



Alaska Railroad Corporation *News Release*

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Alaska Railroad schedules open house in Wasilla to discuss proposed capital project plans for 2009

Additional open house events in Anchorage and Fairbanks

ANCHORAGE, Alaska – The Alaska Railroad (ARRC) invites the public to an open house on Thursday, January 22, from 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. Evangelo's Restaurant, 2530 E. Parks Highway in Wasilla. The venue provides an opportunity to review and comment on a proposed Program of Projects (POP) for 2009.

The open house will showcase continuing and proposed capital improvement projects that are in various stages – from conceptual planning to construction. Project managers will be on-hand to explain projects that are located all along the Railroad system from Seward to Fairbanks, with an emphasis on projects located within the Matanuska-Susitna Borough, Southcentral Alaska and system-wide, including:

- Port MacKenzie Rail Extension
- South Wasilla Rail Line Relocation
- Curry Quarry Development and Production
- Healy Canyon Safety & Reliability Program
- Denali Park Passenger Turnaround Track,
- Collision Avoidance System
- Rehabilitation of Matanuska River Bridge and other bridge work
- A self-propelled DMU Rail Car and two Bi-level “first-class” Dome Rail Cars
- Track Rehabilitation

The ARRC Wasilla Open House will occur at the same time and place as a Mat-Su Borough public meeting on the proposed southern Trunk Road Extension, providing a one-stop venue for interested residents. The ARRC Wasilla event is also the second in a series of POP Open House events. Open Houses in other locations are scheduled as follows:

- **Anchorage** – 4:00-7:00 p.m. on Wednesday, January 21, at the Railroad's Historic Rail Depot (Ship Creek), 411 West First Avenue. Emphasis will be on projects located in Southcentral Alaska.
- **Fairbanks** – 4:00-7:00 p.m., Tuesday, January 27, at the Alaska Railroad Depot, 1745 Johansen Expressway. Emphasis will be on projects located in Interior Alaska.

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Since 1996 through 2008, the Alaska Railroad will have received about \$795 million in federal grants that have been used to repair and improve an aging track infrastructure, to modernize signal and safety equipment, to build new facilities, and to offer valuable new services. About \$105 million in federally-funded grants is budgeted for 2009. Grants received from such agencies as the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) require a 9% to 25% funding match from ARRC. Since 1996, the Alaska Railroad has provided more than \$42 million to match grants, including \$4.6 million budgeted for 2009. In addition to matching funds, ARRC will have invested an additional \$215 million of internally-generated funds to support numerous non-federal capital improvement projects since 1996; this includes \$21.6 million for 2009.

People unable to attend the open house events 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.

Open House locations are 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 Director, External Affairs Tim Thompson, 265-2695.