

An original and 10 copies of all pleadings, referring to STB Finance Docket No. 34615, must be filed with the Surface Transportation Board, 1925 K Street, NW., Washington, DC 20423-0001. In addition, a copy of each pleading must be served on Karl Morell, Suite 225, 1455 F Street, NW., Washington, DC 20005.

Board decisions and notices are available on our Web site at <http://WWW.STB.DOT.GOV>.

Decided: December 9, 2004.

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

Vernon A. Williams,
Secretary.

[FR Doc. 04-27628 Filed 12-16-04; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4915-01-P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Surface Transportation Board

[STB Finance Docket No. 34611]

Alabama & Tennessee River Railway, LLC—Lease and Operation Exemption—CSX Transportation, Inc.

Alabama & Tennessee River Railway, LLC (ATN), a noncarrier, has filed a verified notice of exemption under 49 CFR 1150.31 to lease from CSX Transportation, Inc. (CSXT) and operate approximately 122 miles of rail lines in Alabama as follows: (1) Between milepost SG 737.1 of the Belt Connecting Track at Birmingham and milepost OAG 85.2 at Guntersville; and (2) the Ivalee Branch, between milepost OLE 443.0 near Moragne and milepost OLE 447.9 at Moragne.

This transaction is related to STB Finance Docket No. 34615, *Patrick D. Broe and OmniTRAX, Inc.—Continuance in Control Exemption—Alabama & Tennessee River Railway, LLC*, wherein Patrick D. Broe and OmniTRAX, Inc., seek to continue in control of ATN upon ATN's becoming a Class III rail carrier.

ATN certifies that its projected revenues as a result of this transaction will not result in ATN becoming a Class II or Class I rail carrier. But, because ATN's projected annual revenues will exceed \$5 million, ATN certified to the Board on November 1, 2004, that, on that date, it sent the required notice of the transaction to the national offices of all labor unions representing employees on the affected lines and posted a copy of the notice at the workplace of the employees on the affected lines. See 49 CFR 1150.32(e).

The transaction is expected to be consummated on or shortly after

December 31, 2004 (which is 60 days or more after ATN's certification to the Board that it had complied with the Board's regulation at 49 CFR 1150.32(e)).

If the notice contains false or misleading information, the exemption is void *ab initio*. Petitions to revoke the exemption under 49 U.S.C. 10502(d) may be filed at any time. The filing of a petition to revoke will not automatically stay the transaction.

An original and 10 copies of all pleadings, referring to STB Finance Docket No. 34611, must be filed with the Surface Transportation Board, 1925 K Street, NW., Washington, DC 20423-0001. In addition, one copy of each pleading must be served on Karl Morell, Suite 225, 1455 F St., NW., Washington, DC 20005.

Board decisions and notices are available on our Web site at <http://WWW.STB.DOT.GOV>.

Decided: December 9, 2004.

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

Vernon A. Williams,
Secretary.

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Bureau of Transportation Statistics

Agency Information Collection; Activity Under OMB Review; Report of Traffic and Capacity Statistics—The T-100 System

AGENCY: Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS), DOT.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: In compliance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, Public Law 104-13, the Bureau of Transportation Statistics invites the general public, industry and other governmental parties to comment on the continuing need for and usefulness of DOT requiring U.S. and foreign air carriers to file traffic and capacity data pursuant to 14 CFR 241.19 and part 217, respectively. These reports are used to measure air transportation activity to, from, and within the United States.

DATES: Written comments should be submitted by February 15, 2005.

ADDRESSES: Comments should be directed to: Office of Airline Information, K-14, Room 4125, Bureau of Transportation Statistics, 400 Seventh Street, SW., Washington, DC 20590-0001, fax no. 366-3383 or e-mail bernard.stankus@bts.gov.

Comments: Comments should identify the OMB # 2138-0040. Persons wishing the Department to acknowledge receipt of their comments must submit with those comments a self-addressed stamped postcard on which the following statement is made: Comments on OMB # 2138-0040. The postcard will be date/time stamped and returned.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Bernie Stankus Office of Airline Information, K-14, Room 4125, Bureau of Transportation Statistics, 400 Seventh Street, SW., Washington, DC 20590-0001, (202) 366-4387.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: OMB Approval No.: 2138-0040.

Title: Report of Traffic and Capacity Statistics—The T-100 System.

Form No.: Schedules T-100 and T-100(f).

Type of Review: Extension of a currently approved collection.

Respondents: Certificated, commuter and Foreign air carriers that operate to, from or within the United States.

Number of Respondents: 330.

Total Burden per Response: 6 hours.

Total Annual Burden: 24,180 hours.
Needs and Uses:

Airport Improvement

The Federal Aviation Administration uses enplanement data for U.S. airports to distribute the annual Airport Improvement Program (AIP) entitlement funds to eligible primary airports, *i.e.*, airports which account for more than 0.01 percent of the total passengers enplaned at U.S. airports. Enplanement data contained in Schedule T-100/T-100(f) are the sole data base used by the FAA in determining airport funding. U.S. airports receiving significant service from foreign air carriers operating small aircraft could be receiving less than their fair share of AIP entitlement funds. Collecting Schedule T-100(f) data for small aircraft operations will enable the FAA to more fairly distribute these funds.

Air Carrier Safety

The FAA uses traffic, operational and capacity data as important safety indicators and to prepare the air carrier traffic and operation forecasts that are used in developing its budget and staffing plans, facility and equipment funding levels, and environmental impact and policy studies. The FAA monitor changes in the number of air carrier operations as a way to allocate inspection resources and in making decisions as to increased safety surveillance. Similarly, airport activity statistics are used by the FAA to develop airport profiles and establish priorities for airport inspections.

Acquisitions and Mergers

While the Justice Department has the primary responsibility over air carrier acquisitions and mergers, the Department reviews the transfer of international routes involved to determine if they would substantially reduce competition, or determine if the transaction would be inconsistent with the public interest. In making these determinations, the proposed transaction's effect on competition in the markets served by the affected air carriers is analyzed. This analysis includes, among other things, a consideration of the volume of traffic and available capacity, the flight segments and origins-destinations involved, and the existence of entry barriers, such as limited airport slots or gate capacity. Also included is a review of the volume of traffic handled by each air carrier at specific airports and in specific markets which would be affected by the proposed acquisition or merger. The Justice Department uses T-100 data in carrying out its responsibilities relating to airline competition and consolidation.

Traffic Forecasting

The FAA uses traffic, operational and capacity data as important safety indicators and to prepare the air carrier traffic and operation forecasts. These forecasts as used by the FAA, airport managers, the airlines and others in the air travel industry as planning and budgeting tools.

Airport Capacity Analysis

The mix of aircraft type are used in determining the practical annual capacity (PANCAP) at airports as prescribed in the FAA Advisory Circular Airport Capacity Criteria Used in Preparing the National Airport Plan. The PANCAP is a safety-related measure of the annual airport capacity or level of operations. It is a predictive measure which indicates potential capacity problems, delays, and possible airport expansions or runway construction needs. If the level of operations at an airport exceeds PANCAP significantly, the frequency and length of delays will increase, with a potential concurrent risk of accidents. Under this program, the FAA develops ways of increasing airport capacity at congested airports.

Airline Industry Status Evaluations

The Department appraises Congress, the Administration and others of the effect that major changes or innovations are having on the air transportation industry. For this purpose, summary traffic and capacity data as well as the detailed segment and market data are

essential. These data must be timely and inclusive to be relevant for analyzing emerging issues and must be based upon uniform and reliable data submissions that are consistent with the Department's regulatory requirements.

International Negotiations and Routes

Many air services between the United States and foreign countries are governed by bilateral agreements. Evaluations of existing bilateral agreements and proposed changes to such agreements are based on a determination of the traffic and revenues between the United States and foreign countries for scheduled passenger and cargo flights as well as charter services. In order to determine conditions of reciprocity and overall balance of trade, DOT conducts similar analyses for countries with which the United States does not have bilateral aviation agreements. Information used in these analyses includes traffic volume by countries and by city-pairs for passenger and cargo services and the corresponding traffic yields. Load factors, aircraft seating configurations, cargo capacities and aircraft unit cost are also used in the analyses. In limited entry markets, the competing air carriers are required to submit an operating plan. To analyze these plans, the Department uses current and historical traffic and capacity data to determine the reliability of the applicants' forecasts and to evaluate applicants' competing fare and service proposals.

Mail Rates

The Department is responsible for establishing international and intra-Alaska mail rates. International mail rates are set based on scheduled operations in four geographic areas: Trans-border, Latin America, operations over the Atlantic Ocean and operations over the Pacific Ocean. Separate rates are set for mainline and bush Alaskan operations. The rates are updated every six months to reflect changes in unit costs in each rate-making entity. Traffic and capacity data are used in conjunction with cost data to develop the required unit cost data.

Essential Air Service

The Department reassesses service levels at small domestic communities to assure that capacity level are adequate to accommodate current demand.

System Planning at Airports

The FAA is charged with administering a series of grants that are designed to accomplish the necessary airport planning for future development and growth. These grants are made to

State metropolitan and regional aviation authorities to fund needed airport systems planning work. Individual airport activity statistics, nonstop market data, and service segment data are used to prepare airport activity level forecasts.

Review of IATA Agreements

The Department reviews all of the International Air Transport Association (IATA) agreements that relate to fares, rates, and rules for international air transportation to ensure that the agreements meet the public interest criteria. Current and historic summary traffic and capacity data, such as revenue ton-miles and available ton-miles, by aircraft type, type of service, and length of haul are needed to conduct these analyses: to (1) Develop the volume elements for passenger/cargo cost allocations, (2) evaluate fluctuations in volume of scheduled and charter services, (3) assess the competitive impact of different operations such as charter versus scheduled, (4) calculate load factors by aircraft type, and (5) monitor traffic in specific markets.

Foreign Air Carriers Applications

Foreign air carriers are required to submit applications for authority to operate to the United States. In reviewing these applications the Department must find that the requested authority is in the public interest. In the latter cases, T-100 data are used in assessing the level of benefits that carriers of the applicant's homeland presently are receiving from their U.S. operations. These benefits are compared and balanced against the benefits U.S. carriers receive from their operations to the applicant's homeland.

Air Carrier Fitness

The Department determines whether U.S. air carriers are and continue to be fit, willing and able to conduct air service operations without undue risk to passengers and shippers. The Department monitors a carrier's load factor, operational, and enplanement data to compare with other carriers with similar operating characteristics. Carriers that expand operations are a high rate are monitored more closely for safety reasons.

International Civil Aviation Organization

Pursuant to an international agreement, the United States is obligated to report certain air carrier

data to the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO). The traffic data supplied to ICAO are extracted from the U.S. air carriers' Schedule T-100 submissions.

The Confidential Information Protection and Statistical Efficiency Act of 2002 (44 U.S.C. 3501 note), requires a statistical agency to clearly identify information it collects for non-statistical purposes. BTS hereby notifies the respondents and the public that BTS uses the information it collects under this OMB approval for non-statistical purposes including, but not limited to, publication of both Respondent's identity and its data, submission of the information to agencies outside BTS for review, analysis and possible use in regulatory and other administrative matters.

Donald W. Bright,

Assistant Director, Airline Information.

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Bureau of Transportation Statistics

Agency Information Collection; Activity Under OMB Review; Report of Financial and Operating Statistics for Small Aircraft Operators

AGENCY: Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS), DOT.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: In compliance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, Public Law 104-13, the Bureau of Transportation Statistics invites the general public, industry and other governmental parties to comment on the continuing need for and usefulness of BTS collecting financial, traffic and operating statistics from small certificated and commuter air carriers. Small certificated air carriers (operate aircraft with 60 seats or less or with 18,000 pounds of payload capacity or less) currently must file the two quarterly schedules listed below:

F-1 Report of Financial Data,
F-2 Report of Aircraft Operating Expenses and Related Statistics, and Commuter air carriers must file the Schedule F-1 Report of Financial Data.

Commenters should address whether BTS accurately estimated the reporting burden and if there are other ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information collected.

DATES: Written comments should be submitted by February 15, 2005.

ADDRESSES: Comments should be directed to: Office of Airline Information, K-14, Room 4125, Bureau of Transportation Statistics, 400 Seventh Street, SW., Washington, DC 20590-0001, fax no. 366-3383 or e-mail bernard.stankus@bts.gov.

Comments: Comments should identify the OMB #2138-0009. Persons wishing the Department to acknowledge receipt of their comments must submit with those comments a self-addressed stamped postcard on which the following statement is made: Comments on OMB #2138-0009. The postcard will be date/time stamped and returned.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Bernie Stankus, Office of Airline Information, K-14, Room 4125, Bureau of Transportation Statistics, 400 Seventh Street, SW., Washington, DC 20590-0001, (202) 366-4387.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: OMB Approval No: 2138-0009.

Title: Report of Financial and Operating Statistics for Small Aircraft Operators.

Form No.: BTS Form 298-C.

Type of Review: Extension of a currently approved collection for the financial data.

Respondents: Small certificated and commuter air carriers.

Number of Respondents: 80.

Estimated Time per Response: 4 hours per commuter carrier, 12 hours per small certificated carrier.

Total Annual Burden: 1,600 hours.

Needs and Uses: Program uses for Form 298-C financial data are as follows:

Mail Rates

The Department of Transportation sets and updates the Intra-Alaska Bush mail rates based on carrier aircraft operating expense, traffic, and operational data. Form 298-C cost data, especially fuel costs, terminal expenses, and line haul expenses are used in arriving at rate levels. DOT revises the established rates based on the percentage of unit cost changes in the carriers' operations. These updating procedures have resulted in the carriers receiving rates of compensation that more closely parallel their costs of providing mail service and contribute to the carriers' economic well-being.

Essential Air Service

DOT often has to select a carrier to provide a community's essential air service. The selection criteria include historic presence in the community, reliability of service, financial stability and cost structure of the air carrier.

Carrier Fitness

Fitness determinations are made for both new entrants and established U.S. domestic carriers proposing a substantial change in operations. A portion of these applications consists of an operating plan for the first year (14 CFR part 204) and an associated projection of revenues and expenses. The carrier's operating costs, included in these projections, are compared against the cost data in Form 298-C for a carrier or carriers with the same aircraft type and similar operating characteristics. Such a review validates the reasonableness of the carrier's operating plan.

The quarterly financial submissions by commuter and small certificated air carriers are used in determining each carrier's continuing fitness to operate. Section 41738 of Title 49 of the United States Code requires DOT to find all commuter and small certificated air carriers fit, willing, and able to conduct passenger service as a prerequisite to providing such service to an eligible essential air service point. In making a fitness determination, DOT reviews three areas of a carrier's operation: (1) The qualifications of its management team, (2) its disposition to comply with laws and regulations, and (3) its financial posture. DOT must determine whether or not a carrier has sufficient financial resources to conduct its operations without imposing undue risk on the traveling public. Moreover, once a carrier begins conducting flight operations, DOT is required to monitor its continuing fitness.

Senior DOT officials must be kept fully informed and advised of all current and developing economic issues affecting the airline industry. In preparing financial condition reports or status reports on a particular airline, financial and traffic data are analyzed. Briefing papers prepared for senior DOT officials may use the same information.

Air Transportation Safety and System Stabilization Act

DOT is using financial data reported by small certificated and commuter air carriers to establish benchmarks to assess the reasonableness of air carrier claims under the Stabilization Act.

The Confidential Information Protection and Statistical Efficiency Act of 2002 (44 U.S.C. 3501 note), requires a statistical agency to clearly identify information it collects for non-statistical purposes. BTS hereby notifies the respondents and the public that BTS uses the information it collects under this OMB approval for non-statistical purposes including, but not limited to,