

ALASKA RAILROAD CORPORATION



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

March 4, 2003
2003-004
For Immediate Release

Contact: Patrick Flynn
907-265-2695
flynnp@akrr.com

Canyon Consent Decree Signed

The Alaska Railroad Corporation (ARRC) will pay the federal government \$150,000 and upgrade a key piece of emergency response equipment to settle civil penalties related to a derailment and fuel spill at Canyon, in the upper Susitna Valley, in October 1999.

The settlement, contained in a consent decree lodged today, includes the cash payment and a credit, known as a Supplemental Environmental Project (SEP), for installing hyrail gear on a mobile command center. Outfitted with response and communications gear, the command center is designed for use at remote sites. The hyrail gear allows the command center to travel on railroad tracks. The SEP cost will be at least \$25,000.

“ARRC is glad to bring Canyon to closure,” Matt Glynn, ARRC VP and Chief Operating Officer, said. “We recovered 94 percent of the fuel spilled within weeks of the derailment, received a ‘no-further-action’ determination from the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) last September, and are operating with improved response procedures under a C-plan filed with DEC. With this settlement, we resolve the federal claims and get a vastly improved emergency response vehicle in the process. Our environmental staff and even some local responders are very excited about having this new response capability.”

The October 31, 1999 derailment occurred in a remote area about 40 miles north of Talkeetna and involved an Anchorage-bound fuel train. Approximately 12,500 gallons of jet-A leaked into a small stream and series of beaver ponds. A combination of ARRC employees and contractors successfully recovered 94 percent of the fuel and no measurable contamination remains.

The mobile command center SEP was undertaken in connection with the settlement of an enforcement action taken by the United States, on behalf of the Environmental Protection Agency, for alleged violations of Section 311 of the Clean Water Act.