

THE CROSS-TIE

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Rail Safety

FRA PROMOTES HIGHWAY-RAIL GRADE CROSSING SAFETY AND TRESPASS PREVENTION WITH GRANT TO OPERATION LIFESAVER

WASHINGTON — Preventing and reducing collisions, fatalities and injuries arising from highway-rail grade crossing and railroad trespass incidents is the goal of a \$1.03 million Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) grant to Operation Lifesaver, Inc. (OLI), a not-for-profit railroad safety education organization.

Trespassing and highway-rail grade crossing deaths comprise approximately 95 percent of all rail-related fatalities in the United States each year. The grant funding will be used for public education and awareness programs in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. As part of the grant agreement, OLI is required to receive 25 percent matching in-kind contributions from non-government sources for a total program effort of \$1,366,500.

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WITH GRANT: FRA, OLI PROMOTE GRADE CROSSING SAFETY AND TRESPASS PREVENTION

(Continued from page 1)

“Far too often, preventable tragedies occur because motorists and pedestrians ignore the dangers of grade crossings at railroad tracks,” said FRA Administrator Joseph H. Boardman. “Increased public knowledge will result in more people making the right safety decisions around the rails.”

Since 1995, the highway-rail grade crossing collision rate has declined from 6.92 to 3.84 per million train miles, reaching an all-time low in 2005. And, the number of deaths resulting from train-vehicle collisions has decreased by 38.5 percent, from 579 to 356, over the same period. Unfortunately, the number of fatalities resulting from trespassing on railroad property has remained fairly constant at approximately 500 per year.

The grant supplements the FRA’s wide-ranging highway-rail crossing safety and trespass prevention program that includes numerous engineering, enforcement and educational initiatives. It also supports the U.S. Department of Transportation’s National Rail Safety Action Plan and the Secretary of Transportation’s Action Plan for Highway-Rail Grade Crossing Safety and Trespass Prevention, the blueprint for Federal efforts to combat these problems.

Recent actions taken by FRA include: a Safety Advisory stressing the railroad industry’s role in preventing grade crossing accidents; a rule requiring the sounding of the locomotive horn at all public grade crossings unless the crossing is sufficiently protected by warning devices and other safety measures; and a rule requiring reflective materials on locomotives and freight railcars to give motorists an additional visual warning of a train that is occupying a crossing in poor weather or lighting conditions.

FRA SUPPORTS TOLL-FREE PHONE NUMBERS: Meanwhile, toll-free emergency telephone numbers posted at highway-rail grade crossings used to report problems with warning equipment or other emergencies are effective in enhancing motorist and rail passenger safety and should be expanded to include more crossings, Boardman said.

A new FRA report finds that malfunctioning warning lights and gates at grade crossings have been repaired more quickly by railroads thanks to people using the telephone number, Boardman said. Also, freight and passenger trains have been slowed or stopped to prevent collisions with stalled vehicles, trespassers, and other obstructions on the tracks, he said.

Over 75 percent of grade crossings with flashing lights and gates, and over 60 percent of all public grade crossings, have such an emergency number posted, according to Boardman.

“Many grade crossing accidents can be prevented and lives saved when the public knows where to call to report a problem,” Boardman stated. “More grade crossings need to have emergency numbers posted so more potential tragedies can be avoided.”

The findings support U.S. Department of Transportation Secretary Norman Y. Mineta’s Highway-Rail Crossing Safety and Trespass Prevention Action Plan, which calls for universal implementation of the toll-free emergency notification system at all public grade crossings.

The FRA also recommends emergency numbers be posted at private grade crossings with significant public use such as to access shopping centers, industrial parks and residential developments.

In addition, the FRA will provide the necessary operating software and work to identify possible start-up funding to encourage smaller freight railroads to join together and establish combined toll-free emergency call-in systems to cover grade crossings not part of any existing program.

— *Special to The Cross-Tie*

\$489M GRANT GOES TO UTAH COMMUTER RAIL PROJECT

SALT LAKE CITY — An area commuter rail line got a big boost in June with \$489 million in federal funding.

The money will be used to build the new 44-mile “Frontrunner” Weber County-to-Salt Lake City Commuter Rail line. The line is expected to carry almost 12,000 weekday passengers taking nearly 6,000 cars off the roads everyday, U.S. Secretary of Transportation Norman Y. Mineta said during a visit to the Farmington Station construction site this afternoon.

“Because it runs parallel to I-15, this rail line offers a common-sense solution to highway congestion to and from Salt Lake City,” Mineta said. “And taking more cars off the road during rush hours will help

keep people and products moving through Salt Lake City safely and on time, no matter which path they choose.”

The Full Funding Grant Agreement represents the government’s commitment to provide funding for the project, Mineta said. The funds will be allocated over a seven year period from 2006 through 2012.

It allows construction to continue on the new commuter rail line, which will provide service from Pleasant View to the existing Salt Lake City Intermodal Terminal in downtown Salt Lake City, which stops in Salt Lake, Weber and Davis counties.

The line’s downtown terminal will provide commuter rail passengers a direct connection for commuter rail, light rail,

and passenger rail with UTA buses and Greyhound intercity bus service. Feeder buses will provide transportation from the terminal to local businesses and residential areas.

The grant, the largest award given to the state for a single project, will allow more workers to get to Salt Lake City’s booming businesses, Mineta said.

UTA plans to begin operating the line in November 2008, with service at 20-minute intervals during peak periods and every 40 minutes during off-peak periods.

At startup, it will serve 6,100 people a day, and up to 12,500 people daily by 2025.

— *Special to The Cross-Tie*

BNSF RAILWAY TO RAILFANS: HELP KEEP AMERICA'S RAIL SYSTEM SAFE, SECURE

FORT WORTH, Texas — BNSF Railway Company is looking to recruit some people who are most familiar with the nation's rail network to help keep it safe — railfans.

"Keeping America's rail transportation network safe from crime and terrorist activity is a high priority for the railroad industry," says William Heileman, BNSF general director, Police and Protection Solutions. "Every day across the country, rail fans photograph and watch trains as they pass through communities. It seems natural to harness their interest to help keep America's rail system safe."

Railfans can register for the program by going to the Citizens United for Rail Security (CRS) Web site (<http://newdomino.bnsf.com/website/crs.nsf/request?open>). CRS participants will receive an official identification card along with access to

news and information on the BNSF CRS Web site.

"Supporting homeland security in this manner is positive for everyone," said Carl Ice, BNSF's executive vice president and chief operations officer. "It supports the nation's security efforts, improves safety within our company and the community, and improves operations by helping to remove the impact of criminal acts and accidents."

The CRS program is an outgrowth of another BNSF grassroots program, called BNSF ON GUARD, which encourages employees to report suspicious activities, trespassers or individuals to BNSF's Resource Operations Call Center (ROCC).

The BNSF ON GUARD program, which started in 2003, has been successful, with more than 200 employees reporting suspicious activities since its inception. Em-

ployees have reported theft, vandalism, arson, attempted suicide, and other criminal violations, threats to safety, or unusual events on or near railway properties.

"Security is everyone's business. Because of heightened security status, Americans are being asked to be the 'eyes and ears' for law enforcement," says John Clark, BNSF assistant vice president, Resource Protection Solutions Team. "At BNSF, our police team continues to educate employees on work, personal and home security, as well as working to change employee behavior to increase awareness of security risks."

To report suspicious activity, CRS members and the public can call (800) 832-5452. The information will be taken by a BNSF representative and routed for appropriate response.

— *Special to The Cross-Tie*

NTSB: FAILURE TO ADHERE TO TRACK WARRANT CONTROL LED TO FATAL TEXAS WRECK

WASHINGTON — The probable cause of a May 19, 2004, fatal collision between two BNSF trains was caused by one crew's failure to adhere to an after-arrival track warrant requiring them to stay in one location until the northbound train arrived, the National Transportation Safety Board has determined.

Contributing to the accident was BNSF Railway Co.'s use of after-arrival track warrant authority in non-signalized territory, and the Federal Railroad Administration's failure to prohibit the use of such authority. Also contributing to the accident was the train dispatcher's informal communications regarding planned train meeting locations.

"This accident could have been prevented if the proper procedures and protocol had been followed flawed as those procedures are," said NTSB Acting Chairman Mark Rosenker. "It is imperative that crewmembers abide by the rules and regu-

lations that are in place."

On May 19, 2004, two BNSF Railway Company freight trains collided head on near Gunter, Texas. The southbound train (BNSF 6789), was traveling about 37 mph and the northbound train (BNSF 6351) was traveling about 40 mph when the collision occurred. The collision resulted in the derailment of 5 locomotives and 28 cars.

The southbound train engineer was killed, and the southbound train conductor sustained serious injuries. The crewmembers on the northbound train also sustained injuries.

The investigation revealed that there was another northbound train (BNSF 2917) that originally had main track authority to the north siding switch at Dorchester. Northbound 2917 and southbound 6789 passed each other at Dorchester; the northbound train subsequently was authorized to continue north.

Because southbound 6789 did not ver-

bally confirm the train identification of northbound 2917 by radio, the crew most likely assumed that northbound 2917 was the single train that the dispatcher had told them they would meet at Dorchester. After the trains passed, southbound 6789 was issued the track warrant authorizing it to proceed south from Dorchester after the arrival of northbound 6351.

The investigators found that at the time of the collision, northbound 6351 was proceeding at the allowed track speed with valid authority to travel north on the main track from milepost 678 to the south siding at Dorchester. The southbound 6789 train crew was required to note on their track warrant form the engine number, the time, and the location when they met northbound 6351.

As a result of the accident investigation, the National Transportation Safety Board issued various recommendations to the FRA, BNSF and the AAR.



NEWS FROM THE RAILS

QUICK HITS FROM AROUND THE FREIGHT RAILROAD INDUSTRY

ACC: Rail Monopolies a 'Golden Spike' Through American Competition

ARLINGTON, Va. — America needs reliable freight rail service to remain strong and create jobs, but the monopoly power of railroads and ineffective Surface Transportation Board (STB) oversight are hurting America's competitiveness, the American Chemistry Council (ACC) told the U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Surface Transportation and Merchant Marine June 21.

"The system is broken and Congress needs to fix it" by providing a clear signal to the STB, passing legislation to restore competition and ensuring that railroads are covered by antitrust statutes, John McIntosh, president of Chlor Alkali Products for Olin Corporation, said, testifying on behalf of the ACC.

Reliability is crucial for chemical companies — and other shippers — but without competition, monopoly rail carriers have no incentive to deliver efficient, predictable service. In the 1970s there were 63 major U.S. railroads. Today, there are just seven, and 90 percent of the rail traffic is handled by only five, ACC said.

Consequently, nearly two-thirds of ACC member company facilities are "captive customers, that is, customers with service from a single monopoly railroad." Because companies are captives, "we have no way to negotiate, beg or buy reliability," McIntosh said.

"Railroad monopolies are

driving a 'golden spike' through the heart of American competitiveness," McIntosh told the panel. Captive customers are "completely at the mercy of the carrier," and "free and fair market forces no longer ride American rails."

— PRNewswire

OLI to Media: Don't Romanticize Dangerous Activity

ALEXANDRIA, Va. — As the National Press Photographers Association opened its 60th Annual Photojournalism Summit, the non-profit highway-rail safety group Operation Lifesaver (OL) is urging news media to refrain from romanticizing activities along railroad tracks in photographs and articles.

In an effort to educate editors about the dangers they might overlook, OL has produced an educational four-color flyer that is being distributed to news, photo, and art editors across the country, as well as to advertising agencies and advertising media. It can be seen at <http://www.oli.org/>.

"Every year, more than two thousand people lose their lives or suffer serious injury while on or beside train tracks," said Gerri Hall, president of OL. "Unfortunately, media stories and photographs often romanticize the rails and railroad rights of way — inadvertently threatening the safety of not only their readers, viewers, and listeners, but also of their reporters and photographers."

Hall cited several recent examples of media accounts or

photographs of bicycles racing to beat a train across a grade crossing, people illegally "hopping" freight trains, couples romantically strolling along live railroad tracks, and individuals interviewed track-side or while standing on active railroad tracks.

— PRNewswire

UP: Regional Ops Realignment Focuses on Network Efficiency, Customer Service

OMAHA, Neb. — Union Pacific Railroad on June 23 announced a realignment of its regional operating organization. Effective July 1, the company will establish three operating regions and eliminate the Kansas City-based Central Region.

"This realignment of our regional management supports the train flows on the northern portion of the Union Pacific and the terminal interdependencies in the Gulf/North-South Corridor," said Dennis Duffy, UP executive vice president for operations.

"The Northern Region realignment will provide unified management of all Central Corridor routes to the east, as well as our two highest-volume eastern gateways — Chicago and St. Louis. The Southern Region alignment will result in the key terminals of North Little Rock, Pine Bluff and Houston being managed as an integrated operation.

"This is another step in simplifying our network and improving velocity, efficiency and customer service," Duffy said.

The Kansas City and St.

Louis service units will join the Northern Region, based in Omaha, and the North Little Rock and Wichita service units will join the Southern Region, based in Spring, Texas. These service units currently are part of the Central Region. The Western Region, based in Roseville, California, remains unchanged.

— PRNewswire-FirstCall

Buffalo & Pittsburgh Railroad Resumes Service After May 10 Wooden Bridge Fire

ROCHESTER, N.Y. — Rail service on the Buffalo & Pittsburgh Railroad resumed June 22 to three companies in Butler County, Pa., following a fire last month that destroyed a wooden railroad bridge on that line.

With the cooperation of local, state and federal officials and regulatory agencies to expedite the permitting process, the B&P was able to replace the damaged bridge with new track on culverts and earthen fill in about six weeks. The branch line runs from East Butler to Bruin and was out of service since the May 10 fire.

"Restoring rail service in a speedy and environmentally responsible manner to our customers was the main goal. These three customers, who are major employers in the area, depend on rail service for their businesses," said David J.

Collins, the B&P's President and General Manager. As thanks, the B&P made a donation to area fire officials.

— PRNewswire



NEWS FROM THE RAILS

QUICK HITS FROM AROUND THE PASSENGER RAILROAD INDUSTRY

Texas "Railroad Town" Completes Restoration Depot

MINEOLA, Texas — Amtrak passengers traveling to or from business, shopping, relaxation and recreation in the "Piney Woods" of East Texas will now have a station in Mineola that is simultaneously modern and historic.

A ceremony is set for Saturday, June 10, to rededicate the former Texas and Pacific Railroad station in the community about 80 miles east of Dallas.

From 1974 until 1996, the Amtrak Texas Eagle and its predecessor trains passed through the community of 5,000 without stopping. However, Mineola community leaders convinced Amtrak to make their city a stop, based on creative local marketing and a promise to renovate the train station.

The station being rededicated captures the look of the 1906 station that was remodeled and replaced almost exactly nearly 55 years ago, on June 20, 1951.

The city used grants from the Texas Department of Transportation (\$550,000), Mineola Development Inc. (\$195,820) and the Meredith Foundation (\$46,000 for a railroad museum) and raised additional funds (\$13,000) to support the project. The 50s-era "modernization" of the building was removed and the building's exterior recreated to the original 1906 design.

Site improvements included parking, signage, fencing, landscaping and bicycle racks. Interior restoration included ticket

windows, waiting area and a railroad artifacts museum.

The building, at 115 East Front St., is now part of what is known locally as the Mineola Transportation Plaza. The property is leased from the Union Pacific Railroad, a successor to the Texas and Pacific.

"The renovations are beautiful, the community is enthusiastic and at Amtrak we are grateful for all the work to make this improvement to our facilities," said Richard Phelps, General Superintendent of the Los Angeles-based Amtrak Southwest Division. "More than 4,000 passengers used the Mineola station last fiscal year and we expect this project will entice even more to ride the Texas Eagle."

— *Special to The Cross-Tie*

N.J. Transit Board Gives the Green Light to NYC-Atlantic City Express Rail Service

NEWARK, N.J. — The N.J. Transit Board of Directors on June 19 approved a three-year demonstration rail service between New York Penn Station and Atlantic City.

The service is under contract with the Casino Reinvestment Development Authority (CRDA) and Atlantic City Express Service, LLC (ACES), a partnership of Atlantic City hotels.

Under the agreement, CRDA and ACES will work with N.J. Transit to operate 18 express trains on weekends (Friday afternoon through Sunday night) between New York Penn Station and the Atlantic City Rail

Terminal. The trains will provide customers with a one-seat ride between New York and Atlantic City, with one or more stops in New Jersey, based on market demand. The service is expected to provide roundtrip transportation for approximately 1,100 people or 2,200 trips, each weekend.

As part of the agreement with ACES, N.J. Transit will purchase eight additional multi-level rail cars for the service and lease four diesel locomotives from Amtrak.

The terms also include full reimbursement for all capital equipment and operating costs by ACES and CRDA. ACES will work with N.J. Transit on schedule design, pricing, stopping patterns, reservations, on board services and marketing promotions.

Service is expected to begin in late 2007.

— *Special to The Cross-Tie*

Metrail Surpasses 200 Million Trips For First Time In any Single Fiscal Year

WASHINGTON — The Metrorail system on June 23 surpassed the 200 million trip mark, the first time in the transit authority's 30-year history that Metrorail has carried more than 200 million riders in a single fiscal year. The 200 millionth trip was taken during the morning rush hour.

More than 757,000 people rode Metrorail yesterday. While it was not a ridership record, it pushed the total Metrorail ridership for the current fiscal year (July 1, 2005 to June 30, 2006)

to 200,676,750 trips. In fiscal year 2005, Metrorail carried 195,186,512 passenger trips.

On June 13-16, Metrorail achieved four consecutive days of high ridership marks and seven days in June to see a high weekday ridership number.

Typical weekday ridership sees about 700,000 customers taking trips on Metrorail and 460,000 taking trips on Metrobus. Combined, Metro provides about 1.2 million weekday trips.

— *Special to The Cross-Tie*

Power Fluctuations on Northeast Corridor Cause Delays

WASHINGTON — Power was lost on one of the four Amtrak 138 kV transmission lines between Philadelphia and New York City on June 21, causing delays for both Amtrak and N.J. Transit.

At the same time as the outage — which was reported at 8:04 a.m. — a power substation at Kearny, N.J. experienced multiple tripped circuit breakers, which isolated New York City from the rest of the electric power system.

After safely removing all trains from the Penn Station tunnels under their own power, Amtrak held trains in the Newark-New York City area for about ten minutes. Amtrak load and power directors were able to connect New York City to the rest of the system, restore full power and normal operations at 8:33 a.m.

The incident is under investigation.

— *Special to The Cross-Tie*

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NEW FRA STUDY RE-AFFIRMS SAFETY OF PUSH-PULL PASSENGER RAIL OPERATIONS

WASHINGTON — A comprehensive federal study of accident data found that push-pull passenger rail service has an excellent safety record and that a train being pushed has virtually no greater likelihood of derailing after a highway-rail grade crossing collision than one with a locomotive in the lead, Federal Railroad Administrator Joseph H. Boardman announced.

The new analysis of grade crossing accidents found that from 1996 to 2005, only three push trains derailed out of 218 collisions and two pull trains derailed out of 290 collisions. This difference in the rate of derailment between push and pull modes is a statistically insignificant 0.69 percentage points. Including the intentional derailment of the push train

involved in last year's Glendale, Calif., Metrolink wreck — caused by a man contemplating suicide who parked his SUV on the tracks — the difference is still only a very small 1.14 percentage points, Boardman noted.

The report also determined that 27 fatalities occurred in push trains and 22 happened in pull trains during this same period. While passengers and crew members may be more vulnerable in a push train, the severity of the outcome in a high-energy event like Glendale is more likely to be influenced by chance than whether the locomotive is pushing or pulling the train, he added.

To prevent future passenger rail accidents, the FRA is conducting pilot projects with commuter railroads in Florida

and Virginia to identify potential collision hazards on their systems and developing reasonable ways to address them. Also, earlier this year the FRA crashed two full-scale trains in a successful demonstration of crash energy management (CEM) technology designed to protect passengers with safety features such as designated crush zones located away from passenger seating areas, Boardman said.

Further, the FRA recently unveiled a new rescue training simulator that rotates a full-sized commuter rail car up to 180 degrees to teach emergency responders how to save passengers from rollover train accidents. And, the FRA intends to propose additional passenger rail equipment safety standards.