

This notice is filed under 49 CFR 1150.31. If the notice contains false or misleading information, the exemption is void *ab initio*. Petitions to revoke the exemption under 49 U.S.C. 10505(d) (now 49 U.S.C. 10502(d)) may be filed at any time. The filing of a petition to revoke will not automatically stay the transaction.

Decided: January 19, 1996.

By the Board, David M. Konschnik,  
Director, Office of Proceedings.

Vernon A. Williams,

Secretary.

[FR Doc. 96-1227 Filed 1-24-96; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4915-00-P

**[Docket No. AB-3 (Sub-No. 127X)]**

**Missouri Pacific Railroad Company—  
Abandonment Exemption—in  
Muskogee County, OK**

Missouri Pacific Railroad Company (MPRR) has filed a notice of exemption under 49 CFR Part 1152 Subpart F—*Exempt Abandonments* to abandon a portion of the former Oklahoma Subdivision near Muskogee from milepost 128.6 to the end of the line at milepost 129.5, a distance of approximately 0.9-mile in Muskogee County, OK.

MPRR has certified that: (1) No local traffic has moved over the line for at least 2 years; (2) there is no overhead traffic on the line; (3) no formal complaint filed by a user of rail service on the line (or by a State or local government entity acting on behalf of such user) regarding cessation of service over the line either is pending with the Board or with any U.S. District Court or has been decided in favor of the complainant within the 2-year period; and (4) the requirements at 49 CFR 1105.7 (environmental reports), 49 CFR 1105.8 (historic reports), 49 CFR 1105.11 (transmittal letter), 49 CFR 1105.12 (newspaper publication), and 49 CFR 1152.50(d)(1) (notice to governmental agencies) have been met.

<sup>1</sup>The ICC Termination Act of 1995, Pub. L. No. 104-88, 109 Stat. 803 (the Act), which was enacted on December 29, 1995, and took effect on January 1, 1996, abolished the Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC) and transferred certain functions and proceedings to the Surface Transportation Board (Board). Section 204(b)(1) of the Act provides, in general, that proceedings pending before the ICC on the effective date of that legislation shall be decided under the law in effect prior to January 1, 1996, insofar as they involve functions retained by the Act. This notice relates to a proceeding that was pending with the ICC prior to January 1, 1996, and to functions that are subject to Board jurisdiction pursuant to 49 U.S.C. 10903. Therefore, this notice applies the law in effect prior to the Act, and citations are to the former sections of the statute, unless otherwise indicated.

As a condition to use of this exemption, any employee adversely affected by the abandonment shall be protected under *Oregon Short Line R. Co.—Abandonment—Goshen*, 360 I.C.C. 91 (1979). To address whether this condition adequately protects affected employees, a petition for partial revocation under 49 U.S.C. 10505(d) (now 49 U.S.C. 10502(d)) must be filed.

Provided no formal expression of intent to file an offer of financial assistance (OFA) has been received, this exemption will be effective on February 24, 1996, unless stayed pending reconsideration. Petitions to stay that do not involve environmental issues,<sup>2</sup> formal expressions of intent to file an OFA under 49 CFR 1152.27(c)(2),<sup>3</sup> and trail use/rail banking requests under 49 CFR 1152.29<sup>4</sup> must be filed by February 5, 1996. Petitions to reopen or requests for public use conditions under 49 CFR 1152.28 must be filed by February 14, 1996, with: Office of the Secretary, Case Control Branch, Surface Transportation Board, 1201 Constitution Ave., N.W., Washington, DC 20423.

A copy of any pleading filed with the Board should be sent to applicant's representative: Joseph D. Anthofer, 1416 Dodge Street, Room 830, Omaha, NE 68179.

If the notice of exemption contains false or misleading information, the exemption is void *ab initio*.

MPRR has filed an environmental report which addresses the abandonment's effects, if any, on the environmental and historic resources. The Section of Environmental Analysis (SEA) will issue an environmental assessment (EA) by January 30, 1996. Interested persons may obtain a copy of the EA by writing to SEA (Room 3219, Surface Transportation Board, Washington, DC 20423) or by calling Elaine Kaiser, Chief of SEA, at (202) 927-6248. Comments on environmental and historic preservation matters must be filed within 15 days after the EA is available to the public.

Environmental, historic preservation, public use, or trail use/rail banking

<sup>2</sup>A stay will be issued routinely by the Board in those proceedings where an informed decision on environmental issues (whether raised by a party or by the Board's Section of Environmental Analysis in its independent investigation) cannot be made prior to the effective date of the notice of exemption. See *Exemption of Out-of-Service Rail Lines*, 5 I.C.C.2d 377 (1989). Any entity seeking a stay on environmental concerns is encouraged to file its request as soon as possible in order to permit the Board to review and act on the request before the effective date of this exemption.

<sup>3</sup>See *Exempt. of Rail Abandonment—Offers of Finan. Assist.*, 4 I.C.C.2d 164 (1987).

<sup>4</sup>The Board will accept a late-filed trail use request as long as it retains jurisdiction to do so.

conditions will be imposed, where appropriate, in a subsequent decision.

Decided: January 19, 1996.

By the Board, David M. Konschnik,  
Director, Office of Proceedings.

Vernon A. Williams,

Secretary.

[FR Doc. 96-1228 Filed 1-24-96; 8:45 am]

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**UNITED STATES INFORMATION  
AGENCY**

**Summer Institute for Russian Social  
Scientists on Approaches to Political  
Science as a Scholarly Discipline**

**ACTION:** Notice—Request for Proposals.

**SUMMARY:** The Advising, Teaching, and Specialized Programs Division of the Office of Academic Programs in the United States Information Agency's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs announces an open competition for an assistance award to develop a program for a Summer Institute for Russian Social Scientists on Approaches to Political Science as a Scholarly Discipline. Public and private nonprofit organizations meeting the provisions described in IRS regulation 26 CFR 1.501(c)(3)-1 may apply to develop a six-week graduate-level program designed for a group of 10 Russian university professors who are currently teaching courses in political science. The purpose of the Institute is to enhance the participants' ability to teach political science at their home institutions by engaging the participants in a multi-faceted discussion of the discipline of political science as currently practiced in the United States.

Overall grant making authority for this program is contained in the Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961, Pub. L. 87-256, as amended, also known as the Fulbright-Hays Act. The purpose of the Act is "to enable the Government of the United States to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries \* \* \*; to strengthen the ties which unite us with other nations by demonstrating the educational and cultural interests, developments, and achievements of the people of the United States and other nations \* \* \* and thus to assist in the development of friendly, sympathetic and peaceful relations between the United States and the other countries of the world."

The funding authority for the program cited above is provided through the Freedom Support Act (FSA). Programs and projects must conform with agency

requirements and guidelines outlined in the Solicitation Package. USIA projects and programs are subject to the availability of funds.

**Announcement Title and Numbers:** All communications with USIA concerning this announcement should refer to the above title and reference number E/AS-96-01.

**Deadline for Proposals:** All copies must be received at the U.S. Information Agency by 5 p.m. Washington, DC time on Monday, March 25, 1996. Faxed documents will not be accepted, nor will documents postmarked March 25, but received at a later date. It is the responsibility of each applicant to ensure that proposals are received by the above deadline. Tentative approximate program dates are August 5, 1996 through September 16, 1996. In order to assure adequate time for the host institution to make program arrangements and send pre-program materials to grantees, USIA will make every effort to award the approved cooperative agreement by April 26, 1996.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** The Office of Academic Programs, Advising, Teaching and Specialized Programs Division, E/AS, Room 349, U.S. Information Agency, 301 4th Street, SW., Washington, DC 20547, telephone number 202/619-6038; fax number 202/619-6970; internet address shayman@usia.gov, to request an Application Package containing more detailed award criteria, required application forms, and standard guidelines for preparing proposals, including specific criteria for preparation of the proposal budget.

**TO DOWNLOAD A SOLICITATION PACKAGE VIA INTERNET:** The Solicitation Package may be downloaded from USIA's website at <http://www.usia.gov/> or from the Internet Gopher at <gopher.usia.gov>, under "New RFPs on Educational and Cultural Exchanges."

Please specify USIA Program Specialist Sherry Hayman on all inquiries and correspondences. Interested applicants should read the complete Federal Register announcement before sending inquiries or submitting proposals. Once the RFP deadline has passed, Agency staff may not discuss this competition in any way with applicants until the Bureau proposal review process has been completed.

**Submissions:** Applicants must follow all instructions given in the Solicitation Package. The original and 10 copies of the application should be sent to: U.S. Information Agency, Ref.: E/AS-96-01, Office of Grants Management,

E/XE, Room 326, 301 4th Street, SW., Washington, DC 20547

Applicants must also submit the "Executive Summary" and "Proposal Narrative" sections of the proposal on a 3.5" diskette, formatted for DOS. This material must be provided in ASCII text (DOS) format with a maximum line length of 65 characters. USIA will transmit these files electronically to USIS Moscow for its review, with the goal of reducing the time it takes to obtain comments for the Agency's grants review process.

#### Diversity Guidelines

Pursuant to the Bureau's authorizing legislation, programs must maintain a non-political character and should be balanced and representative of the diversity of American political, social, and cultural life. "Diversity" should be interpreted in the broadest sense and encompass differences including, but not limited to ethnicity, race, gender, religion, geographic location, socio-economic status, and physical challenges. Applicants are strongly encouraged to adhere to the advancement of this principle both in program administration and in program content. Please refer to the review criteria under the 'Support for Diversity' section for specific suggestions on incorporating diversity into the total proposal.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

##### Overview

The purpose of the Summer Institute for Russian Social Scientists on Approaches to Political Science as a Scholarly Discipline is to engage the Russian participants in a discussion of current methodologies and issues for teaching and research in political science.

Proposals should demonstrate an understanding of the issues confronting Russian social scientists and universities; expertise in the teaching and practice of political science in U.S. higher education, including graduate education; and knowledge of current trends and controversies in the field. Proposals should be creative in suggesting strategies for engaging the participants in the examination of the foundation and structure of the American political system; Western political traditions and the development of democratic political institutions; political philosophy; comparative politics; and an introduction to empirical research methods. Close attention should be paid to providing source materials, bibliographies and

computer resources that can be utilized in the classroom in Russia.

The Institute should be six weeks in length and should take place on a U.S. college or university campus where participants will have access to libraries and computer networks as well as an opportunity to become acquainted with university teaching practices in the U.S. At the beginning of the program the participants should receive an initial orientation to the U.S. and to American university life in addition to an introduction to current trends in political science as an academic discipline. The program should provide the participants with opportunities to explore these issues with U.S. scholars and to observe political science classes that are in session. The program should focus on engaging the participants in active ways that will aid them in designing new approaches to their own teaching and research. The institute should foster a collegial atmosphere in which institute faculty and participants discuss relevant texts, issues and concepts and should be structured to require participants to make presentations, write reports, and prepare drafts.

At the conclusion of the Institute each participant should be required to present a report on his or her thoughts about how to adapt the approaches and interests of U.S. political scientists to teaching and research in Russia.

##### Objective

The Institute should enable the participants to apply a wide range of curricular materials, scholarly approaches, teaching techniques, information about the internet, and other resources to their classrooms in Russia.

##### Participants

The program should be designed for ten Russian university professors who are currently teaching courses in political science but who, despite significant knowledge of Western political and historical traditions, are less familiar with current approaches to political science in the U.S. The participants will be nominated by the United States Information Service (USIS) in Moscow and will have a high level of fluency in English.

##### Guidelines

The program must comply with the J-1 visa regulations. Please refer to program specific guidelines (POGI) in the Solicitation Package for further details.

### Additional Information

Confirmation letters from U.S. co-sponsors noting their intention to participate in the program will enhance a proposal. Proposals incorporating participation/observer site visits will be more competitive if letters committing prospective host institutions to support these efforts are provided.

### Visa/Insurance/Tax Requirements

Programs must comply with J-1 visa regulations. Please refer to program specific guidelines (POGI) in the Solicitation Package for further details. Visas will be issued by USIS posts abroad. USIA insurance will be provided to all participants, unless otherwise indicated in the proposal submission. Grantee organization will be responsible for enrolling participants in the chosen insurance plan. Please indicate in the proposal if host institutions have any special tax withholding requirements on participant or staff escort stipends or allowances.

### Proposed Budget

Applicants must submit a comprehensive line item budget for the entire program based on the specific guidance in the Solicitation Package. There must be a summary budget as well as a breakdown reflecting both the administrative budget and the program budget. For better understanding or further clarification, applicants may provide separate sub-budgets for each program component, phase, location, or activity in order to facilitate USIA decisions on funding. The total USIA-funded budget award will not exceed \$125,000. USIA-funded administrative costs may not exceed 30% of the total. The recipient organization should try to maximize cost-sharing and to stimulate U.S. private sector support.

Grants awarded to eligible organizations with less than four years of experience in conducting international exchange programs will be limited to \$60,000.

The program should include a book budget for participants to use in purchasing books and teaching materials which they will need to develop new courses and to improve existing ones.

Allowable costs for the program include the following:

- (1) Books, teaching materials and computer software
- (2) Mailing allowances
- (3) Travel and per diem
- (4) Salaries, fringe benefits

Please refer to the Solicitation Package for complete budget guidelines and formatting instructions.

### Review Process

USIA will acknowledge receipt of all proposals and will review them for technical eligibility. Proposals will be deemed ineligible if they do not fully adhere to the guidelines stated herein and in the Solicitation Package. Eligible proposals will be forwarded to panels of USIA officers for advisory review. All eligible proposals will be reviewed by the Agency contracts office, as well as the USIA NIS and East European Area Office and the USIS office in Moscow. Proposals may also be reviewed by the Office of the General Counsel or by other Agency elements. Funding decisions are at the discretion of the USIA Associate Director for Educational and Cultural Affairs. Final technical authority for assistance awards (grants or cooperative agreements) resides with the USIA grants officer.

### Review Criteria

Technically eligible applications will be competitively reviewed according to the criteria stated below. These criteria are not rank ordered in the proposal evaluation:

1. *Quality of the Program Idea:* Proposals should exhibit originality and substance and should demonstrate familiarity with current issues in the field of political science as a scholarly discipline in the U.S.

2. *Program planning:* A detailed agenda and a relevant work plan should demonstrate substantive undertakings and logistical capacity. The agenda and work plan should adhere to the program overview and guidelines described above.

3. *Ability to achieve program objectives:* Objectives should be reasonable, feasible, and flexible. Proposals should clearly demonstrate how the institution will meet the program's objectives and plan. Area expertise and awareness of the issues and problems of social science in Russia should be exhibited.

4. *Multiplier effect/impact:* Proposed programs should strengthen long-term mutual understanding, including maximum sharing of information and establishment of long-term institutional and individual connections.

5. *Support of Diversity:* Proposals should demonstrate substantive support of the Bureau's policy on diversity. Achievable and relevant features should be cited in both program administration and program content (orientation and wrap-up sessions, program meetings, resource materials and follow-up activities).

6. *Institutional Capacity:* Proposed personnel and institutional resources

should be adequate and appropriate to achieve the project's goals.

7. *Institution's Record/Ability:* Proposals should demonstrate an institutional record of successful exchange programs, including responsible fiscal management and full compliance with all reporting requirements for past Agency grants as determined by USIA's Office of Contracts. The Agency will consider the past performance of prior recipients and the demonstrated potential of new applicants.

8. *Follow-on Activities:* Proposals should provide a plan for continued follow-on activity (without USIA support) which ensures that USIA-supported programs are not isolated events.

9. *Project Evaluation:* Proposals should include a plan to evaluate the activity's success, both as the activities unfold and at the end of the program. A draft survey questionnaire or other technique plus description of a methodology to use to link outcomes to original project objectives is recommended.

10. *Cost-effectiveness:* The overhead and administrative components of the proposal, including salaries and honoraria, should be kept as low as possible. All other items should be necessary and appropriate.

11. *Cost-sharing:* Proposals should maximize cost-sharing through other private sector support as well as institutional direct funding contributions.

12. *Value to U.S.-Partner Country Relations:* Proposed projects should receive positive assessments by USIA's geographic area desk and overseas officers of program need, potential impact, and significance in the partner country.

### Notice

The terms and conditions published in this RFP are binding and may not be modified by any USIA representative. Explanatory information provided by the Agency that contradicts published language will not be binding. Issuance of the RFP does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the Government. The Agency reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal budgets in accordance with the needs of the program and the availability of funds. Awards made will be subject to periodic reporting and evaluation requirements.

### Notification

Final awards cannot be made until funds have been appropriated by

Congress, allocated and committed through internal USIA procedures.

Dated: January 17, 1996.

Dell Pendergrast,

*Deputy Associate Director for Educational and Cultural Affairs.*

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