



The Capitol Report
September 22nd, 2003
Provided by The Georgia Railroad Association
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No field trials on crossing closures.

The Georgia Transportation Board will consider proposed standards for closing unsafe grade crossings when it meets this week, and the new regulations are expected to pass. DOT officials had previously indicated to GRA that field trials would be conducted prior to adoption of the new rule, but no such field trials have been conducted.

GRA has contended that field trials are important to ensure that unsafe crossings can be closed under the criteria contained in the new rules. The concern is that the criteria will allow closure only for those crossings with very severe humps or very narrow lanes. Redundancy appears to be under-weighted in the criteria, while lane width appears to be over-weighted.

A committee of the DOT Board will consider the new rule on Wednesday afternoon, and is expected to recommend adoption by the full DOT Board on Thursday morning. GRA President Doug Cochran will speak at the meetings to ensure that Board members understand the importance of adopting a rule that will allow elimination of unsafe crossings.

GRA and the Georgia Municipal Association have been working with DOT for over a year to implement the provisions of HB 1382, the grade crossing bill passed in 2002. Field trials were very helpful in development of crossing maintenance rules, but for some reason were not used in developing criteria for crossing closures.

Local government representatives continue to push for closure rules based on convenience rather than safety.

Remember to use the GRA website when shopping for goods and services. It's fast and easy! Just go to www.georgiarailroad.org and click on "directory" in the left column of the home page. Then click on "services" at the top of the directory page for a list of service providers from "bridges" to "welding."

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