

FAIRBANKS INTERMODAL UPDATE

The Alaska Railroad is moving forward with its plans to build an intermodal facility in Fairbanks. This new facility is designed to ensure smooth and safe movement of passengers making travel connections on trains, buses and automobiles. While visitors will certainly enjoy this new facility, all Fairbanks residents will benefit as well. After the depot is moved, local traffic will improve since roads will no longer be blocked by long trains during rush hour. The new facility will also better position Fairbanks for its growing tourism industry.

Current plans are to locate the new facility on a 16.1 acre site adjacent to the Alaska



Fairbanks has outgrown the existing depot.

Railroad operations yard. Located at the intersection of Johansen Expressway and Danby Road, the new site is easily accessible from the downtown core and the airport. The facility will feature a state-of-the-art train depot, plenty of bus parking and safe transfer areas to ensure that our customers can easily and safely transfer from one mode of transportation to another. Additionally, taxi and bus stops will be conveniently located to allow easy transportation choices for the traveling public.

The Railroad just started phase one of the project. The design consultant from Fairbanks, Charles Bettisworth and Company Inc., is scheduled to conduct site investigations, conduct planning activities, define the project scope and develop a concept design.

An extensive public involvement process will be taking place throughout this and other phases. The Railroad encourages all Fairbanks residents to participate in this process. If you would like to be kept abreast of the Railroad's activities, please contact Charles Bettisworth and Company Inc. at 907-456-5780 or e-mail them at cbco@bettisworth.com. ♦

Alaska Railroad
Ongoing Projects:

Anchorage Airport Rail Station

Denali Depot

Seward Dock Improvements

Whittier Pedestrian Underpass

Anchorage/Wasilla
Line Changes

Fairbanks Intermodal Facility

Anchorage/Fairbanks
Railyard Study

On-Board Communications
System Upgrade

Ship Creek Improvements

Anchorage Rail Depot

Whittier Dock
Improvement Study

For updates on these
projects, visit the Alaska
Railroad website at
www.alaskarailroad.com

COMMUTER RAIL SERVICE BEING STUDIED

When we talk to Alaskans about projects that will help make a rail commuter service viable, we get asked a lot of questions we don't have answers to yet. But that will change soon. Last month, the Alaska Railroad began a commuter rail study that will tell how a successful commuter rail system between the Mat-Su Valley and Girdwood can be developed.

The study first will identify those Alaskans who would use a commuter rail service. Once the ridership profile is established, the study will examine other essential questions including: Where will the depots and park-n-

rides be located? What kind of mass transit will be used to transport commuters from the train depot to the workplace? How much will the train tickets cost? How often will the trains run? What kind of facilities will be needed and what type of equipment will be used? Who will manage and operate the service? Will the service require public funding? What type of public funding will Alaskans support?

A commuter service between the Mat-Su and Girdwood could contribute many positive benefits. As this region continues to grow, the Glenn and Seward Highways will become more crowded. A commuter rail system would help alleviate congestion during peak travel times. It would stave off the immediate need to add

new lanes to our highways. And by taking cars off the road, it would reduce the impact on air quality in the Anchorage Bowl which is one of the goals of Anchorage's 2020 Plan.

The commuter study is slated for completion by the end of this year. With this road map in hand, the Alaska Railroad, local governments and the public can determine whether Southcentral Alaska is ready to support a commuter rail system. As the Railroad and local governments work through this process, your input is valuable. Please send your comments and ideas to Debby Bloom at 1340 Birchwood Street, Anchorage, Alaska, 99508 or dbloom@alaska.net. ♦

PROGRESS ON THE SEWARD DOCK

To improve safety and better meet cruise ship and ferry passenger needs in Seward, the Alaska Railroad has been working on plans to construct a new freight dock and overhaul the existing dock into a passenger-only facility.

Currently, one dock services both types of customers. Loading ships with logs and unloading steel pipe near tourists from cruise ships can be dangerous. The Alaska Railroad and the cruise ship industry are concerned about safety and are working to improve it as both prepare for growth. Under current plans, passengers and freight customers will have their own space along Seward's waterfront.

Construction is currently underway, with completion scheduled for the new year.

This new facility will accommodate truck or rail transport and include a modern ship docking system. It will be approximately 640 feet long, 200 feet wide and situated roughly 400 feet from the passenger dock.

Once the freight dock is complete and freight customers are transferred to the new facility, the Railroad can begin its overhaul work on the existing dock. Meanwhile, the Railroad is developing the scope of work for these improvements and determining the schedule and budget. The plan is to have a contractor on board by the end of this year with a goal of making noticeable improvements by the next passenger season.

Improvements will include repaving the dock, dockside lighting, a facelift for the existing terminal facility, rehabilitation of interior space to better serve passengers and improved access to the uplands area. In addition, the Railroad is working with the cruise industry to ensure the harbor will be able to accommodate cruise ships up to 960 feet in length. ♦



Seward dock site plan

BRIGHTER YEAR AHEAD

By Governor Bill Sheffield

This past year has been one of the roughest ever for the Alaska Railroad. With three derailments, a lawsuit and tragic death of one of our employees, the Alaska Railroad has held a regular spot on the front page of newspapers throughout the state.

Despite this string of stories, what you haven't heard about is our successes and how we have dealt with this series of unfortunate events. First, we successfully cleaned up two of the derailment spills with recovery rates of 95 percent and 100 percent of the fuel spilled. The yard spill, caused by using a "cheater" wire to hold open a valve, was also completely recovered and employees were counseled that the procedure was illegal, contrary to railroad policy and not to be repeated.

It is certainly true that our largest spill, at Gold Creek, continues to haunt us with its slow recovery, but through our efforts, the fuel never reached the Susitna River and our containment was successful. To date, we've spent more than \$9 million on

IN THE PAST FIVE YEARS,
WE SPENT MORE THAN \$80
MILLION ON RAILS, TIES
AND BALLAST

this single derailment, cleaning up the site, and putting in more than 150 monitoring and recovery wells, as well as containment trenches. We may need to remain active there for years to come, but we will deal with the problem.

I know Alaskans expect a safe and reliable railroad and these difficulties have caused some to question our operating procedures. Ironically, because we've had a fairly sterling operating history in the past, we seem especially accident-prone today. Yet our accident figures remain in line with national rates even though we operate in an environment certainly more difficult than hauling hopper cars of wheat across Kansas.

I would like to quote from Mr. Gary Wolf, President of Rail Sciences, a national, independent consulting firm that investigated our last derailment. A reporter asked his professional opinion about the overall condition of our system. Here is what he had to say. "I saw this railroad in 1995. Today it's almost night and day with the improvements they've made."

And that improvement is real. After the last derailment, we walked every curve of more than three degrees on the mainline. In more than 500 miles of track we found only two curves that needed immediate replacement of ties and tie plates. But this isn't unusual maintenance. In the past five years, we spent more than \$80

million on rails, ties and ballast, replacing more than half a million ties during that period. Most railroads our size would only replace about 30,000 ties a year. It's no wonder that Mr. Wolf recognized our system improvement.

As we tackle each problem area and work to improve our performance, we still need to operate a daily railroad and accomplish nearly \$100 million in new capital projects, all while keeping an eye on the Railroad's role in the future.



The railroad replaces more than 100,000 ties a year.

Many of these capital projects are only possible through federal matching funds. That's why it is so important that the Alaska Railroad is a public corporation, because federal assistance would simply not flow to a private company in a similar way. Our congressional delegation, Senators Ted Stevens and Frank Murkowski and Congressman Don Young, have played an integral role in the growth of the Alaska Railroad and continue to help us reach the railroad's full potential.

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BRIGHTER YEAR AHEAD CONTINUED

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Recent problems notwithstanding, the Railroad has grown better and safer under state ownership since we acquired it from the federal government in 1984. Every last cent of revenue we generate goes right back into improving the system and growing the Railroad.

And growing we are. Last year the railroad posted record revenues in its three main sectors: freight, real estate and passenger services. In 1999, we carried more than 670,000 passengers and hauled more than seven million tons of freight, primarily commodities such as gravel,

coal and of course, fuel. These are basic commodities that Alaskans depend on every day.



New MAC SD70 locomotive, just one of the many improvements at the railroad.

The Alaska Railroad has been operating in Alaska for more than 75 years. This year has certainly not been one of our best. But through adversity we've learned valuable lessons, tightened our procedures and become better positioned to serve our customers. I would like to thank all Alaskans for bearing with us and granting us the time we need to address our problems and prepare for the future. ♦

EMPLOYEES ATTAIN 30 YEARS OF SERVICE

The following railroad employees will be or have had their 30 year anniversary in the year 2000. Our congratulations to each and every one.

Employee	Dept.	Job	Employee	Dept.	Job
Aaron Pascar	Mechanical	Carman	Nancy Tjaden	Finance	Freight Rate Auditor
Eugene Owens	Transportation	Conductor	James Trueblood	Mechanical	Locomotive Electrician
Robert Emerson	Transportation	Engineer	Frank Withey	Engineering	Track Repairer
Chelcie Eager	Transportation	Supervisor Customer Service	J. Gary Beitinger	Transportation	Engineer

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