



## THE CHAIRMAN'S CORNER

Friday, June 6, 2003

### MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

When the NTSB speaks out, people listen. Such was the case this week when Board meetings covered two accident reports concerning a multiple car accident in Largo, Maryland, with five fatalities and a train accident in Clarendon, Texas, with \$8 million dollars of damage and one fatality. As both involved the use of a cell phone, extensive media interest included television, radio and print coverage.

It is imperative that the NTSB always focus on good science, data, and facts rather than supposition, desire or "guesswork" to ensure that our recommendations are valid to support our aggressive pursuit of safety. IICs **David Rayburn** and **Ron Hynes** are to be commended for their hard work and adherence to our mission.

With 145 million cell phone

subscribers, the use of cell phones is pervasive in our nation. Cell phones have been identified as one of many "distracters" that will slow the response time of a driver and may add to the causation of an accident. Other distracters include the use of the radio, eating, smoking, conversations with passengers, pets and children in the car. Regrettably, the safety studies to date offer conflicting determinations on the impact of cell phone usage and accident causation. Additionally, few states currently report distraction elements in their accident reports so actual data and facts must yet be collected before final conclusions can be reached.

As such, the Board was very clear in its recommendations to pursue safety through a variety of



Chairman Engleman during her CBS interview.

impacting elements, including driver education and awareness, protection of inexperienced drivers, better accident reporting, and the need for definitive studies to allow validation and evaluation. There is much to be done to ultimately finalize this debate, and the NTSB will continually focus on its safety message.

*Ellen G. Engleman*

### CHAIRMAN ADDRESSES VEHICLE RECORDER TOPTEC SYMPOSIUM

**"Vehicle recorders are critical tools for providing information in an accident investigation,"** said NTSB Chairman Ellen Engleman. **"These innovative technologies should provide us with vital information for future investigations."**

On Wednesday, June 4<sup>th</sup>, Chairman Engleman delivered the keynote address at the SAE Vehicle Recorder TOPTEC Symposium in Alexandria, Virginia. The Symposium was jointly sponsored by the NTSB and SAE

International (Society of Automotive Engineers) and had over 200 vehicle recorder specialists and engineers from around the world in attendance.

The Chairman underscored the growing importance of vehicle recorders to safety in all modes of transportation. "For the Board to draw sound conclusions on vital safety issues, we need to evaluate a great deal of data. The proliferation of recorders across modes gives us

the resources through which we can make recommendations that will advance the Board's work - aggressively improving safety across all modes."



Chairman Engleman delivers the keynote address at the TOPTEC Symposium.

## NTSB ALL HANDS MESSAGES



**Casual Business Attire**—Casual business attire will be acceptable for most activities during the summer months. For information on NTSB's policy, please visit the NTSB Intranet at <http://inside/employresorc/summerattire.htm>.

### On the Hill...

Chairman Engleman met with Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell and Congresswoman Nita Lowey. The Chairman met with Ms. Lowey to discuss hard core drinking driver laws. Thank you to **Elaine Weinstein, Kevin Quinlan** and **Betty Scott** for their efforts with these meetings.



## STATE OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

**Connecticut Booster Seat Bill** – The Senate approved legislation that increases coverage from 4 to 6 years old. Children seven or older (up to 16 years of age) and weighing 60 pounds or more must be secured in either an approved child restraint system or a safety belt. The bill also requires a child under age one, or weighing less than 20 pounds to be transported in a rear-facing child restraint system. At the request of Safe Kids, staff contacted key House legislators to make them aware of the Safety Board's recommendations, and urge the bill's consideration on the last day of the session (June 4).

**Maine Approves Cell Phone Use Restriction** – Governor Baldacci has signed into law a measure that prohibits a person who has been issued an instruction permit or an intermediate driver's license from driving while using a mobile telephone.

## NTSB SUCCESSES

### Aviation Regional Investigators Assist Marine Investigators

In Miami, **Jeff Kennedy** and **John Lovell** are assisting **Marine IIC Bob Ford** from DC with the explosion in the boiler room of the cruise ship *Norway*.

In Alaska, **Jim Labelle** is traveling to Ketchikan to investigate the cruise ship *Columbia*, which experienced an electrical fire. This same vessel was investigated for an accident a few years ago. He is coordinating with **Marine IIC Bill Woody** from D.C. Regional aviation investigators are helping them out in true "intermodal team" fashion.

### NTSB Academy Family Assistance Training Course

*Don,*

*I find your manual to be an invaluable resource as I am reviewing my notes and putting together this year's recurrent for our Family Assistants.*

*I also want to take this opportunity to thank you [Don Chupp] and the NTSB Family Support Office for providing this training event. It really brought forward the focus on family care in a much stronger light than I had anticipated, our company has a very high-level focus on our owners, however, there was a greater depth of information that I was able to bring back to the coordinators of our emergency response plan.*

*I am definitely looking forward to attending future training events. Thanks again!*

*Elaine Sturm, Director of Corporate Training and Recruiting, NetJets*