

in 2001, transportation improvements are needed to support the regional economic development goals planned for the area, encourage the regional intermodal needs of the area by providing safe and efficient access to the airport, and maintain consistency with the region's transportation goals and objectives as defined by the North Central Pennsylvania Regional Planning and Development Commission.

Alternatives that will be considered include: The no-build; upgrade of existing roadways within the study area; and new roadway alignment with a new interchange on Interstate 80. These alternatives will be the basis for a recommendation of alternatives to be carried forward for detailed environmental and engineering studies in the EIS. Incorporated into and studied with the various alternatives will be design variations of grade and alignment.

Public meetings have been and will continue to be held throughout the development of the EIS for the general public and agencies. A Project Mailing List, a Project Newsletter and a Project Web Site will be established to inform the public of project milestones.

Periodic meetings are scheduled with the state and federal environmental agencies through an Agency Coordination Meetings (ACM) to present project as well as receive comments and concerns from the agencies on the development of the project alternatives, the assessment of impacts and the identification of mitigations measures. Letters describing the proposed action and soliciting comments will be sent to appropriate federal, state and local agencies and to private organizations and citizens who have previously expressed or are known to have an interest in the project.

To ensure the full range of issues related to this proposed action are addressed and all significant issues identified, comments and suggestions are invited from all interested parties. Comments and questions concerning this proposed action and the EIS should be directed to the FHWA or PENNDOT at the addresses provided above.

(Catalogue of Federal Domestic Assistance Number 20.205, Highway Planning and Construction. The regulations implementing Executive Order 12372 regarding intergovernmental consultation of Federal programs and activities apply to this program)

James A. Cheatham,

FHWA Division Administrator, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

[FR Doc. 02-1285 Filed 1-17-02; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910-22-M

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Surface Transportation Board

[STB Finance Docket No. 34151]

Beaufort & Morehead Railway, Inc.— Acquisition and Operation Exemption—North Carolina Ports Railway Commission d/b/a Beaufort & Morehead Railway

Beaufort & Morehead Railway, Inc. (BMRI), a noncarrier, has filed a verified notice of exemption under 49 CFR 1150.31 to acquire by lease, pursuant to an agreement with its owner the North Carolina Ports Railway Commission d/b/a Beaufort & Morehead Railway (NCPRC), all of NCPRC's railroad line extending from the connection with the Norfolk Southern Railway Company (Atlantic & East Carolina Railway) at milepost 0.0 in Morehead City to milepost 0.87 at Gallants Channel near Morehead City, a distance of .87 miles in Carteret County, NC, serving the intermediate stations of Marsh Island, Radio Island and Beaufort Team Track, together with all of the NCPRC's yard and interchange tracks.¹ BMRI will be the operator of the line. BMRI certifies that its projected annual revenues as a result of this transaction will not result in the creation of a Class II or Class I rail carrier, and that its projected annual revenues will not exceed \$5 million.

The transaction was scheduled to be consummated on December 28, 2001.

If this notice 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. 34151, must be filed with the Surface Transportation Board, Office of the Secretary, Case Control Unit, 1925 K Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20423-0001. In addition, a copy of each pleading must be served on Fritz R. Kahn, P.C., 1920 N Street, N.W., 8th Floor, Washington, DC 20036-1601.

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Decided: January 11, 2002.

¹ See *North Carolina Ports Railway Commission d/b/a Beaufort & Morehead Railway—Acquisition and Operation Exemption—Beaufort & Morehead Railway, Inc.*, STB Finance Docket No. 33826 (STB served Dec. 2, 1999).

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

Vernon A. Williams,
Secretary.

[FR Doc. 02-1276 Filed 1-17-02; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4915-00-P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Surface Transportation Board

[STB Finance Docket No. 34125]

South Dakota Railroad Authority— Acquisition Exemption—The Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railway Company

South Dakota Railroad Authority (SDRA), noncarrier, has filed a notice of exemption under 49 CFR 1150.31 to acquire approximately 49.48 miles of rail line located in Brown and Marshall Counties, SD, owned by The Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railway Company (BNSF). The line to be acquired is located between milepost 115.08 near Aberdeen, SD, and milepost 65.60 near Kidder, SD, at the South Dakota/North Dakota border. SDRA will also acquire limited operating rights to conduct rail freight service only, for the sole purpose of interchanging freight cars and equipment, over BNSF's rail line at or near Aberdeen, SD, between milepost 115.08 and milepost 118.6 of BNSF's Geneseo subdivision, and between milepost 706.1 and milepost 707.1 of BNSF's main line, for the sole purpose of SDRA or its designee interchanging rail cars and equipment at BNSF's Aberdeen Yard.¹ SDRA certifies that its projected annual revenues will not exceed those that would qualify it as a Class III carrier.

SDRA reports that an agreement for the transaction was reached and the transaction was consummated on June 15, 2001. The effective date of the exemption was December 27, 2001 (7 days after the exemption was filed).

If the notice 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. 34125 must be filed with the Surface Transportation Board, Office of the Secretary, Case Control Unit, 1925 K Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20423-0001. In addition, a copy of each pleading must be served on Bruce E.

¹ SDRA states that an operator on the track being acquired has not yet been determined.

Lindholm, Program Manager, Office of Air, Rail and Transit, 700 East Broadway Avenue, Pierre, SD 57501.

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Decided: January 11, 2002.

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

Vernon A. Williams,
Secretary.

[FR Doc. 02-1387 Filed 1-17-02; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4915-00-P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Surface Transportation Board

[STB Finance Docket No. 34144]

Georgia Southwestern Railroad, Inc.—Sale and Lease Exemption Within a Corporate Family Transaction—South Carolina Central Railroad, Inc.

Georgia Southwestern Railroad Inc. (GSR) and South Carolina Central Railroad, Inc. (SCCR), both Class III rail carriers, have jointly filed a notice of exemption under 49 CFR 1180.2(d)(3).¹ The exemption transaction involves what GSR describes as a corporate family transaction whereby GSR will sell to SCCR, and SCCR will lease back to GSR, 101.27 miles of rail lines (the Lines), located in Georgia: (1) Between milepost SLB 0.38 near Columbus and milepost SLB 23 near Cusseta; (2) between Valuation Station 41+60 and Valuation Station 107+35 near Columbus; (3) between Valuation Station 0+00 and Valuation Station 41+61 near Columbus; (4) between milepost SLC 91.68 near Bainbridge and milepost SLC 160.0 near Cuthbert; and (5) between milepost 63.55 near Dawson and milepost 72.88 near Sasser. In addition, GSR will acquire the operating rights of SCCR for 13.62 miles of rail line between milepost 86.5 at Albany and milepost 72.88 at Sasser.² The 13.62-mile line was converted to a trail, in accordance with an interim trail use arrangement, on October 16, 1997.

The transaction was scheduled to be consummated on or shortly after December 28, 2001, the effective date of the exemption.

This transaction is within a corporate family of the type specifically exempted from prior approval under 49 CFR

1180.2(d)(3). The parties stated that the transaction will not result in adverse changes in service levels, significant operational changes, or a change in the competitive balance with carriers outside of the corporation family.

The purpose of the transaction is to simplify the arrangements for the operation of the Lines. SCCR will own the Lines and GSR will operate the Lines. The proposed transaction will improve the financial viability of GSR and SCCR and they will benefit from the purchase price and reduced operating costs, while still providing rail service.

This transaction is related to a simultaneously filed notice of exemption in STB Finance Docket No. 34057, *State of Georgia Department of Transportation—Acquisition Exemption—South Carolina Central Railroad, Inc.*, wherein the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT)³ is acquiring certain railroad assets of SCCR, including the above-noted 101.27 miles of railroad lines, but not including the right to conduct common carrier freight operations over the Lines.⁴

Under 49 U.S.C. 10502(g), the Board may not use its exemption authority to relieve a rail carrier of its obligation to protect the interests of its employees. Section 11326(c), however, does not provide for labor protection for transactions under section 11324 and 11325 that involve Class III rail carriers. Because this transaction involves Class III rail carriers only, the Board, under the statute, may not impose labor protective conditions for this transaction.

If the notice contains false or misleading information, the exemption is void *ab initio*. Petitions to reopen the proceeding 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. 34144, must be filed with the Surface Transportation Board, Office of the Secretary, Case Control Unit, 1925 K Street, NW., Washington, DC 20423-0001. In addition, a copy of each pleading must be served on Gary A.

³ GDOT simultaneously filed a motion to dismiss the notice of exemption on jurisdictional grounds. That motion will be addressed by the Board in a separate decision.

⁴ Concurrently with the closing of the transaction between SCCR and GSR, SCCR will sell the Lines to GDOT, and GDOT will acquire only the physical assets. GDOT will not hold or perform common carrier service. GSR will provide common carrier service and SCCR will retain a permanent easement to provide residual common carrier service if GSR or an assignee of GSR is unable to provide service over the Lines.

Laakso, Vice President Regulatory Counsel, RailAmerica, Inc., 5300 Broken Sound Boulevard NW., Second Floor, Boca Raton, FL 33487; and Louis E. Gitomer, Ball Janik LLP, 1455 F Street, NW., Suite 225, Washington, DC 20005.

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Decided: January 11, 2002.

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

Vernon A. Williams,
Secretary.

[FR Doc. 02-1404 Filed 1-17-02; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4915-00-P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Surface Transportation Board

[STB Finance Docket No. 34057]

State of Georgia, Department of Transportation—Acquisition Exemption—South Carolina Central Railroad, Inc.

State of Georgia, Department of Transportation (GDOT), a noncarrier, has filed a notice of exemption under 49 CFR 1150.31¹ to acquire from the South Carolina Central Railroad, Inc. (SCCR), a Class III rail carrier, but not to operate, 101.27 miles of rail lines (the Lines) located in Georgia: (1) Between milepost SLB 0.38 near Columbus and milepost SLB 23 near Cusseta; (2) between Valuation Station 41+60 and Valuation Station 107+35 near Columbus; (3) between Valuation Station 0+00 and Valuation Station 41+61 near Columbus; (4) between milepost SLC 91.68 near Bainbridge, and milepost SLC 160.0 near Cuthbert; and (5) between milepost 63.55 near Dawson and milepost 72.88 near Sasser.

GDOT, SCCR, and RailAmerica, Inc., the parent company of SCCR, have entered into an agreement whereby GDOT will acquire only the physical assets in the Lines, but not the right to conduct common carrier freight operations over the Lines. SCCR and its affiliate, Georgia Southwestern Railroad, Inc. (GSR) have entered into a separate agreement for GSR to sell the Lines to SCCR, and for SCCR to lease the Lines back to GSR. That related transaction is the subject of a simultaneously filed notice of exemption in STB Finance Docket No. 34144, *Georgia Southwestern Railroad, Inc.—Sale and Lease Exemption Within*

¹ GDOT simultaneously filed a motion to dismiss the notice of exemption on jurisdictional grounds. That motion will be addressed by the Board in a separate decision.

¹ GSR and SCCR are subsidiaries of RailAmerica, Inc., a noncarrier.

² See *Georgia Great Southern Division, South Carolina Central Railroad Co., Inc.—Abandonment and Discontinuance Exemption—Between Albany and Dawson, in Terrell, Lee and Dougherty Counties, GA*, Docket No. AB-389 (Sub-No. 1X) (STB served Aug. 16, 1996).