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ICC CONTACT: Marianne Manko

Office: (217) 782-5793

Mobile: (217) 993-1000

Marianne.Manko@Illinois.gov

Victoria Crawford

Office: (217) 557-5819

Victoria.Crawford@Illinois.gov

ICC Releases 5-Year Rail Crossing Safety Improvement Plan

Springfield, IL...The Illinois Commerce Commission (ICC) recently approved its annual 5-year plan for the Crossing Safety Improvement Program to begin implementing highway-rail safety capital projects across the state. For Fiscal Years 2019-2023, the ICC will spend approximately \$194 million from the Grade Crossing Protection Fund (GCPF) to help local communities and railroads pay for safety improvements at over 700 crossing locations.

“Rail crossing safety is a top priority of the Illinois Commerce Commission to prevent the loss of life due to train-related collisions. The Crossing Safety Improvement Program enables the ICC to identify and help provide funding for much-needed rail crossing safety projects on local roads and streets in communities throughout Illinois,” said Brien J. Sheahan, ICC Chairman.

The five-year plan proposes to provide assistance from the GCPF to help cover the cost of 16 new bridge projects, 194 new grade crossing projects, and low-cost improvements at an estimated 500 crossing locations.

Among a few of the major projects in the five year plan, include:

- \$3.5 million to assist the City of Chicago with the cost to reconstruct the bridge that carries tracks of CSX Transportation over 63rd Street in Chicago, Cook County. (FY19)
- \$2 million to assist the City of Elmhurst to construct a new pedestrian grade separation of the Union Pacific Railroad’s tracks adjacent to York Road, in Elmhurst. (FY23)
- \$238,915 to reconstruct roadway crossing surfaces at the Maple Avenue and Myrtle Avenue highway-rail grade crossings of the Union Pacific Railroad in Elmhurst, DuPage County.
- \$1 million to reconstruct roadway approaches; install gates and automatic flashing light signals at Martin Luther King Jr. Drive of the Illinois Central Railroad’s tracks in Decatur, Macon County. (FY19)

- \$12.6 million to assist Sangamon County with the cost to construct a new grade separation to carry Iron Bridge Road over the Union Pacific Railroad's track, near Chatham, Sangamon County (FY19)
- \$9 million to assist Champaign County with the cost to construct a new bridge to carry Curtis Road over the Illinois Central Railroad's track to replace the existing Curtis Road highway-rail grade crossing in Savoy, Champaign County. (FY23)
- \$370,000 to reconstruct roadway approaches, install gates, modify automatic flashing light signals at the Ridge Avenue highway-rail grade crossing of the Terminal Railroad Association's tracks in East St. Louis, St. Clair County. (FY19)
- \$505,000 to reconstruct roadway approaches, install automatic flashing light signals and gates at the Laughman Road highway-rail grade crossing of the Illinois Central Railroad's track in Alma, Marion County. (FY19)
- \$325,000 to reconstruct roadway approaches, install automatic flashing lights and install gates at the East Canyon Road highway-rail grade crossing of the Chicago, Central & Pacific Railroad's track in Nora, JoDaviess County. (FY19)
- \$2 million to assist the City of Mundelein with the cost to construct a pedestrian-rail grade separation of the Wisconsin Central Ltd.'s tracks near Hawley Street in Mundelein, Lake County. (FY20)

The ICC prioritizes projects based on several factors including, collision history, traffic volume, engineering requirements, and geographical location. The ICC has identified as a priority the need to improve public highway-rail grade crossings in rail corridors where conventional speed passenger trains operate, and locations where grade crossing blockages cause substantial motorists or emergency vehicle delays, or a heightened risk for threat of train/vehicle collisions.

The annual 5-year plan outlines the statutory obligations and goals for improving public safety at rail crossings across the state pursuant to Public Act 90-659 paid, in part, by the Grade Crossing Protection Fund (GCPF). The Illinois General Assembly created the GCPF, which uses a portion of the motor fuel tax designated specifically for rail safety programs, to support the majority of costs of improvements at highway-rail grade crossings and highway-rail bridge crossings

The recommendations in the report assume that local funding matches will be available in a timely manner. In the event they are not, the Rail Safety Section Staff may recommend to the Commission to re-allocate GCPF assistance for those projects to another fiscal year.

Preliminary statistics for 2017 indicate there were 86 collisions at public crossings in Illinois, compared to 100 in 2016, a reduction of 9.3%. Total fatalities resulting from collisions at highway-rail crossings in Illinois increased from 20 in 2016 to 26 in 2017.

The ICC promotes and supports "The Three E's" of railroad safety: Education through Operation Lifesaver Illinois; Enforcement of existing laws to ensure motorists and pedestrians obey all railroad safety laws; and the Engineering necessary to make crossings physically and operationally as safe as possible.

The Crossing Safety Improvement Program plan is published annually. To view the 2019-2023 plan on the ICC's website, click [here](#).

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About the Illinois Commerce Commission

The Illinois Commerce Commission (ICC) is a quasi-judicial body made up of five Commissioners. Through its Public Utility Program, the Commission oversees the provision of adequate, reliable, efficient and safe utility services at the least possible cost to Illinois citizens served by electric, natural gas, telecommunications, water and sewer public utility companies. Through its Transportation Regulatory Program, the Commission oversees public safety and consumer protection programs with regard to intrastate commercial motor carriers of general freight, household goods movers, relocation towers, safety towers, personal property warehouses and repossession agencies. The Commission's Rail Safety Program also inspects and regulates the general safety of railroad tracks, facilities and equipment in the state.

To learn more about the Commission, its offices and bureaus, click [here](#). If you are a consumer who needs help resolving a utility dispute call 800-524-0795 or file an online complaint [here](#). For a complaint related to transportation, call 217-782-6448.

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