



915 Washington Street NE, Olympia, Washington 98501 Tel 360.528.8000 Fax 360.528.8090 Web www.portolympia.com

Press Release

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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, CONTACT:

John Thompson, Project Manager (360) 528-8004 ~ johnt@portolympia.com

Port of Olympia awards contract for rail improvements on the Intermodal Infrastructure Enhancement Project

On September 22, 2008 the Port of Olympia awarded a contract to Granite Northwest to perform repairs, upgrades and safety enhancements to the rail infrastructure at the Port's marine terminal.

The project is designed to increase safety at the Market Street crossing and to expand the Port's capacity to handle greater volumes of cargo by shifting emphasis from trucking to rail. This project will specifically add loading and storage track, eliminating an operational bottleneck.

This project is federally funded through grants secured by Representative Brian Baird with support from Representative Adam Smith and Senators Patty Murray and Maria Cantwell.

The Washington State Department of Transportation is serving as the pass-through agency on the project and will provide oversight on the proper use of the federal funds.

The most visible portion of this project to the public includes the installation of rail crossing safety equipment on Market Street, adjacent to the popular Farmer's Market. . This work will take place when the Farmer's Market is closed for business to minimize any disruption.

Additionally, existing track on the marine terminal will be rebuilt and two new sidings will be installed to increase the rail car storage capacity by another 2,200 linear feet of track. Old creosote rail ties, which are considered an environmental risk, will be removed and replaced with concrete ties.

Work will progress through the winter and spring and be complete by mid-summer 2009. Completion of the project is expected to double the Port's rail cargo-processing capacity and have a number of positive regional economic benefits. Among these is the shift from truck to the more energy efficient rail mode of cargo transportation and the resulting ease of congestion on City streets.

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About the Port of Olympia

The southernmost deepwater port on Puget Sound, the Port of Olympia is Thurston County's partner in economic opportunity. The Port owns and operates a diversified international shipping terminal, an established niche facility that handles a range of breakbulk and project cargoes. The Port also owns and operates a strategically located regional airport, a vibrant 656-slip recreational marina and boat haulout/repair facility, and a thriving real estate division. A community port, it generates an estimated 2,600 jobs in Thurston County and indirectly over 5,000 jobs in Washington State.