



Port of Benton

Rail Caucus Legislators Tour Tri-Cities Rail Network

Published by the Port of Benton - Fall 2022

Members of the bipartisan Washington State Rail Caucus met in the Tri-Cities in September to hear from local, state and industry stakeholders about pressing issues impacting freight rail in the region.

The Port of Benton's short line has the distinction of transporting the second highest tonnage of goods in the state, flowing from the Tri-Cities to both national and international markets.

The Rail Caucus members work together to improve freight and passenger rail industries, which are integral to Washington's economy. The meeting was the start of priority-setting for projects the lawmakers will consider helping fund during the 2023 legislative session.

The group and representatives from the Washington State Freight Mobility Strategic Investment Board and Washington Department of Transportation also toured rail shippers in Richland and Pasco that depend on rail transport. Stops included Lineage Logistics, Packaging Corporation of America, Central Washington Corn Processors and BNSF, the largest classification yard in the state.

Port of Benton and Port of Pasco co-hosted the two-day session and highlighted the critical importance of rail transport for local businesses and the 75 ports throughout the state.

Rail Caucus members tour the Lineage Logistics control room (above right photo). Group members learning more about Central Washington Corn Processors operations (middle photo). Some of the legislators with Port of Benton Commissioners and staff (bottom photo).



Executive Director Message

As the year comes to a close, we remain focused on our assets. Our most important asset is our team that continuously seeks to grow, better the Port and serve our community. We also welcomed commissioners Christy Rasmussen representing District 2 and Lori Stevens representing District 3.

This year, the team accomplished the largest number of capital projects in the Port's history. Some examples of the capital improvements to our property assets include:

- Richland Airport lighting upgrades to LED
- Railroad crossings improvements at Van Giessen and Swift Blvd./Cemetery Road
- Hanford History Project archives building construction
- Real estate and financial information integration and upgrades to provide further transparency

Our 2023 budget calls for continued focus in these areas and improvements to the 2345 and 2579 Stevens facilities. We remain conservative in our project plans and budget as ongoing supply chain issues and national recession trends loom.

Despite those challenges, interest by companies in our community and industrial property is increasing. This growing interest is primarily the result of the recently established Washington VERTICAL innovation cluster.

Washington VERTICAL's purpose is to ***accelerate the transition to clean, renewable and non-emitting energy production sources by 2025 through advanced nuclear power technologies.***

Port of Benton is teaming with industry, university and workforce partners along with regional partners, including the county, cities, chambers, Visit Tri-Cities, Prosser Economic Development Association, TRIDEC, and state and congressional offices on this transformational effort.

A lot is happening quickly, and remaining action-oriented allows us to keep at the pace of business. This momentum will result in a thriving advanced clean energy industry in our region and the positive economic impact we envision for our district, state and beyond.

It's a privilege to work alongside such a tremendous team and commission as we accomplish important projects and initiatives to benefit the communities we serve.

Sincerely,



Diahann Howard, PPM®, Executive Director

Port Construction Project - Updates

Richland Airport

The Port obtained a \$3,156.583 million grant from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to fully fund the replacement of the entire electrical system at Richland Airport. Construction began in mid-July, and crews completed lighting upgrades to the airport's secondary runway (#8-26) in mid-September. Work will continue on the main runway (#1-19) for the remainder of the project, which is expected to be completed by mid-November.



Railroad

The Port completed reconstruction of the Van Giesen/State Route 224 crossing in August and the Swift Boulevard/Cemetery road access crossing in October.



Both projects were 100% Port of Benton funded and included replacement of the entire rail crossing, adding concrete panels, new rail ties and repaving the area.

White Bluffs Facility

Construction is underway on the future home for the Hanford History Project, which is located near the USS Triton Sail Park in north Richland. The facility will serve as the first phase of the White Bluffs STEM Center, and collocate archives and artifacts related to the Manhattan Project National Historical Park.



This investment aligns with the Port's commitment to regional STEM tourism and brings visitors to our community.

For updates on all Port projects visit portofbenton.com/projects.

Sip, Snack & Shop at Vintners Village

WE'LL MAKE YOU BLUSH

Prosser, Washington  VintnersVillage.com



PORT OF BENTON

Visit the new VintnersVillage.com website to plan day or weekend trips to Vintners Village in Prosser. The website highlights the walkable wine village's tasting rooms, eateries, retailers and events.

Clean Energy Sector Convening

The region's clean energy leaders and champions from industry, academia and government came together this summer to share current initiatives and coordinate opportunities for collaboration.

The working session focused on areas to advance individual and collective efforts in advanced nuclear, hydrogen, energy storage, transportation and workforce training.

Port of Benton, TRIDEC and the Washington VERTical innovation cluster hosted the event.

Stephanie Scott, Washington State Department of Commerce's Innovation Cluster Accelerator Program Director, provided an overview of the state's efforts to strengthen industry ecosystems and drive economic development by investing in innovation clusters like Washington VERTical.

VERTical's first initiative was launching the nation's first industry-led Clean Energy Supplier Alliance to accelerate the deployment of next-generation nuclear plants.

The Clean Energy Supplier Alliance's Executive Director Dave McCormack announced the alliance and spoke about market opportunities for new nuclear and preparing tomorrow's workforce. Rep. Matt Boehnke gave an update on advanced manufacturing and policy initiatives.

Industry collaboration and addressing supply chain issues will accelerate the transition to advanced clean energy systems to help achieve state and federal climate goals.



Commissioners



Christy Rasmussen
Commission President



Roy Keck
Commission Vice President



Lori Stevens
Commission Secretary

Executive Director



Diahann Howard, PPM

Community Celebration at Vintners Village

Port of Benton hosted a triple ribbon-cutting and block party event to welcome two tasting rooms and a gift shop with a bakery that opened at Vintners Village during the COVID-19 pandemic. The businesses include:

- **Cork and Taps**, offering a selection of beers, foods and events
- **Sister to Sister on the Ave.**, providing the ultimate shopping experience featuring a collection of gifts, home accents, jewelry, clothing, candles, gourmet foods and baked goods
- **Wautoma Springs**, offering a selection of Wautoma wines, food, gift baskets, chocolates, and events



The Port's community partners City of Prosser, Prosser Chamber of Commerce and Prosser Economic Development Association helped kick off the celebration.

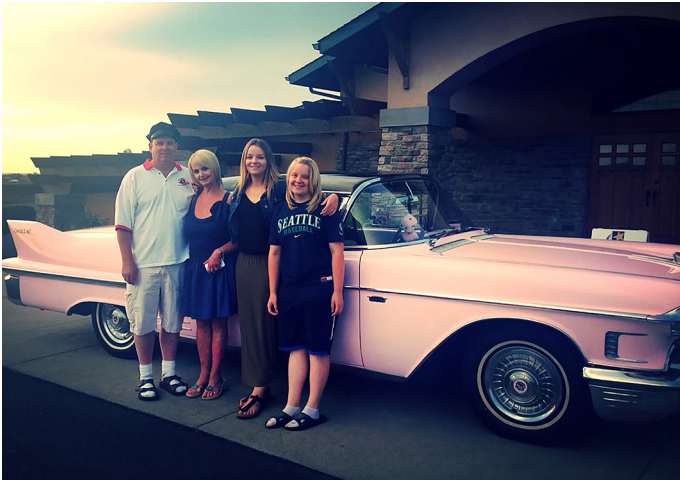
"We are thrilled to recognize these locally-owned businesses that are thriving and helping make Vintners Village a popular Washington wine destination," said Diahann Howard, Port Executive Director.

Attendees enjoyed live music by David Chavey-Reynaud, complimentary pizza from Cascade Crust Food Truck, face painting by Vivid Imaginations Face Painting, and refreshments and specials from each business.

The new businesses join the Prosser Economic Development Association and 12 other local favorites found throughout the walkable wine village.

Visit VintnersVillage.com to plan your visit.

PORT KUDOS CORNER: *Edward Stearns*



Edward Stearns with family in front of his award-winning restored 1958 Cadillac Coupe DeVille.

Congratulations to Edward Stearns for more than seven years of service at Port of Benton. At the Port, Ed has worked primarily as an HVAC Specialist. Previously, he worked for several businesses in and around the Tri-Cities area and owned and operated Horse Heaven Heating and Cooling in Prosser. In all, Ed has over 30 years experience in the HVAC field. He graduated with an associate degree from Columbia Basin College in Instrumentation and Controls Technology.

Ed lives in West Richland with his wife Stacey, two Shih Tzus – Weiner dogs and Sheldon, their 5-year-old Labrador Retriever mix. Ed and Stacey have two daughters, twins Sawyer and Sydney. Ed spends a great deal of time restoring and showing classic street rods and very much enjoys watching the Cougars and the Cowboys with the family.



Port of Benton Team (left to right) Justin Hardgrove, Trevor Thompson, Ed Stearns, Danielle Connor, Liz Renz, John Alley, Summers Miya, Miles Thomas, Robert Jackson, Cory Roemeling, Diahann Howard, Dan Davis, David Billetdeaux, Ron Branine, Teresa Hancock, Joe Pisca, Veronica Serna, Wally Williams, Sheri Collins and Jeff Moore.

Calendar of Events

Special Commission Budget Workshop	Port Administration Building	October 10
Commission Meeting & Public Hearing	Port Administration Building	October 11
Commission Meeting & Public Hearing	Port Administration Building	November 8
Veterans Day	Port Office Closed	November 11
Thanksgiving Holiday	Port Office Closed	November 24-25
Commission Meeting	Port Administration Building	December 14
Christmas Holiday	Port Office Closed	December 23-26
New Year's Holiday	Port Office Closed	January 2

Commission meetings are open to the public and held the second Wednesday of each month at 8:30 a.m.

Special meetings and alternate schedules are posted online at portofbenton.com/commission.

PortofBenton.com