

**As Prepared Remarks of Ronald L. Batory  
Swearing-In Ceremony as the 14<sup>th</sup> Administrator of the  
Federal Railroad Administration  
U.S. Department of Transportation Headquarters  
Washington, DC  
February 28, 2018**

Thank you, Secretary Chao, for this swearing in, along with your kind remarks. It is truly a sincere pleasure to serve our country in conjunction with your outstanding leadership.

Deputy secretary Rosen, I certainly appreciate your attendance this morning. The support and guidance both you and the secretary have extended to me since my arrival as an advisor last November has been so beneficial in bringing me to this point of becoming your administrator of the federal railroad administration.

To my family, friends, colleagues and fellow Americans, thank you so much for taking the time to attend my swearing in ceremony this morning. This day could not have happened soon enough. Those of you familiar with railroad work rules will appreciate I was “held away from home terminal” from August 2nd to November 19th of last year and on “initial terminal delay” until today, so needless to say, I’m ready to release the brakes and throttle out.

I have three loves in my life: my country, my family, and railroads. I’ll leave the order up to your imagination, but the safe answer is “all of the above.” In regards to my family, I want to acknowledge my wife, Barbara, of 43 years and 13 relocations later, whom many in the railroad industry have often referred to her as the “real general manager” throughout my career in the private sector.

In addition to the ex officio “general manager,” this morning I want you to meet the future of our family. Our daughter, Erin Budisak, her husband, Todd, and their two children, Andrew and Alison, or her alias, “boss baby” known for that famous saying, “either you run the day or the day runs you.”

Now let’s talk railroads, as it is my living dream. First, safety:

Rail safety is first and foremost. Its practice is non-compromising and non-negotiable.

Safety is embedded into our lives. It is the keystone of the railroad industry.

Railroading is not unsafe, as you know, yet you can never assume. One mistake can be your last.

Reducing and eliminating risk is paramount toward enhancing safety.

Next is a public awareness safety mission. Safety reaches beyond the railroad right of ways. Increasing public awareness is necessary, so people will make better decisions around crossings and tracks because most, if not all, trains can't stop short.

So in that regard, we are going to continue increasing public awareness. On Monday, the FRA and NHTSA launched a major, \$4.3 million-dollar safety campaign to educate the public about the dangers of rail grade crossings.

I can assure each of you that this subject matter will always be close to my heart, having personally experienced on board locomotive collisions with highway vehicles during my career, and in one instance a school bus full of children that thankfully emptied seconds prior to striking it.

Throughout my forthcoming tenure, increasing public awareness to rail safety will be a consistent priority of mine at FRA, not unlike that of my career past in the private sector. I ask each of you to join me in that endeavor if you are not already engaged.

Safety and creative innovation must be coupled together. The latter brings me to technology.

Transformative technologies await us, as we continue pursuing our 21st century journey. Economic growth can be propelled by fact based, data driven analysis and decision making. Remember, without facts, it's just another opinion.

We must aggressively embrace the internet of things and artificial intelligence, along with seeking autonomous functions that can foster an environment towards minimal to non-existent risk.

Therefore, FRA will continue with renewed urgency in seeking ways to foster and encourage the railroad industry's use of technology to bring about continued safety improvements and increased efficiency in railroad operations and maintenance.

So now imagine our safety instilled culture of zero tolerance combined with the infinite use of developing technology. This combination of culture and applied sciences can be the key ingredients towards determining and developing safe, smart and sustainable infrastructure for our future.

How much one builds or spends on infrastructure is not nearly as important as to how wisely we exercise those actions. We have many fields of opportunity awaiting us to harvest change whether it be safety, technology infrastructure or a combination thereof.

Many of you know that I'm not a "care taker." Instead I've always sought constructive change. You cannot fear failure. If you do, it becomes a lock on the door that keeps you from entering the unknown side of creative innovation.

As your administrator, I will well and faithfully discharge its duties with unrelenting vigor. I look forward to using all of the rail safety and business knowledge that thousands of Americans

have given me throughout my living dream. Combining my commitment and knowledge with that which exists today at FRA, I'm of the belief we can make a positive difference for the future to tell.

Thank you, and God bless the United States of America.

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