

July 22, 2024



The Port of Ephrata airport hosts a variety of aircraft throughout the year, including for events and competitions.

July Updates at WPPA

The heat arrived at Olympia with the turn of the calendar, and we're happy to report that the air conditioning in Suite 304 is keeping up! Staff returned to WPPA World HQ at the end of June on the heels of another great Finance and Administration Seminar, hosted this year at the AC Marriott Hotel on the vibrant Vancouver Waterfront. Some conclusions were evident after two days on the banks of the Columbia: the Port of Vancouver is doing incredible things on, and adjacent to, its waterfront properties; the Port of Vancouver's staff were critical in helping WPPA's own Tasha Cilurso and Mandy Lill execute an informative and exciting seminar; and the folks who attend our Finance and Administration seminar are the often unsung, behind-the-scenes, workhorses who keep our ports running on time and on budget.

We always welcome an update from the State Auditor's Office at this conference, and this year they provided information on the latest from the Government Accounting Standards Board (GASB) and best practices for complying with federal grant requirements. SAO's update was followed with an appearance from stalwart port partner Janea Stark from the Community Economic Revitalization Board, and a legislative update from our own Chris Herman. Staff from the Port of Vancouver gave updates on Tax Increment Financing and supported a presentation from MRSC on public works and procurement, and our associate member partners from KeyBanc and Northwest Municipal Advisors gave a rundown of the latest in the capital bond markets.



Rudy Caluza presented with his award by Eric Ffitch

Two other highlights from the seminar: longtime Port of Seattle Director of Finance and Accounting Rudy Caluza was presented with his 2023 “Outstanding Service to the Port Industry” award. He was applauded heartily by his colleagues across the port finance community with whom he worked and partnered for so long. And on a totally different note, the Thursday night dinner was punctuated by an appearance by the truly otherworldly Craig Martin, a local Vancouver, WA-based magician whose been as far as America’s Got Talent, and on this occasion left jaws on the floor and even stole our Executive Director’s watch!



Magician Craig Martin displaying a couple of his many talents

The WPPA summer seminar sprint continues with the recently completed Directors Seminar in Kalama, and the 2024 Commissioners Seminar in Richland, WA this week. We are excited to be in the Tri-Cities, and will have representatives from the Ports of Pasco, Kennewick, and Benton featured in our agenda. That agenda will

highlight our state’s wine industry, survey the status of nuclear energy development in Washington, and examine how ports have undertaken executive director recruitment and hiring over the past year. We look forward to seeing many of you there!

This seminar fun only continues, with our Environmental Seminar coming up in September in Walla Walla (see below for more), and our second straight year at Campbell’s Resort in October for our Small Ports Seminar. Stay cool and stay in touch, we will look forward to seeing many of you in the weeks and months to come.

Port Spotlight: Port of Ephrata on Preserving the Past while Building for the Future



Formerly a WWII U.S. Army base, the Port of Ephrata is home to an airport, rail warehouse complex, and industrial park.

Ephrata, Washington, located in Grant County almost exactly in the center of Washington State, is a bustling, growing community with a 2,200 acre-port district just east of town. A former U.S. Army base during WWII, the Port of Ephrata consists primarily of an airport, rail warehouse complex and an industrial park. With an ambitious vision for the future, the Port has not lost sight of its original identity and the pride that this community has in the facility.

“We’re in a growth mode,” said David Lanman, Executive Director of the Port of Ephrata, “I came on board in March of last year with the objective of elevating the airport to be economically viable.”

With his Commission, Lanman has created a five and ten-year growth plan that will serve as a blueprint in which to guide future development, in accordance with the Federal Aviation Administration and Washington State Department of Transportation. Elevating the airport to economic viability, for example, has meant improvements to current facilities are on the horizon but also the Port being aggressive in its outreach and coordination of public and private sector partners regarding future project development.



A jet on the runway at the Port of Ephrata

According to Lanman, “Ephrata has been mostly overlooked by private and political interests. However, with a near-complete turnover of leadership over the past couple of years, a new vision has spurred the Port to start rattling some cages and announce its presence.”

To start, the Port pivoted from some projects that were in progress upon Lanman’s arrival to ones that catered to attracting outside users/tenants. As such, the Port is positioning itself to be competitive in aircraft space, i.e., commercial-sized hangars. The objective is to take advantage of the lack of aircraft hangar space being experienced in Western Washington. Ephrata has a lot to offer via favorable flying conditions on average, along with the low overhead cost of operating out of the Port.

To work within budgetary restrictions, the Port must be strategic about upgrades. The lack of Jet-A fuel was a major limiting factor for the airport, so Lanman immediately pushed for funding to move forward with the installation of a 20,000-gallon tank to serve the needs of numerous current and potential users that had been negatively affected by the lack of such. The tank is to be installed and fully operational by August 2024 (currently Jet-A is being offered via a temporary “pump trailer”). Lanman also convinced the Port to save the three WWII hangars (30,000 sq ft x two and 45,000 sq ft, respectively) from being demolished and instead include the structures as part of the airport’s future. The decision to save the hangars also will preserve the history that these beautiful buildings represent.

With several projects being planned currently, the Port takes its responsibility seriously in not only balancing the responsibility of preserving the past, but strategically planning for future growth to compliment both efforts,” said Lanman. “The future is very promising for the Port of Ephrata. It’s exciting to visualize where this Port will be and what achievements it will make in the next five to ten years”.

Legislative Spotlight

As WPPA prepares for the 2025 Legislative Session, we are working on new ways to interact with our membership as we work through complex issues, so we better understand your needs. This will result in better preparedness for the 2025 Legislative Session and enable us to focus more on engaging with legislators because we have already been vetting issues with our membership ahead of time.

One of the ways we will do this is through establishing workgroups. WPPA Workgroups will be formed when a specific topic requires more dedicated and concentrated time by a consistent group of our membership to reach a resolution or determine our collective path forward. In addition, Workgroups will often be cross-collaborative, meaning, they will incorporate membership from more than one WPPA Standing Committee.

In preparation for the 2025 Legislative Session, the following Workgroups have been or will be launching soon:

Port Decarbonization Workgroup – Port districts have been leading the effort to decarbonize operations. The state has become an effective partner in decarbonization through project funding. The Port Decarbonization Workgroup has been a place to share best practices, learn about other ports’ planning and project efforts, develop funding strategies and responses and provide guidance to agencies standing up dedicated funding programs. As ports continue to explore decarbonization possibilities, this Workgroup will continue to be an outlet that informs WPPA staff on advocacy and education needs while continuing to build momentum by showcasing decarbonization projects and new technologies.

Stormwater Workgroup – This Workgroup will identify imminent stormwater issues that need additional coordination, communication, education, and collaboration among port members. This Workgroup will work together to share perspectives and impacts on stormwater issues. Sharing information and connecting the dots among port members is a priority. Workgroup action items may include draft talking points for port members, WPPA public comment, or letters for policy changes.

Tax Increment Finance (TIF) Workgroup – The TIF Workgroup was originally formed in 2023 and will convene membership with divergent perspectives on TIF to find a unified port position on current tax increment financing law and proposed future legislation. This Workgroup is designed to advise WPPA advocacy related to TIF. This will include existing coalition-building work, responding to proposed changes to TIF law, and may include proposing legislative changes.

Energy Supply & Grid Reliability Workgroup – Access to affordable and reliable energy is fast becoming one of the most critical issues facing port districts across the state. New technologies like Artificial Intelligence (AI) and clean energy manufacturing are driving unprecedented demand for electricity, while codified decarbonization goals suggest more parts of our economy, including transportation, will also become reliant on electricity. New sources of electricity promise sustainability but may not provide the same flexible baseload supply, or they require a more certain pathway to permitting. Finally, the grid must be modernized to handle new demand where it is at. This WPPA workgroup will explore these complex topics with an eye towards maintaining access to energy necessary to fulfill our economic development mission and support the state’s economic transition to clean energy uses.

If you or your port is interested in participating in any of these Workgroups, please contact [Chris Herman](#) or [Carly Michiels](#) to be added or included in the workgroup!

Knowing the Waters

July’s column revisits concepts of compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act (OPMA), most recently featured back in [March](#). This month’s issue explores how to handle external events attended by port commissioners, such as city council meetings or one of WPPA’s conferences. Read more in this month’s [Knowing the Waters](#) for a nuanced discussion of the law’s requirements in these cases.

Grants and Trainings/Resources for Ports

EPA Clean Heavy-Duty Vehicles Grant Program – applications due July 25, 2024

The Inflation Reduction Act invests \$1 billion to replace existing non-zero-emission heavy-duty vehicles with zero-emission vehicles, support zero-emission vehicle infrastructure, and to train and develop workers. The **application deadline is July 25, 2024**. The EPA anticipates notifying selectees by November 2024 and awarding the grants by February 2025. Final date to submit questions, July 8th. Read more and find the application and a recorded applicant webinar [here on EPA’s website](#).

CFI Grant Program – applications due August 28, 2024 (Phase 1 reserve funds also available)

The Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) [Charging and Fueling Infrastructure Discretionary Grant Program](#) (CFI Program) is a competitive grant program to strategically deploy publicly accessible electric vehicle charging and alternative fueling infrastructure, including for electric, hydrogen, propane, and natural gas vehicles. Round 2, which makes up to \$800 million in funding available, is now open for applications on [Grants.gov](#). The **application due date is August 28, 2024**.

Up to \$521 million in reserved funds from Round 1 may also be awarded. Applicants from Round 1 who were rated "highly recommended" or "recommended" may **request that FHWA reconsider their Round 1 application by July 1, 2024**. To do this, respond to the email sent by FHWA from CFIgrants@dot.gov or send an email noting the state where the project is located and the project title.

Ecology Volkswagen Enforcement Action Grants – applications due August 29, 2024

The Washington Department of Ecology will make available \$141 million in settlement funds to reduce air pollution in communities affected by harmful diesel exhaust. Eligible projects will replace or repower vehicles, vessels, and equipment with less-polluting diesel engines, alternate fuels, or all-electric engines and/or will help develop charging infrastructure for electric vehicles. Ecology's point of contact for this program, [Mehjabeen Rahman](#), can be reached at 360.764.6303 or via online office hours held each Wednesday from 2-4 p.m. Read more [here](#) on Ecology's website. Applications are due no later than August 29, 2024.

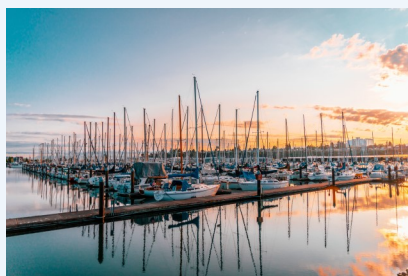
EPA Community Change Grants – applications due November 21, 2024

EPA will accept applications on a rolling basis for \$2 billion in Inflation Reduction Act funding to support community-driven projects that build capacity to tackle environmental and climate justice challenges, strengthen climate resilience, and advance clean energy. Local government authorities can apply in partnership with a community-based non-profit organization (CBO). For more information please visit [EPA's website here](#). [Technical assistance](#) is also available, as well as an [FAQ document](#) for the program.

Commerce/EPA Climate Pollution Reduction Grant Program (CPRG) – coming soon

The [Climate Pollution Reduction Grant Program \(CPRG\)](#) is one of many federal funding opportunities created through the [Inflation Reduction Act](#) and run through the EPA. [Washington's CPRG](#) will include 2 phases. Phase 1 will provide up to \$250 million in noncompetitive planning grants, and Phase 2 will offer up to \$4.6 billion for competitive implementation grants.

Highlighted Events



Marina Committee Meeting (In-Person), held Thursday, August 1, from 12-3 p.m. at Port of Everett

Please join us for our annual in-person Marina Committee meeting hosted by the Port of Everett on Thursday, August 1, from 12-3 p.m. Attendees will receive lunch, followed by the committee meeting program and a tour of Everett's beautiful marina. Remote participation will be available for the committee meeting portion of the event. For more information or to RSVP, please email [James Cockburn](#).



Environmental Seminar, held September 19 - 20, at the Marcus Whitman Hotel, Walla Walla

Registration will be open this week for our 2024 Environmental Seminar at the Marcus Whitman hotel in beautiful Walla Walla! Be on the lookout for an email with event and hotel information. The hotel room block expires August 19, so we encourage you to book your accommodations as soon as possible by calling 866-826-9422. Be sure to tell them you are with the WPPA 2024 Environmental Seminar to get our special rate of \$179.00 a night. Please email [Mandy Lill](mailto:Mandy.Lill@wppa.org) with any questions and for sponsorship opportunities.

Save the Dates for 2024 Events

Further event details for 2024 are coming soon. Registration typically opens about 8 weeks in advance. In the meantime, mark your calendars for these upcoming meetings and events!

- Small Ports Seminar, held October 24-25 at Campbell's Resort, Lake Chelan
- Annual Meeting, held December 11-13 at Hyatt Regency Hotel, Bellevue

As Arthur Sees It

Notes from the Executive Director and his dog



Eric and his family at the Frankfurt Stadium

Last month, I left the pooch at home and packed two tight bags with just the basics and headed to Germany for just over a week of soccer madness, European train adventures, and family touring that will live long in memory. Given the huge space this trip still occupies in my mind, I figured I'd share a bit of what I saw on this sprint through the Ruhr and Rhine valleys, and anything I may or may not have learned.

First, though I sprinkle this column with baseball reflections and the odd basketball note, I was raised by a soccer-made English father who instilled in my brother and me a deep and complex devotion to the English men's national soccer team. Perpetually under-achieving and dogged by a critical nation, that soccer team is *finally good*, and one reason for our trip was

simple: our dad told my brother and me, "I'll be watching England play in Frankfurt, if you want to meet me there!" Now while we didn't have time to accompany the retired parents on their six week sojourn through England, France and finally Germany, we did have an urge to see what a continent in the grips of a major international soccer tournament looks like, so my brother Eamon and I set off for Berlin, Germany, with a few game tickets, a few train tickets, and otherwise no real idea of what to expect.

We arrived in Germany just days after an election of major consequence in that country, with similarly ominous elections due to arrive in France and England in the weeks after we left. The message of the organizers of this European Championship 2024 was blunt: "Uniting Europe through Football." In other words, set your political differences aside, and let's shout at each other about our respective national soccer teams for a few blissful weeks! And that was largely what we saw: groups of fans clad in their nation's colors, some with face paint to match, singing and swaying together in Fan Parks, train stations, stadium concourses, and wherever people would gather. Much is made of football hooliganism over here, but mostly we just saw dads and sons, families and friends, neighbors of different national origins, all coming together every evening for this so-called "Festival of Football." It was enough to give you hope!

We also walked in some ominous footsteps in Germany, where there are living reminders of the dark history of the continent and country. We spent the morning of the first tournament game far from the soccer fanatics, at the Berlin Wall memorial in the north-central part of the city. Here you can see the first place the wall was erected, that successfully separated a citizenry for forty years – a three-meter wall built to divide people and ideas, a monument to the strange and flawed idea that a simple structure could stop the free flow of both. Yet it lasted forty years, claimed hundreds of lives, and really was *not that long ago*. As we stood in the Chapel of Reconciliation, a place that honors those who lost their lives in this place, my brother and I marveled at the closeness of this history, the futility of this attempted separation and enforced difference, and the echoes it has now.

And from the Chapel of Reconciliation, we walked through the city tracing the outline of the wall, to the famous Topography of Terror museum that marks the spot where the Nazi headquarters once stood. And walking that route meant not just tracing the wall's path but stepping across sidewalks where cobblestones had been replaced by gold plaques at each address where Jewish families had been removed from their homes, taken on trains, and many never seen again. This is one way the Germans live in the memories of that tragic time every day, with commemorations of the atrocities dotting their sidewalks every few dozen yards. These were important moments for us to learn and to live even just briefly in the dark and terrible past, always present in the background here.

From Berlin we trained down the country through the Ruhr Valley and all its lush greenery, past the VW headquarters, and into the Rhineland and the lovely Cathedral-dominated Cologne. We were seeking some respite from soccer then, only to discover the square outside the cathedral thronged with kilt-clad Scottish fans, singing and dancing in preparation for their game there in a few days. Still, we found time to climb the cathedral spire, walk the famous river, and delight in the region's most famous contribution to German culture: Kolsch beer! This was the city where I sat and contentedly reflected on another important lesson learned on this trip: the power of the positivity and generous welcoming spirit of the German people. At every turn we were greeted by eager hosts who were glad to help us explore their country, and it gave us confidence as travelers and a special appreciation for this mysterious place across the ocean.

Finally, and most importantly: we saw our parents! Little can prepare you for the site of your mother and father driving slowly down a German boulevard in a rented VW camper van with an English flag flying out the window, eliciting delighted honks and faux-jeers from passing motorists and kids on the street. We walked a tree-lined avenue to the Frankfurt Stadium with my dad and mom between us, singing English pub songs loudly and out of tune, and avoiding the throngs of Danish fans who were hoping to see us quieted for the walk home. We walked under grand arches into one of Germany's most famous stadiums and watched our England team... well, barely manage a tie, to be honest, and disappoint most of their fans. But we walked out triumphant, back into that muggy German night, possessing memories that we'll hold close and turn over in our minds forever.

I can't say whether the tournament has unified the continent. But it did a lot for my brother and me, traveling together for the first time since our early twenties, and doing so with the ease of equal partners. We spent time with our parents we never would have otherwise, seeing them in the strange light of a Rhineland afternoon. We dove deep on the Berlin Wall and other historical items, and we embraced this new friend: the country of Germany. That is unity that I will appreciate, whether or not England manages to win this tournament. We will go back!

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