

8th Annual SSO Workshop

The Federal Transit Administration's 8th State Safety Oversight Annual Workshop was held at the Holiday Inn Select in Boston, Massachusetts from September 19 to September 23, 2004, and by all accounts was a great success. The event was sponsored by FTA's Office of Transit Safety and Security, and was jointly hosted by the Massachusetts Department of Telecommunications and Energy (MDTE) and the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA).



Roundtable Discussion

This year's workshop achieved the highest attendance to date, with 93 participants, including representatives from: 18 state safety oversight agencies; 23 rail transit agencies; 6 FTA Regional Offices, and FTA headquarters. Also in attendance were representatives from the American Public Transportation Association (APTA), the Volpe National Transportation Systems Center, the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), the Transportation Research Board (TRB), the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), the Office for Domestic Preparedness (ODP), and consultants supporting FTA's State Safety Oversight and Drug and Alcohol Programs. During the three-and-a-half day meeting, 32 members of the SSO community gave presentations and helped lead panel discussions. Workshop topics included FTA's

Drug and Alcohol Program, TRB's Cooperative Research Program, rail grade crossing safety, efficiency and proficiency testing in public transportation, root cause analysis and accident investigation, hazard management programs, rail transit security, FTA's SSO Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, and the development of National Transit Database reports for State Oversight Agencies.

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On the second full day of the workshop, participants boarded a bus to the MBTA Bus and Rail Control Centers for an overview of MBTA operations. Participants were also able to tour the



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the Acela High Speed Train as well as the new Silver Line Transitway, where tunneling techniques, operations, and security measures were presented.

All workshop invitees will receive a follow-up package of workshop materials including



presentations, meeting minutes, and attendee contact information.

New Starts Systems

Three new light rail systems and one new heavy rail system have increased the size of the State Safety Oversight community over the past year. The new systems are in Arkansas, Minnesota, Puerto Rico, and North Carolina. All four new starts systems required the establishment of a new State Oversight Agency (SOA), bringing the total number of SOAs to 26. The new agencies are the Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department, the Minnesota Department of Public Safety, the Puerto Rico State Emergency and Disaster Management Agency and the North Carolina Department of Transportation. FTA expects seven additional new starts systems to initiate revenue service over the next 5 years. As a result of these additional systems, new SOAs have been designated in Nevada and Arizona to oversee rail transit safety. See *table and map on Page 5*.

Central Arkansas Transit Authority, River Rail, Little Rock, AR – 11/1/04

The Central Arkansas Transit Authority (CATA) initiated revenue service on its new River Rail vintage trolley line on November 1, 2004, marking the first time in 57 years that electric trolley cars have traveled the streets of Little Rock. During the inaugural week of operation, rides were free on the 2.5 mile system. The new rail line uses the Main Street Bridge to unite the “River Cities” of Little Rock and North Little Rock. Riders board one of the three vintage trolleys in use at any of 11 stations along the system. The route links many popular destinations in the River Cities such as the Alltel Arena, the Statehouse Convention Center, the River Market, two city halls, the Historic Arkansas Museum, the Discovery Museum, the Robinson Auditorium Concert

Hall and the Riverfront Amphitheater. The system operates from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. on



Little Rock River Rail

Monday through Wednesday, 11 a.m. to Midnight on Thursday through Saturday, and 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Sunday. Round trip fares are 50 cents for adults, 25 cents for seniors and the disabled, and children under five ride for free. Day passes are available for \$2.

Metropolitan Council, Hiawatha Light Rail, Minneapolis, MN – 6/26/04

On June 26, 2004, citizens of the Twin Cities took their first rides on the Metropolitan Council’s new Hiawatha light rail transit system. The Hiawatha system’s Bloomington/



Hiawatha Light Rail

Mall of America extension was opened on December 4, 2004, lengthening the system to

11.6 miles and 17 stations. The rail line unites downtown Minneapolis, the Minneapolis/St. Paul International Airport, and the Mall of America in Bloomington, the nation's largest retail and entertainment complex. The system consists of 24 cars, each capable of carrying 66 seated passengers, plus standing capacity for 180. Typically trains run every 10 minutes and, rush hour, every 7.5 minutes. Ridership on the Hiawatha line has been strong in its first year, surpassing early estimates. In the first week of operation the system had over 93,000 riders, and during the first two days following the opening of the Bloomington/Mall of America extension, over 140,000 passengers rode the system.

Puerto Rico Highway and Transportation Authority, Tren Urbano, San Juan, PR – 12/19/04

The inauguration of the Puerto Rico Highway and Transportation Authority's new Tren Urbano heavy rail line in San Juan, Puerto Rico was Friday, December 17, 2004. On the following Sunday, the line initiated operation providing fare-free service to the public.



Tren Urbano

The 10.7 mile, 16 station system runs between Bayamon Centro and the Sagrado Corazon area of Santurce in San Juan. The Tren

Urbano line includes 74 heavy rail vehicles and is expected to carry 113,300 riders per day by 2010. The system will continue to offer fare-free service on Saturdays and Sundays through March 2005.

Charlotte Area Transit System, Charlotte Trolley, Charlotte, NC – 6/25/04

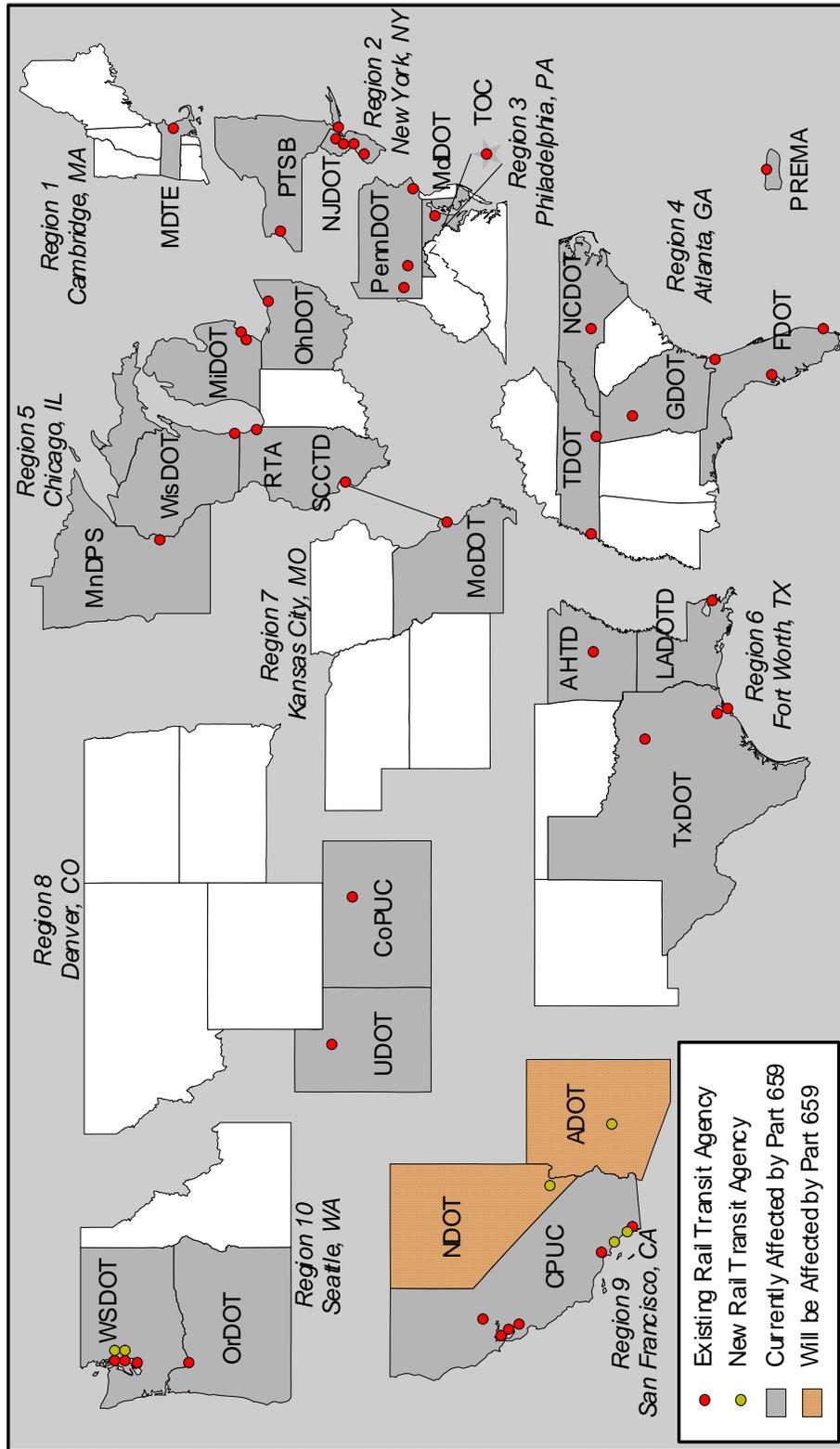
On June 25, 2004, for the first time in 65 years, a trolley car traveled the streets of Charlotte. Car # 85 has had an interesting history since its retirement from the streets of Charlotte and its final destination in Huntersville, North Carolina. After being "rescued" in 1989, Car #85 has been restored to its former glory and can now be seen traveling along Charlotte Area Transit System's (CATS) 2.1 mile, 10 station Charlotte Trolley system. The Charlotte Trolley functioned under limited operation until October, when CATS introduced three new replica trolley cars to accompany Car #85.



Charlotte Trolley, Car #85

Fare for the trolley is \$1. Children 12 and under accompanied by an adult and customers 62 and over can ride for 50 cents. Children 46 inches tall and below ride the trolley service for free. A portion of the Charlotte Trolley track will be shared with the upcoming CATS South Corridor LRT, scheduled to begin revenue operations in 2007. ♻️

State Safety Oversight Community Map

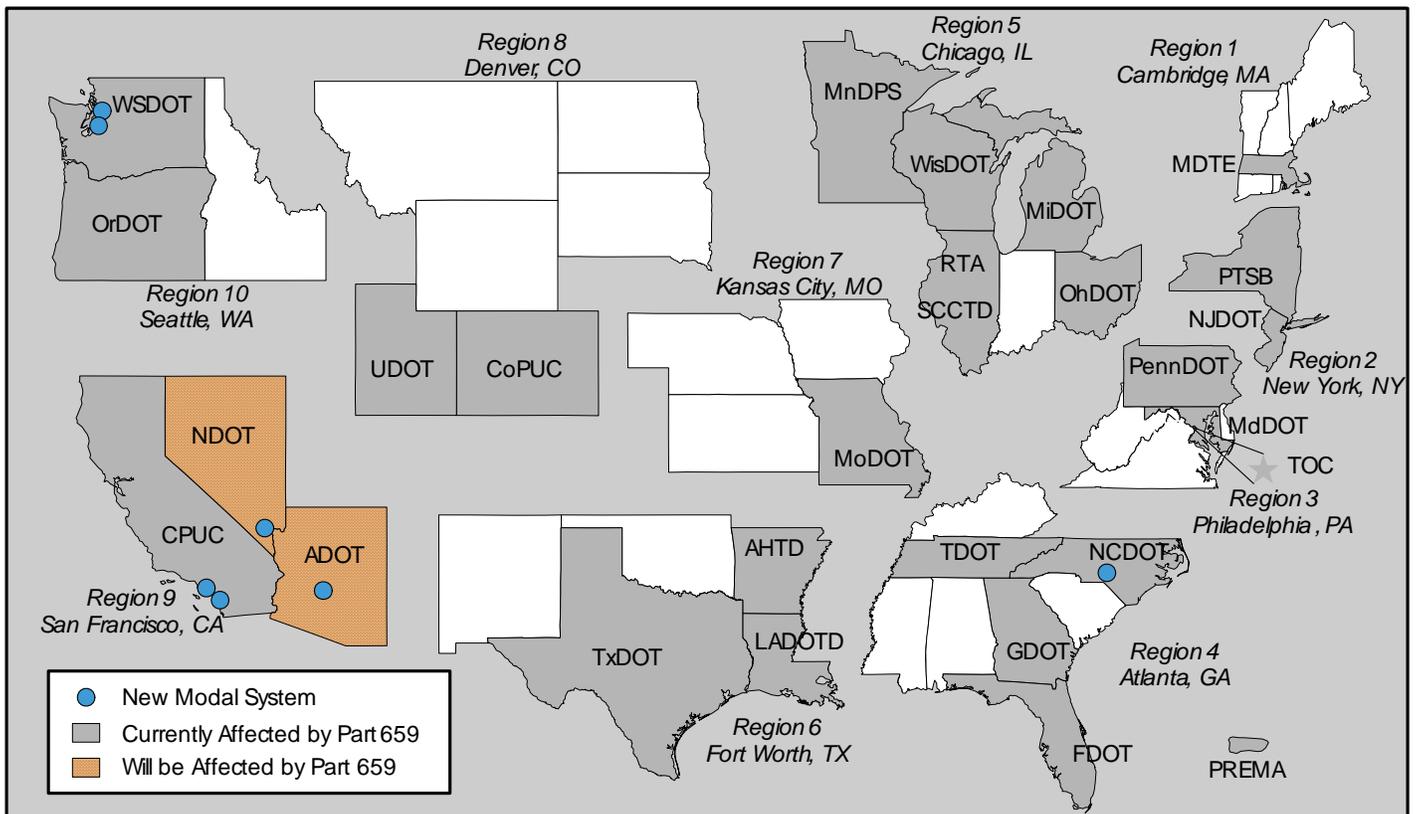


Upcoming Additions to the SSO Community

Location	Rail Transit Project	Projected Date of Service	Projected Weekday Ridership	State Oversight Agency
Charlotte, NC	Charlotte Area Transit System South Corridor LRT	1/2007	21,100	North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT)
San Diego, CA	North County Transit District Sprinter ¹	12/2007	16,000	California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC)
Phoenix, AZ	Regional Public Transportation Authority East Valley Corridor ¹	12/2008	48,000	Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) ¹
Las Vegas, NV	Las Vegas Resort Corridor Fixed Guideway (extension) ^{1, 2}	5/2009	38,800	Nevada Department of Transportation (NDOT) ¹
Seattle, WA	Sound Transit Central Link Light Rail ¹	7/2009	42,500	Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT)
San Diego, CA	Orange County Transportation Authority CenterLine LRT ¹	12/2009	28,400	California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC)
Seattle, WA	Seattle Popular Monorail Authority Green Line ¹	2009	69,000	Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT)

¹ new agency

² The existing Las Vegas system will join the SSO community upon the initiation of service on the federally-funded extension.



Efficiency and Proficiency Testing Programs

Operating rules are put in place at rail transit agencies to promote safe, efficient, and timely transit operations. To meet these objectives, it is imperative that rail transit personnel follow established operating rules. Many rail transit agencies implement efficiency and proficiency testing programs to ensure that operating rules are followed. These programs are designed to verify, reinforce, and document a consistent understanding of critical rules and procedures.



Through supervision, efficiency and proficiency testing programs improve employee operating compliance. Typically, these programs assess compliance with operating rules and procedures. Tests are conducted by the operations department, assisted by the safety department, to ensure that safety rules are not violated. Typical programs may include preliminary planning, staffing of the actual test, and post-test actions. Supervisor testing procedures may include the creation of a test report to be logged with all other test reports

for inspection by applicable agencies. Efficiency and proficiency tests can assess a variety of operational performance areas (see below).

TESTED PERFORMANCE AREAS

- *Smooth operations*
- *Signal compliance*
- *Speed compliance*
- *Yard operation*
- *Schedule adherence*
- *Communications protocol*
- *Prescribed announcements*
- *Cab condition*
- *Safety requirements*

The FRA requires efficiency and proficiency testing at railroads. Each railroad must implement a written program of periodic operational tests to determine the “extent of compliance with its code of operating rules” under various operating conditions (49 CFR 217.9). The FRA regulation requires that railroads maintain records of individual tests and make available an annual summary of these operational tests to FRA upon request.

APTA has produced several documents relating to efficiency and proficiency testing. APTA’s *Recommended Practice for Rail Transit System Station Procedures*, *Standard for Rule Compliance*, *Standard for Train Operating Employees Reporting to Work*, and *Standard for RTS Train Operations Safety Program* are valuable resources for developing efficiency and proficiency testing programs.

Another method of efficiency and proficiency testing is the implementation of event data

recorders (EDRs). Similar to the devices known as “black boxes” on airplanes, EDRs decode and record information from critical systems of a rail transit vehicle, such as vehicle velocity, brake timing and pressure, and signal data. EDRs can provide supervisors with valuable data in evaluating operational rules and procedures compliance as well as providing accident investigators with crucial information for the determination of causal or contributing factors in an accident.

In response to rail transit accidents, the National Transit Safety Board (NTSB) has recommended both the development of efficiency and proficiency testing programs and the use of EDRs aboard rail transit vehicles. In R-02-22 NTSB recommends the development and implementation of “systematic procedures for performing and documenting frequent

management checks to ensure all operating personnel are complying with [transit agency] operating rules, including speed restrictions and signal rules.” As a result of the same investigation, NTSB also recommended that rail transit vehicles “be equipped with event recorders” (R-02-19).

At FTA’s 8th State Safety Oversight Annual Workshop, three SSO community members were invited to present the benefits of efficiency and proficiency testing. FTA recognizes the clear benefits of these programs and will continue to support the sharing of efficiency and proficiency testing materials, guidelines and best practices among transit agency officials across the nation, and encourages transit agencies to continue to implement programs to ensure the safety of the riding public. ♻️

FTA Safety and Security Website

<http://www.fta.dot.gov>

Click on “Safety and Security”

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