

CITY OF WOODWARD

1219 8TH STREET | WOODWARD, OK 73801 | TEL: 580.256.2280



PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

City Manager Alan Riffel has announced a new Quiet Zone on the BNSF railway will become effective Sunday, October 1st. This means that train horns will not blare through the heart of the City of Woodward. Horns will regularly sound at the Lakeview intersection on the east side of town, and at 48th Street on the west side of town. All other intersections will be crossed without train horns being sounded.

"This designation has been granted by the Federal Railroad Administration following a review by their Diagnostic Team of the steps taken by the City to mitigate hazards at six at-grade crossings," said Riffel. "Working closely with the Oklahoma Department of Transportation, particularly Highway Commissioner Bobby Alexander and ODOT Director Mike Patterson, we have been able to accomplish this with minimum local costs. We greatly appreciate their help."

"The Quiet Zone was identified in the Envision Woodward Comprehensive Planning process as a major transportation goal that would benefit significant portions of the community, including the downtown business core." Riffel continued. "Local hospital administrators have repeatedly asked for assistance to mitigate train horn noise as it has impacted both their level of care and their ability to implement health care programs dependent on federal reimbursements."

Citizens should not expect that the horns will automatically cease on Sunday. BNSF officials have stated it typically takes a couple of weeks for all engineers to transition into the new regulation. Also, there will be circumstances where trains are required to sound their horns, such as when obstacles or pedestrians are observed in the track right-of-way, or when trains are starting to move after having been at a full stop.

City of Woodward crews installed six non-traversable concrete medians painted yellow with individual reflective posts and posted "No Horn" signage at each of the affected intersections. These improvements resulted in a Quiet Zone Risk Index that was lower than the Risk Index with Horns. The closure of other crossing intersections in the city, and the installation of a pedestrian crossing arm on Ninth Street, had previously taken place, satisfying other requirements for the designation.

"Trains are an integral part of Woodward's history," said Riffel. "As we continue that heritage, it's our sincere desire that we do so safely, as well as peacefully. So, we encourage everyone to continue to utilize the highest caution when approaching railroad tracks, and cross them only when you are assured it's safe to do so."

Release Approved:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'AR', written over a horizontal line.

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