



## THE CHAIRMAN'S CORNER

Friday, October 10, 2003

### MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Special thanks to **Bob Chipkevich, Mike Flanigan, Dr. Steve Jenner, Ted Turpin, Rick Downs**, and all NTSB staff who participated in an excellent board meeting on the April 23, 2002, Placentia, CA train accident. The Board voted on three new recommendations and reiterated one.

The Board recommended that BNSF revise their signal awareness form procedure to require recording of time, speed, and aspect name for all signals at the time they are encountered, and that the American Association of Railroads report to the Board the milestones and activities needed for completion of

the interoperability standards for positive train control (PTC) systems and their priorities for completion of this effort. The Board also reiterated a recommendation to the FRA to facilitate actions necessary for development and implementation of PTC systems.

This accident represents the importance of developing new technologies to support our safety goals – and at the same time increases the awareness that implementation of these technologies is key to ensuring that we benefit in all modes. Positive train control will be both revolutionary and evolutionary for

rail safety - - Revolutionary in that it is a new technology; evolutionary in that it is a redundant safety system. The human factor is still dominant and elements of fatigue, situational awareness, inattentiveness, training, procedures and personal responsibility must be in the forefront of all safety activities.

The NTSB is dedicated to raising the safety bar in all modes of transportation. Everyone is responsible to help achieve improvements and ensure a safe transportation system.

*Ellen G. Engleman*

### NTSB CITES BNSF CREW'S INATTENTIVENESS

“This accident, which happened during rush-hour on a commuter route, illustrates how each employee is responsible for safety and how implementation of new technology can save lives,” said Chairman Engleman.

On October 7th, the NTSB determined that the probable cause of the collision between a Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) freight train and a Metrolink commuter in Placentia, California, April 23, 2002, was the freight train crews inattentiveness to the signal system and their failure to

observe, recognize, and act on the approach signal.

Contributing to the accident was the absence of a positive train control system that would have automatically stopped the freight train short of the stop signal. Additionally, if the BNSF conductor had been more actively involved in monitoring the signals, he may not have misidentified an approach signal as clear, the Board found.

“The Safety Board has issued recommendations on Positive Train Control since 1969. The technology these systems provide are the best approach to reducing human error collision,” Engleman said. “The Board’s

strong interest in this issue was further demonstrated when we placed PTC on our Most Wanted list in 1990.”



NTSB staff at the October 7th Board Meeting to review the accident report for the Placentia, CA train collision.

## NTSB ALL HANDS MESSAGES

### WELCOME



**Ms. Lola A. Ward, Acquisition Division**—Ms. Ward assumed the duties as the Chief of the Acquisition Division in September 2003. In this capacity Ms. Ward is responsible for contract award and administration functions for NTSB acquisitions. Ms. Ward is the chief advisor to the Managing Director and senior management regarding all procurement matters. Previously, Ms. Ward served as the Director of Contracts and Procurement, at the Department of Transportation's Research and Special Programs Administration in which she led the Department on many procurement reforms. While at DOT, she received the Secretary's Silver Medal and the Administrator's Eagle Award for implementing many innovative procurement initiatives and streamlining the acquisition process. Ms. Ward has over 25 years experience in federal acquisition. Ms. Ward has a Bachelor of Science degree from LaSalle University in Philadelphia, PA. She resides in Northern Virginia with her husband and four daughters.



**Ms. Colette M. Magwood, Assistant Director for Human Resources**—Ms. Magwood assumed the duties as the Assistant Director for Human Resources in September 2003. Previously, Ms. Magwood worked at the Department of Commerce, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration from 1993 to 2003. Beginning in 2003, she managed the Senior Executive Resource Program, comprised of 140 executives for the bureau and in support of the Agency. From 1998 to 2003, she served as nationwide program manager for the Department of Commerce Demonstration Project, an alternate personnel system based on a pay for performance premise, otherwise known as paybanding, and from 1993 to 1998, served in a variety of human resource positions.

### On the Hill...

Chairman Engleman met with Congressman Olver to discuss the NTSB budget and hard core drunk driving.



### NTSB SUCCESSES

**Office of Aviation Safety**—Jeff Rich, Patrick Jones, Tealeye Cornejo, Wayne Pollack, Jeff Guzzetti, and Barbara Zimmerman were featured on the Discovery Channel's show, "When Planes Go Down" that aired on October 2nd.

**Office of Research and Engineering**—John Whitener completed a software upgrade of our enterprise backup system. Early tests have resulted in reduced backup times and we expect better results after the weekend full backup completes.

### NTSB OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

**15-passenger Vans**—The National Collegiate Athletic Association and National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) have advised SR that they will run the Board's drop-in article urging national organizations that use 15-passenger vans to improve the safety of their operation; the alert will run in both print and electronic newsletters. NAIA has sent an electronic version of the alert to more than 500 of its member colleges.

**Kentucky Highway Safety Testimony** – Steve Blackistone testified regarding the NTSB's recommendations for preventing highway accidents before a joint meeting of the Kentucky House and Senate Transportation Committees, on October 7. His remarks focused on alcohol, teenage drivers, and 15-passenger vans.