



Alaska Railroad Corporation *News Release*

DATE: January 24, 2007
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Alaska Railroad schedules public meeting to provide an update on the Fairbanks Area Rail Realignment

*Project scope includes options for realignment outside of Fairbanks,
and options for realignment of branch track from Fairbanks to Eielson AFB*

ANCHORAGE, Alaska – The Alaska Railroad (ARRC) invites the public to a public meeting on the [Fairbanks Area Rail Realignment](#) (FARR) project:

Wednesday, January 31, 2007

4:30 to 7:00 p.m.

Presentation at 5:30 p.m.

Westmark Fairbanks Hotel & Conference Center

813 Noble Street, Fairbanks

The meeting is aimed at providing an update on efforts to:

- a) Reduce highway-railroad at-grade (same level) crossing impacts to the Fairbanks community to alleviate concerns regarding safety and congestion. This element of the FARR will build on previous reconnaissance studies and public involvement efforts, most recently the South Fairbanks Rail Realignment (SFRR) in 2006.
- b) Realign and improve the Eielson Branch, from the new Fairbanks rail depot at branch milepost (MP) G0.0 to the end of the branch (MP G19.0) near Eielson Air Force Base. This element of FARR will build on previous concept and environmental studies, most recently the Eielson Branch Rail Realignment (EBRR) Environmental Assessment (EA) in 2006.

The FARR project scope is essentially a combination of the SFRR and EBRR efforts, with the exception of the Fort Wainwright segment (*See background below*). The public meeting will include a presentation at 5:30 p.m., followed by a question-and-answer period. Other than the presentation and resulting discussion, the meeting will be open house style, allowing meeting attendees to talk one-on-one with project team members. The public will have an opportunity to submit comments in writing or to provide oral testimony at the meeting.

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Background

The railroad initiated the Eielson Branch Rail Realignment EA in mid-2005 with funding from the Department of Defense. Fact-gathering with the public, agencies and field work occurred during 2006.

In Summer 2006, at the request of local Fairbanks, North Pole and Borough government leaders, the Railroad initiated action to address a rail realignment outside of the more congested areas of Fairbanks. Called the South Fairbanks Rail Realignment Study, the effort renewed public involvement activities and started some preliminary engineering and alternative analysis of options posed in previous reconnaissance studies.

In December 2006, the Fort Wainwright component of the EBRR EA project was separated, effectively redirecting the EA focus and funding to the Fort Wainwright segment.

For 2007, the South Fairbanks and Eielson Branch realignment efforts were combined into a Fairbanks Area Rail Realignment project, which will likely require an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). Until funding is identified, this project will move forward with an alternatives analysis that incorporates the findings of previous studies.

People unable to attend the public meeting may visit www.AlaskaRailroad.com for project information. Written comments may be e-mailed to public_comment@akrr.com or mailed to Alaska Railroad Capital Projects, P.O. Box 107500, Anchorage, AK 99510-7500.

The hotel is accessible to individuals with disabilities. If special accommodations are needed, please contact the Railroad by calling TTY/TDD 265-2620, voice 265-2494, or via the Alaska Relay Service (ARS) TTY 1-800-770-8973 or voice 1-800-770-8255.

For more information, call Public Involvement Officer Stephenie Wheeler at 265-2671 or External Affairs Manager Tim Thompson, 265-2695.

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