

highlights

OFFICE OF SAFETY NEWS

MAC E. ROGERS
ASSOCIATE ADMINISTRATOR,
OFFICE OF SAFETY
202-426-0895
FEDERAL RAILROAD ADMINISTRATION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20591
VOLUME 1 NUMBER 15

June 15, 1973

NEW COMMITTEE FORMED...A new safety committee has been established within FRA to administer the various regulations being issued under the 1970 Safety Act. The Committee has been given the authority to: (1) provide an objective review of railroad safety regulations and standards; (2) advise the Administrator on the overall impact of railroad safety regulations and standards; and (3) review and make recommendations on proposed or revised regulations and standards. It is composed of the Deputy Administrator, Chief Counsel, and the Associate Administrators for Safety, Policy and Plans, Economics, and Research Development and Demonstrations.

...AND SAFETY BOARD REORGANIZED...The Railroad Safety Board has been reorganized under a new FRA order to redefine its area of authority, as well as to restructure the membership. The Order delegates authority to the Board to: (a) decide petitions for permanent or temporary waiver or exemption from any FRA railroad safety rule; (b) decide applications for approval of material modification of a signal system under 49 C.F.R. Part 235; (c) decide applications for relief from rules, standards and instructions for signal systems; (d) decide appeals of notices issued by FRA inspectors ordering locomotives out of service until restored to a serviceable condition by correction of specified defects; and (e) approve and publish railroad accident investigation reports. Associate Administrator Rogers has been re-designated as Chairman of the Board, and the Associate Administrator for Policy and Plans and the Chief Counsel are members.

ACCIDENT SUMMARY PUBLICATION IMMINENT...The Summary of Accidents Investigated for FY 1971-1972 was sent to the printer last week and should be ready for mailing within the next two weeks. The Summary reports investigation of 121 accidents during the period and initiation of five others which were preempted by the NTSB. The figures show that 46 of the accidents involved collisions, 64 derailments, and 11 rail-highway grade crossing accidents. Railroad property damage was \$16.4 million, 30 persons were killed, and 772 injured. Copies will be sent to all personnel as soon as they are available.

HEARING DELAYED...The public hearing on the Notice of Proposed Rule-making on Railroad Operating Rules and Practices which had been scheduled for June 15 has been postponed until August 15. The AAR and the Short Line Association asked for an extension in order to have more time to study the proposal.

TERMINAL SECURITY PROJECT IMPLEMENTED...A \$15,000 contract has been awarded to develop and implement a total security system for the Erie-Lackawanna Railroad piggy-back rail terminal at Jersey City. American Multi-Lert Corp. of Hershey, Pennsylvania, will augment the grant with funding of its own plus financing from the Erie-Lackawanna to develop such protection as: anti-door-tampering devices for high-risk cargo that send a warning signal simultaneously to local security guards as well as to police headquarters; closed-circuit TV employing reusable video tape to monitor vehicles and drivers leaving the facility; and electronic gates guarding four lanes, with a time card system to control and record entering and departing vehicles.

THANKS RECEIVED...A letter to Associate Administrator Rogers was received some time ago from R. Biddle Bishop in Region 7 expressing his appreciation for all the cards and messages he received wishing him a speedy recovery from a heart attack. It evidently got buried under the mounds of paper littering our desk and only just now surfaced. With apologies to Mr. Bishop, here is his letter:

Dear Mac:

May I take this informal means to express through you, to all the BRS office and field personnel my sincere thanks for the many cards and messages wishing me a speedy recovery from this so-called heart attack. It turned out that I suffered no heart damage, but tests disclosed advisability for open-heart surgery which permitted 3 artery by-passes, which, when fully healed will make me stronger than before with no future heart worries. Thanks again, and best regards to all.

R. Biddle Bishop

INFORMATION RETRIEVAL SYSTEM CONSIDERED...A newly developed information storage and retrieval system called INQUIRE, which its authors feel could be used to produce the revised Accident Bulletin, was demonstrated for OS personnel last week. Representatives from Infodata Systems, Inc. developers of the system, showed how INQUIRE could provide speedy access to any information in the file, and will not only respond to simple one-word-answer queries, but also produce tables and histograms. The data base consists of railroad accident data taken from the carriers' monthly reports. The system is now under evaluation.

AWARD RECEIVED...The Hazardous Materials Branch in Chicago was chosen as this year's winner of the Unit Citation which is presented annually by the Chicago Field Coordination Group. The award is given to acknowledge achievement and to encourage outstanding public service. Hazardous Materials Inspector in the Chicago office, E. W. Pritchard, accepted the citation on behalf of all those who worked on hazardous materials projects throughout the year.

ROAD TRAVEL UP...Recent Federal Highway Administration statistics indicate that travel on America's highways increased nearly 25 percent during the past four years. A preliminary estimate of travel for 1972 is 1,250 billion vehicle miles, a 5.4 percent increase over the 1,186 billion reported for 1971. Just four years ago, in 1968, highway travel topped the one trillion mile mark for the first time-- at 1,016 billion miles.