

The purpose of the trackage rights is to permit UP and BNSF to implement directional running over lines between Pueblo, CO, and Amarillo, TX.

As a condition to this exemption, any employees affected by the trackage rights will be protected by the conditions imposed in *Norfolk and Western Ry. Co.—Trackage Rights—BN*, 354 I.C.C. 605 (1978), as modified in *Mendocino Coast Ry., Inc.—Lease and Operate*, 360 I.C.C. 653 (1980).

This notice is filed under 49 CFR 1180.2(d)(7). If it 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. 34408, must be filed with the Surface Transportation Board, 1925 K Street, NW., Washington, DC 20423–0001. In addition, a copy of each pleading must be served on Robert T. Opal, 1416 Dodge St., Room 830, Omaha, NE 68179.

Board decisions and notices are available on our Web site at WWW.STB.DOT.GOV.

Decided: September 22, 2003.

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

Vernon A. Williams,
Secretary.

[FR Doc. 03–24383 Filed 9–24–03; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Surface Transportation Board

[STB Finance Docket No. 34406]

Union Pacific Railroad Company— Trackage Rights Exemption—The Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railway Company

The Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railway Company (BNSF) has agreed to grant overhead trackage rights to Union Pacific Railroad Company (UP) over a line of railroad on BNSF's Pikes Peak Subdivision between BNSF milepost 107.9 in or near Bragdon, CO, and BNSF milepost 120.3 (617.51) in or near Pueblo, CO, a total distance of approximately 12.4 miles.¹

Although UP states that the transaction was scheduled to be consummated on September 11, 2003,

the earliest the transaction could be consummated was September 12, 2003 (7 days after filing under 49 CFR 1180.4(g)).

The purpose of the trackage rights is to permit UP and BNSF to implement directional running over lines between Pueblo, CO, and Amarillo, TX.

As a condition to this exemption, any employees affected by the trackage rights will be protected by the conditions imposed in *Norfolk and Western Ry. Co.—Trackage Rights—BN*, 354 I.C.C. 605 (1978), as modified in *Mendocino Coast Ry., Inc.—Lease and Operate*, 360 I.C.C. 653 (1980).

This notice is filed under 49 CFR 1180.2(d)(7). If it 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. 34406, must be filed with the Surface Transportation Board, 1925 K Street, NW., Washington, DC 20423–0001. In addition, a copy of each pleading must be served on Robert T. Opal, 1416 Dodge St., Room 830, Omaha, NE 68179.

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Decided: September 22, 2003.

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

Vernon A. Williams,
Secretary.

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Surface Transportation Board

[STB Finance Docket No. 34407]

Union Pacific Railroad Company— Trackage Rights Exemption—The Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railway Company

The Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railway Company (BNSF) has agreed to grant overhead trackage rights¹ to Union Pacific Railroad Company (UP) over a line of railroad on BNSF's (1) Dalhart Subdivision between BNSF milepost 417.5 in or near Dalhart, TX, and BNSF milepost 452.9 in or near Texline, TX; and (2) Twin Peaks

Subdivision between BNSF milepost 452.9 in or near Texline, TX, and BNSF milepost 210 in or near Trinidad, CO, a total distance of approximately 170.9 miles.²

The transaction was scheduled to be consummated on September 11, 2003.

The purpose of the trackage rights is to permit UP and BNSF to implement directional running over lines between Pueblo, CO, and Amarillo, TX.

As a condition to this exemption, any employees affected by the trackage rights will be protected by the conditions imposed in *Norfolk and Western Ry. Co.—Trackage Rights—BN*, 354 I.C.C. 605 (1978), as modified in *Mendocino Coast Ry., Inc.—Lease and Operate*, 360 I.C.C. 653 (1980).

This notice is filed under 49 CFR 1180.2(d)(7). If it 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. 34407, must be filed with the Surface Transportation Board, 1925 K Street, NW., Washington, DC 20423–0001. In addition, a copy of each pleading must be served on Robert T. Opal, 1416 Dodge St., Room 830, Omaha, NE 68179.

Board decisions and notices are available on our Web site at WWW.STB.DOT.GOV.

Decided: September 17, 2003.

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

Vernon A. Williams,
Secretary.

[FR Doc. 03–24385 Filed 9–24–03; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Surface Transportation Board

[STB Docket No. AB–55 (Sub–No. 640)]

CSX Transportation, Inc.— Abandonment—in Atkinson and Ware Counties, GA

On September 5, 2003, CSX Transportation, Inc. (CSXT), filed with the Surface Transportation Board (Board) an application for permission to abandon a portion of its Southern Region, Jacksonville Division, extending from milepost AP 594.69, near

¹ UP has included a draft of the trackage rights agreement and states that a copy of the agreement will be provided to the Board after it is finalized and executed.

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² The trackage rights involve BNSF subdivisions with non-contiguous mileposts. Therefore, total mileage does not correspond to the milepost designations of the endpoints.

Waresboro, to milepost AP 617.94, near Pearson, a distance of 23.25 miles, in Atkinson and Ware Counties, GA (the line). The line includes the Pearson Station and traverses United States Postal Service ZIP Codes 31552, 31564, and 31642.

The line does not contain federally granted rights-of-way. Any documentation in CSXT's possession will be made available promptly to those requesting it. The applicant's entire case for abandonment (case-in-chief) was filed with the application.

This line of railroad has appeared on CSXT's system diagram map in category 1 since March 28, 2003.

The interest of railroad employees will be protected by the conditions set forth in *Oregon Short Line R. Co.—Abandonment—Goshen*, 360 I.C.C. 91 (1979).

Any interested person may file with the Board written comments concerning the proposed abandonment, or protests (including the protestant's entire opposition case), by October 20, 2003. All interested persons should be aware that following any abandonment of rail service and salvage of the line, the line may be suitable for other public use, including interim trail use. Any request for a public use condition under 49 U.S.C. 10905 (49 CFR 1152.28) and any request for a trail use condition under 16 U.S.C. 1247(d) (49 CFR 1152.29) must be filed by October 20, 2003. Each trail use request must be accompanied by a \$150 filing fee. *See* 49 CFR 1002.2(f)(27). Applicant's reply to any opposition statements and its response to trail use requests must be filed by November 4, 2003. *See* 49 CFR 1152.26(a).

Persons opposing the abandonment who wish to participate actively and fully in the process should file a protest. Persons who oppose the abandonment but who do not wish to participate fully in the process by submitting verified statements of witnesses containing detailed evidence should file comments. Persons seeking information concerning the filing of protests should refer to 49 CFR 1152.25. Persons interested only in seeking public use or trail use conditions should also file comments.

In addition, a commenting party or protestant may provide: (i) An offer of financial assistance (OFA) for continued rail service under 49 U.S.C. 10904 (due 120 days after the application is filed or 10 days after the application is granted by the Board, whichever occurs sooner); (ii) recommended provisions for protection of the interests of employees; (iii) a request for a public use condition under 49 U.S.C. 10905; and (iv) a statement pertaining to prospective use

of the right-of-way for interim trail use and rail banking under 16 U.S.C. 1247(d) and 49 CFR 1152.29.

All filings in response to this notice must refer to STB Docket No. AB-55 (Sub-No. 640) and must be sent to: (1) Surface Transportation Board, 1925 K Street, NW., Washington, DC 20423-0001; and (2) Natalie S. Rosenberg, CSX Transportation, Inc., 500 Water Street, Jacksonville, FL 32202. The original and 10 copies of all comments or protests shall be filed with the Board with a certificate of service. Except as otherwise set forth in part 1152, every document filed with the Board must be served on all parties to the abandonment proceeding. 49 CFR 1104.12(a).

The line sought to be abandoned will be available for subsidy or sale for continued rail use, if the Board decides to permit the abandonment, in accordance with applicable laws and regulations (49 U.S.C. 10904 and 49 CFR 1152.27). Each OFA must be accompanied by a \$1,100 filing fee. *See* 49 CFR 1002.2(f)(25). No subsidy arrangement approved under 49 U.S.C. 10904 shall remain in effect for more than 1 year unless otherwise mutually agreed by the parties (49 U.S.C. 10904(f)(4)(B)). Applicant will promptly provide upon request to each interested party an estimate of the subsidy and minimum purchase price required to keep the line in operation. The carrier's representative to whom inquiries may be made concerning sale or subsidy terms is set forth above.

Persons seeking further information concerning abandonment procedures may contact the Board's Office of Public Services at (202) 565-1592 or refer to the full abandonment or discontinuance regulations at 49 CFR part 1152. Questions concerning environmental issues may be directed to the Board's Section of Environmental Analysis (SEA) at (202) 565-1539. [Assistance for the hearing impaired is available through the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at 1-800-877-8339.]

An environmental assessment (EA) (or environmental impact statement (EIS), if necessary) prepared by SEA will be served upon all parties of record and upon any agencies or other persons who commented during its preparation. Other interested persons may contact SEA to obtain a copy of the EA (or EIS). EAs in these abandonment proceedings normally will be made available within 33 days of the filing of the application. The deadline for submission of comments on the EA will generally be within 30 days of its service. The comments received will be addressed in the Board's decision. A supplemental

EA or EIS may be issued where appropriate.

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Decided: September 17, 2003.

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

Vernon A. Williams,
Secretary.

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DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

Capital Asset Realignment for Enhanced Services (CARES) Commission; Notice of Meeting

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) gives notice under Public Law 92-463 (Federal Advisory Committee Act) that the Capital Asset Realignment for Enhanced Services (CARES) Commission will hold a meeting on Tuesday, October 7, 2003, in Room 418 of the Russell Senate Office Building, Washington, DC 20510. The meeting will begin at 8:30 a.m. and end at 5 p.m. The meeting is open to the public.

The purpose of the Commission is to conduct an external assessment of VA's capital asset needs and to assure that stakeholder and beneficiary concerns are fully addressed. The Commission is reviewing recommendations in VA Under Secretary for Health's Draft National CARES Plan. The Commission will also consider recommendations submitted by veterans service organizations, individual veterans, Congress, medical school affiliates, VA employees, local government entities, community groups and others. Following its assessment, the Commission will make specific recommendations to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs regarding the realignment and allocation of capital assets necessary to meet the demands for and enhance veterans health care services over the next 20 years.

The October 7, 2003, meeting will be the first national meeting of the Commission since the Draft National CARES Plan was issued where parties from outside VA will address the Commission. As a final step in the Commission's information gathering process, national leaders are being asked to provide a national perspective on the CARES process and the Draft National CARES Plan to the entire Commission. Leadership from both the Senate and House of Representatives Veterans Affairs Committees and the