

## *Transportation*

### **Fatalities Along Rail Crossings Are Usually Preventable, Regulators Say**

**T**hree accidents at rail crossings in the last six weeks that killed at least four adults and three children are a reminder that more action is needed to prevent similar fatalities, Federal Railroad Administrator Sarah Feinberg said in a statement.

The accidents responsible for the 11 fatalities in Colorado, Arkansas and California are still under investigation, but the FRA says incidents such as these are usually avoidable. An additional 87 fatalities and 236 injuries have been reported this year at the country's more than 200,000 railroad crossings.

"We know that incidents like these are almost always preventable, and yet, they still happen," Feinberg said. "We all must do more to protect drivers and their passengers—many of whom are children."

"The responsibility to improve safety at railroad crossings rests on all of us—safety regulators, state officials, the railroads themselves, law enforcement and even the private companies that conduct business in the transportation sector," she said.

FRA data show fatalities at rail crossings decreased slightly to 244 in 2015 from 264 in 2014. Injuries along crossings during the same period increased to 967 last year from 861 in 2014.

**Precautions.** The FRA has asked technology companies to integrate railroad-crossing data into mapping software and to develop new technologies to improve safety at these crossings. The administration also has urged railroads to be more aggressive in reporting problematic or dangerous crossings to state and local officials.

"While the full and ultimate safety impact of integrating crossing data into applications remains unknown, we must try everything we can to address this challenge," the FRA said.

In February, the FRA awarded almost \$10 million in grants to eight states—Arkansas, Illinois, California, Louisiana, Minnesota, North Dakota, Washington and Wisconsin—for railroad safety projects.

The administration has also pushed state and local transportation departments to form partnerships with technology and training companies such as Google and Operation Lifesaver.

"Improving safety and saving lives at railroad crossings has been and continues to be one of FRA's highest priorities," Feinberg said. "We have put more focus and attention on this problem than ever before."

By STEFF THOMAS

To contact the reporter on this story: Steff Thomas in Washington at [sthomas\\_ic@bna.com](mailto:sthomas_ic@bna.com).

To contact the editor responsible for this story: Heather Rothman at [hrothman@bna.com](mailto:hrothman@bna.com).

To request permission to reuse or share this document, please contact [permissions@bna.com](mailto:permissions@bna.com). In your request, be sure to include the following information: (1) your name, company, mailing address, email and telephone number; (2) name of the document and/or a link to the document PDF; (3) reason for request (what you want to do with the document); and (4) the approximate number of copies to be made or URL address (if posting to a website).