

Friday, June 9, 2006

Robert L. Sumwalt III Nominated As NTSB Board Member

President George W. Bush has nominated Robert L. Sumwalt III, of South Carolina, to be a Member of the National Transportation Safety Board, for the remainder of a 5-year term expiring December 31, 2006, and an additional 5-year term expiring December 31, 2011, and upon confirmation designate him Vice Chairman. Mr. Sumwalt currently serves as Manager of Aviation for SCANA Corporation. Prior to this, he served as an airline Captain for 24 years for US Airways and was assigned to the Flight Safety Department. In that capacity, Mr. Sumwalt worked on NTSB investigations. Mr. Sumwalt received his bachelor's degree from the University of South Carolina.

NTSB Determines Poor Planning and Inadequate Bracing Caused Deadly Highway Bridge Girder Collapse



On Wednesday, May 31, the National Transportation Safety Board determined that poor construction planning and execution led to the failure of a temporary bracing system for a bridge girder being installed above Interstate 70 (I-70) in Golden, Colorado, causing the girder to collapse onto a passenger vehicle on I-70, killing three people. The Board cited as contributing factors the lack of uniform, consistent bracing standards and the Colorado Department of Transportation's (CDOT's) narrow definition of falsework, which did not include lateral bracing. Also contributing to the accident was CDOT's failure to effectively oversee safety-critical contract work.

On the morning of May 15, 2004, a steel girder that had been installed about 3 days earlier and secured with a temporary bracing system, sagged into the eastbound lanes of I-70 and struck a sport utility vehicle traveling along the roadway. All three people in the vehicle, including a 2-year-old child, were killed in the accident.

As a result of its investigation, the Board recommended that the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), and the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) work together to develop consistent guidance and requirements for constructing such temporary highway bracing and related structures, known as "falsework," including that all falsework plans should be prepared or approved by a Registered Professional Engineer.

The Board also recommended that AASHTO revise its guidance concerning oversight conducted by highway supervisory construction personnel to call for prequalification of subcontractors; submission of engineer-approved written plans for all construction, including falsework; intervention when contractors or subcontractors demonstrate a lack of competence; and monitoring of temporary bracing systems until construction is completed.



Acting Chairman Rosenker Testifies Before Senate During Confirmation Hearing

Acting Chairman Mark Rosenker testified on Thursday, June 8, before the Senate Commerce Committee during his confirmation hearing for Chairman of the NTSB. During his opening statement, the Acting Chairman said: "If confirmed as Chairman, I commit to you and the American people that I will do my best to effectively and efficiently manage this important agency, making sure that its ability to carry out its critical mission is never compromised." Committee Chairman Senator Ted Stevens announced at the end of the hearing that he hopes the committee can mark-up this nomination as well as others considered in the same hearing by the end of June.



From left to right: Member Higgins, Acting Chairman Rosenker, Member Hersman.

Acting Chairman Rosenker Speaks To New Jersey Motorcoach Association



Acting Chairman Mark Rosenker spoke to the New Jersey Motorcoach Association on June 7. He discussed the work the Board has done recently involving motorcoach safety by highlighting a few ongoing accident investigations. He emphasized the importance of the Safety Board's job to make recommendations that can prevent accidents from occurring.

Rosenker encouraged the association to view accidents as an opportunity to make maintenance improvements, implement operational policy, provide better training, and embrace new technology. He challenged them to take action to make their companies safer for passengers, employees, families, and their communities.

On Wednesday June 7th Acting Chairman Rosenker addressed the 25th Anniversary of the New Jersey Motor Coach Association Driver Awards Luncheon. After his remarks he participated in presenting the safety awards to the nominated drivers.

2006 Federal Human Capital Survey

Two years ago, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) sent a questionnaire government-wide to a random number of Federal employees to measure how Federal agencies are managing their employees. The questions addressed the effectiveness of leadership, employees' career opportunities, and employee job satisfaction. An extraordinary 60 percent of Safety Board employees responded.

Once again, OPM is conducting a survey to assess the Federal Government's progress since 2004. In fact, you may have already been notified that you have been randomly selected to participate in the 2006 survey. If you did receive the survey, please take time to complete it.

Your response is voluntary and confidential and will be returned directly to OPM for compilation and analysis. With these results, the Safety Board can continue to make improvements in the areas of leadership and management practices, which contribute to the agency's performance and increase employee satisfaction. We value your opinion so make your voice heard!

Please feel free to contact Anh Bolles, Chief, Human Resources Division, if you have any questions. She can be reached at 202-314-6355 or anh.bolles@ntsb.gov.

Safety Board Welcomes New Employees

Mr. Robert J. Boone Jr joined the Safety Board on May 30. He will be working in the Office of Administration as a Contract Specialist.

Ms. Anh T. N. Bolles joined the Safety Board on May 30. She will be working in the Office of Administration as the Chief of Human Resources Division.