



SENATOR

Mary Margaret Haugen

E-Newsletter - 10th District

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10th Legislative District

November 18, 2009

Good day — and great news!

I'm thrilled to announce that it will be my immense pleasure to arrive on the Amtrak *Cascades* train when it makes its first stop at the new Stanwood rail station this Saturday morning. The train will arrive at 9:03 a.m. to a grand opening ceremony that is open to the public.

I hope you'll come out and take part in the fun—in fact, Island Transit is making it easy for area residents to attend by offering special bus service that day. Please see my latest [blog](#) for more details, including busing options to be on the first train as it arrives in Stanwood.

This kind of thing doesn't happen every day, and I know a lot of folks in the community are raring to ride the first train — including me! This region hasn't seen passenger rail service in more than 35 years, and it's going to make a huge difference for so many people in so many ways. Everywhere I go people are talking about the train station.

And let me tell you, it's been years in the making. I first secured funding in the transportation budget to make this construction possible back in 2005, and since then plenty of others have helped make it a reality. The state covered the construction costs, while the City of Stanwood donated the land. Best of all, construction began last April and was completed this month — on time and under budget!

One of them, state Department of Transportation Secretary Paula Hammond, will join other area officials and me at Saturday's grand opening, and so I urge you to come on out and join in the celebration.

As for the specifics, here's how the service will work:

- ✍ Amtrak Cascades will make two morning and two evening stops daily. The northbound train will stop in Stanwood at 9:03 a.m. and 8:14 p.m. The southbound run will stop in Stanwood at 9:18 a.m. and 8:25 p.m. The run extends from Vancouver, B.C., down to Eugene, Ore., and includes stops in Seattle, Portland and 13 other cities including Bellingham and Mount Vernon.
- ✍ Sample fares from Stanwood start at a range of \$9 to Mount Vernon, \$11 to Bellingham, \$8 to Everett, \$13 to Seattle and \$31 to Portland.
- ✍ The new station is an unstaffed platform, which means you need to buy your tickets online at Amtrak.com or by calling 1-800-USA-RAIL. You can also reserve tickets online or by phone at

least three days in advance, then board the train with printouts of your reservation and purchase your tickets from the train conductor. For more information, go to amtrakcascades.com.

- ✍ More good news: Passengers riding between Stanwood and Vancouver, B.C., qualify for a 25 percent discount on Amtrak Cascades fares to and from Vancouver, B.C., through Dec. 31, 2009.

I hope to see you at the station on Saturday!

INSPECTION WILL CLOSE PORT TOWNSEND/KEYSTONE ROUTE

The Washington State Department of Transportation Ferries Division will close the Port Townsend/Keystone ferry route the weekend of Jan. 9-10 for a mandatory required annual inspection of the Steilacoom II.

If you normally ride that route, and need to travel during the weekend of the scheduled closure, your best alternative route between the Olympic Peninsula and Whidbey Island will be to take the Edmonds/Kingston and Mukilteo/Clinton ferries.

As with all Washington state ferries, the Steilacoom II must undergo an annual safety inspection by the U.S. Coast Guard every year. Federal regulations require the inspection of lifesaving equipment, navigation equipment and fire suppression systems, as well as observing crew performance during emergency drills.

The Jan. 9-10 weekend was chosen after consultation with community representatives from Port Townsend and Coupeville. The annual inspections are normally performed during two-week maintenance sessions at the Eagle Harbor Maintenance Facility on Bainbridge Island, but the state is opting for the special two-day inspection because there are no other vessels that can operate on the Port Townsend/Keystone route.

If you'd like to receive e-mail alerts about service disruptions and other route information, you can sign up at: [Your WSF Account - Login.](#)

UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS EXTENDED

Those who are struggling to find work in this recessionary economy got a vital break recently when Congress extended unemployment benefits to individuals who have or will exhaust their federal UI benefits by the end of the year. The extension is 14 weeks, with an additional six weeks for states where the unemployment rate tops 8.5 percent — which includes Washington.

This increases unemployment benefits to 99 weeks — 26 weeks of standard benefits, 33 weeks of federal emergency benefits, 20 weeks of extended benefits and the additional 20 weeks just approved. Eligible individuals may also receive an additional 26 weeks if they are accepted into the training benefits program.

WORKSOURCE PUTS PEOPLE BACK TO WORK FASTER

A study released just this week shows that people who look for work via the state's WorkSource program find new jobs faster — and typically earn more money.

The study said WorkSource users are as much as 37 percent more likely to find work in the subsequent six-month review period. Although a specific employee's success at finding work is affected by additional factors such as gender and employment history, WorkSource users are 20-to-37 percent more likely to find jobs. Also, WorkSource users earn about \$2,500 to \$3,000 more a year than unemployment-insurance claimants who don't use WorkSource services, according to the study.

WorkSource helps job seekers develop a strategy for finding work, create a targeted resume, and prepare for job interviews.

WorkSource is a partnership of Employment Security, other state agencies, local governments, colleges and nonprofit organizations that work together to provide free employment and training services to job seekers and businesses. More than 270,000 people in Washington received assistance from WorkSource in 2008.

For more information, visit a local WorkSource career center or read about it online at Go2WorkSource.com.

The report was done by state economic analysts and verified by independent third parties. It tracked the outcomes of more than 16,000 unemployed people over a 12-month period in 2007 and 2008.

WHAT TO DO ABOUT SWINE FLU

If you're worried about you or your family being exposed to Swine Flu (H1N1), a great resource is our state [Department of Health](#). The department's web site offers a wide range of simple, easy-to-follow information on everything from [how to recognize and treat flu symptoms](#) to the [availability of vaccine](#) and is updated regularly.

The department also offers recorded tips for dealing with Swine Flu at 1-888-703-4364, and Twitter users can receive frequent updates via twitter.com/wa_deptofhealth. You can also e-mail the department questions at prepare@doh.gov.

I also know some of you are having trouble finding where you can get the regular seasonal flu shots. If you're still in need of a the vaccine, use this [link](#) provided by the American Lung Association to go to a handy site that offers a map of where flu shots (seasonal flu and H1N1) are available within specific zip code areas. Once you have your site, **be sure to call the provider before you drive to the location** to confirm availability.

In the meantime, general tips for preventing the spread of germs in your house include:

Keep hard surfaces like kitchen countertops, desktops and bathroom surfaces clean and disinfected.

Keep surfaces touched by more than one person clean and disinfected. Examples of these surfaces include doorknobs, refrigerator door handles and microwaves.

Use disposable sanitizer cloths to wipe electronic items that are touched often, such as phones, computers, remote controls and hand-held games.

MOVE OVER, ROSE GARDEN ... I HAVE A TRANSPORTATION GARDEN!

It's always fun to meet with constituents, but sometimes it's an outright hoot. A case in point came recently from the folks I met at the Rexville Grocery for coffee one morning. Their parking lot has a stop sign that kept getting hit and mangled by cars, so they decided to build a small garden around it — and dedicate it to me! It's a cute little thing, and we all had a good chuckle over it.

The inscription on the garden reads: "The Mary Margaret Haugen Transportation Garden, which decorates this small but precious strip of Washington soil, is hereby dedicated in her honor in recognition of her dedication to the residents of the 10th District and all the people of Washington."

Thanks, everyone — if someone was ever going to name something after me, I'm delighted that it's a garden!

EITHER OFFICE CAN HELP DURING THE LEGISLATIVE INTERIM

I hope you found this newsletter helpful. As always, if you have a concern, I want to hear it — in Olympia or in my local office.

You can reach me by [e-mail](#) or call my office in Olympia at **360-786-7618**, where Nova Gattman is running my office at our state's capital. You can also call my district office in Oak Harbor ([1091 SE Dock St., Suite #4](#)) at **360 682-6274** or stop by and talk to Gina Bull in person.

Until next time — Take care!

Thank you for reading my email newsletter. I appreciate your interest in the legislative process. If at any time you decide you no longer wish to receive updates from me, please go to <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/subscriptions/member.aspx?member=haugenm> to remove your name from the list.

Washington Senate Democratic Caucus