

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Surface Transportation Board

[STB Docket No. AB-853 (Sub-No. 1X)]

**Kansas & Oklahoma Railroad, Inc.—
Abandonment Exemption—in
Hodgeman, Comanche, Kiowa, and
Pratt Counties, KS**

Kansas & Oklahoma Railroad, Inc. (K&O), has filed a notice of exemption under 49 CFR 1152 subpart F—*Exempt Abandonments* to abandon two rail line segments as follows: (1) A 10.7-mile rail line between milepost 36.3 at Hanston, and milepost 47.0 at Jetmore, in Hodgeman County, KS; and (2) a 46.8-mile rail line between milepost 589.2 at Coats, and milepost 636.0 at Protection, in Comanche, Kiowa, and Pratt Counties, KS. The lines traverse United States Postal Service Zip Codes 67849, 67854, 67028, 67155, 67029, and 67127.

K&O has certified that: (1) No local traffic has moved over the line for at least 2 years; (2) there is no overhead traffic on the line; (3) no formal complaint filed by a user of rail service on the line (or by a state or local government entity acting on behalf of such user) regarding cessation of service over the line either is pending with the Surface Transportation Board (Board) or with any U.S. District Court or has been decided in favor of complainant within the 2-year period; and (4) the requirements at 49 CFR 1105.7 (environmental reports), 49 CFR 1105.8 (historic reports), 49 CFR 1105.11 (transmittal letter), 49 CFR 1105.12 (newspaper publication), and 49 CFR 1152.50(d)(1) (notice to governmental agencies) have been met.

As a condition to this exemption, any employee adversely affected by the abandonment shall be protected under *Oregon Short Line R. Co.—Abandonment—Goshen*, 360 I.C.C. 91 (1979). To address whether this condition adequately protects affected employees, a petition for partial revocation under 49 U.S.C. 10502(d) must be filed. Provided no formal expression of intent to file an offer of financial assistance (OFA) has been received, this exemption will be effective on September 26, 2003, unless stayed pending reconsideration. Petitions to stay that do not involve environmental issues,¹ formal

¹ The Board will grant a stay if an informed decision on environmental issues (whether raised by a party or by the Board's Section of Environmental Analysis (SEA) in its independent investigation) cannot be made before the exemption's effective date. See *Exemption of Out-of-Service Rail Lines*, 5 I.C.C.2d 377 (1989). Any request for a stay should be filed as soon as possible

expressions of intent to file an OFA under 49 CFR 1152.27(c)(2),² and trail use/rail banking requests under 49 CFR 1152.29 must be filed by September 8, 2003. Petitions to reopen or requests for public use conditions under 49 CFR 1152.28 must be filed by September 16, 2003, with: Surface Transportation Board, 1925 K Street, NW., Washington, DC 20423-0001.

A copy of any petition filed with the Board should be sent to applicant's representative: Karl Morell, 1455 F St., NW., Suite 225, Washington, DC 20005.

If the verified notice contains false or misleading information, the exemption is void *ab initio*.

K&O has filed an environmental report which addresses the effects, if any, of the abandonment on the environment and historic resources. SEA will issue an environmental assessment (EA) by August 29, 2003. Interested persons may obtain a copy of the EA by writing to SEA (Room 500, Surface Transportation Board, Washington, DC 20423-0001) or by calling SEA, at (202) 565-1539. (Assistance for the hearing impaired is available through the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at 1-800-877-8339.) Comments on environmental and historic preservation matters must be filed within 15 days after the EA becomes available to the public.

Environmental, historic preservation, public use, or trail use/rail banking conditions will be imposed, where appropriate, in a subsequent decision.

Pursuant to the provisions of 49 CFR 1152.29(e)(2), K&O shall file a notice of consummation with the Board to signify that it has exercised the authority granted and fully abandoned the line. If consummation has not been effected by K&O's filing of a notice of consummation by August 27, 2004, and there are no legal or regulatory barriers to consummation, the authority to abandon will automatically expire.

Board decisions and notices are available on our Web site at <http://www.stb.dot.gov>.

Decided: August 18, 2003.

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

Vernon A. Williams,
Secretary.

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so that the Board may take appropriate action before the exemption's effective date.

² Each OFA must be accompanied by the filing fee, which currently is set at \$1,100. See 49 CFR 1002.2(f)(25).

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS
AFFAIRS**Privacy Act of 1974; Report of
Matching Program**

AGENCY: Department of Veterans Affairs.

ACTION: Notice.

Notice is hereby given that the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) intends to conduct a recurring computer program matching Railroad Retirement Board (RRB) benefit recipient records with VA pension and parents' dependency and indemnity compensation (DIC) records. The goal of this match is to compare income status as reported to VA with benefit records maintained by the RRB.

VA plans to match records of veterans and surviving spouses and children who receive pension, and parents who receive DIC, with railroad retirement benefit records maintained by RRB. The match with RRB will provide VA with data from the RRB Research File of Retirement and Survivor Benefits.

VA will use this information to update the master records of VA beneficiaries receiving income dependent benefits and to adjust VA benefit payments as prescribed by law. Otherwise, information about a VA beneficiary's income is obtained only from reporting by the beneficiary. The proposed matching program will enable VA to ensure accurate reporting of income.

Records to be Matched: The VA records involved in the match are the VA system of records, Compensation, Pension and Education and Rehabilitation Records—VA (58 VA 21/22), first published at 41 FR 924 (March 3, 1976), and last amended at 63 FR 37941 (7/14/98), with other amendments as cited therein. The RRB records consist of information from the Research File of Retirement and Survivor Benefits, Systems of Records RRB 225 and RRB 26 contained in the Privacy Act Issuances, 1991 compilation, Volume V, pages 518-519. In accordance with Title 5 U.S.C., subsection 552a(o)(2) and (r), copies of the agreement are being sent to both Houses of Congress and to the Office of Management and Budget. This notice is provided in accordance with the provisions of the Privacy Act of 1974 as amended by Pub. L. 100-503.

The match will start no sooner than 30 days after publication of this Notice in the **Federal Register**, or 40 days after copies of this Notice and the agreement of the parties is submitted to Congress and the Office of Management and Budget, whichever is later, and end not