

# highlights

OFFICE OF SAFETY NEWS

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ADMINISTRATOR TESTIFIES ON BUDGET... Appropriations hearings were held on FRA's budget late last month and Administrator Ingram told the Congressional Committee that "...many of the problems affecting rail transportation have reached a very critical stage. The overall, future viability of the industry is being questioned; we again have a very bothersome freight car shortage; and the Department's recent report to the Congress on the Northeastern Railroad problem pinpointed the problems of bankrupt carriers in this important region." He told the Committee that the FRA budget request for Fiscal Year 1974 "reflects an emphasis on current problems, and a commitment to meet future needs through government sponsored research development and demonstration programs." He also said there would be a continuing emphasis given to safety programs and research, and noted that "The range of financial, operating and regulatory problems pressing the railroads makes it clear that rail transportation is the mode that will demand the most attention in the next ten years. Recent events emphasize the need for immediate attention to the shorter range economic problems impacting on rail transportation" he said. "This does not mean that long range goals should be forsaken. On the contrary, the future capability of existing ground transportation systems to meet the demand of the 1980's and 1990's will require major advances in our present day systems and technology."

ADVISORY COMMITTEE PROPOSED... A request has been made to the Office of Management and Budget to issue a charter for the establishment of an Advisory Committee on Railroad Operating Rules in accordance with the Federal Advisory Committee Act of 1972. The Committee, which through its affiliations would be an expert working group with an intimate knowledge of operating rules, would be comprised of up to 12 persons representing the railroad industry, labor unions, various state regulatory agencies, and representatives of FRA. In the request to OMB it was noted that "The FRA has neither the manpower capability nor the intimate knowledge of all existing railroad operating rules, practices, and conditions considered necessary for the timely development of uniform railroad operating rules. Because of this deficiency and the necessity of exercising extreme care in the formulation of standardized

operating rules applicable to operating situations which vary from road to road, the FRA desires the cooperation of an Advisory Committee in developing the proposed rules." If the request is granted, the Committee will be formed immediately and will meet at least once a month over a 12-month period.

BOND CAMPAIGN UNDERWAY...The 1973 Savings Bond Campaign has begun and will be conducted through the month of May. In setting off the campaign, Secretary Brinegar noted that "Bonds are risk-free, loss and theft proof, and can be quickly converted to cash to meet emergencies." He said that not only would each individual be helping himself to attain his personal goals, but "...most important, you will be helping our country."

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS PROGRAM EMPHASIZED...Associate Administrator Rogers has asked all Regional Directors to see that more emphasis is placed on assuring full compliance with the Office of Safety's Hazardous Materials Safety Program. He said that in order to promote safety in the transportation of explosives and other dangerous commodities, and to assure that carriers are adhering to DOT's regulations, "it is essential that all Safety Inspectors, and their respective Supervisors devote approximately 15 percent of their total effort to (the) Program."

UTLX TANK CAR MODIFIED...One of the UTLX tank cars which was withdrawn from service under Emergency Order Number 2 has been modified with a new stub sill arrangement and is now undergoing testing. Thus far, the modified car has received a Brittle Lacquer Squeeze Test to determine the areas of greatest stress, and an instrumented squeeze test to determine the actual stress levels in the modified structure. Subsequent impact tests over the road will be made to determine the ability of the modified tank car to perform in a service environment.

CHIEF COUNSEL'S OFFICE ACTIVITIES...U.S. vs. Seaboard Coast Line Railroad Company, Middle District of Florida, Tampa Division. This case involved a challenge to the COT&S Regulation (49 CFR 232.17(b)), which incorporates by reference Rule 60 of the AAR's Interchange Rules. The Court, Judge Ben Krentzman, agreed the regulations are not vague, ambiguous or unreasonable; COT&S attention must be provided after the expiration of 48 months. The defendant has appealed the lower court's decision to the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit. The appeal is pending.