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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Highway Administration

Adequacy of Truck Parking Facilities; Notice of Conference

AGENCY: Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), DOT.

ACTION: Notice of conference.

SUMMARY: This notice is an invitation to participate in a 1½ day commercial truck Rest Area Forum, to be held in Atlanta, Georgia. The forum will address the issue of how best to improve the availability and safety of commercial vehicle parking along the Nation's highways.

DATES: The Rest Area Forum will be held on June 29 and 30, 1999. The first day's session will begin at 8:30 a.m. and end at 5 p.m. The second day will begin at 8:30 a.m. and end at approximately 2 p.m.

ADDRESSES: The forum will be held at the Sheraton Colony Square Hotel, in midtown Atlanta, Georgia (Telephone: (404) 892-6000. A block of rooms has been reserved until May 28, 1999 under "FHWA Rest Area Forum."

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: For information about the forum and to obtain registration materials, contact Dr. Patricia Hamilton, NATEK Inc., 4200-G Technology Court, Chantilly, VA 20151. E-mail: pat@natekinc.com. Telephone: (703) 818-7070, extension 3028. FAX: (703) 818-0165. To register on-line: <http://www.natekinc.com/>. Questions about the Forum may also be addressed to Mr. Robert Davis, Office of Motor Carrier Research and Standards (HMCS-30), Office of Motor Carrier and Highway Safety, Federal Highway Administration, 400 Seventh Street, SW., Washington, DC 20590; Telephone: (202) 366-2997; FAX: (202) 366-8842; E-mail: robert.davis@fhwa.dot.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Electronic Access

An electronic copy of this document may be downloaded using a modem and suitable communications software from the Government Printing Office's Electronic Bulletin Board Service at (202) 512-1661. Internet users may

reach the **Federal Register's** home page at: <http://www.nara.gov/fedreg> and the Government Printing Office's database at: <http://www.access.gpo.gov/nara>.

Background

On June 29 and 30, 1999, in Atlanta, Georgia, the Office of Motor Carrier and Highway Safety of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) will host a 1½ day Rest Area Forum for representatives of State enforcement and department of transportation officials, motor carriers, private truck stop operators, commercial drivers, safety advocates, and other interested parties. During the Forum, attendees will be asked to: (1) Review various issues associated with the current provision, by both public and private parties, of parking spaces for commercial drivers; (2) describe and document "success stories" and "best practices" being employed to alleviate shortages of parking spaces and enhance their safety during day and nighttime hours; (3) consider effective means to provide "real-time" information to commercial drivers about available parking spaces at privately owned truck stops or public rest areas; (4) identify appropriate actions, initiatives, and pilot efforts that could be undertaken by both public and private sources to expand the number of safe, accessible parking spaces across the United States; and (5) identify any needed legislative initiatives, including the provision of resources, that would be helpful in facilitating the improvement of commercial vehicle parking.

The impetus for the Rest Area Forum is taken from the requirements of section 4027, "Study of Adequacy of Parking Facilities", of the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (Pub.L. 105-178, 112 Stat.107), which calls upon the Secretary of Transportation to "conduct a study to determine the location and quantity of parking facilities at commercial truck stops and travel plazas and public rest areas that could be used by motor carriers to comply with Federal hours of service rules." According to section 4027, the study "shall include an inventory of current facilities serving the National Highway System, analyze where shortages exist or are projected to exist, and propose a plan to reduce the shortages."

In considering this requirement, the FHWA has determined that a first step in satisfying it should include a national work session with public and private sector officials experienced in dealing with this issue, who have researched it, or who want to contribute to its resolution. The FHWA believes that the feedback that would be obtained from

the forum would help focus the FHWA's response to the section 4027 effort, while also providing for an healthy exchange of ideas and recommendations among the participants.

Accordingly, the Rest Area Forum will provide attendees with the opportunity to directly contribute to the dialogue on how best to improve the availability and safety of commercial vehicle parking along the Nation's highways. Aside from introductory and concluding plenary sessions, most of the 1½ day Forum will be conducted in break-out sessions, during which the groups will be asked to consider a variety of issues and contribute their experiences and perspectives. Attendees will be asked to contribute their experiences and recommendations through an interactive discussion with their peers; formal presentations will not be required or solicited.

Ultimately, the discussions and recommendations of these collective sessions will be used to construct a final Forum report that will: (1) Offer a "best practices" guide; (2) identify for Federal, State and private sector customers how best they may proceed to influence and bring about better, more available, and safer commercial vehicle parking; and (3) provide the FHWA with needed information about challenges and workable solutions which can be used to both satisfy the immediate requirement of Section 4027 and ensure that the Congress and other interested parties are kept informed about progress in this area.

Due to limited seating, early registration is encouraged. For those registering by May 28, the registration fee is \$50. Those registering after May 28 or at the door will be charged \$75.

Authority: 23 U.S.C. 315; 49 U.S.C. 31136 and 31502; 49 CFR 1.48.

Issued on May 12, 1999.

Dwight A. Horne.

*Director, Office of Highway Safety
Infrastructure, Federal Highway
Administration.*

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