



March 17, 2021



Join Us in Person at Our Regional Meetings this June

ASLRRRA is planning to hold [in-person regional meetings](#) in June. They are:

- Central & Pacific Region Meeting - June 7-9, Kansas City, Missouri, [Kansas City Marriott Downtown](#)
- Eastern & Southern Region Meeting, Finance & Administration and General Counsel Symposium - June 21- 23, Louisville, Kentucky, [Galt House Hotel](#)

Registration and hotel blocks for these meetings will be open in the near future. ASLRRRA staff will be mindful of changing Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines, and will be sure to abide by local safety protocols during the meetings.

Sponsorships are also available for the regional meetings. Please contact ASLRRRA's [Amy Westerman](#) for more information.

REMINDER: ASLRRRA does not work with third-party organizations to book hotel rooms for our events, including the annual convention, regional meetings and special training sessions. We do not authorize third-party travel companies to contact you directly via phone or email. We urge you to follow information on our website or links we provide to book your hotel rooms directly with the hotels in our room block.

If you are contacted by a housing company purporting to be working with ASLRRRA, we urge you to end the phone call or not respond to the email message and not provide any credit card or other secure information. Please report those contacts to ASLRRRA General Counsel Sarah Yurasko at syurasko@aslrra.org, who will review for further action.

Short Line Safety Institute Offers New Guidance Document Helping Railroads Plan for Emergency Response

The Short Line Safety Institute (SLSI) has a new tool for short line railroads. The organization can now help companies develop a customized [Transportation Emergency Response Plan](#) (TERP), at no cost to the railroad.

The TERP is a tool for preparing employees to safely respond to an incident and to share with local first responders in advance of an emergency. Included in each individualized plan are high-resolution maps showing physical features of the railroad's yard(s), location of key assets and emergency access routes and roadways able to accommodate large emergency vehicles.

Another section contains contact information for key personnel and government agencies, as well as for locations like hospitals and schools within a one-mile radius of the yard(s).

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The final plan is made available to the railroad in both electronic and print versions. Follow the link above to learn more or start the TERP process.

The TERP program is the newest of several hazardous materials training resources available to railroads through SLSI. These offerings, which include a [hazmat training program](#) and [online training videos](#), were made available through a grant from the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA). There are also [safety tips](#) and a number of [hazardous materials guides](#). All of these resources are available for free to railroads.

For more information, or to ask questions, please contact SLSI's [John Walsh](#).

Iowa Northern Closer to Unveiling New Safety Training Program for Short Lines


ASLRRA member Iowa Northern Railway Company (IANR) is in the [final planning stages](#) of developing a comprehensive safety education and training program for short line railroads, funded by a \$6.7 million Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements Program (CRISI) grant.

The program will offer computer-based and in-person training courses focused on Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) regulatory compliance and industry best practices. Three objectives guiding the program are improving railroad safety and compliance with FRA regulations; enhancing and expanding workforce development; and boosting rail operation efficiency.

Classes will cover areas such as 49 CFR Part 243 training, leadership and development, operating rules, mechanical and MOW training. Locomotive simulator training will also be available to short line railroads at the Iowa Northern's training center or delivered directly at individual railroad locations via a mobile simulator and classroom trailer.

"Class III railroads are challenged to provide financial resources, expertise, and personnel to undertake education and training of their workforces, and their rural locations can make it difficult to travel to education. Additionally, our railroaders wear many hats, making a 'one size fits all' education program nearly impossible. The grant will enable a wide variety of critical safety training to be made available for all small business railroads, either in-person or virtually. We firmly believe that this program has the potential to have a wide and lasting positive safety impact on our industry," said IANR President Dan Sabin.

ASLRRA is working with IANR to help develop the program by providing staff training and administration expertise. The program is expected to begin rollout this summer.



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ASLRRA Submits Comments on FRA's Brake System Proposed Rule

ASLRRA and the Association of American Railroads [submitted comments](#) in response to the Federal Railroad Administration's (FRA) [notice of proposed rulemaking](#) concerning amendments to brake system safety standards.

The changes would address operations using an electronic air brake slip (eABS) system, providing an alternative regulatory framework.

The proposed rule also deals with the use of electronic airbrake slips to track mechanical inspections and freight car mileage.

The associations support FRA's action to modernize and improve its existing air brake inspection regulations and to implement certain proposals in AAR's 2019 petition for rulemaking on the same topic. The proposed rule would not only increase the efficiency of railroad operations, but would advance railroad safety, reduce injury exposure to railroad employees, and result in significant climate, economic, and other societal benefits.

SOFA Working Group Issues Alert Due to Recent Fatal Accident

The Switching Operations Fatality Analysis (SOFA) Working Group has issued an [alert](#) concerning a recent fatality.

On March 3, a conductor was fatally injured during a shoving operation. While SOFA members have not yet analyzed this case, the group reminds railroad employees to remain vigilant during switching operations by protecting the shove movement and avoiding close or no clearances hazards.

Find this SOFA alert and other SOFA notifications on ASLRRA's website [here](#).

CISA Notice Provides Information Regarding Three Current Cybersecurity Issues

A recent notice from the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) covers three important cybersecurity issues: a Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and CISA Joint Advisory, a product-specific vulnerability alert and short-term remediation information for compromised supply chains.

ASLRRA members can view the notices on ASLRRA's website in the [RAN Alerts](#) section.

The [FBI/CISA advisory](#) discusses vulnerabilities in Microsoft Exchange Servers, which was also reported in last week's ASLRRA newsletter. The [second advisory](#), provided by security company F5, concerns remote code execution (RCE) vulnerabilities, while the third includes [new resources](#) from CISA to support federal departments and agencies affected by the SolarWinds breach.

Minnesota DOT Seeking Applications for Freight Rail Improvement Grants

The Minnesota Department of Transportation is accepting applications for grants through its [Minnesota Rail Service Improvement Program](#) (MRSI). The grants will go to freight rail service improvement projects supporting economic development.

Examples of eligible projects would be those for railroad tracks and turnouts, railroad bridge construction or rehabilitation, fixed railroad loading and unloading facilities and railroad components of intermodal facilities.

Applications must be submitted electronically, and are due March 31. Follow the link above for more information and application instructions.

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For railroads needing assistance, ASLRRRA's [Member Discount Program](#) features grant-writing preferred providers who can help members prepare and submit grant applications for a variety of programs at state and federal levels.

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

- 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.
- 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.

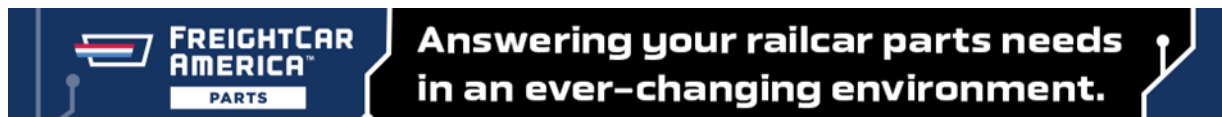
RRB Hires New Chief Actuary

Keith Sartain [has been appointed](#) the Railroad Retirement Board's (RRB) new chief actuary. He will be in charge of the RRB's Bureau of the Actuary and Research (BAR).

The BAR provides long- and short-term projections of the financial status of railroad retirement funds and unemployment and sickness accounts.

In addition to his role as actuary, Sartain will serve as a member of the RRB's Executive Committee, which is responsible for day-to-day operations and making policy recommendations to the RRB's Board.

Prior to joining the RRB, Sartain was a partner and consulting actuary for Aon in Washington, D.C.



Help Tell the Railroad Story - Participate in Railroad Day 2021

While being unable to meet lawmakers in person during [Railroad Day on Capitol Hill](#) this year may be a disappointing prospect, a virtual event offers several benefits not possible otherwise.

One of the most significant changes for Railroad Day participants is in event cost. Namely, there is none. This year, with meetings on April 13 and 14 being held via Zoom, there are no registration fees and no travel expenses.

A virtual Railroad Day is a time saver, as participants will be scheduled for more-targeted 30-minute meetings with relevant Congressional offices rather than taking part in a full eight-hour working-day's-worth of talks. Participants will also be able to meet from their homes or offices, limiting interruptions to daily activities - like running a railroad!

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With this year's format, ASLRRRA hopes there will be record-breaking attendance. The Association encourages all its members to participate, as this event is the best way to send a unified message to federal lawmakers and regulators concerning those issues most important to the railroad industry.

[Register today](#) for the opportunity to demonstrate the critical nature of the nation's railroads, and help be the voice for the industry.

ASLRRRA will hold informational Zoom calls prior to Railroad Day to enable participants to test their system capabilities, review railroad messaging and learn how the meetings will be run. Please plan to attend one of the two sessions. They will be held April 6 and April 8, each at 12:30 p.m. EDT.

ASLRRRA is also welcoming Railroad Day sponsors. Contact ASLRRRA's [Amy Westerman](#) for more information.

Virtual Meeting Content Available

Access hours of General Session keynotes, panel discussions & Breakout Education Sessions from ASLRRRA's Virtual Convention and General Counsel Symposium.

On-Demand 

Click to learn more...

ASLRRRA Announcements

SLSI's New Safety Tip Summarizes Important Information Regarding Hazmat Shipping Papers

A new Short Line Safety Institute (SLSI) [safety tip](#) discusses shipping papers for railcars containing hazardous materials (hazmat).

The safety tip is the first in a series of three on required documents for HazMat shipments. It includes the rule requiring shipping papers for hazmat cars and other information such as what constitutes acceptable papers and when these shipping papers are required.

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

Meet Positive Train Control Requirements with Help from ASLRRRA's Preferred Providers

Positive Train Control (PTC) is one of the most complex technologies mandated for freight railroads to date and its implementation has been an unprecedented challenge, particularly for short line railroads.

ASLRRRA has secured grant funding and leveraged capabilities under its own Member Discount Program to qualify sources, develop products and services, and secure agreements to aid Class II and III railroads in PTC implementation. These vetted companies are able to provide solutions that will assist short lines in lowering costs, accelerating implementation, and increasing interoperability between host and tenant operations.

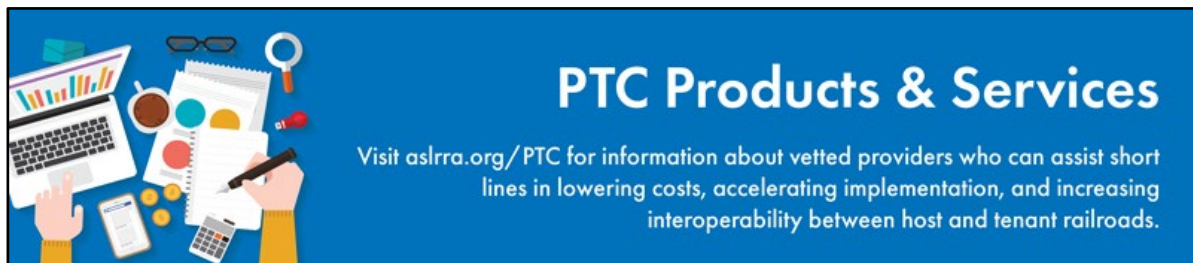
Visit our [Member Discount Program page](#) and select PTC Products & Services to learn more and start saving today.

ASLRRA Out and About

ASLRRA's Strang, Yurasko and Gitchell Have Meeting with Government Accountability Office Staff

On March 11, members of ASLRRA's policy team met with U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) staff members to provide feedback on administration-wide deregulatory actions.

During the meeting ASLRRA Senior Vice President of Safety and Regulatory Policy Jo Strang, along with General Counsel Sarah Yurasko and Assistant Vice President of Legislative and Regulatory Policy Crystal Gitchell, not only discussed deregulation, they also educated GAO representatives on short line policy priorities.

A blue banner with white text and icons. The text reads: "PTC Products & Services" in large font, followed by "Visit aslrra.org/PTC for information about vetted providers who can assist short lines in lowering costs, accelerating implementation, and increasing interoperability between host and tenant railroads." The icons include a laptop, a smartphone, a calculator, a magnifying glass, a notepad, and a coffee cup.

PTC Products & Services

Visit aslrra.org/PTC for information about vetted providers who can assist short lines in lowering costs, accelerating implementation, and increasing interoperability between host and tenant railroads.



ASLRRA Webinars – Live or On-Demand

Upcoming Webinars

[Short Line Fire Prevention - Hazards, Risks and Resolutions](#) - March 24, 2021

ASLRRA's new Environmental Committee is pleased to present this important webinar during Fire Prevention month. The webinar will offer comprehensive fire prevention education and an in-depth

discussion on how to prevent fires involving train operations, locomotive mechanical issues and maintenance-of-way.

Sponsored by:



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

Representatives from ASLRRA 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 ASLRRA members and non-members.

Improve Knowledge of the FRA's Part 225 Regulations With On-Demand Webinars

A recent three-part webinar series focused on the Federal Railroad Administration's (FRA) Code of Federal Regulations Part 225, which concerns railroad accidents and incidents. The webinars were presented by FRA representatives Mike Wissman and James Cassatt.

Recordings of the entire series can be found in ASLRRA's [On-Demand Webinar library](#). Look for these titles in the regulatory category:

- Part 225 Back to Basics, Part 1: Injuries
- Part 225 Back to Basics, Part 2: Rail Equipment
- Part 225 Back to Basics, Part 3: Highway-Rail Grade Crossing

In addition, ASLRRA 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 ASLRRA events.

Industry Events and Announcements

Free Friday Seminar Discusses Heavy Haul Railroading

The next William W. Hay Railroad Engineering Seminar presented by the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign will discuss heavy haul railroad freight transportation on March 19.

Michael Roney, who retired from his role as Canadian Pacific Railway's chief engineer and general manager, will be the speaker. He will focus on the future of heavy tonnage railroading and the incorporation of modern digital technology in the process.

The seminar is free for participants, but registration is required. Follow this [link](#) for more information or to register.

Transportation Technology Center to Hold Virtual Shipping Conference in June

The Association of American Railroads' (AAR) Transportation Technology Center, Inc. (TTCI) will hold a virtual [Damage Prevention and Freight Claims Conference](#) June 8-10.

The focus of this year's conference will be improving shipping quality for the next century, and events will include live industry presentations, networking opportunities and interactive events.

Early bird registration closes May 3. Follow the link above for more information or to register.

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