

Performance Standards for 406 MHz ELT's; d. Report on Inclusion of HIRF "Pass-Fail" Criteria in DO-160D, Environmental Conditions and Test Procedures for Airborne Equipment; e. Proposed Letter to the FAA on NAS Architectural Issues Pertaining to Communication, Navigation, and Surveillance; f. Technical Management Committee Systems Management Working Group Report; (5) Other Business (RTCA Annual Membership Meeting and Awards Luncheon); (6) Date and Place of Next Meeting.

Attendance is open to the interested public but limited to space availability. With the approval of the chairman, members of the public may present oral statements at the meeting. Persons wishing to present statements or obtain information should contact the RTCA Secretariat, 1140 Connecticut Avenue, NW., Suite 1020, Washington, DC 20036; (202) 833-9339 (phone); (202) 833-9434 (fax); or <http://www.rtca.org> (web site). Members of the public may present a written statement to the committee at any time.

Issued in Washington, DC, on March 12, 1997.

Janice L. Peters,

Designated Official.

[FR Doc. 97-6806 Filed 3-17-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4810-13-M

Intent To Rule on Application To Impose a Passenger Facility Charge (PFC) at Pellston Regional Airport of Emmet County, Pellston, MI

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), DOT.

ACTION: Notice of intent to rule on application.

SUMMARY: The FAA proposes to rule and invites public comment on the application to impose a PFC at Pellston Regional Airport of Emmet County, Pellston, Michigan, under the provisions of the Aviation Safety and Capacity Expansion Act of 1990 (Title IX of the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1990) (Pub. L. 101-508) and part 158 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (14 CFR part 158). **DATES:** Comments must be received on or before April 17, 1997.

ADDRESSES: Comments on this application may be mailed or delivered in triplicate to the FAA at the following address: Federal Aviation Administration, Detroit Airports District Office, Willow Run Airport, East, 8820 Beck Road Belleville, Michigan 48111.

In addition, one copy of any comments submitted to the FAA must

be mailed or delivered to Mr. Raymond Thompson, Airport Manager, of the County of Emmet, at the following address: Pellston Regional Airport of Emmet County, U.S. 31 North, Pellston, Michigan 49769.

Air carriers and foreign air carriers may submit copies of written comments previously provided to the County of Emmet under § 158.23 of part 158.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. Jon B. Gilbert, Program Manager, Federal Aviation Administration, Detroit Airports District Office, Willow Run Airport, East, 8820 Beck Road, Belleville, Michigan 48111 (313-487-7281). The application may be reviewed in person at this same location.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The FAA proposes to rule and invites public comment on the application to impose a PFC at Pellston Regional Airport of Emmet County under the provisions of the Aviation Safety and Capacity Expansion Act of 1990 (Title IX of the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1990) (Pub. L. 101-508) and part 158 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (14 CFR part 158).

On February 27, 1997, the FAA determined that the application to impose a PFC submitted by the County of Emmet was substantially complete within the requirements of § 158.25 of part 158. The FAA will approve or disapprove the application, in whole or in part, no later than June 10, 1997.

The following is a brief overview of the application.

PFC Application No.: 97-05-I-00-PLN.

Level of the proposed PFC: \$3.00.

Proposed charge effective date: January 1, 1998.

Proposed charge expiration date: April 1, 1998.

Total estimated PFC revenue: \$17,500.00.

Brief description of proposed project: Replace Aircraft Rescue Fire Fighting Vehicle.

Class or classes of air carriers which the public agency has requested not be required to collect PFC's: FAR Part 135 operators who file FAA Form 1800-31.

Any person may inspect the application in person at the FAA Office listed above under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**.

In addition, any person may, upon request, inspect the application, notice, and other documents germane to the application in person at the County of Emmet.

Issued in Des Plaines, IL, on March 11, 1997.

Benito De Leon,

Manager, Planning/Programming Branch, Airports Division, Great Lakes Region.

[FR Doc. 97-6807 Filed 3-17-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910-13-M

Federal Highway Administration

Advanced Rural Transportation Systems Strategic Plan; Request for Information

AGENCY: Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), DOT.

ACTION: Notice; request for information.

SUMMARY: The Federal Highway Administration is seeking comments from all sources (public, private, governmental, academia, professional groups, public interest groups, etc.) on the Strategic Plan for Advanced Rural Transportation Systems (ARTS) portion of the Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) Program. The ARTS Strategic Plan defines the vision, mission and goals from the Federal perspective for achieving the benefits of the ITS program in rural areas. This is not a request for proposals or an invitation for bids.

DATES: Your comments on this announcement should be submitted no later than April 17, 1997.

ADDRESSES: Your comment on these important issues are greatly appreciated, but responses will not be acknowledged. Responses should be mailed to FHWA, Intelligent Transportation Systems Joint Program Office, HVH-1, Rm 3400, Washington, DC 20590. However, E-mail responses are encouraged, and should be addressed to raymond.resendes@fhwa.dot.gov.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. Ray Resendes, ITS Joint Program Office, (202)366-2182, Department of Transportation, 400 Seventh Street, SW., Washington, DC 20590. Office hours are from 7:15 a.m. to 4:15 p.m., e.t., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: ITS uses advanced communications, computer and surveillance technologies to address surface transportation problems. When effectively deployed, ITS services can provide safer and more secure travel, improve traffic flow in congested areas, reduce the harmful environmental impacts of traffic congestion, and help travelers and businesses achieve improved levels of productivity. The national ITS program is being advanced as a partnership between the private sector, academia and all levels of State

and local government. A complete description of the ITS program is contained in the March 1995, National ITS Program Plan, developed jointly by the US DOT and ITS AMERICA. The National ITS Program Plan is available from ITS AMERICA, 400 Virginia Avenue SW., Suite 800, Washington, DC. 20024-2730, phone (202) 484-4847.

This is a request for comment on the Strategic Plan for Advanced Rural Transportation Systems portion of the ITS program. The ARTS Strategic Plan defines the vision, mission and goals from the federal perspective for achieving the benefits of the ITS program in rural areas.

Advanced Rural Transportation Systems (ARTS) Strategic Plan

1. Executive Summary

The U.S. Department of Transportation (U.S. DOT) created the Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) Joint Program Office (JPO) to manage the ITS program. JPO is housed within the FHWA, but has liaisons with each modal Administration (except the Federal Aviation Administration) within the U.S. DOT. The JPO also receives policy guidance directly from the ITS Management Council which is chaired by the Deputy Secretary of Transportation. Although this document will be issued by the FHWA, that agency will hereinafter be referred to as the U.S. DOT in order to reflect the variant roles of each modal Administration in the ITS program.

This Strategic Plan has been developed for the Advanced Rural Transportation Systems (ARTS) portion of the ITS Program. The plan focuses on the Federal Government's role in developing rural ITS options and prudently managing emerging ITS technologies within rural settings from conception to viable options for implementation. The Strategic Plan meets the needs of the US DOT by providing a basis for sound decision-making for program development, as well as being consistent with the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 (GPRA). Items in *italics* are references from, "Strategic Planning, An Overview for Complying with GPRA," by Philip Blackerby.

The plan also looks at the ARTS program's role in developing and fostering the application of ITS in rural areas over the next twelve years. It describes the program's vision, mission, goals, objectives, and measures. Because of the diversity of needs and varied settings in rural America, this plan also developed seven critical program areas (clusters) which provide areas of

common interest and focus within the overall program. A companion program plan (which will be available in February 1997), sets the strategic priorities, and lays out the program projects by year for the next five years. Together, both plans provide the road map for the ARTS Program.

Note: For Purposes of this report, rural America is defined as communities or areas with less than 50,000 residents.

2. Introduction

The GPRA requires each Federal agency to prepare:

(1) Strategic plans that define an agency's mission and long-term goals; (2) annual performance plans containing specific targets; and (3) annual reports comparing actual performance to the targets set in the annual performance plans.

US DOT has already put forth significant efforts to assure that the overall ITS program is consistent with the GPRA, including the preparation of the ITS Strategic Plan and the development of a set of measures for evaluating the program's progress¹. While every element in the ITS program should respond to the overall goals and objectives provided in the overall ITS program, it is recognized that conditions and needs vary greatly across the United States and, as a result, the focus of the ITS program and its elements may vary from area to area. Accordingly, the ITS Architecture identified the following three separate scenarios to aid in thinking about and analyzing the different needs and required focus:

1. Urban;
2. Inter-Urban;
3. Rural.

Each has its own set of needs, priorities and concerns. For example, the major initiative for urban areas focuses on the mitigation of congestion and improvement in traffic flow that ITS technologies can offer.

On the other hand, the ARTS Program is concerned with travel within and through rural America. The conditions found in rural travel (including inter-urban travel through rural areas), the characteristics of the travelers, and the costs of maintaining the rural system all point to the need for a focused program for developing advanced technology solutions for transportation in rural America. Some of the attributes found

in rural environments that make this need critical are:

1. Mix of users (rural and urban travelers);
2. Secondary roads with less frequent maintenance;
3. Steep grades/blind corners/curves/few passing lanes;
4. Large variance in travel speeds (frequent passing);
5. Long distance travel;
6. Fewer convenient detour options;
7. Adverse road surface and weather conditions;
8. Few navigational signs;
9. Less existing infrastructure (per square mile);
10. Light usage/large geographical areas impeding rapid emergency detection and response;
11. More motor vehicle deaths with higher frequency of accidents/vehicle mile traveled and more severe accidents than found in urban areas;
12. Recreational travelers needing traveler information services;
13. Limited or non-existent public transportation services;
14. Many, often uncoordinated, providers of transportation services to meet health and human services needs; and
15. Very dispersed systems with high unit costs for service delivery, maintenance, and operations.

This document is the Strategic Plan for the US ARTS Program. It is important to note that this Strategic Plan represents the US DOT perspective on rural ITS, and the US DOT's roles and responsibilities for improving the rural transportation system through advanced technologies. In this role, the US DOT program will work to bring rural ITS technologies to maturity and examine institutional arrangements for their deployment, providing feasible options to rural areas. In this context, the role of the ARTS Program is not to provide long term operational funding to rural ITS systems (though Federal funds may be available from other programs). Rather, the role of the ARTS Program is to work in partnership with those responsible for the implementation of ITS in rural areas—States and local agencies, and the private sector—to provide appropriate and sustainable (i.e., Can be operated using existing and projected funding and resources) ITS solutions to rural problems and needs. Consequently, others will need to develop their own plans to complement and coincide with this one.

The latter portion of this document identifies the goals and objectives that are the priority of the ARTS Program. It outlines the Federal role in advanced rural transportation systems and is

¹ These "Few Good Measures" include measures to meet goals in the following categories: Time savings; Reductions in crashes; Reductions in fatalities; Increased throughput; Cost savings; and Improved customer satisfaction. ("Implementation of the National Intelligent Transportation System Program: 1996 Report to Congress").

consistent with the guidelines provided by the GPRA.

The companion ARTS Program Plan is also under development as described in the final section of this document. The program plan includes the setting of strategic priorities, another key follow up element in strategic planning, as well as specifying candidate projects by year to address the uncertainties and ultimately lead to the deployment of rural ITS.

3. Potential Barriers

There are three potential barriers to the development and acceptance of the ARTS Strategic Plan. These are:

1. Acceptance of the role of the US DOT and participation by others critical to the process;
2. The focus of the Strategic Plan on the US DOT role in rural ITS in lieu of a "National" plan; and
3. The degree of variability within the rural transportation system.

The development and implementation of the Strategic Plan depends upon its acceptance by the key partners required for its implementation. Throughout the strategic planning process, a critical guidance has been provided from the field offices of the US DOT as well as representatives of State and local agencies directly responsible for implementing rural ITS in their areas and independent consultants. However, there may also be some dissatisfaction with the ARTS program's focus on finding the answers to what is not known about rural ITS through research, development, field tests, and targeted deployments at the expense of direct funding of deployment alone. This may become an issue during the comment period prior to the final version of the plan. Given this, it is important to emphasize that reducing the gaps in knowledge is the focus of the ARTS program. Funds for transit operations and other activities may still be provided through traditional Federal funding sources not part of the ARTS program.

The second issue concerns the Strategic Plan's focus on the US DOT's roles and responsibilities, rather than the development of an all encompassing National Plan. As stated in the Introduction, the US DOT is only one partner in the ultimate development and implementation of a sustainable mix of ITS Services in rural America. Other participants include the State and local agencies and other providers of ITS, the private sector, and the public. A concerted effort was made to ensure that the ARTS Program incorporate the interests of all of the participants; however, the Strategic and Program

Plans are still designed to reflect the US DOT role and activities in advanced rural transportation systems. Given the diverse nature of the participants and interests across rural America, it was not feasible to develop a "National" plan encompassing the views, roles, and responsibilities of each participant. Development of a National rural ITS vision and plan may, however, be a worthy exercise to carry out in the future in coordination with ITS America's ARTS Committee and other organizations.

The last issue is a more difficult problem to solve. The wide variety of needs found in rural settings across the US has made it difficult for participants to recognize similarities and agree to program goals, objectives, or program elements. For example, at first glance, people often perceive few similarities between the very disparate rural areas of Death Valley, The Upper Peninsula in Michigan, Jackson Hole, Wyoming, or Cape Cod. It was found, however, that many of the perceived differences are really associated with the differences in the mix of needs within each rural area. Thus, US DOT has spent substantial effort in developing a set of Critical Program Areas, or Clusters, to provide a common identifiable set of views of rural America, its needs, and how ITS can respond. These Critical Programs Areas have become key elements in developing the specific approaches for the rural ITS program described later, and in minimizing the debate and confusion over "What is Rural?"

4. Vision and Mission

The Vision statement describes a future that management envisions. It provides a description of what rural America will be like when the rural ITS program is fulfilled. The Mission describes the organization's purpose or changes that the organization intends to directly effect. These two statements provide the direction and purpose upon which the ARTS program is based.

Vision

An enhanced quality of life for rural residents through safer, more secure, available and efficient movement of people and goods in rural America through the judicious application of advanced ITS technologies.

Rural America accounts for a small and dispersed portion of our nation's population, yet it encompasses a significant portion of the transportation system. Rural areas account for 80 percent of the total US road mileage and 40 percent of the vehicle miles traveled, and they have a unique set of characteristics associated with the travel

upon them and their operations and maintenance. Consequently, the rural traveler has a different set of priorities and needs than does his/her urban counterpart. These differences reflect the rural environment of long distances, relatively low traffic volumes, relatively rare traffic congestion, travelers unfamiliar with the surroundings, and rugged terrain in remote areas. Furthermore, rural characteristics that solicit ITS solutions include an over representation of fatal crashes (About 60 percent of traffic fatalities and 55 percent of work zone fatalities occur in rural areas), safety problems related to high speeds on non-interstate rural roads and increased response time for Emergency Medical Services. Many rural communities now have excellent all-weather road systems, but many rural residents remain isolated because of their inability to travel. Presently, 38 percent of the nation's rural residents live in areas without any public transit service and another 28 percent live in areas in which the level of transit service is negligible².

The vision aims to improve the safety and security of the rural traveler, especially given the differences with the urban environment. Similarly, isolation is a factor that impacts both the transportation disadvantaged and the economic vitality of the communities in rural America; therefore, reducing isolation is important. Additionally, as resources continue to become more scarce, using advanced technologies to improve the efficiency and productivity of operating and maintaining transportation services is crucial, especially given the high costs associated with rural transportation operations and maintenance.

Mission

To ensure the development and application of Advanced Rural Transportation Systems through research, demonstrations, evaluations, and the promotion of cost-effective technologies ready for implementation, and including the provision of training and technical assistance to transportation providers planning or implementing ITS technologies.

The US DOT will work with a wide range of constituents to identify potential technological solutions to rural problems, and to study these potential solutions to determine cost-effective ways to implement them. As stated earlier, the role of the ARTS Program is to develop rural ITS options

² Compiled from Various tables in Highway Statistics 1994. Federal Highway Administration, October 1995.

and husband emerging ITS technologies within rural settings from conception to viable options for implementation. This effort will focus on developing the options for ITS in rural America and reducing the uncertainty surrounding their implementation. It includes examining technological, political/institutional, and planning issues. Note, that the program may entail research, field operations tests, or targeted model deployments designed to reduce the uncertainty associated with particular rural ITS services. The specific elements in the program will be described in the companion ARTS Program Plan.

Initially they may be stand-alone subsystems, however in later years, these subsystems may be coordinated and integrated as necessary. Once these systems and subsystems are defined, the US DOT will assist others in the implementation of these solutions through a variety of outreach activities. Ultimately, these systems will be mainstreamed into participating agencies' long-range plans and capital improvement programs.

4. Values and Philosophies

The Values describe things that are important to an organization that will impact how the Vision and Mission are fulfilled, and yet may not be directly addressed in their statements. These are the underlying principles of the organization. The Philosophy Statements either describe the underlying philosophy that governs the organization, or state management commitments describing the promises management may make to its customers, employees, or other stakeholders. It is the values and philosophies that provide the underlying assumptions upon which the program is built to meet the vision and mission.

Values

Building upon the values each administration may have already defined, the values that are considered important to the organization in developing successful Advanced Rural Transportation Systems are:

Equity—The improvements made via this program will be distributed in a fair and non-discriminatory manner;

Decision making—Balanced and appropriate decisions should be made reflecting the issues and concerns of those impacted and considering all feasible alternatives (their costs, benefits, and outcomes);

Collaboration—Achieving the vision requires many people from a variety of disciplines to work together. This value is at the heart of the US DOT staff, and has been clearly demonstrated through

the cross-cutting Rural Action Team; and

Leadership—A strong and enthusiastic proponent is needed to lead the program.

Philosophies

The following philosophies, or guiding principles, underlie the Strategic Plan for Advanced Rural Transportation Systems. Collectively, they provide the assumptions and foundation for the goals, objectives, and program elements.

The Federal role for rural ITS is one of support and fostering the implementation of advanced ITS technologies in rural America by others. It is an enabling program designed to bring rural ITS technologies to maturity and explore institutional arrangements that provide feasible options to rural areas wanting to implement ITS.

The ARTS must be sustainable.

They must be developed through public/public and public/private partnering initiatives involving both the highway community and the public transportation community, business interests, etc. They must be seamlessly connected to the rest of ITS (i.e., urban, suburban-rural connectivity, and highway-transit-ridesharing connectivity) and also compatible with non-ITS facilities and systems and should employ innovative financing principles.

5. Goals and Strategic Objectives

The Goals describe the general results or outcomes the organization intends to achieve. They are measurable but usually not measured. For each goal, strategic objectives are defined. Strategic Objectives are written statements that describe an intended outcome. Strategic Objectives clearly describe measurable targets of achievement.

As opposed to the abstract nature of the vision and mission, the goals and strategic objectives are definable in real and measurable terms. The six characteristics of Strategic Objectives include: (1) An external focus, (2) measurable, (3) achievable, (4) clear, (5) comprehensive, and (6) supporting the mission and goal statements. Strategic objectives can also be defined for both outputs of the program and outcomes of the program. Outputs are the services and products that the program provides. Outcomes are measures of their impact in the rural environments.

The goals for the ARTS Program and their strategic objectives are provided below.

There are three types of objectives: Administrative outputs, program outputs and outcomes. The

administrative output objectives describe measurable internal or administrative actions that the US DOT will take, hence they are not externally focused. Program output objectives measure the extent to which the US DOT has achieved its role as facilitator—including the extent to which others have been made aware of the solutions, and the extent to which these systems have been deployed. Outcome objectives are measures of the impact that the implementation of the rural ITS systems has on rural America. Outcomes capture the achievement of the overall goals. For example, developing and providing rural ITS awareness seminars would meet an administrative objective. Deploying a safety information system would be an achievement of a program output objective, and reducing the rate and frequency of crashes due to the implementation of this system would be an achievement of an outcome objective.

The long-term outcome objectives are shown as part of this Strategic Plan. The administrative and program objectives are by necessity tied to the specific elements of the companion Program Plan. Therefore, they will be specified as part of that document.

Goals

The goals of the Rural ARTS Program are closely tied to those of the overall ITS program. Priority is given to those goals that will meet the more critical needs of travelers and transporters of goods in rural areas. Consequently, the primary goals of the ARTS program are safety and efficient mobility, versus those of urban systems which are congestion relief and increased throughput. The five goals of the program are: (1) Safety and security; (2) mobility, convenience and comfort; (3) efficiency, economic vitality and productivity; and and environmental conservation.

Safety and Security—Improve the safety and security of users of the rural transportation system.

Improving safety and security are continually identified as critical goals for rural transportation and ITS. Rural crashes tend to be more severe, and have longer response times due to the long distances and isolated settings. The characteristics of rural crashes mirror the diverse nature of the system, having a wide variety of causal factors. In some cases, trip fatigue takes its toll, while in other cases poor visibility or unsafe road conditions lead to crashes. ITS can play a major role in reducing the rate and frequency of crashes through a wide variety of safety advisory systems. ITS can also help reduce the consequences

of the crashes once they occur by enabling emergency responders to reduce response time and provide improved care. Automatic vehicle location systems can expedite the response to emergency situations on board transit vehicles. ITS can also create a more secure rural transportation system by reducing the exposure to unsafe situations. This consists of systems that provide immediate assistance to travelers in rural areas that experience problems, such as, getting lost or having a car breakdown. In addition, law enforcement agencies can apply advanced technologies to meet their needs, including enhanced officer safety, improved dispatching, and simplified reporting.

Safety and Security Strategic Objectives.

1. Reduce the frequency of crashes (via pre-crash warning systems);
2. Reduce the rate of crashes (via pre-crash warning and advisory systems);
3. Reduce the severity and fatality level per incident from current levels (via improved response time and care); and
4. Reduce exposure to unsafe situations (e.g., getting lost, car breaking down, etc.) (via emergency notification system).

Mobility and Convenience—Enhance personal mobility and accessibility to services, and enhance the convenience and comfort of all users of the transportation system.

One of the major characteristics across all of rural America is isolation and the relatively fewer available transportation options. People should have access to transportation, especially to enable them to meet basic life needs such as getting health care or buying staples. This goal consists of reducing isolation by increasing accessibility to services. This is especially true given the aging of America, and the increasing likelihood that rural Americans will be older with additional transportation needs in the years ahead. In some cases, there may be opportunities to implement technologies that enable older drivers to extend the period that they are able to drive. For those unable to drive, this increase in accessibility consists of advanced rural transit systems. Another important aspect of this goal includes providing alternative means of transportation to tourists in areas that cannot accommodate a large number of vehicles. It also addresses the need for convenient and comfortable travel through the development of information systems that help people get the services they need (gas stations, lodging, restaurants, hospitals, etc.).

The advances in communications and computing have created an alternative to transportation. Improving the ability of rural America to carry out their desired activities through telecommuting and remote computing is also an important aspect of enhancing mobility. Therefore, this goal must also address the evaluation and advancement of communications options for rural America as substitutes for desired travel. Examples of how transportation and ITS may help improve the connectivity of rural areas include: providing connectivity through sharing communications trunk lines used for ITS services; and making public right of ways available for communications link installation.

Mobility and Convenience Strategic Objectives

1. Increase the percentage of population with available and convenient transportation services to meet its mobility needs;
2. Improve access to services and tourist areas, and expand the availability of information about services; and
3. Improve the communications connectivity of rural areas and the ability to trade off communications with desired travel.

Efficiency—Increase operational efficiency and productivity of the transportation system, focusing on system providers.

In rural America this goal addresses the needs of rural transportation system providers, enabling them to carry out their services in a safe, efficient and productive manner. To some extent, this is a shift from the metropolitan ITS program whose primary goal is to reduce congestion. The long distances and sparse network often make operations and maintenance very expensive on a cost per unit basis, and the seasonally harsh nature of the rural environment can put providers, such as snow plow and transit operators, at risk. Also, the manpower and equipment per road mile, or transit vehicle is often much higher than in urban settings. Finally, weekend or seasonal peaks in traffic, severe weather conditions, backups due to crashes, or road construction with limited alternate routing all create congestion problems. Thus, improving the safety, efficiency, and productivity of operations and maintenance activities of the transportation providers, meet critical needs, especially through the application of coordinated advanced wide-area traffic management and traffic signal systems.

Efficiency Strategic Objectives

1. Reduce congestion and delay (e.g., in work zones, at events and tourist areas, etc.);
2. Improve incident management and response time;
3. Improve vehicle routing and diversion (e.g. trip coordination, pre-trip route selection, en-route delay and road condition information, and en-route notification of detour options); and
4. Improve operations and maintenance resource management and allocation.

Economic Vitality and Productivity—Enhance economic productivity of individuals, businesses, and organizations.

Many rural areas are economically depressed and their economic viability is limited by their isolation.³ Rural ITS can improve their ability to compete by reducing their isolation, improving the efficiency of transportation services to businesses in the area, and letting the public know of their attributes. Likewise, tourist areas need to be able to provide information to their visitors and provide them mobility if they are to continue to attract visitors. The focus of rural ITS in meeting this goal is therefore, to keep rural areas viable and helping to provide the services needed to function competitively. Another aspect of this goal addresses the desires of small communities that want to maintain their communities as they are, and limit the amount of growth (e.g., Aspen, CO). The rural ITS program will identify opportunities to address their transportation needs, while also respecting their desire to control growth.

As discussed within the Mobility and Convenience Goal, isolation can also be reduced by improving the communications connectivity of an area. As rural areas become more connected, they become more viable areas for living and working. This goal, therefore, also addresses the evaluation and advancement of telecommuting from rural America as a means of reducing isolation and making the rural environment more livable.

Economic Vitality and Productivity Strategic Objectives

1. Improve access to and from rural communities for travel, goods and services, and information;
2. Improve knowledge of goods, services, and opportunities in rural communities (e.g. en-route information,

³ Understanding Rural America, Economic Research Service, US Department of Agriculture, Agriculture Information Bulletin No. 710, Washington, DC, February 1995.

transportation service information, etc.); and

3. Improve transportation and communication facilities in and around rural communities.

Environmental Conservation—Reduce energy consumption and environmental costs and negative impacts.

While rural areas may not have air quality problems of the same magnitude as urban areas, there are still areas where there is a need to maintain good air quality and address other environmental problems. Consequently, opportunities to reduce the number of single occupant vehicles, vehicle miles traveled (VMT), and increase public transportation and ridesharing alternatives are essential. Many tourist attractions, such as National Parks, also suffer from the negative environmental impacts of large numbers of visitors. This goal includes opportunities to minimize the effects of large influxes of people into these sensitive areas. In addition, in rural areas there is a need to address the impacts of the transportation infrastructure, operations, and maintenance on the environment, including the reduction of impacts due to hazardous material spills, and the tracking of hazardous materials through the rural transportation system.

Environmental Conservation Strategic Objectives

1. Reduce Single Occupant Vehicles;
2. Reduce Vehicle Miles Traveled;
3. Improve hazardous material response (minimize environmental impacts); and
4. Reduce emissions per trip.

External Factors Assessment

External factors are key outside forces that may influence the success of the rural ITS program in achieving the above mission and goals; or have other impacts on the delivery of the program, and yet are outside the control of the agency.

One set of external factors with a focus on changes in legislation and the environment in Washington, D.C. can have a profound effect on the delivery of a long-term program. Of particular interest are the current hearings concerning Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act and its reauthorization in the next year. If the major priorities or funding mechanisms change as a result of the new legislation, the strategic plan may have to be modified and updated accordingly.

Likewise, shifts in the Federal and State Departments of Transportation roles and responsibilities may impact the fulfillment of the program. However,

these shifts may not be due to specific changes in legislation, but can also be caused by changes in administration.

Another important set of external factors are changes in the economy, fuel prices, or concerns of the nation brought about by unique events. Terrorist acts can raise the importance of security throughout the transportation system. Another energy crisis will impact the amount and type of rural travel.

Equally important are watershed changes in technology that can totally change the costs and potential applications within the rural environment. Twenty years ago, no one could have predicted the rapid adoption of facsimile machines throughout the business world, or even the use of cellular phone technology that now makes many ITS applications possible. Significant developments of new communications systems by private industry, such as satellite communications networks, could greatly impact the cost-effectiveness of advanced rural transportation systems. Yet, the US DOT has little control over these types of developments.

The last factor is the ability of local rural communities to adopt new technologies and systems. However, the rapid infusion of new technologies in rural settings is hampered in a number of ways. First, rural areas are often some of the most fiscally constrained in America. There are large resource requirements for maintaining the current systems, and little additional funds for implementing new systems over the miles of rural network. Likewise, the staff resources are often limited in rural environments with one person taking on the roles and responsibilities typically filled by many specialists in denser areas, or even whole departments. "Mainstreaming" the consideration and evaluation of ITS strategies into multimodal transportation planning processes is also important if transportation planners and decision makers are to understand the costs and benefits of implementing certain technologies, particularly in comparison with more traditional or conventional improvements. Staffs must have the time and energy to plan and adopt the new systems to their current environments.

Recognizing these external factors and updating the strategic plan as conditions change over the life of the program will keep it aligned with the overall mission and goals described above.

7. Strategies

A Strategy is an approach, or an implementation methodology, that will lead to achieving a specific objective. It

includes a description of how the goals and objectives are to be achieved, including a description of the operational processes, skills and technology, and the human, capital, information, and other resources required to meet those goals and objectives.

Achieving the strategic objectives of the program means recognizing the extremely diverse nature of the rural transportation system. Diversity is exhibited in the system's wide range of motorists, managers, maintenance staff, operators, road types, terrain, climates, jurisdictions, land use, and seasonal characteristics. These diverse characteristics translate into a wide variety of needs, problems, and opportunities for improvement. Consequently, the ARTS solutions, i.e., the application of advanced technologies to meet these disparate needs, problems and opportunities, must be diverse as well. The strategies to identify these solutions must also recognize this diversity.

Given this diversity of the rural transportation system, and the wide breadth of the program (i.e., encompassing a large number of needs of a large number of users), the ARTS program has been organized into seven Critical Program Areas (CPA's). A major effort of the Rural Action Team during the development of the Strategic Plan, was the investigation of different cluster concepts and ways to find common areas of interest across rural America. It was found that while rural settings differ greatly (Jackson Hole, WY, vs. Death Valley, CA, vs. Cape Cod, MA), there was general agreement on the classes of needs that exist within each setting and the principal users of ITS. The clusters were therefore developed around major needs and service groupings. They are:

1. Traveler Safety and Security;
2. Emergency Services;
3. Tourism and Traveler Information Services;
4. Public Traveler Services and Public Mobility Services;
5. Infrastructure Operations and Maintenance;
6. Fleet Operations and Maintenance; and
7. Commercial Vehicle Operations.

The above division is the primary dimension for this cluster concept and focuses on identifiable needs and services categories. The Tourism and Traveler Information Services CPA, for example, refers to the needs and services that a visitor (both driver and passenger) unfamiliar with a rural area may require, as well as the Visitors and Tourism Bureaus, transit service

providers, information providers, etc., that provide the services to meet their needs. In a tourist resort area, this may be the main focus of the ITS program. In other areas, it may exist but plays a smaller role. Likewise, the Public Traveler and Public Mobility Services focus on reducing the isolation of the transportation disadvantaged and increasing the mobility for all of the public. Its constituents also include both the potential travelers and service providers. The maintenance and operations activities may also form their own divisions because of the costs of the provision of these services in rural areas. As ITS services are shown to reduce their costs, improve their efficiency, etc., these areas and the organizations responsible for them become natural constituents and advocates for the programs.

The clusters are not necessarily mutually exclusive and will overlap in their deployment in a specific region or rural setting. For example, services developed around a "safety information cluster" may also exist in the same area with services developed to meet the mobility needs. Similarly, clusters are "fuzzy" and the boundary between two related clusters may be difficult to discern at times (infrastructure versus fleet operations and maintenance).

Each rural area will have its own environmental conditions and constraints, frequency of needs, institutional settings, etc. These factors determine the importance and priority placed upon each cluster within an area, and the mix of ITS services that may be considered for implementation.

The clusters provide common areas of understanding and focus and, thus, make the ARTS Plan implementation more manageable. The Program Plan describes the user services, functional requirements, and knowledge gaps that apply to each CPA. Aspects of a program element may address more than one CPA. Consequently, The activities associated with some CPA's may consist of a number of research and field test activities, while activities associated with another will focus on deployment.

Though much needs to be done to determine exactly which projects will be initiated within each CPA, some generalizations can still be made. The research and field testing efforts that take place within this program will be building upon the wealth of knowledge and proven solutions that have been developed under other parts of the ITS program. It is not expected that the rural advanced technologies will be significantly different from their urban counterparts, rather the difference

between the two will be characterized through the implementation methods. Consequently, the bulk of the program will probably not consist of basic research, but rather will focus on overcoming the rural barriers that hamper cost-effective implementation. While such a focus will ensure that the seamless connectivity between urban and rural systems is achieved, care must be taken to avoid attempts to fit urban solutions into rural problems.

Traveler Safety and Security

The rates and severity of accidents have been repeatedly identified as one of the most serious problems associated with rural transportation. Accidents per vehicle-mile traveled are higher than in urban areas, and tend to be more severe due to higher operating speeds. Once an accident occurs, the time to notify and respond are also on the average longer, and trauma centers are located further away. Consequently, improving safety and security has been identified as a key cluster or critical program area.

The needs in this cluster center around improving the driver's ability to operate the vehicle in a safe and responsible way and in reducing the influence of other factors that may help cause an accident, such as, poor road conditions, visibility, etc. This cluster focuses on the prevention of accidents before they occur and in reducing the severity of the accident if it does take place.

Another aspect of this cluster is increasing the security (both actual and perceived) of the traveler along his/her trip. Providers of transportation services have a responsibility to provide a safe and secure environment in which to travel. A traveler may be injured while traveling even though he/she has not been involved in a vehicular accident (i.e., a transit patron is assaulted while waiting for a vehicle, or someone using a rural rest stop is robbed). Thus, providing a secure environment through remote monitoring, silent alarms, etc., is an important ITS function within this cluster.

Some of the advanced systems that may be explored and developed under this cluster are:

1. *Wide area information dissemination systems* (via radio, computer, TV, etc.) both pre-trip and en-route of safety information, such as weather and road conditions;

2. *Site-specific safety advisories and warnings* (e.g., the enhanced radar detector for hazard warning, visibility sensors, variable speed limits, collision avoidance, work zone detection/intrusion alarms, rail crossing alerts,

shoulder detection, etc.) to alert motorists of imminent problems;

3. *Safety surveillance and monitoring* (e.g., on transit vehicles (for malcontents and for ill riders), at park-and-ride lots, rest areas, etc.); and

4. *In-Vehicle monitoring and detection systems* including such items as driver monitoring (alertness, status), vision enhancement, perimeter detection, shoulder detection, etc.

Emergency Services

Once an incident (accident or emergency situation) occurs, there is a need for emergency services. These can be in the form of ambulances and medical care, police, fire, tow trucks, and other vehicle assistance, etc. The isolation of rural areas, extensive time from the incident to detection, and response once the incident is detected all contribute to notifications and response times much longer than found in denser areas, often of an hour or more. This leads to much more severe consequences than would occur with rapid response. Given an incident, the Emergency Management Team must be notified, a decision on how to address the emergency must be made, services dispatched and the location of the incident found and reached. In addition, the care givers are constantly having to make critical decisions about the type and extent of care to provide, both on the scene and at the hospital or trauma center.

This cluster focuses on the ITS services required to provide this emergency assistance. It includes both the provision of communications, the management of the emergency services fleets, and the transmission of critical information to better prepare the care givers, both at the scene and in the hospital or trauma center. Assisting the emergency vehicle in reaching the incident through vehicle routing, identification, and warning systems, is also an important aspect. A large number of this cluster's needs also deals with the coordination of different services and the need to share the critical and appropriate information on the emergency as rapidly as possible in real time.

Some of the advanced systems that may be explored and developed under this cluster are:

1. *Mayday systems* to alert dispatchers of location and nature and extent of a problem (e.g., crash, breakdown, etc.); and

2. *Advanced dispatching and vehicle-based response systems* (e.g., on emergency medical services & law enforcement vehicles, tow trucks, etc.) to get to the scene quickly, and provide

appropriate care (perhaps for the judicious enforcement of traffic laws as well).

Tourism and Traveler Information Services

This cluster focuses on the needs of a visitor or traveler that is unfamiliar with the rural area they are in or traveling through. It includes both information services and the unique aspects of providing mobility services to tourists and resorts, since many times visitors have little choice of mode (no auto) and require special services. It addresses aspects of both the "Mobility and Convenience" and "Economic Vitality and Productivity" goals for the ARTS program. Knowing where desired destinations are, how to get to them, and conditions along the way adds to the mobility and convenience of an area. Likewise, travelers must be aware of destinations before they can visit them and providing services to tourists and others unfamiliar with the rural surroundings enhances the economic vitality of the area.

The needs and services that may be bundled in this cluster include such activities as electronic yellow pages, weather and condition forecasting, route advisory information, information dissemination in hotels, roadside, wide band radio, etc. Once in a resort area, tourists often are hindered due to lack of a vehicle, or knowledge of the area. Providing mobility through transit, paratransit, and Global Positioning Systems (for rental cars) may also be an important function. This cluster would also be of primary interest to the Tourism and Visitors Centers, Economic Development Bureaus, as well as the local service providers (departments of street and traffic, transit authorities, State Department of Transportation, and Park Agencies).

Tourism may also be a concern in any rural setting during major events and festivals. At these events the traffic, local population, and transportation problems of the participants, local residents, and emergency services swell to many times their average levels. Event logistics, traffic and parking management, provision of emergency communications, etc., are crucial to the success of these events and yet must be temporary in nature, and in most cases understandable to volunteers.

Some of the advanced systems that may be explored and developed under this cluster are:

1. *Information services* (electronic yellow pages, route guidance, etc.) provided at fixed locations (e.g., in hotels, at rest areas, at modal transfer stations, etc.), and en-route;

2. *Mobility services* (transit, paratransit, parking systems, etc.);

3. *Smart card payment/transaction systems* for transit and tourist transactions; and

4. *Portable event management systems* that include such services as traffic management, variable message signs, hotel and service availability and directions on how to reach services when they are available.

Public Traveler Services/Public Mobility Services

Isolation and accessibility to key services are critical concerns to many rural inhabitants. Providing transit, paratransit, rural addressing, and other services associated with ability to make a desired trip fall within the Mobility Services cluster. As the nation ages, and becomes more transportation disadvantaged the need for Mobility Services and the safety net of accessibility will become more extreme. This is especially true for rural areas where neighbors are often miles apart, trip distances are long, and travel to common origins and destinations infrequent. All rural residents, visitors to tourist areas, and human service providers are constituents of this cluster.

The first major need associated with this cluster is finding those who need services and providing the mobility safety net to them. Secondly, determining how to provide the services in an efficient and effective manner, since often those providing the service have very high operating expenses. This includes the sharing of information among providers which can be used to help optimize routing, coordinate delivery, and reduce fraud in claiming subsidies from service providers. Lastly, addressing the need for coordination and communication between the many providers of services that may be involved including transit agencies and social service providers. The cluster includes not only providing mobility to the travelers from their homes and origins and destinations, but also increasing the ability of people to reach them in provision of other services (nursing, meals on wheels, hospital out patient, etc.).

Some of the advanced systems that may be explored and developed under this cluster are:

1. *Advanced transit, paratransit systems*, etc., using AVL and improved dispatching (e.g., taking advantage of improved rural addressing (i.e., using Global Positioning Satellites), etc.);

2. *Smart card payment/transaction systems* for rider payment and tracking (beat fraud); and

3. *Advanced ride sharing and ride matching systems.*

Infrastructure Operations and Maintenance

Due to the isolation, distances, and sheer amount of rural road miles the provision of infra-structure maintenance and operation services are both costly, and often inefficient. Low volumes on the roads make the detection of problems and conditions a concern. This cluster's focus is on improving the efficiency of the maintenance and operations activities for the transportation systems within rural areas. Improving and automating the highway pavement management systems, providing early detection and deployment of services to meet severe conditions (snow removal, salting, etc.), maintaining, operating, and linking local and statewide traffic operations centers, managing work zones are examples of the ITS elements that would fall in this cluster. It is closely related to the next cluster which focuses on the fleet operations in rural areas.

The maintenance of roads and the road system for safe operation falls under the maintenance organization activities. Because of the nature of rural settings, the cost per mile, and simply knowing the condition of the system that is out there, is very high and often inefficient. This cluster would focus on the provision of services to help maintenance organizations perform their functions more efficiently and safely. Pavement management, and normal road condition detection to reduce the costs of tracking and planning the system upkeep is critical. Some of the other needs and services that fall within this cluster include: Management of road crews and work zone location; road striping systems; weather information systems, detection of road conditions; coordination of maintenance activities; and flood control and detection.

Also general operations of the physical infrastructure has a set of needs that can be met by rural ITS. These include traffic management, traffic signal systems, tracking of use of the system, assisting in the safety and management of work zone areas, etc. This cluster would also focus on how the needs and desires of the operation managers of the road and other infrastructure systems can be provided for using ITS. Again, the overall focus would be to provide services to help reduce the costs of operations and maintenance activities and improve the performance and efficiency in rural settings.

Some of the advanced systems that may be explored and developed under this cluster are:

1. *Appropriate traffic signal and traffic management systems* for small urban areas, ultimately linked together (as well as with large metropolitan TMCs) as part of a statewide, distributed information system;
2. *Automated management systems* (e.g., bridge, pavement, roadside hardware, etc.); and
3. *Advanced work zone management and traffic control.*

Fleet Operations and Maintenance

The cost of providing services for mobility and managing the fleets used in rural settings is often extremely high for the same reasons as found in the last cluster. The distances are long, and the ability to combine destinations and provide efficient routing often poor. The potential for ITS to improve the coordination of fleets, routing, and communications is especially high in rural areas.

Fleet operations of both transit and other rural fleets has a different focus than infrastructure operations. The vehicles must be scheduled, routed, located, and maintained. Management of rural fleets takes on new significance due to the cost and low use per mile of operations. This cluster would focus on the coordination and provision of services for rural fleet operations and management. It includes services to transit operators and paratransit providers, as well as the fleets of maintenance and other areas. Vehicle location and routing, maintenance scheduling, rural addressing, coordination of services and billing between providers, etc. all would fall within this cluster.

Some of the advanced systems that may be explored and developed under this cluster are:

1. *Advanced dispatching and routing systems* (e.g., for snow plows, transit operators, etc.) (includes central processing systems and vehicle-based systems such as Automatic Vehicle Location);
2. *Advanced vehicle tracking systems* (e.g., guidance for snow plow operators to track through dangerous areas covered in snow); and
3. *Fleet maintenance and management systems.*

Commercial Vehicle Operations

Commercial Vehicle Operations (CVO) and ITS development and support is carried out through the parallel ITS CVO program under the direction of the FHWA Office of Motor Carriers. The Vision Statement for the

ITS CVO program is stated as "Assisted by technology, trucks and buses will move safely and freely throughout North America." It is a voluntary effort consisting of public and private organizations working together to improve highway safety and motor carrier productivity through the development and application of the CVO User Services (Commercial Vehicle Electronic Clearance, Automated Roadside Safety Inspections, On-board Safety Monitoring, Commercial Vehicle Administrative Processes, Hazardous Materials Incident Response, and Freight Mobility).

Since many of the activities associated with commercial vehicle operations take place in rural environments there are a number of topics and services of mutual interest between the Rural and CVO ITS programs. The rural ITS program focuses on the overall ITS services and general users found throughout rural America which may impact, but not be tailored to, CVO operations. Many of these, such as, emergency response and Mayday systems, may fall into other clusters. The Rural CVO cluster's primary function would be to provide a CVO perspective to these other clusters to ensure that CVO needs and requirements are also considered in the development of the overall ITS applications. The Rural CVO cluster may also supplement the main CVO ITS Program in uniquely rural commercial operations such as services to agricultural harvesting and migration operations or small rural commercial activities.

As stated, an important aspect of this cluster would be to ensure that systems designed to meet the other critical program areas also included the elements and perspectives of the commercial vehicle operators (collecting and tracking CVO specific data, monitoring and tracking specific vehicles, meeting unique CVO information needs, etc.). How can CVO operations take advantage of these clusters? Can CVO and general backbone systems be combined? What additional requirements are necessary to meet CVO needs? These are questions that may be addressed in fulfilling this aspect of the CVO cluster.

Another major component of this cluster centers around the agricultural harvesting and roundups found in rural areas. The annual migration of the harvesting combines in the Midwest, the sugar beet harvest in Minnesota, the roundups in ranch and sheep country, etc. all require focused transportation activities in often a very narrow window of opportunity. People need to know the

location of the combines. Logistics and the movement of the trucks in and out of the area is critical; The road maintenance organizations may have special requirements before and after the event. All of these concerns point to a unique set of needs possibly overlooked under the provision of normal day-to-day services.

Some of the advanced systems that may be explored and developed under this cluster are:

1. *CVO-specific requirements/needs within the other critical program areas* (e.g., rural addressing, logistics, vehicle and driver monitoring), vehicle location systems for alerts to other travelers as well as for other tracking needs, assistance for agricultural harvesting, collecting and tracking CVO specific information needs (e.g., CVO-enhanced weather advisories);
2. *Services to assist Agricultural Harvesting and Migration;* and
3. *Other services in support of small rural commercial enterprises.* On the road communications and paging, low cost vehicle location for employees in the field, etc., to help make rural commercial activities more viable and cost-effective.

8. Next Steps: The Program Plan

This Strategic Plan for the ARTS program has described the vision, mission, objectives, and measures upon which the ARTS program is built. Because of the diversity of needs and settings in rural America, it also developed seven critical program areas, or clusters, which provide areas of common interest and focus within the overall program. The ARTS Program Plan has been defined using the Strategic Plan and its critical program areas as a foundation. Strategic Planning is also a continuing process. As the implementation of the program moves forward, a key element is the ongoing evaluation and adjustment of the plan to account for new knowledge gained by the early research, shifting priorities, etc. This "Performance Feed Forward" step of strategic planning will be carried out as part of each budget cycle.

As stated, the ARTS Program Plan will be developed around the clusters, or critical program areas. The tasks associated with the development of the Program Plan are underway and include:

1. Continue assessment and evaluation of current rural ITS projects;
2. Determine what is known and not known for each cluster;
3. Identify potential projects and costs associated with answering the unknowns within each cluster;

4. Set strategic priorities within and between each cluster;

5. Select projects (research, field operational tests, targeted model deployments) to reduce the unknowns within each cluster, meet the goals, objectives and strategic priorities, and stay within budget allocations for each fiscal year; and

6. Evaluate progress and update both the Strategic Plan and Program Plan during each budget cycle (Performance Feed Forward).

(23 U.S.C. 315; 49 CFR 1.48)

Issued on: March 7, 1997.

Jane F. Garvey,

Acting Administrator, Federal Highway Administration.

[FR Doc. 97-6738 Filed 3-17-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910-22-P

Surface Transportation Board

[Docket No. AB-433X]

Idaho Northern & Pacific Railroad Company; Abandonment Exemption in Wallowa and Union Counties, OR

AGENCY: Surface Transportation Board—DOT.

ACTION: Notice of exemption.

SUMMARY: The ICC Termination Act of 1995, Pub. L. No. 104-88, 109 Stat. 803 (the ICCTA), which was enacted on December 29, 1995, and took effect on January 1, 1996, abolished the Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC) and transferred certain functions and proceedings to the Surface Transportation Board (Board). Section 204(b)(1) of the ICCTA provides, in general, that proceedings pending before the ICC on the effective date of that legislation shall be decided under the law in effect prior to January 1, 1996, insofar as they involve functions retained by the ICCTA. This decision relates to a proceeding that was pending with the ICC prior to January 1, 1996, and to functions that are subject to Board jurisdiction pursuant to 49 U.S.C. 10903. Therefore, this decision applies the law in effect prior to the ICCTA, and citations are to the former sections of the statute, unless otherwise indicated. The Board, under 49 U.S.C. 10505 exempts from the prior approval requirements of 49 U.S.C. 10903-04, the abandonment by Idaho Northern & Pacific Railroad Company of a 60.58-mile portion of its Joseph Branch line, in Wallowa and Union Counties, OR, subject to standard labor protective conditions and environmental conditions.

DATES: Provided no formal expression of intent to file an offer of financial assistance (OFA) has been received, this exemption will be effective April 17, 1997. Formal expressions of intent to file an OFA under 49 CFR 1152.27(c)(2) must be filed by March 28, 1997; petitions to stay must be filed April 2, 1997; requests for a public use condition in conformity with 49 CFR 1152.28(a)(2) must be filed by April 7, 1997; and petitions to reopen must be filed by April 14, 1997.

ADDRESSES: An original and 10 copies of all pleadings referring to Docket No. AB-433X must be filed with: Surface Transportation Board, Office of the Secretary, Case Control Unit, 1925 K Street, NW., Washington, DC 20423-0001. In addition, a copy of all pleadings must be served on petitioner's representative: Robert A. Wimbish, 1920 N Street, NW., Washington, DC 20036.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Beryl Gordon, (202) 565-1600. [TDD for the hearing impaired: (202) 565-1695.]

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Additional information is contained in the Board's decision. To purchase a copy of the full decision, write to, call or pick up in person from: DC News & Data, Inc., 1925 K Street, NW., Suite 210, Washington, DC 20006 [Telephone: (202) 289-4357]. [Assistance for the hearing impaired is available through TDD services (202) 565-1695.]

Decided: March 12, 1997.

By the Board, Chairman Morgan and Vice Chairman Owen.

Vernon A. Williams,
Secretary.

[FR Doc. 97-6741 Filed 3-17-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4915-00-P

DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

Submission to OMB for Review; Comment Request

March 10, 1997.

The Department of Treasury has submitted the following public information collection requirement(s) to OMB for review and clearance under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, Public Law 104-13. Copies of the submission(s) may be obtained by calling the Treasury Bureau Clearance Officer listed. Comments regarding this information collection should be addressed to the OMB reviewer listed and to the Treasury Department Clearance Officer, Department of the Treasury, Room 2110, 1425 New York Avenue, NW., Washington, DC 20220.

Internal Revenue Service (IRS)

OMB Number: 1545-1380.

Regulation ID Number: IA-17-90 (Final).

Type of Review: Extension.

Title: Reporting Requirements for Recipients of Points Paid on Residential Mortgages.

Description: To encourage compliance with the tax laws relating to the mortgage interest deduction, the regulations require the reporting on Form 1098 of points paid on residential mortgages. Only businesses that receive mortgage interest in the course of a trade or business are affected by this reporting requirement.

Respondents: Business or other for-profit.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 37,644.

Estimated Burden Hours Per

Respondent: 7 hours, 31 minutes.

Frequency of Response: Annually.

Estimated Total Reporting Burden: 283,056 hours.

Clearance Officer: Garrick Shear, (202) 622-3869, Internal Revenue Service, Room 5571, 1111 Constitution Avenue, NW., Washington, DC 20224.

OMB Reviewer: Alexander T. Hunt, (202) 395-7860, Office of Management and Budget, Room 10226, New Executive Office Building, Washington, DC 20503.

Dale A. Morgan,

Departmental Reports Management Officer.

[FR Doc. 97-6791 Filed 3-17-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4830-01-P

Office of the Comptroller of the Currency

[Docket No. 97-01]

Preemption Determination

AGENCY: Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, Treasury.

ACTION: Reopening of comment period.

SUMMARY: The Office of the Comptroller of the Currency (OCC) is reopening the public comment period on the OCC's notice and request for comment regarding a request it has received for a preemption determination regarding certain provisions of the Rhode Island Financial Institution Insurance Sales Act.

DATES: Comments must be received by May 15, 1997.

ADDRESSES: Comments should be sent to the Communications Division, 250 E Street, SW, Third Floor, Washington, DC 20219. Attention Docket No. 97-01. In addition, comments may be sent by facsimile transmission to FAX number