

Wood Ties To Be Used In Upgrade

By Abby Farris

Wood ties and new rail are expected to be part of a track upgrade to the Eugene, Ore.-to-Vancouver corridor that will result from a more than \$5 million grant from the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA).

The FRA will provide the Oregon Department of Transportation with \$5.2 million for track, structure and signal improvements of the Portland-Eugene leg of the Pacific Northwest high-speed transportation corridor. The money will be used for upgrading equipment and track at a Portland Union Station tower; expanding and upgrading the Irving Siding in Eugene to allow for simultaneous movement of freight and passenger service; and updating the signaling system between Portland and Vancouver to increase track speeds to allow freight and high-speed passenger trains to share the same track.

The funding will come from the coffers of the Next Generation High-Speed Rail program. In 1992, the Pacific Northwest

corridor was designated one of five potential high-speed rail corridors under Section 1010 of ISTEA, making it eligible to receive the funds. Jeff Schultz, rail planning specialist for the Washington State Department of Transportation, said that congestion of the transportation routes linking Portland, Seattle and Vancouver was a factor in the United States Department of Transportation's decision to allocate the funding to the Pacific Northwest, a major transportation corridor that "clearly showed a lot of promise" for high speed development. Having high-speed rail in the corridor, he said, will keep the area's growing population moving through increased intermodality.

"The Pacific Northwest has been growing fast over the last six to seven years. We predict that in the next 20 years it will grow even more," Schultz said. "High speed rail will help provide balanced transportation for a lot more people so they're not dependent on I-5, which is

already very congested. It will help keep people moving between the major population centers within the corridor...it was logical (for the USDOT to choose the Pacific Northwest corridor). We're a growing area and rail is going to provide transportation for a major part of our population."

Ed Immel, state rail planner for the Oregon Department of Transportation, said that, due to cost constraints, the improvements will not be undertaken as "one grandiose project." Rather, he said, the project will be taken on incrementally and will attack the slowest segments of the corridor, doubling the speed permitted in some areas. Immel also said that the project will help to convert Portland from an "end of the line" city by facilitating train movement through the city, one of the objectives of the Conrail/CSX merger.

In Oregon, Burlington Northern Santa Fe and Union Pacific are in charge of the upgrade project. Both Schultz and Immel said they believe wood ties will be used to replace wood ties. Schultz said that suppliers should voice their support for the project to help convince lawmakers to continue funding. ♦



ST&T is designed to do business the way you do business: dependable, efficient, on time. So when you're ready to move, we're ready to go.

If that fits your style, give us a call. Ben Luttrell: (318) 375-4956



**SUPERIOR
TIE & TIMBER**



TIE SAVERS S-IRONS FROM THIEL TOOL

- 3½", 5" AND 6" SIZES
- IMMEDIATE SHIPMENT
- COMPETITIVELY PRICED



**TOOL AND ENGINEERING
COMPANY**

4622 BULWER AVE., ST. LOUIS, MO 63147
PHONE: (314) 241-6121 FAX: (314) 241-7857