



# nwact

Northwest Oregon Area Commission on Transportation

## December 2008 Newsletter

NWACT is an advisory committee to the Oregon Transportation Commission on NW Oregon transportation needs and project priorities

### Representing Counties:

Clatsop County Commission  
Columbia County Commission  
Tillamook County Commission  
Washington County Commission

### Representing Cities:

City of Astoria  
City of Banks  
City of Bay City  
City of Cannon Beach  
City of Columbia City  
City of Clatskanie  
City of Garibaldi  
City of Gaston  
City of Gearhart  
City of Manzanita  
City of Nehalem  
City of North Plains  
City of Rainier  
City of Rockaway Beach  
City of Scappoose  
City of Seaside  
City of St Helens  
City of Tillamook  
City of Vernonia  
City of Warrenton  
City of Wheeler

### Representing Ports:

Port of Astoria  
Port of Garibaldi  
Port of Nehalem Bay  
Port of St Helens  
Port of Tillamook Bay

### Representing Transit Districts:

Columbia County Transportation  
Sunset Empire Transit  
Tillamook County Transportation

### Representing ODOT:

ODOT Region 1 -- NW Area  
ODOT Region 2 -- NW Area

### Representing Others:

NW Oregon Regional Partnership  
Transportation Stakeholders  
Citizens-At-Large

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503.228.5565

[NWoregon.org/NWACT](http://NWoregon.org/NWACT)

Email: [NWACT@NWoregon.org](mailto:NWACT@NWoregon.org)

### **Recent News and Recap of NWACT November 6th meeting in Seaside, Oregon**

Much of the November meeting focused on transportation funding:

**Federal Government**—The Surface Transportation Authorization Act expires September 30, 2009, and Congress is sending a clear message that a new Transportation Act is needed for the 21st Century: Highway maintenance funding is as critical as funding for new roads and highways. The multiple funding programs need to be consolidated. And, the complexity of Federal regulations that make building and maintaining roads so laborious and expensive need to be simplified.

**Federal Transportation Earmarks**—Projects forwarded to Oregon's Congressional delegation by the Oregon Department of Transportation must meet the following criteria:

- Addresses a problem on Oregon's transportation system
- Meets State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) guidelines
- Can be completed within a specified period of time
- Has sufficient funding to cover required match and any project funding shortfall

Typical match required is approximately 11%. Generally, projects less than \$ 1 million in funding aren't as good a fit for Federal earmarks because of all the Federal requirements. Local jurisdictions may also request federal earmarks outside of the ODOT process. This will be a topic of discussion at NWACT's January 8, 2009 meeting.

**Federal Stimulus**—If there is an infrastructure stimulus package, ODOT has projects ready to go. Having lists of ready-to-go projects prioritized for funding will be critical. Priority will be

on projects that are do-able, quick, with demonstrable results. Focus will be on construction projects that can start next Summer.

**Oregon Transportation**—The Governor has unveiled more than \$1 billion in new road, bridge and rail spending to help boost the economy and fix outdated infrastructure. Proposed is a 2-cent gas tax hike, and more than a doubling of car title and registration fees. Also proposed is borrowing \$600 million, raising the tobacco tax by 2 1/2 cents and taking \$16 million in lottery money for railroad, mass transit and port projects.

**The Oregon Solar Highway**—ODOT has more than 16,000 lane miles of right-of-way. Solar arrays on 120 miles could supply 45 million kilowatt hours of power. Implementation of solar arrays will involve public-private partnerships, with incentives for utilities to install the technology. Next step is implementation of a "proof of concept" 100 kilowatt project with PGE, to be completed by the end of 2008.

This installation located at the I-5/I-205 Interchange will be at no cost to ODOT, with PGE paying for the installation and maintenance. Goals of the program are to complement the current transportation system, supply needed electricity, develop sustainable energy at no greater cost than electricity from the grid, add value to right-of-way assets, and build a foundation for solar highways throughout Oregon and the nation.

**Local Transportation Funding**—Columbia and Tillamook counties received good news with the temporary return of the federal timber receipt funding. Designed to wind down over the next 4 years, these funds provide significant transportation and rural school financing. Planned cuts in county road budgets are being restored, with a continued look at addressing long

term road maintenance.

Port of Tillamook Bay Rail Repair—Still awaiting a final cost estimate before a decision can be made to rebuild.

ODOT State of the System Report is Available for Review at: [www.oregon.gov/ODOT/TD/stateofthesystem](http://www.oregon.gov/ODOT/TD/stateofthesystem).

NWACT is Interested in Hearing from Stakeholders and Citizens

1. What transportation issues or questions would you like to hear about?
2. How can we hear back from you? What would it make it easier, eg, surveys to help identify issues and concerns?
3. What is the best way to get information to you? Electronic newsletters, radio, printed ads, through the website?
4. What agenda items should be included on every agenda, to provide regular updates and ongoing information? How can we get more input from the public?

5. How do we measure NWACT's effectiveness with its public involvement? Eg, Level of public feedback?

ODOT's Announces a New Environmental Website

In keeping with ODOT's and the Governor's vision to be sustainable and encourage a high environmental stewardship ethic statewide, ODOT's new environmental website, called the '**e-Guide**'. The **e-Guide** link can be found in the following sections of ODOT's website:

1. **e-Guide's** main page:  
[oregon.gov/ODOT/HWY/GEOENVIRONMENTAL/e\\_guide.shtml](http://oregon.gov/ODOT/HWY/GEOENVIRONMENTAL/e_guide.shtml)
2. on the ODOT homepage, under 'ODOT Spotlight':  
[oregon.gov/ODOT/index.shtml](http://oregon.gov/ODOT/index.shtml)
3. on the Geo-Environmental site, under 'Section Highlights':  
[oregon.gov/ODOT/HWY/GEOENVIRONMENTAL/index.shtml](http://oregon.gov/ODOT/HWY/GEOENVIRONMENTAL/index.shtml)

January 8, 2009 NWACT Meeting  
Scappoose Fire Hall  
52751 Columbia River Hwy (Hwy 30)  
1:00 pm — 3:30 pm

Draft Agenda Items:

Governor's Proposed Transportation Budget  
Regional Transportation Priorities  
Public/Stakeholder Feedback  
Charter/Bylaws Review Update  
Draft NWACT Biennial Report  
Election of 2008—2009 NWACT Officers

(Proposed Slate:)

Shirley Kalkhoven—Chair  
Ron Blin—Vice-Chair  
Rita Bernhard—Second Vice Chair

For more information on NWACT, its members, meetings, charter/bylaws, and deliberations, please go to [NWOregon.org](http://NWOregon.org). NWACT meetings are generally scheduled for the first Thursday of every other month at various locations throughout the four-county area.

NWACT meetings are open to the public and accommodations will be provided to persons with disabilities. If a sign language interpreter is needed, please call Mary McArthur at 503.228.5565 at least 48 hours prior to the meeting.