



COMMUNITY

Alaska Railroad Corporation
2nd Quarter 2015



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Visit our web site at
AlaskaRailroad.com

Daily summer passenger service continues through mid-September. Visit our web site for information on trains traveling between Seward, Whittier, Portage, Girdwood, Anchorage, Wasilla, Talkeetna, Denali and Fairbanks.

RR LAUNCHES PUBLIC SAFETY CAMPAIGN

Operation Lifesaver message aims to avoid incidents, save lives

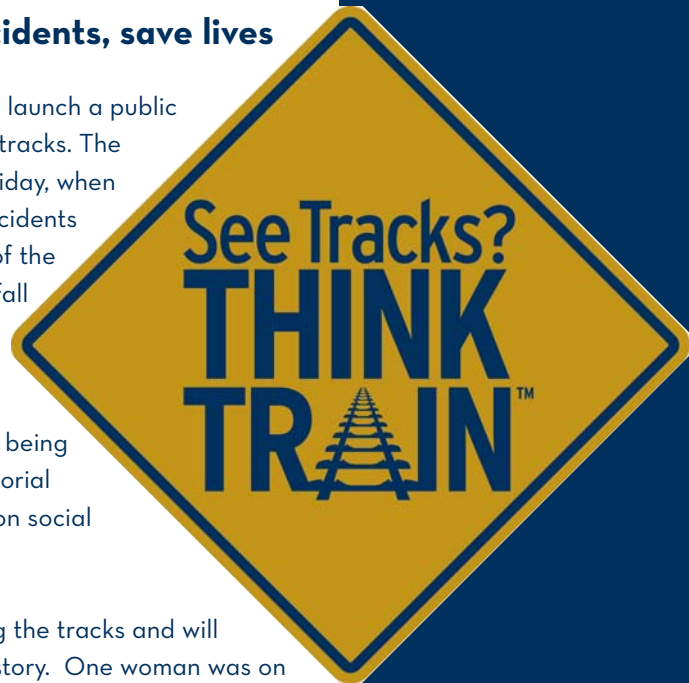
The Alaska Railroad has teamed up with Operation Lifesaver to launch a public safety campaign sharing the importance of staying clear of the tracks. The campaign kicked off late June, just before the Fourth of July holiday, when historically the railroad sees more injuries, incidents and near-incidents along the railbelt. The campaign will continue through the end of the year, with elements changing slightly with the seasons (school start, fall hunting and winter recreation).

The key campaign message corresponds with Operation Lifesaver's national program reminder: **See Tracks? Think Train.** The message is being spread via news media stories, public service announcements, in editorial columns, through discussion on radio talk shows, and posts and ads on social media.

People believe that they will hear such huge machinery moving along the tracks and will have time to move. They don't. Examples from recent years tell the story. One woman was on the track snapping photos of Turnagain Arm scenery. She did not hear the train, even as its horn blasted repeatedly; she was hit and killed instantly. A man was walking his dog along the track when the dog pulled away, running onto the track. Both were killed when the owner tried to rescue the dog. Rail bridges are extremely dangerous, leaving nowhere to go when a train crosses, as more than one person has discovered. Some drivers have tried to beat the crossing gates only to watch their vehicles demolished after making a narrow escape.

Since 1985, at least eight people have died while trespassing within the railroad's right-of-way (ROW). Every incident was 100 percent preventable. By educating the community and drawing attention to the dangers, the railroad hopes to prevent incidents and save lives.

Help the railroad keep your families, employees and customers safe. Tell them to stay away from the tracks and outside the ROW (100 feet on either side of the track). If they must cross, do so at a public crossing designated with a crossbuck sign, if possible. Cross quickly and only after looking both ways. Never cross a railroad bridge or through a railroad tunnel. Operation Lifesaver is a nationwide organization dedicated to end collisions, deaths and injuries at road/rail crossings and on railroad property. More information about railroad public safety is available at the Operation Lifesaver website, www.oli.org. ●



SILVER LEED CERTIFIED

The Alaska Railroad (ARRC) has received Silver LEED Certification award for renovation of its Freight Shed, Alaska's first historic building renovated to meet stringent standards of the U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) program. Eligible for the National Register, the facility was constructed in 1941 and its historic designation is verified by the Alaska State Historic Preservation Office. Coordinated with the Alaska Office of History and Archeology, the core-and-shell improvements include reinforcement to the structural supports, roof and wall systems, and upgrades to mechanical and electrical systems. Completed in 2010, these renovations met LEED standards for site sustainability, water efficiency, energy conservation, material reuse and indoor environmental quality. Over the past year, ARRC has completed the final steps necessary to achieve the official LEED certification. ●



STATE OKAYS BOND ISSUE FOR PTC

\$37 million will help fund Positive Train Control mandate

Beginning mid-July, the railroad will have access to \$37 million to continue developing Positive Train Control (PTC), which is mandated – but not funded – by the federal government. PTC is a fail-safe system to prevent human error that may cause accidents. The project will monitor and control train movements, including stopping a train if it exceeds safe speeds, moves into unauthorized areas, or detects potentially unsafe track conditions.

Since work on the estimated \$158 million project started in 1997, the railroad has spent nearly \$70 million. The State of Alaska contributed \$19 million in 2013 and \$15 million in 2014 toward project implementation. Given the state's fiscal situation, ARRC sought options other than asking the state for more money to fill the \$55 million funding gap. One option is to issue bonds, which the railroad had done previously in 2006 and 2007 to help pay for track rehabilitation. Those bonds were backed by annual Federal Transit Administration (FTA) grants as a source of repayment.

As a state entity, ARRC needs legislative approval to issue additional public debt. At the railroad's request, Representative Steve Thompson of Fairbanks introduced House Bill 140 (HB140), which passed the Alaska State House March 31 and the Alaska Senate on April 15. Governor Bill Walker signed the bill on May 5, thus approving a new bond issue that refinances the balance of the 2006/2007 bonds, plus makes \$37 million available for PTC. By taking advantage of low interest rates, ARRC expects to save \$3 million in interest expense on the old bonds. The new bonds must be repaid by 2023, with repayment also pledged from annual FTA grants.

Federal law currently mandates PTC be implemented by December 31, 2015 – a deadline that the Alaska Railroad and many other railroads nationwide cannot meet. The rail industry has asked the U.S. Congress for an extension of the deadline to the end of 2018, when the Alaska Railroad is scheduled to be done. ●



Standing, L-R: ARRC VP Engineering Clark Hopp, ARRC Chief Operating Officer Doug Engebretson, Transportation Commissioner Marc Luiken, ARRC VP Real Estate Jim Kubitz, ARRC Chief Information Officer Jim Ratchford and ARRC Board Vice Chair Bill Sheffield witness Governor Bill Walker sign House Bill 140 into law on May 5.

RAILROAD SUPPORTS ANCHORAGE CENTENNIAL

3,000-plus second graders take a ride on Centennial Celebration charter trains

Over the course of three days (April 22-24) more than 3,000 second graders from the Anchorage School District (ASD) took a short train trip as a part of Anchorage's Centennial Celebration. The Alaska Railroad and the Municipality of Anchorage co-sponsored the activity which fits into the ASD's Alaska

History curriculum for all second graders. It was a great opportunity for the Alaska Railroad to be a part of Anchorage's year-long centennial celebration and to introduce the state's railroad to thousands of Alaskan children from around the city. Anchorage began as a tent city to support construction of the railroad. ●



Conductor Harvey Neel takes a seat next to delighted young passengers before this Centennial Celebration train departs with a load of Anchorage second grade students.



Drawn by second-grader Dorence, this image was on one of the hundreds of thank-you notes and cards featuring great artwork from children who thoroughly enjoyed their train trip.

FAIRBANKS RAILROAD OPEN HOUSE BIGGEST BY FAR

An estimated 5,000 Alaskans attended the free early May community event

The Saturday, May 9, Open House was by far the largest Railroad community event held thus far in Fairbanks. A few telling statistics:

- Estimated 5,000 attendees – nearly double than in prior years.
- 2,481 passengers boarded the free ride train, which cycled 10 times and operated well past 2:00 p.m. to accommodate everyone in line.
- First time we ran out of helium (even with 2 tanks!)
- First time the Boy Scout food booth ran out of food – TWICE!
- First time we ran out of the exclusive 2-for-1 coupons!

- Gift Shop sales doubled over the 2013 Fairbanks Open House sales
- About 1,000 entries were submitted in the rail ticket drawing.
- Estimated 1,000 cars on property at any given time. The parking lot was full by 9:45 a.m. ●



Above: Railroad retiree Terry Hinman volunteers to give out balloons. Left: A Fairbanks family waves to friends departing on the free ride train.



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Contact Corrections

- Please correct the following errors in your newsletter emailing list:
- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Receiving more than one copy | <input type="checkbox"/> Email Address wrong |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Contact person changed | <input type="checkbox"/> Name Misspelled |

RAILROADERS HELP WITH WILLOW FIRE INCIDENT

Fires threaten communities, emergency responders and railroad operations

The 2015 summer fire season heated up mid-June as the Sockeye fire ignited near Willow, and quickly threatened railroad operations along with the community. Railroad Safety Director Tom Covington spent several days and nights working with the State Incident Command System (ICS) Team and Mat-Su Emergency Operations Team. Covington and track maintenance managers kept watch on fire activity near the tracks, reporting back to the ICS team. The railroad also moved firefighters and gear in and out of the fire area. At one point, as flames encroached, more than 160 firefighters used the tracks as a firebreak.

Having ARRC personnel on-scene allowed for nimble coordination of train movements through the area. Hy-rail vehicles (equipped for road or rail) were used to scout ahead on the tracks. Despite some delays, all trains made it through the fire zone. Many trains hauled passengers and baggage that couldn't get through on the closed Parks Highway.

ARRC President / CEO Bill O'Leary and Chief Operating Officer Doug Engebretson traveled to Houston as the ICS team began demobilizing. "Thank you for everything you did for the people of Willow, to protect their lives and their homes, and to keep the Railroad up and running." ●



A hy-rail vehicle scouts ahead along the track.



Smoke billows from the fire burning by the rail.