Rail Pedestrian Safety
Education and Communication
Break out Session

June 22, 2010
The communication challenge:

• People have become desensitized to the risk around railroads
• People do not fully appreciate that the dangers of distraction are not just physical distraction but mental process degradation as well
• Regular commuters are used to routine and get caught out by unexpected events such as the “second train”, express trains and irregular workings
• The riskiest times of day might be when people least expect it, such as the late afternoon after-work hour
Participants were divided on whether to find common cause with anti-distraction campaigns in other transportation modes:

• There are advantages of economies of scale and "political clout," but . . .

• The degree of lethality is much greater for railroad incidents compared with highway incidents, and

• The populations most at risk around the railroad can be targeted very specific both geographically and by other demographics
Search for effective message delivery:

- There was a consensus that drivers’ education classes are still the primary vehicle for getting to the largest number of people in an efficient way.
- While it targets a specific age group which, in general, is at low risk, it is the one “common experience” for the entire population.
- Currently, rail pedestrian issues do not get the attention they deserve in drivers’ education.
Public Service Announcements:

• While the “traditional PSA” is dead, there are now alternative outlets that may be more effective
• Consensus view that “video is where it is at” rather than posters/print ads
• Need music to back up the visual images, with catchy tunes and lyrics. We eagerly await the “Metra Rap”
There are two types of videos, both of which have their place:

• The “shocking videos” such as views from the cab showing risky behaviors
• There was a preference for videos showing “realistic situations” rather than “preaching videos.” An example is a recent Operation Lifesaver video showing a business executive caught up in multitasking, bumping into fellow pedestrians and then inadvertently stepping in front of a light rail vehicle
There are new channels for PSAs:

• Video monitors at grocery store checkouts that are in communities proximate to railroad lines
• Video screens on station platforms
• In elevators in office buildings near stations
• On-vehicle announcements, videos clips (if vehicle is equipped) and display boards on Pace buses that connect to Metra stations
Enlist other parties to disseminate messages:

- Cell phone and data providers may be encouraged to carry “safe behavior” messages
- Employers who provide the smart phones and other devices that distract their employees, often on work related matters, during the commute