, "don't mess it up" would supercede "git'er done" in this instance.

"There simply isn't another issue with such widespread support across partisan lines and geographic boundaries," said Republican pollster Frank Luntz of Luntz, Maslansky Strategic Research. "The public already sees the need and is ready to lend a hand financially to make sure it gets done – but they want it done correctly. This is a major test for government. Accountability is absolutely essential."

The American Society of Civil Engineers gives our roads, water, and basic systems a grade of "D" and reports that it will cost \$2.2 trillion to fix the crumbling infrastructure. Delay has exacerbated the cost increases, as the car repair guy says "pay me now, or pay me later..."

As we look to rebuilding America's infrastructure through the stimulus plan (and having something to show for it afterwards) it occurs to me that how we build it matters as much as what we build in some regards. Whether it is the smart grid that will allow more use of alternative energy sources, or the energy independence initiatives, or the use of distributed power generation and net metering, or rebuilding our transportation infrastructure, or adding new connectivity and corridors to our transportation portfolio, we all have a role to play in insuring that it is done in a logical and supportable way. As more and more alternative fuels are developed we will need an improved energy distribution network, whether it is hydrogen, or electric from solar, wind, nuclear, or geothermal, whether it is bio-diesel or cellulosic ethanol, we have much work to do on our energy distribution infrastructure. We need smart investments that will pay over the long haul, improving our economy and jobs in the short term and leaving us with a lasting resource for a prosperous future. We need to make sure that we don't just look at the jobs created by the construction activity, but consider the investment's effects on the economy as a whole.

Ken Nelson

More info at www.investininfrastructure.org

STIRLING TRANSPORTATION

At the 109th Annual Conference we had the chance to tour the Infinia Corp. and hear some things about their Stirling solar system (www.infiniacorp.com). A number of folks chided me about "what does this have to do with transportation?" See my rebuttal here. Aside from providing alternative power for plugin hybrids there are many examples of more direct transportation uses. The French have a research sub powered by one, the Swedes have a diesel powered Stirling sub that has been terrifying the Admirals of the 7th fleet ...so much so that they have leased the sub for a couple of years and have it based in San Diego so they can try to find ways to detect it. The Stirling engine you see is very quiet and vibration free (especially compared to a turbine). In the 1970's Ford, GM and American Motors had worked on prototypes of Stirling powered cars. They could run on most any fuel and are reputed to be 30% more efficient, promising less pollution and providing the same performance as a conventional internal combustion engine. One example of this was the 1979 AMC Spirit prototype. Then guess what? Oil prices came down in the 1980's and the research ended. Patented in 1816 by Robert Stirling the Stirling engine was intended to be a safer replacement for steam engines that were blowing people up with some regularity. Obviously the patent has run out, but many companies are employing their versions to provide power, cryo cooling, combined heat and power, and concentrating solar power. Infinia's secret sauce is their high precision machining, innovative flexure bearings, their NASA gold stamp seal of approval, and time tested free piston maintenance free operation. They have an awesome video on their website showing them in operation.



Current innovative Stirling efforts include Dean Kamen's conversion of a Ford "Think" to a Stirling hybrid electric vehicle. His vanity plate reads "REVOLT". Kamen is probably better known as the inventor of the Segway. So yeah... Stirling engines and transportation have a long history that isn't done yet.

Photo used by permission of www.stirlingengine.com

Ken Nelson

WSDOT Ferry Plan

SEATTLE – Washington State Department of Transportation Ferries Division (WSF) released its revised draft Long-Range Plan today. The revised draft plan highlights a need for \$1.3 billion to \$3.3 billion in new funding over the next 22 years to maintain the ferry system.

The revised draft plan defines two very different scenarios for the state ferry system. Scenario A would make minor improvements to the system, but it would also require \$3.3 billion of additional funding over the next 22 years. Scenario B would cut back some service and pare the system to its bare essentials, reducing the funding need to \$1.3 billion.

"The revised draft plan begins the policy discussion, and presents for the communities, the Legislature and the Governor scenarios that seek to balance achievable service goals and funding requirements," said Paula Hammond, Transportation Secretary. "We need to emerge from this legislative session with clear policy direction and a budget that sets a sustainable course for the future of the ferry system."

The revised draft plan updates a draft document released on Dec. 19, 2008 for public review and comment. WSF accepted comments on the draft through Monday, Jan. 26. During the 38-day comment period, WSF conducted a total of

In Memoriam

Wes Jonasson and Adele have been long time members of Washington State Good Roads and Transportation. Wes Served on the Executive Committee and Adele was a long time Secretary for the Association.

Wesley Julius Jonasson, age 68, passed away the evening of November 6, 2008 at home surrounded by family and friends. Wes was born in Bellingham, December 14, 1939 to Gestur (Juse) and Lois Jonasson. Wes was very active in many local organizations. He was a long time member and President of North Bellingham Rotary and Mt Baker Rotary, and a Phil Harris Award winner, Executive Board Member of Washington State Good Roads, Fire Commissioner for District 7, and volunteer firefighter, advisory board for 911, and Ferndale Chambers of Commerce, Kiwanis, Ferndale Masonic Lodge #264, United Lodge #93, and President and long time member of Puget Sound Wheelers. After retirement, Wes and Adele enjoyed traveling around the United States in their RV. They were avid crabbers, razor clam diggers, and did yearly trout fishing at Ross Lake and Lake Wannacut. Wes is survived by his wife, Adele, daughter Trisha Berg with her husband Chris and their children, Alyssa and Austin Berg of Custer, daughter Kristen Gibson and husband John with their children Kaija and Matt of Redmond, and step-son Hudson Allard, his wife Tera and granddaughter Samantha Allard of Ferndale, and step-son Sam Allard and wife Heather of Seattle. He is also survived by an adopted sister, Judy Chase of Lyman, Washington and too many cousins to name. Please make donations to Hospice as they were wonderful.



Ross Dunfee helms the boat at the 109th annual meeting.

Senator Horn shows his dedication to efficient transit.



THERE'S A NEW SECRETARY IN TOWN

10 public hearings in ferry-served communities to present the draft plan and to listen to public testimony. More than 1,300 individuals attended the public hearings, and hundreds in attendance testified. In addition, WSF received more than 800 written comments.

“I want to thank everyone who took the time to attend a public hearing or write us with their comments,” said David Moseley, Assistant Secretary for Washington State Ferries. “We have reviewed all the comments and, where possible, made some modifications to the draft plan scenarios. We are eager to continue this discussion with the Legislature.”

To obtain a copy of the revised plan or read the public comments submitted between Dec. 19, 2008 and Jan. 26, 2009, visit www.wsdot.wa.gov/ferries/planning/ESHB2358 <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/ferries/planning/ESHB2358>

The new U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood, of Peoria, Illinois, says he wants to meet soon with all 50 state transportation chiefs to discuss stimulus legislation moving through Congress. LaHood has said that it is too soon to say which projects will be funded; but the plan is to get money to states for roads and mass transit as soon as a bill is signed and states submit paperwork.

LaHood, who has years of legislative experience, first on the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee and later on the House Appropriations Committee, will inform state transportation secretaries that “We’re looking to make sure the money is spent correctly, by the book, no short cuts.” The U.S. Transportation Department has been tasked with developing common reporting standards for states that will carefully track all transportation investments. The public will be able to track federal funding on a government web site according to LaHood. In a quote that appeared in the Chicago Tribune, LaHood said “What I’m saying is that when money goes out the door, it’ll be on the web site. I’ve been in public service for 30 years... I’ve read all the horror stories about misspent government money and we’re going to avoid that.”

Another of LaHood’s top priorities involves modernizing the nation’s outmoded, radar-based air traffic control system. He is pushing to replace it with a satellite-based network, called NextGen.

In a recent press release by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), Executive Director John Horsley wrote; “Bipartisan support will be critical if Congress is to draft the kind of transportation bill necessary to meet the enormous demands we face today. We’re confident that Secretary LaHood will play a major role in bringing both sides of the aisle together; setting the state for real solutions and bringing about the kind of reform and accountability that AASHTO is seeking.”

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Infrastructure, Transportation and Economic Development

Major budget and policy decisions are being contemplated as we get into the 2009 legislative session. Mega projects like the

Alaska Way Viaduct and the SR 520 bridge are of course prime topics, but more esoteric items needed by local communities like the Local Infrastructure Financing Tool



(LIFT) are also hot topics. Strong economies are based on infrastructure investments that are often made many years in advance...We are on the brink of a new era of energy and climate change policy that are also affecting decisions as we proceed forward. Stay tuned as the world turns.

American Recovery and Reinvestment Plan (ARRP)

Slightly Different than AARP, the stimulus plan is being tracked closely by the Governor's staff, cities, counties and ports as they try to see where this is headed. It looks at this point as if they will use existing systems and programs to distribute the funding and administer the projects.

Transportation, Clean Water and Drinking Water are the three main areas of focus. The distribution is likely to be a combination of zero percent loans and grants for the Clean Water and Drinking water programs. For transportation it will most likely run through the traditional federal programs and the Surface Transportation Program (STP). How the STP flexible funds get apportioned

will lead to some intrigue. Traditionally this approximate \$80M is lared with local governments. One idea being proposed is to have the Transportation Improvement Board (TIB), with the inclusion of key stakeholders, review transportation projects to assure they meet the federal criteria. More info: <http://news.avnnet.org/avnleg/issues/2009-01-30/6.html>

Meeting at the Phoenix Inn

WSGRTA Membership Meeting February 5 - 7 pm

Our regular Membership meeting will be held at 7 pm to conduct business and set the agenda for the new year. Light dessert items and beverages will be served during this meeting.

WSGRTA 2009 Legislative Breakfast Phoenix Inn

February 6 - 7 am

This years legislative breakfast will focus on funding for state and local agencies, a stimulus package update, studded tires. As always this is a great opportunity to meet with your delegation and talk about issues relating to transportation in your region. We have three great speakers in Senator Mary Margaret Haugen, Representative Judy Clibborn, and the Chief Operating Officer for WSDOT David Dye, P.E. Always a lively discussion not to be missed. The meeting will conclude no later than 9 a.m.



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.



David Dye is Washington State Department of Transportation's Chief Operating Officer. This position focuses on the day-to-day operations of WSDOT across all lines of business, working closely with the Secretary of Transportation, the Chief of Staff and all of WSDOT. Dave helps coordinate with the Regional Transportation Improvement District and maintains a presence on the Puget Sound Region project teams who are working on the region's mega-projects.

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

