

COMMUNITY

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Alaska Railroad Corporation
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ARRC GARNERS 2 PRESTIGIOUS AWARDS

Safety improvements and architecture inspire awards

In May, the railroad industry's most prestigious safety organization recognized the Alaska Railroad (ARRC) as one of the most improved railroads in the country for safety performance. ARRC was one of nine U.S. railroads to receive an Edward H. Harriman Memorial special certificate of commendation for continuous improvement in safety performance over at least a two-year period.

The annual Harriman Awards are granted to railroads with the fewest injuries per 200,000 man-hours worked. ARRC's injury rate in 2003 was 3.64, the lowest in the corporation's history and a 70% reduction since 1997. Edward H. Harriman was a pioneer in American railroading. His wife Mary founded the safety awards in his memory in 1913, when railroading was

considered among the most dangerous occupations.

Architecture — In April, the Bill Sheffield Depot at Ted Stevens International Airport won a coveted American Institute of Architects (AIA) Award. Architects from KMD (Kaplan McLaughlin Diaz) drew praise for their northern lights inspired design. Like the Aurora Borealis, the depot captures intriguing patterns of light — from skylights across vaulted ceilings, to towering glass walls that project a warm glow, to fiber optic northern lights décor along the tunnel linking to the airport terminal.

"The rail station brings the intrigue of the sky into a welcoming center to greet and tantalize visitors with the natural splendors of Alaska," said Herb McLaughlin, KMD's design director. ●

THEY'RE HERE!

This spring, the Alaska Railroad took possession of the eight new SD70MAC locomotives being purchased this year. Soon after rolling off a General Motors assembly line, locomotives 4317 through 4324 were distinctively painted before delivery. This fall, these 4300 horsepower locomotives will be equipped with head power (HEP), which will supply electricity to passenger coaches to run air conditioning, lighting, cooking appliances, etc.



Alaska Railroad
Ongoing Projects:

Fairbanks Intermodal Facility

Anchorage Operations Center

Anchorage-to-Wasilla
Track Realignment

Ship Creek Intermodal Center

Whittier Passenger Access

Improved Sidings & Signals

Track Integrity Detection

Fish Passage Improvements

Palmer Park-and-Ride Center

Anchorage Rail Capacity Study

Whistle Noise Reduction System

Seward Loading Facility

For updates or comments on
these projects, visit the Alaska
Railroad web site at
www.AlaskaRailroad.com

ARRC, EPA ASSESS SHIP CREEK

80 years of industrial operation prompts study



1933 Passenger Train brochure.

MOMENT IN HISTORY

The pictured 1933 Alaska Railroad passenger service brochure was distributed by Conoco Travel Bureau, in Denver, Colorado. That year, the passenger season was effective June 9 - September 8. There were no dining cars at the time, so luncheon stops were made in Anchorage and Healy. For the long route between Seward and Fairbanks, passenger trains stopped overnight in Curry, where the Alaska Railroad owned and operated the Curry Hotel.

According to the brochure, visitor connections to the Alaska Railroad could be made:

- at Seward, via the Alaska Steamship Company and Pacific Steamship Company based in Seattle;
- at Nenana, via the American-Yukon Navigation Company steamer river service between the Yukon Territory's Whitehorse and Dawson City, and Nenana. The Alaska Railroad also operated passenger and freight service on the Tanana and Lower Yukon rivers.
- At Fairbanks, via car travel along the Richardson Auto Trail that stretched from Fairbanks to Valdez. ●

The Alaska Railroad and the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recently agreed to environmentally assess about 600 acres of railroad land in the Ship Creek area. Railroad and other industrial uses over the

past 80 years may have resulted in environmental problems at the site. The Railroad will conduct the investigation under EPA guidance. If any significant contamination is discovered during the study period, risks to humans, wildlife or the environment will be assessed, and results will guide development of a cleanup plan where appropriate and feasible. Any cleanup would be shared cooperatively with past owners/operators.

“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 federal government constructed the railroad from 1915 to 1923, and various federal



There is no information indicating that it is unsafe to consume fish from Ship Creek.

agencies owned and operated the railroad until its transfer to the state. In 1985, the State of Alaska took ownership of the railroad and the property in Anchorage, assuming federal 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. A copy of the agreement, other information and updates are posted at www.alaskarailroad.com. ●



The size of the Ship Creek area being studied is approximately 600 acres.

LEGISLATIVE ACTIONS HOLD EXPANSION PROMISE

Lawmakers embrace potential rail extensions to Fort Greely and Canada

Some legislative actions this session may pave the way for economic expansion. Another will address land use restrictions that could hinder railroad expansion.

Lawmakers in both chambers wholeheartedly embraced several rail extension initiatives. Passed this year, Senate Bill 395 authorizes ARRC to issue up to \$500 million in tax-free revenue bonds to underwrite construction of a rail line from Fairbanks to Delta Junction and Ft. Greely. Bonds would be secured through U.S. Department of Defense funds and could be issued as early as 2005. This bill followed the 2003 initiative, HCR 2, which encourages ARRC to extend rail to

Ft. Greely to support military, agricultural and resource development activities.

Two years in the making, Senate Bill 31 authorizes the Railroad to delineate and survey a 500-foot-wide transportation corridor between Eielson AFB and the Canadian Border. The railroad would own a 200 foot-wide corridor embedded within the transportation corridor. Funding is not yet identified.

Also on the economic development front, Senate Bill 384 was introduced to authorize use of Railroad tax-exempt bonds to fund a gas pipeline down the rail corridor from Fairbanks to Anchorage. While the bill failed to pass, it could

be resurrected in a future session, depending on development of a North Slope gas pipeline.

The Railroad asked the legislature to respond to a recent Alaska Supreme Court decision that questioned the railroad's long-standing exemption from local planning and zoning ordinances. Lawmakers formed a task force to offer recommendations on whether and to what extent municipal planning, platting and land use regulations should apply to interests in land owned by the Alaska Railroad. The task force will be comprised of one senator, one house member, a member from each railbelt municipality, and a railroad representative. The legislature will consider their recommendations in 2005. ●

REGIONAL ROUND-UP

Alaska Railroad activity from Seward to Fairbanks

SEWARD: The railroad is assessing plans to improve capacity of the Seward Loading Facility that was purchased last September. The facility currently handles movement of coal that comes by train from Healy to Seward, where it is loaded onto ships headed for South Korea. An environmental assessment is underway to determine potential impacts.



The facility conveyor discharges coal into a ship's hold.

WHITTIER: The Railroad began greeting Princess Cruises passengers in this deepwater harbor community in late May. Construction of a privately owned dock, and repeal of a passenger tax, prompted Princess to move docking operations from Seward. To accommodate passengers seeking rail transportation from Whittier to Anchorage, ARRC created safe dock-to-train access, including a paved path, signage and shelter.



Whittier: A shelter is constructed over a path to the train.

(continued on back page)

ROUND-UP CONTINUED...

ANCHORAGE: This spring, Alaska Mechanical Inc. (AMI) began construction of the railroad's new Anchorage Operations Center situated off Whitney Road on railroad land. Designed by Architects Alaska, the building will house offices for key operations personnel, crew and train dispatch facilities, training rooms, conference and meeting areas, employee break areas, restroom/ locker rooms, and an Emergency Operations Center. The facility should be substantially complete by the end of 2004, and ready to operate in March 2005.



Anchorage Operations Center architecture compliments ARRC Headquarters building.

WASILLA: Wasilla residents and Mat-Su Valley commuters may notice new train activity between Pittman Road and the Glenn/Parks Interchange this

summer. A gravel train is traveling round-trip through Wasilla in the mornings, 5-6 days per week, to accommodate a new gravel pit located along the Parks Highway, just north of Wasilla. Other gravel trains run between pits in Palmer and processing facilities in Anchorage.

FAIRBANKS: Governor Frank Murkowski joined ARRC Chair John Binkley in late April for a Fairbanks Intermodal Facility ground-breaking ceremony. Designed by Charles Bettisworth & Company, the state-of-the-art passenger terminal is being constructed by AMI. It will begin receiving rail passengers in summer 2005. Covering 32-acres of land, the terminal location and track configuration can support an increased number of trains to meet projected passenger growth over the next 30 years. ●



Governor Murkowski praises Fairbanks Intermodal Facility.

2004 COMMUNITY TIES MAILING LIST UPDATE

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