

meeting. FRA enclosed the report with a letter Report to Congress signed May 17, 2000.

(Report to Congress) The Appropriations Conferees included in their report on the FY 2003 DOT Appropriations Act a requirement for a second review of the costs and benefits of PTC as a part of the 2005 budget submission to Congress. FRA will request the RSAC to comment on the draft report when available.

(Regulatory development) The Standards Task Force, formed to develop PTC standards assisted in developing draft recommendations for performance-based standards for processor-based signal and train control systems. The NPRM was approved by consensus at the full RSAC meeting held on September 14, 2000. The NPRM was published in the **Federal Register** on August 10, 2001. A meeting of the Working Group was held December 4–6, 2001, in San Antonio, Texas to formulate recommendations for resolution of issues raised in the public comments. Agreement was reached on most issues raised in the comments. A meeting was held May 14–15, 2002, in Colorado Springs, Colorado at which the Working Group approved creation of teams to further explore issues related to the “base case” issue. Briefing of the full RSAC on the “base case” issue was completed on May 29, 2002, and consultations continued within the working group. The full Working Group met October 22–23, 2002, and again March 4–6, 2003. Resolution of the remaining issues was considered by the Working Group at the July 8–9, 2003, meeting. The Working Group achieved consensus on recommendations for resolution of a portion of the issues in the proceeding. The full Committee considered the Working Group recommendations by mail ballots scheduled for return on August 14, 2003; however, a majority of the members voting did not concur. FRA has proceeded with preparation of a final rule, which is currently being reviewed in the Executive Branch.

(Other program development activities) Task forces on Human Factors and the Axiomatic Safety—Critical Assessment Process (risk assessment) continue to work toward development of a risk assessment toolkit, and the Working Group continues to meet to monitor the implementation of PTC and related projects. Contact: Grady Cothen (202) 493–6302.

*Task 00–1*—Determining the need to amend regulations protecting persons who work on, under, or between rolling equipment and persons applying, removing or inspecting rear end

marking devices (Blue Signal Protection). The Working Group held its first meeting on October 16–18, 2000, and six meetings have been held since then. The Working Group significantly narrowed the issues, but did not reach full consensus on recommendations for regulation action. The status of this rulemaking will be addressed at the December 2, 2003, RSAC meeting. Contact: Doug Taylor (202) 493–6255.

*Task 03–01* Passenger Safety. This Task was accepted May 20, 2003, and a Working Group was established. The Working Group held its first meeting September 9–10, 2003. At the second meeting held November 6–7, 2003, four task forces were established and specific issues were committed to each task force for resolution. Task forces are charged with reporting to the working group regarding need, practicability, and milestones with respect to each issue item.

#### Completed Tasks

*Task 96–1*—(Completed) Revising the Freight Power Brake Regulations.

*Task 96–2*—(Completed) Reviewing and recommending revisions to the Track Safety Standards (49 CFR Part 213).

*Task 96–3*—(Completed) Reviewing and recommending revisions to the Radio Standards and Procedures (49 CFR Part 220).

*Task 96–5*—(Completed) Reviewing and recommending revisions to Steam Locomotive Inspection Standards (49 CFR Part 230).

*Task 96–6*—(Completed) Reviewing and recommending revisions to miscellaneous aspects of the regulations addressing Locomotive Engineer Certification (49 CFR Part 240).

*Task 96–7*—(Completed) Developing Roadway Maintenance Machines (On-Track Equipment) Safety Standards.

*Task 96–8*—(Completed) This Planning Task evaluated the need for action responsive to recommendations contained in a report to Congress entitled, *Locomotive Crashworthiness & Working Conditions*.

*Task 97–7*—(Completed) Determining damages qualifying an event as a reportable train accident.

*Task 01–1*—(Completed) Developing conformity of FRA's regulations for accident/incident reporting (49 CFR Part 225) to revised regulations of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), U.S. Department of Labor, and to make appropriate revisions to the *FRA Guide for Preparing Accident/Incident Reports* (Reporting Guide).

Please refer to the notice published in the **Federal Register** on March 11, 1996,

(61 FR 9740) for more information about the RSAC.

Issued in Washington, DC on November 25, 2003.

**George A. Gavalla,**

*Associate Administrator for Safety.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

### National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

#### Innovative Grants To Support Increased Safety Belt Use Rates

**AGENCY:** National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), Department of Transportation (DOT).

**ACTION:** Announcement of grants to support innovative and effective projects designed to increase safety belt use rates.

**SUMMARY:** NHTSA announces the fifth year of a grant program under Section 1403 of the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA–21) to provide funding to States for innovative projects to increase safety belt use rates. Consistent with prior years, the goal of this program is to increase safety belt use rates across the Nation in order to reduce the deaths, injuries, and societal costs that result from motor vehicle crashes. Award of funds will be based on criteria specified in this Notice. This Notice solicits applications from the States, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, through their Governors' Representatives for Highway Safety, for funds to be made available in fiscal year (FY) 2004. Detailed application instructions are provided in the Application Procedure and the Application Contents and Grant Criteria sections of this Notice.

**DATES:** Applications must be received by the appropriate NHTSA Regional Office, on or before January 14, 2004.

**ADDRESSES:** Each State must submit its application to the appropriate NHTSA Regional Office, to the attention of the Regional Administrator, on or before January 14, 2004. Addresses of the ten Regional Offices are listed in Appendix A.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Questions relating to this grant program should be directed to Janice Hartwill-Miller, Occupant Protection Division (NTI–112), Office of Impaired Driving and Occupant Protection, NHTSA, 400 Seventh Street, SW., Room 5118, Washington, DC 20590, by e-mail at [jhartwill-miller@nhtsa.dot.gov](mailto:jhartwill-miller@nhtsa.dot.gov), or by phone at (202) 366–2684. For legal