

**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION****Surface Transportation Board**

[STB Finance Docket No. 33650]

**RailAmerica, Inc.—Continuance in Control Exemption—Ventura County Railroad Co.**

RailAmerica, Inc. (RailAmerica) has filed a verified notice of exemption to continue in control of Ventura County Railroad Company (VCRR), upon VCRR's becoming a Class III railroad.

The transaction was scheduled to be consummated on or shortly after September 1, 1998.

This transaction is related to STB Finance Docket No. 33649, *Ventura County Railroad Company—Lease and Operation Exemption—Ventura County Railway Company*, wherein VCRR seeks to lease and operate certain rail lines from Ventura County Railway Company (VCRC).<sup>1</sup>

RailAmerica currently controls 10 common carrier Class III rail carriers operating in 7 states: the Cascade and Columbia River Railroad Company; the Delaware Valley Railway Company, Inc.; the Huron & Eastern Railway Company, Inc.; Minnesota Northern Railroad, Inc.; the Otter Tail Valley Railroad Company; the Saginaw Valley Railway Company, Inc.; the West Texas & Lubbock Railroad Company, Inc.; the Dakota Rail, Inc.; and the South Central Tennessee Railroad Corp.

RailAmerica states that: (i) The rail lines operated by VCRR do not connect with any railroad in the corporate family; (ii) the transaction is not part of a series of anticipated transactions that would connect VCRR with any railroad in the corporate family; and (iii) the transaction does not involve a Class I carrier. Therefore, the transaction is exempt from the prior approval requirements of 49 U.S.C. 11323. See 49 CFR 1180.2(d)(2).

Under 49 U.S.C. 10502(g), the Board may not use its exemption authority to relieve a rail carrier of its statutory obligation to protect the interests of its employees. Section 11326(c), however, does not provide for labor protection for transactions under sections 11324 and 11325 that involve only Class III rail carriers. Because this transaction involves Class III rail carriers only, the Board, under the statute, may not impose labor protective conditions for this transaction.

If the verified notice contains false or misleading information, the exemption

<sup>1</sup> VCRR and VCRC have entered into an agreement for VCRR to lease the line and purchase certain assets and equipment from VCRC.

is void *ab initio*. Petitions to revoke the exemption under 49 U.S.C. 10502(d) may be filed at any time. The filing of a petition to revoke will not automatically stay the transaction.

An original and 10 copies of all pleadings, referring to STB Finance Docket No. 33650, must be filed with the Surface Transportation Board, Office of the Secretary, Case Control Unit, 1925 K Street, NW, Washington, DC 20423-0001. In addition, a copy of each pleading must be served on Gary Laakso, Esq., RailAmerica, Inc., 301 Yamato Road, Suite 1190A, Boca Raton, FL 33431.

Board decisions and notices are available on our website at "www.stb.dot.gov."

Decided: September 16, 1998.

By the Board, David M. Konschnik, Director, Office of Proceedings.

**Vernon A. Williams,**  
Secretary.

[FR Doc. 98-25335 Filed 9-23-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4915-00-P

**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION****Surface Transportation Board**

[STB Finance Docket No. 33649]

**Ventura County Railroad Co.—Lease and Operation Exemption—Ventura County Railway Co.**

Ventura County Railroad Company (VCRR), a noncarrier, has filed a verified notice of exemption under 49 CFR 1150.31 to lease from Ventura County Railway Company (VCRC)<sup>1</sup> and operate approximately 12.09 miles of rail line. The rail lines to be leased include: the mainline from milepost 0.0 (the interchange with Union Pacific Railroad Company) to milepost 5.7 on the docks at Port Hueneme, and three branches: the 1.05-mile Diamond Branch; the 1.71-mile Edison Branch, and the 3.63-mile Patterson Branch in the Port of Hueneme and Oxnard, CA.<sup>2</sup>

The transaction was scheduled to be consummated on or shortly after September 1, 1998.

The transaction is related to STB Finance Docket No. 33650, *RailAmerica, Inc.—Continuance in Control*

<sup>1</sup> VCRR and VCRC have entered into an agreement for VCRR to lease from VCRC the line and all improvements thereon, all rail ties, spikes, tie plates, rail anchors, bridges, culverts, signaling equipment, and other supporting structures, ballast, and track materials, while excluding some real property and a building, and the purchase of certain assets, all located in the Port of Hueneme, Oxnard, CA.

<sup>2</sup> VCRR states that its projected revenues will not exceed those that would qualify it as a Class III carrier.

*Exemption—Ventura County Railroad Company*, wherein RailAmerica, Inc., has concurrently filed a verified notice to continue in control of VCRR, upon its becoming a Class III rail carrier.

If the verified notice contains false or misleading information, the exemption is void *ab initio*. Petitions to revoke the exemption under 49 U.S.C. 10502(d) may be filed at any time. The filing of a petition to revoke will not automatically stay the transaction.

An original and 10 copies of all pleadings, referring to STB Finance Docket No. 33649, must be filed with the Surface Transportation Board, Office of the Secretary, Case Control Unit, 1925 K Street, NW, Washington, DC 20423-0001. In addition, a copy of each pleading must be served on Gary Laakso, Esq., RailAmerica, Inc., 301 Yamato Road, Suite 1190A, Boca Raton, FL 33431.

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Decided: September 16, 1998.

By the Board, David M. Konschnik, Director, Office of Proceedings.

**Vernon A. Williams,**  
Secretary.

[FR Doc. 98-25334 Filed 9-23-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4915-00-P

**DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY****Treasury Advisory Committee on Commercial Operations of the U.S. Customs Service**

**AGENCY:** Department Offices, Treasury.

**ACTION:** Notice of meeting

**SUMMARY:** This notice announces the date and time for the next meeting and the agenda for consideration by the Committee.

**DATES:** The next meeting of the Treasury Advisory Committee on Commercial Operations of the U.S. Customs Service will be held on Friday, October 9, 1998 at 9:00 a.m. in Chicago, Illinois. The meeting will be held in the 47th floor boardroom of Sara Lee corporate headquarters at 70 West Madison Street (also known as 3 First National Plaza), Chicago, IL 60602. 70 West Madison Street is between Clark Street and Dearborn Street. Phone: (312) 726-2600.

The duration of the meeting will be approximately three to three and a half hours.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Dennis M. O'Connell, Director, Office of Tariff and Trade Affairs, Office of the Under Secretary (Enforcement), Room 4004, Department of the Treasury, 1500

Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20220. Tel.: (202) 622-0220.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** At the October 9, 1998 session, the regular quarterly meeting of the Advisory Committee, the Committee is expected to consider the agenda items listed below. The agenda may be modified prior to the meeting:

1. Status of implementation of Committee recommendations on the Automated Export System (AES).
2. The Automated Commercial Environment (ACE) and the International Trade Data System (ITDS): Where do they stand?
3. Adequacy of staffing for the Office of Regulations and Ruling.
4. The Merchandise Processing Fee and aggregation of entries.
5. Review of Committee annual report recommendations.

The meeting is open to the public; however, participation in the Committee's deliberations is limited to Committee members and Customs and Treasury Department staff. A person other than an Advisory Committee member who wishes to attend the meeting, should give advance notice by contacting Theresa Manning at (202) 622-0220 no later than October 2, 1998.

Dated: September 19, 1998.

**John P. Simpson,**

*Deputy Assistant Secretary (Regulatory, Tariff, and Trade Enforcement).*

[FR Doc. 98-25516 Filed 9-23-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4810-25-M

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## UNITED STATES INFORMATION AGENCY

### Program Title The FREEDOM Support Act/Future Leaders Exchange (FSA/FLEX) Program; Inbound, NIS Secondary School Initiative

**NOTICE:** Request for proposals.

**SUMMARY:** The Youth Programs Division/Office of Citizen Exchanges of the United States Information Agency's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs announces an open competition for the FREEDOM Support Act Future Leaders Exchange Program. Public and private non-profit organizations meeting the provisions described in IRS regulation 26 CFR 1.501 may submit proposals to recruit and select host families of high school students between the ages of 15 and 17 from the New Independent States (NIS) of the former Soviet Union. In addition to screening, selecting, and orienting host families and enrolling students in American high schools, organizations will be responsible for: Orienting

students at the local level; providing support services for students; arranging enhancement activities; monitoring students during their stay in the U.S.; providing reentry training; and assessing student performance and progress. The award of grants and the number of students who will participate is subject to the availability of funding in fiscal year 1999.

### Program Information

#### Background

Academic year 1999/00 will be the seventh year of the FSA/FLEX program, which now includes over 6000 alumni. This component of the NIS Secondary School Initiative was originally authorized under the FREEDOM Support Act of 1992 and is funded by annual allocations from the Foreign Operations and USIA appropriations. The goals of the program are to promote mutual understanding and foster a relationship between the people of the NIS and the U.S.; assist the successor generation of the NIS to develop the qualities it will need to lead in the transformation of those countries in the 21st Century; and to promote democratic values and civic responsibility by giving NIS youth the opportunity to live in American society for an academic year.

#### Objectives

To place approximately 930 pre-selected high school students from the NIS in qualified, well-motivated host families and welcoming schools. To expose program participants to American culture and democracy through homestay experiences and enhancement activities that will enable them to attain a broad view of the society and culture of the U.S. To encourage FSA/FLEX program participants to share their culture, lifestyle, and traditions with U.S. citizens.

#### Other Components

Two organizations have been awarded grants to perform the following functions: Recruitment and selection of students; targeted recruitment for students with disabilities; assistance in documentation and preparation of IAP-66 forms; preparation of cross-cultural materials; pre-departure orientation; international travel from home to host community and return; facilitate ongoing communication between the natural parents and placement organizations, as needed; maintenance of a student database and provision of data to USIA; and ongoing follow-up with alumni following their return to the NIS. Additionally, a separate grant

may be awarded for a one-week mid-year civic education program in Washington, DC, for a select number of students who successfully compete for the Washington program. Students who require additional English language training before entering their host communities will attend an English upgrade and cultural orientation program, which is conducted under a grant exclusively for that purpose. The announcements of the competitions for these grants are being published separately.

#### Guidelines

Organizations chosen under this competition are responsible for the following: Recruitment, screening, selection, and orientation of host families; school enrollment; local orientation; placement of a small number of students with disabilities; specialized training of local staff and volunteers to work with NIS students; preparation and dissemination of materials to students pertaining to the placement organization; program enhancement activities; supervision and monitoring of students; trouble shooting and periodic reporting on their progress; when appropriate, communication with the organizations conducting other program components; evaluation of the students' performance; evaluation of the organization's success in achieving program goals; and re-entry training to prepare students for readjustment to their native culture.

Applicants may request a grant for the placement of at least 20 students. There is no ceiling on the number of students who may be placed by one organization. It is anticipated that 10 to 15 grants will be awarded for this component of the FLEX program. Placements will be spread all across the U.S. Students may be clustered in one or more regions or dispersed. If dispersed, applicants should demonstrate that local staffing and training of local staff is adequate to ensure their competence in supervising and counseling students from the NIS. Please refer to the Solicitation Package, available on request from the address listed below, for details on essential program elements, permissible costs, and criteria used to select students.

Grants should begin at the point that the complete applications on selected finalists are delivered to the placement organizations, approximately on April 1, 1999. Participants arrive in their host communities in the month of August and remain for 10 or 11 months until their departure during the period mid-June to early July 2000. Some students will depart at the end of May to