



The Chairman's Corner

Message from the Chairman

Friday, March 26, 2004

(Note: I submitted the following letter to the editor of Time magazine in response to a recent article on the NTSB)

Editor:

The perplexing headline of your March 29 Notebook item – “Air Experts in Exile?” – displays a misunderstanding on your magazine’s part of the roles and responsibilities at the NTSB.

The five Presidentially-appointed, Senate-confirmed Board members do not serve as crash investigators. From a variety of backgrounds, they apply their professional knowledge and experience towards NTSB policy issues and the interaction of industry and government to turn the findings of our professional investigators into safety improvements for the traveling public.

Our aviation safety experience measures over 2000 man-years. Our aviation accident experts, along with our expert investigators in rail, marine, pipeline, hazmat and highway, are career professionals who investigate over 2,000 accidents a year. The most complex investigations can consume 5,000 to 25,000 man-hours. Through their relentless dedication, our investigators show that they have a mission -- not a job.

So, to answer your question, the world’s best air crash investigators are alive and well, at the National Transportation Safety Board.

Sincerely,

Ellen Engleman Conners

NTSB launches on two helicopter and one rail accident



Investigator-in-charge Aaron Sauer examines wreckage from a Bell 407 which crashed near Pyote, Texas.

The NTSB’s South Central Regional Office in Arlington, Texas launched on two helicopter accidents in Texas this week. On March 21st, a Bell 407 air ambulance helicopter crashed near Pyote, killing four people and seriously injuring one. The team included Investigator-in-Charge **Aaron Sauer**, **Erik Grosf** from Transportation Disaster Assistance and Meteorologist **Don Eick**.

On March 23rd, a Sikorsky S-76A, enroute to an offshore drilling ship, crashed in the Gulf of Mexico killing two pilots and eight passengers. **Lorenda Ward** has been named Investigator-in-Charge.

The Office of Railroad, Pipeline and Hazardous Materials launched an investigation into the allision of two Metra locomotives in Chicago, Illinois.

NTSB ALL HANDS MESSAGES



The Office of Research and Engineering released preliminary aviation accident statistics for 2003, which showed an increase in several civil aviation categories.

Carol Floyd was responsible for compiling the statistics, which have been posted to the NTSB website. The address is <http://www.nts.gov/aviation/Stats.htm>.

On the Hill...

Cheryl McCullough escorted **Debbie Hersman**, the President's nominee for NTSB Board Member, to several courtesy meetings on the Hill. **Dan Campbell, Bob Chipkevich, Cheryl McCullough and Ron Battocchi** attended a meeting with the Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee staff on passenger accountability and family assistance issues involving rail accidents .

Chairman **Ellen Engleman Connors** and **David Clark** are scheduled to meet next week with the Senate Appropriations Committee staff to discuss the FY 2005 budget.



Member Healing visits Regional Office



Member Dick Healing traveled to the Southeast Regional Office on March 23rd. After meeting with employees, discussions focused on investigations involving aircraft in support of aeromedical missions.

The photo at the left shows Member Healing with **Jose Obregon, Al Yurman, Tisha Kincy, Regional Director Jeff Kennedy, and Tim Monville** from the Miami office.

NTSB IN THE NEWS

- “NTSB: The Crash of Flight 323,” - a fictional account of an NTSB investigation into the crash of a commercial airliner - was aired by ABC on Monday, March 22.
- New York Times Television was at the NTSB’s Washington headquarters on Thursday and Friday to film for the Court TV program “Extreme Evidence,” on the crash of ValuJet Flight 592. They interviewed **Bob Swaim, Tom Haueter and Jim Wildey**.
- Time Magazine wrote an article in the “Notebook” section on Board Member qualifications in this week’s issue. Chairman Engleman Connors sent a Letter to Editor in response.
- The New York Times ran a story on American Airlines Flight 587.
- **Tom Haueter** was interviewed by Actuality Productions on TWA Flight 800 and the Southwest Airlines runway overrun accident in Burbank, California.
- **Bob Chipkevich** gave a background briefing to NBC reporter Bob Hager on hazardous materials transportation for Hager’s story on NBC Nightly News Friday.