

## FERRY NEWSLETTER

June 2, 2009

---

I have had two web site comments over the last month in regards to our apparent lack of progress on technology projects on the Pierce County Ferry System. I am overdue with providing you an update.

This is a complicated project involving several components which, contrary to what you see as a rider are in fact coming together.

1. **Maintenance Tracking Software** We have take a software program (termed the FASTER program) used to track and record large vehicle maintenance at the County Equipment Services Division and adapted this program for Ferry vessel and dock maintenance use. This system is loaded with all recurring and special maintenance requirements, flags ships engineers on work needing to be performed parts, needed etc. and records the maintenance when completed
2. **Automated Captains Log** Using an on board GPS System an automated arrival and departure log is maintained eliminating the hand recording of arrivals and departures providing an record for future reference. It also provides fields for manual entry of vehicles left behind and other operational data. This same GPS feature is utilized on the next project.
3. **Reader Board With Automated Estimated Time of Arrivals (ETA) and departures (ETD) based on the vessel location.** The board will also have a drop down menu that allows vessel operator to indicate delays based on weather, maintenance, tide etc. We have tested this feature out and successfully been able to track the vessel location every few seconds on the entire route. The public will also be able to view this feature from our web site in the near future.

**WHY NOT NOW?** – To accurately record arrival and departure times you have to envision a bubble around each docking area. That bubble is adjustable as to how far out it records the time. So it currently records an arrival approximately three minutes before we are fully berthed and records a departure approximately three minutes after true departure. This affects both project two and three, is recoverable but the software need to be adjusted to take out this slack

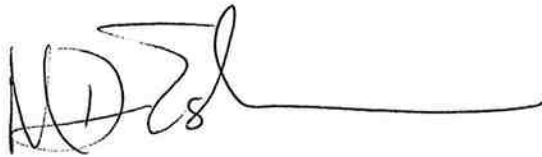
**SO WHY CAN'T YOU JUST USE IT AS A READER BOARD IN THE INTERIM TO BROADCAST LOAD OR UNLOADING?** – That is our intent and it is in fact being tested tonight or tomorrow night. A connecting module from the ether net line to the sign was installed this morning.

4. **SECURITY CAMERAS** – Fourteen security cameras have been installed. Four remain without power and crews continue to work on these installs. The rest were tested this morning and I was able to view them from my office PC at University Place. These share the same new server with the reader board. Some of the sighting was not optimal so crews will continue to adjust the view fields for best results. In addition we are assessing what do we want on the web site to maximize customer service and what will require special access only by law enforcement.

I hope this explains why it is taking a while to bring all this together. When you add in the harsh environment that the cameras, reader board, laptops etc. are operating under we must take extra measures to make sure we develop a reliable, sustainable and useful system, Ultimately we will all gain by increasing your confidence as to the credibility to our operating efficiencies, better plan and cost manage maintenance requirements, provide a more secure operating environment and give you more insight on the vessel location and availability at any given time whether from the approach lanes or your home

Thank you for your patience.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'MDE', followed by a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Michael D. Esher  
Ferry and Airport Administrator