

11/3/11

Docket No. EP 526 (Sub-No.3)

Railroad –Shipper Transportation Advisory Council (RSTAC); Suggestion for candidacy

Jerry Cope
Dakota Mill & Grain
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The honorable Chairman of the STB, Mr. Dan Elliot; Vice Chair, Ms. Ann Begeman; Commissioner Mr. Francis Mulvey:

My name has been submitted by the National Grain and Feed Association (NGFA) as a candidate for appointment to RSTAC. I would be honored, willing and able to serve as a member of this council.

I am a South Dakota native with twenty seven years of experience in the grain industry. I believe my tenure in the grain industry and variety of experiences will allow me to contribute in a positive and professional manner to RSTAC. I spent three years as a grain merchandiser in Great Falls, Montana and assistant manager for a green-field 52-car BN train loader in north central Montana followed by three years in merchandising and rail operations for Peavey Company, Bozeman. After moving back home to South Dakota, the next twenty one years were with South Dakota Wheat Growers, Aberdeen, the largest farmer owned coop in the upper Midwest as a grain merchandiser and Rail Transportation Manager. During that time I was on the development team for five BNSF 110-car shuttle loaders and one on the CPRS. Other responsibilities included oversight of a leased car fleet, freight trading and participation in railroad programs. In February of 2011, I came to Dakota Mill & Grain as VP of Marketing for the company's CPRS elevators.

I have had the privilege to serve on the NGFA Rail / Shipper Receiver Committee since 2003. During that time the committee has had meaningful impact on such issues as fuel surcharge clarity, developing a working relationship with the STB and providing input and direction to help proactively shape rail related legislation and policy that is beneficial for shippers and acceptable to carriers. Committee duties have included sub-committees focused on rail related and carrier specific issues. Commitment to NGFA has also included use of the NGFA arbitration process, both as a member filing arbitration claims and as a volunteer chairman for two arbitration panels, one of which was an oral hearing.

I am currently the vice president of South Dakota Grain and Feed, a membership based elevator association for licensed and bonded grain handlers in South Dakota. This will be my last year as a member of the Grain Inspection and Stockyards Act (GIPSA) Grain Inspection Oversight Committee of which I am currently serving as chairman. Past affiliations include South Dakota Ag and Rural Leadership (SDARL) - an Ag based leadership program dedicated to identifying and developing community, commercial and political leaders for agriculture and the rural communities of South Dakota.

I would be honored to serve as a member of RSTAC and appreciate your consideration.

Sincerely,

Jerry D. Cope