



THE WHEEL

The Transportation Club of Houston Newsletter



Communications: Danny Schnautz

March/April 2007

Executive Secretary: Russell Powell

April Luncheon/Past Presidents Luncheon

April 3, 2007 at Brady's Landing

Speaker: April Yergin of ATA Associates. ATA Associates is a leader in the field of accident investigation and reconstruction and has worked with many trucking firms and attorneys on a number of high profile cases. Topic: "Integrated Battlefield of accident reconstruction" is a talk that will present the audience with a primer on a multitude of electronic monitoring and recording devices found in tractor trailers.

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Notice: The Board of Governors has proposed some minor changes to the By-Laws including the due date for your membership dues. The proposed changes will be voted on by the membership at the regular May 1, 2007 luncheon meeting. The actual changes and their purse can be viewed on the club website at: www.transclubhou.org/change.htm

Notice: Election of officers for the 2007-2008 club year will take place over the next few weeks. Ballots will be mailed to resident members and resident life members in early April. The nominating committee has proposed the following candidates:

- Danny Schnautz Clark Freight Lines for President**
- Deborah Butler Euro-Hub International, Inc for Vice President**
- Robert Clark Shell E&P for Treasurer**
- Shristi Shrestha Edna Rice Executive Recruiter Inc for Secretary**
- Robert Morgan Port of Houston Authority for Director**
- Michael Taber ChevronPhillips Chemical Co for Director**
- Larry Snellings dangerousgoods.com for Director**

If twenty five or more eligible members nominate any other candidate by written request to the Secretary before April 7, his or her name will also be included on the official ballot.

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Development of New Federal Design Standards for Hazardous Materials Tank Cars to Benefit from Public-Private Partnership

In a move designed to aid in the development of new federal design standards for stronger and safer hazardous materials tank cars, the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) is joining forces with rail and chemical industry leaders to create the tank car of the future, announced FRA Administrator Joseph H. Boardman.

"Our goal is to jump beyond incremental design changes," Boardman said. "We and our partners are looking to apply the latest research and advanced technology to provide increased safety for rail shipments posing the greatest safety risk," he explained, noting that FRA is considering issuing new, more robust federal design standards for hazardous materials tank cars and hopes to issue a final rule in 2008.

Boardman said the FRA has signed a Memorandum of Cooperation (MOC) with Dow Chemical Company, Union Pacific Railroad and the Union Tank Car Company to participate in their Next Generation Rail Tank Car Project. The agreement provides for extensive information sharing and cooperation between ongoing FRA and industry research programs to improve the safety of rail shipments of hazardous

commodities such as toxic inhalation hazards and high-risk gases and liquids.

Boardman stated FRA is focusing on strengthening the structural integrity of the tank car including the type of material and thickness of the outer shell and the type and design of the insulation material located between the outer shell and the inner tank that contains the hazardous material. This is intended to reduce the probability that a collision, such as a side impact, will result in release of the hazardous commodity. In addition, FRA is evaluating technology such as pushback couplers, energy absorbers, and anti-climbing devices designed to prevent a derailment of the tank car by keeping it upright and on the tracks after an accident.

The MOC also supports FRA's National Rail Safety Action Plan and its emphasis on promising research which has the potential to mitigate the greatest risks. In addition, the FRA has held two public meetings in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Transportation's Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration to receive comment on the design and operation of hazardous materials tank cars and anticipates holding a third meeting in early 2007.

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The Transportation Department removed a barrier to fledgling airline Virgin America's plans to start U.S. operations, saying the company was 'back on track' toward complying with laws limiting foreign control of a domestic carrier.

The agency gave a tentative OK to a revised plan filed in January by Burlingame, Calif.-based Virgin America, saying the revised plan 'should meet U.S. ownership rules' that cap foreign control of a U.S. airline at 25 percent. One required change is that Virgin America replaces CEO Fred Reid.

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Chairman and Chief Executive Larry Kellner says Continental Airlines prefers to remain independent if the airline industry stays the way it is structured now. In remarks made to an aviation and transportation conference in New York, Kellner reiterated that Continental isn't keen on merging with another carrier.

"My general belief is that if the industry stays as it is, we don't see huge benefits in consolidation for us," Kellner said. "We are very well-positioned competitively."

Continental has maintained that position for months, but each comment is closely scrutinized for any hint of change in light of the talk of takeover speculation not long ago.

While the Houston carrier's management has talked about independence, it revealed late last year that it had been in discussions about the possibility of merging with United Airlines.

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