



June 30, 2021



Patriot Rail Employees Named ASLRRRA Safety Person and Safety Professional of the Year

For the first time, the [winners](#) of both ASLRRRA's [Safety Person of the Year and Safety Professional of the Year awards](#) are employees of the same member company. Congratulations to Safety Person of the Year [George Johnson, Jr.](#), a locomotive engineer at Patriot Rail

Company, and Safety Professional of the Year [Herman Crosson](#), Patriot Rail's vice president of safety, training and regulatory.

The Safety Person of the Year is a member railroad employee who has demonstrated outstanding safety achievement through visible promotion of safety programs and initiatives, as well as leadership by example. The individual also contributes off-duty time to activities promoting community safety and involvement in social service. The Safety Professional of the Year is awarded to a railroad safety management employee who works effectively with personnel at all levels of the organization and industry, and supports the success of the short line industry in safety through the sharing of expertise and knowledge and the application of all regulatory requirements. Both winners will be recognized at ASLRRRA's Annual Convention and Exposition in Phoenix, Ariz. in November.

"ASLRRRA is pleased to recognize two individuals who have dedicated their careers to providing leadership in safety performance. There is no higher calling on a railroad than the commitment to bringing all team members home safely, every night, despite multiple competing priorities," said ASLRRRA President Chuck Baker. "This year's applicant pool was the most competitive we have ever had. We are honored to recognize George Johnson, Jr. and Herman Crosson, both of Patriot Rail Company, for their significant contributions to their company's safety culture, their community, and to the freight rail industry. Safety must come first for freight railroads every day, and these two leaders help make that goal a reality."

[Safety Person of the Year: George Johnson, Jr.](#)



"You have to fight complacency every minute - just because we've always executed a move or a procedure a certain way without a safety threat doesn't mean that the next time it couldn't be different."

*Safety Person Award Winner
George Johnson, Jr.*

Using the phrase "long-term commitment to safety" to describe George Johnson, Jr. is putting it mildly. Johnson has made dedication to railroad safety, for employees and local citizens, a cornerstone of his personal philosophy for many years.

Johnson plays a key role in supporting and promoting the safety culture at Patriot Rail subsidiary Golden Triangle Railroad (GTRA). He started at GTRA in 1982 and marked 39 years of injury-free service this past February.

Johnson has trained new employees in safety and operational expectations at every level of his career and is currently the designated supervisor of locomotive engineers, a role he has held for over 15 years, Johnson is also chairman of GTRA's safety committee and has led implementation of various safety initiatives at the railroad, and is a liaison on the safety committee of GTRA customer International Paper.

Outside of work, Johnson continues supporting rail safety with his local chapter of Operation Lifesaver (OLI), a rail-safety awareness organization. He has been an OLI volunteer for 25 years.

Safety Professional of the Year: Herman Crosson



“Getting to incident-free performance requires rethinking how we approach safety activities, the measures we use to monitor progress and define success, and the way we approach engagement of employees at all levels.”

Safety Professional Award Winner Herman Crosson

Patriot Rail Company's Herman Crosson embodies the idea of service and dedication, both in his role as vice president and as a colonel in the U.S. Army National Guard.

Crosson introduced the Vision Zero campaign at Patriot Rail, a project that works to promote safety culture and safe operations by engaging employees and encouraging everyone to take accountability for creating a safe environment. He also takes charge of the company's safety committee program. Leaders, nominated by fellow employees, meet monthly to

conduct inspections and identify potential safety risks.

In the National Guard, Crosson leads 1,600 soldiers as the first African-American brigade commander of the 59th Troop Command at McEntire Joint National Guard Base in South Carolina. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Crosson's brigade delivered over 100,000 meals to school children, while medics worked in hospitals to support staff during surges in COVID cases. Soldiers also supported 280,000 COVID testing and vaccination sites in the state, as well as data centers for vaccination scheduling.

Use ASLRRRA Resources to Learn About SmartWay, Joining Fellow Members as a SmartWay Partner

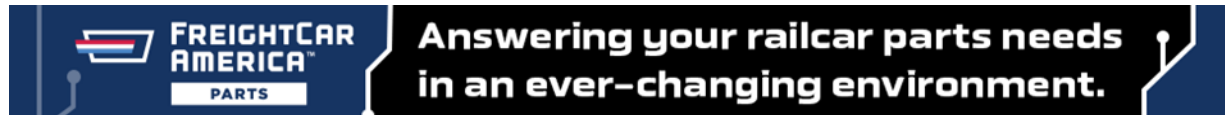
ASLRRRA members are continuing to join [SmartWay](#) as rail partner members. The latest to join is Iowa Interstate Railroad. Railroads who participate are able to showcase to shippers the environmental benefit of choosing rail over competing modes of transportation.

Companies like [Home Depot](#) are expressing more and more interest in rail shipping as a cost-efficient, eco-friendly way to move goods, and a program like SmartWay helps partners collect the appropriate data demonstrating their efficiency to current and potential customers.

For more information on the benefits of joining SmartWay, and how to become a rail partner member, members can access several webinars in ASLRRRA's [On-Demand Webinar Library](#), including “Benefits of Using Rail From a Shipper & Logistics Perspective,” “Benefits of Freight Rail: Capacity, Safety & Clean Air” and “ASLRRRA & SmartWay: Introduction and Opportunities.”

Participants at both the [Central and Pacific](#) and [Eastern and Southern](#) Region Meetings also had the opportunity to learn about the SmartWay program during meeting sessions, and takeaways from those presentations can be found at the respective meeting links above.

Freight rail has a positive story to tell in environmental benefits and helping shippers achieve sustainability goals, and SmartWay participation is one way that short lines can help get that message out.



Small Business Roundtable Discusses OSHA COVID-19 Guidance

The Small Business Administration (SBA) recently held a Small Business Labor Safety Roundtable to discuss a COVID-19 [Emergency Temporary Standard](#) (ETS) published by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), as well as OSHA's new COVID-19 [general industry guidance](#).

The ETS establishes new requirements to protect employees in healthcare and healthcare support settings, while the general guidance is meant to help those in other industries protect unvaccinated workers, especially in workplaces where employees have prolonged close contact. A [press release](#) offers summaries of both of OSHA's COVID-19 guidelines.



House, Senate Infrastructure Bills Continue to Advance

Today, the U.S. House of Representatives has taken up a sweeping infrastructure bill, the INVEST Act. The bill garnered very little Republican support in committee and a similar outcome is expected on the House floor, but its passage by the narrow Democratic majority is all but guaranteed.

As we have previously indicated, there are a few positive notes in this bill for short lines, but overall it is troubling. For instance, we are pleased the bill significantly increases the proposed funding level for the Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) grant program, however it would also add in new eligibility for commuter rail and include a 25 percent set-aside for large projects of \$100 million or more, which we have publicly opposed because that threshold generally exceeds the scope of short line CRISI projects.

The House bill would also increase the multimodal flexibility for the state freight formula program and authorize the Short Line Safety Institute into law. This action is a Congressional endorsement for work of the SLSI and its efforts to improve safety in our industry, and makes the SLSI permanently eligible for funding via Appropriations. However, concerns exist on a crew size mandate that would affect scores of short lines, a blocked crossing time limit, a prohibition on LNG transportation by rail, and the removal of any small project set-aside in the Infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA) and Projects of National and Regional Significance (PNRS) program, among other things. Further, at least one truck size and weight amendment may get considered on the floor, which ASLRRRA is closely monitoring and will be opposing along with a broad coalition.

Separately, two key Senate committees have finalized their versions of the reauthorization related to rail, highway and bridge policy and more. In particular, the Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee reported a favorable rail title that increases CRISI authorization levels significantly without any of the troubling changes in the House program. It also does not include the House's language on a crew size mandate, blocked crossing time limits, or LNG prohibition, and it expands the multimodal flexibility of both the state freight formula program and the INFRA program, while actually enhancing the INFRA small project set-aside. ASLRRRA finds this bill far preferable to the bill being debated in the House today.

Meanwhile, the White House has negotiated the contours of a bipartisan infrastructure framework with a group of 21 senators, 10 Democrat and 11 Republican, to spend more than \$1.2 trillion over an eight-year period, with an increase of \$579 billion in new spending above current law baseline levels. The agreement has been on and off several times in the past week, and there remains significant concern and a lack of clarity over how closely tied this bipartisan framework is to the partisan efforts to pass a Democrat-only "human infrastructure" or social welfare bill via the reconciliation process.

It is reasonable to expect this bill to die and be revived multiple times before its ultimate fate is decided. Furthermore, how this agreement will get incorporated into what the Senate eventually considers on the Senate floor remains to be seen. ASLRRRA intends to be fully engaged and welcomes member engagement both with the Association and directly with their Congressional delegation.



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ASLRRRA New Members

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

ASLRRRA Welcomes One Supplier and Two Short Lines to Its Membership Rolls



[Bentley Systems](#) (Nasdaq: BSY) is a global infrastructure engineering software company. It provides innovative software to advance the world's infrastructure - sustaining both the global economy and environment. Its offerings for rail and transit address the entire asset lifecycle from planning to performance, including AssetWise Rail Condition Analytics, which enables small- to medium-sized agencies to optimize track maintenance strategies by

improving renewal decisions with minimal time and cost, helping to achieve greater efficiency, easier regulatory compliance, and enhanced operational performance. Vice President Road & Rail Asset Management [Dan Vogen](#) is our primary contact and can be reached on (412) 230-3049.



[Illinois Western Railroad](#) (ILW) based in Greenville, Ill., is an affiliate of Agracel Rail Holdings. The short line serves the John W. Kelsey Business and Technology Park, which is a rail site certified by CSX and BNSF. Our primary contact is President Charlie Barenfanger, who can be reached on (618) 283-2268.



[The South Point & Ohio Railroad](#) (SPOR), based in The Point Industrial Park in South Point, Ohio, operates a 7-mile line. The subsidiary of Agracel Rail Holdings is located on the banks of the Ohio River in the Huntington, West Virginia tri-state region and interchanges five days a week with Norfolk Southern. Our primary contact is Scott Lurkins, who can be reached on (812) 697-3851.

ASLRRR Announcements

Access Regional Meeting Takeaways Online and Provide Meeting Feedback Through a Survey

Both of this year's regional meetings have finished, and ASLRRR is glad to have had a successful return to in-person gatherings. Participants at both meetings enjoyed engaging educational offerings, networking opportunities and the return of fun social events like golf.



The winning team at this year's Eastern and Southern Region Meeting golf tournament included (L to R) Jonathon Donelli of Koppers, Joe McGough of Wi-Tronix, Andrew Jacobs of Pan Am Railways and Doc Claussen of Gulf & Ohio Railways.

Eastern and Southern Region attendees who may have missed a session or want to review meeting content can log in [here](#) to access presentation materials. ASLRRRA also asks attendees to complete a [brief survey](#) about their experience. Responses can help shape the content and design of future Association meetings.

ASLRRRA is also still accepting [survey responses](#) from those who attended the Central and Pacific Region Meeting. Registered participants looking to access Central and Pacific meeting content can find it [here](#).

Those looking forward to the next opportunity to gather with short line industry colleagues should mark their calendars for the [ASLRRRA Annual Convention](#)

[and Exhibition](#). It will be held Nov. 17 to 19 in Phoenix, Ariz. ASLRRRA's team is already working to plan the convention, which will include honoring recipients of the Association's industry awards.

OSHA Announces Training Grants, and ASLRRRA's Preferred Providers Offer Assistance with Grant Writing

The U.S. Department of Transportation provides the bulk of grants railroads pursue for funding, through programs like INFRA, RRIF and CRISI, but alternative funding sources can be found for smaller, more specific projects through other government agencies, and state Departments of Transportation.

For example, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) [announced](#) the availability of funding for training grants, which can be used to support educational programs to identify and prevent workplace hazards, develop training and educational materials on workplace hazards, and for similar projects. ASLRRRA expects a new round of CRISI funding to be announced shortly, and encourages railroad members to consider this source.

To help members pursue grant funding from its many sources, ASLRRRA's Member Discount Program features grant-writing services from Preferred Providers. Experts from Bergmann, HDR and GTS can help in the preparation and submission of grant applications, providing exceptional service at competitive pricing.

Visit aslr.org/discounts to learn more about grant-writing services and other benefits available to members through the Member Discount Program.

ORR Safety Helps Protect Your Employees from Heat-Related Illness

High temperatures and humidity present an increased risk of heat illness to railroad workers, so it is essential to protect everyone, from the new hires to the seasoned employees. ASLRRRA Preferred Provider ORR Safety is an ISO 9001-registered distributor of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and related services, and has helped protect hundreds of thousands of workers for more than 70 years.

ASLRRA members receive great discounts on a wide selection of PPE, all available at the click of a mouse. View ORR Safety's online e-catalog at aslrra.org/discounts, and stock up today on cooling gear to keep the team safe and hydrated!

ASLRRA Out and About

Baker, Oelsner Meet With Transportation Intermediaries Association Leaders

ASLRRA President Chuck Baker and Assistant Vice President of Data and Technology Fred Oelsner, were joined by several short line railroad executives for a meeting with the [Transportation Intermediaries Association's](#) leadership on June 30 to share respective industry priorities and business development opportunities.

ASLRRA's Member Discount Program Includes Grant Writing Services!

Visit aslrra.org to learn more!



ASLRRA Webinars – Live or On-Demand

ASLRRA's Recorded Webinars Offer Tips on Cybersecurity

ASLRRA recommends its members take steps to secure their computer systems in the wake of recent high-profile cyber attacks on U.S. companies.

ASLRRA member Collins Aerospace sponsored a three-part cybersecurity webinar series. Recordings of these webinars can be found in ASLRRA's [On-Demand Webinar Library](#). Look for the following titles:

- Part 1: Introduction to Cybersecurity for Short Line Railroads
- Part 2: Security Controls for Short Line Railroads
- Part 3: Resiliency for Short Lines

In addition to these offerings, ASLRRA has more than 160 webinar recordings covering a wide variety of railroad-related topics. Recordings are free to members and available by subscription to non-members.

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

Industry Events and Announcements

Sept. 21 – Learn About Alternative Locomotive Fuel Options with Michigan State University's Program

Every day, news items talk about climate change and environmental sustainability. How does this impact railroads? Reducing fuel consumption reduces emissions, and changing fuel can reduce emissions further.

Learn about these issues by attending Michigan State University's Center for Railway Research and Education's Railway Motive Power and Alternative Propulsion program, taking place in September in Long Beach, Calif. Sessions will focus on topics like converting diesel locomotives and reducing motive power energy consumption.

ASLRRA members who would like to attend this particular program can save up to 20 percent with a special reduced rate of \$1,595 per person. Follow [this link](#) to learn more about the program, or [this link](#) to register.

Nov. 1-5 – University of Tennessee to Hold Railroad Track Inspection Course

The University of Tennessee at Knoxville's Tennessee Transportation Assistance Program will offer a Railroad Track Inspection and Safety Standards course Nov. 1 to 5 in Chattanooga, Tenn.

The class will teach participants how to conduct and document track inspections, as well as explain federal track safety standards and the Federal Railroad Administration's track inspection process and more.

Follow [this link](#) for more information or to register.

Application Deadline for League of Railway Women Scholarship is Next Friday

The League of Railway Women is [accepting applications](#) for its Connie Sumara Memorial Scholarship and the Future of Railroading Scholarship. Submissions for both are due July 9.

The [Connie Sumara Memorial Scholarship](#) is awarded to a woman who is pursuing a graduate or undergraduate degree and wants to further her career in the rail industry. The [Future of Railroading Scholarship](#) is awarded to a student pursuing a graduate or undergraduate degree who is interested in supporting the rail industry. Follow the links above for more information or to apply.

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