

AORTA Bulletin

A publication of the
Association of Oregon Rail and Transit Advocates

Issue 115

March 1998

Since 1976

AORTA pushes for cost-effective S/N alignment

❑ Failure to trim fat may kill project

AORTA believes S/N light rail can be funded and built within the next 7 years, but only if officials are willing to make cost saving decisions. The Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) released Feb 23 includes two alignments which are consistent with what voters approved in 1994 (MOS1 and full-length ... see pg 3), but the estimated cost of those alternatives as presented is too high.

The \$475M bond measure regional voters approved in 1994 called for the rail line to serve Clark County (WA) and Clackamas County (OR). Another condition is that the general obligation bonds will be issued only if matched with federal funds. If the project does not serve Clark County, or federal funds are not secured, the bond measure is dead.

If the federal government matches this \$475M local share, \$950M will be available *without help from the States of Oregon or Washington.*

AORTA contends it is possible to build a 13.5 mile Vancouver, WA, to Milwaukie, OR, LR for \$950M. That is over \$70M per mile. San Diego recently extended their system six miles at \$36M/mile, Sacramento is beginning a 6.3 mile extension that will be completed in 2003 at a cost of \$35M/mile and St. Louis is building a 17.4 mile system expansion that will open in 2001 for less than \$20M/mile.

“There is more than enough money if we can get federal matching funds and are willing to eliminate

(Continued on page 3)

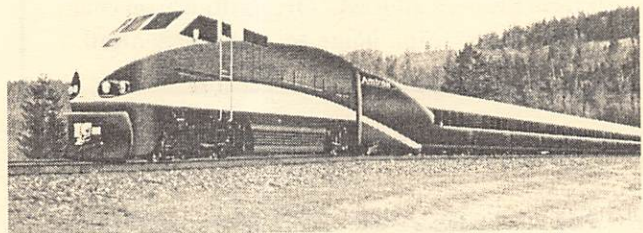
Improved Seattle-Portland rail service

❑ More trains, faster trains

On May 17 there will be one additional train, and travel time will be reduced, between Portland and Seattle. The additional train means 4 daily round-trips between the two cities.

Utilizing two Spanish tilt-trains, travel time will be reduced by 25 minutes. The *Cascadia* (Eugene-Portland-Seattle) will use Talgo equipment.

The trains are able to maintain passenger comfort while traveling through curves using a passive tilting mechanism. While the car body tilts, the only way a passenger would notice the tilting is by looking out the window.



In this issue . . .

Eugene Chapter on track	Page 2
Oregon employers, take note!	5
Americans support rail passenger service	6
Four Talgos on track for NW	6
Mileage Tax fouls the air	8

Renew Your Dues for 1998!

The AORTA Bulletin is published 4-6 times a year by the

Association of

Oregon Rail and Transit Advocates

PO Box 2772, Portland, Oregon 97208-2772

A non-profit citizen advocate group working to educate the public about the need for safe, fiscally responsible, environmentally sound transportation. Also known as the Oregon Association of Railway Passengers (OreARP).

President	Aloha Wyse	503 244-7595
Vice President	C. B. Hall	541 929-6086
Secretary	Kenneth Skach-Mills	503 235-2780
Treasurer	Kenneth Peters	503 643-6490
<i>Bulletin</i> Editor	Dan L. McFarling	503 642-4077

Also serving on the Board of Directors: Jim Howell, Robert Lowry, Kenneth McFarling, Patricia Noyes, John Nuxoll, Fred Nussbaum, Ray Polani, Art Poole and Tim Wilson.

AORTA works cooperatively with the National Association of Railroad Passengers (NARP), but AORTA is an autonomous body. NARP Directors from Region 8 (AK, ID, MT, OR, WA), including Directors-at-Large, include James Hamre, Hans Mueller, Art Poole, Jeffrey Schultz and William Weeks.

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP

Introductory/senior/student/low income	_____10
Regular (family rate, add \$5/additional member	_____20
Sponsor	_____100
Govt/corporate rate (budget under \$100,000/yr)	_____50
(budget over \$100,000/yr)	_____100

Internet E-mail address: OregonRail@aol.com

WEB Page: <http://home.aol.com/OregonRail>

Are you a member of NARP?

The National Association of Railroad Passengers (NARP) is an alliance of railroad passengers and citizens who want transportation choice in this country and who are concerned about improved mobility, rational land use and the environment. Regular NARP dues are \$24/year. AORTA works cooperatively with NARP, but we are an autonomous body.

NARP

900 Second Street, NE

Washington, DC 20002-3557

Have you paid your 1998 dues?

Please check your name and address on the envelope in which you received this *AORTA Bulletin*. If you do not find a "PD98" or "PD99" after your name, you probably have not paid your dues for 1998. AORTA relies on payment of dues and donations to help spread the word about the need for balanced transportation. Membership fees are listed in the box on the left side of this page.

Perhaps in 1998 we will be able to begin to lease office space and/or hire some part-time staff! Please help us by sending in your dues today, or make an extra donation to help us grow.

New officers elected

Eugene- The AORTA Board of Directors elected Aloha Wyse President on Jan 31. Aloha is an attorney with a private law practice in Lake Oswego. Aloha previously served as President in 1985-86.

C. B. Hall of Philomath was elected Vice-President. CB, translates documents from Finish into English for a living. An Oregon resident since 1995, he is married and has an 8 y.o. son. Secretary Ken Skach-Mills and Treasurer Kenneth Peters were re-elected.

Eugene chapter on track

Eugene- About 20 people gathered at the Eugene Water and Electric Board offices January 12 to discuss improved Willamette Valley rail service and formation of a Eugene AORTA Chapter.

The presence of former Mayor Ruth Bascom helped to ensure a big turnout at the successful event. Bascom has been instrumental in bringing attention to improved rail service, and convincing other elected officials and business people to "get on board."

Without her enthusiasm and enlightened leadership, it is unlikely the Willamette Valley would still be on the map as part of a future high speed rail corridor. Bascom talked about the role of the Willamette Valley Passenger Rail Advisory Committee.

Get well, Ralph!

AORTA Portland Chapter President Ralph Gaskill suffered a mild heart attack on March 13. Ralph is doing well; we send him wishes for rapid recovery!

(Continued from page 1)

costly features that were put in the project for political reasons," according to AORTA Director Jim Howell. "Many of these features do not produce enough ridership to justify the cost." AORTA suggests the following cost cutting measures:

Eliminate Clackamas Town Ctr to Milwaukie

This 4 mile segment costs over \$300M and produces very little ridership. Terminating the line at the Milwaukie Transit Center, the hub of nearly all North Clackamas County bus service, is far more cost effective.

Use the Hawthorne Bridge

A new bridge across the Willamette River is not needed to accommodate the traffic demand expected in this corridor within the next 20-25 years, according to Howell. Track could be installed on the Hawthorne Bridge next year and the bridge reinforced while it is closed for painting and deck repairs. The Water Avenue approach ramp on the east side was recently strengthened to accommodate light rail at a cost of \$200,000.

Connect to existing MAX at SW 1st & Yamhill

This minimal six block Downtown segment would save more than \$200M over the current plans. It would not require tearing up the Transit Mall; would save several years of disruptive construction, and avoid damaging changes to Downtown bus service. Connecting to MAX at this location rather than at the Mall allows for more transit service flexibility than the latest designs proposed by METRO (Direct trains could connect Clackamas County with Washington County).

AORTA is on record as opposing an expensive Mall alignment which would not be able to handle LR traffic generated by future corridors (e.g., a Barbur Blvd line). Further expansion of LR will soon necessitate a subsurface alignment, such as along 4th Avenue, as proposed by AORTA.

Terminate north end of line at Vancouver's Downtown 7th Street Transit Center

This location requires only six blocks of construction in downtown Vancouver, yet gets light rail to the hub of Clark County's bus system (C-Tran).

Although Clark County voters elected not to pay for construction of a much longer route, nothing prevents them from sharing in the LR operating expenses. The money C-Tran currently spends for express bus service to Downtown Portland could reasonably be shifted to cover LR operations in Washington without another vote in Clark County. The convenience provided by LR for both Washington and Oregon commuters will significantly reduce peak hour traffic congestion on I-5, Hayden Island, and the Interstate Bridge.

Extensions, park & ride facilities and connecting shuttle bus service in Clark County would be the responsibility of C-Tran and Washington residents.

AORTA asserts the project is feasible, but only if Metro and Tri-Met sharpen their pencils. At this point AORTA is asking that the modified alternative be included as one of the options meriting further study. Representatives of the AORTA Board have been meeting with key officials on both sides of the river in order to help build support for the proposal.

S/N Corridor Project

Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS)

The DEIS discusses five alternatives:

1 No Build

2 MOS 1 (Bi-State): 17-mile Milwaukie Marketplace to VA Medical Center/Clark College, Vancouver, WA. Capital cost: \$1,122M

3 MOS 2 (Rose Quarter): Clackamas Town Center to Rose Quarter Transit Center. Capital cost: \$748M

4 MOS 5 (Lombard): 15-mile Clackamas Town Center to N Lombard St in north Portland. Capital cost: \$915M

5 Full-Length: 21-mile CTC to VA Medical Center/Clark College, Vancouver, WA. Capital cost: \$1,309M

The DEIS Executive Summary and information about hearing schedule is available by calling METRO's Transportation Hotline **(503) 797-1900**

Mail comments to Leon Skiles, METRO Transportation, 600 NE Grand Ave, Portland 97232. FAX: 797-1929. Or E-Mail: southnorth@metro.dst.or.us.

All comments are due at METRO by **April 24, 1998.**

LOCAL LINES: *News around the state*

Coastal Tidings

New bridge across the Columbia to include rail?

Astoria- According to the December 12, 1997 *Daily Astorian*, an Alaska-based engineering firm is pushing for rail to be included in a new bridge across the Columbia River near Longview, WA. Floyd Holcom, a consultant with Peratrovich, Nottingham & Drage Inc., says that "If they're going to build a new bridge [to replace the aging bridge], let's add rail."

According to Bill Gunderson, the new rail link would help resolve problems with rail congestion in the northwest. Plans call for a two-level cable-stayed bridge. If built, it would be the largest cable-stayed bridge in the world. Gunderson heads up the firm's Astoria office which opened in 1995.

Preliminary cost estimates range from \$110M to \$210M. Willamette and Pacific President Bob Melbo is working with the feasibility assessment.

Clatsop County bus service expands

Astoria- In December, the Sunset Empire Transportation District's (SETD) board voted 5-0 to acquire two additional buses. One of the two buses, a 28-passenger Bluebird, now operates on Highway 101 between Seaside and Astoria. A second 28-passenger Bluebird serves a route within Astoria. A 14-passenger bus which serves the Astoria-Warrenton route will soon be replaced with a new 26-passenger Bluebird Transhuttle bus.

According to Executive Director Cindy Howe, the District is negotiating with the city for support of a \$2M transportation center in Astoria. According to Board member James Santee, SETD hopes to soon contract with a planner to examine transportation issues, including rail, for Clatsop County.

SETD is exploring low-interest federal loans to expand service. Cannon Beach, 8 miles south of Seaside, recently expressed interest in being served by the transit district. Cannon Beach, along with Astoria and Seaside, is a popular destination for tourists to the Oregon coast.

Santee, who is a member of AORTA, was elected to SETD's board in 1997. In part because of a last minute resignation on the Board, Santee actually won two positions, creating a problem for the county elections department. Santee had to resign one of the two seats.

Santee hopes to use self-propelled diesel rail cars, possibly a high-railer bus (capable of operating on both rail and roadway) between Astoria and Tongue Point, and possible future service extension to Clatskanie and Portland. High-railer buses were briefly used between Washington, DC and Mt Vernon in the early 1930's.

Correspondents Needed

Your help is needed to keep AORTA members apprised of rail/transit news around the state. If you know of a development in Oregon please send the information directly to the editor: Dan McFarling, 20585 SW Cheshire Ct, Aloha, OR 97007-3737; or send E-Mail to OregonRail@aol.com. Both news clippings or original stories are welcome.

Sand on the Rails Needed!— Slip of the Pen

"High tech European design Amtrak trains will soon start taking curves at higher speeds without fear of spilling passengers' coffee Amtrak official said yesterday that the use of the train "tilt" technology- previously employed only on a test basis will cut as much as 25 minutes off travel time between Seattle and Portland. The trip currently takes 3 hours and 55 minutes. The trips are set to start May 17 according to Amtrak officials...

"The Seattle-Portland route will become the first in the United States to use the new pendular technology ... The technology lets the train zoom around curves without slowing down as much as conventional trains. That is because the rail car's undercarriages gently tilt into the curves [wrong!] while the passenger compartment- and the coffee cups- will remain upright. [Actually, the passenger compartment, passengers, and the coffee cup will tilt. The liquid in the coffee cup will appear level to the passengers! The only thing that doesn't tilt is the undercarriage! I'm glad the PI didn't design the Talgo!!]" The headline read "Trains Will Speed Up On Curves." March 9, 1998, *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*

East Oregon News

Heavy trucks costly to taxpayers

Ontario- The Idaho legislature is considering increasing allowable truck weights from 105,500 lbs to 129,000 lbs. The state, however, has a reported backlog of \$4.1B in road maintenance.

Sponsors of HB 623 claim trucks would have "beefed up brakes" and would result in safer highways (sound like the triple-trailer campaign in Oregon?). But a representative of the Idaho State Police testified the increased weight would be a significant safety hazard.

In "Roadcheck '95," a national survey of heavy trucks found 21% had to be taken out of service because of serious safety violations. The most frequently cited problem: defective brakes.

Idaho's current weight limit is consistent with Oregon and Washington. Editorials in the Feb 23 and Feb 27 *Argus Observer* expressed concern about safety and increased highway maintenance costs.

Public transit needed in Eastern Oregon

Ontario- Community activists in Ontario told Roger Auerbach, Administrator of Oregon's Senior and Disabled Services Division, that transportation problems are a major concern. While Willamette Valley residents express concern about routing and service frequencies, rural Oregonians face "a complete absence of public transportation" according to an article in the March 2 *Argus Observer*.

Continuing subsidies for wealthy travelers

Baker City- The Baker City Council approved expenditures for repaving and improved lighting for the Municipal Airport. The project is projected to cost "as much as \$630,000. Ninety percent of the cost will be covered by the Federal Aviation Administration. *Editor's Note: It's too bad similar effort was not given to retaining rail passenger service to Baker City. The Pioneer could carry far more people than a commuter airplane for a fraction of the cost and with far less fuel.*

Central Oregon Semaphores

Bend city council to study transit

In January the Bend City Council voted to study the possibility of using school buses and the area's elderly/disabled Dial-a-ride buses to begin public transportation. \$40,000 will be spent on the study, using federal and local funds.

Bill Friedman, a council member who previously served as operations manager for the bus system in San Mateo, CA, voted against the proposal. Bend, with a 1996 population of 32,220, is the largest city in the Northwest that does not have a public transportation system. It is also one of the fastest growing cities in the state.

Oregon employers, take note!

☐ Or should we say, "Take transit!"

In Oregon, effective Jan 1 of this year, Oregon businesses can receive a 35% tax credit when furnishing transit passes to employees. In order to take advantage of the tax credit, the business must have a contract with the transit provider to purchase tickets or passes. The employees must use transit at least 45 days per year. Employers must be pre-approved.

Oregon businesses are encouraged to contact the local transit district serving their area for more information

The Taxpayer Relief Act of 1997 (TRA) also includes changes in tax regulations which will help decrease incentives which long promoted auto dependency. The TRA increases incentives for employers to encourage public transit. Very slowly, things are changing as the nation better understands the need to decrease the addiction to the auto.

Amtrak faces critical vote in House

One of the keys to Amtrak's future health is allowing states the flexibility to use federal ISTEA money for intercity passenger rail. The Senate's recently passed version provides such flexibility. The House version (not yet voted on) does not. Write and/or call your US Representative today!

Willamette Valley Whistles

More low-floor buses arriving in Portland

Tri-Met will soon introduce low-floor buses on 7 routes. Route 15 (Mt Tabor/NW 23rd) is the only route currently served by low-floor buses.

Tri-Met planned to primarily purchase standard buses prior to an effort by AORTA. AORTA brought the matter to the attention of state and local advocates for seniors and people with disabilities.

This fall the low-floor buses will begin service on Lines 8, (NE 15th/Jackson Parkway), 54 (Beaverton-Hillsdale), 56 (Scholls Ferry), and 72 (Killingsworth/82nd). Early in 1999, Line 4 (Division/Fessenden), 19 (Glisan/Woodstock), and 75 (39th/Lombard) will see the new buses. A total of 118 low-floor buses are to be delivered.

Return of streetcars to Salem?

Salem- The return of streetcars to Oregon's capital may be a possibility, according to a Feb 16 article in the *Statesman Journal*. Catalyst for the idea is a recently abandoned railroad bridge which spans the Willamette River. Salem officials are discussing the possibility of purchasing the bridge from Union Pacific, or possibly even having the bridge donated.

Salem resident Bob Krebs believes a short trolley line could be built for \$5-8M. It would be a cost-

effective alternative to a new highway bridge, projected to cost "at least \$100M." While it would take 20 years to construct the highway bridge, the trolley line could be built within 2 years, according to Krebs. Krebs oversees the passenger rail program for the Oregon Department of Transportation.

Statesman criticizes Legislative inaction

An editorial in the Feb 23 *Statesman Journal* criticized the Oregon Legislature for inaction on rail corridor improvements. The paper pointed out that while Washington has spent or pledged \$117M, Oregon has appropriated a "paltry" \$4M. The paper points out that investment in the rail line is far more cost-effective than continuing to expand I-5.

Four Talgos on track for NW

Seattle- At the joint Spring Membership Meeting for AORTA, WashARP and NARP, held March 21 in Seattle, officials announced that Amtrak West signed a contract for a fourth Talgo trainset to serve passengers in the Cascadia Corridor (Eugene, OR to Vancouver, BC). The surprise announcement was greeted with a standing ovation by the crowd of over 100 attendees.

Featured speakers, Sid Morrison, Secretary, Washington State Department of Transportation, and Ed Ellis, Vice President for Mail and Express, Amtrak Intercity, received similar accolades.

Attendees adopted a resolution urging the National Association of Railroad Passengers (NARP) to "actively and forcefully intervene, so that the US Congress upholds its commitments (implied in the Tax Payer Relief and Amtrak Reform and Accountability Acts of 1997) to multi-year, predictable resources designed to ensure expansion of the AMTRAK national rail passenger network in both coverage and frequencies of service."

The resolution calls for restoration of "at least daily" passenger service connecting Seattle, Portland, Boise, Salt Lake City and intermediate points, and service between Salt Lake City, Las Vegas and Los Angeles, in time for the 2002 Winter Olympic Games in Salt Lake City.

Americans support rail passenger service

A Gallup Poll completed in October 1997 revealed strong support for continued funding for Amtrak. Seven out of ten Americans believe that the federal government should continue to fund Amtrak "in order to ensure that the U.S. has a *national* train service" [emphasis added].

The results are particularly important as the Amtrak Reform Board is being established to determine the fate of rail passenger service. Highway, air and waterway transportation all receive direct and indirect federal subsidy.

SHORTLINES AND QUOTES . . .

- "The average cost of moving freight by rail dropped by 62% between 1986 and 1995. As a result, railroads have won an increasing market share of intercity freight traffic. This performance is all the more impressive given the *massive subsidies enjoyed by rival modes of transportation*. A study released in August by the U.S. Department of Transportation found, for example, that user fees paid by heavy trucks (over 80,000 pounds) represent only 50 to 60% of the financial costs they impose on government highway budgets." "Blood on the tracks: Overworked railroads are wreaking economic havoc," *US News and World Report*, October 27, 1997. [Emphasis added]
- Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway has approved Amtrak's fleet of 60-foot express cars for speeds up to 90 mph between Los Angeles and Chicago. The *Southwest Chief* operates along this route, which includes nearly 1000 miles of trackage approved for 90 mph passenger service.
- The Bay Area Rapid Transit District (BARTD) began construction of an extension to the San Francisco International Airport in November. The long-delayed \$1.2B project is scheduled for completion in 2001. Construction of the 8.2-mile heavy rail line is projected to cost \$750 million. *RailNews*, Feb 1998
- In Salt Lake City, planning for a second light rail line is now on track, with \$600,000 in private sector funds helping to support the effort. Along with \$1 million from the city, the funds provide local match to complete a \$8.2 million final environmental impact statement. Plans call for opening the line by 2002, in time for the Olympic Winter Games. Ibid.
- Taxes on rental autos and revenues from vehicle registration fees will be used in North Carolina to help pay for the first phase of a 35-mile commuter rail project serving Raleigh and the surrounding three-county area. Officials in Wake, Orange and Durham Counties approved the 5% tax on rental vehicles. Ground-breaking is not scheduled until 2001, with completion of the \$228 million first phase, serving Raleigh, Cary and Durham, in 2004..Ibid.
- A poll conducted by Davis & Hibbetts Inc in January 1994 found that while 21% of Oregonians believed more freeways and roads were needed to handle increased traffic, 73% of Oregonians believed we should "increase all types of public transportation and discourage increased automobile traffic." Sixty-four percent of the respondents believed that abolishing statewide land-use planning would be bad for Oregon. The poll was paid for by the *Oregonian*, and appeared in the paper on April 17, 1994.
- "Nature is never going to be dominated. We're a part of it and we've got to ride with it. Figure it out. But we're not going to steam roll right over the top of it. And that's what they thought they could do in those days. They thought they could pave the world..." Film Director James Cameron in the television broadcast, "Titanic: Breaking New Ground."
- Norway, with rugged terrain and low population density, is giving serious consideration to high-speed rail. At a February 1998 conference in Oslo, it was reported that passenger traffic on the French TGV between Paris and Lyon has quintupled (up 500%), while air traffic is cut in half, and auto traffic is down 30%! The rail line also has boasted economic revival along its route.


(Continued from page 8)

Driving circuitous routes to avoid detection will not help you avoid it. You pay. Every time you put gasoline in your tank. Drivers from out-of-state pay. The collection system is in place. And it works. No new tax. No new bureaucracy.

NOTE: Adding the cost of liability insurance at the fuel pump would help to make the out-of-pocket cost of driving more accurately reflect the true cost. It would also save taxpayers money by eliminating multiple problems associated with uninsured drivers.

Mileage tax fouls the air

□ A Train of Thought

 dan l. mcfarling, editor

A mileage tax is being promoted as a substitute for the state gasoline tax. One proponent is a good friend, the Oregon Environmental Council. This new tax would require drivers to pay based on number of miles driven. But is this the direction to go?

A mileage tax is expensive and difficult to collect. Large trucks in Oregon already pay a mileage (and weight) tax. But while we spend large sums trying to enforce the weight-mile tax, the evasion rate remains high. How high? No one knows; there is no fool-proof way to catch those who circumvent the tax. We throw money at the problem, introducing expensive technology to monitor trucks. But we cannot have monitoring devices everywhere. And even where they are, like all technology, the devices are subject to failure. It is the wrong direction.

The mileage tax fails to promote fuel-efficiency as effectively as a fuel tax. With a tax based strictly on miles driven, why care about fuel consumption? Or the pollutants you expel? The elderly lady on a fixed income driving her well-tuned subcompact is taxed at the same rate as hot-rod Willy, driving his 450 cubic inch gas guzzler, the one with the thick, black smoke, and the CEO driving her expensive, fuel-sucking vehicle. Some proposals adjust the tax based on the vehicle's *rated* mpg, but this does not address the poorly tuned vehicle, and opens the door for those who modify their engine to "improve" performance. So much for energy conservation!

Ironically, one of the strategies truckers use to avoid paying the mileage tax is to drive *more* miles, circuitous miles, often on roadways not designed for heavy traffic. That creates more wear and tear. More traffic. More pollution. More wasted energy. It is a step in the wrong direction.

Repeatedly, Oregon voters have stated they oppose new taxes. They certainly do not favor creating more bureaucracy. And with the current make-up of the Legislature, this conservative viewpoint will not change. The likelihood of a mileage tax, the cost of developing a system to monitor mileage, and the additional bureaucracy to monitor and collect the tax,

make its adoption very improbable even if it were a good idea.

The most serious problem, however, is the mileage tax further obscures the true cost of driving. ***The primary reason our transportation system is so out-of-balance is that the economics are distorted.***

Drivers do not face the true cost of their habit when they get behind the wheel. To correct this problem we should make immediate, out-of-pocket expenses more accurately reflect the cost of driving. The gasoline tax helps to accomplish this objective, albeit below true cost. Replacing the gas tax with a mileage tax paid every other year as proposed in the 1997 Legislature, or even monthly (an expensive, bureaucratic "solution") is the wrong direction.

It might bring more business to Oregon. Why not design and market a device to reduce the odometer reading by 50%?! I'll bet they would sell better than radar detectors! Creating a tax structure in which evasion is relatively easy encourages *more* unlawful activity. Why pursue a tax that is hard to enforce, easy to evade, costly to collect?

An excuse frequently used for abandoning the gasoline tax is that gasoline consumption will be going down, while the need for revenue will be going up. Long-standing trends do not support the assumption that our gasoline use will drop. Gas-guzzler sales, e.g., "sports-utility" vehicles, are rising. The Census Bureau predicts US population will rise to 300.2 million, up from 251.4M in 1990. According to *Car and Driver* magazine (Feb 1998), while fuel efficiency for vehicles will improve, gasoline consumption is expected to rise 51% between 1990 and 2010

The only problem with the gasoline tax is where the money goes, not how it is collected. Otherwise, the gasoline tax is a good tax. It is difficult to avoid. Every time you fill your tank, you pay. The more you drive, the more you pay. If you drive a vehicle that wastes fuel, or is poorly tuned, you will pay more. Turning back your odometer, or disconnecting your speedometer will not help you avoid it.

(Continued on page 7)