



—FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE—  
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## **FORUM TO FOCUS ON REGIONAL PASSENGER-ONLY FERRY NETWORK**

*Elliott Bay Cruise Aboard Latest, Locally Manufactured Ferry to Cap Event*

**SEATTLE, WASH.** (May 8, 2008)—This afternoon, as part of the Puget Sound Ferry Coalition meeting hosted by the Port of Seattle, Cascadia Center at Discovery Institute will join regional leaders to discuss passenger-only ferry operations on the region's waterways. A reception and cruise will follow on Bellingham (Wash.)-based All American Marine's new high-speed passenger ferry. The meeting takes place from 3-5 p.m. at the Port of Seattle Commission Chambers, 2700 Alaskan Way, Pier 69. The reception, to begin at 5:45 p.m. at Bell Street Harbor, Pier 66, takes place on All American Marine's River Gorge Explorer. The forum is open to media but not to the public.

Recently, King County formed a passenger-only ferry district to operate the West Seattle Water Taxi, the Vashon Island-Seattle foot ferry and demonstration routes on Puget Sound and Lake Washington. The Port of Kingston received a \$34.5 million federal grant to begin foot ferry service to Seattle. Cascadia Center, long a regional thought leader in working with public and private sector groups to help find solutions to the region's transportation challenges, is at the forefront of the effort to push for a broader Interlocal agreement for passenger ferry operations among Puget Sound communities.

"It's very encouraging to see the enthusiasm among elected leadership and communities to test more passenger ferry operations in the Sound," said Bruce Agnew, Policy Director for Cascadia Center. "We encourage an Interlocal agreement to help pool resources and coordinate regional service. The need and will are certainly in alignment. Plus, it couldn't be a more exciting time for passenger-only ferry technology. The sleek, modern, low-wake foot ferry that All American Marine will showcase following today's forum is testament to that."

All American Marine, Inc., recently unveiled an advanced high-speed vessel, which according to the company, "has been tested as producing the lowest levels of wake wash energy." The boat builder will host a cruise following today's forum aboard its River Gorge Explorer, completed for the Tennessee Aquarium in Chattanooga, Tenn.

In July 2003, aboard an Argosy vessel, Cascadia Center launched the Puget Sound Passenger Ferry Coalition with the aim of developing alliances to expand passenger-only ferry service on the Puget Sound and Lake Washington. Since then, the Coalition has organized events, including a well-attended educational trip to the San Francisco Bay Area in Fall, 2006, and a July 2008, passenger-only ferry forum at Salty's in West Seattle. Nearly five years after it began, the Coalition is meeting at a point when passenger ferries could be at a crossroads.

"It's difficult to overstate the important role that passenger-only ferries can and should have as part of the Puget Sound's transportation mix," said Agnew. "The state's withdrawal from operations certainly opens the door for other alternatives. King County, the Port of Kingston, Bremerton, and Port Townsend are among those who are picking up the leadership pieces. We're very pleased to see that."

Agnew said Cascadia will suggest regional funding through a motor vehicle excise tax to be applied toward passenger ferries, terminal improvement and surface water runoff rehabilitation projects.

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*Founded in 1993, Cascadia Center at Discovery Institute is known for its involvement in transportation and development issues in the Cascadia Corridor, Puget Sound and in the U.S.-Canadian cross-border realm. The Center also focuses on promoting U.S. efforts to reduce reliance on foreign oil, including the earliest possible development and integration of flex-fuel, plug-in, hybrid-electric vehicles. Cascadia Center, funded in large part by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, is proud of its reputation as an independent voice for creative solutions to metropolitan, state, regional, and national challenges—a voice shared through constructive policy analyses, testimony to government bodies, and by convening forums and conferences to facilitate solutions to complex policy matters. More at: [www.cascadiaproject.org](http://www.cascadiaproject.org)*