



Alaska Railroad Corporation *News Release*

DATE: March 17, 2008
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Whistle Stop Train rolls into communities to offer FREE Emergency Response Information and Instruction

Alaska Railroad, Dept. of Environmental Conservation, and Dept. of Health & Social Services team up to provide citizens with emergency preparedness tools

ANCHORAGE, Alaska – The Alaska Railroad will be rolling into 10 railbelt communities March 31 through April 12 to offer practical information and instruction aimed at preventing and preparing for a variety of emergency situations. The *2008 Alaska Railroad Emergency Response Whistle Stop Tour* begins in Seward, with subsequent stops in Whittier, Palmer, Meadow Lakes (northern area of Wasilla), Talkeetna, Healy, Clear AFS, Nenana, Fairbanks and ending in Anchorage.

The tour is aimed first at training emergency responders, and secondarily at offering potentially life-saving information to the general public. Firefighters, rescue technicians, medics and other front-line personnel will take part in hazardous materials education and train accident response training to include classroom instruction, hands-on equipment exercises, and accident scenario drills. The public is invited to explore a mobile “fair” with presentations, experts and materials to help citizens plan ahead to avoid or mitigate situations ranging from wildfires and natural disasters, to crime and railroad hazards.

Along with the Alaska Railroad, sponsoring partners include the Alaska Departments of Environmental Conservation (ADEC) and Health & Social Services (ADHSS). The tour presents information from sponsor organizations, as well as from several nationally-recognized preparedness programs, including:

- **Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)**... training to prepare citizens to cope with a disaster
- **Citizen Corps**... training /preparing to support first responders during disasters and homeland threats
- **Neighborhood Watch**... organizing neighbors to deter crime and solve problems
- **FireWise Alaska**... planning to protect people and property from wildland fire
- **Forestry Division's Smokey the Bear**... tips and reminders for preventing forest fires
- **Operation Lifesaver**... learning to be safe around railroad tracks and operations
- **Departments of Emergency Services**... planning ahead by borough and municipal emergency organizations
- **Emergency & Health Preparedness**... ADHSS is teaming up with the Alaska Division of Homeland Security & Emergency Management to offer an exhibit and handouts with practical advice for planning ahead

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“The Alaska Railroad is required to periodically coordinate with the emergency response community on responding to accidents and incidents involving freight and passenger trains,” said Alaska Railroad Environmental Services & Emergency Response Manager Marc Peterson. “The Whistle Stop Tour program fulfills that mandate, but goes even further. These face-to-face forums allow for a true partnering with local emergency organizations. At the same time, the traveling train provides a venue to reach everyday citizens with tools that can save lives and property.”

In appreciation for the public’s interest and participation, Whistle Stop Tour sponsors are offering a separate door prize drawing for each community. Prizes include 2008 Summer Season Rail Tickets for two people, 2008 ARRC Posters, and First Aid Kits.

Public Fair railcars will be open to the public from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. each day, according to the following schedule:

Seward	Passenger Dock Terminal	Monday, March 31
Whittier	Princess Track	Tuesday, April 1
Palmer	Fairgrounds Depot	Wednesday, April 2
Wasilla	Pittman Road Siding	Thursday, April 3
Talkeetna	Spur Siding Downtown	Friday, April 4
Healy	Yard Outfit Track	Saturday, April 5
Clear AFS	Spur Track	Sunday, April 6
Nenana	Long Pass Track	Monday, April 7
Fairbanks	Depot Track	Tuesday, April 8 and Wednesday, April 9
Anchorage	Operations Center Track	Friday, April 11 and Saturday, April 12

Additional details on the *2008 Alaska Railroad Emergency Response Whistle Stop Tour* are available on the Alaska Railroad web site – www.AlaskaRailroad.com. Click on INFORMATION, then COMMUNITY. On the left, click on *Emergency Response Whistle Stop Tour*. The web site also includes whistle stop locator maps that show major cross streets, as well as parking areas, for each Whistle Stop location.

For more information, contact Marc Peterson at 265-2535 or External Affairs Manager Tim Thompson at 265-2695.