



## July 2015 – in review

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### **Amtrak Cascades named among Top Three Train Trips in the U.S.**

CBS Los Angeles recently cited the Amtrak Cascades train trip as among the three top rail experiences in the entire country. In an article offering how-to tips for rail travel, the television station highlighted three particularly compelling train trips, including Amtrak Cascades service from Eugene, Oregon to Vancouver, B.C. The article noted the breathtaking views of seascapes, distant islands, farms, and mountain peaks. Read the [complete article](#).

### **Progress continues on Amtrak Cascades high-speed rail projects**

Twelve of the 20 projects are in construction this summer with another seven already completed. The remaining project in design, King Street Station Track Upgrades, begins construction later this year. All projects must be completed by spring 2017. Recent updates include:

- **Landslide Mitigation** – The second phase of the Corridor Reliability Supplemental Work project is set to begin in August at four historically landslide prone sites near Everett and Mukilteo. Types of work include retaining walls to catch debris before it hits tracks, slide detection fences for early landslide warning, improved drainage systems and slope stabilization/erosion control. The plans have received final design acceptance from the Federal Railroad Administration, one of the last steps before construction starts. Two other sites were completed in 2014 for a total of six. The goal is to prevent landslides and reduce landslide-related delays of passenger trains along the northern corridor. This work is scheduled to be completed this fall.
- **Vancouver – Port Access Rail Improvements** – The first BNSF train traveled through the new rail trench earlier this month. The trench was part of the work completed at the Port of Vancouver in March to ease congestion and improve access in and out of port facilities. [Photos](#) of this project are available on the WSDOT Flickr site.
- **Advanced Wayside Signal System** – A total of 14 locations between Seattle to Vancouver have been completed, with work at the final site scheduled for completion in August. Additional punch list items and some electrical work will continue throughout the remainder of the year. The project upgrades signal system components at control points, sidings and turnouts between the Canadian border and Vancouver, Washington.
- **Mount Vernon Siding Extension** – Crews recently began laying new track to create 4,700 feet of new siding. Road and at-grade crossing work was previously completed. The project will add to the existing siding and create a longer pull out track for passenger and freight trains to pass each other along this single track section, thus improving intercity passenger rail reliability.

### **Discussion continues on pre-clearance agreement with Canada**

Officials from Transport Canada met with Amtrak and WSDOT on July 22 to discuss a pre-clearance agreement between the United States and Canada. After touring the Pacific Central Station, Transport Canada officials acknowledged the station is ready for pre-clearance activities for travelers returning to the United States on Amtrak Cascades. Canadian Parliament and U.S. Congress must agree on the terms of administering pre-clearance before it can be offered at Pacific Central Station. Transport Canada suggested that, as the designated carrier, Amtrak begin drafting formal correspondence requesting pre-clearance, as required under the proposed agreement. WSDOT will officially request that Amtrak submit this letter on our behalf.

