

Project Milestones

On August 20, 2001 a group of public and private interests met to chart a new comprehensive strategy designed to advance Walla Walla Valley's long sought after goal of four-laning U.S. Highway 12 from Burbank, Washington to Walla Walla, Washington. As a result of this meeting, the U.S. Highway 12 Coalition was formed.

The Coalition's first action was to retain the services of Ball Janik to work with our congressional delegation as critical transportation authorization and appropriation bills make their way through congress. In addition, Ball Janik coordinates coalition member visitations to Washington, DC to meet with congressional members and key congressional committee staff.

The coalition also made a commitment to develop comprehensive marketing materials to articulate the safety and economic development justification for four-laning U.S. Highway 12. This website is a product of the coalition's marketing efforts. Below in chronological order, is a description of some of the coalition's efforts and accomplishments.

February 15, 2002



Comprehensive marketing materials unveiled. Includes Highway 12 logo, corridor map, project information sheet, project action sheet and business & citizen petition campaign.

Tri-City Herald:

(Feb. 16, 2002) - [Push on for Highway 12 widening](#)

Walla Walla Union-Bulletin:

(Feb. 17, 2002) - [WW project to four-lane U.S. 12 on track](#)

February 20, 2002

Coalition guest editorial appears in Walla Walla Union-Bulletin Newspaper.

Walla Walla Union-Bulletin Article:

(Feb. 20, 2002) - [Aggressive Efforts Needed To Make U.S. 12 Safer](#)

February 27, 2002

Port of Walla Walla Commissioner Ken Jantz and Port Executive Director Jim Kuntz travel to Washington, DC. Meetings held with:

Congressman George Nethercutt
Senator Maria Cantwell
Senator Patty Murray

March 11, 2002

City of Walla Walla Mayor Jerry Cummins and City Manager Duane Cole travel to Washington, D.C. Meetings held with:

Congressman George Nethercutt
Tyler Prout, Office of Congressman Doc Hastings
Dale Learn, Office of Senator Patty Murray
Greg Gardner, Office of Senator Maria Cantwell

April 17, 2002 *Major Milestone – Phase I Funding of \$10.1 Million Retained*

Due to a shortfall in the Washington State Department of Transportation's budget, a host of transportation projects across the state were targeted to be eliminated, cut or delayed. The first phase of four-laning U.S. Highway 12 previously approved with \$10.1 million in state funding was at risk.

A host of coalition members wrote letters to the Washington State Transportation Commission, phone calls were made to the respective chairs of the House & Senate Transportation Committees, and our 16th Legislative District members (Senator Mike Hewitt, Representative Bill Grant and Representative Dave Mastin) wrote Secretary of Transportation Doug MacDonald a joint letter seeking to retain phase one funding.

At the April 17, Transportation Commission Meeting in Olympia the following coalition members provided joint testimony seeking to retain funding:

Senator Mike Hewitt
County Commissioner Dave Carey
Port Commissioner Fred Bennett
County Public Works Director Phil Merrell
Ball Janik Representative Dan James

While a multitude of projects throughout the state were cut or substantially delayed, the coalition was successful in retaining \$730,000 in current fiscal year funding to allow phase one four-laning to go out to bid in October 2002. The remaining construction funding will be released when the new fiscal year starts on July 1, 2003.

Walla Walla Union Bulletin Articles:

(April 3, 2002) - [U.S. 12 project on state chopping block](#)

(April 5, 2002) - [U.S. 12 project faces year delay](#)

(April 11, 2002) - [Area officials prepare for battle over U.S. 12 funds](#)

(April 18, 2002) - [Highway 12 project put back on path](#)

June 5 & 6, 2002

Walla Walla Delegation Travels to Washington, DC.

Fred Bennett, Commissioner Port of Walla Walla
Jerry Cummins, Mayor City of Walla Walla
Dave Carey, Walla Walla County Commissioner
Jim Caddey, Financial Manager Boise Wallula Mill
Jim Kuntz, Executive Director Port of Walla Walla



Dave Carey, *Walla Walla County Commissioner*
Fred Bennett, *Port of Walla Walla Commissioner*
Jerry Cummins, *Mayor, City of Walla Walla*

Meetings held with:

*Congressman Jack Quinn
Congressman George Nethercutt
Senator Maria Cantwell
Senator Patty Murray
Fraser Verrusio - House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee
John Haifley - Senate Environment & Public Works Committee

*The coalition met with Congressman Quinn who represents the Buffalo, New York area at the request of the Cliffstar Corporation, a New York based juice manufacturing company that is opening a production facility in Walla Walla. Cliffstar supports the four-laning of U.S. Highway 12 to enhance the movement of freight into and out of Walla Walla.

June 12, 2002

Secretary of the Washington State Department of Transportation visits Walla Walla to discuss the four-laning of Highway 12 with members of the coalition.



Doug MacDonald, *Secretary of Transportation*
Fred Bennett, *Port of Walla Walla Commissioner*

July 25, 2002

Senator Patty Murray announces \$2.5 million have been earmarked in the Senate Transportation & Appropriations Subcommittee to assist with U.S. Highway 12 four-laning efforts.

Walla Walla Union-Bulletin Article:

(July 25, 2002) - [U.S. 12 may get funding boost](#)

Tri-City Herald Article:

(July 25, 2002) - [Tri-City highways could get funding](#)

August 15, 2002

Senator Patty Murray meets with U.S. Highway 12 Coalition in Walla Walla.



Fred Bennett, *Port of Walla Walla Commissioner*
Dave Carey, *Walla Walla County Commissioner*
Senator Patty Murray
Jerry Cummins, *Mayor, City of Walla Walla*

Press Release:

[Remarks by Senator Murray at U.S. Highway 12 Event in Walla Walla](#)

August 27 - September 2, 2002

U.S. Highway 12 Coalition attends Walla Walla Fair & Frontier Days with an informational booth highlighting the coalition's efforts. During the five-day fair, 1,207 citizens signed the coalition's petition supporting the four-laning of U.S. Highway 12. As of September 2, 2002 the coalition gathered a total of 3,545 citizen signatures and 170 business signatures.



September 18 & 19, 2002

Port of Walla Walla Executive Director Jim Kuntz travels to Washington, DC. Meetings held with:

September 18

Kathy Weatherly, Office of Congressman Pete DeFazio
John Anderson, Office of Senator Mike Crapo
Tracie Sunday, Office of Congressman Rick Larsen
Mariia Zimmerman, Office of Congressman Earl Blumenauer
Ben McMakin & Dale Learn, Office of Senator Patty Murray

September 19

Grey Gardner, Office of Senator Maria Cantwell
Congressman George Nethercutt
Mike McEleney, Office of Congressman "Butch" Otter
Brian Hard, Office of Congressman Greg Walden
Brandon Tucker, Office of Congressman Mike Simpson
Tyler Prout, Office of Congressman Doc Hastings
Alisa Ferguson, Office of Congressman Brian Baird
Joshua Sheinkman, Office of Senator Ron Wyden

September 25, 2002

Walla Walla Union-Bulletin Article:

(Sept. 25, 2002) - [U.S. Highway 12 Funding Goes to House Panel Thursday](#)

October 24, 2002

Congressman George Nethercutt meets with U.S. Highway 12 Coalition in Walla Walla.



Pam Ray, *Walla Walla County Commissioner*
Congressman George Nethercutt
Fred Bennett, *Port of Walla Walla Commissioner*

December 10, 2002

Secretary of Washington State Department of Transportation meets with US Highway 12 Coalition to discuss transportation financing issues.



Doug MacDonald, *Secretary of Transportation*

December 11, 2002

State awards Phase 1 U.S. Highway 12 four-laning contract.

Walla Walla Union-Bulletin Article:

(December 11, 2002) - [State awards U.S. 12 widening contract](#)

February 14, 2003

It appears the U.S. Highway 12 widening project will get the federal money officials hoped for and more.

Walla Walla Union-Bulletin Article:

(Feb. 14, 2003) - [U.S. 12 federal funding fares better than officials expected](#)

February 20, 2003 *Major Milestone – 2003 Federal Budget Contains \$4.4 million for U.S. Highway 12*

President George Bush signs 2003 Federal Budget. Included is \$4.4 million to assist with four-laning U.S. Highway 12. Senator Patty Murray and Congressman George Nethercutt played instrumental roles in securing the appropriation. Senator Maria Cantwell was also supportive.



Patty Murray



Maria Cantwell



George Nethercutt

February 25, 26, 27, 2003

Port of Walla Walla Commissioner Dr. Fred Bennett and Port Executive Director Jim Kuntz travel to Washington, DC.

Meetings held with: Senator Patty Murray
Evan Schatz, Office of Representative Rich Larsen
Beth Stein, Office of Senator Maria Cantwell
Alisa Ferguson, Office of Representative Brian Baird

February 28, 2003

Port of Walla Walla Commissioner Dr. Fred Bennett, Walla Walla County Commissioner Dave Carey and Port Executive Director Jim Kuntz meet with Congressman George Nethercutt.

March 10 & 11, 2003

City of Walla Walla Mayor Jerry Cummins and City Manager Duane Cole Travel to Washington, DC.

Meeting held with:
Congressman George Nethercutt
Senator Maria Cantwell
Ben McMakin and Dale Learn, Office of Senator Patty Murray

May 1, 2003

U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration Officials Tour Project Site.



Left to Right: **Moe Davari**, Project Engineer, WSDOT; **Michael Kulback**, Regional Engineer, Federal Highway Administration; **Don Whitehouse**, South Central Regional Administrator, WSDOT; **Jason Smith**, Assistant Environmental Program Manager, WSDOT; **Lieutenant Colonel Edward Kertis**, Commander Walla Walla District, Army Corp of Engineers; **Daniel Mathis**, Division Administrator, Federal Highway Administration; **Jim Kuntz**, Executive Director, Port of Walla Walla

May 9, 2003

Walla Walla Union-Bulletin Editorial:

U.S. Highway 12 Coalition's hard work pays off

There is reason to be optimistic U.S. Highway 12 will be four lanes from Walla Walla to the Snake River bridge in the not-too-distant future.

By the Editorial Board of the Union-Bulletin

The U.S. Highway 12 Coalition's success has come from hard work, not luck. And its members have the bags under their eyes to prove it.

Coalition members, led by Port of Walla Walla officials, have tirelessly lobbied Congress and the state Legislature for money to expand Highway 12 to four lanes between Burbank and Walla Walla. Coalition members have done their homework, planned well and were prepared to seize the opportunity when the time came. It came when the Legislature cobbled together a seven-year plan for state road improvements.

Funding was secured to expand the highway to four lanes from the Wallula Junction to Burbank. Southeastern Washington will get more than its fair share of money from the nickel-a-gallon gas tax recently approved by the Legislature. (Shhh, don't spread it around, the folks west of the Cascades might make a grab for our asphalt.)

The gas-tax hike will provide \$32.5 million over seven years. In addition, \$4.4 million has been secured from the federal government.

Money was also obtained to plan for expansion of the highway all the way to Walla Walla.

And, of course, lobbying continues for federal and state money for the 30 or so miles of pavement to Walla Walla. The Coalition has a lot more work ahead of it.

But the group has already made progress. It has convinced U.S. Sens. Patty Murray, Maria Cantwell and U.S. Rep. George Nethercutt that the highway improvements are necessary.

There is reason to be optimistic Highway 12 will be four lanes from Walla Walla to the Snake River bridge in the not-too-distant future.

Coalition members deserve our praise for their vision for the future and getting the project this far.

May 15 & 16, 2003

Port of Walla Walla Executive Director Jim Kuntz travels to Washington, D.C.

Meetings held with:

Emily Zielske, Office of Senator Maria Cantwell

Dale Learn, Office of Senator Patty Murray

Darin Beffa, Office of Congressman George Nethercutt

Susan McColley, Congressional Affairs Office, U.S. Department of Transportation

May 19, 2003 *Major Milestone – State of Washington Transportation Revenue Package Includes \$35.5 Million for U.S. Highway 12*

Governor Gary Locke signs the transportation revenue package. U.S. Highway 12 to receive \$32.5 million over a seven-year period, which will provide the needed financing to four-lane U.S. Highway 12 from the Snake River Bridge in Burbank to the Wallula Junction. In addition \$3 million has been allocated to plan where the four-lane corridor will be located from the Wallula Junction to the City of Walla Walla. Senator Mike Hewitt and Representatives Bill Grant and Dave Mastin deserve credit for making sure U.S. Highway 12 was included in the state transportation revenue package. Thank you!



Gary Locke



Mike Hewitt



Bill Grant



Dave Mastin

June 30, 2003

CELEBRATION OF PROGRESS



August 27-31, 2003

U.S. Highway 12 Coalition attends Walla Walla Fair & Frontier Days with an informational booth highlighting the coalition's efforts. During the fair over 300 citizens signed the coalition's petition supporting the four-laning of U.S. Highway 12. As of August 31, 2003 the coalition has gathered a total of 4,007 citizen signatures and 182 business signatures.



September 2, 3 & 4, 2003

Walla Walla Delegation Travels to Washington, DC

Jerry Cummins, Mayor, City of Walla Walla
Ken Jantz, Commissioner, Port of Walla Walla
Greg Tompkins, Commissioner, Walla Walla County
Jim Kuntz, Executive Director, Port of Walla Walla

Meeting held with:

Senator Patty Murray
Congressman Goerge Nethercutt
Senator Maria Cantwell
Megan Lawrence, Office of Congressman Nethercutt
Ken Van Poole, Office of Congressman Nethercutt
Rob Neal, Office of Congressman Nethercutt
Dale Learn, Office of Senator Patty Murray



*Ken Jantz, Commissioner, Port of Walla Walla
Greg Tompkins, Commissioner, Walla Walla County
Jerry Cummins, Mayor, City of Walla Walla*

September 24, 2003

Washington State Transportation Commission Holds Meeting In Walla Walla



US Highway 12 Coalition members update Transportation Commission on efforts to four-lane US Highway 12 from Burbank to Walla Walla.

October 9 & 10, 2003

Port of Walla Walla Executive Director Jim Kuntz travels to Washington, DC -

Meetings held with the following people:

- Emily Zielske, Beth Stein and Matt McCarthy, office of Senator Maria Cantwell.
- Dale Learn, office of Senator Patty Murray.
- Evan Schatz, office of Congressman Larsen.
- Megan Lawrence, office of Congressman Nethercutt.
- Joel Rubin, office of Congressman Baird.

October 21, 2003



Washington State Legislative Transportation Committee visits Walla Walla. Port Commissioner Dr. Fred Bennett thanks the transportation committee for its support for four-laning U.S. Highway 12. In May 2003 the state legislature approved \$32.5 million to four-lane U.S. Highway 12 from Burbank to Wallula Junction.

January 23, 2004 *Major Milestone – 2004 Federal Budget Contains \$4.0 million for U.S. Highway 12*

President George Bush signs 2004 Federal Budget. Included is \$4.0 million to assist with four-laning U.S. Highway 12. Senator Patty Murray and Congressman George Nethercutt played instrumental roles in securing the appropriation. Senator Maria Cantwell was also supportive.



Patty Murray



Maria Cantwell



George Nethercutt

February 13, 2004

Governor Gary Locke receives a transportation leadership award from the U.S. Highway 12 Coalition in Walla Walla.



Left to Right:

Jerry Cummins, Council Member, City of Walla Walla

Paul Schneidmiller, Commissioner, Port of Walla Walla

Ed Ammon, Mayor, City of College Place

Gary Locke, Washington State Governor

Amy Cruz, Communications Manager, Boise

Ken Jantz, Commissioner, Port of Walla Walla



Left to Right:

Jim Kuntz, Executive Director, Port of Walla Walla

Gary Locke, Washington State Governor

Yolanda Cortinas Trout, Member, U.S. Highway 12 Coalition

February 27, 2004

Port of Walla Walla Commissioner Dr. Fred Bennett and Port Executive Director Jim Kuntz travel to Washington, DC.

Meetings held with the following people:

- Megan Lawrence, office of Congressman Nethercutt.
- Dale Learn, office of Senator Patty Murray.
- Emily Zielske, Beth Stein and Matt McCarthy, office of Senator Maria Cantwell.

March 29 & 30, 2004

WSDOT and US Highway 12 coalition hosts informational open houses in Burbank and Walla Walla to update community on the progress of four-laning US Highway 12. Excellent public attendance and input was received.



May 5 & 6, 2004

U.S. Highway 12 Coalition meets with Congressional delegation.

Meetings held with:

Senator Murray



Left to Right:

Jim Kuntz, Port of Walla Walla Executive Director
Greg Tompkins, Walla Walla County
Commissioner
Jerry Cummins, City of Walla Walla Councilman
Senator Patty Murray
Fred Bennett, Port of Walla Walla Commissioner
Ed Ammon, City of College Place Mayor

Senator Cantwell



Left to Right:

Greg Tompkins, Walla Walla County
Commissioner
Ed Ammon, City of College Place Mayor
Senator Maria Cantwell
Jerry Cummins, City of Walla Walla Councilman
Jim Kuntz, Port of Walla Walla Executive Director
Fred Bennett, Port of Walla Walla Commissioner

Congressman Nethercutt



Left to Right:

Fred Bennett, Port of Walla Walla Commissioner
Jim Kuntz, Port of Walla Walla Executive Director
Jerry Cummins, City of Walla Walla Councilman
Greg Tompkins, Walla Walla County
Commissioner
Congressman George Nethercutt
Ed Ammon, City of College Place Mayor

August, 2004 *Major Milestone – Phase I Four Laning Completed*

Phase I completed ahead of schedule and within \$11.1 million budget.



Casey Pond Section

December 6, 2004 *Major Milestone – 2005 Federal Budget Contains \$2,250,000 for U.S. Highway 12*

President George Bush signs 2005 Federal Budget. Included is \$2,250,000 to assist with four-laning U.S. Highway 12. Senator Patty Murray and Congressman George Nethercutt played instrumental roles in securing the appropriation. Senator Maria Cantwell was also supportive.



Patty Murray



Maria Cantwell



George Nethercutt

February 1 & 2, 2005

Port of Walla Walla Executive Director Travels to Washington, D.C.

Meetings held with:

Representative Cathy McMorris

Dale Learn, Office of Senator Patty Murray

Kelly Leary and Layth Elhaussani, Office of Senator Cantwell

Larry Ehl, Federal Liaison, Washington State Department of Transportation

Jack Silzel, Office of Representative McMorris

March 23, 2005

Representative Cathy McMorris meets with U.S. Highway 12 Coalition in Walla Walla. Representative McMorris announces \$3.4 million has been allocated in "Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users" or "SAFETEA-LU."



Left to Right:

Jim Kuntz, Port of Walla Walla Executive Director
Congresswoman Cathy McMorris
David Condon, Congresswoman Cathy McMorris District Director
Paul Schneidmiller, Port of Walla Walla Commissioner



Left to Right:

David Condon, Congresswoman Cathy McMorris District Director
Jerry Cummins, City of Walla Walla Council Member
Dave Carey, Walla Walla County Commissioner
Ken Jantz, Port of Walla Walla Commissioner
Joyce Anderson, Artist
Congresswoman Cathy McMorris
Ed Ammon, City of College Place Mayor

April 18-20, 2005



Left to Right:

Jerry Cummins, City of Walla Walla Council Member
Ken Jantz, Port of Walla Walla Commissioner
Senator Maria Cantwell
Ed Ammon, City of College Place Mayor
Dave Carey, Walla Walla County Commissioner
Jim Caddey, Boise Paper Financial Manager
Jim Kuntz, Port of Walla Walla Executive Director



Left to Right:

Ken Jantz, Port of Walla Walla Commissioner
Jerry Cummins, City of Walla Walla Council Member
Senator Patty Murray
Jim Caddey, Boise Paper Financial Manager
Dave Carey, Walla Walla County Commissioner
Ed Ammon, City of College Place Mayor



Left to Right:

Dave Carey, Walla Walla County Commissioner
Jerry Cummins, City of Walla Walla Council Member
Congresswoman Cathy McMorris
Ed Ammon, City of College Place Mayor
Ken Jantz, Port of Walla Walla Commissioner
Jim Caddey, Boise Paper Financial Manager

May 9, 2005 *Major Milestone - State of Washington Transportation Revenue Package Includes \$60.23 for U.S. Highway 12*

Governor Christine Gregoire signs the transportation revenue package. Included in the bill is \$20 million for the U.S. Highway 12/124 Burbank Interchange, \$36 million to four-lane U.S. Highway 12 from the City of Walla Walla to McDonald Road, near Lowden (Phase VI) and \$4.23 million for the Myra Road extension to U.S. Highway 12. Senator Mike Hewitt is credited for making sure the U.S. Highway 12 projects were included in the transportation package.



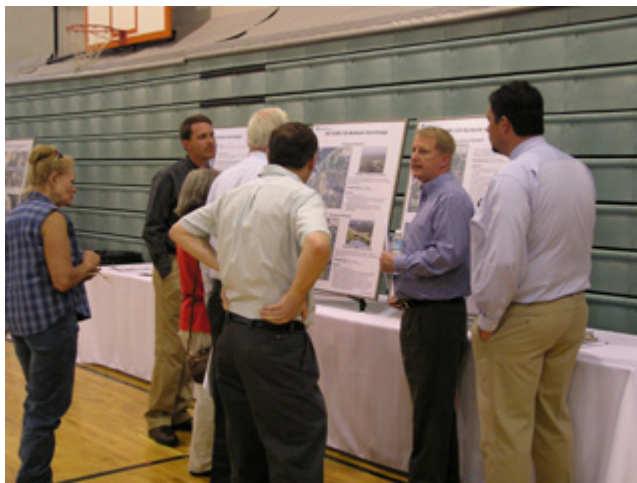
Governor Chris Gregoire



Senator Mike Hewitt

May 11 & 12, 2005

WSDOT and U.S. Highway 12 Coalition hosts open houses in Burbank and Walla Walla to update community on the progress of four-laning U.S. Highway 12.



Fall 2005 – *Major Milestone*

Federal budget includes a \$2.25 million appropriation and a \$5.9 million TEA-21 appropriation for Phase VI four-laning.

April 25 & 26, 2006

U.S. Highway 12 delegation travels to Washington, DC to meet with Congressional Delegation. Coalition members include: Dr. Fred Bennett, Port of Walla Walla Commissioner; Greg Tompkins, Walla Walla County Commissioner; Jerry Cummins, Walla Walla City Council Member; Jim Kuntz, Port of Walla Walla Executive Director; Duane Cole, City of Walla Walla Manager; Pat Reay, City of College Place Administrator.

Meetings held with:
Senator Patty Murray
Senator Maria Cantwell
Congresswoman Cathy McMorris

June 1, 2006

WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION - NEWS South Central Region - PO Box 12560 -Yakima, WA 98909-2560

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 1, 2006

Contacts:

Will Smith, WSDOT Project Engineer (509) 577-1844 (Yakima), Bob Hooker, WSDOT Assistant Project Engineer (509) 577-1842 (Yakima), Mike Westbay, Communications Manager (509)728-4712 (Yakima)

WSDOT AWARDS US 12 ATTALIA VICINITY ADD LANES CONTRACT

WALLA WALLA – WSDOT awarded an \$11,221,772.72 contract to Apollo, Inc. of Kennewick, WA to add two more lanes to US 12 in Walla Walla County near Attalia. The contract includes construction of a pre-stressed concrete girder bridge, asphalt paving, guardrail installation, guideposts, signing and lighting.

This project is part of a corridor plan to increase safety and improve mobility for US 12 between the Snake River Bridge and the city of Walla Walla , by adding lanes to establish a four-lane divided highway.

The contract was awarded May 31, 2006. Drivers should be able to see the start of construction in middle part of June.

January 29-30, 2007

U.S. Highway 12 delegation travels to Washington, DC to meet with Congressional delegation. Coalition members include: Paul Schneidmiller, Port of Walla Walla Commissioner; Greg Tompkins, Walla Walla County Commissioners; Jerry Cummins, Walla Walla City Council Member; Ed Ammon, City of College Place Mayor; Jim Kuntz, Port of Walla Walla, Executive Director.

Meetings held with:
Senator Patty Murray
Senator Maria Cantwell
Congresswoman Cathy McMorris

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 18, 2007 – DEDICATION OF PHASE III FOUR-LANING U.S. HIGHWAY 12



FEBRUARY 4-5, 2008

U.S. Highway 12 delegation travels to Washington, DC to meet with Congressional delegation. Coalition members include: Paul Schneidmiller, Port of Walla Walla Commissioner; Greg Tompkins, Walla Walla County Commissioner; Jerry Cummins, Walla Walla City Council Member; Ed Ammon, City of College Place Mayor; Duane Cole, City of Walla Walla Manager; Jim Kuntz, Port of Walla Walla Executive Director.

Meeting held with:
Senator Patty Murray
Senator Maria Cantwell
Congresswoman Cathy McMorris Rodgers

JUNE 3, 2008 – CELEBRATION OF PROGRESS – START OF PHASE VI CONSTRUCTION



FEBRUARY 9-10, 2009

U.S. Highway 12 delegation travels to Washington, DC to meet with Congressional Delegation. Coalition members include: Paul Schneidmiller, Port of Walla Walla Commissioner; Greg Tompkins, Walla Walla County Commissioner; Jerry Cummins, Walla Walla City Council Member; Jim Kuntz, Port of Walla Walla Executive Director; Duane Cole, City of Walla Walla Manager.

JUNE 24, 2009 – *MAJOR MILESTONE*

Federal budget includes a \$2.66 million appropriation for phase 7-A environmental documentation and design.



Senator Murray