

`BRIT76

26<sup>th</sup> February 2007

## **UK RAIL NETWORK NEEDS CONCRETE ANSWERS**

**A new report has found that the rail network is struggling to cope. No surprises there. In 2006, the number of passengers increased to 1,147 billion – the highest figure for 60 years. Yet, the network is only half the size that it was in 1946.**

Real investment, rather than the current patch and mend approach, in the rail infrastructure is essential if railways are not to suffer from even more chronic overcrowding and unpunctuality. However, the call for the building of new lines and expansion of others must include the use of a rail track construction method that will update the UK's present ballast track that is basically a 19<sup>th</sup> century approach struggling to deliver a 21<sup>st</sup> century service, believes Britpave, the transport infrastructure group.

The report from the Association of Train Operating Companies found that 3.2 million rail journeys are made every day. This is an increase of over 50% since 1995/6. London-distance journeys have increased by 71% since 1995/6. All this is on a network which according to the ATOC is now half the size it was in 1946. The ATOC is calling for funding to be made available to build new lines and to expand others.

“The need for a better rail network infrastructure is obvious”, said David Jones, director of Britpave. “If that network is to truly meet the demands placed upon it then it needs to be constructed using a method that eliminates unplanned maintenance, offers high levels of performance, buildability, safety and ride comfort, and provide significant whole life cost savings”.

Britpave believes that concrete slab track, successfully used in Japan for over 40 years

and increasingly being laid throughout Europe, rather than ballasted track is the answer.

“The impressive safety and punctuality records of rail companies using concrete slab track speak for themselves”, said Jones. The initial cost for slab track may be higher but the constant maintenance and replacement costs of ballast tracks soon make concrete slab track the economically viable solution. In Japan, this payback period has been found to be less than 10 years with the added advantage of minimum disruption to rail passengers. We need at 21<sup>st</sup> century rail infrastructure not one based on the Victorian era”.

**ENDS**

**Notes to editors**

Britpave (British In-situ Concrete Paving Association) promotes the better and greater use of concrete for transportation solutions. Its members include major contractors, specialist equipment and material suppliers, consulting engineers and interested trade associations. Together they provide a single voice for the in-situ concrete paving industry. For further information see: HYPERLINK "http://www.britpave.org.uk" [www.britpave.org.uk](http://www.britpave.org.uk)

Issued by Steve Elliott, Constructive Dialogue, tel: 01276 36735, email: HYPERLINK "mailto:condialogue@aol.com" [condialogue@aol.com](mailto:condialogue@aol.com)

---000---