

Waresboro, to milepost AP 617.94, near Pearson, a distance of 23.25 miles, in Atkinson and Ware Counties, GA (the line). The line includes the Pearson Station and traverses United States Postal Service ZIP Codes 31552, 31564, and 31642.

The line does not contain federally granted rights-of-way. Any documentation in CSXT's possession will be made available promptly to those requesting it. The applicant's entire case for abandonment (case-in-chief) was filed with the application.

This line of railroad has appeared on CSXT's system diagram map in category 1 since March 28, 2003.

The interest of railroad employees will be protected by the conditions set forth in *Oregon Short Line R. Co.—Abandonment—Goshen*, 360 I.C.C. 91 (1979).

Any interested person may file with the Board written comments concerning the proposed abandonment, or protests (including the protestant's entire opposition case), by October 20, 2003. All interested persons should be aware that following any abandonment of rail service and salvage of the line, the line may be suitable for other public use, including interim trail use. Any request for a public use condition under 49 U.S.C. 10905 (49 CFR 1152.28) and any request for a trail use condition under 16 U.S.C. 1247(d) (49 CFR 1152.29) must be filed by October 20, 2003. Each trail use request must be accompanied by a \$150 filing fee. *See* 49 CFR 1002.2(f)(27). Applicant's reply to any opposition statements and its response to trail use requests must be filed by November 4, 2003. *See* 49 CFR 1152.26(a).

Persons opposing the abandonment who wish to participate actively and fully in the process should file a protest. Persons who oppose the abandonment but who do not wish to participate fully in the process by submitting verified statements of witnesses containing detailed evidence should file comments. Persons seeking information concerning the filing of protests should refer to 49 CFR 1152.25. Persons interested only in seeking public use or trail use conditions should also file comments.

In addition, a commenting party or protestant may provide: (i) An offer of financial assistance (OFA) for continued rail service under 49 U.S.C. 10904 (due 120 days after the application is filed or 10 days after the application is granted by the Board, whichever occurs sooner); (ii) recommended provisions for protection of the interests of employees; (iii) a request for a public use condition under 49 U.S.C. 10905; and (iv) a statement pertaining to prospective use

of the right-of-way for interim trail use and rail banking under 16 U.S.C. 1247(d) and 49 CFR 1152.29.

All filings in response to this notice must refer to STB Docket No. AB-55 (Sub-No. 640) and must be sent to: (1) Surface Transportation Board, 1925 K Street, NW., Washington, DC 20423-0001; and (2) Natalie S. Rosenberg, CSX Transportation, Inc., 500 Water Street, Jacksonville, FL 32202. The original and 10 copies of all comments or protests shall be filed with the Board with a certificate of service. Except as otherwise set forth in part 1152, every document filed with the Board must be served on all parties to the abandonment proceeding. 49 CFR 1104.12(a).

The line sought to be abandoned will be available for subsidy or sale for continued rail use, if the Board decides to permit the abandonment, in accordance with applicable laws and regulations (49 U.S.C. 10904 and 49 CFR 1152.27). Each OFA must be accompanied by a \$1,100 filing fee. *See* 49 CFR 1002.2(f)(25). No subsidy arrangement approved under 49 U.S.C. 10904 shall remain in effect for more than 1 year unless otherwise mutually agreed by the parties (49 U.S.C. 10904(f)(4)(B)). Applicant will promptly provide upon request to each interested party an estimate of the subsidy and minimum purchase price required to keep the line in operation. The carrier's representative to whom inquiries may be made concerning sale or subsidy terms is set forth above.

Persons seeking further information concerning abandonment procedures may contact the Board's Office of Public Services at (202) 565-1592 or refer to the full abandonment or discontinuance regulations at 49 CFR part 1152. Questions concerning environmental issues may be directed to the Board's Section of Environmental Analysis (SEA) at (202) 565-1539. [Assistance for the hearing impaired is available through the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at 1-800-877-8339.]

An environmental assessment (EA) (or environmental impact statement (EIS), if necessary) prepared by SEA will be served upon all parties of record and upon any agencies or other persons who commented during its preparation. Other interested persons may contact SEA to obtain a copy of the EA (or EIS). EAs in these abandonment proceedings normally will be made available within 33 days of the filing of the application. The deadline for submission of comments on the EA will generally be within 30 days of its service. The comments received will be addressed in the Board's decision. A supplemental

EA or EIS may be issued where appropriate.

Board decisions and notices are available on our Web site at WWW.STB.DOT.GOV.

Decided: September 17, 2003.

By the Board, David M. Konschnik, Director, Office of Proceedings.

Vernon A. Williams,
Secretary.

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DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

Capital Asset Realignment for Enhanced Services (CARES) Commission; Notice of Meeting

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) gives notice under Public Law 92-463 (Federal Advisory Committee Act) that the Capital Asset Realignment for Enhanced Services (CARES) Commission will hold a meeting on Tuesday, October 7, 2003, in Room 418 of the Russell Senate Office Building, Washington, DC 20510. The meeting will begin at 8:30 a.m. and end at 5 p.m. The meeting is open to the public.

The purpose of the Commission is to conduct an external assessment of VA's capital asset needs and to assure that stakeholder and beneficiary concerns are fully addressed. The Commission is reviewing recommendations in VA Under Secretary for Health's Draft National CARES Plan. The Commission will also consider recommendations submitted by veterans service organizations, individual veterans, Congress, medical school affiliates, VA employees, local government entities, community groups and others. Following its assessment, the Commission will make specific recommendations to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs regarding the realignment and allocation of capital assets necessary to meet the demands for and enhance veterans health care services over the next 20 years.

The October 7, 2003, meeting will be the first national meeting of the Commission since the Draft National CARES Plan was issued where parties from outside VA will address the Commission. As a final step in the Commission's information gathering process, national leaders are being asked to provide a national perspective on the CARES process and the Draft National CARES Plan to the entire Commission. Leadership from both the Senate and House of Representatives Veterans Affairs Committees and the