

Federal Aviation Administration, Northwest Mountain Region, Airports Division, ANM-600, 1601 Lind Avenue, S.W., Suite 540, Renton, WA 98055-4056.

In addition, any person may, upon request, inspect the application, notice and other documents germane to the application in person at the Spokane International Airport.

Issued in Renton, Washington, on December 24, 1996.

David A. Field,

*Manager, Planning, Programming and Capacity Branch, Northwest Mountain Region.*

[FR Doc. 96-33377 Filed 12-31-96; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910-13-M

## Federal Railroad Administration

[FRA Waiver Petition Docket No. PB-95-4]

### Petition for Waiver of Compliance

In accordance with Part 211 of Title 49 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), notice is hereby given that the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) received a request for a waiver of compliance with certain requirements of its safety standards. The individual petition is described below, including the party seeking relief, the regulatory provisions involved, the nature of the relief being requested, and the petitioner's arguments in favor of relief.

#### Northeast Illinois Railroad Corporation

Northeast Illinois Railroad Corporation (Metra) seeks a permanent waiver of compliance from certain provisions of 49 CFR Part 232, Section 17, on passenger cars equipped with 26-C brake equipment by extending the clean, oil, test and stencil (COT&S) period from 36 to 48 months, and on passenger cars that are equipped with PS-68 brake systems by eliminating the required 12 cycle of single car testing. According to Metra's waiver request, their entire car fleet is equipped with the 26-C brake valve and is captive to the Chicago metropolitan area. Each Metra car is placed in a yard at least once each week. Their passenger locomotive fleet is equipped with Graham-White Air Dryers which provide a source of clean, dry air to the brake system. When on repair tracks or upon completion of COT&S, Metra cars are tested under Metra's Code of Tests for Passenger Cars. The Metra's Code of Tests for Passenger Cars is based upon Association of American Railroad's (AAR) Standard S-044 with the following enhancements:

- Main reservoir pipe and reservoir leakage test (Part 2.2);
- Test for auxiliary brake pipe reduction devices (Part 2.5);
- Lift interlock pressure setting test (required feature covered by the American Disabilities Act) (Part 2.10);
- Test for cars equipped with the 26-C service portion valves and ABDXL emergency portion valves (Part 2.16); and
- Test for the car handbrake (Part 2.17).

The passenger cars operated on the Burlington Northern are equipped with a PS-68 brake system, which has 26-C brake equipment as its foundation. The PS-68 brake system is governed by a 48 month COT&S cycle, per AAR Standard S-045. In date, testing has been performed as the cars are repaired in maintenance shops. According to Metra, the car is dependable and safe, and their experience with this equipment does not support a benefit for the additional 12 month cycle of single car testing.

Interested parties are invited to participate in these proceedings by submitting written views, data, or comments. FRA does not anticipate scheduling a public hearing in connection with these proceedings since the facts do not appear to warrant a hearing. If any interested party desires an opportunity for oral comment, they should notify FRA, in writing, before the end of the comment period and specify the basis for their request.

All communications concerning these proceedings should identify the appropriate docket number (e.g., Waiver Petition Docket Number PB-95-4) and must be submitted in triplicate to the Docket Clerk, Office of Chief Counsel, FRA, Nassif Building, 400 Seventh Street S.W., Washington, D.C. 20590. Communications received within 30 days of the date of this notice will be considered by FRA before final action is taken. Comments received after that date will be considered as far as practicable. All written communications concerning these proceedings are available for examination during regular business hours (9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.) at FRA's temporary docket room located at 1120 Vermont Avenue, N.W., Room 7051, Washington, D.C. 20005.

Issued in Washington, D.C. on December 20, 1996.

Phil Olekszyk,

*Deputy Associate Administrator for Safety Compliance and Program Implementation.*

[FR Doc. 96-33303 Filed 12-31-96; 8:45 am]

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[FRA Waiver Petition Docket No. PB-96-2]

### Petition for Waiver of Compliance

In accordance with Part 211 of Title 49 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), notice is hereby given that the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) received a request for a waiver of compliance with certain requirements of its safety standards. The individual petition is described below, including the party seeking relief, the regulatory provisions involved, the nature of the relief being requested, and the petitioner's arguments in favor of relief.

#### South Kansas & Oklahoma Railroad and South East Kansas Railroad

The South Kansas & Oklahoma Railroad and the South East Kansas Railroad seek a permanent waiver of compliance from 49 CFR Part 232.13 (e)(1), concerning transfer and yard train air test. The aforementioned railroads work in Coffeyville, Kansas, preparing outbound trains on a daily basis. The trains are built throughout the day with cars being added at various times. According to the railroads, the space available does not allow for complete trains to be built without cutting or clearing four public crossings, including a Federal highway. The trains depart each day after receiving an initial terminal air test but they cannot be air tested at locations where the trains are made up without blocking some or all of the aforementioned crossings for significant amounts of time. The railroads would like to put trains together and pull them to the edge of town where they can be tested without blocking any public crossings. The track speed is governed by restricted speed with a maximum of 10 mph, all within yard limits. Currently, the railroads make two air tests of the same train within a two mile area. The railroads state that the city of Coffeyville has one road accessibility to the south part of town when the aforementioned crossings are blocked, thus the waiver would allow for safer access by emergency personnel, as well as save the public from long delays by blocked crossings.

Interested parties are invited to participate in these proceedings by submitting written views, data, or comments. FRA does not anticipate scheduling a public hearing in connection with these proceedings since the facts do not appear to warrant a hearing. If any interested party desires an opportunity for oral comment, they should notify FRA, in writing, before the end of the comment period and specify the basis for their request.

All communications concerning these proceedings should identify the appropriate docket number (e.g., Waiver Petition Docket Number PB-96-2) and must be submitted in triplicate to the Docket Clerk, Office of Chief Counsel, FRA, Nassif Building, 400 Seventh Street S.W., Washington, D.C. 20590. Communications received within 30 days of the date of this notice will be considered by FRA before final action is taken. Comments received after that date will be considered as far as practicable. All written communications concerning these proceedings are available for examination during regular business hours (9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.) at FRA's temporary docket room located at 1120 Vermont Avenue, N.W., Room 7051, Washington, D.C. 20005.

Issued in Washington, DC, on December 20, 1996.

Phil Olekszyk,

*Deputy Associate Administrator for Safety Compliance and Program Implementation.*

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## UNITED STATES INFORMATION AGENCY

### Community Connections

**ACTION:** Notice—request for proposals.

**SUMMARY:** The Office of Citizen Exchanges, Russia/Eurasia Division of the United States Information Agency's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs announces a competition for an assistance award. Public and private non-profit organizations meeting the provisions described in IRS regulation 26 CFR 1.501(c)(3)-1 may apply to organize and implement community-based, professional programs for entrepreneurs, legal professionals and government officials from Russia, Ukraine, Moldova, Armenia, Belarus, and Georgia. The objective of Community Connections, the successor to Business for Russia, is to enhance the participants' skills in business and entrepreneurship, law, and local governance. USIA is interested in proposals that provide both professional experience and exposure to American life and culture through internships hosted by U.S. business and local governmental and legal institutions, and home stays with local community members. An overall objective of Community Connections is to establish long term lasting relationships among U.S. and international audiences. This program is not academic in nature; rather, it is designed to provide practical, hands-on training in

American business, legal and public sector environments which can be transferred upon an individual's return home. The Agency welcomes innovative proposals which combine elements of professional enrichment, job shadowing and internships appropriate to the language ability and interests of the participants.

Overall grant-making authority for this program is contained in the Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961, Public Laws 87-256, as amended, also known as the Fulbright-Hays Act. The purpose of the Act is "to enable the Government of the United States to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries . . . ; to strengthen the ties which unite us with other nations by demonstrating the educational and cultural interests, developments, and achievements of the people of the United States and other nations . . . and thus to assist in the development of friendly, sympathetic and peaceful relations between the United States and the other countries of the world." The funding authority for the program cited above is provided through the *Freedom* Support Act.

Programs and projects must conform with Agency requirements and guidelines outlined in the Solicitation Package. USIA projects and programs are subject to the availability of funds.

**ANNOUNCEMENT TITLE AND NUMBER:** All communications with USIA concerning this announcement should refer to the above title and reference number E/PN-97-18.

**DEADLINE FOR PROPOSALS:** All copies must be received at the U.S. Information Agency by 5 p.m. Washington, D.C. time on Friday, February 28, 1997. Faxed documents will not be accepted, nor will documents postmarked February 28, 1997 but received at a later date. It is the responsibility of each applicant to ensure that proposals are received by the above deadline.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** The Office of Citizen Exchanges, Russia/Eurasia Division, E/PN Room 216, U.S. Information Agency, 301 4th Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20547, Phone: (202) 401-6884, fax: (202) 619-4350, internet: vrector@usia.gov to request a Solicitation Package containing more detailed award criteria, required application forms, and standard guidelines for preparing proposals, including specific criteria for preparation of the proposal budget.

**TO DOWNLOAD A SOLICITATION PACKAGE VIA INTERNET:** The Solicitation package may be downloaded from USIA's website at <http://www.usia.gov/or> from

the Internet Gopher at [gopher://gopher.usia.gov](http://gopher.usia.gov). Select "Education and Cultural Exchanges", then select "Current Request for Proposals (RFPs)." Please read "About the Following RFPs" before beginning to download.

Please specify USIA Program Officer Michael Weider on all inquiries and correspondence. Interested applicants should read the complete Federal Register announcement before sending inquiries or submitting proposals. Once the RFP deadline has passed, Agency staff may not discuss this competition in any way with applicants until the Bureau proposal review process has been completed.

**SUBMISSIONS:** Applicants must follow all instructions given in the Solicitation Package. The original and 12 copies of the application should be sent to: U.S. Information Agency, Ref.: E/PN-97-18, Office of Grants Management, E/XE, Room 326, 301 4th Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20547.

**DIVERSITY GUIDELINES:** Pursuant to the Bureau's authorizing legislation, programs must maintain a non-political character and should be balanced and representative of the diversity of American political, social, and cultural life. "Diversity" should be interpreted in the broadest sense and encompass differences including, but not limited, to ethnicity, race, gender, religion, geographic location, socio-economic status, and physical challenges. Applicants are strongly encouraged to adhere to the advancement of this principle both in program administration and in program content. Please refer to the review criteria under the 'Support for Diversity' section for specific suggestions on incorporating diversity into the total proposal.

### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

#### Overview

Community Connections seeks to establish and strengthen links between American communities and communities in Russia, Ukraine and Moldova. Contingent upon the availability of funds, we also anticipate expanding the program to include audiences from Armenia, Belarus and Georgia. Community Connections will focus on business (particularly entrepreneurship), the legal profession and its relationship to the administration of justice, and issues of concern for local and regional government. In order to expand the reach and impact of Community Connections, the program will recruit both English speaking participants and participants with little or no English-language skills.