



U.S. Department of
Transportation

News:

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs
Washington, D.C. 20590

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Thursday, March 2, 1995

FRA 01-95
Contact: David A Bolger
Tel.: (202) 366-0881

**FRA PROPOSES HIGHWAY-RAIL
GRADE CROSSING RULE**

Federal Railroad Administrator Jolene M. Molitoris today announced a proposed rule on the selection and installation for highway-rail grade crossing warning systems across the nation.

The proposal is part of the U.S. Department of Transportation's Highway-Rail Grade Crossing Action Plan initiative, announced in June 1994, to reduce the number of crossing and trespasser accidents and fatalities. During 1993, 1,149 people died in such accidents, accounting for nearly 90 percent of fatalities in railroading.

Administrator Molitoris commented, "This rule will assist state and local governments by ensuring that the priorities they set are carried out. It will also help railroads make better use of their resources for crossing improvements. At the same time, we will ensure these projects yield the highest safety return for the general public and railroad employees."

The proposed rule would require railroads to provide state highway authorities with operating information such as the number and speed of trains that go through any public crossings and future plans for increases in rail traffic. Currently, most railroads already do a good job of volunteering this information to the states. This information would help states better plan and invest in transportation corridor improvements.

The rule would also prohibit railroads from unilaterally selecting and installing warning systems at public highway-rail crossings outside of the state planning and prioritization process.

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Molitoris added, "Tragically, almost every 90 minutes in the United States there is someone killed in a car-train collision. Many of these accidents occur because motorists don't understand or ignore warning signs and signals."

In an effort to reduce these preventable incidents, this month, Transportation Secretary Federico Pena is unveiling a nationwide, multimedia, highway-rail crossing safety campaign entitled **Always Expect a Train**. The campaign will focus on educating the public about the tragic consequences of ignoring highway-rail signals and trespassing on rail rights-of-way.

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U.S. Department
of Transportation

**Federal Railroad
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400 Seventh St., S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20590

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**U.S. Department of
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News:

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs
Washington, D.C. 20590

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
Tuesday, May 2, 1995

FRA 06-95
Contact: David A. Bolger
Tel: (202) 366-0881

FRA SEEKS PUBLIC COMMENT ON HIGH-SPEED RAIL AT ALBANY MEETING

Albany, N.Y. -- High-speed rail and magnetic levitation trains (maglev) could greatly benefit people in the state of New York, members of the public told Federal Railroad Administrator Jolene M. Molitoris and New York State Transportation Commissioner John B. Daly today at a meeting in Albany.

The meeting was sponsored by the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) and the New York Department of Transportation to seek input into a national high-speed ground transportation policy being developed by the FRA. The policy, required by Congress, will facilitate state, local and regional high-speed ground transportation efforts.

Today's meeting in Albany was the first of seven meetings being held around the United States. FRA officials said a draft of the policy would be published later this year.

At the meeting, Commissioner Daly presented a description of New York State's high-speed rail plan, which includes upgrading current Amtrak service between New York and Buffalo to 125 m.p.h. Molitoris and Daly committed to work together to further this plan and those of other states.

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"This meeting demonstrates that high-speed rail and maglev have strong support from the people of New York and the people of the northeast. FRA will work closely with New York State to assist their high-speed efforts," Molitoris said.

"The people of New York State understand that high-speed ground transportation is an idea whose time has come, and we look forward to working with the FRA and with other regions to provide the traveling public with high-speed travel options," Daly said.

Other participants in today's meeting included New York State Assemblywoman Patricia McGee, ranking minority member of the Assembly Transportation Committee; New York State Assemblyman Sam Hoyt, co-chair of the Assembly Task Force on High Speed Rail; and representatives of the Empire State Passengers Association, a public interest group.

Discussions at the meeting focused on four major areas: the role of high-speed ground transportation in our nation's transportation infrastructure; planning; funding; and implementing high-speed ground transportation.

In addition to the public forum, FRA welcomes written comments on the policy. These should be sent to: Jolene M. Molitoris, Administrator, Federal Railroad Administration, HSGT Policy, Room 8206, 400 Seventh Street, S.W. Washington, D.C. 20590.

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U.S. Department of
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News:

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs
Washington, D.C. 20590

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Thursday, May 4, 1995

FRA 07-95
Contact: David A. Bolger
Tel.: (202) 366-0881

OPERATION RESPOND PROMOTES SAFER HAZMAT ACCIDENT RESPONSE

The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) announced today the incorporation of Operation Respond, an organization developed to respond to hazardous material accidents involving trains. In the near future, the program will be expanded to include trucks carrying hazardous materials.

The new corporation, chartered as a not-for-profit educational institute will focus on developing and disseminating software, information and training for local fire, medical and police emergency personnel for use in responding to multimodal hazardous material accidents. As a not-for-profit corporation, Operation Respond will now be eligible to receive direct public and private financial assistance. This will include grants from the U.S. Department of Transportation for implementation of a national computerized emergency information network.

Federal Railroad Administrator Jolene M. Molitoris said, "With strong support from Transportation Secretary Peña, the department and the Houston railroads developed Operation Respond to quickly and accurately answer the most crucial question facing first responders at a rail accident -- are there any hazardous materials on the train. We wanted to see if the railroads' existing computer systems for tracking car contents could be linked directly to emergency dispatchers and responders to provide lifesaving information as fast as possible."

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Operation Respond was started as a partnership between the Houston area railroads, the DOT's Federal Railroad, Federal Highway, and Research and Special Programs Administrations, chemical manufacturers, and the Houston police and fire departments. The combined goal is to improve safety through the merging of existing information systems and computer software for use in identifying the contents of multimodal hazardous material shipments so in the event of an accident, emergency crews will be able to respond quickly and accurately.

In addition to Houston, the program is also in use in Freeport and Laredo, Texas, and is planned for use in Baton Rouge and New Orleans, La., and Victoria, Texas. During the coming months, the department will work with Operation Respond and the governments of Canada and Mexico to extend the project across U.S. borders, in the spirit of the North American Free Trade Agreement.

Federal Railroad Administrator Jolene M. Molitoris added, "Ironically, it's because hazardous rail shipments arrive nearly 100 percent of the time incident-free that first responders need this kind of help - police officers or firefighters often may go through most of their careers without experiencing a rail accident. Operation Respond allows them to quickly get to the job they're trained for - helping people."

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U.S. Department
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**Federal Railroad
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U.S. Department of
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News:

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs
Washington, D.C. 20590

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Friday, May 5, 1995

FRA 08-95
Contact: David A. Bolger
Tel: (202) 366-0881

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**FRA SEEKS PUBLIC COMMENT
ON HIGH-SPEED RAIL OPTIONS
FOR VIRGINIA AND NORTH CAROLINA**

Richmond, Va. -- High-Speed ground transportation could greatly benefit people in the Virginia and North Carolina region, members of the public told Federal Railroad Deputy Administrator Donald M. Itzkoff, Virginia Secretary of Transportation Robert Martinez and North Carolina Deputy Secretary of Transportation David King at a meeting in Richmond last night.

The meeting was sponsored by the U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation, and the North Carolina Department of Transportation, to seek input into a national high-speed ground transportation policy being developed by the FRA. The policy, required by Congress, will facilitate state, local and regional high-speed ground transportation efforts.

Last night's meeting in Richmond was the second of seven meetings being held around the United States. FRA officials said a draft of the policy would be published later this summer.

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At the meeting, Martinez and King presented Virginia and North Carolina high-speed rail plans. Itzkoff committed to work with officials in both states to further high-speed ground transportation in the region.

"This meeting demonstrates that high-speed ground transportation has strong support from the people of the southeast. FRA will work closely with Virginia and North Carolina to assist their high-speed efforts," Itzkoff said.

"In Virginia, we view high-speed rail as a logical means of extension for Amtrak's Northeast Corridor into Richmond and on to Newport News. Accordingly, we are identifying the demand for, and costs of, such a system. We also plan to make track improvements to allow safe travel of trains at higher speeds on this key rail corridor," added Martinez.

"North Carolinians are demanding options for traveling to the northeast and improved mobility in the fast-growing Piedmont region. We believe that high-speed rail, in concert with improved highways and air service, can meet both of these requirements," said King.

Discussions at the meeting focused on four major areas: the role of high-speed ground transportation in our nation's transportation infrastructure; planning; funding; and implementing high-speed ground transportation.

In addition to the public forum, FRA welcomes written comments on the policy. These should be sent to: Jolene M. Molitoris, Administrator, Federal Railroad Administration, HSGT Policy, Room 8206, 400 Seventh Street, S.W. Washington, D.C. 20590.

The cities and dates for the next high-speed ground transportation meetings are as follows: Boston, May 8; Portland, Ore., May 15; Sacramento, Calif., May 17; Orlando, Fla., May 25; and Chicago, June 1.

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U.S. Department of
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News:

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs
Washington, D.C. 20590

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, May 12, 1995

FRA 09-95

Contact: John Fitzpatrick

Tel.: (202) 366-0881

**FRA AND FHWA PRAISE
SAFETY EFFORTS TO CONSOLIDATE
COLORADO HIGHWAY -RAIL GRADE CROSSINGS**

FORT COLLINS, CO –Federal Railroad Administrator (FRA) Jolene M. Molitoris and Federal Highway Administrator (FHWA) Rodney E. Slater today said the innovative decision by state and local transportation planners to consolidate railroad tracks and close excess grade crossings would make Fort Collins a safer place to live and was in keeping with the spirit of the recommendations from Transportation Secretary Federico Peña's Rail Safety Summit, held Sept. 30, 1994.

Administrator Slater said, "Safety is the Clinton administration's highest priority and Secretary Peña has set a goal of closing the most dangerous 25 percent of this country's grade crossings, including half of the nearly 4,500 crossings of the National Highway System (NHS). This is critical since the NHS will carry more than 40 percent of all highway traffic."

Though grade crossing-crashes and fatalities have been reduced greatly over the past 20 years, the trend has leveled off. In 1994, there were 4,921 crashes, killing 610 people and injuring 1,923 others. Colorado suffered 52 crashes, killing 13 and injuring 12 motorists in 1994.

"As our nation's economy grows, so too do our railroads. We are even seeing more freight trains operating on previously seldom-used lines where motorists were not accustomed to heavy train traffic," said Administrator Molitoris. She noted that motorists often disregard warning devices or fail to understand that drivers must look, listen and yield at all crossings. "At all crossings, drivers should obey lights and gates and always expect a train."

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Administrator Slater called the Fort Collins project "a model for hundreds of other communities across the nation," and both administrators praised the multi-government, public-private commitment of \$2.75 million that will pay for the track and roadway improvements. Two railroads, Union Pacific and Burlington Northern, will pay \$800,000 toward the project.

Part of the money will be used to eliminate a busy switching track used by trains that now blocks the city's main thoroughfare for more than 60 minutes each day. The track, as well as a small yard serving a new Anheuser-Busch brewery, will be moved to less congested sites outside the immediate downtown area. The remainder of the funds will be used to eliminate 13 other crossings and to pay for gates, flashing lights and bells at five remaining crossings where vehicular traffic will be concentrated.

Funding and planning input came from FHWA, the Colorado Department of Transportation, the city of Fort Collins and the two railroads serving the community, Union Pacific and Burlington Northern. Molitoris said FRA and FHWA broke bureaucratic barriers to bring all participants to the table. She urged officials across America to use the U.S. Department of Transportation as a resource to address issues of highway-rail grade crossing safety and traffic congestion caused by train-auto conflicts. She noted that FRA distributed a *Guide to Crossing Consolidation and Closure* which is a key resource for local officials who want to consolidate crossings to enhance safety in their communities.

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U.S. Department
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**Federal Railroad
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U.S. Department of
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News:

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs
Washington, D.C. 20590

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Tuesday, May 16, 1995

FRA 10-95

Contact: David Bolger

Tel: (202) 366-0881

**FRA SEEKS PUBLIC COMMENT
ON HIGH SPEED RAIL OPTIONS
FOR OREGON AND WASHINGTON**

Portland, Ore. -- High-Speed ground transportation could greatly benefit people in the Oregon, Washington and Vancouver, British Columbia region, members of the public told Federal Railroad Deputy Administrator Donald M. Itzkoff, Oregon Secretary of Transportation Donald Forbes and Washington Department of Transportation Director of Public Transportation and Rail James Slakey at a meeting in Portland last night.

The meeting was sponsored by the U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), the Oregon Department of Transportation, and the Washington Department of Transportation to seek input into a national high-speed ground transportation policy being developed by the FRA. The policy, required by Congress, will facilitate state, local and regional high-speed ground transportation efforts.

Last night's meeting in Portland was the fourth of seven meetings being held across the United States. FRA officials said a draft policy would be published later this summer.

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At the meeting, Forbes and Slakey presented Oregon and Washington high-speed rail plans. Itzkoff committed to work with officials in both states to further high speed ground transportation in the region.

"This meeting demonstrates that high-speed ground transportation has strong support from the people of the northwest. FRA will work closely with Oregon and Washington to assist their high speed efforts," Itzkoff said.

"Oregonians will benefit from high-speed rail as the Pacific northwest continues to grow rapidly. We look forward to working with FRA and with other regions to provide the traveling public with high-speed travel options," added Forbes.

"Washington State is committed to the incremental development of high-speed rail in the Pacific Northwest rail corridor. Together with our public and private partners, as well as FRA, we are aggressively upgrading rail infrastructure and equipment to safely provide frequent, reliable and competitive service," said Slakey.

Discussions at the meeting focused on four major areas: the role of high-speed ground transportation in our nation's transportation infrastructure; planning; funding; and implementing high-speed ground transportation.

In addition to the public forum, FRA welcomes written comments on the policy. These should be sent to Jolene M. Molitoris, Administrator, Federal Railroad Administration, Attn: HSGT Policy, Room 8206, 400 Seventh Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20590.

The cities and dates for the next high speed ground transportation meetings are as follows: Sacramento, Calif., May 17; Orlando, Fla., May 25; and Chicago, June 1.

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U.S. Department of
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13832

News:

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs
Washington, D.C. 20590

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Wednesday, May 17, 1995

FRA 11-95
Contact: John F. Fitzpatrick
Tel.: (202) 366-0881

**FRA ANNOUNCES AGREEMENT ON
FIRST NEGOTIATED RULEMAKING
FOR THE PROTECTION OF ROADWAY WORKERS**

Railroad employees who work on or near the tracks will be safer as a result of an agreement signed by the Safety Standards Negotiated Rulemaking Advisory Committee. The agreement will form the basis for the Federal Railroad Administration's (FRA) first-ever negotiated rulemaking.

In a signing ceremony held today, Transportation Secretary Federico Peña and Federal Railroad Administrator Jolene Molitoris praised the work of the committee which consists of the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) and rail management and labor.

The committee reached consensus on 11 specific and nine general recommendations in the report that prescribes requirements to develop specific rules and procedures for roadway workers while working, defines training requirements and stipulates when trains are restricted from entering areas where workers are in danger of being struck while on or near railroad tracks.

Peña said, "Through negotiated rulemaking, the Clinton Administration is changing the way government conducts business. We have opened our doors to work with transportation leaders in both labor and management to ensure America has the safest, most efficient transportation system in the world."

"This is one of the proudest moments in my tenure as administrator," Molitoris said. Not only is this the basis for the first-ever negotiated rulemaking in the history of the FRA, but it shows how government, labor and management can achieve positive results through partnerships. Together, we have taken a quantum leap to change our traditional relationships -- the result will be the difference between life and death for roadway workers in the field."

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Chuck Dettman, Executive Vice-President of Operations Research and Technology for the Association of American Railroads added, "This is a real accomplishment for the railroad industry, based on joint labor-management analysis of FRA data. We developed the basis for a federal rule in a non-adversarial environment that should reduce casualties and be implemented in partnership with labor and the FRA."

Mac Fleming, President of the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Workers commented, "I am encouraged that this report and the pending rule, will protect roadway workers from all crafts, and serve to reduce injuries and tragic fatalities such as the 46 that have occurred since 1986."

Noting that the establishment of safety regulations to protect railroad workers from being struck by moving equipment has long been one of rail labor's most important goals, Brotherhood of Railroad Signalman Dan Pickett said, "This shows what can be achieved when rail labor and management and the federal government join together to improve safety on our nation's railroads."

Traditionally, rulemakings are developed within FRA then sent to the Federal Register for public comment prior to becoming final. This is FRA's first effort to negotiate a rule in an open and formal process designed to gain input for a rule prior to publishing it in the Federal Register. The benefit of a negotiated rule is often a faster process with diverse experts providing the federal government with input at the beginning of the process as opposed to near the end.

With assistance from the Federal Mediation and Conciliatory Service, the Advisory Committee has been meeting since January 1995 and has held seven intense and productive meetings to reach this consensus. They developed the basis for a proposed rule for the protection of railroad employees who work on or adjacent to tracks and who face the risk of injury from moving trains and equipment. The sessions have been open to the public and the FRA believes the negotiated rulemaking process will lead to a more effective safety program on the nation's railroads.

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**U.S. Department of
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News:

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs
Washington, D.C. 20590

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Thursday, May 18, 1995

FRA 12-95

Contact: David A. Bolger

Tel: (202) 366-0881

**FRA SEEKS PUBLIC COMMENT
ON HIGH-SPEED RAIL OPTIONS
FOR CALIFORNIA**

Sacramento, Calif. -- High-Speed ground transportation could greatly benefit people in California and the west coast, members of the public told Federal Railroad Deputy Administrator Donald M. Itzkoff, and California Intercity High-Speed Rail Commission Vice Chair Edward G. Jordan last night at a meeting in Sacramento.

The meeting was sponsored by the U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) and the California Department of Transportation to seek input into a national high-speed ground transportation policy being developed by the FRA. The policy, required by Congress, will facilitate state, local and regional high-speed ground transportation efforts.

Last night's meeting in Sacramento was the fifth of seven meetings being held across the United States. FRA officials said a draft policy would be published later this year.

At the meeting, Jordan presented a description of California's high-speed rail plans. Itzkoff committed to work with California officials to further high-speed ground transportation efforts across the state.

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"This meeting demonstrates that high-speed ground transportation has strong support from the people of California. We will work closely with California to assist their high-speed efforts," Itzkoff said.

"Californians demand and require the maximum feasible options for transportation in the state. The governor and legislature have responded by establishing a commission to study California's high-speed rail options. The state is also eager to work with the Federal Government to promote high-speed rail," Jordan said.

Discussions at the meeting focused on four major areas: the role of high-speed ground transportation in our nation's transportation infrastructure; planning; funding; and implementing high-speed ground transportation.

In addition to the public forum, FRA welcomes written comments on the policy. These should be sent to Jolene M. Molitoris, Administrator, Federal Railroad Administration, Attn: HSGT Policy, Room 8206, 400 Seventh Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20590.

To date, public meetings have been held in Albany, N.Y. (May 2), Richmond, Va. (May 4), Boston (May 8), and Portland, Ore. (May 15.) Additional meetings are scheduled for Orlando, Fla. (May 25) and Chicago (June 1).

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U.S. Department
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**Federal Railroad
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U.S. Department of
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News:

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs
Washington, D.C. 20590

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Thursday, May 25, 1995

FRA 13-95

Contact: David A. Bolger

Tel: (202) 366-0881

**U.S. Railroads Have
Safest Year Ever, Announces Peña**

Railroad accidents and employee injuries and fatalities for 1994 were the lowest ever recorded, announced Transportation Secretary Federico Peña today at the Harriman Awards, the annual industry gathering to celebrate safety among railroads and rail employees

"Last year was a banner year for U.S. railroads and their employees. In 1994, when shipments by rail were booming, it is a tribute to the men and women of rail labor that the past year was also the safest year in history on our nation's railroads. With the Clinton Administration's strong commitment to safety, we have been working with partnerships among rail management and labor, suppliers and shippers to foster increased safety, and I am hopeful 1995 will bear continued successes for both rail growth and safety," said Peña.

The FRA's preliminary data for 1994 indicate that the number of railroad accidents decreased from 2,611 to 2,504, a decline of 4.10 percent. The train accident rate (accidents per million train miles) decreased by 11.6 percent, to 3.8 from 4.3 in 1993.

Employee-on-duty injuries comprise about 77 percent of the total rail-related injuries each year. In 1994 there were 13,080 injuries, a decrease of 15.1 percent compared to 15,410 on-duty injuries in 1993. The employee injury rate (injuries sustained per 200,000 employee hours worked) decreased to 5.1 in 1994 from 5.9 in 1993, a decline of 13.6 percent, the lowest in rail history.

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In 1994, there was also a significant reduction in employee-on-duty fatalities. Data for the past year indicates there were 31 fatalities, a decrease of 34 percent from 47 employee fatalities in 1993. While a single fatality is one too many, this represents the lowest number of employee fatalities ever recorded in a single year.

There were five passenger fatalities in 1994, compared to 58 in 1993. Note: Of the 58 passenger deaths in 1993, 42 were passengers on Amtrak's Sunset Limited on Sept. 23. A river barge struck and disabled a railroad bridge just prior to the Sunset Limited arrival, causing the train to derail. This was the worst passenger rail accident in Amtrak history. In addition, included in 1994 statistics were six passengers on the Long Island Railroad who were victims of a shooting.

Crashes at highway-rail crossings and pedestrian trespassing incidents continue to be the leading cause of rail-related deaths. Combined they account for more than 90 percent of all rail-related deaths, far surpassing passenger or employee fatalities. In 1994, crashes at highway-rail crossings increased by 1.8 percent from 4,892 in 1993 to 4,979 in 1994. There were 615 fatalities and 1,962 injuries in the 1994 crashes.

In 1994 there were 529 trespassing deaths and 1,586 injuries. This represents a 1.2 percent increase and a 2.8 percent decrease respectively, compared to 523 trespassing deaths and 1,632 injuries in 1993.

In an effort to reduce these preventable and tragic accidents, Secretary Peña launched a public information campaign this past year entitled *Always Expect A Train*. The goal of the multimedia campaign is to educate the American public about the dangers at highway-rail crossings and to inform them to never trespass on railroad property.

"Highway-rail crashes and trespasser incidents continue to be the leading cause of death in the rail industry. This loss of life is all the more tragic since these incidents are preventable. We are working with the rail industry on a number of fronts to end highway-rail and trespassing incidents, but we cannot do it alone. People need to take individual responsibility -- always slow down, look and listen at highway-rail crossings. Never drive around lowered gates or through blinking lights. Never walk on railroad tracks. When at a crossing or near the tracks, always expect a train. If followed, these simple procedures will do more to save lives than anything else we can do," added Peña.

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A video news release on this topic will be available via satellite today, May 25, 1995 :
at 2:00 - 2:30 p.m. EDT, Galaxy 3 Transponder 7, Audio 6.2 & 6.8



U.S. Department of
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News:

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs
Washington, D.C. 20590

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Friday, May 26, 1995

FRA 14-95

Contact: David A. Bolger

Tel: (202) 366-0881

**FRA SEEKS PUBLIC COMMENT
ON HIGH-SPEED RAIL OPTIONS
FOR FLORIDA**

Orlando, Fla. -- High-speed ground transportation could greatly benefit people in Florida and the South, members of the public told Federal Railroad Deputy Administrator Donald M. Itzkoff and Florida Department of Transportation Public Transportation Administrator Nick Serianni last night at a meeting in Orlando.

The meeting was sponsored by the U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) and the Florida Department of Transportation to seek input into a national high-speed ground transportation policy being developed by the FRA. The policy, required by Congress, will facilitate state, local and regional high-speed ground transportation efforts.

Last night's meeting in Orlando was the sixth of seven meetings being held across the United States. FRA officials said a draft policy would be published later this year.

At the meeting, Serianni presented a description of Florida's high-speed rail plans. Itzkoff committed to work with Florida officials to further high-speed ground transportation efforts across the state.

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"This meeting demonstrates that high-speed ground transportation has strong support from the people of Florida. We will work closely with Florida to assist their high-speed efforts," Itzkoff said.

"We will never build enough highways to solve all of our transportation problems. Florida's future intercity rail network will provide Florida's citizens and visitors with a viable alternative to automobile and air travel. The department is confident that Florida's residents and visitors will in the future enjoy high quality rail passenger service rivaling the finest in the world," Serianni said.

Discussions at the meeting focused on four major areas: the role of high-speed ground transportation in our nation's transportation infrastructure; planning; funding; and implementing high-speed ground transportation.

In addition to the public forum, FRA welcomes written comments on the policy. These should be sent to Jolene M. Molitoris, Administrator, Federal Railroad Administration, Attn: HSGT Policy, Room 8206, 400 Seventh Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20590.

To date, public meetings have been held in Albany, N.Y. (May 2), Richmond, Va. (May 4), Boston (May 8), Portland, Ore. (May 15), and Sacramento, Calif. (May 17). The last meeting is scheduled for Chicago (June 1).

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U.S. Department of
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News:

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs
Washington, D.C. 20590

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Thursday, June 1, 1995

FRA 15-95
Contact: David Bolger
John F. Fitzpatrick
Tel.: (202) 366-0881

**Motorists Suffer 84 Percent More Crashes
At Highway-Rail Crossings Where Train Whistles
Are Banned, According to FRA Report**

The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) today released a report which shows that at highway-rail crossings where train whistles are banned, the likelihood of highway-rail crashes is 84 percent greater than at similar crossings where train horns are routinely sounded.

Federal Railroad Administrator Jolene M. Molitoris commented, "The report clearly shows that train horns significantly reduce the likelihood of highway-rail crashes. Too often, the choice comes down to hearing the whistle of a train or potentially the siren of an ambulance. These horns are saving lives."

Molitoris added, "We recognize that a train horn can be a nuisance to those living near railroad tracks and we will work with local communities to identify ways to maintain safety while preserving the quality of life near crossings."

In 1994, preliminary FRA statistics show there were 4,921 highway-rail crashes, killing 610 motorists and seriously injuring 1,923 others. In addition to motorist warning devices such as signs, lights, bells or gates at crossings, trains traditionally sound horns to provide an additional warning of a train's approach.

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There are approximately 168,000 public highway-rail crossings in the United States and railroads regularly sound train whistles at most of these crossings. However, at nearly 2,100 crossings, local communities have banned train whistles to limit excessive noise in residential or other designated areas.

In the *Swift Rail Development Act of 1994*, Congress directed FRA to issue a rule mandating the use of train horns at all public crossings by 1996. The FRA report, entitled, "Nationwide Study of Train Whistle Bans," provides the results of a study of whistle bans and related crossing-accident data which will assist FRA in developing the required regulation.

Rules required by the Swift Rail Development Act will preempt local ordinances that silence train whistles, except where other safety measures are shown to provide the same level of safety. FRA previously identified alternatives, which if adopted, might maintain safety at crossings without requiring train horns to be sounded. Prior to issuing a notice of proposed rulemaking, FRA will actively work with affected communities regarding these and other potential options that will satisfy the requirements called for in the Act.

Copies of the "National Study of Train Whistle Bans," and related information, may be obtained by contacting the FRA's Office of Public Affairs at (202) 366-0881.

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U.S. Department of
Transportation

News:

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs
Washington, D.C. 20590

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Friday, June 2, 1995

FRA 16-95
Contact: John F. Fitzpatrick
Telephone: (202) 366-0881

**FRA SEEKS PUBLIC COMMENT
ON HIGH-SPEED RAIL AT CHICAGO MEETING**

Chicago -- High-speed rail and magnetic levitation trains (maglev) could greatly benefit people in the Midwest, members of the public told Federal Railroad Deputy Administrator Donald M. Itzkoff, Illinois Transportation Secretary Kirk Brown, Wisconsin Transportation Secretary Charles H. Thompson, and Michigan Transportation Deputy Director Phil Kazmierski and at a meeting here last night.

"The Clinton Administration and Transportation Secretary Federico Peña have a strong commitment to high-speed rail," Itzkoff said. "This meeting demonstrates that high-speed ground transportation has strong support from the people of Illinois, Michigan, and Wisconsin. FRA will work closely with them to assist their high-speed efforts."

The meeting was sponsored by the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) and the Illinois Department of Transportation to seek input into a national high-speed ground transportation policy being developed by the FRA. The policy, required by Congress, will facilitate state, local and regional high-speed ground transportation efforts.

Today's meeting in Chicago was the last of seven meetings being held around the United States. FRA officials said a draft of the policy would be published later this year.

At the meeting, Secretary Kirk along with Deputy Director Kazmierski and Secretary Thompson presented a description of their state's high-speed rail plans. Itzkoff committed to work with them to further high-speed ground transportation in the area.

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"The state's plan for developing high-speed rail service between Chicago and St. Louis is realistic. It builds on existing infrastructure and involves the private sector. This is key in today's environment. With the focus on reducing government spending, this project has a good chance of moving forward," Kirk said.

He continued, "The state's incremental approach has been used successfully in the Northeast Corridor and in European countries. Track and signal improvements in the Chicago-St. Louis corridor that have already been made and those under way are of benefit not only to future high speed rail service but also to current Amtrak rail passenger and rail freight service."

Kazmierski said, "The Michigan Department of Transportation is very excited to see the Federal Railroad Administration undertaking these high-speed ground transportation outreach meetings. They will help formulate the national policy for high speed intercity rail passenger transportation, helping to make it the mode of choice of the twenty-first century and beyond."

Thompson said, "It's important that we start now to take a serious look at whether high-speed rail can become a viable element of our transportation system in the 21st century. Over the next several years, we need to very carefully examine what scope of service is feasible, which technology to pursue, the corridors to serve, the ridership to expect and what level of investment is appropriate.

Thompson emphasized, "We also have to have some assurance that there will be a strong, long-term federal commitment -- both in terms of leadership and funding -- if we want to make high-speed rail a reality."

Amtrak President Thomas M. Downs also spoke at the meeting, saying that the National Railroad Passenger Corporation intends to be a leader in developing high-speed rail technologies and in operating the nation's high-speed rail systems. "We are the most experienced in the country in this area and, in many ways, the extent of our involvement in high-speed rail transportation will determine our success in the future," Downs said.

Discussions at the meeting focused on four major areas: the role of high-speed ground transportation in our nation's transportation infrastructure; planning; funding; and implementing high-speed ground transportation.

In addition to the public forum, FRA welcomes written comments on the policy. These should be sent to: Jolene M. Molitoris, Administrator, Federal Railroad Administration, HSGT Policy, Room 8206, 400 Seventh Street, S.W. Washington, D.C. 20590.

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U.S. Department of
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News:

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Washington, D.C. 20590

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Friday, July 21, 1995

FRA 18-95
Contact: David A Bolger
Tel.: (202) 366-0881

DOT PARTNERS WITH DOD TO DEVELOP HIGH-SPEED RAIL TECHNOLOGY

The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) and the Advanced Research Projects Agency (ARPA) of the Department of Defense announced today a joint award of \$2.9 million to the University of Texas Center for Electromechanics to develop an advanced locomotive propulsion system which will double the acceleration of next generation high-speed passenger train locomotives.

Federal Railroad Administrator Jolene M. Molitoris said, "The development of this new technology is a key part of the Clinton Administration's and Transportation Secretary Peña's commitment to develop next generation high-speed ground transportation systems.

"This is the kind of advanced technology America needs. This project will use the best of high technology -- turbine engines and advanced electronics -- as well as good old American know-how to deliver fast, high quality passenger rail service. It will be a quantum leap towards making cost-effective high-speed passenger rail service an affordable reality throughout the United States."

The funding will be used to develop a locomotive propulsion system consisting of a turbine-driven electric generator and a mechanical flywheel system. The propulsion system will help raise average train speeds and significantly shorten trip times on existing railroad lines that have frequent stops and curves where trains must slow down. The ability of the flywheel to "bank" energy will permit the overall locomotive system to provide optimum fuel efficiency and reduce emissions by one fourth.

The system could provide corridors nationwide with fast, quiet and economical high-speed passenger trains able to run on existing tracks without the need for costly electrification infrastructure.

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The University of Texas project is under the umbrella of the Southern Coalition for Advanced Transportation, a consortium of more than 40 high technology organizations presently working with ARPA in transportation and defense technology. The federal funding will be equally matched by the Texas project team.

The flywheel will be a large disk constructed of advanced composite materials spinning in a vacuum chamber and connected to an electrical motor/generator. When the locomotive stops or is braking, the motor will use available electricity from the turbine or recovered braking energy to "spin up" the flywheel disk. When acceleration is needed, the flywheel drives the generator to return the "banked" energy, slowing its rotation very rapidly while delivering thousands of extra horsepower to the locomotive motors and doubling the locomotive acceleration.

The main benefit of this flywheel is its ability to store and then to release enormous amounts of energy and the immense power the flywheel can capture and exert. The energy storage feature allows the turbine to operate at near constant power and at peak efficiency.

The development of the flywheel propulsion system will be a true partnership effort. The University of Texas project team combines the research and development resources of the Department of Transportation and the Department of Defense; the Association of American Railroads' experience in railroad testing at the Transportation Technology Center at Pueblo; the Argonne National Laboratory's expertise in safety analysis; the General Motors Electromotive Division's skill in building locomotives; the Allied Signal Companies' command of turbines and generator systems; and the AVCON Corporation's experience with magnetic suspension bearings.

The flywheel technology is also of great interest to electric utility companies and is under consideration by the ARPA for several defense applications. The technology being applied to locomotive propulsion draws on research originally conducted for the U.S. Army Electric Gun program, which utilizes strong electromagnetic forces to propel artillery projectiles.

In November 1994, FRA issued an announcement to seek new technologies for use in high-speed rail systems. The flywheel proposal is one of the first technologies funded by the FRA under this initiative.

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U.S. Department of
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News:

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Tuesday, September 5, 1995

FRA 21-95
Contact: David A Bolger
Tel.: (202) 366-0881

FRA MOVES AHEAD ON REGULATORY REFORM

As part of the Federal Railroad Administration's (FRA) commitment to regulatory reform and customer service, FRA Administrator Jolene M. Molitoris today outlined a series of recent initiatives to cut red tape, streamline procedures and develop performance-based regulatory procedures where appropriate.

The initiatives are part of a larger Department of Transportation effort which recommended eliminating 13 percent of its regulations and re-writing or revising 37 percent. The effort was undertaken in response to President Clinton's Regulatory Reform Initiative.

The FRA promotes safe, environmentally-sound, successful railroad transportation to meet the current and future needs of the nation. To better serve the American people and ensure the safety of our nation's railroads, we are fundamentally changing the way we do business -- business as usual is a relic of the past" said Molitoris.

Some of the FRA initiatives underway include:

- **Building Partnerships to ensure safety.** In May, 1995, a committee of labor, management and FRA representatives signed a report of findings on a proposed regulation to increase safety for railroad track workers. This historic action fundamentally changed the way rail safety rules are developed. In the past, the FRA wrote a regulation, then labor and management often attacked it and fought to get a rule closer to their liking. This time, through an open and formal negotiated rulemaking process, all parties worked together at the beginning and reached consensus on all the elements of a fair and effective rule. The benefit of a negotiated rule is often a faster process with diverse experts providing the federal government with input at the beginning of the process as opposed to near the

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end. Building on this success, the FRA is in the midst of a paradigm shift to establish a collaborative rulemaking process. The FRA is developing a standing advisory committee to continue this consensual approach to safety enhancement. This type of partnership highlights the Clinton Administration's new approach to ensure that the regulatory environment makes sense for the American people.

- **Relieving user fees for small businesses.** Large railroads constitute a major portion of the rail industry and command much of FRA's attention while smaller railroads currently pay a disproportionate share of their profits for railroad user fees. The FRA is proposing to reverse this imbalance, creating an exception for small entities. This would reduce the financial burden on smaller railroads, while not increasing larger railroads' user fees by more than one percent, with no loss to the U.S. Treasury.
- **Moving towards a paperless reporting system.** The FRA will launch a major project to allow railroads to maintain required "hours of service" records in an electronic, rather than paper, format. This will provide FRA mandated data supplied by the railroads in a format which can be more readily analyzed and will eliminate the current requirement to create 3.6 million paper records each year and store 7.3 million paper records at any given time. An added bonus will be an estimated \$2.3 million saved annually by the rail industry.
- **Re-engineering the process of approving waivers of regulations.** The FRA is working to streamline the approval process for waivers of federal regulations, block signal applications for modification of existing signal systems and special approvals required by existing regulations. This new process will eliminate delays in implementing 50 to 100 regulatory exceptions annually. This will allow for more rapid introduction of FRA approved new equipment and procedures, and could save the rail industry approximately \$1 million each year.

Molitoris concluded, "FRA's vision for regulatory reform is a program that protects the health and safety of all people affected by railroading in America and enhances the environment without placing unreasonable costs on society. In short, we are promoting railroad safety by seeking to create regulations that are effective, consistent, sensible and understandable."

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FRA 22-95
Contact: David A. Bolger
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FRA PLANS MEETING WITH RAILROADS ON SAFETY USER FEES

Washington -- At a congressional hearing today on extending the Federal Railroad Administration user fee program, which is set to expire Sept. 30, FRA Deputy Administrator Donald M. Itzkoff said that, upon congressional reauthorization, the agency will hold a roundtable meeting with railroad industry members to discuss the impact railroad user fees have on small and large railroads.

Itzkoff spoke before the Railroad Subcommittee of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, which is considering legislation proposed by DOT to continue and expand the user fee program.

Railroads subject to FRA safety oversight are charged user fees to cover FRA costs in carrying out the safety responsibilities mandated by law. Fees are assessed and collected once annually. In fiscal year 1994, a total of \$37 million was collected from more than 600 railroads.

Small railroads, often the least able to bear the cost of user fees, have frequently asked the agency to evaluate the impact user fees have on their operations.

Deputy Administrator Itzkoff stated, "Our support for this program is in keeping with President Clinton's efforts to 'reinvent' federal government operations, especially by increasing reliance on user-fee funding for activities that directly benefit specific groups or activities."

In addition, Itzkoff said, "Once the program is reauthorized, we intend to consult our railroad industry partners -- large and small railroads -- to evaluate whether changes could be made in the program to ease the financial burden on small railroads while taking into consideration the concerns of large railroads."

He added, "We have found roundtable discussions to be a very effective means for allowing the parties to voice their concerns and ideas in a constructive dialogue." As part of the Clinton Administration's initiatives on regulatory reform and customer service, the FRA has held a series of public meetings around the country to gather information on issues of concern to FRA customers.

Railroad safety user fees are allocated to individual railroads by regulation on the basis of a three-part formula that includes: train miles, road miles and employee hours. A sliding scale system is used to reduce the user fee burden on light density railroad lines. The allocation formula was adopted through a rulemaking process with participation from the railroad industry.

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2