

# ALASKA RAILROAD CORPORATION



Corporate Address: P.O. Box 107500, Anchorage, Alaska 99510  
327 Ship Creek Avenue, Anchorage, Alaska 99501

May 17, 2004  
2004-08

*For Immediate Release*

Contact: Public Affairs Officer,  
Tim Thompson, 265-2695

## **Alaska Railroad Signs Agreement With EPA**

ANCHORAGE, AK -- The Alaska Railroad Corporation (ARRC) and the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 10 have reached agreement to undertake a long-term environmental remedial investigation and assessment on 600 acres of railroad land just north of downtown Anchorage. Railroad operations and other industrial uses that began over 80 years ago have resulted in suspected environmental problems at the site.

According to Pat Gamble, Alaska Railroad President and CEO, the Railroad will conduct the investigation under EPA guidance. If any significant contamination is discovered during the study period, the agreement calls for an assessment of risks to humans, wildlife or the environment. The assessment results will guide the development of a cleanup plan where appropriate and feasible. Any cleanup would be shared cooperatively with past owners/operators of the Ship Creek railroad yard who had previous responsibility for the property.

“The potentially complex issue boils down to what occurred, and who was responsible at the time,” President and CEO Pat Gamble said. “But clearly, the bottom line is that we and those affiliated parties will want to address any findings right away.”

The U.S. Government began construction of The Alaska Railroad in 1915 and operated the railroad up to the date of its transfer of ownership to the State of Alaska. From 1915 to 1985, various agencies of the federal government, including the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), owned and operated the railroad and the Anchorage Terminal Reserve in Ship Creek. In 1985, the State of Alaska took ownership of the railroad and the property in Anchorage, assuming previous Federal government leases to industrial and commercial businesses, ranging from small convenience stores to large oil storage operations.

The remedial investigation could take several years to complete. During this process, ARRC and EPA will encourage public involvement through public meetings, fact sheets, project documents to the community, and public comment opportunities throughout the process.

“Community involvement will be a significant component of this project,” said Gamble.

The Alaska Railroad Corporation is a self-sustaining, state-owned corporation that operates without state subsidy, that provides year round passenger and freight service to a number of rail belt communities from Seward to Fairbanks.