

FEDERAL NEWS WEEKLY SUMMARY CONTINUED



greater safety in frontal crash protection, and wants to encourage both their rapid development and design flexibility. Smart bags will effectively "tailor" the deployment to the size of the occupant and the crash circumstances.

"Overall, air bags are working well and are responsible for an 11 percent reduction in driver fatalities in passenger cars, including a 30 percent reduction in fatalities in head-on crashes. They are credited with saving more than 1,500 lives since 1986 when they began appearing in the U.S. fleet," Dr. Martinez said.

Consumers who have questions or concerns about air bags should contact the agency's toll-free Auto Safety Hotline at (800) 424-9393.

—NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMINISTRATION
11/25/96

TRANSPORTATION

PILOT AGENCIES APPROVED FOR FLEXIBILITY IN USING TRANSIT PROPERTY FOR PUBLIC/PRIVATE JOINT DEVELOPMENT

■(WASHINGTON) Federal Transit Administrator (FTA) Gordon J. Linton has announced the establishment of a pilot initiative to promote joint development projects

between public transportation agencies and the private sector, by allowing certain transit agencies to apply the income from use of federally-funded real estate to transit-related expenditures.

The four transit agencies that will participate in the pilot project are: the Washington, DC Metropolitan Transit Authority (WMATA); the Tri-County Metropolitan Transportation District (Tri-Met), Portland, OR; the Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA), Atlanta; and the Maryland Mass Transit Administration (MTA), Baltimore.

Under the Common Rule for Federal Grant Programs, public transportation agencies that sell real estate originally acquired with federal financial assistance generally must return the federal share of the sales proceeds to the U.S. Treasury. Pilot agencies will be excepted from complying with this requirement. They will now be able to sell their federally-funded real property to establish transit-oriented joint development projects, create an ongoing revenue stream or receive a one-time payment, and use the proceeds to offset transit-related expenses.

Many public transportation agencies are currently engaged in joint development projects through leases. They rent air and ground rights on their properties to private developers who build offices, retail centers, day care facilities and newsstands. The trans-

portation agencies are allowed to apply the income from such rentals to transit-related expenditures. The waivers to the common rule will provide public transit agencies greater flexibility in using and managing their real estate assets. They will be allowed to establish land sales contracts for joint development activities and to use the resulting income for transit operations, much as is already being done with rental contracts.

DOT published the individual exceptions to the Common Grant Rule in a Federal Register Notice on Oct. 7, 1996.

—U.S. DEPT. OF TRANSPORTATION
11/26/96

UTILITIES

PUBLIC COMMENTS REQUESTED ABOUT BELL OPERATING COMPANIES' ENTRY INTO LONG DISTANCE

■(WASHINGTON) The Department of Justice is asking all interested parties to submit position papers addressing several important questions relating to the impact of the Bell companies' entry into the long distance services market.

Joel I. Klein, Acting Assistant Attorney General in charge of the Department's Antitrust Division, said that the submissions would assist the Department in developing a general analytical framework for evaluating the Bell companies' applications to provide in-region long distance service.

Under the Telecommunications Act of 1996, the Department will consult with and provide comments to the Federal Communications Commission — which must give "substantial weight" to the Department's evaluation in determining whether to grant or deny any Bell Company application to provide long distance service within its region.

All interested parties are invited to address the questions outlined in the attached letter and submit their response by December 13, 1996.

The response should not exceed 25 pages, and should be submitted to Don Russell, Chief of the Telecommunications Task Force, Antitrust Division, Department of Justice, 555 4th Street, Room 8104, Washington, D.C. 20001.

—U.S. DEPT. OF JUSTICE
11/26/96

