

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Train horns within Prosper may fade into the past

PROSPER (November 3, 2016) To some old-time Prosper residents, the sound of a train horn is as natural as the sunrise, but while the trains will continue to play an important part of the transportation system that traverses Prosper, the piercing sounds of the train horns may soon become a thing of the past.

“Trains, of course, are woven deeply into the history of Prosper,” says Capital Improvement Projects Manager Michael Bulla. “Prosper can actually trace its founding to the fact that it is roughly midway between Dallas and Sherman, two important waystations for rail traffic in the early 1900s.”

Area farmers with yields to move counted on the soothing sound of train horns for reassurance that their produce would make it to market, ensuring a successful season. But, those days of longing for the comforting shriek of train horns are long gone, replaced by a yearning for peace and quiet.

In response to resident requests, and following two years of work, the Federal Railway Administration granted the Town of Prosper a Quiet Zone in 2010, but only for the BNSF crossing at Prosper Trail.

This Quiet Zone relieves train engineers from sounding their horns within approximately 2000 feet on either side of the Prosper Trail crossing.

“Nevertheless, engineers still have sole discretion in sounding horns if they believe it’s appropriate to prevent injury, death, or property damage,” said Bulla.

Engineers are still required to sound horns at the First Street, Fifth Street, and Frontier Parkway rail crossings. The only overpass currently available for Prosper motorists is Hwy 380, although long-range traffic plans call for a similar overpass at the Frontier Parkway crossing. In addition, First Street is slated for widening in the near future, making that intersection eligible for its own Quiet Zone, and Fifth Street will likely terminate at the crossing, removing the need for horns.

“We often get calls regarding the long wait times at railroad crossings,” he added. “Many of those longer delays are the result of Prosper’s dubious honor of having the longest siding rail between Dallas and Oklahoma.”

A siding rail serves the same purpose as a rest stop on the highway. Although instead of resting, the siding rails are designed to allow trains to “step to the side” and let others pass them. The stalled trains, and those using the siding rail to rearrange cars, not only block the intersection, but they must sound their horns when they begin to move again.

“We don’t know exactly when it will happen, but BNSF has plans for constructing a longer siding rail south of SH121 to relive stoppages in Prosper,” said Bulla.

With a relationship spanning 115 years, the Town will continue to work with the railroad to improve the environment for our residents.

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ABOUT THE TOWN OF PROSPER – The Town of Prosper is a fast-growing suburb with small town charm, located 30 miles north of Dallas at the crossroads of U.S. 380, Preston Road and the Dallas North Tollway in Collin and Denton Counties. Prosper sits on 27 square miles and is home to more than 17,800 people. A home-rule municipality, governed by a council-manager form of government, the town has full-time fire and police departments, including its own dispatch service. As the Town grows to its projected build-out population of 70,000 residents, Prosper’s vision is to remain a “Place Where Everyone Matters.”