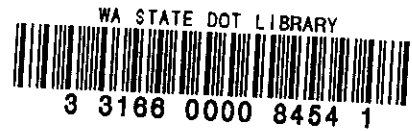


A History of Highways & Transportation



Washington State Highway & Transportation Commission 1951 - 1993

Washington State Highway & Transportation Department 1905 - 1993

Years of Progress, Service, Achievement



Washington State Department of Transportation

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Washington History Task Force, Harold Garrett, PAO, 1993:

A HISTORY OF HIGHWAYS

INTRODUCTION

Today, many people are interested in discovering more about their family history, their ancestral "roots." We all like to know something about our history, to find out more about those past accomplishments and setbacks that may help guide us as we meet future challenges. As Shakespeare wrote: "What is past is prologue."

Similar to personal history, the history of people in groups working toward common goals, of organizations, can be just as interesting and significant. That is equally true of the history of the Washington State Highway Department and Highway Commission. The Department, from 1905 to 1977, and the Commission, from 1951 to 1977, have been active participants with the people in the growth of Washington State.

In the pages that follow, the historic highlights of years of progress and service are reviewed.

In addition to hours of research, writing, and preparation by Department Public Affairs staff members, additional assistance was provided by several people from the State Capitol Museum, State Library Washington History Room, Department of Transportation Library, and Department of Natural Resources Public Affairs Office. We appreciate the cooperation of the staff members in helping us prepare both this brief narrative overview, and a pictorial slide presentation which chronicles significant events in state highway and ferry system history.

Now that 72 years of Highway Department history has been completed, an even more challenging period of expanded transportation involvement has begun for the new Washington State Department of Transportation. It is not the end of an era in state transportation development; it is only the beginning.

Charles Fowler
Washington State Dept. of Transportation
Public Affairs Office - September, 1977

A HISTORY OF TRANSPORTATION

The Washington State Department of Transportation's major mission through all these years has been to assure a multimodal transportation system which meets the social, economic and environmental needs of the state.

WSDOT employees see to it the state's transportation system is safe, reliable, and affordable. WSDOT's job -- with policy guidance from the State Transportation Commission (STC) -- is to plan, build, maintain, and operate the state's highway, aeronautics, ferries, public transit, high-occupancy-vehicle, rail, bicycle, and pedestrian transportation systems. To this end, employees plan, design, construct, and maintain the state's 7,000 mile highway system, 16 emergency airfields, the largest ferry system in the nation, and support a growing public transportation system. Washington State's proposed part of a new National Highway System (NHS) consisting of a 3,000 mile statewide system of trunk freeways is slated for congressional approval by September 30, 1995.

WSDOT works as a partner with all levels of government, and public and private transportation interests to provide mobility for all people and goods throughout the state.

This supplement compiled by Harold R. Garrett, PAO, before his retirement in May, 1994, was gleaned from 25 years of service to the Department of Highways and Department of Transportation. This updated summary covers 88 years of DOH/DOT history from 1905 through 1993.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF WASHINGTON STATE HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORTATION

A Brief Chronology

- 1852 - State Historical Road No. 1 established. "Byrd's Mill Road" between Puyallup, Tacoma and Steilacoom was the first road established by law in Washington by the Legislature of Oregon Territory.
- 1893 - Legislature approves plans to construct Cascade Wagon Road (now North Cascades Highway).
- 1905 - Highway Department formally organized. State had 1,082 miles of road, 125 miles in "improved" condition.
- 1909 - Highway Department achieves partial control over construction contracts, heretofore granted entirely to counties. Decision made to pave roads.
- 1911 - Permanent Highway Act: Still more contract control granted to state.
- 1912 - State's first concrete road built in Lewis County. (Other segments in eastern Washington in progress)
- 1916 - Federal Aid Road Act: First federal assistance with state highway construction costs.
- 1918 - Highway districts established in Seattle, Spokane, Vancouver, Walla Walla, and Olympia. Large-scale construction program started.
- 1920 - State citizens owned 186,827 autos and trucks.
- 1921 - District system enlarged from five administrative areas to seven. First gas tax: 1 cent on the gallon. Temple of Justice boiler room becomes first Highway Materials Laboratory. Motor Vehicle Act revised; state control over all highway maintenance.
- 1923 - Gas tax increased to 2 cents per gallon and part of the property tax levy for State Highway construction was eliminated.
- 1925 - Six-district system started; same as at present with exception of seventh. Seattle district established in 1957.

- 1927 - Speed limit raised from 30 to 40 miles per hour. Highway Department achieves regulatory control over toll bridges. The non-technical highway committee was abolished and the permanent post of Director of Highways was established.
- 1929 - Gas tax increased to 3 cents a gallon, with the 1 cent increase distributed to counties.
- 1931 - Gas tax increased to 5 cents per gallon.
- 1933 - To combat chronic depression-era unemployment, a \$10 million emergency relief bond issue was placed on the department, and a large share of highway funds was diverted to the counties via the Secondary Highway Act to be used for road construction.
- 1934 - Aerial photography, a radio communications system and a network of truck-weighing stations was introduced to highway operations.
- 1936 - A planning survey was made to determine future highway needs.
- 1937 - Legislature approved a revised Highway Code, covering all aspects of highway administration. A Commission on Highway Transportation was formed to study the department's fiscal operations and related subjects.
- 1941 - Highway Advisory Commission formed to assist the department director with administrative matters. Gasoline tax legislation was broadened to diesel fuels. Highway Department started a comprehensive safety program for highway crews. Highway building practically ceased, due to World War II, and only work needed to keep roads passable was approved. State aid laws were revised to place more control of construction projects in the hands of counties and cities. The use fuel tax was imposed at the rate of 5 cents per gallon.
- 1949 - Motor fuel taxes were raised from 5 cents to 6 1/2 cents per gallon.
- 1950 - Second Tacoma Narrows Bridge opened on October 14, 1950. \$14 million bond issue retired on March 1, 1965. (First Tacoma Narrows Bridge called "Gallopig Gertie" had collapsed in severe wind storms on November 7, 1940.)
- 1951 - Five-member Highway Commission created to give the department continuity and a non-political outlook. The department assumed control of the Puget Sound ferry system, heretofore privately owned.

(The Washington State Ferries system is now the largest of its kind in the United States.)

- 1953 - Highway districts were given authority to advertise for and to open bids on contracts up to \$15,000. Authority to award contracts remained with the department Director.
- 1955 - Department received authority of "blanket condemnation" wherein it could acquire several separately-owned tracts of land by filing one case against the owners.
- 1956 - Marked increase in federal allocations for highway construction came with Federal Aid Highway Act. Over 630 contracts totaling \$143 million were awarded in next two years.
- 1958 - Department personnel numbered more than 3,200.
- 1959 - State's Interstate program took a slight setback when federal funding was reduced. Winter flood damage to highways brought federal relief funding.
- 1960 - Information on highway needs for next quarter-century and valuable data on county and city roads were supplied through Highway Commission Needs Study. Highway construction continued at reduced pace.
- 1961 - Gas tax was increased from 6 1/2 cents to 7 1/2 cents per gallon.
- 1963 - Priority Programming Act passed by State Legislature to set up guidelines for long-range planning of department. Part of the act called for the Highway Commission to develop a 14-year long-range plan for highway development.
- 1965 - Management survey brings sweeping changes to department's organizational structure. Seven major divisions created to streamline operations.
- 1967 - Legislature passes bills increasing gasoline tax to aid urban highway construction and authorizing a statewide survey of transportation needs. Legislature increased the gas tax from 7 1/2 cents to 9 cents per gallon. Maintenance Control System adopted to tighten and streamline scheduling and production of maintenance activities resulting in greater efficiency and control of expenditures.

- 1968 - More than 102 miles of Interstate 90 completed from 1966 to 1968 between Seattle and Spokane.
- 1969 - Last traffic light between Canada and Oregon border removed on Interstate 5 near Everett.
- 1971 - 6,451 miles of non-Interstate on state's highway system. 763.7 miles of Interstate on state system, 563.5 miles open to traffic. Interstate Program 74% complete.
- 1972 - North Cascades Highway (SR 20) open to public September 2, 1972 between Newhalem and Winthrop at cost of \$20 million.
- 1973 - 440-foot ferries Walla Walla and Spokane added to Ferry System fleet, each with a 2,000 passenger and 206 car capacity.
- 1974 - Fuel shortage curtails Department of Highways and Ferry System operations.
- 1975 - As part of a re-organizational review, Districts 1 and 7 were combined and the District 7 headquarters in Bellevue was eliminated. The Ferry System carried over 7.8 million passengers during Fiscal Year '75. Total vehicles carried was 5.3 million, while 1.6 million vehicles utilized the Hood Canal Bridge (SR 104).
- 1976 - Federal Highway Act extends completion date of Interstate Highway system from 1979 to 1990.
- 1977 - Gas tax increased from 9 cents to 11 cents per gallon. Department of Transportation created by State Legislature, effective September 21, 1977.
- 1978 - Seven-member Transportation Commission and WSDOT identify integrated transportation modes; purchase six new 100-car ferry vessels at \$135 million.
- 1979 - Hood Canal Floating Bridge sinks February 13, 1979 from 120 mph winds, high tides and swirling canal waters. Western half sinks to bottom of 300 foot canal. Eastern half remains intact.
- 1980 - Mount St. Helens volcano erupts May 18, 1980, destroying St. Helens highway and 12 bridges. Monumental ash removal begins across state.
- 1981 - Duane Berentson becomes second Secretary of Transportation May 21,

- 1981; five of six new 100-car ferry vessels in service.
- 1982 - New, stronger Hood Canal floating bridge is reopened October 25, 1982.
- 1984 - Increased productivity and cost savings realized; work on \$1.4 billion I-90 Project progresses between Seattle, Mercer Island and Bellevue.
- 1986 - Streamlining department's structure provides multimodal systems that meet social and economic needs of travelers.
- 1988 - Passenger-only ferry vessels introduced. Assistant Secretary for Marine Division moved to Seattle waterfront headquarters.
- 1989 - WSDOT efficiency improved without sacrificing effectiveness as it fosters economic development role.
- 1990 - 50-year-old Lacey V. Murrow concrete floating bridge (I-90) sinks November 25, 1990, during severe storm; New, wider I-90 floating bridge paralleling the L.V. Murrow bridge (named in 1993 for Homer Hadley who designed the L.V. Murrow pontoon bridge) was opened between Seattle and Mercer Island in June 1989.
- 1991 - Passed largest gas tax increases in state's history -- from 12 cents to 18 cents per gallon in 1984, and to 23 cents a gallon in 1991. Revenue solved critical highway street and road funding shortfalls at all levels of government.
- 1992 - Joint Regional Policy Committee charged by Legislature to bring a commuter rail system to ballot in 1993.
- New Spirit Lake Memorial Highway (SR 504) opens October 16, 1992 to Castle Lake viewpoint, near Coldwater Lake.
- 1993 - New Lacey V. Murrow replacement bridge opened across Lake Washington September 12, 1993; anticipate completion of I-90 Projects in 1995.
- Sid Morrison named new Secretary of Transportation by State Transportation Commission following retirement of Duane Berentson. Morrison's duties begin June 1, 1993.

- Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act described; distribution of ISTEA enhancement funds (\$150 million federal funds) to be spent over six years.
- Partnering concept accepted fostering public/private construction work bringing long-term cost savings and more efficient resource management.
- Rail passenger service plans start. Designed to improve passenger service through Oregon and Washington to Vancouver, B.C. Canada. Congress designates N.W. Rail Corridor.
- WSDOT/STC conduct public meetings to discuss implementing 20-year State Transportation Systems Plan targeting state-owned highways, ferries and airports. STC to adopt final plan in January, 1994.
- WSDOT oversees maintenance and operations of 7,000 miles of state highways and 3,500 bridges on which the state's citizens (estimated at close to five million) travel over 47 billion vehicle miles every year.
- WSDOT employees total 6,700 -- include environmental specialists, engineers and technicians, aeronautics experts, transportation planners, marine operations specialists and support staff. Department operates with \$2 billion biennial budget, administering over 100 construction projects worth more than \$650 million per year. Oversee largest ferry fleet in the United States, transporting 22 million passengers and nine million vehicles each year, and general aviation activities at 500 airports used by 20,000 pilots of private aircraft.

A SHORT HISTORY
WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENTS
OF HIGHWAYS/TRANSPORTATION
AND
HIGHWAYS/TRANSPORTATION COMMISSIONS
YEARS OF PROGRESS, SERVICE, ACHIEVEMENT

1905 -- 1993

The present system of state highways in Washington State was founded in the early territorial days, but it was not until statehood was gained in 1889 that comprehensive and sustained action was taken to develop a modern transportation system.

In 1852 the Legislature of Oregon Territory established the first State Historical Road No. 1 in Washington. (Chapter 225 established a road to be known as Washington State Historical Road No. 1 "Byrd's Mill Road," from Puyallup to Tacoma and Steilacoom). It was the first road established by law in Washington. When Washington Territory was formed its Legislature established it as a military road by Legislative Acts of 1854, 1856 and 1857. It became a part of the State Highway System.

In 1893, four years after statehood, legislative action was started on the Cascade Wagon Road which roughly follows the North Cross State Highway (currently State Route 20), which was completed in September 1972.

Before 1905, a total of \$131,881.23 had been appropriated for road construction, with few results. The Highway Department was formed in that year to expedite progress. J.M. Snow was appointed the first highway commissioner.

At that moment in history, there were 1,081.6 miles of state road, of which 124.5 miles were in an "improved" condition.

The department achieved partial control over construction contracts, granted only to the counties, with the appointment of Henry L. Bowlby as

highway commissioner in 1909.

During Bowlby's administration, the decision was made to design and pave future roads for the automobile, rather than horse-drawn vehicles.

The 1911 Permanent Highway Act, which transferred still more county control of roads to the state, provided for the construction of hard-surface roads for commercial trade purposes. Bowlby was replaced in rapid succession by first, William R. White and then William J. Roberts.

The state's first concrete road was constructed in 1912 in Lewis County. Similar test sections were in progress in eastern Washington. William R. Roy became highway commissioner the next year.

World War I brought curtailment of practically all road construction in the state due to the need for channelization of materials and people-power into the national military effort.

Following the war, much more authority and responsibility was delegated to department district engineers in Seattle, Spokane, Vancouver, Walla Walla and Olympia. A large-scale construction program was begun, with over \$11 million spent by 1920.

Citizens of Washington State owned 186,827 motor vehicles in 1920.

All state departments were reorganized for a short time in 1921, with the highway department placed under the department of public works and controlled by a highway committee for one biennium.

A seven-district system was instituted and a gas tax of one cent on the gallon was begun. A materials laboratory was set up in the Temple of Justice boiler room in Olympia.

A major reorganization of state highway funding also occurred and many revisions were made in the Motor Vehicle Act, resulting in complete state control of highway maintenance on the state highway system.

In 1925, long-time department head James Allen was succeeded by J.W. Hoover.

In 1927, oil was first used to prevent dust on highways, the highway department achieved regulatory control of toll bridges and the speed limit was raised from 30 to 40 miles per hour. Samuel J. Humes replaced J.W. Hoover as highway engineer.

The gasoline tax was increased to three, and later to five cents, with one cent channeled into the creation of special "Farm to Market" roads.

Friction between the highway engineer and the non-technical highway committee brought about the abolition of the committee and the creation of a Director of Highways. This post was assumed in 1933 by Lacey V. Murrow.

The Depression saddled the department with a \$10 million emergency relief bond issue, very little of which went for highway purposes. In addition, a large share was diverted to the counties, via the Secondary Highway Law, for roadway construction over which the department had little control. As the main purpose of this legislation was to relieve chronic unemployment, contracts specified as much hand labor as possible.

In 1934, the department began using aerial photography, increased radio communications and a system of truck weighing stations.

A planning survey was made two years later to determine the future highway needs of the state.

A revised Highway Code, covering all aspects of highway administration, was approved by the Legislature in 1937. In the same year, a Commission on Highway Transportation was formed to study the department's fiscal operations and related subjects. Legislation creating the Toll Bridge Authority was passed by the State Legislature.

Lacey V. Murrow resigned his post as department head in 1940, as did many other department personnel, to enter military service. James A. Davis assumed the post, and was succeeded in 1941 by Burwell Bantz. A Highway Advisory Commission was formed in that year to assist the department head with administrative matters.

Lake Washington Floating Bridge opened to traffic as a toll bridge on July 2, 1940. \$5,500,000 bonds were retired on July 2, 1949. The first Tacoma Narrows Bridge was completed through a \$3,520,000 bonding program. The bridge collapsed during a storm four months after opening.

The gasoline tax law was widened to include diesel and other fuels at this time and the department started a comprehensive safety program.

World War II had a dramatic effect on highway construction, and only building deemed necessary to the war effort was approved. Only maintenance work necessary to keeping roads in safe condition was authorized.

State aid laws were revised, placing more control of construction projects

in the hands of the cities and counties.

The 1944 Federal Aid Highway Act provided for a national system of Interstate highways. The state then had 599 miles of roadway so designated.

Clarence Hickey succeeded Bantz as department director in 1945. He died in office a short time later, and was replaced by James A. Davis.

The Toll Bridge Authority was given authority to acquire ferry vessels.

A Joint Fact-Finding Committee on Highways, Streets and Bridges was formed in 1947 to study all phases of highway construction and administration.

In 1949, O.R. Dinsmore was appointed department director, replacing Clarence Shain, who had served since 1945. Dinsmore became assistant director in 1949 with the appointment of W.A. Bugge to the directorship.

A five-man Highway Commission was created in 1951 and charged with duties heretofore performed by the director. The Commission was intended to give the department continuity and a non-political outlook. Bugge was retained as director.

In the same year, the department assumed control of the Puget Sound ferry system. As the Washington State Ferries system, it was the world's largest such operation.

The districts were given the authority in 1953 to advertise for, and to open bids on, contracts up to \$15,000. The power to award contracts remained with the department director. The department received the power of "blanket condemnation" in 1955, wherein it could acquire several separately-owned tracts of land by filing one case against the owners.

Enactment of the 1956 Federal Aid Highway Act, which increased federal allocations to states, resulted in a marked increase in Washington State's highway construction program. In two years, 632 contracts were awarded, totaling \$143 million. A two stage project was started in 1946 to build a toll bridge over the Columbia River between Portland and Vancouver. The \$14,500,000 bond issue was retired on November 1, 1956.

In 1958, department personnel numbered 3,206.

Authorization of funds for state highway construction, via the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1959, were slightly decreased. Thus Washington state's Interstate program took a slight, but not significant, setback.

November and December of that year brought heavy flooding to several areas in western Washington and the central mountain region. Federal Emergency Relief funds, totaling \$545,375 were authorized to restore many state highways in these areas.

The 1960 Commission Needs Study supplied valuable data on county and municipal thoroughfares and predicted state highway needs through 1975.

Between 1958 and 1960, a total of 525 construction projects were started. Total cost was \$95 million. This was less than the previous biennium, and can be attributed to cutbacks in federal aid and a number of construction strikes.

Charles G. Prahl succeeded William A. Bugge as director of Highways in 1963. A Corridor Hearing was held on Interstate 90, Interstate 5 to Mercer Island.

Five hundred and thirty-six construction projects costing \$162,956,541 were initiated during the biennium 1962-1964.

Sweeping changes were made in the department's organization following the completion of studies made by an independent management consultant firm. The 1965 Management Survey resulted in the creation of seven major divisions: construction, maintenance, management services, administration, toll facilities, highway development and the division of planning, research and materials.

The public information office was placed directly under the department director.

The 1967 legislature passed two significant bills affecting highways. The first was an increase in the gasoline tax to provide relief for urban traffic congestion.

The second was a statewide traffic study of all highways, roads and streets for the purposes of reclassifying these thoroughfares, determining what transportation problems would arise in the next quarter-century and how these needs could be financed.

Between 1966 and 1968, a total of 407 projects were started at a cost of \$215,440,191. This decrease was due to a smaller number of Seattle freeway contracts.

George H. Andrews succeeded Charles G. Prahl as Director of Highways in 1969. Since then, new buildings have been constructed for the headquarters administrative staff and materials testing personnel.

In 1970 there were over 7,000 miles of state highways and over 5,000

department employees.

During the next two years, 1971 and 1972, much progress was made towards the completion of the Interstate highway system. Interstate 82 between Yakima and Ellensburg was completed, and plans were underway to extend it to the Oregon border. Planning was also well underway on Interstate 182, a spur link between Interstate 82 and the Tri-Cities region.

In 1970, the Highway Department moved its operations into a modern new building on the Olympia Capitol campus, and a new materials research laboratory was built in Tumwater. In 1971 an injunction was granted by the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals concerning work on I-90, I-5 to Mercer Island.

The North Cascades Highway (State Route 20) was opened to traffic in September, 1972. The state's ferry system was enlarged and streamlined with the addition of two new jumbo ferries, the SPOKANE and the WALLA WALLA.

In 1973 the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals ordered a new Corridor Hearing on I-90 from I-5 to Mercer Island.

In 1975 the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals upheld the United States District Court decision allowing construction work to continue on I-90, between Echo Lake and Tanner (North Bend Bypass).

During Fiscal Year '72 the department awarded 242 construction contracts for a total of \$176 million. This compared with 143 construction contracts totaling \$117 million in FY 1971.

A construction contract for \$11,347,285 to construct Interstate Highway 205 around the city of Vancouver was awarded in 1972.

Lane miles on the state system increased from 16,298 in FY '72 to 16,480 in FY '73. Maintenance forces were reduced, however, from 1,310 to 1,293 despite the increased work load. The Ferry System operating budget increased from \$15 million in FY 1972 to \$16.6 million in FY 1973.

The Washington State Ferries System began operating the Port Townsend-Keystone crossing in 1974 which was previously privately owned. Severe weather in January, 1974 caused serious maintenance problems on the state's high mountain passes.

Between May of 1971 and September 1, 1974, the Department of Highways removed more than 6,300 billboards at a cost of \$986,000 under the Highway Beautification Act.

Permanent employee total was reduced to 3,900 on June 30, 1975.

In 1976 (Washington State's Centennial Year) the Highway Commission approved a new construction priority system with the "3-R" category at the top -- reconstruction, resurfacing and replacement of highways and bridges. The department had 260 projects underway at the end of FY 1976 at a completion cost of \$238 million. This compared with 187 projects at a \$251 million completion cost in FY 1975.

The Department of Highways was active in the 1970's in the development of park and ride lots, freeway flyer stops and exclusive transit and vehicle lanes in the Seattle area.

In 1977, the State Legislature created a Department of Transportation which includes the Department of Highways, Aeronautics Commission, Highway Commission, Toll Bridge Authority, Canal Commission, Administration only of the Urban Arterial Board and transportation related function of the Planning and Community Affairs Agency.

William A. Bulley, who had been Director of Highways from 1975 became the first Secretary of Transportation when the new WSDOT was established effective September 21, 1977.

The department proceeded with work on \$217 million in Interstate highway jobs, including continuing work on the Washington State portion of the new I-205 bridge across the Columbia River just east of Vancouver, and improving the Vancouver I-5 freeway. The 11-mile segment of I-205 four-lane freeway bypassing Vancouver was completed at an overall cost of \$35 million on December 22, 1976.

By 1978 the new seven-member State Transportation Commission (STC) made up of citizen policy-makers, realized the legislative intent was not to create a new super agency. The action brought together primary transportation functions and integrated them within a single state agency.

"Value Engineering," a technique for conservation of alternate construction methods, had been applied on selected projects to assure that cost effective designs would be achieved. A cost cutting program was applied by the department on the redesign of the I-205 bridge piers on the Washington side of the bridge, utilizing the "value engineering" process. The department and the I-205 bridge contractor collaborated on changes that saved the state \$100,000.

Another "first" in 1978 was the Secretary of Transportation's decision on May 12, authorizing bicycling on three interstate segments where no other reasonable parallel paths were available. It provided year-round bike use of I-5 freeway shoulders between Kalama and Woodland. Other segments were near Fort Lewis, north of Olympia, and on I-90 from Fishtrap to Tyler interchanges west of Spokane.

WSDOT's State Aid organization in 1979 was the first in the nation to implement a local agency certification acceptance program and delegate major project approval authority to qualified cities and counties. The CA process meant savings of two weeks on minor projects and four months or more on major projects. In 1979 the challenge for the department was to meet expanding, and sometimes conflicting, transportation needs while preserving a strong state economy and maintaining desired life styles.

1980 and 1981 were times of adversity for WSDOT. Department administrators and field personnel faced serious natural disasters, financial constraints and other crises. The February 13, 1979 sinking of the Hood Canal concrete floating bridge (SR 104) hampered motorists travel plans drastically. Maintenance skills were put to the test following volcanic eruptions of Mount St. Helens beginning May 18, 1980. An horrendous chore was placed on highway maintenance crews trying to settle flying volcanic ash to the sides of highway lanes long enough to escort stranded motorists in central and eastern Washington. Nearly 50 miles of old St. Helens highway and 12 bridges were destroyed by the super-heated pyroclastic flows down the Toutle River Valley. Plans were made to build a complete new SR 504, Spirit Lake Memorial Highway along higher elevations of the mountain range paralleling the valley. (The current end of the new highway opened in 1992 is at the Forest Service's observatory overlooking Coldwater Lake. Construction of the remaining seven miles of new highway up to Johnston Ridge looking into the throat of the volcano is slated for 1995.)

In mid-1981, the department announced that freeway lighting costs would be cut in half by converting to high pressure sodium lamps, which provided more energy efficient lighting. The move saved more than \$500,000 annually.

In late 1981, the main WSDOT issue was roadway maintenance. Many of the state's Interstate freeways -- the department's most sophisticated and

carefully constructed highways -- were reaching their design age and needing costly repair and maintenance work. Thousands of miles of other roadways, including state, county and city roads, were suffering from serious deterioration. Department officials and State Transportation Commissioners pledged to continue working with the state legislature and the federal government to ensure WSDOT's state and national commitment to maintaining the mobility the public prizes so much.

On May 21, 1981, when Duane Berentson was named the Second Secretary of Transportation by the State Transportation Commission, the Washington State Ferries system workers went on strike. The event signaled eventual overhaul of the ferry system's financial management system. The State Legislature allocated over \$130 million to build six new 100-car "Issaquah" class ferry vessels. Five of the six vessels were built and operating in the fleet in 1981, bringing the system to 21 vessels serving nine ferry routes and 20 terminals on Puget Sound and San Juan Island waters. (By 1991, WSF vessels carried 22 million passengers, making the ships the number one tourist attraction in the state.)

The final portion of financial and program management actions were accomplished permitting reconstruction of the \$150 million Hood Canal Concrete Floating Bridge that had been destroyed by a February 13, 1979 storm. The replacement bridge re-established a vital transportation and commerce link to the Olympic Peninsula. (The new bridge was reopened for vehicle uses October 25, 1982.)

The department's Pavement Management System was adopted in November, 1981. Developed by department engineers, it was then one of the first systems in the United States providing computerized analysis of the total system of state highways and showed when segments should be most economically resurfaced. It is still one of the most functional systems of its kind in the nation.

Establishment of a loan program and other actions resulting in over \$6 million in federal and private funds was made available to rehabilitate rail lines abandoned by railroad companies.

In 1981 the department raised goals for minority and women-owned businesses in WSDOT's projects. From October, 1982 through August, 1983 the department attained over 11 percent for minority-owned businesses and over

four percent for women-owned businesses.

The department stayed in business during the tight-money years (1981-1983) following the late 1970s gasoline shortage by "working smarter." The lack of gas tax revenue reached crisis proportions in 1981 and 1982, jeopardizing the safety of Washington State's transportation systems. WSDOT overcame the crisis by assuring completion of interstate freeway construction.

The retirement of over 300 employees in 1982 made possible a substantial reduction in positions without widespread layoffs.

The new, wider, stronger Hood Canal Floating Bridge was reopened to vehicular uses on October 25, 1982, at a cost of \$125 million. The new bridge has since withstood storms with winds up to 80 and 90 mph.

In late December, 1982, the U.S. Congress passed a five cent increase in the federal gas tax from 4 to 9 cents a gallon. This helped WSDOT complete planned work into the mid-1990s, plus anticipated adequate maintenance of interstate freeways and non-interstate highways and bridges.

State revenue shortfalls were overcome for reconstruction and resurfacing of highways when the Washington State Legislature, in the spring of 1983, approved the State Transportation Commission's request for a 6 cent a gallon increase in the state gas tax -- up to 18 cents a gallon by fiscal 1985. The revenue package permitted the department to preserve the state's existing highway system by resurfacing 1,200 miles of state highway each year for six years; increase city and county revenues from the new gas tax rate of 16 cents in fiscal 1984 and 18 cents in fiscal 1985; accomplish during the biennium 97 safety projects and repair 26 deficient bridges; complete improvements on 21 projects, and proceed with 22 new capacity construction projects to improve capacity; accelerate interstate highway completion of 764 miles of authorized Interstate freeways; continue capital improvements in the ferry system to provide better service and to refurbish vessels; begin a new Rural Arterial Program pumping over \$10 million into heavily-used farm-to-market road improvements; and increase the Urban Arterial Program with sufficient revenue providing for \$100 million in authorized bonds, a big boost for city capital needs.

Legislation was passed for the largest gas tax increase in the state's history -- from 12 cents to 18 cents per gallon in July, 1984. The action solved many critical highway, street, and road funding shortfalls at all levels of government.

Included was preservation of the 52,000 mile network of local streets and roads, vital interconnecting links between centers of industry, agriculture, and Washington State's population centers. The state's high priority preservation and capacity improvements programs were funded through 1989 making movement of goods and people safer, more efficient and cost effective.

The seven-mile, \$1.4 billion "missing link" on Interstate 90 in Seattle was under construction after 20 years of intense community discontent, which had led to complex environmental and other kinds of litigation. This was the last urban section of I-90 between downtown Seattle and Boston that had not been brought up to interstate standards for safety and convenience. The project is slated for completion in 1995. The infusion of federal funds from this immense project supported almost 8,000 jobs and has benefited the state's economy. When completed, this link will play an important role in Pacific Northwest economies as Pacific Rim trade increases in the future. (Included in the I-90 Project was the completion of the longest soft soil tunnel in the United States through Seattle's Mount Baker Ridge, and the modern I-90 concrete floating bridge named for Homer Hadley crossing Lake Washington between Seattle and Mercer Island.)

The advent of computer technology and an increased emphasis on program delivery reduced dependence by the department's engineering work force spending so much time (about 40 percent) on preliminary engineering. Design and plan authority was delegated to lower levels, and an increased use of photogrammetry brought more efficient production and centralization of design activities.

In 1985 a video logging system of inventorying the condition of state highways, a first in the nation, eliminated a more costly system. Savings included \$65,000 in initial equipment costs, and about \$35,000 savings per year in film and developing costs. A permanent telemetry traffic recording system, detector loops embedded under pavement surfaces, created projected savings of \$40,000 per year.

WSDOT began playing a larger role in tourism, attracting travelers to the state to use Washington State ferries and the state's modern highway network, including rest areas and visitor information centers. Tourism is a \$3 billion business in Washington State, and 20 percent of what tourists spend is for

transportation. The department also went on record supporting economic development initiatives from the Governor's Office, state agencies, local government, interest groups and the private sector.

In 1986 the department assured that materials going into state highways met specifications. An inspector training program, using visual aids and videotapes in 17 courses, attracted 2,000 attendees. Results were levels of efficiency and productivity that increased without adding to the department's work force.

In 1987 policy guidance was submitted to the Legislature for updating a Comprehensive Statewide Transportation Plan (1987-2000) which provided an assessment of resource availability and a basis for rational programming of transportation activities into the future.

A significant increase in the aircraft fuel tax permitted the department's Division of Aeronautics to provide up to \$800,000 per biennium in grants and loans to general aviation airfields for such things as navigational aids, runway and taxiway extensions and lighting. A total of 41 aeronautical grants to communities were allocated for construction, improvement and major revision of municipal airports.

In 1988 passenger-only ferry vessels were introduced to the Washington State Ferries fleet to improve movement of ferry users between Seattle and selected Puget Sound points such as Bainbridge and Vashon Islands, and Bremerton. The operational office of the Assistant Secretary for Marine Division was shifted from Olympia to the Colman Dock on Seattle's waterfront, improving communications, accountability and management control.

During the state's Centennial Year, 1989, WSDOT's functions increased in complexity. The Washington State Commission for Efficiency and Accountability in Government evaluated WSDOT's practices -- contracting protocol, operating procedures and policies, and other contract administration issues. The study was completed in September, 1989, with a total of 38 recommendations. WSDOT began implementing and monitoring every recommendation with anticipated savings of \$17 million. (By March, 1991, the department had implemented 30 recommendations and continued to work on the remainder for full implementation.)

The massive new I-90 Lake Washington Concrete Floating Bridge between

Seattle and Mercer Island was opened for full traffic uses in June, 1989. It carries three lanes of auto traffic, and two transit lanes with traffic flows eastbound and westbound. (When the new Lacey Murrow Bridge was completed in 1993, the auto traffic was westbound on the larger bridge, with the Lacey Murrow bridge carrying eastbound traffic.)

The first phase of the I-90 Project was completed in 1989. It included more than 80 individual contracts ranging from \$5,000 to \$65 million each. Work progressed while more than 80,000 vehicles traveled across Lake Washington and Mercer Island daily. Emphasis was placed on "moving people rather than vehicles" in densely populated urban regions. More federal funds were allocated for building and improving rail services. And the department worked to improve its efficiency without sacrificing effectiveness as it fostered its role in economic development throughout the state.

In order to deliver its programs more effectively, the department established cooperative relationships with public and private sector organizations. Working with the Washington State Trade Center in Seattle was an example. The center created 7,000 entry level jobs. Another example was the ATA Gateway Tower Building in Seattle located partially on department-owned property that produced revenue to WSDOT totaling \$750,000 per year. Other examples included the Prosser Rest Area, Travelers Rest Area on Snoqualmie Pass summit, and the restaurant at the Washington State Ferries headquarters on Colman Dock in Seattle.

The 50-year-old Lacey V. Murrow floating bridge sank into Lake Washington following fierce storms on November 25, 1990. A new and stronger concrete floating bridge was under construction to replace the old bridge with completion expected in 1994.

The State Transportation Policy Plan was presented to the State Legislature in January, 1990. It described land use, urban mobility, rural mobility, planning coordination, economically distressed areas, ports and tourism, movement of freight and goods, and preservation of existing transportation facilities. It also described the Growth Management Act.

The work of six District Administrators was emphasized in 1991. Activities of district employees ranged from the I-90 Project in District 1 (Seattle) to the SR 504, Spirit Lake Memorial Highway construction in District 4

(Vancouver), to the U.S. 2 Spokane River Bridge job in District 6 (Spokane). A series of District 3 (Tumwater) I-5 jobs totaling \$139 million were completed in late 1991. Improvements of I-5 lanes in District 4 (Vancouver) were highlighted, along with I-90 improvements in the mountainous regions of District 5 (Yakima).

Employees were encouraged to participate in Teamwork Incentive and "Brainstorm" programs. The Teamwork Incentive Program permitted groups of employees, working collectively, to improve department operations. Since 1983 a total of 22 work units had participated in the TIP program, realizing a savings of more than \$3 million as a direct result of TIP suggestions. The "Brainstorm" Program encouraged individual employees to suggest methods that improve agency productivity. Employees submitted more than 800 suggestions resulting in savings of \$390,000.

A Local Programs Division (formerly State Aid) was created in the early 1990s to better serve local governments. Primary responsibility has been to assist cities and counties in obtaining their share of federal and state funds to improve transportation facilities and programs, and ensure their eligibility for these funds by complying with state and federal requirements. Since the early 1970s the division has funded 3,500 local agency federal aid projects valued at \$810 million. Biennially, the division provides about \$131 million in federal aid to fund nearly 300 city street and county road projects.

In 1992 WSDOT became a major player in establishing a public transportation rail/bus transit system for the Puget Sound region. The Joint Regional Policy Committee was charged by the State Legislature to bring a commuter rail system to the ballot in 1993. The department was also studying high-speed ground transportation systems such as magnetic levitation trains for future use in Washington State.

In 1992 the department with direction from the State Transportation Commission, was continuing intensive studies and work meant to increase the department's efficiency, effectiveness, accountability and service.

Sid Morrison, who became the third Secretary of Transportation for the Washington State Department of Transportation on June 1, 1993, addressed general transportation issues facing people throughout the state, inadequate funding for transportation, and a look at the state's role in transportation

planning for the future.

In 1993 emphasis was placed on the department's "Partnering" concept with a focus by WSDOT and private contractors on quality assurance specifications as work moved forward building highways, bridges, ferry vessel facilities, and improving airfields and public transportation routes -- bringing long-term cost savings and more efficient resource management.

In early 1993 the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) gained emphasis. Passed by Congress in 1992, ISTEA called for greater public participation and more local decision-making in transportation planning, promoting government-private sector partnerships, and providing new funding for historic and scenic preservation projects. It also placed more emphasis on environmental issues and alternative transportation.

That same year the STC approved a Six-Year Rail Program to improve rail passenger service in the state. The \$237 million program included \$31 million in the 1993-95 biennial budget for improving track and grade crossings from Canada to Oregon, and restoring Amtrak passenger service between Seattle and Portland.

In April, 1993, the STC adopted a resolution honoring the late Homer Hadley, designer of the first concrete floating bridge across Lake Washington (L. V. Murrow) -- naming the new and wider I-90 floating bridge in his honor.

Before Duane Berentson retired at the end of May, 1993, the department launched its third annual "Give 'Em A Brake" safety campaign to remind drivers to use caution when driving through work zones. The successful program was designed to protect motorists and work crews from accidents, injuries, and fatalities caused by driver inattention, speeding and careless driving.

The Congress in May, 1993, designated the Northwest Rail Corridor from Eugene, Oregon to Vancouver, B.C. Canada, as a high speed rail corridor.

The department began a study to determine how Seattle's Alaskan Way Viaduct (completed in 1957) might perform during an earthquake. The study was a part of larger seismic retrofit program for state bridges constructed before 1981.

In June, 1993, WSDOT proposed a Mentor/Protégé' program, which

signed an historic agreement for joint development of a new Rest Area and Interpretive Center on SR 504, the Spirit Lake Memorial Highway, on the North Fork Ridge, with work set to be completed in 1995.

WASHINGTON STATE HIGHWAY/TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
COMMISSION MEMBERS SINCE 1951

George B. Simpson	1951-54	Vancouver	D
John E. Maley	1951	Omak	
Fred G. Redmon	1951-54 51-54*	Yakima	R
R.A. Moasio	1951-61 54-55*	Tacoma	
Oscar E. Stone	1951-61	Spokane	
L.B. Wallace	1951-54	Bellingham	
R.E. Hensel	1954-57	Bremerton	
Ernest C. Huntley	1954-57 55-57*	Colfax	
Harry E. Morgan	1954-61	Longview & Ocean Park	
Ernest A. Cowell	1957-65 57-58* 61-65*	Eureka	D
Ernest J. Ketcham	1957-61 58-61*	Seattle	
George D. Zahn	1961-71 65-66* 67-71*	Methow	D
James M. Blair, Sr.	1961-67	Puyallup	D
Robert L. Mikalson	1961-71, 77-83	Centralia	D
Irving Clark, Jr.	1963-65	Seattle	D
Harold Walsh	1965-74	Everett	D
Elmer C. Huntley	1965-67 66-67*	Thornton	R
Baker Ferguson	1967-76 71-72* 73-75*	Walla Walla	R
John N. Rupp	1967-73 72-73*	Seattle	R
Lorna Ream	1971-73, 76-77	Spokane	
A. H. Parker	1971-76 75-76*	Bremerton	R
Virginia K. Gunby	1973-79	Seattle	D
Howard Sorensen	1973-77 76-77*	Ellensburg	R
Julia Butler Hansen	1975-80 79-80*	Cathlamet	D
Ray A. Aardal	1977-81 77-79* 80-81*	Bremerton	D
James G. Swinyard	1977-81	Deer Park	R
Vaughn Hubbard	1977-89 81-82* 86-87*	Waitsburg	R
Richard Odabashian	1978-91 83-84* 89-90*	Cashmere	R

Gov. Albert D. Rosellini	1979-91 90-91*	Seattle	D
Jerry B. Overton	1981-87 82-83*	Spokane	R
F. "Pat" Wanamaker	1981-86 84-85*	Coupeville	R
Bernice Stern	1981-92 85-86*	Seattle	D
Leo B. Sweeney	1983-93 87-88*	Olympia	D
William J. Kamps	1986-90 88-89*	Bremerton	D
Jim Henning	1987 - 91-92*	St. John	R
Norm McKibben	1989-93 92-93*	Walla Walla	R
Alice B. Tawresey	1990 - 93-94*	Bainbridge Island	R
Robert M. Higgins	1991-93	Spokane	D
Barbara Shinpoch	1991-93	Renton	D
Aubrey Davis	1992 -	Mercer Isl.	D
Connie Niva	1993 -	Everett	D
Lawrence Weldon	1993 -	Seattle	D
Linda Tompkins	1993 -	Spokane	D

* Served as Chairman

WASHINGTON STATE HIGHWAY/TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT
CHIEF EXECUTIVES
1905 - 1993

1905 - 1909 J. M. Snow, Commissioner
1909 - 1911 Henry L. Bowlby, Commissioner
1911 - William R. White, Commissioner
1911 - William J. Roberts, Commissioner
1912 - 1916 William R. Roy, Commissioner
1916 - 1925 James Allen, Commissioner
1925 - 1927 J.W. Hoover, Commissioner
1927 - 1933 Samuel J. Humes, Highway Engineer
1933 - 1940 Lacey V. Murrow, Director of Highways
1940 - 1941 James A. Davis, Acting Director of Highways
1941 - 1945 Burwell Bantz, Director of Highways
1945 - Clarence Hickey, Director of Highways
1945 - James A. Davis, Acting Director of Highways
1945 - 1949 Clarence Shain, Director of Highways
1949 - O.R. Dinsmore, Acting Director of Highways
1949 - 1963 William A. Bugge, Director of Highways
1963 - 1969 Charles G. Prahl, Director of Highways
1969 - 1975 George H. Andrews, Director of Highways
1975 - 1977 William A. Bulley, Director of Highways
1977 - 1981 William A. Bulley, Secretary of Transportation
1981 - 1993 Duane Berentson, Secretary of Transportation
1993 - Sid Morrison, Secretary of Transportation