Mason Transit Authority Named 2015 Rural Community Transportation System of the Year!

_FROM Community Transportation Association of America_ Tampa, Fla. – June 3, 2015. Mason Transit Authority of Shelton, Washington, was named today the 2015 Rural Community Transportation System of the Year by the Community Transportation Association of America at its annual Awards Banquet, held this year in Tampa, Fla. The system was recognized for its efforts in improving service to its passengers and serving the community.

The award, presented annually at the Association’s national EXPO, recognizes excellence by rural transit systems in serving the needs of people in their communities. Association Board Regional Director Barbara Cline, CCTM, in presenting the award, said the organization “offers proof that amazing things can happen when like-minded people work together for the common good. This county-wide rural operator has made words like innovative and creative far more than mere slogans, they are part of the agency’s everyday operation.”

Cline also noted Mason Transit Authority’s After School Activities Bus service, partnership with a local tribal government, its vanpool service transporting more than 150 daily workers to the Puget Sound Naval Shipyards and the opening of the nation’s first rural, joint transit-community center as key factors in the system’s selection as rural system of the year.

Jefferson Transit Authority Celebrates Grand Opening of New Building

Jefferson Transit Authority (JTA) celebrated the opening of its new transportation hub at 63 Four Corners Road in Port Townsend on June 12. JTA was long overdue for new space, they have been in an old car dealership for many years, with staff located in hallways and very limited space to work on vehicles.

The new building houses administration, operations and maintenance for JTA. It was funded through a combination of more than $2.4 million in federal funds, more than $1 million in state funds, nearly $1.5 million of its own money and $60,000 from East Jefferson Fire Rescue.
Legislative Update and Bill Tracking (Michael Shaw, WSTA Lobbyist)

From June 12, 2015
Last week ended with some optimism that the House and Senate would reach a budget deal. After the weekend, that optimism evaporated. Both sides in the operating budget negotiation appear to have dug in, and there are reports that no additional negotiations took place this week to change that.

The House held floor action on Thursday, while most of the Senate was out of town. While the House passed a number of bills, many Representatives were excused, thus the bills that received votes were not particularly contentious. With the U.S. Open starting on June 15th, next week should be very quiet. However, the capital budget and transportation negotiators have scheduled meetings. While each still has some issues to resolve, they are reportedly making headway. Proposals are being exchanged. A few stakeholders are organizing media campaigns in support of a transportation funding package.

The number of lobbyists haunting the capital has diminished as more of them take vacations that have been put off since the regular session ended in April. More Legislators are speculating that June could end without a budget agreement and that they may be forced to pass temporary spending measures to avoid a complete state government shutdown.

From June 5, 2015
The first week of the second special session is now done. It started with promise – the House Appropriations Committee unveiled a new operating budget proposal. It was a response to the Senate proposal of last week, and it generated some optimism that both sides may be moving towards a compromise. The week ended with little apparent progress.

The new House proposal no longer relies on a B & O tax increase nor the miscellaneous repeal of various tax exemptions that its original budget proposal contained. It still assumed a capital gains tax of 5% that would raise an additional $550 million, and contained various cuts and fund transfers. The new proposal assumes the passage of HB 1966, which provides transit agencies with a B & O tax exemption related to the production of compressed natural gas.

The Senate is not convinced that a capital gains tax is necessary – that is what has brought the negotiation to an impasse. There are still other differences related to higher education funding, the collective bargaining agreements, and certain state agency budget cuts, but those seem like second tier issues compared to the capital gains issue.

The transportation funding discussion is still progressing. Rumors are that proposals regarding sales tax issue (use of that revenue that would be generated from transportation projects), and the low carbon fuel issue have been exchanged. Some worry that if an operating budget deal is struck, the Legislature will not wait for the transportation funding negotiation to finish.

When this week started, those of us outside of the various negotiations were optimistic that the Legislature could finish its business by mid-June. Now, most of us think this Legislature may take the State to the brink of a government shutdown.

Recent News Clippings Related to the Legislative Session
Senator: Party split, not U.S. Open, blocks budget deal. Bellingham Herald
Governor Signs Short-Term Transportation Bill Near Cheney. NWPR
Inslee signs $5.1B transportation bill, touts Cheney rail project. Spokesman-Review
Rivers looks to revive distracted driving bill. Columbian
Transit funding for Everett Connector requires fares. South Whidbey Record
New Washington law will allow Silver Alerts for missing seniors. Spokesman-Review
http://www.spokesman.com/stories/2015/jun/05/washington-state-budget-negotiators-still/ House Democrats offer revised budget proposal; government to shut down at end of month if no deal. KCPQ
http://www.spokesman.com/blogs/spincontrol/2015/jun/01/2-spec-sess-day-4-new-budget-plan-big-step-or-long-way/ House Democrats offer $38.4 billion budget plan. Spokesman-Review

Important Links During Session
Helpful links to see proposed budgets and legislation, and to monitor committee schedules:
- Senate Transportation Committee:
  http://www.leg.wa.gov/senate/committees/TRAN/Pages/default.aspx
Help wanted: WSDOT seeks public input on how to improve collaboration

Residents across the state still have time to help the Washington State Department of Transportation determine how the agency can best engage and collaborate with partners, stakeholders, tribes, communities and the public.

From the earliest planning stages through project and service delivery, the WSDOT Community Engagement Plan will guide the agency’s outreach and engagement efforts. Those efforts will continue into the maintenance and operations of a project, and help inform the outreach the agency conducts for future projects. The plan is designed to help increase consent on decisions, improve understanding, and improve public access to information and decision making.

Comments on the plan can be submitted by email to benniob@wsdot.wa.gov and will be accepted until Monday, June 22.

The agency's strategic plan, Results WSDOT, directs WSDOT to strengthen partnerships to increase credibility, drive priorities and inform decision making. The Community Engagement Plan is consistent with Results WSDOT, state law and federal expectations.

FTA Seeks Input on Website Redesign

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) is preparing to undergo a comprehensive redesign of its website and is seeking input from its stakeholders. Please take a moment to complete a brief survey to assist FTA with this undertaking. Link to the FTA website survey here. If you have questions, you may contact the FTA's Valerie Berton at valerie.berton@dot.gov.

Uber chief touts service as answer to public transportation gaps

Read more at this link.

Recently Released

June 15, 2015 Government Fleets at this link (includes “How to recruit and retain technicians”).

FTA Region 10 Bulletins

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<tr>
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<th>DATE</th>
<th>SUBJECT</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>06-12-15</td>
<td>ITS America Shared Use Mobility Symposium</td>
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<td>05-22-15</td>
<td>TrAMS Update and Required Actions for Mitigation of Information from TEAM to TrAMS</td>
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<td>2015-16</td>
<td>05-07-15</td>
<td>NTI NTD Safety and Security Reporting Webinars</td>
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<td>2015-15</td>
<td>05-01-15</td>
<td>Transportation Planning Information Exchange Webinar on Public Involvement Tools</td>
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APTA Legislative Alert, June 12, 2015

House Passes FY 2016 Transportation-HUD Appropriations Bill

Tuesday evening, the House of Representatives finished floor debate and passed, by a vote of 216 - 210, the Fiscal Year (FY) 2016 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development and Related Agencies (THUD) Appropriations bill. The House voted on the first series of amendments to the bill last week, and completed amendments before voting for final passage late Tuesday night.

As with the Committee-approved bill, the final House THUD FY 2016 Appropriations bill funds the core Federal Transit Administration (FTA) formula programs at the FY 2015 enacted level of $8.595 billion (funded from the Highway Trust Fund Mass Transit Account). The measure provides another $2.15 billion for transit programs funded from the General Fund, including $1.92 billion for FTA Capital Investment Grants (New Starts and Core Capacity). Other programs such as TIGER Grants, Amtrak Capital and Debt Service Grants, Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA), as well as many programs funded by General Funds saw cuts. A chart showing FY 2015 enacted levels compared to the President’s request, as well as the House FY 2016 appropriations can be found here.

Below are the results of the amendments postponed from last week and voted on Tuesday:

- An amendment offered by Representative Marsha Blackburn (R-TN) that would reduce spending for all accounts in the bill by 1 percent. This amendment was defeated by a roll call vote of 163 – 259.

- An amendment offered by Representative Bill Posey (R-FL) prohibiting funds from being used by DOT to finance a new passenger rail project that runs from Orlando to Miami through Indian River County, Florida. The amendment's sponsor seeks to prevent funding from being provided for the "All Aboard Florida" project. This amendment was defeated by a roll call vote of 163 – 260.

- An amendment offered by Representative Pete Sessions (R-TX) prohibiting funds from being used by Amtrak to support the route with the highest loss, measured by contributions/(loss) per rider. The amendment would eliminate the "Sunset Limited" line from New Orleans to Los Angeles. This amendment was defeated by a roll call vote of 205 – 218.

- An amendment offered by Representative Pete Sessions (R-TX) prohibiting funds from being used by Amtrak to operate any route whose operating costs exceed two times its revenues based on the National Railroad Passenger Corporation FY2014-2018 Five Year Plan from April 2014. The amendment sponsor seeks to eliminate funding for Amtrak's long distance routes. This amendment was defeated by a roll call vote of 186 – 237.

- An amendment offered by Representative Bill Posey (R-FL) prohibiting funds from being used to authorize private activity bonds to finance passenger rail projects that do use vehicles reasonably expected to be capable of attaining a maximum speed in excess of 150 mph. The amendment's sponsor objects to the approval of private activity bonds for the "All Aboard Florida" project. APTA's Recommendations for Surface Transportation Authorization seek to broaden eligibility and encourage greater use of private activity bonds in public transportation. This amendment was defeated by a roll call vote of 148 – 275.

- An amendment offered by Representative Bill Posey (R-FL) prohibiting funds from being used to make a loan in an amount that exceeds $600 million under title V of the Railroad Revitalization and Regulatory Reform Act of 1976. Again, the amendment's sponsor objects to the approval of a Railroad Rehabilitation and Improvement Financing (RRIF) Program loan application for the "All Aboard Florida" project. APTA's Recommendations for Surface Transportation Authorization seek to
greatly expand, rather than limit the use of the DOT/FRA RRIF loan program. This amendment was defeated by a roll call vote of 134 – 287.

In addition to the votes postponed from last week, several new transit amendments were offered late in the day on Tuesday. Representative Patrick Meehan (R-PA) offered an amendment prohibiting funds from being used by Amtrak for projects off of the Northeast Corridor (NEC) until the amount spend on capital projects on the NEC in FY 2016 equals the amount of Amtrak’s profits from that line in FY 2015. This amendment was defeated by a roll call vote of 199 – 227. Representative Tom Emmer (R-MN) also offered an amendment prohibiting funds from being used to carry out enrichment for any New Start grant request. This amendment was also defeated by a roll call vote of 212 – 214.

Late on Tuesday, an amendment was offered by Representative Karen Bass (D-CA) which prohibits funds from being used by the FTA to implement, administer, or enforce section 18.36(c)(2) of title 49, Code of Federal Regulations, in order to promote "local hire" initiatives for construction hiring purposes. This amendment was adopted by voice vote. In response to the regulatory docket on the U.S. Department of Transportation’s Notice of Proposed Rulemaking on Geographic-Based Hiring Preferences in Administering Federal Awards [Docket DOT–OST–2015–0013], APTA recently provided comments expressing the views of the industry.

Another amendment adopted by voice vote was one offered by Representative Jeff Denham (R-CA) prohibiting funds from being used for high-speed rail in California or for the California High-Speed Rail Authority.

This legislation will now be sent to the Senate, where the Appropriations Committee has not yet scheduled a mark-up of their version of a Transportation-HUD bill.

**Senate Commerce Committee Holds Hearing on Passenger Rail Safety**

On Wednesday, June 10, 2015, the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation will held a hearing titled, "Passenger Rail Safety: Accident Prevention and On-Going Efforts to Implement Train Control Technology". The hearing focused on the efforts to prevent passenger rail accidents, particularly through the use of train control technology. Witnesses included:

- **The Honorable Tho "Bella" Dinh-Zarr**, Vice Chairman, National Transportation Safety Board
- **Mr. Robert Lauby**, Associate Administrator for Safety / Chief Safety Officer, U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Railroad Administration
- **Mr. Charles Mathias**, Associate Bureau Chief, Federal Communications Commission, Wireless Telecommunications Bureau
- **Mr. DJ Stadtler**, Executive Vice President / Chief Operations Officer, Amtrak

**Chairman John Thune (R-SD)** acknowledged the challenges that many railroads have faced in their PTC installation efforts. He stated, "While I fully support the implementation of PTC, for years I have noted the complexity of its full implementation for both passenger and certain freight railroads." He went on to say, "Many challenges weren’t fully understood or appreciated when PTC was mandated in 2008 following the tragic Metrolink accident in California or when railroads drafted their initial PTC implementation plans following the final implementing rule in 2010." And, lastly, he affirmed the need to for Congress to extend the current PTC installation deadline stating, "Understanding that there is broad agreement on the need for a deadline extension, I hope Congress can soon come together on a thoughtful, revised implementation framework for this important safety technology."

**Ranking Member Bill Nelson (D-FL)** also conceded that railroads have endured PTC implementation challenges and was steadfast on the need to move forward. He stated, "Undoubtedly, the installation of PTC is complex. However, talking about the technical challenges will not make them go away. If we want to get this technology installed quickly, then we must do more." He also commented on the need to protect victims of rail accidents stating, "It is time to reevaluate the (compensation award) cap to ensure that victims of these crashes are adequately compensated."
Associate Administrator Lauby also noted implementation challenges specifically regarded funding. He testified that the FRA has long stated that a lack of public sector funding may cause unwanted delays in fully implementing PTC. He also reiterated the Administration’s position that the FRA be granted authority to review, approve, and provisionally certify PTC plans on a railroad-by-railroad basis. Most notably, he clarified that the FRA is preparing to take a range of enforcement actions against railroads that do not meet the 12/31/15 PTC implementation deadline.

Federal Communications Commission Associate Bureau Chief Mathias offered an overview of some complexities of acquiring the spectrum necessary for PTC systems and issues surrounding the installation of PTC-related infrastructure including PTC poles. Numerous issues and questions related to PTC spectrum were raised during the hearing. Inexplicably, Mathias from the FCC indicated in several instances that as far as the FCC was aware, commuter railroads had access to all of the communications spectrum they needed. However, according to a recent APTA survey of the nation’s commuter railroads, 54 percent do not have complete access to all of the necessary spectrum required to fully implement PTC. This point was made during the hearing in clarification of the FCC statements. APTA data was used at numerous points throughout the hearing clarifying costs and challenges our commuter railroads face in completing the implementation of PTC.

To view the hearing in its entirety or to read the prepared remarks offered by the witnesses, please visit the committee website here.

Hearings Scheduled in House Ways and Means and Senate Finance Committees on Highway Trust Fund
Finance Needs
Under rather short notice, each of the tax-writing committees in Congress has scheduled a hearing for next week to examine transportation funding needs and the challenges facing the Highway Trust Fund and its revenue stream.

On Wednesday, June 17, the House Committee on Ways and Means will hold a hearing on Long-Term Financing of the Highway Trust Fund. The hearing will take place at 10:00 a.m. in room 1100 of the Longworth House Office Building. As this Legislative Alert was being completed, the witness list for the hearing had not yet been announced. For more information on this hearing, visit the committee website here.

On Thursday, June 18, the Senate Committee on Finance will hold a hearing titled "Dead End, No Turn Around, Danger Ahead: Challenges to the Future of Highway Funding". The hearing will take place at 10:00 a.m. in room 215 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building. For more information on this hearing, visit the committee website here. The witnesses will include:

- Dr. Joseph Kile, Assistant Director for Microeconomic Studies Division, Congressional Budget Office
- The Honorable Ray LaHood, Senior Policy Advisor, DLA Piper
- Mr. Stephen Moore, Distinguished Visiting Fellow, The Heritage Foundation

APTA Legislative Alert, June 5, 2015

House Votes on Amendments to Transportation, Housing and Urban Development and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill

Thursday afternoon, the House of Representatives voted on the first group of amendments to the Fiscal Year (FY) 2016 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development and Related Agencies (THUD) Appropriations bill. The House began consideration of the bill Wednesday evening and debated the amendments late into the night.

Several amendments affecting public transportation were offered and adopted by voice vote. Representative Charlie Dent (R-PA) offered an amendment to increase Amtrak’s Capital and Debt Service Grants by $9 million for the purpose of installing inward facing cameras. The amendment was offset by cuts to the Department of Transportation (USDOT) Secretary’s salaries and expenses, the Federal Transit...
Administration's administrative expenses account, the Saint Lawrence Seaway administrative expenses. This amendment was adopted by voice vote. In addition, Representative Jim Langevin (D-RI) proposed an amendment, adopted by voice vote, which increased Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Technical Assistance and Training by $2 million, offset by cuts to the FTA Administrative Expenses account.

Representative Bob Dold (R-IL) offered two amendments sought to increase funding for Amtrak Capital and Debt Service Grants by $200 million, increase FTA Capital Investment Grants by $200 million, with both offset by cuts to the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) Operations Account. These proposals were defeated by voice vote. Representative Glenn Grothman (R-WI) offered an amendment which proposed to cut Capital Investment Grants by $230 million and apply the same amount to the spending reduction account (deficit reduction). This amendment was also defeated by a voice vote.

Other amendments were offered which sought to increase TIGER Grants, Amtrak Capital and Debt Service Grants, and funding for the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA), all of which were not offset. As these amendments would increase funding above the overall allocation to the bill, a point of order was sustained on each and they were not subject to a vote.

Of the amendments that were decided by recorded vote, three amendments failed. The first, by Representative Scott Garrett (R-NJ) sought to increase funding by $16.9 million for FRA Safety and Operations through an $83 million reduction in the FTA's Capital Investment Grants account. This amendment was defeated 160-266. In addition, two amendments offered by Representative Mo Brooks (R-AL) would have eliminated funding for Amtrak Operating Grants, as well as Amtrak Capital and Debt Service Grants. These amendments were defeated 143-283 and 139-266 respectively.

The House suspended action on the Transportation-HUD appropriations bill, in order to allow members to return to their districts for the weekend. The remaining amendments for which votes were requested will be voted on next week, along with a vote on final passage of the bill, when the House returns on Monday.

Among the amendments that remain pending and will be voted on next week are the following:

- An amendment offered by Representative Marsha Blackburn (R-TN) that would reduce spending for all accounts in the bill by 1 percent
- An amendment offered by Representative Bill Posey (R-FL) prohibiting funds from being used by DOT to finance a new passenger rail project that runs from Orlando to Miami through Indian River County, Florida. The amendment's sponsor seeks to prevent funding from being provided for the "All Aboard Florida" project.
- An amendment offered by Representative Pete Sessions (R-TX) prohibiting funds from being used by Amtrak to support the route with the highest loss, measured by contributions/(loss) per rider. The amendment would eliminate the "Sunset Limited" line from New Orleans to Los Angeles.
- An amendment offered by Representative Pete Sessions (R-TX) prohibiting funds from being used by Amtrak to operate any route whose operating costs exceed two times its revenues based on the National Railroad Passenger Corporation FY2014-2018 Five Year Plan from April 2014. The amendment sponsor seeks to eliminate funding for Amtrak's long distance routes.
- An amendment offered by Representative Posey (R-FL) prohibiting funds from being used to authorize private activity bonds to finance passenger rail projects that do use vehicles reasonably expected to be capable of attaining a maximum speed in excess of 150 mph. The amendment's sponsor objects to the approval of private activity bonds for the "All Aboard Florida" project. APTA's Recommendations for Surface Transportation Authorization seek to broaden eligibility and encourage greater use of private activity bonds in public transportation.
- An amendment offered by Representative Posey (R-FL) prohibiting funds from being used to make a loan in an amount that exceeds $600 million under title V of the Railroad Revitalization and
Regulatory Reform Act of 1976. Again, the amendment’s sponsor objects to the approval of a Railroad Rehabilitation and Improvement Financing (RRIF) Program loan application for the "All Aboard Florida" project. APTA's Recommendations for Surface Transportation Authorization seek to greatly expand, rather than limit the use of the DOT/FRA RRIF loan program.

**ACTION ITEM**

APTA opposes each of the amendments referenced above as they all seek to reduce funding or limit financing opportunities for public transportation projects.

APTA members are urged to contact their Members of Congress to voice their opposition on the amendments referenced above.

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**House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Holds Hearing on Amtrak Accident**

On Tuesday, June 2, the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee held a hearing on the tragic Amtrak derailment that occurred in Philadelphia, PA on May 12, 2015. The witnesses that testified before the Committee included:

- The Honorable Christopher Hart, Chairman, National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB)
- The Honorable Joseph H. Boardman, President & CEO, Amtrak
- Ms. Sarah Feinberg, Acting Administrator, Federal Railroad Administration (FRA)
- Mr. Dennis R. Pierce, National President, Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen

Ranking Member Peter DeFazio (D-OR) voiced strong concerns over the continuing underinvestment in infrastructure, citing Amtrak's $21 billion backlog in maintenance to bring the Northeast Corridor (NEC) to a state of good repair, the growing age of bridges and tunnels, and other investments which have not been made. Representative DeFazio also noted the benefits of Positive Train Control (PTC) and the role it may have had in preventing this accident.

Railroads, Pipelines, and Hazardous Materials Subcommittee Chairman Jeff Denham (R-CA) urged for the implementation of PTC as soon as possible, noting the similarity of the Emergency Order that was issued after last year’s Metro North accident compared to the more recent Amtrak derailment.

Acting Administrator Feinberg stated in her testimony that the deadline for implementation of PTC is quickly approaching and that most major railroads have said they will not be able to implement it by the end of the year. The FRA is having internal conversations on how to enforce this deadline, ranging within their discretion of very little enforcement to daily civil penalties. She also noted that this would be done on a merit basis, with the most compliant railroads receiving the most leniency. In addition, FRA will be releasing a package of actions to address train speed, distraction, and training in the coming weeks.

Mr. Boardman spoke about the difficulty of acquiring spectrum in order to implement PTC on the NEC. He stated that Amtrak had experienced delays from the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) in approving the spectrum necessary to fully implement PTC on the NEC, which they have since expedited in the past several weeks. Boardman projected that Amtrak will have PTC fully functional on the corridor by the deadline.

Other topics discussed in the three hour hearing included inward-facing cameras, work schedules, cell phone usage, implementation of seatbelts, among others. To view the hearing in its entirety or to read the prepared remarks offered by the witnesses, please visit the committee website here.

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**House Committee on Small Business Holds Hearing on the Need for a Long-Term Transportation Reauthorization**

On Wednesday, June 3, the House Committee on Small Business held a hearing which focused on the impacts of short-term authorizations on small businesses. Chairman Steve Chabot (R-OH) highlighted the economic impact of patchwork fixes to the Highway Trust Fund (HTF) and their detrimental effects on the
infrastructure that small businesses are reliant on. Ranking Member Nydia Velázquez (D-NY) noted the cost of traffic delays and congestion, as well as the uncertainty created by short-term funding, especially in construction, which are generally smaller businesses.

One of the topics that was discussed thoroughly was funding sources to fill the gap in the HTF, and mechanisms that could remedy this. The federal gas tax, vehicle miles traveled, gas indexing, tolls and other user-fee structures were among the several discussed. In addition, public-private partnerships (P3s), TIFIA loans, and Private Activity Bonds (PABs) were raised as viable options for financing sources of projects. The witness that testified before the full Committee are below:

- Mr. William Schmitz, Vice President, Sales and Quality Control, Gernatt Asphalt Company, Collins, NY
- Mr. Don Shilling, President, General Equipment and Supplies, Fargo, ND
- Mr. Matt Davis, Director, Build Our New Bridge Now Coalition, Cincinnati, OH
- Dr. Jonathon Gifford, Professor and Director, Center for Transportation Public-Private Policy, George Mason School of Public Policy, Arlington, VA

To view the hearing in its entirety or to read the prepared remarks offered by the witnesses, please visit the committee website here.

Upcoming Hearing: Senate Commerce Committee to Hold Hearing on Amtrak Accident
On Wednesday, June 10, 2015 at 10 a.m., the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation will hold a hearing titled, "Passenger Rail Safety: Accident Prevention and On-Going Efforts to Implement Train Control Technology". This hearing will be focused on the efforts to prevent passenger rail accidents, particularly through the use of train control technology. The witnesses that will give testimony are below:

- Mr. Robert Lauby, Associate Administrator for Safety / Chief Safety Officer, U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Railroad Administration
- Mr. Charles Mathias, Associate Bureau Chief, Federal Communications Commission, Wireless Telecommunications Bureau
- Mr. DJ Stadtler, Executive Vice President / Chief Operations Officer, Amtrak

To access a live stream of the hearing as it takes place, please visit the committee website here.

Senate Commerce Committee Approves TSA Nominee
On Thursday, the Senate Commerce Committee approved, by voice vote, the nomination of Coast Guard Vice Admiral Peter Neffenger to lead the Transportation Security Administration (TSA). Chairman John Thune (R-SD) and Ranking Member Bill Nelson (D-FL) both stated their confidence in Neffenger's ability to lead the TSA and urged for his expeditious confirmation. The nomination will now be considered by the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs before being considered by the full Senate for confirmation.

Other APTA News
Obama Threatens Veto of House THUD Appropriations Bill
This week, the House of Representatives began consideration of the Fiscal Year 2016 appropriations bill for the departments of Transportation and Housing and Urban Development (THUD), but adjourned for the weekend before completing work on the bill.

While the bill maintained spending levels for core public transit formula programs, many other programs funded from the General Fund saw significant cuts. Due to top-line spending cap levels, FTA capital investment grants and transit research, as well as TIGER grants and FRA funding for Amtrak, were among the accounts reduced below currently enacted funding levels.
When the House returns next week, it is expected to complete consideration of amendments to the bill and vote on final passage. Details of the House consideration can be found in APTA's latest Legislative Alert.

In a statement released June 1, President Obama threatened to veto the bill in its current House form, saying it "freezes or cuts critical investment in transportation that creates jobs, helps to grow the economy and improves America's roads, bridges, transit infrastructure and aviation systems, benefiting towns and cities across the United States." The full statement is available here.

The Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development and Related Agencies has not yet moved the bill. Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV) has stated that he is prepared to block all Republican appropriations bills in an effort to raise spending caps set in 2011.

**Feinberg's Nomination Sent to Senate**

On May 29, President Obama announced his plans to nominate FRA Acting Administrator Sarah Feinberg to that position on a permanent basis, succeeding Joseph C. Szabo. He submitted the nomination to the Senate on June 1.

"Throughout [Feinberg’s] time at DOT, she has been immersed in issues related to rail safety," DOT Secretary Anthony Foxx said in a statement. "Her attention to detail and passion for the work continues to impress not just me but safety experts, members of Congress and the staff at FRA. FRA will benefit from her ability to cut red tape and get things done."

Feinberg has served as FRA deputy administrator and acting administrator since January 2015. She was DOT chief of staff from 2013 to 2014 and was special assistant to the president and senior advisor to the chief of staff at the White House from 2008-2010. Feinberg also has worked for Facebook, Bloomberg LP and Bloomberg Government.

In related news, Feinberg and FTA Acting Administrator Therese McMillan will address the June 22 General Session, "A Dialogue with USDOT," during the APTA Rail Conference in Salt Lake City.

**MAJOR EVENTS & SAVE THE DATE NOTICES**

**Public Transportation Conference & Vendor Expo, August 23-26**

Reserve your Hotel Rooms Now, Registration Link Coming Soon

If you plan to attend the annual statewide Public Transportation Conference & Vendor Expo in Vancouver, WA, you’ll want to make your hotel reservations ASAP. Space at the Vancouver Hilton is limited and will fill up fast. Check out the reservation information at this link. The Conference sessions begin on August 24 through August 26. Registration information will follow soon, hopefully this week.

Special note for Vendors: Vendors received a separate email from Megan Abbott last week with information about vendor registration and hotel space. If you have questions, please contact Megan at megan@watransit.com or check out the vendor website.

Special note for Roadeo participants: Roadeo participants received a separate email from Melanie Espinoza with information about Roadeo registration and hotel space. If you have questions, please contact Melanie at melanie@watransit.com or check out the Roadeo website.
West Region Transportation Workforce Center (WRTWC) Stakeholder Engagement Session
12 pm to 1:30 pm Mountain Time on Thursday, June 25, 2015

The West Region Transportation Workforce Center (WRTWC) will host a 1.5 hour online stakeholder working session. The purpose of the session is to share information on the results of our ten-state needs assessment, to further define regional industry priorities, and to establish strategic objectives for the WRTWC network. Click here for more information and here to register. For more information on the WRTWC, see our website at: www.wrtwc.org

MRSC Webinar: Making Open Data Work: Learning from Local Government Data Initiatives in Washington
Thursday, July 9, 2015, 1:00am - 12:00pm. Free. Click here to register

Harnessing the power of data is a growing trend in government. Many believe that successfully compiling and sharing government data offers one of the biggest opportunities to reinvent government operations and make them more responsive to citizen needs.

However, those in the business also know that starting a big data initiative is a daunting task. What are the time and resource requirements? What stakeholders need to be involved? How do you make sure it is accessible to citizens? How do you maintain momentum?

In this webinar we will dive into all of these questions through a panel discussion with three local government innovators from Washington that have led data initiatives in their jurisdictions. We will talk about what open data means to them, the processes they went through to get their initiatives up and running, and most importantly, recommendations they have for other jurisdictions looking to get into the open data world. If you’re thinking about starting a data initiative or have one underway, this will be a great chance to pick the brains of those that have already been through it.

APTA Transit Board Members & Board Support Seminar
Make plans now to participate in the APTA Transit Board Members & Board Support Seminar, July 18-21 in Denver. Professional development sessions will focus on best practices in governance and innovative solutions to create policy for public transportation systems. Register here.

Eleventh Annual APTA Sustainability and Public Transportation Workshop
This event is for managers and senior staff with an interest in sustainable community development, climate change adaptation and resiliency, maintaining a sustainable organization and operation, and green infrastructure. Early registration discounts only last until Friday, June 26, so sign up today at this link.

RECENT NEWS CLIPPINGS (thank you WSDOT and others for your news service and updates)

Washington State & Regional Issues
WSDOT seeks public input on improving collaboration. Suburban Times
http://thesubtimes.com/2015/06/12/wsdot-seeks-public-input-on-improving-collaboration/

Transit staff ready for change of scenery. PT Leader

C-Tran to acquire land for bus rapid transit. Columbian

Metro and Sound Transit Conducting Joint Public Outreach. Seattle Transit Blog

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UPCOMING WSTA & TRAINING COALITION MEETINGS

WSTA Events
We post all WSTA Board and Committee meetings on our 2015 Calendar at this link.

Upcoming WSTA Board and Committee meetings:

- June 24: WSTA Finance Committee Meeting, Spokane - Registration & Details
- July 11: WSTA HR Roundtable Meeting, Spokane - Registration & Details
- August 22 - 23: Washington State Public Transportation Roadeo, Vancouver - Registration & Details
- August 24: Washington State Public Transportation Conference & Vendor Expo, Vancouver - Vendor Registration & Details, Attendee hotel information (Attendee registration information coming soon)

WSTTC Events
Training Coalition Events (for more information and registration, please go to this link)

- CDL Medical Certificates Update Webinar, July 15, 2015 ~ Online
- WSDOT Grant Administration Training, July 15, 2015 ~ Spokane
- WSDOT Grant Administration Training, July 22, 2015 ~ Olympia
- TSI Transit Supervisor Certification Course, July 27- 31, 2015 ~ Spokane
- Effective Business Writing: Plain and Simple, August 11, 2015 ~ Olympia
- Passenger Service and Safety (PASS) Trainer Certification, August 12- 14, 2015 ~ Olympia
- Stepping Up to Supervisor, September 14, 2015 ~ Olympia
- Successfully Managing People and Performance Evaluations, September 15, 2015 ~ Olympia
- Coaching: Strategic Tools for Effective Leadership, September 16, 2015 ~ Olympia
- Legal Issues for Supervisors, September 17- 18, 2015 ~ Olympia

Please contact Geri Beardsley at geri@watransit.com to be added to the mailing list or removed from it.