

Message from Patty

My first year at the helm of Washington State Ferries felt like navigating a series of stormy seas. I know it's been a challenging time for the millions of customers who rely on our ferry system, day in and day out. We are almost two years into the COVID-19 pandemic, and our workforce is feeling the tremendous strain of mental and physical exhaustion. Our ferry family has lost employees to COVID-19 and we are still feeling the effects of the pandemic. We continue to be a vital part of our state highway system despite these challenges and at all levels we are working every day to restore service to pre-pandemic levels.

I am immensely proud of my dedicated and passionate team. I've seen the hard work that goes into ensuring millions of customers get to their destinations safely. As we continue to fill vital vacancies throughout our division, each new hire demonstrates how critical every staff member is at Washington State Ferries.

Community engagement

Each year we host two rounds of public meetings to hear from the ferry-served communities we serve and to share updates about service and key projects. Due to COVID-19 we again held both sets of meetings virtually. With the convenient use of the online platform we had more than 550 people from all over the system participate in our community meetings. It was amazing to reach so many people!

Planning for a new Fauntleroy terminal



We launched an extensive public outreach process on the [future of our Fauntleroy terminal](#). Built in the 1950s, the Fauntleroy terminal is aging, seismically vulnerable and overdue for replacement. We are

2021 by the NUMBERS

17
MILLION
TOTAL RIDERS

COMPLETED
150,000
TOTAL TRIPS

410
DEPARTURES
PER DAY



760,000
TOTAL SERVICE MILES
30 times around the Earth



189
WHALE
SIGHTINGS



7 LIFESAVING
EVENTS



98.2%
TRIP RELIABILITY



7%
LESS OF DIESEL
FUEL USED



1,100,000
Vehicle reservations



400
MEDICAL
TRANSPORTS



95,000
Calls answered
by Customer Service

218
NEW employees



5,574
HOURS of employee
TRAINING

11
Open houses &
public meetings

Increased our social media outreach to

40,000

Twitter followers

&

11,000

Facebook followers



In this annual review, we highlight key accomplishments of 2021 and acknowledge some of the difficulties we faced. From our 70th anniversary on June 1, to important construction milestones and progress in our sustainability and electrification programs, we made great strides in 2021. In 2022, we are working on several efforts to improve our staffing and service reliability. I hope you enjoy this Year in Review and I look forward to what lies ahead in 2022.

working on a study to identify alternatives for replacement. Our community engagement process includes three different advisory groups focused on the executive, technical and community aspects of the terminal. Over 200 people from our Fauntleroy/Vashon/Southworth route communities participated in 2021. Thank you to all who participated, we appreciate and rely on your input to shape the future of our ferry system.



A special 70th anniversary decal aboard Wenatchee. In June, we installed these decals on every vessel in the fleet in honor of this major milestone



Our Kaleetan engine room crews decorated the vessel in holiday lights. Photo by Alternate Staff Chief Chad Scott.



COVID-19 response

In 2020, our ridership hit the lowest level in nearly 50 years. Annual ferry ridership was down by 10 million riders from 2019 due to the ongoing impacts of the pandemic. Throughout 2021 there was a resurgence of ferry riders as people started venturing out on trips and employees who previously operated completely remotely began returning to the office.



A healthcare worker from Peninsula Community Health Services administers COVID-19 vaccinations aboard Chimacum.

On June 30, the state lifted several safety mandates that had changed the way we sailed. Our crews and terminal staff no longer had to advise drivers to remain in their vehicles, enforce passenger capacity limits, or use selfie sticks with credit card readers. Masks continue to be required by federal transportation mandates. We are working with our food vendor to continue adding back food service in the coming year.

Workforce recruitment, training and succession planning

Despite extensive recruiting efforts and the hiring of more than 175 new employees in 2021, staff shortages continue to be a constant challenge. We are working on several short-, medium- and long-term strategies to address severe crew shortages, including moving to continuous, year-round hiring.

Our New Mate Orientation is an intensive six-to-eight-week

Carol Heimgartner of Coupeville and Alan Johanson of Port Townsend got married aboard Salish on the route that connected them.



Spokane flies the POW MIA flag on Veteran's Day 2021.



The Sounders donated an autographed soccer ball which we gave away on Twitter. We love our local sports teams!



I had the opportunity to do several fleet visits this year including a stop with our Colman Dock terminal supervisors (pictured here).

program for licensed deck officers who have completed the First Class Pilot License requirement for WSF. Training includes navigational proficiencies, leadership, safety skills and familiarity with emergency procedures. Participants go through practical assessments for safe and efficient watch standing onboard our vessels. This program is critical in creating the succession we need as our seasoned captains get ready for well deserved retirements.

We also continue to promote the opportunities and advantages of maritime careers amidst a worldwide shortage of mariners. We're proud to be involved with the new Maritime High School, a collaborative project of Highline Public Schools and several local partners, which opened in September. We also conducted vessel tours for the Youth Maritime Collaborative to support possible future mariners.



Youth Maritime Collaborative Accelerator Project members tour Tacoma.

With all the crewing challenges, our dispatch team was the clear winner of this year's WSF Teamwork Award. This award goes to a team that had a significant and positive effect on the organization while exemplifying the values of trust, cross-functional collaboration and service. Thanks to the tireless efforts of our dispatch team, vessels sailed when they might have remained tied up, key positions were filled when they might have gone empty and sailings operated that might have been cancelled. Great job dispatch team and thanks for all you do!



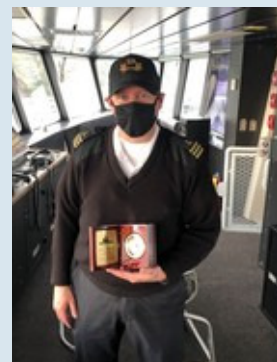
Mukilteo terminal staff Brad Norman with a snowman this past February.

Service awards

In addition to celebrating our milestone anniversary, many employees celebrated key milestones in their careers at WSF.



Capt. Roger Hammett accepts a 30-year service award.





A class of new deck employees pose for a photo at Bainbridge in May. The class was one of many in 2021 in our ongoing efforts to hire new crew members.

Reliable service

Reliability is very important to us. Unfortunately, we faced several obstacles in 2021 to provide the best service possible. In April, we unexpectedly lost *Wenatchee*, one of our largest ferries, due to an engine fire. With *Wenatchee* out of service, and the ongoing pandemic-related vessel crewing challenges, we had to adjust service several times in 2021 for customers to better plan their travel.

These difficult decisions included temporarily suspending vehicle reservations for the San Juan Islands and implementing an alternate sailing schedule in October, which has reduced service on almost every route in the system. This reduced schedule allows us to meet the required staffing levels and provide more reliability for our customers.

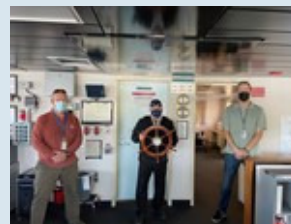
Thanks to the hard work of our dispatch and operations teams, we've been able to trial adding back full service on the Anacortes/San Juan Islands route. On Dec. 17, we restarted the reservation system for our Anacortes/San Juan Islands and Port Townsend/Coupeville routes. We will continue to restore service as new, trained staff are hired.



Chief Mate Scott Boyer accepts a 30-year service award.



Ticket Seller Frank Fletcher accepts a 45-year service award.



Capt. Curt Larson accepts an award for 45 years of service.

2021 Life Ring Awards

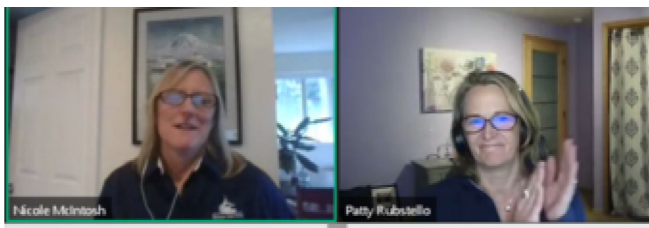
One of the reasons our crew goes through such extensive training is because at any moment they can be asked to respond to emergencies on the Puget Sound.

This year our crews provided emergency medical care on board the vessel, pulled people out of the water, and retrieved several people in distress aboard small crafts. We responded to seven lifesaving events and helped

New engine room staff go through physically distanced training.

One of the positions that's been especially difficult to recruit for has been engine room employees. Like many industries both locally and internationally, we're facing a shortage of experienced and licensed employees.

We're hiring! If you want to work for the ferries now is a great time to start your maritime career! We are no longer requiring new hires to work on-call and are hiring continuously now! [Visit our employment website](#) for more information on how to apply.



Senior Port Engineer of Maintenance Bill Schweyen was announced as the recipient of the 2021 WSF Leadership Award, which is given to individuals who lead by building trust and inspiring others. Bill has supervisory responsibilities for four port engineers and nearly 400 licensed and unlicensed engine room employees. Congratulations and job well done!

Systemwide electrification

Just a year ago we issued our [System Electrification Plan](#) to guide our vessel and terminal electrification efforts for the next 20 years. Our vision for our 2040 fleet is to have 26

more than 20 people in danger. Thank you to all who participated in life saving events for your compassionate care and quick thinking!

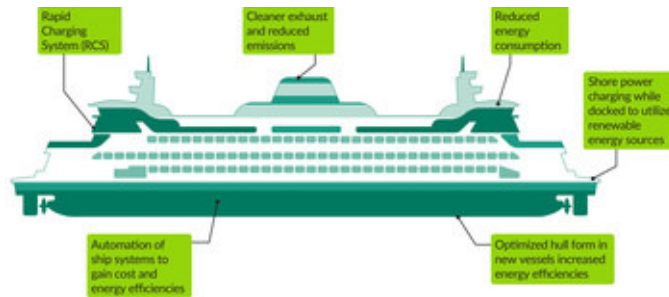


Captain Tom Tilton led a search and rescue effort on the last day of his 25 year career on Thanksgiving Day. The Chimacum crew assisted a person that had gone overboard while on our Seattle/Bremerton route. What an incredible way to end a career in public service!



New deck crew members training in how to launch rescue rafts.

vessels, 22 of which are plug-in hybrid-electric vehicles. This includes building 16 new hybrid-electric vessels and converting six existing vessels. The plan also describes the charging infrastructure that will be needed at 16 terminals as well as the anticipated changes in job duties for various day-to-day functions for our staff.



A diagram from our System Electrification Plan showing some of the benefits of hybrid-electric ferries.

I'm looking forward to implementing the first phase of our electrification plan in 2022 when construction begins on our first hybrid electric Olympic class vessel. With this construction on the horizon, the Washington State Transportation Commission (WSTC) launched a public process in 2021 to name the new ferry boat. On Dec. 14, after months of public outreach, the WSTC selected the name of the upcoming vessel: *Wishkah*. Wishkah is a river that runs from the Olympic foothills southward into Grays Harbor at the town of Aberdeen. The new vessel is scheduled to enter service in 2025.

The governor's proposed 2022 budget includes \$323.9 million in funding for our electrification program. The funds would go to the first 144-car hybrid-electric ferry, a second 144-car hybrid-electric ferry, conversion of a second Jumbo Mark II vessel to hybrid-electric and to building three terminal charging stations. I look forward to the upcoming legislative session and will be advocating for the electrification program.



We were pleased to have our ferries counterparts from Norway visit us this year. Norway is one of the international leaders in electrification, and we look forward to our continued relationship with them as our program advances.

Major construction

Construction continued on two major terminal projects this year. We wrapped up the final elements of our [new Mukilteo terminal that opened on Dec. 29, 2020](#), and we made tremendous progress on our [new Colman Dock terminal in Seattle](#).

Colman Dock

In 2021, we completed the trestle on the north side of the terminal, continued construction on the remaining two-thirds of the terminal building and began erecting the new entry building along Alaskan Way, along with the elevated pedestrian connector. In spring of 2022 we plan to open the rest of the terminal building and welcome our many walk-on passengers to the completed terminal building.

By late 2022 or early 2023, we will complete and open the remaining key elements of the project, the entry building and elevated pedestrian connector. Stay tuned for more information about these project milestones! As always, we appreciate your patience as you traverse through this busy construction zone. We can't wait to share the final result with all of you.



A snapshot of progress at Colman Dock and Alaskan Way in August 2021.



State Sen. Marko Liias, Tulalip Tribes of Washington Vice Chairman Glen Gobin, Chief of Staff Nicole McIntosh, WSDOT Secretary Roger Millar, FTA Administrator Nuria Fernandez and FTA Regional Administrator Linda Gehrke tour the Mukilteo Terminal after announcing the award of \$242 million for our Colman Dock project and \$72 million for our new Mukilteo terminal.

Mukilteo terminal

I am proud to note that our new Mukilteo terminal has won a number of professional awards. Most recently, the engineering and construction publication Engineering News-Record named the terminal its Northwest Project of the Year and gave it the award of merit for Excellence in Sustainability. The project goes on to compete in the

national competition.

While the new terminal opened to vessels and passengers on a dark and stormy night in December 2020, these elements opened in 2021.

- The overhead passenger walkway, opened in April, improves safety as it streamlines loading and unloading by separating walk-on passengers from vehicles.
- First Street, the new road leading to the terminal from State Route 525, opened just in time for the busy Memorial Day weekend.
- The final piece of the project, the Port of Everett's fishing pier, opened with a ribbon cutting in June. Built as part of the project to replace the old fishing pier next to the old ferry terminal that was torn down, the ADA-compliant aluminum gangway features grating that allows light to pass through the pier to benefit marine life below.

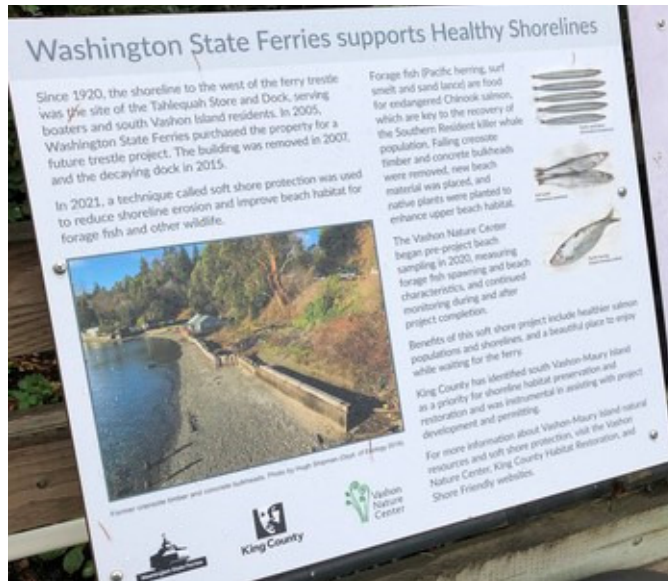


The new overhead loading walkway at our Mukilteo terminal opened in April.

Greening the fleet

Improving our environmental impact is an ongoing journey, and in 2021 we made some great strides. In August we launched our [updated Sustainability Action Plan](#) for the 2021-2023 biennium, which also evaluated successes and areas to improve from the 2019-2021 plan.

Since releasing our first plan in 2019, we removed 7,000 tons of creosote in Mukilteo, which was four percent of the remaining creosote in Puget Sound at the time. Both the Mukilteo and Seattle projects have enhanced storm water treatment systems. Also, over 85 percent of our janitorial supply transitioned to “green” products, including unique garbage can liners for our vessels that meet our safety requirements.



Eagle Harbor Maintenance Facility crews installed a new interpretive board at the Tahlequah terminal that outlines our shoreline restoration efforts and the importance of supporting healthy ecosystems.

Local partnerships are a key part of achieving our sustainability goals. One project that highlights that effort was the transformation of the shoreline next to our Tahlequah terminal. Terminal engineers and designers worked with King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks and the Vashon Nature Center to use an ecofriendly method of protecting the terminal roadway against high tides while also promoting habitat for forage fish, a key food source for salmon.

Looking ahead to 2022

I am hopeful about our path for 2022. On Sept. 30, 2021, I had the privilege of speaking about our ferry system to the U.S. House of Representatives Subcommittee on Highways and Transit. In my testimony, and questions following, I

highlighted the role of ferry transportation in reducing congestion, contributing to clean mobility alternatives and the critical services we provide. Despite the challenges we faced in 2021, our role in Washington's highway system remains essential to the function of everyday life for every customer and business we serve.



Here's to a new year filled with opportunities to grow and serve the people of our great State of Washington.

Patty Rubstello

Assistant Secretary, WSDOT/Ferries Division



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