

making, showing any revisions to the approach proposed in the grantee's application. This detailed action plan will be subject to the technical direction and approval of NHTSA and will describe the following:

(1) The personnel and hardware resources required to perform the data linkage.

(2) The process for obtaining the different files required for linkage.

(3) The process for accelerating the State's data processing, if necessary, so that the statewide data are available in a timely manner for the linkage.

(4) The process for verifying the data and performing additional edits on the linkage variables.

(5) The process for resolving problems expected during linkage and their proposed solutions.

(6) The milestones for completing the various phases of the probabilistic linkage and validation processes.

(7) The milestones for proposed meeting schedules and actions by the Board of Directors and Advisory Committee.

(8) Date(s) for providing 1995 and 1996 linked database(s) to NHTSA.

(9) The process for identifying the limitations of the final linked database or applications of the linked data, if any.

(10) The process for ensuring access to the linked data as demand for information increases.

(11) The process for choosing those applications of linked data that will have the most impact on reducing death, injury, and costs of injuries related to motor vehicle crashes.

(12) The milestones for implementing the applications.

(13) The benefits expected from the applications of the linked data.

b. Quarterly Progress Reports. During the performance, the grantee will provide letter-type written reports to the NHTSA COTR. These reports will compare what was proposed in the Plan of Action with actual accomplishments during the past quarter; what commitments have been generated; what follow up and support are expected; what problems have been experienced and what may be needed to overcome the problems; and what is specifically planned to be accomplished during the next quarter. These reports will be submitted seven days after the end of each quarter.

c. Board of Directors and Advisory Committee Meetings. Copies of the agenda and minutes for each Board of Directors and Advisory Committee Meeting will be attached to the Quarterly Progress Report submitted to NHTSA immediately following the meeting.

d. Final Report. The grantee shall deliver to NHTSA, at the end of the project, a final report describing the results of the data linkage process, and the applications of the linked data. The report shall include the following:

(1) A description of the state crash and injury data linked,

(2) A description of the file preparation,

(3) A description of the linkage, validation processes and results,

(4) A description of the applications of linked data implemented for decision-making and results of the decision-making,

(5) A discussion of the limitations of the linked data and subsequent applications of these data,

(6) A description of how the State will institutionalize data linkage and continue to use linked data for decision-making,

(7) A description of the documentation created to facilitate repeating of the linkage process and an estimate of how much time is needed to repeat the linkage in subsequent years, and

(8) A copy of the public-use formats that were successful for incorporating linked data into the State's decision-making processes for highway safety and injury control.

e. CODES Linked Database. The grantee shall deliver to NHTSA after linkage, at the date specified in the Action Plan, the CODES linked databases. NHTSA's funds are not being used to "buy" the linked data so NHTSA does not retain rights to the linked data. NHTSA's will use the data to help facilitate the development of data linkage capabilities at the state level and to encourage use of the linked data for decision making by the state. The deliverable will include:

(1) The database in an electronic media and format acceptable to NHTSA, including all persons, regardless of injury severity (none, fatal, non-fatal) involved in a reported motor vehicle crash during 1995 and 1996 and including medical and financial outcome information for those who are linked.

(2) A copy of the file structure for the linked data file.

(3) Documentation of the definitions and file structure for each of the data elements contained in the linked data files.

(4) An analysis of the quality of the linked data and a description of any data bias which may exist based on an analysis of the false positive and false negative linked records.

3. During the effective performance period of Cooperative Agreements

awarded as a result of this announcement, the agreement as applicable to the grantee shall be subject to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's General Provisions for Assistance Agreements.

Issued: November 22, 1996.

Patricia Breslin,

Director, National Center for Statistics and Analysis.

[FR Doc. 96-30401 Filed 11-27-96; 8:45 am]

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[Docket No. 96-108; Notice 2]

General Motors Corporation; Grant of Application for Decision of Inconsequential Noncompliance

This notice grants the application by General Motors Corporation (GM) of Warren, Michigan, to be exempted from the notification and remedy requirements of 49 U.S.C. 30118, and 30120 for a noncompliance with 49 CFR 571.115, Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard (FMVSS) No. 115, "Vehicle Identification Number." The basis of the application is that the noncompliance is inconsequential as it relates to motor vehicle safety.

Notice of receipt of the application was published on October 7, 1996, and commenters were afforded an opportunity for comment (61 FR 52493).

Paragraph S4.6 of Standard No. 115 requires that the VIN for passenger cars, * * * be located inside the passenger compartment. It shall be readable, without moving any part of the vehicle, through the vehicle glazing under daylight lighting conditions by an observer having 20/20 vision (Snellen) whose eye-point is located outside the vehicle adjacent to the left windshield pillar. Each character in the VIN subject to this paragraph shall have a minimum height of 4 mm.

GM's description of the noncompliance follows: Approximately 403 Saturn passenger cars, Model Year 1996, were produced which fail to comply with requirements in FMVSS No. 115. These vehicles were built with VIN plates that are partially obstructed by the instrument panel upper trim cover. The characters on the VIN plates are 4 millimeters high. Based on measurements of 25 cars, Saturn estimates that up to one millimeter of some characters was covered on 91.9% of the cars and more than one millimeter was covered on only 8.1% of the cars (about 22 cars). It is easy to read the VIN characters when up to one millimeter is covered.

GM supported its application for inconsequential noncompliance with the following:

"The VIN is in two other easily accessible places—the certification label on the driver's door and the service parts label on the spare tire cover (the owner's manual identifies these locations). Derivatives of the VIN also appear on the engine and transmission. Because the VIN appears in several places on these cars, as well as on the car's title and registration, these cars can be easily identified for the purpose of determining whether they are subject to [recall] campaigns.

"GM uses a 'posident style' font * * * in which each character has a unique upper and lower half. Police agencies have copies of the font sample and will be able to read the VIN even in the worst case condition (2.25 millimeters was the highest obscuration measured). Even without the aid of the font sample, a customer will likely be able to read most of the characters.

"Saturn has not received any field service reports or complaints from customers, dealers, motor vehicle registration officials, or law enforcement personnel. This indicates that no one is being seriously inconvenienced by this condition.

"The NHTSA has agreed that other comparable instances of non-compliance with FMVSS 115 were inconsequential: Marina Mobili, Inc., 51 Fed. Reg. 40367 (50 motorcycles with less than 17 characters in VIN); Volvo White Truck Corp., 47 Fed. Reg. 35063 (46 trucks with wrong model year code); General Motors Corp., 58 Fed. Reg. 32167 (630 cars with VIN characters smaller than 4 millimeters).

"[GM] this non-compliance is inconsequential to motor vehicle safety. A recall would impose costs on Saturn and inconvenience its customers without creating any safety benefit."

"GM is not aware of any accidents, injuries, owner complaints or field reports associated with this condition."

No comments were received on the application.

NHTSA accepts GM's analysis of the reported noncompliance and concurs. The agency agrees that motor vehicle safety will not be compromised because of this reported noncompliance; neither will identification of stolen cars or cars subject to recall campaigns be compromised because the VIN is relatively visible, and located in two other easily accessible places—the certification label on the driver's door and the service parts label on the spare tire cover.

Accordingly, for the reasons expressed above, the petitioner has met

its burden of persuasion that the noncompliance herein described is inconsequential to motor vehicle safety, and the agency grants GM's application for exemption from notification of the noncompliance as required by 49 U.S.C. 30118 and from remedy as required by 49 U.S.C. 30120. (49 U.S.C. 30118, 30120; delegations of authority at 49 CFR 1.50 and 501.8).

Issued on: November 25, 1996.

L. Robert Shelton,

Associate Administrator for Safety Performance Standards.

[FR Doc. 96-30514 Filed 11-27-96; 8:45 am]

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Surface Transportation Board

[STB No. MC-F-20902]

Colorado Mountain Express, Inc., and Airport Shuttle Colorado, Inc., d/b/a Aspen Limousine Service, Inc.—Consolidation and Merger—Colorado Mountain Express

AGENCY: Surface Transportation Board.

ACTION: Notice tentatively approving finance application.

SUMMARY: Colorado Mountain Express, Inc. (Express), of Avon, CO, and Airport Shuttle Colorado, Inc., d/b/a Aspen Limousine Service, Inc., and/or d/b/a Vans to Vail (Shuttle), of Glenwood Springs, CO (collectively, applicants), have applied for authority under 49 U.S.C. 14303(a)(1) to consolidate or merge into Colorado Mountain Express (CME), a Colorado general partnership to be formed for this purpose once the transaction is approved. The transaction was approved on an interim basis under 49 U.S.C. 14303(i), and we are now tentatively granting permanent approval. Persons wishing to oppose the transaction must follow the rules at 49 CFR part 1182, Subpart B. If no opposing comments are timely filed, this tentative grant of authority will become effective automatically at the close of the comment period and will be the final Board action. If opposing comments are timely filed, this tentative grant of authority will be deemed vacated, and the Board will consider the comments and any replies, and issue a further decision on the application.

DATES: Unless opposing comments are filed, this notice will be effective on January 13, 1997. Comments are due by January 13, 1997, and, if comments are filed, replies are due by January 28, 1997.

ADDRESSES: Send an original and 10 copies of any comments referring to STB No. MC-F-20902 to: Surface

Transportation Board, Office of the Secretary, Case Control Branch, 1201 Constitution Ave., N.W., Washington, DC 20423. Also, send one copy of comments to applicants' representatives: (1) Thomas J. Burke, 1625 Broadway, Denver, CO 80202; and (2) Mark W. Williams, 1433 Seventeenth St., Denver, CO 80202.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Beryl Gordon, (202) 927-5660. [TDD for the hearing impaired: (202) 927-5721.]

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Express (MC-169174) and Shuttle (MC-174322),¹ both motor carriers of passengers, primarily operate between Denver, CO, and various Colorado ski resorts. They hold similar interstate and intrastate operating rights authorizing: (a) charter and special operations within Colorado; and (b) regular route service mostly between Denver and such points as Aspen, Avon, Beaver Creek, Glenwood Springs, Grand Junction, and Rifle, CO.

Applicants state that their combined, aggregate gross operating revenues exceed the \$2 million jurisdictional threshold of 49 U.S.C. 14303(g). Claiming that losses are being incurred in their respective operations, Express and Shuttle seek to consolidate their separate properties, operations, and employees into CME. They assert that the consolidated entity will be more efficient and profitable and will provide more effective and economical service to the public.

Applicants certify that: (1) Shuttle received a conditional safety rating from the U.S. Department of Transportation on October 7, 1996; Express has not received a safety rating recently; (2) they have sufficient insurance to cover the services they intend to offer; (3) no party to the transaction is either domiciled in Mexico or owned or controlled by persons of that country; and (4) approval of the transaction will not significantly affect either the quality of the human environment or the conservation of energy resources. Additional information may be obtained from applicants' representatives.

Under 49 U.S.C. 14303(b), we must approve and authorize a transaction that we find consistent with the public interest, taking into consideration at least: (1) the effect of the transaction on the adequacy of transportation to the public; (2) the total fixed charges that result; and (3) the interest of affected carrier employees. We find, based on the application, that the proposed

¹ Although not involved in this transaction, New Orleans Tours, Inc. (MC-160781), a motor passenger carrier engaged in charter and special operations, is affiliated with Shuttle.