

# READING & NORTHERN RAILROAD COMPANY

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## Presentation to the Committee for highway signs.

Haags Hotel, Tuesday, Feb. 27, 1996

Presented by Edgar Teahl for the Reading Blue Mountain and Northern Railroad.

Please allow me to introduce myself. My name is Ed Teahl, and I represent The Reading Blue Mountain and Northern Railroad. The first item on my agenda is to tell you who we are and what we do.

For convenience, our company name usually is shortened to "Reading and Northern". Our company is known in the railroad industry as a "Short Line Railroad". The railroad employs approximately forty full time employees and forty part time employees. The Company operates 164.1 miles of main line track in the counties of Berks, Schuylkill, Carbon, Northumberland, Luzerne, and Columbia. We serve the heart of the Anthracite Coal Region. Our rails connect such localities as the northern part of Reading, Pottsville, Minersville, Hamburg, Tamaqua, Mahanoy City, Ashland, Mount Carmel, Hazleton and the smaller towns in between. There are also connections to Shamokin, Sunbury and Jim Thorpe via other "short line" railroads. The Reading Blue Mountain and Northern Railroad ships freight to or from anywhere in the country and to seaports for export through our rail connections with CONRAIL.

The Reading Blue Mountain and Northern Railroad is very much concerned with the economic development of this area. Our business is transportation, and transportation, whether it is bulk commodities, products, goods or people, depends upon a sound economic base. It's no secret that a good economic base also creates jobs and benefits everyone. The area in which we do business can use all the economic development it can get.

We consider Tourism and related industries to be a major factor in the economic development of an area. Good public relations is the very foundation, heart and soul of the tourist industry. We try to make a good positive impression upon our customers. This is the best advertising. The tourist industry and the entire area realizes the economic benefits.

After operating a tourist oriented passenger train service for the past several years our company has gained valuable insight into the importance of highway signs. It is our opinion that a tourist related business cannot survive very well without them. Unfortunately, excessive and varied regulation at all government levels makes it very difficult to erect and maintain signs. This Type of regulatory atmosphere has a very negative impact upon the advertising needs of the small business.

It is imperative to relieve the burden of regulation that prohibits a small business from placing signs.

The high cost of sign rental or lease is also a major factor when you consider the small profit margins of most small tourist related industries. A struggling new tourist business cannot survive the costs of year round billboard advertisement under the present level of costs of advertisement and maintenance charged by the ad agencies.

The Tourist Industry needs signs that are affordable and adequate to meet our needs. This would include the placement of directional information along the route from a major sign to the tourist facility. The possibility of adding tourist business signs to the existing state highway signs at a mutually agreeable rate must be explored.

It is the opinion of the railroad that the placement of this type of signage along our highways would be of great economical benefit to the entire Commonwealth. County and Local levels of government would also benefit.

The Railroad and I wish to thank you for the opportunity to present our opinions on this subject to you today.