



THE CHAIRMAN'S CORNER

Friday, November 19, 2004

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

The National Transportation Safety Board is well noted for its work in investigating accidents, determining probable cause and issuing and implementing safety recommendations in all modes of transportation. We have the opportunity to recognize some of the efforts that may not be as well known.

This year's DOT Inspector General audit review received a clean report for Fiscal Year 2004. This is a significant achievement. We strive to ensure that the same level of integrity that we use in our investigations is utilized in our financial management. It is important to protect and preserve the taxpayer's dollars so that we can efficiently and effectively use our resources in the pursuit of safety. The results of this audit prove our commitment to excellence in all phases of the Safety Board's operations. Congratulations to Steve Goldberg and the entire CFO Team.

Our Office of Transportation Disaster Assistance successfully trained members of the FBI's Victim Assistance Rapid Deployment Team in helping families of crime victims. And the Office of Highway Safety began a safety study which we hope will make our students safer traveling to and from school.

It is estimated that over 37 million citizens will travel more than 50 miles from their homes for the Thanksgiving holiday, with 82% traveling by car. This figure is above the levels prior to 9/11. We are traveling again, and in record numbers. I hope that you enjoy this Thanksgiving holiday and please, travel safely.

Ellen Engleman Conners

NTSB Receives Clean Audit



Don Libera, Ed Benthall, Suzanne Krauth, Mary Musgrove and Steve Goldberg from the CFO's office. Not Pictured are Sue Berry, Cheryl Blanchette, Phyllis Gibert, Sylvia Livingston, Aurora Marteja, Richard Miller, Bill Mills, Pat Murray and Dee Pettus.

For the second consecutive year, the National Transportation Safety Board's financial statements received an unqualified, or "clean," opinion from the Department of Transportation Inspector General. The results derive from an audit conducted on the Safety Board's financial statements for Fiscal Year 2004. In addition, the Board met the new accelerated submission deadline of November 15th.

The audit was conducted by Leon Snead and Company, CPA of Rockville, Maryland. The Accountability of Tax Dollars Act of 2002 requires small agencies, such as the NTSB, to submit audited financial statements to the Congress and the Office of Management and Budget. The NTSB Reauthorization Act of 2000 gave the DOT/IG its audit oversight authority over the NTSB's financial management, property management and business operations.

NTSB ALL HANDS MESSAGES



FEHB Open Season

The Federal Employees Health Benefit (FEHB) Open Season runs through December 13, 2004. Now is the time to make changes to your FEHB plan. All 2005 FEHB Guides, health plan brochures, and the 2005 premium rates are available on the OPM web site at www.opm.gov/insure/health. This site also contains an interactive tool that will allow you to find health plans that service your area, and will allow you to make comparisons of the cost, benefits and quality indicators of the plans that interest you. If you have any questions, please contact Pam Goins at x6236 or by email at goins@ntsb.gov.

On the Hill...

On November 16th the Chairman went to the Hill to meet with the Congressional Texas Delegation, led by Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison, for a briefing on six Union Pacific rail accidents that have occurred in San Antonio since May. The meeting included the Mayor of San Antonio, two city councilmen and the County Judge. **Bob Chipkevich, Ron Hynes, Jim Remines** from the Office of Railroad, Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Investigations and **Cheryl McCullough** from Government and Industry Affairs also attended.



FBI Receives Victim Assistance Training

The staff of the NTSB's Office of Transportation Disaster Assistance (TDA) completed three days of training at the NTSB Academy in Ashburn, Virginia for 20



TDA's **Erik Grosopf** conducts training in family assistance operations.

members of the newly-created Victim Assistance Rapid Deployment Team (VARDT) of the FBI Office for Victim Assistance. VARDT members provide family assistance operations during criminal events that result in fatalities and will also support NTSB TDA in certain responses. The training featured classroom instruction, two table-top exercises, and a mock crash site requiring VARDT members to organize a site visit. Working lunches included a presentation by the DOD Office of Family Policy on the Pentagon Family Assistance Center, which was created after the 9/11 disaster.



TDA staff and members of VARDT.

Highway Safety Launches Two Investigations

The Office of Highway Safety (HS) began an incident investigation of a school bus/car accident that occurred in Cache, Oklahoma, in which two high school students were killed driving to school. The NTSB will be examining the issue of students riding to and from school in private cars instead of school buses. Each year more than 800 students are killed in accidents while traveling to and from school, with nearly half riding as passengers. Only about 8 students are killed each year in school buses.

Highway Safety also conducted a field investigation of a motorcoach collision with the Alexandria Street overpass on the George Washington Parkway in Alexandria Virginia. While there were no fatalities in this accident, in 1987, the Board conducted a major investigation of a similar crash that occurred at exactly the same location, killing one. Investigators launched on this accident to examine why this type of collision could occur again now that the highway is clearly marked as the result of the NTSB's previous recommendations.