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Passengers Honor Oregon's DeFazio for His Stalwart Support of Trains

Washington, D.C.—The National Association of Railroad Passengers (NARP) presented Rep. Peter DeFazio with its Golden Spike Award today for his long-time support of passenger rail in America and the work done on behalf of train passengers in the Pacific Northwest.

Mr. DeFazio has long advocated for the importance of a robust, energy-efficient intermodal transportation system, and has been a leader in pushing for a strong passenger train network over his 25-year career in the U.S. Congress.

His work for better trains and transit in the House Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure—from Amtrak's intercity services to downtown streetcars—is part of the reason why trains have experienced a renaissance in the past 15 years. This renaissance has directly benefited the people of Oregon and the Pacific Northwest, who have access to additional frequencies on the popular Amtrak Cascades service (Eugene – Portland – Seattle, WA – Vancouver, B.C.), and have seen upgrades and improvements thanks to strong investment from federal and state government.

Steady levels of investment in transit also led to a light rail boom—in Portland, Oregon, and the U.S. in general. The private sector has responded to this public initiative, and in 2007, Oregon Iron Works became the first American company to manufacture streetcars in more than 50 years.

“The people of the Pacific Northwest are seeing firsthand how passenger rail investment benefits local economies—not only through improved connectivity, but through the creation of construction and domestic manufacturing jobs,” said Ross Capon, president of NARP. “Representative DeFazio has been a leader in that investment, and for that America's passengers are grateful.”

About the National Association of Railroad Passengers NARP is the only national organization speaking for the users of passenger trains and rail transit. We have worked since 1967 to expand the quality and quantity of passenger rail in the U.S. Our mission is to work towards a modern, customer-focused national passenger train network that provides a travel choice Americans want. Our work is supported by over 22,000 individual members.

About NARP's Golden Spike Award

Going back to the completion of the Transcontinental Railroad in 1869, golden spikes were used by railroads in ceremonies to mark the completion of important projects. In the 1960s, magazine publishes George Falcon, an active early member of NARP, got the idea for the Golden Spike Award from actress Debbie Reynolds, a train lover whose father worked as a conductor on the Southern Pacific Railroad. Since 1984, the NARP Board of Directors Executive Committee has approved all choices for recipients. Past recipients include Ms. Reynolds, Walt Disney, Johnny Cash, and Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan.

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