

## RAILROAD QUIET ZONE FACTS

- WHAT IS A QUIET ZONE? - Under the [Train Horn Rule](#) (49 CFR Part 222), locomotive engineers must begin to sound train horns at least 15 seconds, and no more than 20 seconds, in advance of all public grade crossings. Train horns must be sounded in a standardized pattern of 2 long, 1 short and 1 long blasts. The pattern must be repeated or prolonged until the lead locomotive or lead cab car occupies the grade crossing. The final rule also provides an opportunity for localities nationwide to mitigate the effects of train horn noise by establishing a quiet zone. In a quiet zone, railroads have been directed to cease the routine sounding their horns when approaching public rail grade crossings. Train horns may still be used in emergency situations or to comply with other Federal regulations or railroad operating rules. Localities desiring to establish a quiet zone are first required to mitigate the increased risk caused by the absence of a horn.
- April 23, 2014 the Quiet Zone Committee (authorized by the Village Board) met in Pepin with representatives from the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) and the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WIDOT) to discuss the possibility of a Railroad Crossing Quiet Zone for Pepin related to the Lake Street and First Street crossings.
- **IT IS ALL ABOUT SAFETY** for this Diagnostic Review team (Tammy Wagner, FRA; Dave Johnson, BNSF and Lisa Wagner, WIDOT) and they have an excellent track record. Research shows that the number of incidents in Quiet Zones in the United States is **lower than** in Horned Crossings. Pedestrian traffic across the tracks between the Lake Street and First Street crossings was of particular concern to the Diagnostic team.
- Tammy Wagner of the FRA followed up after the Diagnostic Review with her calculations of the Quiet Zone risk factors as modified with proposed **Supplemental Safety Measures (SSM)**. Her recommendation was that the Village change the Lake Street Crossing into a one-way and install fencing on the Lake Pepin side of the BNSF right-of-way. This fencing would not infringe upon the view from First Street to the Lake
- May 14, 2014 the Village sent out the Notice of Intent to all Crossing Partners (BNSF, WIDOT, FRA, Wisconsin Commissioner of Railroads) as required by the FRA. The Notice provided for Supplemental Safety Measures (SSM) suggested by the team, to allow for a Safety level which

exceeds that required by the FRA for Quiet Zones throughout the United States. This calculation was made by Tammy Wagner of the FRA and was reviewed and approved by the main FRA office in Washington, DC.

- July 24, 2014 the Village submitted the formal Quiet Zone Application to the FRA. A response from the FRA could take 120 days and is pending at this time.
- The Village has sent the Petition to the Wisconsin Commissioner of Railroads to change the Lake Street crossing to a one way as recommended by the FRA. (The First Street crossing – Pickle- would remain a 2 way)
- Estimated cost for the work is about **\$60,000. *VILLAGE of PEPIN will not be expected to contribute any money to this effort.***
- **Voluntary** contributions have already been committed to the project and more are being gathered at this time. Significant, long term commitments have already been made by Dennis & Joan Benish, Pepin Marina; Steve & Marianne Dove, Pickle; Dave Sheriden, SailPepin.
- Both the Quiet Zone Application and the Petition to the Wisconsin Commissioner of Railroads are available at the Village office and online at [www.pepinwisconsin.org](http://www.pepinwisconsin.org). Updates can be found there as well – click on “What You Need To Know.”
- We are still a long way from getting this done. As of 9/12/14 nothing has been approved. We hope to hear from the FRA by the end of October and the WI Railroad Commissioner by January. If we receive these approvals, BNSF tells us that the work could be completed next Spring - in time for the 2015 season.

#### Quiet Zone Committee Members:

- Dave Brassfield, Trustee - Pepin Village Board
- Bill Wroblewski, Trustee - Pepin Village Board
- Jesse Van Alstine - Pepin Police Chief
- Dan Fedie – Planning & Zoning - Pepin
- Dennis & Joan Benish – Owners - Pepin Marina
- Steve & Marianne Dove – Owners - Pickle Factory
- Dave Sheriden – Owner - Sail Pepin
- Ruth Stoyke – Co-owner – Harbor View Café
- Rob Buntz – Facilitator