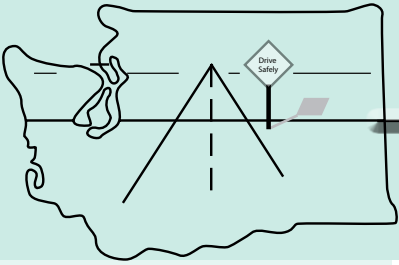


Good Roads & Transportation



WSGRTA

Established in 1899

Inside this issue

Bridge Collapse	2
Improved Package Savings	3
Highway Trust Fund in Peril	3
Annual Conference Info	4

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109th Annual Conference

Sept 18 & 19

Kennewick, Washington
Register online at
www.wsgрта.com

2008 Meeting Schedule

109th Annual Conference
Sept 18 & 19

Kennewick, Washington

November 20 - Ellensburg



Aug 2008

Message From the President

We are now most of the way through my term as President and I am not sure where the time has gone. Now we approach our 109th Annual conference in the Tri-Cities. We are excited to bring our 2008 Annual Conference and Golf Tournament back to the Tri-Cities on September 18 and 19. This year's events will include 18 holes of golf at the award-winning Canyon Lakes Golf Course, a boat cruise on the Columbia River, and a tour of Infinia (a solar startup company). At our Legislative Breakfast our speakers, Senator Mary Margaret Haugen, Representative Judy Clibborn, and Transportation Secretary Paula Hammond stressed the need for continued emphasis on transportation demands throughout the State. Subsequently the legislature has passed a supplemental transportation package. This bill provided for increases in some programs to offset the material escalation costs of the past two years. Unfortunately, other areas are negatively impacted. Aging boats in the state's ferry system, impacts resulting from numerous weather related events the past winter, and unfunded, but much needed, mega projects will definitely impact future transportation budgets. There is still no additional funding identified for the cities and counties in the near future.

I mentioned in the last newsletter that I thought our organization could be utilized as an educational tool to help voters understand the facts and needs of our state transportation system. As a resident of eastern Washington, I have heard a great number of people proclaim that they would not support any further increase in funding because they believe all of the money would go to projects on the west side of the state - primarily the Puget Sound area. On

the WSDOT website (www.wsdot.wa.gov) there is important factual information that shows this statement to be untrue. During the years 2004 through 2015 the return per dollar contributed is \$1.02/\$1.00 for the Puget Sound Region and \$0.97/\$1.00 for the rest of the state. During the years 1984 through 2003, the return was \$0.98/\$1.00 for the Puget Sound area and \$1.11 for the rest of the state. There is even a further breakdown by each County. It is our duty to lead the way in making sure that factual information is presented to the voters and erroneous information is challenged.

We have made funding for cities and counties our number one priority in the past. I believe that this is still an area that we need to focus on. But there are a considerable number of issues facing our transportation system, and it is imperative that our organization focus on the ones that have state-wide significance. What else should we be working on? I know several of our members are heavily involved on various transportation committees throughout the state and we would like to hear from you and anyone else. Please take the time let us know the issue and how you think we can help. My goal is to prioritize this list so we have areas to focus on to present to our members at the annual meeting in September, in preparation for the Legislative breakfast. I am looking forward to seeing you all at the 109th Annual Conference in the Tri-Cities.

Jim Tobin



ANNIVERSARY OF A BRIDGE COLLAPSE

The I-35W bridge collapse anniversary underscores need for ongoing transportation infrastructure investments. Bridge study outlines conditions and \$140 billion national price tag.

OLYMPIA – Secretary of Transportation Paula Hammond has said that while Washington’s bridge preservation program is among the nation’s leaders, our state and nation must continue to invest in our transportation infrastructure.

“The aging of our highways and bridges leaves us little time to spare in shoring up our investments in the federal Highway Trust Fund, and no time to delay the ongoing preservation of our state’s transportation system.”

Secretary Hammond was responding to the release of a national report on the condition of America’s 600,000 bridges. The report, issued by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), underscores the safety of U.S. bridges, but finds that one out of every four needs to be modernized or repaired, despite the best efforts of state transportation officials. AASHTO reports that it could cost \$140 billion (in 2006 dollars) to make all of needed repairs or upgrades immediately.

As we recall the anniversary of the Minneapolis I-35 W bridge tragedy, AASHTO’s report, *Bridging the Gap: Restoring and Rebuilding the Nation’s Bridges*, outlines the critical challenges ahead. Among the report’s key findings:

Age – Usually built to last 50 years, the average bridge age in this country today is 43, with one in five bridges over 50 years old. As age and traffic increase, so does the need for repair.

The Price Tag – Based upon data from the Federal Highway Administration, the cost to repair or modernize the country’s bridges is \$140 billion – assuming all the bridges were fixed immediately.

Traffic Congestion – Many of the nation’s large-scale bridges have become chokepoints on the country’s freeway system, and a drain on the nation’s economy. The top 10 highway interchange bottlenecks cause an average of 1.5 million truck hours of delay each year.

Soaring Construction Costs – The costs of steel, asphalt, concrete and earthwork have risen by at least 50 percent in the past five years, forcing delays of bridge improvements and replacements. Nearly every state faces funding shortages that prevent them from the kind of on-going preventive maintenance, repair and replacement needed to keep their bridges sound indefinitely.

“This generation of baby boomer bridges is in need of significant repair or replacement. New technology can help us build bridges that are stronger and longer-lasting,” said Pete Rahn, AASHTO president and director of the Missouri Department of Transportation. “Yet we are not seeing the kind of national attention we need to address these issues.”

Bridging the Gap also points to several solutions. Among them:

- Increased investment in transportation at all levels of government – federal, state and local;
- Support for a wide range of revenue options such as tolls, tax increases, annual road user fees, bonds or private investment;
- Continued commitment to research and innovation;
- Systematic maintenance to extend the life of bridges; and
- Increased public awareness that bridges are vital links to business and communities.

AASHTO Executive Director John Horsley said, “Across the nation, state and local transportation agencies are struggling to keep our country’s bridges safe, sound and fit for the future. A new generation of bridges must be built and Bridging the Gap points the way.”

More on WSDOT’s bridge preservation program is available on-line at www.wsdot.wa.gov.

For a full copy of the report or to see a video on its key findings, visit www.transportation.org

WSDOT kicks off SR 16 Project

WSDOT kicked off construction for an interchange that will replace the intersection of SR 16 at Burley Olalla Road in Kitsap County.

The message of safety resonated loudly at Friday’s groundbreaking ceremony for a \$24.3 million project that builds new bridges on SR 16 and new ramps to and from Burley Olalla Road in Kitsap County. WSDOT officials, alongside Washington State Patrol Chief John Batiste and Judy Oke, widow of former state senator Bob Oke and other state and local officials broke ground with shovels.

Safety is WSDOT’s number one priority and replacing this intersection demonstrates the agency’s commitment to make roads safe for drivers. This intersection received interim safety improvements in 2004, but movements were restricted and drivers continued to cross the median to enter the highway. When complete in August 2010, all movements will be restored and safety will drastically improve with new on- and off- ramps.

The two-year closure of Burley Olalla Road, which began Monday, Aug. 4, marked the beginning of construction. The closure keeps workers and drivers safe in the work zone during the project.

More Info: <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/Projects/SR16/BurleyOlalla/>

Columbia River Crossing

WASHINGTON – The Columbia River Crossing, also known as the Interstate 5 Bridge between Portland, Ore., and Vancouver, Wash., received national priority status from the White House today, said U.S. Transportation Secretary Mary E. Peters. The elite status, extended to only 20 other projects over the last five years, will help reduce the project’s timetable by months if not years.

"The Columbia River Crossing will ease the congestion impacting one of the most important commercial routes in the country," said Secretary Peters. "The President's order is an important step toward making this project a reality so we can get goods to market, and travelers to their destinations efficiently and safely."

The priority designation under Executive Order 13274 was requested jointly by the Oregon and Washington Departments of Transportation. It will help speed decision-making by officials while maintaining all federal and state environmental review requirements.

"With the environmental streamlining that this Executive Order empowers, we can cut red tape without cutting corners," said Secretary Peters.

The Columbia River Crossing project, which has already received \$15 million in federal funding, will reduce gridlock and improve safety problems on a five-mile stretch of I-5 through a combination of bridge, transit and highway improvements. About one crash occurs daily – a rate that is twice as high as similar highways in Oregon and Washington.

For the nine projects of national significance currently listed under E.O. 13274, visit <http://www.dot.gov/execorder/13274/projects/pplist/index.htm>

HIGHWAY TRUST FUND IN PERIL

As reported in the *Columbian*, the Highway Trust Fund is in danger of going bankrupt unless Congress steps in to support the fund. As motorists have changed their driving habits in response to rising fuel costs, revenues to the fund have fallen. The fund is projected to have a \$3.2 billion deficit next year without help. Recent proposals for a "gas tax holiday" only exacerbate this problem. Approximately \$40 billion in spending a year on bridges and highways are dependent on this funding, approximately one third of state and local funding are reliant on this source of funds. For every billion dollars in construction, approximately 35,000 jobs are supported. Senator Patty Murray is the appropriations subcommittee chair and has been working to support a bipartisan proposal to transfer general funds to the Highway Trust Fund as essentially a repayment for funds borrowed in 1998.

The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) issued this statement in their press release: We at the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) are extremely pleased to learn that the Senate transportation appropriations subcommittee has acted in support of efforts by Finance Committee leaders Senator Max Baucus (D-MT) and Charles Grassley (R-IA) to resolve a potential \$3.3 billion shortfall in the Highway Trust Fund. A failure to resolve this crisis would result in the loss of hundreds of thousands of highway construction jobs this fall.

Appropriations Subcommittee Chair Senator Patty Murray (D-WA) and Ranking Minority Member Senator Christopher Bond (R-MO) are to be commended for their bipartisan leadership in moving this issue forward.

Subsequently the bill was filibustered placing things in limbo for now. More info: http://www.columbian.com/news/localNews/2008/08/08052008_Murray-Federal-highway-fund-imperiled.cfm

The Transportation Benefits of Improved Packaging

Many companies, especially in the consumer packaged goods industry, are finding that what might be the easiest way to reduce transportation expense in the face of soaring fuel costs is to improve and reduce product packaging.

One of the more dramatic examples of that came to light this week with news of an improved milk carton, cylindrical in design, that can increase shipping density in trailers by 50% or more. Key to that savings is elimination of traditional plastic milk cartons to move the milk, and the ability to palletize the new containers.

A brilliant idea, even if not all consumers are wild about the design. Sam's Club, which like Costco has been testing the new packaging, estimates it can reduce truck load deliveries by 11,000 per year as a result when it takes the program national, which it has committed to do. The real question is what other products/companies have similar opportunities.

More Info:

<http://www.scdigest.com/assets/newsViews/08-07-17-2.php?cid=1803>

Quiet Pavement???

WSDOT is currently researching quiet pavements. States like Arizona have successfully used rubberized asphalt in this endeavor. Washington state's climate poses some durability problems for rubberized asphalt mixes. WSDOT is installing several miles of quieter pavement on some of Washington State's busiest highways. WSDOT will study the test sections to see how quieter pavement performs in the Pacific Northwest's unique driving and climate conditions. The durability of open graded asphalt mixes is one of the main questions to be answered.

They are testing both quieter asphalt, which contains compounds that help reduce noise, and quieter concrete, which uses surface texturing techniques to reduce noise.

Noise is a common complaint near highways across the state. Residents are asking for solutions that will reduce traffic noise. WSDOT is testing quieter pavement as a potential tool to reduce road noise on major highways like Interstate 90, Interstate 5, Interstate 405 and State Route 520.

More info:

<http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/Projects/QuieterPavement/>

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**WSGRTA 109th ANNUAL CONFERENCE
& John Schoenfelder Memorial
Golf Tourney**

September 18 & 19, 2008 - Kennewick, WA
The WSGRTA Annual Conference will be held September 18 & 19, 2008 in Kennewick, Washington. The event will include golf, a dinner boat cruise on the Columbia River, a tour of Infinia Corporation, three informative speakers, and Governor Christine Gregoire's Transportation Policy Advisor. Our host hotel is the Hilton Garden Inn right across the street from the Three Rivers Convention Center.

**John Schoenfelder Memorial Golf Tourney \$50 -
Golf at Canyon Lakes
9:30 am Thursday**

We will be playing the award-winning Canyon Lakes Golf Course in Kennewick for our four-man scramble. 18 holes, range balls, carts, two beverages, and lunch are included in your registration fee. Each participant needs to provide either their handicap or their average 18-hole score so that the course manager can establish net team scores. We will have prizes for closest to the pin and two longest drive, along with team prizes for 1st gross, and 1st, 2nd, and 3rd net. Spouses or co-workers are invited to play.



CONFERENCE & BOAT CRUISE

Full Conference and Boat Cruise - \$100
7 pm Thursday - A fabulous boat cruise up the Columbia River and back will be complimented with heavy hors d'oeuvres and a no-host bar. Bus Transportation from the Hilton Garden Inn to the Boat dock will be provided. The boat will leave from Richland's Howard Amon Park. Guests are invited for an additional fee of \$40 per person.

Conference at Three Rivers Convention Center
Friday - Breakfast - 7:30 am
Membership Meeting - 8 am
Infinia Tour - 9 am
Infinia Corporation is a dynamic, venture capital backed, energy technology company located in Kennewick, Washington that has been successful developing and delivering innovative Stirling generators and cryocoolers since 1985. Learn more about Infinia and their solar power initiative. <http://www.infiniacorp.com>

Program Guest Speakers -10:00 am Friday

Amy Jenne, Senior Project Leader with Apollo, Inc. will speak about the Columbia Center Railroad crossing and other area projects. She will also address fuel cost impacts on construction. <http://www.apollosm.com/inc/>

Ted Trepanier - State Traffic Engineer
Mr. Trepanier will speak about congestion pricing, managing demand, and more.

Carol Moser - State Transportation Commission
Ms. Moser will give a commission update, and speak about climate change policy and tolls.

Lunch- 12 pm Friday
Jill Satran-12:30 pm Friday
The Governor's Transportation Policy Advisor will speak at the luncheon.

Survey of Members Results

This is a summary of the web survey results.

Respondents

Labor	20.7 %	State Govt.	10.3%
Local Govt.	24.1%	Consultant	17.2%
Material Supply	3.4%	Other	27.6%

64.3% of respondents find Ellensburg to be the best location for meetings.

79.2 % felt we need to be more politically active.
76% felt we should schedule meetings with local delegations at the legislative breakfast.

54.2% thought improved programs at meetings would help grow membership.

44.4 % of respondents report almost always attending the annual conference.



“The amount of solar energy that hits the surface of the earth every minute is greater than the total amount of energy that the world's human population consumes in one year.”

Sandia National Laboratories

Register for the 109th Annual Conference
online at WWW.WSGRTA.COM



WSGRTA

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Kennewick, WA 99336

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

www.wsgta.com