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Federal Railroad Administration Launches Web Portal For Public to Report Blocked Railroad Crossings

WASHINGTON- The U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) today announced it has established a new, dedicated webpage for the public and law enforcement to report blocked highway-rail grade crossings.

Blocked crossings occur when stopped trains impede the flow of motor vehicle or pedestrian traffic at railroad tracks for extended periods of time. Communities have long dealt with the issue of blocked crossings, and FRA is now seeking broad public input to better understand the scope of the problem and engage with affected parties to identify potential solutions.

"Railroads, states and local jurisdictions are best positioned to address blocked highway-rail grade crossings and I've asked them to work together to minimize unwanted impacts," FRA Administrator Ronald L. Batory said. "FRA expects that collecting this data will help us identify where chronic problems exist and better assess the underlying causes and overall impacts of blocked crossings -- locally, regionally and nationwide."

Blocked crossings pose potential safety risks, specifically in locations where trains routinely hinder roadway and pedestrian movement for extended periods. Frustrated drivers may attempt to clear the crossing before a train arrives. Likewise, pedestrians may be tempted to crawl between stopped railcars. Further, blocked crossings make people late for work, school and appointments, and contribute to roadway congestion.

The new FRA Blocked Crossing webpage, www.fra.dot.gov/blockedcrossings, requests specific information from users reporting blocked crossings— including date, time, location and duration. The agency expects it will take an average of 3 minutes for users to complete the report. FRA notes that this should only be done in a manner that is consistent with the safe operation of a vehicle.

“Our ability to address this issue is only as effective as the data we collect,” Batory continued. “Therefore, we are hoping to engage citizens and all levels of government to help spread the word about this important tool.”

FRA will use the information collected to gain a more complete picture of where, when, and for how long such obstructions occur at the nation’s approximately 130,000 public grade crossings, and what impacts result from this. FRA will share the information with stakeholders, using it to help facilitate local solutions to blocked crossing issues.

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