



## THE CHAIRMAN'S CORNER

Friday, August 8, 2003

### MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

The role and responsibilities of the National Transportation Safety Board include the review and adoption of safety investigation reports to determine the probable cause of accidents in order to issue safety recommendations that will prevent repeat occurrences. This critical determination uses the facts, science and data of the investigation to form the basis for our safety recommendations to the states, to industry, and to other federal agencies. The independence of the investigation combined with the reputation of the NTSB for its excellence and expertise is the core of our safety function.

This *Chairman's Corner* provides additional information on the activities of the Board in this responsibility area, highlighting both the accident reports and the related recommendations. Progress, performance and results — the NTSB Board is working aggressively to conclude our current investigations in a timely fashion in order to close the safety loop with the issuance, and implementation, of our safety recommendations.

*Ellen G. Engleman*

### NTSB BOARD MEETINGS

Since March 2003, the NTSB five Member Board has held eight public meetings and adopted six accident reports:

- **2003 Most Wanted List:** The Board Review of the “Most Wanted” list of safety recommendations resulted in an intensive 30-day review of the effectiveness of this safety advocacy program. A new aggressive advocacy effort will result with full participation by all Board members to “clean up the record” of the approximately 1000 open safety recommendations. The Board will utilize the renewed “Most Wanted List” as its primary tool to close the safety loop through successful implementation of all outstanding NTSB safety recommendations.
- **15 Passenger Vans:** Two separate accidents involving 15-passenger vans that crashed after tire blowouts were reviewed. The Board determined that these crashes were caused by tire failures based on poor tire maintenance, and the inability of the driver to maintain control of the vans in an emergency. (*May 8, and July 15, 2001, in Henrietta, TX, and Randleman, NC.*)



#### **Driver distraction involving cell phone use for freight train and highway safety:**

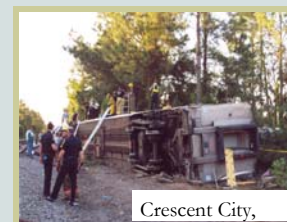
Two separate accidents involving cell phones were considered; they involved the collision of two BNSF freight trains near Clarendon TX and a highway crash in Largo, MD. The NTSB determined that the coal train engineer was distracted by talking on his cell phone and passed the stopping point indicated in the track warrant. The NTSB found that the highway crash was due to a combination of driver inexperience, unfamiliarity with the vehicle, and speed and distraction caused by use of a handheld wireless telephone. (*May 28, 2002, Clarendon, TX; Feb 1, 2002, Largo, MD.*)

- **Emery Worldwide Flight 17:** The NTSB determined that the probable cause of the crash of Emery Worldwide flight 17 was due to poor maintenance which resulted in loss of pitch control resulting from the disconnection of the right elevator control tab caused by a failure to properly secure and inspect the bolt attaching the right elevator control tab crank fitting to the pushrod. (*Feb 16, 2000, Rancho Cordova, CA.*)



**Angels Flight Funicular Railway:** Collision of two rail cars on the Angels Flight Funicular Railway in Los Angeles, CA. was due to improper design and construction of the drive system. The probable cause also cited the failure of the Los Angeles Community Redevelopment Agency and the California Public Utilities Commission to ensure that the railway system conformed to safety design specifications and known funicular safety standards. (*Feb 1, 2001, Los Angeles, CA.*)

**Crescent City Amtrak Train Derailment:** The NTSB determined that the Amtrak track derailment was caused by a heat-induced track buckle that developed because of inadequate CSX track-surfacing operations. (*Apr 18, 2002, Crescent City, FL.*)



## PART II PROGRESS REPORT.....

### The NTSB has issued the following recommendations:

#### Federal Aviation Administration — 15 new recommendations include:

- Modify air traffic control radar data processing backup systems to provide conflict alert functionality;
- Several recommendations addressing pressure vessel repairs to transport-category airplanes;
- Require immediate inspection of all propeller parts and assemblies overhauled or inspected by T&W Propellers, Chino, CA, to determine if they are airworthy. Require that all Hartzell Z-shank propellers be overhauled every 2,000 hours or 5 years
- Require all 14CFR Part 139 certified airports to upgrade all runway safety areas that could meet the minimum standards and install engineered materials arresting systems in each runway safety area. The upgrade system installations should not be part of other runway improvement projects;
- Require that all Embraer 145 and 135, Canadair CL-600 RJ and Challenger CL-600, and Fairchild Dornier 328-300 airplanes be modified with a digital flight data recorder system that meets the sampling rate, range, and accuracy requirements specified in 14 CFR 121.344, Appendix M. Survey all aircraft required by Federal regulation to have a flight data recorder to ensure that the data recorder meets the same requirements;
- Issue a FSIB informing operators and pilots of single-engine helicopters equipped with Rolls-Royce model 250 series IV engines of the potential fault with the full authority digital electronic control system that may cause a sudden, uncommanded decrease of engine power without any identified cockpit indication or warning.



#### The Board issued 25 Highway Safety Recommendations which include:

- Develop 15 passenger van driver training programs (Advocates, GM, Ford and NHTSA), require lap/shoulder belts at all center seats and long term performance for tire pressure monitoring systems (NHTSA), revise definitions of buses and commercial vehicles for 12- and 15-passenger vans (FMCSA and NHTSA), establish driver's license endorsements by completing a training program on the operation of the vans and pass a written and skills test for 12- and 15-passenger vans (States);
- Develop driver education curriculum, media campaigns warning of the dangers of distracted driving (NHTSA and Ad Council), add driver distraction codes to traffic accident investigation forms (States);
- Expand the current evaluation of electronic stability control systems and determine their potential for assisting drivers in maintaining control of passenger cars, light trucks, SUVs, and vans. If results of the evaluation are favorable initiate a phased-in electronic stability control mandate for passenger cars, light trucks, SUVs, and vans (NHTSA);
- Restrict wireless communication devices use for holders of learner's permit and intermediate licenses (States);
- Revisions to Passenger Vehicles and Light Trucks Inspection Handbook to provide guidance on inspecting and failing tires for extensive weather checking or deterioration and on examining tires to ensure that they have the proper load rating (American Association of MVAs);
- Require all passenger vehicle inspections include tire pressure measurement and correction of any inflation deficiencies detected and identification and failure of those tires that exhibit extensive weather checking and deterioration or that are not properly load-rated (Texas and Virginia).

The Board issued a **Marine Safety** Recommendation to the National Park Service to establish oversight procedures and verify tour boat concessionaires carry an appropriately sized lifejacket for every child on board.

#### The Board issued four Railroad Safety Recommendations that include:

- New or amended regulations that will control use of cellular phones and similar wireless communication devices by railroad operating employees while on duty (FRA);
- In territory not equipped with a positive train control system, restrict the issuance of track warrant authority and address track warrant (The General Code of Operating Rules Committee);
- Require that train dispatchers, upon receiving reports of potentially hazardous conditions involving a main track segment or switch, stop train movements or immediately implement an appropriate speed restriction for the affected area and remove the restriction only after the completion of those inspections and/or repairs that are essential for the safe movement of trains (FRA).