

THE CHAIRMAN'S CORNER



Friday, December 3, 2004

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

We have recently reached a milestone at the National Transportation Safety Board with our 2000th highway safety recommendation. That first highway recommendation in 1968 was the NTSB's first step in helping make our roads safer and reducing the tens of thousands of highway deaths each year. Statistics show that traffic fatalities today would exceed 80,000 per year using 1968 rates. This year, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration recorded the lowest rate for traffic fatalities ever. But over 42,000 people are still being lost on our nation's highways every year.

Each day, the NTSB makes small steps toward reducing these numbers. We still have a long way to go, but little by little, we are making progress. In 1968, no one could have foreseen that that first highway recommendation would have been the start of a journey that has helped avoid thousands of deaths on our nation's highways. Thirty-six years and 2000 recommendations later, the results are clear. And it is this knowledge that keeps us making these steps.

Ellen Engleman Conners

Investigators launch to 12 accidents

NTSB investigators have launched to the scene of 12 accidents in the last two weeks. The Office of Aviation Safety (AS) is investigating nine domestic accidents that killed 22 people. A Go-Team was launched for the November 22nd crash of a Gulfstream III in Houston, Texas that was en route to pick up former President Bush. Vice Chairman **Mark Rosenker** acted as on-scene spokesman, and Investigator-in-Charge **Frank Hildrup** led a team of eight at the site of the accident, which killed all three crewmembers. Investigator **Arnold Scott** is also leading a team of eight in the investigation of the crash of a Canadair CL-600 corporate jet in Montrose, Colorado that killed three. The aircraft was carrying NBC Sports President Dick Ebersol and two of his sons, one of whom died in the accident. During this period, NTSB investigators launched to seven other aviation accidents in Mississippi, California, Virginia, Washington, Missouri, Tennessee and New Jersey. The seven accidents killed a total of 16 people. Investigators from AS also acted as the U.S. Accredited Representatives for two accidents in China and Indonesia that killed 92 others.



NTSB Investigator **Jose Obregon** examines the site of a Cessna 195 crash in Mississippi.

The Office of Railroad, Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Investigations (RPH) launched a team to Zephyrhills, FL to investigate the collision of two CSX freight trains, which resulted in the derailment of four locomotives and 14 rail cars. **Russ Gober** and **Dick Hipkind** from RPH are investigating the accident, which killed one crewmember and injured three others.

NTSB ALL HANDS MESSAGES



Open Season Reminders

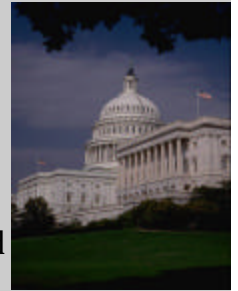
The Federal Employees Health Benefit (FEHB) Open Season lasts through December 13th. Changes to your 2005 health benefits must be made during this period.

The Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) Open Season is also lasts through December 31st. Participants covered by FERS or CSRS can make changes to their retirement contributions during this time.

Questions about these programs can be addressed to Pam Goins at x6236 or goinsp@ntsb.gov.

On the Hill...

As requested by Congress in Public Law (P.L.) 106-424 and P.L. 108-168, the Office of Government and Industry Affairs is finalizing two reports for Calendar Year 2004: The annual report on activities and operations of the NTSB Academy and Board Member non-accident related travel. In addition, since the 2005 Omnibus Appropriations bill has not been signed by the President, NTSB is currently under a Continuing Resolution until December 8.



Highway Safety Issues 2000th Recommendation

The NTSB's Office of Highway Safety (HS) recently issued its 2000th safety recommendation as a result of a Special Investigation Report into the Medical Oversight of Noncommercial Drivers. The first recommendation was issued by HS on December 28th, 1968, to the Federal Highway Administration "to examine the need for and the feasibility of developing methods whereby hazardous driving conditions such as fog, can be forcefully brought to the attention of drivers." The recommendation was made as a result of a series of multi-vehicle collisions in fog on Interstate-55 near Joliet, Illinois on August 12, 1967. The accidents killed five and injured 24 more. The most recent recommendation was made to the Federation of State Medical Boards to "work with member organizations to ensure that continuing medical education requirements in all States include a course addressing the driving risks associated with certain medical conditions and medications..." Highway safety recommendations have an 87% acceptance rate, with 1746 closed since the first one was issued.

Statistical analyses of fatality trends showed that over 52,000 people were dying annually on U.S. roadways in the early 1970's. This number dropped to 42,643 in 2003. Although the fatality numbers have risen slightly in the last 10 years, the fatality rate has dropped to it's lowest level ever of 14.66/100,000 population or 1.48/1,000,000 miles traveled. U.S. drivers traveled 2,880 billion miles in 2003.

Chairman Addresses Aero Club

NTSB Chairman Engleman Connors spoke to members of the Aero Club of Washington on November 23rd, at the Capitol Hilton Hotel in Washington, DC. The topic of the November 23rd keynote speech was "Safety and Security – Finding the Balance." The Chairman addressed the estimated 120 members who attended the monthly luncheon, which included U.S. Secretary of Transportation Norman Y. Mineta.

The Aero Club was founded in 1909 for the promotion of aviation and aerospace issues. The Club's membership consists of leaders in the aviation community.

