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Federal Railroad Administration Showcases Research and Development Portfolio.

The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) presented its strategic research agenda during its annual Research and Development Research Review held at the National Academy of Sciences in Washington D.C. May 22 -23. The gathering was an opportunity for the FRA's Office of Research and Development (R&D) to share its priorities and significant recent findings. Recent R&D project successes include research into crashworthiness that has improved the safety of next generation passenger rail cars; analysis of vehicle-track interaction that has led to revised rules for track safety standards and vehicle qualification; development of a freight train braking algorithm that allows the safety benefits of positive train control to be achieved without adversely affecting operations; and the success of several safety culture improvement pilot programs that have reduced the number of accidents and incidents caused by human error. Contact: Mike England (202) 493-6024

FRA's Close Call Reporting Program Shows Improvement in Safety, Decrease in Derailments.

In recent analysis, the Federal Railroad Administration's Close Call Confidential Reporting System (C3RS) demonstration project has shown significant improvements in both safety and safety culture since C3RS was introduced, including a decrease in derailments. The analysis showed a 31 percent increase in the number of cars moved between incidents (leading to higher productivity) since designated corrective actions were implemented. A survey taken by employees suggested that safety culture had improved since C3RS was introduced at the site. Interviews indicated that disciplinary cases decreased by over 90 percent, thus reducing large amounts of time and paperwork that labor and management needed in order to resolve each case. The result of this analysis is available at

http://www.fra.dot.gov/rpd/downloads/RR_Derailments_Decrease_C3RS_Site_at_Midterm_final.pdf Contact: Kevin Thompson (202) 493-6024

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