

Next Chapter Meeting- No chapter meeting will be held in September, and our next formal meeting will be on Saturday, October 5 at a time and place TBD. Watch *The Train Sheet* and your e-mail for announcements.

Lynnwood Link opens Aug. 30- Sound Transit's light rail system will take a major step forward with the opening of the 8.5 mile Lynnwood Link extension on August 30. Light rail trains will continue past the current Northgate terminus to Shoreline South (148th Street), Shoreline North (185th Street), Mountlake Terrace, and Lynnwood City Center. An "infill" station will open next year at 130th Street, about halfway between Northgate and Shoreline South. Line 1 ridership is expected to increase from the current 80,000 passengers a day to over 100,000 within the first six months of the opening.

Community celebrations are planned for all four new stations on opening day. Lynnwood Station will have live music and dance performances, art displays, food trucks and over 60 booths with representatives from local governments and non-profits.

South Lake Union Streetcars Shut Down- An electrical breakdown will force Seattle's South Lake Union streetcars to stay in the maintenance yard for several weeks, because mechanics can't get the right parts yet from overseas.

King County Metro announced Tuesday afternoon that service has been suspended since Friday, when an unplanned outage cut off power between electrical substations and the overhead catenary wires which power the trains. As of June, the South Lake Union line carried 494 average weekday passengers, compared with 3,598 for the city's busier First Hill streetcar line that reaches the Chinatown International District, Pioneer Square and Capitol Hill.

South Lake Union streetcars operate near empty most hours, but occasionally seats fill in late afternoon as commuters head home from their office jobs. Service on the 1.3-mile line, which goes from the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Center past Amazon's urban campus to Westlake Station, started in late 2007.

The shutdown is the most recent setback for streetcar dreams, following the slow-motion demise of a First Avenue extension also known as the Culture Connector. The extension has been on ice since 2018, with tepid City Council support, a rising price of \$410 million (including associated public utility improvements) and no money to jump-start construction in the property tax transportation levy that will appear on Seattle voter's fall ballots. In the late 2000's, a five-line streetcar plan by City

Council members fell by the wayside, while the South Lake Union line chronically missed its rosy ridership estimates. The estimated operating cost for the South Lake Union line is \$4.6 million this year, offset somewhat by wraparound ads on the rail cars and other funding sources.

Metro, which operates the city-owned streetcars, reported that in July, crews found worn-out control units that manage one substation's high-voltage circuit breakers. Train frequency was reduced to ease the power load on the other substation, the agencies said. Then worn-out units failed at the other substation, for reasons still being determined. Under normal circumstances, a streetcar arrives every 15 minutes most of the day.

"It is currently expected to take several weeks to obtain and install parts for four control units and up to four high-voltage breakers," officials announced in a news release. The city and Metro said they expect to restore streetcar trips to full schedules as soon as possible.

As for how Metro got stuck without replacement parts, spokesperson Jeff Switzer said he couldn't comment, as that question is part of inquiries still underway with suppliers. The streetcars were purchased from Inekon of the Czech Republic, with some assembly in Seattle.

The South Lake Union line is expected to undergo a future eight-year closure, if Sound Transit follows through with its proposal to build a light rail station under Westlake Avenue at Denny Way as part of its 2039 Ballard Link extension. Railcars will be unable to operate while a couple of blocks of Westlake are excavated, followed by two-lane traffic over temporary lids. —*The Seattle Times*, Aug. 14, 2024

Trains are roaring back in the Pacific Northwest- Amtrak Cascades trains are seeing a 7.5% jump in ridership compared with the same period last year.

Train ridership fell hard during the pandemic, but it's coming back strong as people choose trains for the views, the fares and the sustainability. The number of passengers who got on or off Amtrak Cascades trains in Seattle was about 472,000 in 2023, compared to 280,000 in 2022, according to the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT). That's not far behind the 510,000 trips taken in the peak year of 2019.

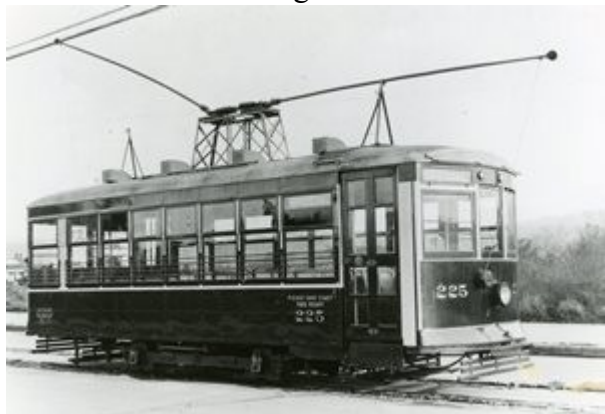
Passenger numbers at the busiest Northwest stations- King Street Station in Seattle and Union Station in Portland- jumped 68% and 43% respectively, from 2022 to 2023. Ridership on the Cascades route between Seattle and Vancouver, B.C. jumped 48% so far this fiscal year, the Wall Street Journal reported. Nationwide, Amtrak is heading toward an annual ridership record for 2024, per the WSJ. While rail travel is still a small percentage of intercity transportation compared with airlines, rail produces far fewer emissions per passenger than either flying or driving. Train tickets are typically less expensive than airline tickets, especially when purchased in advance. *Axios Seattle*, Aug. 7, 2024

100-year-old trolley scheduled for a long-term stop at Bellingham's Old Town district

by Robert Mittendorf and Loumay Alesali

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Inside Look is a Bellingham Herald series where we take readers behind the scenes to restaurants, new businesses, local landmarks and other local news stories. A restored 1924 trolley car, representing of the type that once served Bellingham and several other Northwest cities was put on display at the corner of Holly and E



This photo is not of the actual trolley on display, but of one of the same make.

streets in Old Town next to the Helen Loggie Museum of Art. Brad Parberry, a member of the family that owned recycling facilities near the waterfront, had the trolley returned to its original condition. The trolley will be part of the museum, along with a 10-foot chipping wheel from the old Georgia-Pacific paper mill, in the new Courthouse Plaza. It's so-named because The Loggie is in the old Territorial Courthouse. The 1858 building is the oldest brick structure in Washington state. Having sold their industrial facilities, the Parberrys are focused on housing and other development in the historic Old Town section west of downtown Bellingham. The Courthouse Plaza is a major step, Parberry told The Bellingham Herald in a phone interview from his office in San Francisco. "For me, it's about

beautifying this area. I'd like to make it shine like it used to," Parberry said. TOP VIDEOS Tom and Vince Mendenhall of Arlington made the trolley appear as it did in its heyday, when passengers would ride around downtown. Their company, Historical Railway Restoration, preserves cabooses, locomotives and train cars. They found and restored what's called a Birney Safety Car, a lightweight streetcar with only a driver — called a "motorman" — and no conductor. According to the city of Bellingham website, a system of trolley lines operated on Holly Street-Eldridge Avenue, East North Street-Cornwall Avenue, Kentucky Street-Woburn Street-Electric Avenue, Harris-Cowgill avenues, and Monroe, G, Girard and Ellsworth streets in the Columbia and Lettered Streets neighborhoods. Their tracks are still visible in the pavement of roads in Bellingham and Fairhaven. The wooden interior of a restored 1924 streetcar at the corner of West Holly and E streets in the Old Town district of Bellingham, Wash., on Wednesday, July 31, 2024. The Birney Safety Car was part of a line that ran through several sections of town. Robert Mittendorf The Bellingham Herald "It's got a historical significance to the area. It actually operated originally in Tacoma, but (the engineering firm) Stone & Webster owned the Tacoma, the Seattle, the Everett and the Bellingham operations when this operated, so this car could easily have been from Bellingham," Vince told The Herald as he watched the trolley loaded onto a flatbed truck, moved to the plaza, and then lowered into place with a forklift. Vince's dad, Tom Mendenhall, focused on the wood trim, seats and windows. "I can't really describe what I do — I just do it. Give me a piece of wood from a streetcar and I'll fix it," Tom said. This car was located in a hay barn near Snohomish, Parberry said. Members of the public will be able to see inside the streetcar about mid-September, once the Courthouse Plaza is complete and landscaping is added, he said. One side of the trolley's interior has original seating, and the other side will have historic Bellingham photos.

Read more at: <https://www.bellinghamherald.com/news/local/article290623029.html#storylink=cpy>

A Fire on the Willsburg Bridge Approach

The fire occurred on the Portland & Western Railroad (PNWR) Willsburg line at MP 743.2. The track speed at this location is 10 mph. The fire started at around 0230 and originated at the base of bent #8 (starting at the east end, counting towards the river.) According to the local fire department investigator, the cause was a small campfire under the bridge, likely due to homeless activity. There were no camps directly under the bridge but there were some just to the north side. There were approximately 17 bents with some sort of fire damage (#3 - #19). The heat from the fire caused a 40' – 50' track misalignment that broke both rails. This occurred directly above the source of the fire, which was the hottest part, and where the bulk of the damage was. This is the east bank approach trestle to the steel spans over the Willamette River.

PNWR Bridge and Track department inspectors and managers performed a detailed assessment of the bridge and track and determined that the following components would need to be replaced:

- A few pilings, caps and between 25-30 bridge ties
- 600' of new welded rail. (This is to cover all the area of the burn where the chemistry of the rail might have been compromised by the heat.)

Thankfully, the top portion of the bridge had newer components. The rail, ties, stringers, and caps were all less than ten years old. This helped keep the damage limited to surface burns that didn't penetrate too deeply. They will be using a bridge contractor to replace the bridge components and the track department will replace the rails. They estimate that the track will be restored to service in about a week.



The approach appears on the left side of the bridge in this photo



Charred components of structure

More on this story on the following page.

Portland, OR ([KOIN](#)) Aug. 20, 2024 — Clackamas fire crews battled a massive blaze at a structured bridge in Milwaukie early Tuesday morning.

According to officials, crews responded to the fire around 2:40 a.m. near the 13600 block of Southeast Fair Oaks Drive where they found a large train trestle on fire.

Additional units responded to the scene and quickly got to work battling the fire.



Video of the scene shows the trestle engulfed, while crews worked to put the fire out.

A spokesperson for Portland & Western Railroad told KOIN 6 News that they need to assess the damage before the bridge can be used again.

“We’ll need to assess any potential damage to the structure from the fire before we can allow operations to run. Thankfully, the fire has been extinguished,” the spokesperson said.

50 Years Ago in “The Train Sheet”

September 1974

Streetcars return to Yakima- Yakima Valley Trolleys’ two streetcars from Portugal finally reached U.S. soil in mid-August. They were off-loaded in Houston, Texas after their cross-ocean trip. The cars are 35 feet long, have seating for 32 in each car, and are numbered 1776 and 1976. They are expected to arrive in Yakima in mid-September. City plans allow for chartering the cars and for their operation on almost every part of the Yakima Valley Transportation’s 25-mile network of electrified tracks.

Milwaukee Road Pulls the Plug- The Milwaukee Road electrification is definitely dead. Overhead is already being removed and substations are being stripped in Montana. The Little Joes are being stripped of their motors, compressors, switches and other electrical gear in Deer Lodge. The parts go east for scrap or resale. The Little Joe bodies move west on their own trucks to Tacoma for sale or scrap. Five Joes were in Tacoma August 10, with Deer Lodge releasing one per week.

Big Plans for BN Tacoma Station- Tacoma’s Union Station will be restored as part of a major retail and commercial development.

Burlington Northern, which is financing the restoration, will begin structural and roof repairs this fall. That construction work will cost an estimated \$50,000, the railroad announced. Eventually, the entire station will be renovated and some 250,000 square feet of additional retail space will be built on the adjacent 20 acres of railroad-owned property. Plans call for Union Station’s waiting room to be redone, with a central open area with the skylight restored to allow interior planting of trees and shrubs. Small specialty shops would utilize adjacent space on the surrounding balcony and two main floors. The separate new structure would be connected to the station by glass-enclosed galleries. This new construction would be done in a contemporary style, using brick to harmonize with the depot.

Richard Larson, general manager of BNL Development Corporation (a Burlington Northern subsidiary), and Thomas Dunstan, president of Mall Centers, Inc., are working with the railroad on the planning for project, which will be known as “Depot Galleria.”

“We feel this project could become the southerly anchor of the present downtown renewal and could serve as a catalyst to encourage redevelopment of the intervening properties,” Larson said.

Union Station was opened on May 1, 1911. It was designed by Reed and Stem of St. Paul, Minn., the architectural firm which also designed Grand Central Station in New York and King Street Station in Seattle. The Tacoma depot was placed on the National Register of Historic Sites last March.



more photos of fire damage



View of top and burned ties and broken rail

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