

be rerouted over other GTW lines;² (3) no formal complaint filed by a user of rail service on the line (or by a state or local government entity acting on behalf of such user) regarding cessation of service over the line either is pending with the Surface Transportation Board (Board) or with any U.S. District Court or has been decided in favor of complainant within the 2-year period; and (4) the requirements at 49 CFR 1105.7 (environmental reports), 49 CFR 1105.8 (historic reports), 49 CFR 1105.11 (transmittal letter), 49 CFR 1105.12 (newspaper publication), and 49 CFR 1152.50(d)(1) (notice to governmental agencies) have been met.

As a condition to this exemption, any employee adversely affected by the abandonment shall be protected under *Oregon Short Line R. Co.*—

Abandonment—Goshen, 360 I.C.C. 91 (1979). To address whether this condition adequately protects affected employees, a petition for partial revocation under 49 U.S.C. 10502(d) must be filed. Provided no formal expression of intent to file an offer of financial assistance (OFA) has been received, this exemption will be effective on August 5, 1998, unless stayed pending reconsideration. Petitions to stay that do not involve environmental issues,³ formal expressions of intent to file an OFA under 49 CFR 1152.27(c)(2),⁴ and trail use/rail banking requests under 49 CFR 1152.29 must be filed by July 16, 1998. Petitions to reopen or requests for public use conditions under 49 CFR 1152.28 must be filed by July 27, 1998, with: Surface Transportation Board, Office of the Secretary, Case Control Unit, 1925 K Street, NW, Washington, DC 20423.

A copy of any petition filed with the Board should be sent to applicant's representative: Robert P. vom Eigen, Esq., Hopkins & Sutter, 888 Sixteenth Street, NW, Washington, DC 20006.

²In its environmental and historic reports, GTW stated that traffic has not moved over this line segment in "excess of one year" which conflicted with the certification in the notice of exemption. On June 24, 1998, GTW informed the Board that no traffic has moved over the line segment since October 1995.

³The Board will grant a stay if an informed decision on environmental issues (whether raised by a party or by the Board's Section of Environmental Analysis in its independent investigation) cannot be made before the exemption's effective date. See *Exemption of Out-of-Service Rail Lines*, 5 I.C.C.2d 377 (1989). Any request for a stay should be filed as soon as possible so that the Board may take appropriate action before the exemption's effective date.

⁴Each offer of financial assistance must be accompanied by the filing fee, which currently is set at \$1000. See 49 CFR 1002.2(f)(25).

If the verified notice contains false or misleading information, the exemption is void *ab initio*.

GTW has filed an environmental report which addresses the abandonment's effects, if any, on the environment and historic resources. The Section of Environmental Analysis (SEA) will issue an environmental assessment (EA) by July 10, 1998. Interested persons may obtain a copy of the EA by writing to SEA (Room 500, Surface Transportation Board, Washington, DC 20423) or by calling SEA, at (202) 565-1545. Comments on environmental and historic preservation matters must be filed within 15 days after the EA becomes available to the public.

Environmental, historic preservation, public use, or trail use/rail banking conditions will be imposed, where appropriate, in a subsequent decision.

Pursuant to the provisions of 49 CFR 1152.29(e)(2), GTW shall file a notice of consummation with the Board to signify that it has exercised the authority granted and fully abandoned the line. If consummation has not been effected by GTW's filing of a notice of consummation by July 6, 1999, and there are no legal or regulatory barriers to consummation, the authority to abandon will automatically expire.

Board decisions and notices are available on our website at "WWW.STB.DOT.GOV."

Decided: June 29, 1998.

By the Board, David M. Konschnik, Director, Office of Proceedings.

Vernon A. Williams,
Secretary.

[FR Doc. 98-17802 Filed 7-2-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4915-00-P

DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

Customs Service

Announcement of Second Test of General Aviation Telephonic Entry (Gate II)

AGENCY: Customs Service, Treasury.
ACTION: General notice.

SUMMARY: This notice announces Customs plan to conduct a second general test to evaluate further the effectiveness of new operational procedures regarding the processing of aircraft by way of telephonic entry of certain pre-registered, passenger-carrying, general aviation aircraft flights entering the United States directly from Canada. This second test will expand the scope of participation to ports with one full-time inspector and will include

approved small charter/air taxi aircraft returning with crew members only. This notice invites public comments concerning any aspect of the test, informs interested members of the public of the eligibility requirements for voluntary participation in the test, and describes the basis on which Customs will select participants for the test.

EFFECTIVE DATES: Applications will be available and accepted at the Customs office located at the Detroit Metropolitan Airport beginning July 6, 1998. The test will commence no earlier than August 5, 1998, and will be evaluated after 1 year. Comments must be received on or before August 5, 1998.

ADDRESSES: Applications to participate in the program test are available from and should be mailed to the Detroit Metropolitan Airport: U.S. Customs Service, GATE Program Center, International Terminal, Detroit Metropolitan Airport, Detroit, Michigan 48242. Written comments regarding this notice should be addressed to: U.S. Customs Service, Passenger Process Owner, Passenger Operations Division, 1300 Pennsylvania Ave., NW, Room 5.4-D, Washington, DC 20229-0001.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:
Priscilla Frink (202) 927-1323.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

On November 4, 1996, Customs implemented the General Aviation Telephonic Entry (GATE) Program on a test basis to evaluate the effectiveness of a new operations procedure regarding the telephonic entry of certain pre-registered, passenger-carrying, general aviation aircraft flights entering the United States directly from Canada (see 61 FR 46902, dated September 5, 1996). The test was to last one year and the results evaluated. Although the initial test was to be open to all eligible flights along the northern border, because of personnel constraints and other matters, many flights could not participate in the GATE test.

Accordingly, because the evaluation of the initial test yielded only partial results and an analysis of the comments received showed a willingness to participate in GATE by the traveling community if only the program were more readily available, Customs has decided to conduct a second test of GATE. This second test will expand the scope of participation to ports with one full-time inspector and will allow approved small charter/air taxi aircraft returning with crew members only. Customs will implement the second test for not less than 1 year; however, the

test may be extended for an additional time period not to exceed 180 days.

For programs designed to evaluate the effectiveness of new technology or operational procedures regarding the processing of passengers, vessels, or merchandise, § 101.9(a) of the Customs Regulations (19 CFR 101.9(a)) implements the general testing procedures. This test is established pursuant to that regulation.

I. Description of Proposed Test

The Concept of Telephonic Entry

Any aircraft arriving in the United States from a foreign airport or place is required to (1) give advance notification of its arrival, (2) immediately report its arrival to Customs, and (3) land at the airport designated by Customs for entry. See, 19 U.S.C. 1433(c) and implementing Customs Regulations at 19 CFR Part 122, subparts C and D. Individual passengers are also required to report their arrival to Customs. See, 19 U.S.C. 1459 and implementing Customs Regulations at 19 CFR Part 123. Because historical data on certain general aviation aircraft (aircraft comprising private and corporate aircraft, and air ambulances that have a seating capacity of fifteen or fewer passengers) indicated a high degree of compliance with Customs and other federal agency reporting laws, Customs developed the GATE program to allow certain pre-registered, passenger-carrying flights of such aircraft to report their entry telephonically when entering the United States directly from Canada. To provide a means for measuring the effectiveness of GATE, random inspections were built into the program. Thus, the GATE program was designed to combine the proven benefits of facilitation and selectivity, thereby freeing valuable Customs resources for use in other areas.

The initial test was implemented at designated airports located nation-wide for flights entering the United States directly from Canada. (Flights arriving from areas south of the United States that were subject to the provisions of § 122.23 (19 CFR 122.23) were not eligible for this test). During the test period, pilots gave advance notice of their arrival—from a minimum of 3 hours up to a maximum of 72 hours in advance—to Customs by calling 1-800-98-CLEAR, and approved flights received advance clearance to land at a designated airport, provided the pilot(s) received a telephonic entry number.

Regulatory Provisions Affected

During this second GATE test, participants again will be provided with

a telephonic entry number in lieu of having to comply with normal inspection requirements. Accordingly, for test participants the normal arrival reporting and landing requirements of Parts 122 and 123 of the Customs Regulations (see, 19 CFR Parts 122, subparts C and D, and 123) will not be followed. However, participants will still be subject to civil and criminal penalties and sanctions for any violations of other U.S. Customs laws.

II. Eligibility Criteria

A. Aircraft & Airports

Only U.S.- and Canadian-registered general aviation aircraft that will arrive in the United States directly from Canada are eligible to participate in the GATE test. For purposes of this test, the term *general aviation aircraft* means aircraft comprising private and corporate aircraft, approved small charter/air taxi aircraft and air ambulances that have a seating capacity of fifteen or fewer passengers that are returning to the U.S. with crew members only.

Aircraft transiting Canada are not eligible for this test. Also, flights that arrive from areas south of the United States and are subject to the provisions of § 122.23 (19 CFR 122.23) are not eligible for this test. Further, aircraft that will carry cargo, merchandise requiring the payment of Customs duties, restricted or prohibited food products or other articles, or monetary instruments in excess of \$10,000, will not qualify for this test.

GATE flights will be allowed to land at airports within a port of entry and most airports that are located within a reasonable commuting distance from a port of entry, provided the local port director having jurisdiction over the airport has designated the airport for GATE-test use. Although many airport locations have already been approved for GATE participation, other airports located outside of a port of entry may be approved by the local port director, based on a review of the facility after it is requested as a designated airport on an application. In such cases, the port director will take the following factors into consideration in determining whether to designate an airport for GATE-test use:

- Willingness of the airport operator to participate in the GATE test;
- The distance to the airport from the nearest Customs port of entry (so that random inspections can be performed), commuting time required for Customs officers, and Customs officer safety;

- Whether a secure place to work is provided at the airport; and
- Whether communications equipment is accessible.

B. Persons

Participation in the GATE test is voluntary. Only U.S. citizens, permanent resident aliens of the United States, Canadian citizens, or landed immigrants in Canada from Commonwealth countries, and who are regular passengers or flight crews of pre-registered flights, will be considered for this test. Each applicant must have a "face to face" inspection with either a U.S. Immigration or Customs officer, which clearly demonstrates the person's right to legally enter the United States, and must agree to carry all necessary personal identification and immigration documents.

Persons with evidence of a pending or past investigation which establishes illegal or dishonest conduct, persons involved in a violation of Customs laws (for example, civil, controlled substance violations, smuggling), and persons found to be inadmissible under the immigration laws of the United States are not eligible for this test.

Participation in this test will not constitute confidential information, and lists of participants will be made available to the public upon written request.

III. Test Application Procedure

General aviation aircraft owners, operators, and pilots who wish to have their passenger-carrying flights considered for participation in the GATE test should contact the Customs office at Detroit Metropolitan Airport in Michigan at the address listed at the front of this document to request an application for General Aviation Telephonic Entry Program form (Customs Form 442). Applications must be filed with the Customs port at Detroit Metropolitan Airport in Michigan 30 days prior to the date of the first scheduled flight in order to be considered for participation in the GATE test.

Selection Standards

Applicants will be approved/denied for the GATE test based on whether the personnel/aircraft information provided on the CF 442 meets all the above eligibility criteria. The port of Detroit, Michigan will determine the qualifications of all passengers/pilots/aircraft, and a letter approving or denying the test application will be sent to the applicant. Aircraft owners/operators must agree not to allow their general aviation aircraft to carry

passengers who are not listed and approved on the application. (To allow for the proper accounting of last-minute personnel changes to an application already on file with Customs, an Application Addendum form must be completed and sent to the Customs office at Detroit Metropolitan Airport). Further, aircraft owners/operators must agree not to allow persons to carry dutiable/commercial merchandise, restricted or prohibited food products or other articles, or monetary instruments of \$10,000 or more on test flights.

If an application is denied for any reason other than because a particular airport is not designated for GATE-test use (for example, a denial based on information concerning passengers, pilots, or the aircraft), the applicant may appeal the decision to the Detroit Port Director within 10 working days from receipt of the denial letter. If the appeal to the Port Director results in another denial, then the applicant may appeal directly to the Passenger Process Owner at Customs Headquarters within 10 working days from receipt of the second denial letter.

IV. Test Evaluation Criteria

Customs will review all public comments received concerning any aspect of the test program or procedures, finalize procedures in light of those comments, form problem-solving teams, and establish baseline measures and evaluation methods and criteria. After the second test period is concluded, evaluations of the test will be conducted and final results will be made available to the public upon request.

Dated: June 26, 1998.

John B. McGowan,

Acting Assistant Commissioner, Office of Field Operations.

[FR Doc. 98-17818 Filed 7-2-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4820-02-P

UNITED STATES INFORMATION AGENCY

Vietnam Fulbright: Foreign Student Exchange Program

ACTION: Request for proposals.

SUMMARY: The Office of Academic Programs of the United States Information Agency's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs announces an open competition for an assistance award. Public and private non-profit organizations meeting the provisions described in IRS regulation 26 CFR 1.501(c) may apply to manage a student exchange program. The program would bring 20-25, mid-career

Vietnamese each year to the U.S. in order to pursue a Master's degree, or in some cases a Ph.D., in fields related to economic development to include—but not limited to—economics, business, public policy, public administration, law, and international relations. The proposal must also include renewal costs for approximately 30-35 Vietnamese Fulbright students currently studying in the U.S. (mostly second-year, but some third-year students).

Overall grant-making authority for this program is contained in the Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961, Pub. L. 87-256, as amended, also known as the Fulbright-Hays Act. The purpose of the Act is "to enable the Government of the United States to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries * * *; to strengthen the ties which unite us with other nations by demonstrating the educational and cultural interests, developments, and achievements of the people of the United States and other nations * * * and thus to assist in the development of friendly, sympathetic and peaceful relations between the United States and the other countries of the world." The funding authority for the program cited above is provided through the Fulbright-Hays Act.

The program must conform with Agency requirements and guidelines outlined in the Solicitation Package. USIA projects and programs are subject to the availability of funds.

Announcement Title And Number: All communications with USIA concerning this RFP should refer to the announcement's title and reference number E/AEF-99-01.

Deadline for Proposals: All copies must be received at the U.S. Information Agency by 5 p.m. Washington, DC time on Friday, July 31, 1998. Faxed documents will not be accepted at any time. Documents postmarked by the due date but received at a later date will not be accepted. The grant should begin on or about October 1, 1998.

Duration: October 1, 1998-September 30, 2000.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: The Office of Academic Programs, Academic Exchange Programs Divisions/East Asia Fulbright Branch, E/AEF, Room 208, U.S. Information Agency, 301 4th Street, SW., Washington, DC 20547, phone: (202) 619-6788/5404, fax: (202) 401-1728; email: sborja@usia.gov to request a Solicitation Package containing more detailed information. Please request required application forms, and standard guidelines for preparing proposals, including specific criteria for preparation of the proposal budget.

To Download A Solicitation Package Via Internet: The entire Solicitation Package may be downloaded from USIA's website at <http://www.usia.gov/education/rfps>. Please read all information before downloading.

To Receive A Solicitation Package Via Fax on Demand: The entire Solicitation Package may be received via the Bureau's "Grants Information Fax on Demand System", which is accessed by calling 202/401-7616. Please request a "Catalog" of available documents and order numbers when first entering the system.

Please specify *USIA Program Officer Sue Borja* on all inquiries and correspondences. Interested applicants should read the complete **Federal Register** announcement before sending inquiries or submitting proposals. Once the RFP deadline has passed, Agency staff may not discuss this competition in any way with applicants until the Bureau proposal review process has been completed.

Submissions: Applicants must follow all instructions given in the Solicitation Package. The original and 10 copies of the application should be sent to: U.S. Information Agency, Ref.: E/AEF-99-01, Office of Grants Management, E/XE, Room 326, 301 4th Street, SW., Washington, DC 20547.

Applicants must also submit the "Executive Summary" and "Proposal Narrative" sections of the proposal on a 3.5" diskette, formatted for DOS. This material must be provided in ASCII text (DOS) format with a maximum line length of 65 characters. USIS will transmit these files electronically to USIS posts overseas for their review, with the goal of reducing the time it takes to get posts' comments for the Agency's grants review process.

Diversity, Freedom and Democracy Guidelines

Pursuant to the Bureau's authorizing legislation, programs must maintain a non-political character and should be balanced and representative of the diversity of American political, social, and cultural life. "Diversity" should be interpreted in the broadest sense and encompass differences including—but not limited to—ethnicity, race, gender, religion, geographic location, socio-economic status, and physical challenges. Applicants are strongly encouraged to adhere to the advancement of this principle both in program administration and in program content. Please refer to the review criteria under the "Support for Diversity" section for specific suggestions on incorporating diversity into the total proposal. Pub. L. 104-319