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tives, has served in the state Legislature since 1982.

"Conservation efforts help ensure that the quality of life we enjoy today will continue for future generations," Johnson said. "I am happy to accept this award on behalf of young Oklahomans, and hope that they too will recognize the importance of conservation."

The late L.L. "Red" Males, a pioneer in the Washita Conservation District for more than 30 years, also was inducted into the Hall of Fame.

The Conservation Hall of Fame was established in 1985 to recognize friends of conservation and conservation district directors who have had a positive influence on Oklahoma's conservation programs.

TASK FORCE OUTLINES ACTIONS TO IMPROVE GRADE CROSSING SAFETY

From U.S. Dept. of Transportation

■(WASHINGTON) In an announcement to the National Association of Counties, Secretary of Transportation Federico Peña today released a report on how highway-rail grade crossing safety can be improved.

The report of the department's Grade Crossing Safety Task Force said that better cooperation, communication and education among federal, state and local governments and the private sector is needed to prevent future highway-rail accidents.

Among the report's key recommendations was that state transportation agencies should be focal points to ensure proper coordination between highway authorities and railroads on the interconnection of grade crossing warning devices and highway traffic signals, and of the distance between tracks and parallel highways. These agencies should develop a list of state and local highway authorities and railroad contacts to be involved in the planning, design, construction, operation and inspection of grade crossing warning devices interconnected with nearby highway traffic signals, the report stated.

The report also recommended that state and local highway authorities conduct engineering studies to determine if safety improvements are needed at grade crossings near highway intersections where there is limited space between highway and track and no signal interconnection. The authorities also should ensure that space between highway and track is a significant consideration early in the planning and design process where physical changes are being proposed to the highway or railroad at interconnected signal locations.

The report of the task force recommends 24 steps that the federal government, state and local governments, railroads and transit agencies can take to reduce fatalities at grade crossings. It charges DOT with the responsibility of guiding government and industry to work together, utilizing existing tools and expertise to find the appropriate combination of actions to make crossings safer.

The Secretary said that the task force's recommendations will help meet the goal, established in the June 1994 grade crossing action plan, of reducing crossing accidents and fatalities by 50 percent within 10 years.

The report identified five potential problem areas: 1) inadequate communication between highway traffic signals and rail crossing warning devices; 2) lack of available space for motor vehicles between crossings and adjacent highway intersections that could trap a vehicle on the track; 3) "high-profile crossings" — those at which there is an unusually abrupt change in the level of the road's surface as it crosses the tracks — which can trap low-clearance vehicles; 4) light rail transit crossings which operate in right-of-way shared by motorists and pedestrians; and 5) the adequacy of information on grade crossing safety given to operators of oversized and overweight vehicles.

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