

## MARINE CARGO FORECAST HIGHLIGHTS INVESTMENT NEEDS



Exports will continue to fuel growth in trade in Washington State, according to the 2016 Washington State Marine Cargo Forecast. Leading the way are bulk exports, specifically agricultural products as well as continued strength in automobile exports.

Despite strong increases in container traffic in 2016, the Northwest Seaport Alliance is expected to continue to face stiff competition from ports in both British Columbia and California.

WPPA has been conducting the Marine Cargo Forecast since 1975. This year WPPA partnered with sixteen ports across the state as well as the Freight Mobility Strategic Investment Board (FMSIB) in completion of 20-year outlook.

In relation to infrastructure needed to support trade, the forecast has a good story to tell. Nearly 75% of the rail corridor bottlenecks highlighted in the previous forecast have either had projects completed or have been better managed through operational changes. In addition, the forecast

shows big benefits of increasing the channel depth of the Lower Columbia River to 43 feet, including private investment of over \$500 million in grain terminal capability and capacity along the river.

The forecast finds continued investment will be necessary over the next 20 years including improvements that increase connectivity between transportation modes, maintain necessary draft depth levels, modernize outdated infrastructure or repurpose underutilized or noncompetitive industrial property. If the forecast's volume projections are correct, additional rail investments may also be needed over the next 20 years. In addition to increased siding lengths capable of handling longer trains, more efficient train operations through yards in Everett, Pasco and Vancouver will be necessary as will increased operational flexibility by way of raising the height of the Stampede Pass Tunnel.

*Continued on next page*

## WPPA SPOTLIGHT

### ASSOCIATION HIRES NEW STAFFER

The WPPA is pleased to announce a new Government Affairs Manager and Legal Affairs Counsel. Her name is Elena Oguiza. She is a graduate of the Seattle University School of Law, as well as San Diego State University.

Elena is excited to bring her experience to the WPPA, which includes a stint as a legal intern for the Port of Seattle. She is busy learning about the legislative process, and is focusing on issues relating to governance, elections and public works, and also helping with economic development issues. As a former teacher, she will also be responsible for WPPA's education and training events.

"I am a big fan of ports and all that they represent," Elena said. She has researched marine terminal operations, maritime labor issues, and port security. She recently published an article about the United States port security regime and its implications to foreign vessels. She presented this article at the Port of Piraeus in Greece, which also happens to be the oldest port in the world.

You will see her popping up at legislative hearings and CERB and CPARB meetings. Elena is also keen on visiting as many ports as possible this summer, after the legislative session is over.

Elena is a native of Ashland, Oregon, and also lived and taught in California. She also has led relief work teams in Ethiopia and also taught in Ethiopia.

Elena started working for WPPA on February 1. You're welcome to stop by and introduce yourself when you're in our neighborhood.



FROM ERIC JOHNSON

## FAST BALLS, CURVE BALLS & CHANGE UPS



In politics, as in most everything else, not much is really new. Most issues and debates have cycles, and if you hang around long enough you see them return. I've been around long enough now that I've seen some of them come around a third time. One fascinating debate in Olympia this year has a really long history.

I'm talking about the role of the public sector in providing utility infrastructure in areas where the private sector isn't moving fast enough. The WPPA is pushing a proposal to modernize the authority that port districts first obtained about fifteen years ago to provide broadband infrastructure in certain circumstances.

By long history, what I am referring to is the gigantic political fight in the 1930's over public versus private electrical power. It was a real rhubarb, with the rural Grange and urban progressives fighting privately-owned companies like Washington Water Power (now Avista) and Puget Power. Our state ended up with Public Utility Districts through citizen initiative, and our patchwork geographical mix of public and private electrical systems shows you where the trench lines ended up by the 1940's.

Broadband infrastructure is a lot like electricity. For one thing, every community absolutely has to have it. Typically, whoever provides it has a near monopoly on the service. Much of the system is overseen by a public

utility commission with regulatory powers. These are the hallmarks of a regulated monopoly.

And like electricity there is a debate about how to fund the costs of the remote connections. Our state was full of farms and rural towns where it never would have paid for the private sector to bring copper wires, unless they had to – or unless the PUD did it to serve the public good.

The politics of our proposal is a fun drama to watch. Rural Republicans who typically abhor increasing government powers are some of the biggest backers of giving us more. Urban Democrats generally have adequate service, but are not drawn to defending Fortune 100 companies. Those same big companies might be willing to compromise on increasing our powers, either because we aren't worth the political fight, or because they will be able to make money on our infrastructure investment. Small regional telecomm companies like Frontier are in hysterics. I'm waiting for them to call us Communists.

I am counseling the port membership to take the long view on this issue. Ports do well when we assess a community need and patiently tug the political powers to let us do the job. Copper wire networks today are like the kerosene-distribution industry in 1935. It's not gone yet, but it will soon be a memory.

In the meantime, we will prod and tug and cajole, and roll our eyes at the private sector firms like Frontier who cling to their kerosene-distribution model. And I cannot let this column end without smiling, and typing the sentence we hear this week – the happiest four words in the English Language: Pitchers and Catchers Report!

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Spring Meeting

May 17-19, 2017  
Suncadia Resort, Cle Elum

### Finance and Administration Seminar

June 14-16, 2017  
Semiahmoo Resort, Blaine

## MARINE CARGO FORECAST

*Continued from page 1*

The Marine Cargo Forecast is currently in draft and WPPA is soliciting feedback from the steering committee designed to provide direction for the forecast. To see the draft forecast please visit WPPA's website at <http://washingtonports.org/member-resources/publications/resource-tools/>. The study will be completed by the end of March.

## EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

**Sr. Manager  
Communications –  
Aviation Marketing**  
Port of Seattle

**Airport Duty Manager –  
Airfield Operations**  
Port of Seattle

**Senior Accountant**  
Port of Seattle

**Contract Administrator –  
Construction**  
Port of Seattle

**Deputy Director of Airports -  
Tri-Cities Airport**  
A Port of Pasco Facility

**Director of Operations**  
Port of Newport, Oregon

**Marina Office Assistant**  
Port of Bremerton

**Director, Engineering**  
Port of Tacoma

**Senior Real Estate Manager**  
Port of Tacoma

If you would like information on any of these positions, visit <http://washingtonports.org/washington-ports/employment-opportunities/>