

# Press Release

19 October 2004

## Serco-NedRailways Partnership Wins Britain's Biggest Franchise

Serco-NedRailways, one of Britain's best-performing train operators, today signed the contract to run the country's largest rail network, the new Northern Rail franchise for up to 8¾ years with a start date of 12 December 2004.

Today's announcement marks a further step in a new era for the franchising process, which has seen the introduction of a new standard Franchise Agreement that will provide high performance and standards for customers. As part of the franchise award, the Serco-NedRailways' joint venture has given a commitment to year on year improvement in train punctuality and performance throughout the life of the franchise. Other features include:

- The appointment of four Area Directors to ensure close contact between regional stakeholders, local communities and the planning and delivery of the train services;
- The commitment to deliver best practice from Serco's and Dutch Railways' operations, with a particular focus on train maintenance and customer service;
- Modernised ticketing arrangements and improved facilities for buying tickets;
- Establishing a bicycle users forum to promote greater use of bicycles by train passengers;
- The introduction, in conjunction with South and West Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executives, of a new service between Leeds and Sheffield via Barnsley to provide a much-improved service for commuters and visitors to these key Yorkshire places.

Brian Burdsall, Chairman of the new operating company for the Northern Rail franchise, commented:

*"We have been very fortunate in securing a franchise that already contains a dedicated and professional workforce. From today our priority is to open discussions with the current managers, staff and trade union representatives to ensure we deliver a truly unique and first class service to all our customers and employees."*

The Serco-NedRailways joint venture already operates Merseyrail, the highly successful partnership with the Merseyside PTE, which is recognised as one of the most efficient and punctual franchises in the UK.

The Serco-NedRailways joint venture draws on a unique combination of public sector delivery skills and heavy rail operational experience that will bring a new approach to running this important network. The partnership will now work closely with the staff, managers, unions and the SRA to finalise the arrangements for the transfer of the current operations to the new franchise.

----- END -----

**High Resolution pictures downloadable free of charge on**

**[www.newscast.co.uk](http://www.newscast.co.uk)**

**Tel: 020 7608 1000**

**For further information please contact:**

**Serco-NedRailways**

Pete Smith                      07718 194 856

Jonathan Drake                07770 886 932

#### **Notes to Editors**

The Northern franchise draws together the regional networks currently provided by First North Western and ARRIVA Trains Northern under one operator for the first time since privatisation of Britain's railways. It is described by the Strategic Rail Authority (SRA) as being one of the first of a new generation of customer-focused franchises.

The franchise covers the operation of the railway services for the north-west, Yorkshire, Humberside and the north-east of England and contains 472 stations with over 4500 staff. With a network which stretches more than 1,600 miles it is one of the longest in Britain, serving a number of major cities including Manchester, Leeds, Newcastle and Sunderland, as well as providing direct access to three National parks: the Peak District, Yorkshire Dales and North Yorkshire Moors.

Serco-NedRailways is a 50-50 joint venture arrangement between Serco Group plc and NedRailways BV.

Serco is one of the world's largest service companies operating on a global basis in a diverse range of sectors including; Defense, Aerospace, science, public transport and traffic management, health, education, justice and local government. For more information on Serco Group PLC visit [www.serco.com](http://www.serco.com)

NedRailways is a 100% subsidiary of NS, the major rail operator in the Netherlands with experience in running high density urban networks with an intensity of use greater than that in the UK. On a daily basis, the company operates 5,000 trains carrying 1 million passengers from an end-to-end journey approach.