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Ridgefield Rail Overpass Project Receives \$3.5 Million in Federal Funding

Ray LaHood, U.S. Transportation Secretary, announced early yesterday that the State of Washington would receive more than \$25.9 million in grants for highway-related projects. Brent Grening, Executive Director of the Port of Ridgefield, later stated that the Port of Ridgefield would be receiving \$3.5 million of those funds for the Pioneer Street Railroad Overpass. "We've already completed the majority of the planning and design and process bringing the project to 90% design phase. These funds represent construction dollars, about a third of what it will take to complete the overpass," said Grening.

The overpass will extend Pioneer St., the main road leading into the city of Ridgefield, out over the railroad tracks and landing on the waterfront. The goal, according to Grening, is to provide safe, unobstructed, and direct access to the redeveloped Ridgefield waterfront, as well as to the Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge. "At present, safety and access to the waterfront by emergency vehicles, cars, trucks, and pedestrians are considered deficient because of the street-level rail crossings and short sight distances."

The project provides major benefits to the community and to the region. It will close up to three at-grade railroad crossings, including the Mill Street crossing which has been ranked the 5th most dangerous crossing in Washington State. It will improve visitor access to the Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge. It will also connect downtown Ridgefield and Overlook Park to the newly cleaned up and revitalized waterfront. Furthermore, this project will increase railroad mainline capacity through the Portland metro area - where 70-80 trains pass through Ridgefield on a daily basis and enabling the extension of the high speed rail corridor between Eugene, Oregon and Vancouver, BC and provide safe access to the Port of Ridgefield, a major job center for the city of Ridgefield.

Total cost of the project is estimated at approximately \$12.5 million including: final design, engineering and administration, right-of-way acquisition, environmental impact mitigation, construction, contingency and mobilization. Initial construction is expected to begin in fall of 2012.



About the Port of Ridgefield

The Port of Ridgefield was formed in 1940 and is charged with bringing economic development to the greater Ridgefield area. The Port district covers approximately 57 square miles, represents over 15,000 constituents and is led by three elected commissioners: Joe Melroy, Bruce Wiseman, and Scott Hughes. The Port is currently involved with the environmental cleanup and redevelopment of the Ridgefield waterfront, Ridgefield Rail Overpass and other projects.

Public meetings are held the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of the month at Port offices located at 111 W Division St. Ridgefield WA. Meetings start at 3:00 PM. The public is welcome and encouraged to attend. For more information about the Port, visit www.portridgefield.org or:

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