Your Oregon Guide

Today's lesson: Oregon Extremes

Oregon's **highest elevation** is **Mt. Hood** at **11,239 feet** above sea level.

The **lowest elevation** in Oregon is (surprise!) **the Pacific Ocean** at **sea level**.

Oregon's largest city is Portland with a population of **512,395**. Salem, the capital, comes in second with 148,751.

The **largest county** (in square miles) is Harney with 10,228. Oregon's **smallest county** is Multnomah (465).

What it lacks in size, it makes up for in population. Oregon's **most populous county** is **Multnomah**, population **672,906**. The **least populous** is **Wheeler**, population **1,455**.

The **longest river** (partially in Oregon) is the **Columbia**, at **1,234 miles**. The longest river that is entirely in the state is the **Willamette** at about **300 miles** long.

The **deepest lake** in Oregon (and the entire U.S.) is **Crater Lake** at **1,943 feet deep**.

Oregon's **largest lake** is **Upper Klamath Lake** which covers nearly **140 square miles.**

Oregon's **highest waterfall** is **Multnomah Falls** (620 feet).

The **record high temperature** was **119 in Pendleton**, Aug. 10, 1898.

The **record low temperature** in Oregon is **-54 in Seneca**, Feb. 10, 1933. **Portland's record low is -3**, achieved Feb. 2, 1950.

Record **maximum rainfall** in 24 hours is **11.65 inches** at **Port Orford**, Nov. 19, 1996.

Advanced ITS offers challenges, opportunities

The Future Highway Systems Using Advanced ITS roundtable featured presentations by Robert Lange, Executive Director of Safety and Integration for General Motors, and Jeff Paniati, Associate Administrator for FHWA. One of the key issues the intelligent transportation system is grappling with is research and implementation of Vehicle Infrastructure Integration (VII).

One goal of VII is to implement a communications system between vehicles and between vehicles and infrastructure. Almost half of the estimated 43,000 deaths that occur each year on U.S. highways result from vehicles leaving the road or traveling unsafely through intersections, according to the ITS Web site. Implementation of this system could save lives and prevent injuries. There is a multitude of operations the VII system could perform, including collision avoidance, allowing drivers to pay tolls without stopping, estimating travel times and reserving parking spots at large-scale events.

Both speakers acknowledged there are many significant technological issues that need to be addressed. A VII consortium, made up of 10 state DOTs, the U.S. DOT, AASHTO, the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration, FHWA and many automakers, is identifying and studying these issues. A proof-of-concept test is slated for summer 2007 in Detroit.

"This test will allow us to get a sense of how this system might work if it's implemented," said Paniati.

In addition, Paniati said, significant attention must be paid to the "more difficult" outstanding issues of privacy, liability and governance. "The time is coming when we have to ask two key questions," said Paniati. "A: Can we make this happen? And, B: Do we want to make it happen?"

'Gee whiz' factor delivers projects faster, smarter

"Really good engineering and smart things to do" is how moderator Malcolm Kerley, chair of AASHTO's Subcommittee on Bridges and Structures, described Sunday's session of The Future is Now: Innovative Strategies for Highway Construction.

Washington state faced the complete replacement of the bridge deck on a mile-long 1929-era bridge that is the only crossing of the Columbia River between Portland and Astoria, Ore. Kevin J. Dayton, construction engineer for Washington DOT, provided an overview of the Lewis and Clark Bridge Deck Replacement Project.

Dayton praised the contractor's innovative transport system.

Delvin Dennis, deputy district engineer for Texas DOT, presented "Innovative Construction of New Capacity in a Constrained Environment."

U.S. 59 near Houston carries more than 275,000 vehicles each day. Texas DOT reconstructed two miles of U.S. 59 and one mile of Spur 527 into downtown Houston for about $125 million. Steel arch bridges and drilled-shaft retaining walls were two of the innovative features used within the constrained work environment.

Amy D. Scales, engineer for District 5 interstate construction, shared Florida DOT's experience with self-propelled modular transporters in her presentation, "Raising the Speed of Bridge Construction."

On Interstate 4 in central Florida, demolition of the existing bridge spans and construction of the new superstructure off-site saved significant time and reduced the impacts to the traveling public as replacement spans were rolled into place in a matter of hours.

PORTLAND AASHTO 2006

2006 AASHTO CONFERENCE · PORTLAND, OREGON

AASHTO Daily News

Monday, October 30, 2006

Today's Schedule

CONVENTION CENTER

7 – 8:30 a.m.
Buffet Breakfast
Oregon Ballroom 201, 202

8 – 10 a.m.
FHWA/AASHTO Quarterly Meeting
Room A109

8:30 – Noon
Board of Directors Policy Meeting
Oregon Ballroom 203, 204

10 – 10:30 a.m.
Morning Break
Oregon Ballroom Foyer

Noon – 1 p.m.
Transportation Research Board Lunch
Rooms B110 and B111

Delegate Lunch
Oregon Ballroom 201, 202

1 – 5 p.m.
Board of Directors Business Meeting
Oregon Ballroom 203, 204

PORTLAND ART MUSEUM

6 – 9 p.m.
Board of Directors Dinner

Want to look back?

All newsletters and many photographs from the AASHTO 2006 Conference are available online at www.aashto2006.com.

Weather Forecast

Today: Partly sunny.
High: 54 Low: 33
Tomorrow: Mostly sunny.
High: 54 Low: 36

America's mobility is key, Peters says

Secretary of Transportation Mary Peters, confirmed last month by the U.S. Senate, challenged AASHTO members during a speech Sunday morning to help find innovative and flexible solutions to the transportation problems of the 21st century.

Secretary Peters addresses delegates at Sunday morning's plenary session

Highlighting the 50-year anniversary of the Interstate Highway System, Peters reflected on the vision and wisdom of President Eisenhower and other key players instrumental in adopting the 1956 Federal Aid Highway Act.

But, Peters told the audience of 500 people, America faces a daunting series of challenges inconceivable to leaders 50 years ago: a population that will hit 400 million by 2043, and congested roads that affect domestic productivity in an era when the global economy makes no allowance for those slow to innovate.

"We need to face up to the fact that we are no longer in the 1950s" and meet the transportation challenges of today and tomorrow head on, she said. Otherwise, America can expect dire consequences to its economy and quality of life.

Peters pointed to the so-called "buffer index" – the wasted time Americans build into their schedules due to the unpredictability of clogged U.S. transportation networks.

"Transportation costs have become a make-or-break factor for strong businesses," she said. "If we can eliminate freight chokepoints and bottlenecks, how much more competitive would that make Americans?"

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Mark your calendars for Milwaukee

Join us as we host AASHTO 2007 in one of the country's most striking convention facilities, the Midwest Airlines Center. Located on the shores of Lake Michigan, Milwaukee is perhaps best known for its famed breweries, but there's much more to this diverse, vibrant city. One of the Dozen Distinctive Destinations of the National Historic Trust for Preservation, Milwaukee is rich in historical and architectural heritage. World-class attractions, recreational opportunities, entertainment venues and dining options await you. Pier Wisconsin and the Public Market, recent additions to the Milwaukee scene, are not to be missed. See you next September!

The Milwaukee RiverWalk is one site to visit during AASHTO 2007. The conference is scheduled for Sept. 27-Oct. 1.

Mobility is key, Peters says *continued from page one*

She praised innovative initiatives such as public-private partnerships that open huge pools of capital for infrastructure investments as one of the solutions to transportation system snags.

But more ideas are needed.

"We are hearing a lot about needs," she said. "But the input we are looking for is not just 'how much,' but also 'how to.'"

Peters closed by giving the group two stark choices: continue to watch the nation's transportation system deteriorate while talking about the need for more funds, or develop a sane transportation policy that makes as much sense for the 21st century as Eisenhower's plan did for his time.

Awards honor hard work and innovation

AASHTO President Harold Linnenkohl, right, presents Larry King of Pennsylvania DOT the President's Special Award of Merit.

At the Annual Meeting of the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials on Sunday morning, AASHTO President Harold Linnenkohl recognized several dedicated individuals and groups.

First, he singled out those involved in the successful yearlong celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Interstate Highway System.

"There are two people who deserve recognition for the outstanding leadership they provided in making this event such a resounding success," he said.

He then called to the podium Gary Ridley, director of the Oklahoma DOT and chairman of the AASHTO Steering Committee on the 50th Anniversary, and Howard "Butch" Eley, president of the Infrastructure Corporation of America and chairman of AASHTO's Interstate 50th Industry Advisory Council.

"Let me thank you for the tremendous effort you put forth to focus America's attention on the future of the Interstate Highway System," Linnenkohl said.

Next, Linnenkohl presented the Francis B. Francois Award for Innovation to the Florida DOT State Materials Office and Laboratory for its successful effort to become the first state DOT to achieve ISO accreditation. ISO accreditation is a voluntary program that brings participating labs to an internationally standardized competency level.

Linnenkohl then presented the President's Special Award of Merit to Larry King, Deputy Secretary for Planning of the Pennsylvania DOT since 1991. King has chaired and co-chaired several AASHTO committees and has been the AASHTO Secretary-Treasurer for seven years.

"For his professionalism, his enthusiasm and his decades of contributions to AASHTO and to transportation at the state and national level, I present the President's Special Award of Merit to Larry King," Linnenkohl said.

Transportation system, economy at crossroads

Michael Gallis provided an insightful keynote address at Sunday's Plenary Session. Gallis is a noted futurist and leading expert in developing strategies to help make American urban regions globally competitive.

Gallis said that the U.S. is facing greater changes than those that occurred during the Industrial Revolution. At the dawn of the 21st century, he argued, the world has become an integrated global network in which people, goods and information move continuously around the world.

We are experiencing a "new geography" that has redefined market areas, trading blocs and regions and a "new economy" that has created a global marketplace, he said.

Gallis encouraged transportation industry leaders to be realistic about America's place in a world of growing economic powers. Now, Gallis said, the U.S. is just one player in a global network of players, many of whom are coming on strong – notably China and India.

One major factor in our long-term global status will be how we invest – or choose not to invest – in our infrastructure. As Gallis noted, "infrastructure will unlock" this new economy.

He also said that many key decisions about the use of our infrastructure are now being made by private entities as they engage in lines of business, in part because government officials are declining to actively make those decisions.

In his closing remarks, Gallis posed a question that leaders throughout the U.S. must consider.

"The 20th century was the American century," he said. "It's now the 21st century. Are we preparing, and are we preparing fast enough?"

AASHTO Daily News

Speaker links left and right activists to congestion growth

Dr. Robert Atkinson argued Sunday that anti-sprawl activists on the left and anti-tax advocates on the right share responsibility for the congestion gripping the country's urban highways.

Speaking at the Politics of Congestion and Capacity roundtable, Atkinson called the anti-road factions at the local, state and national levels "a sophisticated group of people who use images and propaganda to achieve their goals."

Atkinson, president of the Information Technology and Innovation Foundation of Washington, D.C., said these groups have managed to convince decision makers that sprawl is responsible for congestion.

Atkinson said he once was asked to join a bicycle advocacy group, but declined based on the group's no-growth, anti-automobile agenda.

Atkinson said the reason the group is opposed to new roads is, "If we make their commute easier, how will we get them out of their cars?"

He said the "politics of constraint" halted highway expansion on a national scale in the mid-1970s.

But left-leaning activists can't take all the blame. Atkinson argued that anti-tax conservatives also stymie highway expansion.

"Organizations like Grover Norquist's Americans for Tax Reform fight virtually every attempt to increase gas taxes," Atkinson told the standing-room-only audience, adding that current gas taxes are less than half of what they were in the 1960s when adjusted for inflation.

The answer, Atkinson said, is a multi-pronged approach in which more roads are built, transit spending is increased, and market forces are used to reduce driving.

Commuting and travel trends

The face of the average commuter is changing and so are commuting habits. More Americans are leaving for work earlier and driving longer. But while the car remains the most common way to go to work, transit and carpooling options are increasing.

So says transportation consultant Alan Pisarski, author of a report on commuting published by the Transportation Research Board this month, Commuting in America III.

The direction of our commutes also has changed. The number of commuters traveling from city to suburb is now greater than those traveling from suburb to city.

From past history, Pisarski can predict future commuting possibilities.

"One of the most significant changes in the future will probably come from newly arrived immigrants," Pisarski said. "Unlike most native-born Americans, many new immigrants carpool, bike, walk or use public transportation to commute."

Another developing trend is the increasing number of people who work from home. About 4 million Americans work from home—more than those who walk to work.

Pisarski has a number of worrisome conclusions to those of us facing increasing congestion: both the number of vehicles and the number of solo drivers continue to grow. The number of new solo drivers grew by almost 13 million in the 1990s. And 30 million more vehicles hit the roads from 1990 to 2000—13 million in households that already had two or more vehicles.

"In the 1970s, baby boomers changed the entire dynamic of commuting trends," Pisarski said. "That era is coming to a close. The needs of Americans – more affluent, more involved in global issues, more free to live and work when and where they want – create new challenges that must be addressed if our commuting experience is to improve."

Public-private partnerships offer funds, trade-offs

With federal funding for transportation projects harder to come by and state money for projects continuing to tighten, looking for alternative ways to fund large projects will become more and more important.

During the State DOT Considerations in Concession Decisions session on Sunday, a panel spoke about the pros and cons of public-private partnerships and what states might need to consider while exploring this as a funding option.

Panelist Jack Lettiere, the former commissioner of New Jersey DOT, spoke about his experience privatizing the New Jersey Turnpike, Atlantic City Expressway and Garden State Parkway. He said the gap was widening between what the state wanted to do and money that was available. Officials wrestled with the idea of what they could do with the funds they had.

"Was that good enough? The answer was 'no,'" he said. The philosophical problem for the state was the idea of giving up ownership of its assets and the fear that the first day the roads were privatized, the tolls would go up. "That fear pales in comparison to the damage that would happen if we didn't do anything."

During the session, the experts pointed out that every major project is unique and a public-private partnership may not be the best option for each one, but they see it as the direction many states will move in order to fund projects.