

For release - May 2, 2008

## **GOVERNMENT OF CANADA ON TRACK TO SAFER RAILWAY CROSSINGS IN ONTARIO**

AJAX — In recognition of Rail Safety Week, the Honourable Jim Flaherty, Minister of Finance and Minister Responsible for the Greater Toronto Area, today announced that the Government of Canada is providing \$3,151,600 for 23 projects to improve safety at 21 railway crossings throughout Ontario. This includes \$145,040 to install flashing lights, bells and gates at a railway crossing in Ajax, Ontario. The announcement was made on behalf of the Honourable Lawrence Cannon, Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities.

"Moving people and goods by rail is essential for a strong and growing economy, but we will not compromise safety in our communities," said Minister Flaherty. "The investments we are making today will help alert our friends and neighbours to oncoming trains so we can avoid future tragedies."

Transport Canada works closely with railway companies and communities across the country to identify grade crossings that require safety improvements. Under the department's Grade Crossing Improvement Program, eligible railway crossings are upgraded, relocated or closed, based on an assessment of factors such as traffic volume and accident history. Improvements may include installing flashing lights and gates, adding gates or extra lights to existing systems, linking crossing signals to nearby traffic lights, modifying operating circuits, or adding new circuits or timing devices. Transport Canada finances up to 80 per cent of the total cost of the improvements, with the balance provided by the railways, municipalities or provinces.

"Improving safety at crossings is a priority for our government," said Minister Cannon. "Accident rates and crossing fatalities have declined in recent years, and this funding will allow us to continue to work with rail companies and communities to increase the safety of rail crossings for motorists and pedestrians throughout Canada."

The Government of Canada is also making the largest single federal investment in public infrastructure since World War II through the Building Canada plan, a total of \$33 billion over seven years for roads, bridges, water systems, public transit and international gateways.

In Budget 2008, the government announced the permanent extension of federal gas tax funding, which will reach \$2 billion per year nationally by 2009-2010. Municipalities large and small, from coast to coast, will be able to rely on this funding to plan and finance their public infrastructure needs for years to come.

In addition, the government is providing \$500 million to make further investments in public transit capital infrastructure. This funding will be dedicated to several specific

projects, including a joint federal-provincial study to re-establish the rail link between the City of Peterborough and Toronto's Union Station.

"The eastern part of the Greater Toronto Area is one of the fastest-growing areas in the country and the Peterborough to Toronto rail link will help establish a more efficient regional transportation system," added Minister Flaherty.

A backgrounder on railway crossing facts and a list of the crossings scheduled for improvements are attached.

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## **BACKGROUND**

### **RAILWAY CROSSING FACTS AND TIPS**

- There are approximately 55,000 public, private and pedestrian highway-railway crossings in Canada.
- There are still too many fatalities and injuries as a result of highway-railway crossing collisions.
- Approximately 50 per cent of vehicle-train collisions occur at crossings with active warning devices (gates, lights, bells).
- Trains cannot stop quickly. An average freight train travelling at 100 km/h requires about 1.1 kilometres to stop. A passenger train travelling at 120 km/h requires about 1.6 kilometres to stop. That's 14 football fields!
- Look for the crossbuck symbol that indicates a highway-railway crossing. Some more heavily travelled highway-railway crossings have lights and bells or gates.

- Listen for warning bells and whistles. Turn off, or turn down, distracting fans, heaters and radios until the crossing is safely cleared. Opening the window helps you hear better.
- Never drive around lowered gates — it's illegal and deadly. If you suspect a signal is malfunctioning, call the 1-800 number posted on or near the crossing signal or your local law enforcement agency.
- Never race a train to the crossing — even in a tie, you lose.
- Do not get trapped on the tracks. Proceed through a highway-railway crossing only if you are sure you can completely clear the crossing without stopping. Remember that the train is three feet wider than the tracks on both sides.
- If your vehicle stalls on the tracks at a crossing, immediately get everyone out and far away from the tracks. Move in the direction that the train is approaching from to avoid being hit by debris, because the momentum of the train will sweep your vehicle forward.
- When at a multiple-track crossing waiting for a train to pass, watch out for a second train on the other tracks, approaching from either direction.
- Railway tracks, trestles, yards and equipment are private property. Walking or playing on them is illegal, and trespassers are subject to arrest and fines. Too often the penalty is death.
- In 2007, 57 people were killed and 27 others seriously injured while trespassing on railway property.
- Do not walk, run, cycle or operate all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) on railway tracks or rights of way or through tunnels.
- Cross tracks only at designated pedestrian or railway crossings. Observe and obey all warning signs and signals.
- Do not attempt to hop aboard railway equipment at any time. A slip of the foot could cost you a limb or your life.

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## **BACKGROUNDER**

### **GRADE CROSSING IMPROVEMENTS PROGRAM FUNDING RECIPIENTS IN THE PROVINCE OF ONTARIO**

<b>PROVINCE</b>	<b>LOCATION</b>	<b>ROAD</b>	<b>IMPROVEMENT</b>	<b>FEDERAL CONTRIBUTION (up to)</b>
Ontario	Hawkesbury	Highway 34 / McGill Street	Relocate driveway and utilities	\$66,960
Ontario	Whitchurch-Stouffville	Vivian Road	Install flashing lights, gates, CWDs	\$278,960

Ontario	Campbelleville	Guelph Line	Adjust rails	\$70,000
Ontario	Campbelleville	Guelph Line	Modify road, asphalt work	\$34,000
Ontario	Guelph-Ermosa	Speedvale Road	Add gates	\$152,720
Ontario	Renfrew	Barry Avenue	Construct new curbs, sidewalk, fence, barricades and restore site	\$17,760
Ontario	Chatham	Queen Street	Add LED lights; upgrade cantilevers	\$122,960
Ontario	Brock	Regional Road No. 47	Add gates	\$104,800
Ontario	Ramara	Concession 3	Reconstruct approach to crossing	\$44,240
Ontario	Ramara	Concession 7	Improve grading	\$28,000
Ontario	Severn	Boyd Road	Construct basins	\$40,000
Ontario	Severn	Cambrian Road	Install flashing lights, gates, CWDs	\$235,360
Ontario	Essex	County Road 25	Add gate barrier arms	\$129,280
Ontario	Shuniah	East Loon Lake Road	Install flashing lights, bell, gates and CWDs	\$180,240
Ontario	Shuniah	East Loon Lake Road	Install active advance warning sign	\$12,400
Ontario	Shuniah	West Loon Lake Road	Install flashing lights, bell, gates and CWDs	\$224,000
Ontario	Elizabethtown-Kitley	Eligh Road	Construct turning basins, barricading and ditching	\$4,000
Ontario	Cobourg	George Street	Relocate sidewalk, close entrance, construct curbs	\$20,800
Ontario	Rainy River	Government Road	Widen road, improve warning system, construct	\$327,680

			diversion road	
Ontario	Leeds and Thousand Islands	Kidd Road	Improve grading and constant warning system with signs, barriers	\$239,040
Ontario	Garden River	Ballpark Road	Improve grading, widen approach	\$150,240
Ontario	Garden River	Syrette Lake Road	Improve road width, grades, lanes, signals and traffic lights	\$523,120
Ontario	Ajax	Fairall Street	Install flashing lights, bell and gates with stop board operations	\$145,040
<b>Total</b>				<b>\$3,151,600</b>

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