

0001. In addition, a copy of each pleading must be served on Karl Morell, Esq., Ball Janik, LLP, 1455 F Street, NW., Suite 225, Washington, DC 20005.

Decided: May 8, 1997.

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

**Vernon A. Williams,**  
Secretary.

[FR Doc. 97-12772 Filed 5-14-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4915-00-P

## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

### Surface Transportation Board

[STB Docket No. AB-55 (Sub-No. 547X)]

#### **CSX Transportation, Inc.; Abandonment Exemption; in Muskegon County, MI**

On April 29, 1997, CSX Transportation, Inc. filed with the Surface Transportation Board a petition under 49 U.S.C. 10502 for exemption from the provisions of 49 U.S.C. 10903 to abandon a portion of its line of railroad known as the Montague Subdivision, extending from railroad milepost 62.12 at Berry to railroad milepost 72.25 at the end of the track at Montague, including a 3.5-mile industrial lead track at Montague, which traverses U.S. Postal Service Zip Codes 49445, 49461, and 49437, a distance of 13.63 miles, in Muskegon County, MI. The line includes the station of Montague at milepost 72.00.

The line does not contain federally granted rights-of-way. Any documentation in the railroad's possession will be made available promptly to those requesting it. The interest of railroad employees will be protected by *Oregon Short Line R. Co.—Abandonment—Goshen*, 360 ICC 91 (1979).

By issuance of this notice, the Board is instituting an exemption proceeding pursuant to 49 U.S.C. 10502(b). A final decision will be issued within 90 days (by August 15, 1997).

Any offer of financial assistance under 49 CFR 1152.27(b)(2) will be due no later than 10 days after service of a decision granting the petition for exemption. Each offer of financial assistance must be accompanied by the filing fee, which currently is set at \$900. See 49 CFR 1002.2(f)(25).

All interested persons should be aware that following 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 CFR 1152.28 and any request for trail

use/rail banking under 49 CFR 1152.29 will be due no later than 20 days after notice of the filing of the petition for exemption is published in the **Federal Register**. Each trail use request must be accompanied by a \$150 filing fee. See 49 CFR 1002.2(f)(27).

All filings in response to this notice must refer to STB Docket No. AB-55 (Sub-No. 547X) and must be sent to: (1) Office of the Secretary, Case Control Unit, Surface Transportation Board, 1925 K Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20423-0001, and (2) Charles M. Rosenberger, 500 Water Street, Jacksonville, FL 32202.

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 at (202) 565-1545. [TDD for the hearing impaired is available at (202) 565-1695.]

An environmental assessment (EA) (or environmental impact statement (EIS), if necessary) prepared by the Section of Environmental Analysis will be served upon all parties of record and upon any agencies or other persons who commented during its preparation. Any other persons who would like to obtain a copy of the EA (or EIS) may contact the Section of Environmental Analysis. EAs in these abandonment proceedings normally will be available within 60 days of the filing of the petition. The deadline for submission of comments on the EA will generally be within 30 days of its service.

Decided: May 9, 1997.

By the Board, Vernon A. Williams,  
Secretary.

**Vernon A. Williams,**  
Secretary.

[FR Doc. 97-12771 Filed 5-14-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4915-00-P

## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

### Surface Transportation Board

[STB Docket No. AB-439 (Sub-No. 2X)]

#### **Dallas Area Rapid Transit; Abandonment Exemption; in Dallas and Collin Counties, TX**

[STB Docket No. AB-12 (Sub-No. 191X)]

#### **Southern Pacific Transportation Company—Discontinuance of Trackage Rights Exemption—in Dallas and Collin Counties, TX**

[STB Docket No. AB-39 (Sub-No. 22X)]

#### **St. Louis Southwestern Railway Company—Discontinuance of Trackage Rights Exemption—in Dallas and Collin Counties, TX**

AGENCY: Surface Transportation Board.

ACTION: Notice of exemption.

**SUMMARY:** The Board, pursuant to 49 U.S.C. 10502, exempts from the prior approval requirements of 49 U.S.C. 10903 the abandonment by Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) of an 18.67-mile line of railroad, consisting of 15.45 miles of the White Rock/Plano line and 3.22 miles of a connecting branch line, the Soumethun Branch, in Dallas and Collin Counties, TX, and the discontinuance by Southern Pacific Transportation Company (SPT) and St. Louis Southwestern Railway Company (SSW) of local and overhead trackage rights on the White Rock/Plano line, subject to a historic condition and standard labor protective conditions.

**DATES:** Provided no formal expression of intent to file an offer of financial assistance (OFA) has been received, this exemption will be effective on June 14, 1997. Formal expressions of intent to file an OFA under 49 CFR 1152.27(c)(2) must be filed by May 23, 1997, petitions to stay must be filed by May 30, 1997, requests for a public use condition conforming to 49 CFR 1152.28(a)(2) must be filed by June 4, 1997, and petitions to reopen must be filed by June 9, 1997.

**ADDRESSES:** Send pleadings, referring to STB Docket Nos. AB-439 (Sub-No. 2X), AB-12 (Sub-No. 191X), and AB-39 (Sub-No. 22X) to: (1) Surface Transportation Board, Office of the Secretary, Case Control Unit, 1925 K Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20423-0001; (2) Thomas J. Litwiler, 1020 Nineteenth Street, N.W., Suite 400, Washington, DC 20036; and (3) Gary A. Laakso, Southern Pacific Building, One Market Plaza, Room 846, San Francisco, CA 94015.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Beryl Gordon, (202) 565-1600. [TDD for the hearing impaired: (202) 565-1695.]

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** Additional information is contained in the Board's decision. To purchase a copy of the full decision, write to, call, or pick up in person from: DC News & Data, Inc., 1925 K Street, N.W., Suite 210, Washington, DC 20006. Telephone: (202) 289-4357. [Assistance for the hearing impaired is available through TDD services (202) 565-1695.]

Decided: May 6, 1997.

By the Board, Chairman Morgan and Vice Chairman Owen.

**Vernon A. Williams,**

Secretary.

[FR Doc. 97-12773 Filed 5-14-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4915-00-P

## UNITED STATES INFORMATION AGENCY

### Strengthening Social Services: A U.S.-Middle East Exchange Program

**AGENCY:** United States Information Agency.

**NOTICE:** Request for Proposals.

**SUMMARY:** The Office of Citizen Exchanges of the United States Information Agency's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs announces an open competition for an assistance award. Public and private non-profit organizations meeting the provisions described in IRS regulation 26 CFR 1.501(c) may apply to design and conduct an international exchange program entitled "Strengthening Social Services: A U.S.-Middle East Exchange Program," for which activities will commence in 1997. The proposed program should involve participants from Israel, Gaza, West Bank, Jordan, Oman, and Bahrain who have interest, expertise, and/or policy authority dealing with persons with disabilities, and it should emphasize strengthening civil society through the improvement of services for the disabled and the linking of professionals dealing with the disabled between and among all the participating countries.

Overall grant making authority for this program is contained in the Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961, Public Law 87-256, as amended, also known as the Fulbright-Hays Act. The purpose of the Act is "to enable the Government of the United States to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries \* \* \*; to strengthen the ties which

unite us with other nations by demonstrating the educational and cultural interests, developments, and achievements of the people of the United States and other nations \* \* \* and thus to assist in the development of friendly, sympathetic and peaceful relations between the United States and the other countries of the world."

**Announcement Title and Number:** All communications with USIA concerning this announcement should refer to the above title and reference number E/P-97-43.

**Deadline For Proposals:** All copies must be received at the U.S. Information Agency by 5 p.m. Washington, D.C. time on Friday, June 27, 1997. Faxed documents will not be accepted at any time. Documents postmarked by the due date but received at a later date will not be accepted. It is the responsibility of each applicant to ensure that proposals are received by the above deadline.

**Contact for Further Information:** Interested organizations/institutions should contact the Office of Citizen Exchanges, E/PS, Room 216, U.S. Information Agency, 301 Fourth Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20547, to request a Solicitation Package containing more detailed award criteria, required application forms, and standard guidelines for preparing proposals, including specific criteria for preparation of the proposal budget. Please direct inquiries and correspondence to Dr. Curtis Huff, telephone (202) 619-5972, fax (202) 619-4350, e-mail: CHUFF@USIA.GOV. Interested applicants should read the complete **Federal Register** announcement before sending inquiries or submitting proposals. Once the RFP deadline has passed, Agency staff may not discuss this competition in any way with applicants until the Bureau proposal review process has been completed.

**To Download a Solicitation Package via Internet:** The entire Solicitation Package may be downloaded from USIA's website at <http://www.usia.gov/education/rfps>. Please read all information before downloading.

**To Receive a Solicitation Package via Fax on Demand:** The entire Solicitation Package may be received from the Bureau's "Grants Information Fax on Demand System," which is accessed by calling 202-401-7616. The "Table of Contents" listing available documents and order numbers should be your first order when entering the system.

Please specify Dr. Curtis Huff on all inquiries and correspondence. Interested applicants should read the complete **Federal Register** announcement before sending inquiries

or submitting proposals. Once the RFP deadline has passed, Agency staff may not discuss this competition in any way with applicants until the Bureau proposal review process has been completed.

**Submissions:** Applicants must follow all instructions given in the Solicitation Package. The original and ten copies of the application should be sent to: U.S. Information Agency, Ref.: E/P-97-43, Office of Grants Management, E/XE, Room 326, 301 Fourth Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20547.

Applicants must also submit the "Executive Summary" and "Proposal Narrative" sections of the proposal on a 3.5" diskette, formatted for DOS. This material must be provided in ASCII text (DOS) format with a maximum line length of 65 characters. USIA will transmit these files electronically to USIS posts overseas for their review, with the goal of reducing the time it takes to get posts' comments for the Agency's grants review process.

**Diversity, Freedom and Democracy Guidelines:** Pursuant to the Bureau's authorizing legislation, programs must maintain a non-political character and should be balanced and representative of the diversity of American political, social, and cultural life. "Diversity" should be interpreted in the broadest sense and encompass differences including, but not limited to ethnicity, race, gender, religion, geographic location, socio-economic status, and physical challenges. Applicants are strongly encouraged to promote this principle both in program administration and in program content. Please refer to the 'Support for Diversity' criterion under Review Criteria for suggestions on incorporating diversity into the total proposal. PUBLIC LAW 104-319 provides that "in carrying out programs of educational and cultural exchange in countries whose people do not fully enjoy freedom and democracy," USIA "shall take appropriate steps to provide opportunities for participation in such programs to human rights and democracy leaders of such countries." Proposals should also reflect advancement of this goal in their program contents, to the fullest extent deemed feasible.

**Programmatic Considerations:** The objectives of the anticipated program should include the following:

- Strengthen local NGOs and other institutions which provide services to the disabled and work to integrate disabled into the broader country workforce;
- Enhance the education and career development of Middle Eastern local