

connection with these proceedings since the facts do not appear to warrant a hearing. If any interested party desires an opportunity for oral comment, they should notify FRA, in writing, before the end of the comment period and specify the basis for their request.

All communications concerning these proceedings should identify the appropriate docket number (e.g., Waiver Petition Docket Number FRA-1998-4823) and must be submitted in triplicate to the Docket Clerk, DOT Central Docket Management Facility, Room PL-401, Washington, DC 20590-0001. Communications received within 45 days of the date of this notice will be considered by FRA before final action is taken. Comments received after that date will be considered as far as practicable. All written communications concerning these proceedings are available for examination during regular business hours (9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.) at DOT Central Docket Management Facility, Room PL-401 (Plaza Level), 400 Seventh Street S.W., Washington, D.C. All documents in the public docket are also available for inspection and copying on the Internet at the docket facility's Web site at <http://dms.dot.gov>.

Issued in Washington, DC, on December 21, 1998.

Grady C. Cothen, Jr.,

Deputy Associate Administrator for Safety Standards and Program Development.

[FR Doc. 98-34715 Filed 12-30-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910-06-P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Research and Special Programs Administration

[Docket No. RSPA-98-4029; Notice 2]

Pipeline Safety: One-Call Systems Study

AGENCY: Research and Special Programs Administration (RSPA); Office of Pipeline Safety (OPS), DOT.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: This notice announces RSPA's current activities to collect information and solicit public participation in a study of prevention of damage to underground facilities. RSPA established the Damage Prevention Best Practices Study Team. The Study Team consists of representatives of government, public, and industries interested in identifying best practices preventing damage to underground facilities. RSPA has developed a Web-based information system to support communication among Study Team participants. The One Call Systems

Study Information System (OCSS Information System) provides access to the public for documents prepared by the Study Team. It also allows public input on the issues addressed by the Team, or any other issues relevant to underground damage prevention. The system also provides information to the public on the various Study Team meetings being held around the country until the conclusion of the study in June, 1999. All Study Team meetings are open to the public. RSPA invites all interested individuals to access the OCSS Information System, review information regarding the Study Team, and provide the Study Team with comments and any additional issues of concern relating to damage prevention best practices. The OCSS Information System can be accessed through the OPS Homepage at <http://ops.dot.gov>, under the "Damage Prevention" option.

DATES: The following meetings have been scheduled:

Planning and Design Practices Task Team

January 19-20, 1999—Orlando, FL

February 8-9, 1999—Las Vegas, NV

One-Call Center Practices Task Team

January 5-6, 1999—Dallas, TX

February, 9-10, 1999—Las Vegas, NV

Locating and Marking Practices Task Team

January 7-8, 1999—Dallas, TX

February 9, 1999—Las Vegas, NV

Excavation Practices Task Team

January 6-7, 1999—Baltimore, MD

February 6, 1999—Las Vegas, NV

Compliance Practices Task Team

January 6-8, 1999—Baltimore, MD

February 2-3, 1999—Orlando, FL

Mapping Task Team

January 11-13, 1999—Phoenix, AZ

February 10, 1999—Las Vegas, NV

April 13-14, 1999—Houston, TX

Reporting and Evaluation Practices Task Team

February 9, 1999—Las Vegas, NV

Public Education and Awareness Task Team

January 6-7, 1999—Baltimore, MD

February 17-18, 1999—Houston, TX

March 22-23, 1999—Dallas, TX

April 29-30, 1999—Atlanta, GA

Emerging Technologies Task Team

January 20-21, 1999—Raleigh, NC

February 17-18, 1999—Raleigh, NC

March 17-18, 1999—Raleigh, NC

April 21, 1999—TBD

Specific details regarding times and meeting places can be found on the OCSS Information System. These meetings are subject to change.

ADDRESSES: Comments should be sent to the Dockets Facility, U.S. Department of Transportation, Plaza 401, 400 Seventh Street, SW, Washington, DC 20590-0001, or you can E-Mail your comments to ops.comments@rspa.dot.gov. Comments should identify the docket number RSPA-98-4029. Persons should submit the original comment document and one copy. Persons wishing to receive confirmation of receipt of their comments must include a self-addressed stamped postcard. The Dockets Facility is located on the plaza level of the Nassif Building in Room 401, 400 Seventh Street, SW, Washington, DC. The Dockets Facility is open from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on Federal holidays.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Eben M. Wyman, (202) 366-0918, or by e-mail (eben.wyman@rspa.dot.gov), regarding the subject matter of this notice.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

RSPA's Office of Pipeline Safety established a national organizational framework and staffing plan to study underground facility damage prevention practices, consistent with federal pipeline safety laws. This study, scheduled to be completed in June, 1999, will identify and evaluate current practices related to one-call notification systems. It will identify those that are most effective in protecting the public, excavators, and the environment and in preventing disruptions and damage to public services and underground facilities. Study Team participants represent a broad range of utilities and distribution systems, highway departments, railroads, excavators, municipal governments, trade associations and academia. The Study Team is charged to meet, discuss, and develop a consensus report that identifies practices used by one-call centers, excavators, facility locators, and underground facility operators to prevent damage to buried facilities.

OPS held a public meeting in August, 1998, to solicit participation in this initiative. OPS met with the Study Team in Washington, DC on September 20-21, 1998, to begin the process of identifying other Study Team participants, and again on October 19-20, 1998, to confirm the Study Team's structure and develop protocols for exchanging information. Nine Task Teams have been established to provide input to the

report. The Task Team focus areas include: Emerging Technologies, Compliance Practices, Excavation Practices, Locating and Marking Practices, Mapping Practices, One-Call Center Practices, Planning and Design Practices, Public Education Practices, and Reporting and Evaluation Practices. These Task Teams are meeting frequently over the next few months to develop their content for the report.

All Task Teams have scheduled their respective meetings and have begun identifying the best practices in their respective focus areas. The Teams are coordinating information, receiving and disseminating comments, and drafting the introductory and concluding chapters of the report on damage prevention best practices. As mentioned before, all Study Team meetings are open to the public and OPS invites public attendance.

Information about team activities and specific meeting information is available through the OPS Information System (OPSIS). OPSIS and the OCSS Information System can be accessed through the OPS Homepage (ops.dot.gov). Select the "Damage Prevention" and then the "OPS Damage Prevention Best Practices—Implementation of One-Call Systems Study" options.

OCSS Information System provisions

After accessing the OCSS Information System, the user is provided with several options, including:

- The ability to submit issues and concerns for consideration by the Study Team;
- Contact information for all Study Team members;
- Information on scheduled meetings; and
- Access to applicable documents.

These include the "TEA-21" one call provisions, protocols of the Study Team, meeting summaries, and the current damage prevention practices identified to-day by the Task Teams.

"Submit an Issue"

The OCSS Information System allows input concerning damage prevention from interested parties outside of the team participants. The "submit an issue" option provides the user the ability to submit a detailed description of the problem or issue of concern, and allows the user to suggest a solution or recommend a "best practice" to address the problem or issue. The user may also recommend which Task Team should address the issue further.

Individuals without access to the Internet may also submit an issue to the Study Team through OPS. OPS will

forward written issues to the Team for consideration. These will subsequently be entered into the OCSS Information System. Issue submissions should include the contact information for the person submitting the issue. This includes the person's name, organization, job title, E-mail address, phone number (E-mail or phone required), mailing address, detailed description of problem or issue and, if applicable, a recommended solution or "best practice". Issues submitted outside of the OCSS Information System should be sent in writing to Eben M. Wyman, Office of Pipeline Safety, 400 7th St., SW, Room 7128, Washington, DC 20590.

In order for RSPA to manage the considerable number of "issues" that may be submitted, the submitter's contact information is required. Any information provided is for Study Team consideration and evaluation. The Study Team will record the disposition of each issue offered for consideration. Any information provided may appear in Government reports and/or other public documents. Proprietary information should not be provided.

Issued in Washington, DC on December 23, 1998.

Richard B. Felder,

Associate Administrator for Pipeline Safety.

[FR Doc. 98-34634 Filed 12-30-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910-60-P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Surface Transportation Board

[STB Docket No. AB-33 (Sub-No. 131X)]

Union Pacific Railroad Company— Abandonment Exemption—in Cameron County, TX

On December 14, 1998, Union Pacific Railroad Company (UP) filed with the Surface Transportation Board (Board) a petition under 49 U.S.C. 10502 for exemption from the provisions of 49 U.S.C. 10903 to abandon its line of railroad known as the Brownsville Branch, extending from milepost 197.90 near Naranjo Road to milepost 205.04 near E. Van Buren St., a distance of 7.14 miles in Brownsville, Cameron County, TX. The line traverses U.S. Postal Service Zip Codes 78520 and 78521 and includes no stations.

The line does not contain federally granted rights-of-way. Any documentation in UP's possession will be made available promptly to those requesting it.

The interest of railroad employees will be protected by the conditions set

forth in *Oregon Short Line R. Co.—Abandonment—Goshen*, 360 I.C.C. 91 (1979).

By issuance of this notice, the Board is instituting an exemption proceeding pursuant to 49 U.S.C. 10502(b). A final decision will be issued by April 2, 1999.

Any offer of financial assistance (OFA) under 49 CFR 1152.27(b)(2) will be due no later than 10 days after service of a decision granting the petition for exemption. Each OFA must be accompanied by a \$1,000 filing fee. See 49 CFR 1002.2(f)(25).

All interested persons should be aware that, following abandonment of rail service and salvage of the line, the line may be suitable for other public use, including interim trail use. Any request for a public use condition under 49 CFR 1152.28 or for trail use/rail banking under 49 CFR 1152.29 will be due no later than January 20, 1999. Each trail use request must be accompanied by a \$150 filing fee. See 49 CFR 1002.2(f)(27).

All filings in response to this notice must refer to STB Docket No. AB-33 (Sub-No. 131X) and must be sent to: (1) Surface Transportation Board, Office of the Secretary, Case Control Unit, 1925 K Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20423-0001; and (2) Joseph D. Anthofer, 1416 Dodge St., Room 830, Omaha, NE 68179-0830. Replies to the UP petition are due on or before January 20, 1999.

Persons seeking further information concerning abandonment procedures may contact the Board's Office of Public Services at (202) 565-1592 or refer to the full abandonment or discontinuance regulations at 49 CFR part 1152. Questions concerning environmental issues may be directed to the Board's Section of Environmental Analysis (SEA) at (202) 565-1545. [TDD for the hearing impaired is available at (202) 565-1695.]

An environmental assessment (EA) (or environmental impact statement (EIS), if necessary) prepared by SEA will be served upon all parties of record and upon any agencies or other persons who commented during its preparation. Other interested persons may contact SEA to obtain a copy of the EA (or EIS). EAs in these abandonment proceedings normally will be made available within 60 days of the filing of the petition. The deadline for submission of comments on the EA will generally be within 30 days of its service.

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

Decided: December 18, 1998.