



Alaska Railroad Corporation *News Release*

DATE: March 26, 2009
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Tim Thompson, 265-2695

Avalanche Partially Buries Freight Train

Train Crew Safe and No Hazardous Materials Onboard

ANCHORAGE, Alaska – An avalanche hit an Alaska Railroad Corporation (ARRC) freight train early this morning near ARRC milepost 49.5, approximately 15-20 miles south of Portage. The three-man crew was not injured but a number of rail cars were buried. The train was carrying lumber, sheet rock and other building materials. No hazardous materials were being transported.

Comprised of 64 rail cars and three locomotives, the northbound freight train left Seward, headed for Anchorage, on Wednesday night. The train crew initiated an emergency stopping procedure around 11:30 p.m. The crew unhooked the locomotives from the rail cars and attempted to proceed north towards Anchorage, but an avalanche halted their progress. Maintenance crews were dispatched to clear the snow and the train crew was retrieved unharmed from the scene.

An aerial inspection on Thursday shows the avalanche buried at least 10 of the stopped rail cars. The locomotives and the remaining rail cars were not hit by the avalanche but heavy snow has blanketed the area.

Avalanche and snow crews are working today and into Friday to mitigate further avalanche activity and to clear existing slide zones. Weather is expected to improve and crews will remove moveable railcars once the area has been assessed and deemed safe for train movement.

-30-