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The International Union of Railways (UIC) and the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) form a new partnership.

In February, Federal Railroad Administrator Joseph Szabo and Federal Railroad Deputy Administrator Karen Rae will be keynote speakers at the Regional Seminars on High-Speed Rail organised under the new APTA/UIC partnership.

(Paris 08.01.10) APTA and UIC developed a first set of three regional seminars to provide U.S. decision makers with the information necessary to implement high-speed rail. Federal Railroad Administrator *Joseph Szabo*, FRA Deputy Administrator *Karen Rae* and *Jean-Pierre Loubinoux* UIC Director General will be keynote speakers at these regional seminars due to be held in February.

The seminars, titled “*International Practicum on Implementing High-Speed Rail in the United States*,” will be held on *February 8-9 in Washington, February 9-11 in Chicago, and February 11-13 in Los Angeles*. The programs feature practitioners from high-speed rail systems around the world and will focus on best practices and lessons learned from European and Asian systems. Experts from Spain, Germany, Japan, Korea, Italy and France will share their experience and knowledge, with U.S.-based speakers providing appropriate context for application in the North American operating environment.

The seminars are designed for local decision makers and practitioners, including executive and senior transportation managers, strategy experts, chief engineers, economists and stakeholder organizations who must understand the issues they will face as their regions develop high-speed rail. The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) will grant professional development hours to state US DOT (Department of Transportation) employees enrolled in the practicum.

This is the first set of seminars developed under a new partnership signed last December between APTA and the UIC. The two groups will now be able to engage in extensive information sharing and the development of common activities that can cover the various technical, finance and management aspects of planning and building high-speed rail systems.

Jean-Pierre Loubinoux, UIC Director General, says “UIC is delighted to cooperate in organising these seminars and to develop common activities with APTA as the development of high-speed is one of the cornerstones of UIC’s activities and an area which is set to present real industrial, technological, financial and social challenges for railway companies and manufacturers. This initiative is fully in line with UIC’s worldwide scope and we hope that the international rail experience acquired by UIC over years, thanks to the excellent cooperation with and among its members, can contribute to the development of the railway mode in the USA and in other regions of the world.

Note to the editor:

APTA is the legacy organization of the former High-Speed Ground Transportation Association, which, in 2007, integrated its members and assets into the APTA structure and now functions through the constituent high-speed and intercity rail committee.

The International Union of Railways (UIC) is the worldwide organisation for promotion of rail transport and cooperation across the world and comprises 200 members on all 5 continents. UIC, as a technical platform, provides its members with technical know-how and expertise (regulations and specifications in order to enhance technical cooperation) and ensures the coherence of the rail system to help meet the challenges of mobility and sustainable development.

UIC provides support for its members in the development of high-speed systems, in particular via its activities in the area of technical harmonisation and cooperation, and also by facilitating discussions and the sharing of experiences in all of these areas. Studies, up-to-date statistics and maps on high-speed are available from the UIC High Speed Department, including the study on infrastructure charging and the impact of new high-speed lines on regional and international traffic. Studies currently in progress include “High-speed and the City”, High-speed territory management”, “High-speed and sustainable mobility” and “High-speed under extreme weather conditions”.

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