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News

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FRA Announces Over \$4 Million in Grants to Rural States to Enhance Safety, Efficiency of Rail Infrastructure

The U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) today awarded over \$4 million to three projects in two states to upgrade and safeguard rail infrastructure. These investments in communities will play a crucial role in strengthening the supply chain by moving goods faster and at a lower cost.

The Special Transportation Circumstances (STC) program provides directed grant funding to states that lack intercity passenger rail service or those in which the rail transportation system isn't connected to the rail system in the continental United States.

"This program delivers on our commitment to ensuring diversity in our infrastructure investments by expanding opportunities in rural communities," FRA Administrator Amit Bose said. "These directed grants will create local jobs, grow local economies, and increase rail safety and efficiency in states where geography and other circumstances create unique needs."

On December 1, 2021, FRA published a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for the STC program. This notice made available funding for eligible projects through the Consolidated Appropriations Acts of 2018, 2019, 2020, and 2021. Federal funds awarded to projects may cover up to 80 percent of the total project cost. Click [here](#) for more information.

The following projects were selected:

Alaska — ARRC Avalanche Control (up to \$1,443,536)
Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities

The proposed project will allow the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities to support the Alaska Railroad Corporation (ARRC) in replacing an M101A1 howitzer avalanche control process with a Remote Avalanche Control System (RACS) above ARRC's Portage Tunnel Door 4 in

Portage Valley, AK, a remote location approximately 50 miles southeast of Anchorage. The project will build six fixed RACS installations consisting of five hanging charge towers and one launch charge tower, plus one weather monitoring station. These enhancements will allow ARRC to improve the mitigation of avalanche danger within an essential transportation corridor while better protecting railroad employees, railroad passengers, the traveling public, transported goods and materials, and existing transportation infrastructure. The ARRC will provide a 20 percent match.

South Dakota — Ringneck & Western Efficiency and Growth Project (up to \$1,799,009)

South Dakota Department of Transportation

The proposed project will improve the economic growth, safety, resiliency, and efficiency of the Ringneck & Western Railroad (RWRR) located just east of Plankinton, SD. The project includes activities, materials, and support services necessary to construct two 1,500-foot transload tracks to transport lumber and aggregate; and construct a 558-foot industrial lead track and a concrete maintenance pit in an existing locomotive maintenance building. Ancillary project work would include a loadout spur, six turnouts, and a roadway for vehicular and transloading equipment access. The project will improve locomotive maintenance and provide an area to transload goods from rail to truck, improving efficiency for the products being moved and the area's economy. The RWRR will provide a 40 percent match.

South Dakota — RCP&E Increasing Rail Resilience Project (up to \$800,000)

South Dakota Department of Transportation

The proposed project will improve safety along the Rapid City, Pierre, & Eastern Railroad (RCP&E) Pierre-Rapid City (PRC) Subdivision by upgrading and installing eight culvert structures between Fort Pierre and Rapid City, South Dakota. The PRC Subdivision is a 163-mile-long single-track main line between these two cities. With completion of the project, the new structures will better withstand future flows from the storm water basins at their location. This in turn will improve the resilience of the PRC Subdivision and service reliability for all customers along the line. The RCP&E will provide a 20 percent match.

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