



March 10, 2021



## Arkansas and Missouri Railroad President Testifies Before House Subcommittee

Today Caren Kraska, president and chairman of ASLRRRA-member Arkansas and Missouri Railroad testified before the United States House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure's Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines and Hazardous Materials during a hearing entitled, "Full Steam Ahead for Rail: Why Rail is More Relevant Than Ever for Economic and Environmental Progress."

Kraska gave committee members an overview of the short line rail industry, including providing four defining characteristics of short line railroads and describing the impact of short lines on the U.S. economy using traditional and non-traditional measurements.

She also explained the environmental benefits of shipping by rail compared to other over-land modes, and outlined four ways Congress can better enable short lines to meet the government's economic and environmental goals with measures in a future infrastructure bill.

Others who testified at the hearing included Virginia Secretary of Transportation Shannon Valentine, AFL-CIO's President-Transportation Trades Department Greg Regan and BNSF Railway's Group Vice President for Consumer Products Tom Williams.

Read more in ASLRRRA's [press release](#).

## CISA and RAN Strongly Emphasize Security Breach Mitigation Steps for all Users of On-Premises Microsoft Exchange Servers

Last week Microsoft released security updates to address vulnerabilities within their Exchange Server products. The Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Agency (CISA) subsequently observed exploitation of these vulnerabilities and issued an [Emergency Directive](#) to all federal government agencies to take mitigation actions.

At the same time CISA released [guidance for the private sector](#) to address these vulnerabilities, including [detailed techniques for IT professionals](#) to assess whether their systems are compromised, as well as several mitigation options. The Association of American Railroad's Railway Alert Network (RAN) also issued [similar guidance](#) specifically for the rail industry.

These alerts are available to ASLRRRA members on our [website](#).


ASLRRRA strongly urges all members to check with their IT staff or managed services providers to confirm whether they are operating any on-premises versions of Microsoft Exchange Server, including cases where these servers are backing up other cloud email service. If your organization is operating

such a server it is critical to quickly assess whether those systems have been compromised, and take action to mitigate any breaches.

## CDC Issues Guidance on Socializing for Fully Vaccinated People

On March 8 the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) [issued](#) its first set of [recommendations](#) for those fully vaccinated against COVID-19, allowing certain indoor visits but suggesting continued use of masks in public.

ASLRRRA has included the CDC's new guidance on its COVID-19 [resource page](#). The page includes information covering a wide variety of issues related to the COVID-19 pandemic, such as tips for [reopening businesses](#) and information on [regulatory relief](#).



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## ASLRRRA Submits Comments Regarding FRA Proposed Rule

ASLRRRA and the Association of American Railroads (AAR) submitted [comments](#) regarding the Federal Railroad Administration's (FRA) [Notice of Proposed Rulemaking](#) (NPRM) regarding alcohol and drug regulation for mechanical employees.

The NPRM proposes to expand the scope of the FRA's alcohol and drug regulation to cover mechanical employees who test or inspect railroad rolling equipment. Also included are miscellaneous, clarifying amendments to the alcohol and drug regulations.

ASLRRRA and AAR support the FRA's action, but offer suggestions on various details. The comments ask that the rule be extended to any employees who perform mechanical duties involving rolling equipment; clarify post-accident testing obligations; retain Appendix C in the CFR; and extend the effective date of the final rule.

## TSA Cybersecurity Awareness Message Available on ASLRRRA Website

ASLRRRA has posted a Surface Transportation Cybersecurity Awareness Message from the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) on its [website](#).

The message concerns a phishing campaign meant to steal active credentials. It targets U.S. Department of Transportation vendors.

Also included in the message are mitigation recommendations, resources for action and ways to report phishing and other incidents to federal agencies.

## STB Selects Two to Represent Small Railroads on RSTAC



Donald Itzkoff (left) and Eric Jakubowski

Two ASLRRRA-member executives, Donald Itzkoff and Eric Jakubowski, [have joined](#) the Surface Transportation Board's (STB) Railroad-Shipper Transportation Advisory Council (RSTAC) as small railroad representatives.

Itzkoff is chief policy officer at Patriot Rail Company. He has served as deputy administrator of the Federal Railroad Administration and has 30 years of experience in transportation policy.

Jakubowski is chief commercial officer at Anacostia Rail Holdings, and has 35 years of railroad experience.



### Help Short Line Colleagues Connect with Lawmakers by Sponsoring Railroad Day on Capitol Hill

The Association is looking for sponsors to support this year's [Railroad Day on Capitol Hill](#), which will take place virtually via Zoom on April 13 and 14.

Sponsor funding will help cover the cost of hosting dozens of online meetings at a time. Sponsors will be recognized in a number of ways, including exposure on ASLRRRA's website, social media accounts and in targeted emails. Contact ASLRRRA's Vice President

of Meetings [Amy Westerman](#) for more information about sponsorships.

Read more about Railroad Day and its importance in the ASLRRRA Announcements below.

*Join us VIA ZOOM April 13 and 14 for*  
**2021 RAILROAD DAY**  
*Click here to learn more and register!*



## ASLRRA New Members

Know a company that would benefit from joining and participating in ASLRRA? Please contact ASLRRA's Vice President of Membership and Business Development [Kathy Keeney](#) via email or on (202) 585-3439.

### Welcome New Associate Business Member: Modjeski and Masters



We are very pleased to welcome back as members [Modjeski and Masters, Inc.](#), based in Mechanicsburg, Pa., with over a dozen offices throughout the U.S.

The firm is a leader in the design, inspection and

rehabilitation of all bridge types, with nearly 130 years of serving the railroad industry. It has designed some of North America's most iconic long-span, movable, and complex railroad bridges as well as many short-span structures.

Experience includes on-line replacements, feasibility studies, emergency response, forensic analyses, instrumentation, weld inspection and certification, and construction engineering support. Our primary contact is [Daniel Irwin](#), PE, Project Manager-Structures, who can be reached at (717) 790-9565.

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## ASLRRA Announcements

### Rail Receives High Grade in ASCE Report Card, but Short Lines Still Must Advocate on Capitol Hill

The American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) released its quadrennial [Report Card for America's Infrastructure](#) last week and [rail received a B](#), the highest grade given in any of the 17 categories.

The report examines the condition and performance of American infrastructure, focusing on areas like physical condition, current level of funding, public safety, system resilience and innovation.

Although rail's high grade is good news, ASLRRA cautions that the rating is no excuse to rest easy. Class II and III railroads generally reinvest 25 to 33 percent of their annual revenue on capital expenditures and maintenance-of-way costs, which makes railroading the most capital intensive business in the country. And those investments are generally just enough to maintain infrastructure in safe working order - there are still huge needs in the industry regarding rail and bridge replacements, more comprehensive rehabilitations, and new infrastructure opportunities.

That is why ASLRRA and its partners worked so tirelessly to get the 45G short line tax credit made permanent, and why the Association continues to make a push for increased federal and state funding for rail maintenance and improvements, ensuring adequate participation opportunities for short lines, particularly in rural areas.

Improved CRISI, INFRA, BUILD, EDA, DERA, RRIF and other programs are crucial for the ongoing success of short lines. Supporting short line railroad infrastructure investment through these programs would have positive implications for the general public in terms of safety, environmental sustainability, highways congestion reduction, and in maintaining the continuity of the national and global supply chain for our country's shippers.

One way ASLRRRA communicates the needs of short lines to lawmakers and federal regulators is through the annual [Railroad Day on Capitol Hill](#), helping railroad members and other stakeholders speak directly to those in Washington who make decisions that directly impact the industry.

This year, Railroad Day is going virtual, with all meetings on April 13 and 14 taking place via Zoom. Participants no longer need to make travel plans or pack comfortable shoes for long walks between office buildings. Instead, they will be scheduled for meetings most directly relevant to their businesses, and can attend from the comfort of their home or office.

[Registration is now open](#) for Railroad Day, and ASLRRRA highly encourages its members to sign up. Those who participate help legislators know the real people affected by their laws and policy decisions. And, with enough of a push, perhaps some tangible results will be reflected in an even higher mark in the next ASCE infrastructure report card.

## **SLSI Safety Tip Encourages Reflection on Safety and Individual Responsibilities**

The latest [safety tip](#) from the Short Line Safety Institute (SLSI) offers questions and points to facilitate discussion concerning an individual's personal safety responsibilities in the workplace.

The safety tip uses General Code of Operating Rules (GCOR) 1.1 to 1.1.4 as a starting point for talks about important safety ideas, and prompts employees to consider questions like "Who is responsible for my safety or that of my coworkers?"

SLSI's [website](#) includes other safety tips, as well as other free [safety resources](#) for railroads and rail employees.

## **Get Help with Grant Applications from ASLRRRA's Preferred Providers – Deadlines are Fast Approaching**

ASLRRRA has tapped industry experts to assist member railroads in the preparation and submission of grant applications for programs currently available from the Department of Transportation (DOT), and other sources.

ASLRRRA's preferred providers for grant writing services include Bergmann, HDR, Inc. and Global Train Services (GTS), and all three companies offer discounted rates, industry expertise, and exceptional service to ASLRRRA members.

There are currently several grant programs, at federal and state levels, seeking applications for eligible projects.

- Federal [Diesel Emissions Reduction Act \(DERA\)](#) grant applications are due March 16.
- Federal [Infrastructure for Rebuilding America \(INFRA\) Program](#) grant applications are due March 19.
- Applications for the North Carolina Department of Transportation's [Short Line Infrastructure Assistance Program](#) are due March 26, and can be submitted through the state's [Partner Connect site](#).



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- The New York State Department of Transportation's [Passenger and Freight Rail Assistance Program and Railway-Highway Grade Crossing Program](#) requires [applications](#) to be submitted by April 22.

Visit our [Member Discount Program page](#) and select Grant Writing Services to learn more and start saving today.

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## ASLRRA Out and About

### Baker Talks About Navigating Disruption at PNWARS Spring Meeting

On March 4, ASLRRA President Chuck Baker addressed participants at the Pacific Northwest Association of Rail Shippers' (PNWARS) 2021 virtual Spring Meeting.

Baker addressed the meeting theme of navigating disruption, which he discussed in terms of technology, environmental and policy issues and business development. He also talked about federal legislative and regulatory concerns.

### ASLRRA's Member Discount Program Includes Grant Writing Services!

Visit [aslrra.org](http://aslrra.org) to learn more!



## ASLRRA Webinars – Live or On-Demand

### Upcoming Webinars

[Part 225 Back to Basics, Part 3: Highway-Rail Grade Crossing](#) - March 11, 2021

In the last of this three-part series, representatives from the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) will discuss Reporting/Recordkeeping Highway-Rail Grade Crossing Accident/Incidents - FRA F 6180.57 &

FRA F 6180.150.

Recordings of parts 1 and 2 of this webinar series are available for viewing in ASLRRA's [On-Demand Webinar](#) library, which is free for ASLRRA members.

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### [Rail Trends: Freight Railroads Helping America Recover](#) - March 16, 2021

Association of American Railroads (AAR) Assistant Vice President Luisa Fernandez Willey will discuss the current state of the railroad industry, the movement of key commodities, and leading economic indicators crucial in understanding the economic recovery. This webinar is scheduled for 90 minutes to allow for more questions at the end of the presentation.

### [ASLRRRA and SmartWay: Introduction and Opportunities](#) - March 25, 2021

Representatives from ASLRRRA and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's SmartWay program will give an introductory presentation about both organizations and a discussion about opportunities for collaboration. This webinar is free for both ASLRRRA members and non-members.

## **On-Demand Webinars Include Financial Tips for a Solid Retirement Plan**

In addition to webinars discussing railroad retirement benefits and eligibility with the Railroad Retirement Board (RRB), ASLRRRA members can find more financial tips from the experts at member Bowers & Company CPAs.

ASLRRRA's [On-Demand Webinar library](#) features recordings of webinars featuring Bowers & Company, including:

- The Road to Retirement
- Railroad Retirement Tips & Tricks: What We've Learned the Hard Way

In addition, ASLRRRA offers more than 100 recordings covering a variety of railroad topics. Recordings are free to members and available by subscription to non-members. Follow the link above to learn more.

[Click here](#) for more ASLRRRA events.

## **Industry Events and Announcements**

### **Outback Railroad Association's Annual Conference to Meet In-Person in May**

The Outback Railroad Association will hold its annual [Outback Railroad Safety Conference](#) in-person May 11-13 in Deadwood, S.D.

ASLRRRA's Vice President of Safety and Compliance JR Gelnar will join a panel discussion on Federal Railroad Administration Part 243 Training Requirements, and representatives from the Short Line Safety Institute will provide [hazardous materials training](#).

The conference is free for participants. Follow the link above for more information or click [here](#) for a registration form.

[Click here](#) for more industry events.

Views & News is published by American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association. Please contact [Amy Krouse](#), editor, with questions or comments.