

THE CHAIRMAN'S CORNER



Friday, November 5, 2004

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

This week, the NTSB launched to the scene of a Metro rail accident in our Nation's capital, Washington, DC. Fortunately, there was no loss of life, but the accident on the Red Line affected commuters throughout the District and, once again, illustrated the importance of safety in all modes.

Safety in our transportation system has a primary benefit of saving lives, but also has an enormous secondary impact on protecting the health of our economy. This accident cut off the entire northwest portion of the Metro rail system for a time, forcing

commuters to find alternate ways of getting home that evening. It has also caused delays on the Red Line for the last two days while wreckage is removed, and repairs are made to the tracks and systems.

Workers in this country make nearly 1.4 million trips on commuter rail per day, and nearly 10 million trips on other types of rail, which is why it is so important to ensure the safety of these transportation systems between home and work.

Ellen Engleman Conners

Team Launches to Washington, DC Train Collision

The NTSB launched a Go-Team to investigate the crash of two Washington Metro subway trains on Wednesday, November 3rd. Twenty people were injured when an empty six-car train rolled backward into a six-car train that was in service, but stopped at the Woodley Park-Zoo/Adams Morgan Metroline station. The crash shut down the Metro's Red Line for several hours, and has forced the line down to single track operations until the wreckage is cleared. Investigator-in-charge **Ed Dobranetski** is leading a team of six at the scene of the accident, which includes investigators from the fields of Mechanical, Systems Safety, Human Performance, and Survival Factors. Member **Debbie Hersman** acted as the on-scene spokesman for the accident, assisted by **Terry Williams** from Public Affairs.



The scene at the Metro train collision in Washington, DC.

Safety Board To Meet on Two Items

The National Transportation Safety Board will hold a public Board meeting on Tuesday, November 9th in its Washington, DC headquarters to discuss two items. The first involves Medical Oversight of Noncommercial Drivers. This report examines several accidents involving drivers with medical conditions that may have significantly impacted their ability to drive.

The Federal Most Wanted Safety Recommendations Annual Update will be the second item on the agenda. Some of the federal Most Wanted issues to be reviewed this year include: rate of runway incursions, fuel-air mixtures in fuel tanks of transport category aircraft, removal of recommendations for voyage data recorders (Marine) and cab voice recorders (Rail) from Most Wanted list.



NTSB ALL HANDS MESSAGES



Aviation Industry Training

The NTSB will hold Aviation Industry Training for Airline Professionals on December 9th & 10th. The course is open to party coordinators, technical representatives and others who may find themselves on-scene during an NTSB investigation. This course is designed to help these individuals understand how the Safety Board investigates major aviation accidents and what it expects of "parties" to the investigation.

Applications must be received no later than November 30, 2004. More details can be found at www.nts.gov/Academy/sched_courses.htm.

On the Hill...

The Office of Government and Industry Affairs and the Office of Railroad, Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Investigations have been working with Members' offices on several Union Pacific train derailments in Bexar County, Texas.



Congress is expected to finalize several Appropriation Bills still outstanding in the 108th Congress during the Lame Duck Session of Congress. One of the outstanding bills would appropriate funds for the NTSB for FY 2005.

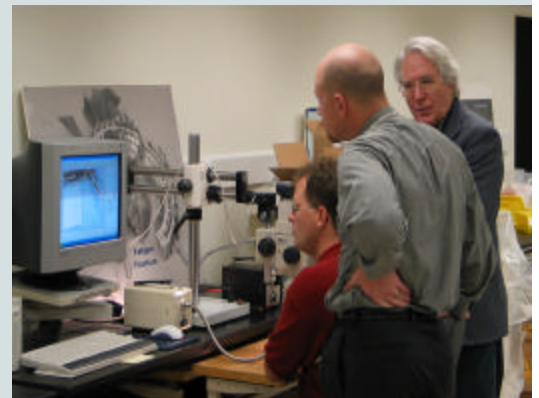
NTSB Continues Work on Space Probe Crash

The NTSB is continuing work on the investigation into the recovery system failure of the NASA Genesis space probe. This week, **Clint Crookshanks** and **Matt Fox** from the Office of Research and Engineering (RE) Materials Lab, worked with Dr. Henning



Heat damaged wiring from the Genesis spacecraft.

Leidecker, Chief Engineer of Electrical Parts at the NASA Goddard Space Flight Center, to conduct a forensic examination of the electrical system from the spacecraft. The Genesis probe traveled one million miles from the Earth during its three year mission to collect matter from the sun. The spacecraft was destroyed after its recovery parachute failed to open during reentry. Although just two of the 250 ceramic collection tiles remained intact after impacting the Utah desert, the team estimates that 80% of the solar samples will be recovered.



Matt Fox (seated), Clint Crookshanks and Dr. Henning Leidecker examine microscopic images of the Genesis probe.

Investigators to Examine 747 Engine

The Office of Aviation Safety is preparing to examine the engine of a Kalitta American International Airways Boeing 747, which separated from the aircraft and fell into Lake Michigan on October 20th. After the separation, the flight diverted to the Detroit Metro Airport, Detroit, Michigan, where it landed safely. The aircraft, which was configured as a cargo freighter, departed from Chicago O'Hare Airport and was destined for John F. Kennedy Airport in New York at the time of the incident. Due to the potential for airworthiness concerns, a partial go-team consisting of regional and headquarters investigators is being established to investigate this incident. Broken portions of the engine pylon have been examined on-scene and in the NTSB's Materials Lab. It is expected that the engine will be recovered from the lake as soon as it is located.