



WASHINGTON STATE FERRIES

TWO-YEAR OPERATIONS REPORT FOR 1999/2001

prepared by:
Heffron Transportation, Inc.
Parsons Brinckerhoff

photos provided by:
Washington State Ferries
Steve Brown
Chris Gendron

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“Despite financial challenges, Washington State Ferries remains the state’s number one tourist attraction and second largest mass transit system.”

Welcome to the Washington State Ferries Two-Year Operations Report for the 1999/2001 biennium. We hope you will find the information provided in this report useful in understanding the nature of the ferry system business, including operations, budgeting, and customer service. As we look back over the past two years, we are reminded of a time of organizational change and a celebration of 50 years of service to the citizens of Washington State. Despite financial challenges, Washington State Ferries remains the state’s number one tourist attraction and second largest mass transit system. Washington State Ferries carried 26.6 million riders in fiscal year 2001, completing 99.6% of our 178,500 scheduled trips. This is the highest rate recorded since we began measuring service reliability in 1996.

I arrived at Washington State Ferries in January 2002. My top priority is to assure our customers that we are providing the most cost-effective service possible. Next, we need to stabilize the funding base for the ferry system and develop additional non-tariff revenue as part of our efforts to help achieve future service expansion goals. The Washington State Legislature has provided us with the funding to stay afloat, but a real solution to this issue remains critical to our future.

Despite financial challenges, ferry system employees have remained dedicated to providing safe and reliable service throughout Puget Sound. 2001 was an unusually tough year for ferry operations. Our region was hit with a major earthquake that damaged ferry terminals, and our nation was hit with terrorist attacks that called for increased security precautions. In both instances, WSF employees rose to the occasion and continued to move vehicles and passengers safely across the Sound. Improving customer service is a continued priority with the addition of website sales of monthly passes, year-

round reservations on the Anacortes/Sidney route, and an email alert system for real-time service information. In addition, several WSF employees saved lives this biennium. From heart attacks to overturned boats, WSF terminal and fleet staff participated in several rescues this past year. Several acts of heroism were recognized by the U.S. Coast Guard and the American Red Cross in 2001.

On June 1, 2001, Washington State Ferries celebrated its 50th anniversary. It was a day of celebration and reflection about the importance of Washington State Ferries to the transportation infrastructure of this state. Through a series of interviews, contests, and events, we captured the rich history of ferry boating on Puget Sound with stories from riders, current and retired employees, and others about the ferry system. Artifacts, pictures, and other notable memorabilia have been placed in a time capsule that is located in the main ferry terminal at Pier 52’s Colman Dock. The time capsule will be opened on June 1, 2051—the ferry system’s 100th birthday.

Washington State Ferries remains a critical link in Western Washington’s transportation system. The services we provide are necessary to the movement of people and commercial goods through the region. We remain optimistic that a stable source of funding will be found in the next biennium. We thank you for your continued interest in and support of the ferry system.

On behalf of all Washington State Ferries employees,

Mike Thorne
Director/CEO