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- **ASLRRRA Offers Condolences to the Family of David Fink** – The railroad industry icon passed away recently at the age of 86. Read more in our [Announcements section](#) below.
- **Veterans Day is Approaching** – Send stories about your railroad's work with the U.S. military and its veterans, and start thinking about applying for our Veterans Engagement Award. Read more in our [Announcements section](#) below.

Headlines

Nine ASLRRRA Member Employees Recognized as Top Women in Rail

Railway Age magazine announced the winners of its annual Women in Rail awards, recognizing 23 individuals for their leadership and accomplishments in all parts of the railroad industry. Nine of the 23 winners work at ASLRRRA-member companies, as do two of the five honorable mention recipients.

The Women in Rail awards program recognizes those whose vision and hard work have a notable impact on their organizations, communities and the railroad industry as a whole. This year's winners were selected from a group of over 100 applicants, the most since *Railway Age* launched the awards in 2017.

The honorees will be featured in the November issue of *Railway Age*. ASLRRRA congratulates all of this year's winners, in particular those belonging to ASLRRRA-member companies. They are:

- **Shannon Drown**, Assistant Vice President of Commercial Development, Railroads, R.J. Corman Railroad Group
- **Alicia Hammersmith**, Vice President of Operations, Transit, Wabtec Corporation
- **Karen Hankinson**, Vice President and Senior Project Manager, RailPros
- **Jodi Heath**, Regional Vice President-Eastern Division, Patriot Rail
- **Jillian Krupko**, Director-Operations Strategy and Analytics, TTX
- **Kate Luce**, President and CEO, Mississippi Export Railroad
- **Sandra Ocaña**, Purchasing and Logistics Manager, The Greenbrier Companies
- **Paige Raulerson**, Manager, Dispute Resolution, Genesee & Wyoming Railroad Services Inc.
- **Tomeka Watson-Bryant**, General Manager, New Orleans Public Belt Railroad

And honorable mention recipients:

- **Dejah Singh**, Project Warranty Manager, Alstom
- **Alanna Strohecker**, Vice President, Global Goods Movement Director, AECOM

Yurasko, Gitchell Take Up Leadership Roles on League of Railway Women's Board of Directors

ASLRRA's Senior Vice President Law and General Counsel Sarah Yurasko has been appointed president of the League of Railway Women's (LRW) Board of Directors for a two-year term. The Association's Assistant Vice President of Legislative and Regulatory Policy Crystal Gitchell was also named one of the LRW board's directors-at-large.

Yurasko's appointment as LRW board president took place at the LRW's 2022 Annual Conference last week in Fort Worth, Texas, which Yurasko attended. For the next two years, she will lead LRW in its work connecting and cultivating women in rail.

"I'm thrilled to continue our mission of connecting and cultivating women in rail, which promotes diversity and improves the business results of the railroad industry," said Yurasko. "As LRW president, I'm proud to continue the league's work to advance the representation, recognition, and opportunities for women in the railroad industry by providing networking opportunities, sponsoring educational

activities, and supporting mentoring partnerships."

Like Yurasko, Gitchell looks forward to fulfilling her role as a director-at-large.

"I am proud to continue serving on the League of Railway Women Board of Directors for another two years," said Gitchell. "It has been wonderful seeing the organization grow, even during the height of the pandemic. Our corporate partners see the value in bringing women to the table and promoting diversity in the railroad industry."

The LRW event was held in conjunction with the Railway Supply Institute's 2022 Expo and Technical Conference. While there, Yurasko networked with other women in the rail industry and participated in various educational sessions covering capital projects, workforce development, environmental sustainability and more.



ASLRRA's Senior Vice President Law and General Counsel Sarah Yurasko (right) joins League of Railway Women (LRW) Board Vice President Lisa Tackach (left) and LRW Immediate Past President Amanda Patrick (center) at the LRW Annual Conference. Yurasko was recently named president of the LRW Board of Directors.

FRA to Hold CRISI Grant Program Office Hours Webinars This Week and Next Week

The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) will hold Office Hours webinars to help organizations navigate the [Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements \(CRISI\) grant](#) application process. The first webinar takes place tomorrow.

[Tomorrow's webinar](#) focuses on CRISI program featured topics. The [second webinar](#) is scheduled for next Thursday, Oct. 27, and will discuss the application's project narrative. Other CRISI resources from the FRA include a recording of the agency's [CRISI notice of funding opportunity \(NOFO\) webinar](#) and a list of [frequently asked questions \(FAQs\)](#) concerning the benefit-cost analysis required for CRISI applications.

CRISI grant applications are due Dec. 1. To help members apply for CRISI grants, which are one of the few federal grant programs for which short line railroads are directly eligible, ASLRRA has put together a list of tips and other resources on its [CRISI application information](#) webpage.



Regulatory Update

Railroad Retirement Board Announces Benefit, Earnings Limit Increases for 2023

Both retiree earnings limits and retirement benefits will increase in 2023 according to a pair of press releases from the Railroad Retirement Board (RRB).

A rise in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) has [prompted an increase](#) to most railroad retirement annuities. Tier I benefits will go up by 8.7 percent – the largest increase since 1981 – while Tier II benefits will increase by 2.8 percent. This brings average annuity payments up by \$215 a month for employees, \$304 a month for combined employee and spouse benefits and \$120 for widow(er)s eligible for an increase.

Railroad retirement annuitants will also [be able to earn more](#) in 2023 without having their benefits reduced thanks to average national wage increases. For example, those under the full retirement age throughout 2023 can earn \$21,240, up from \$19,560 in 2022. Those reaching retirement age in 2023 can earn up to \$56,520 in the months before attaining full retirement age, an increase of \$4,560.

DOT OIG Announces Audit of FRA Hours of Service Oversight

The U.S. Department of Transportation's Office of Inspector General (OIG) announced it will [begin an audit](#) evaluating the Federal Railroad Administration's (FRA) oversight of railroad hours of service (HOS) and fatigue management.

The FRA oversees railroads' compliance with HOS laws and regulations. Changes to operational practices have impacted how railroads use and schedule staff, and human factors like fatigue are still the leading cause of non-grade-crossing train accidents. These circumstances are what have prompted the OIG to initiate this audit.

FRA Releases Guidance on Parts 270 and 271 Concerning Consultation Requirements

On Oct. 12, the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) [issued guidance](#) on railroad and employee consultation requirements under 49 CFR Parts 270 and 271.

Under these sections of 49 CFR, certain railroads must develop a Risk Reduction Program (RRP), System Safety Program (SSP) and a Fatigue Risk Management Program (FRMP). When developing or amending these plans, railroads must consult with directly affected employees. However the FRA does not believe the consultations of some railroads met the spirit of these requirements, prompting the agency to release this most recent guidance.

Included in the document are frequently asked questions concerning the process, such as how to identify directly affected employees and how to initiate consultations. The FRA also includes the text

of the original regulations and a copy of previous guidance issued as an appendix to Part 271. Please contact ASLRRA's [JR Gelnar](#) with questions about this guidance.

Apprenticeship Sprint Nears End But Effort to Train Cybersecurity Professionals Remains

The U.S. Department of Labor launched a 120-day [Cybersecurity Apprenticeship Sprint](#) in July, looking to promote the registered apprenticeship model as a way to on-board more trained cybersecurity professionals. Cybersecurity is becoming an increasingly important topic for railroads, as many modern operational elements and processes have online components that can be vulnerable to cyberattacks.

The program encourages employers, industry associations and others to consider registered apprenticeships as a way to recruit, train and retain cybersecurity employees. Organizations are also encouraged to connect with the Department of Labor's Office of Apprenticeship to develop new apprenticeship programs or join existing ones.

Although the Sprint program ends during National Apprenticeship Week Nov. 14 to 20, organizations are encouraged to continue to consider registered apprenticeships in order to meet the need for qualified cybersecurity employees.



Legislative Update

Biden Administration's Cyber Regulatory Plan Comes Into Focus

As the railroad industry, and many short lines in particular, were put on alert by the [cybersecurity directives and informational circular](#) issued by the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) last year, the White House and relevant agencies are moving forward with new cyber rules for critical infrastructure, as the Biden administration looks to take advantage of existing laws to address digital threats on a sector-by-sector basis in the absence of Congressional action on cybersecurity regulations.

These rules mark a shift away from the previous status quo of voluntary compliance with recommended cybersecurity frameworks, to a new environment where government agencies are specifying requirements for portions of the private sector.

As highlighted in [an October 14, 2022 article published by Federal News Network](#), these federal efforts include a bid by the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA), as mandated by Congress in March 2022 in the [Cyber Incident Reporting for Critical Infrastructure Act of 2022 \(CIRCA\)](#), to create new federal standards for the reporting of cyber incidents by critical infrastructure providers. CISA has begun this process by requesting information from the public on how these standards should be defined through a [formal RFI process and public listening sessions](#).

ASLRRA's technology team is monitoring these developments to assess their impact on short line freight railroads and communicate important information to the Association's members.



Announcements

ASLRRR Extends Condolences to Family of David Fink

David Fink, former president of Guilford Transportation Industries and a lifelong railroader, [passed away](#) on Oct. 11. He was 86.

Fink was a fourth-generation railroader who started his career as a clerk for the Pennsylvania Railroad. He got into the short line business in the early 1980s, just as the Staggers Rail Act was reshaping the rail industry. Fink and his partner Timothy Mellon bought the Maine Central Railroad and Boston and Maine Railroad as part of the Guilford Transportation family of railroads, and in 2006 the Guilford Rail System was rebranded as Pan Am Railways.

Fink co-founded railroad-tie company Perma Treat Corporation and at the time of his retirement was president of Pan Am World Airways, Boston and Maine Airways and Pan Am Systems. Some of Fink's experiences in the railroad industry are documented in Rudy Garbely's book [Delaware & Hudson: The final Years, 1968 to 1991](#) and [Last Train to Texas: My Personal Railroad Odyssey](#) by Fred Frailey.

[Services will be held](#) this Friday at Smith & Heald Funeral Home in New Hampshire. Fink is survived by his wife of 63 years, Alecia, his son David and his daughter Susan Kingman.

Like his father, Fink's son has been active in the railroad industry. He was president of Pan Am Railways, which was very involved in ASLRRR events prior to the company's acquisition by CSX in May 2022.

Online Registration to Close Friday for ASLRRR's Events Next Week

Friday, Oct. 21 is the last day to register online for ASLRRR's [Central and Pacific Region Meeting](#), which takes place Oct. 25-27 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Registration will still be available onsite during the event.

Online registration also closes Friday for ASLRRR's [Finance and Administration Seminar](#) and [General Counsel Symposium](#), which focus on short line freight rail industry issues as they relate to the financial, human resources and legal fields. Continuing legal education credits (CLEs) are available to General Counsel Symposium participants.

In addition to dynamic educational content, participants in all these events have the opportunity to network with their fellow short line railroaders, session speakers, meeting sponsors and ASLRRR staff throughout the events' duration.

[Register today](#) to join short line colleagues at the Central and Pacific Region Meeting. Use [this link](#) to register for the Finance and Administration Seminar or [this link](#) to register for the General Counsel Symposium.

Registration is Open and Scholarships are Available for the 2023 FRA Drug and Alcohol Training Seminar

ASLRRA is partnering with the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) to offer its popular Drug and Alcohol Training Seminar, Jan. 30 to Feb. 1, 2023, in Phoenix, Arizona. This comprehensive two-day training is always in high demand and space fills quickly, so attendees are encouraged to register early to secure a spot.

Presented by FRA Drug and Alcohol Program Specialist Sam Noe and ASLRRA Vice President of Safety and Compliance JR Gelnar, this essential training includes an in-depth review of FRA Part 219 Drug and Alcohol Training and covers all sections of the rule and requirements for all railroads and contractors. Attendees will have an opportunity to engage in interactive discussion of rule requirements and practices with subject matter experts and fellow attendees.

Visit aslrro.org/training to view full details on this and other 2023 training seminars and [register today!](#)

Training scholarships are available to employees of small railroads and awards cover up to \$1,200 in expenses for registration, travel and lodging. View [scholarship criteria](#) and apply online!

Recognizing and Appreciating Veterans in the Short Line Railroad Industry

November 11 is Veterans Day and ASLRRA wants to hear from members about the ways your company recognizes, appreciates, and engages with veterans in the workplace and the broader community, for Veterans Day and throughout the year.

The short line railroad industry has a rich history of supporting U.S. service members by recruiting and hiring veterans and through community outreach, donations and volunteer work. Throughout the month of November – which is National Veterans and Military Families Month – we are collecting Veterans Engagement stories and photos to share in Views & News and on the [Veterans page](#) on our website.

Send us your stories and photos! And while you're at it, you can prepare your company's nomination for the ASLRRA Veterans Engagement Award, which honors industry employers who demonstrate positive policies toward U.S. veterans and who implement unique programs and practices to hire, recognize, support, and engage with veterans in the workplace and the broader community. The 2023 Veterans Engagement Award winner will be recognized at ASLRRA's Annual Conference and Exhibition, April 2-4, in New Orleans, LA.

Stories and photos may be sent to [ASLRRA's communications team](#), while Veterans Engagement Award nomination criteria and form can be found [on ASLRRA's website](#).

ASLRRA Out and About

ASLRRA Staff Focuses on Variety of Rail Issues at Industry Meetings

Several staff members participated this week in discussions of railroad industry topics at various events across the country.

On Oct. 17, ASLRRA Senior Advisor Mike Ogborn joined a Colorado Public Utilities Commission hearing focused on rail rule amendments and railroad crossings.

ASLRRA Vice President of Safety and Compliance JR Gelnar attended the Association of American Railroads (AAR) Hazmat and Tank Car Committee meeting this week in Addison, Texas. The meeting focused on AAR's Non-Accidental Release (NAR) task force, the mobile AskRail app and tank car research. Attendees also received an update from the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA).

ASLRRA President Chuck Baker traveled to two meetings this week to represent the interests of short line railroad members. Baker was in Omaha for a meeting of the UP Short Line Advisory Group (SLAG) and attended the UP Short Line Railroad & Port Business Development Day events. He also traveled to Jacksonville for the CSX Short Line Conference and Short Line Committee Meeting.

Register to Attend FRA Drug and Alcohol Training (Part 219)

Jan 31-Feb 1, 2023 | Phoenix, Arizona

Space is Limited - Register Today!



ASLRRA Webinars

Upcoming Live Webinars

[FRA CRISI Funding: Locomotive Replacement Provision](#) – Oct. 20, 2022

The Federal Railroad Administration's Senior Advisor for Climate and Sustainability Mike Johnsen will provide a review of the Locomotive Replacement Provision of the Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvement (CRISI) grant program, which provides funding for rehabilitation or replacement of locomotives resulting in "significant" emissions reductions.

NEW! [Using AI Technology to Improve Grade Crossing Safety](#) – Nov. 8, 2022

Accidents due to trespassing and grade crossing violations pose the greatest safety challenge to railroads and transit agencies. This webinar will serve to inform stakeholders about recent developments in artificial intelligence driven trespassing and grade crossing violation research conducted by the Rutgers University Rail and Transit Program.

[ASLRRA Part 219 Education Materials and Correction Affidavits](#) – Nov. 10, 2022

Join Holly Rainwater, vice president of drug and alcohol programs at Spark TS, Mitch Harris, director of safety, training and regulatory compliance at Rio Grande Pacific, and JR Gelnar, vice president of safety and compliance at ASLRRA to discuss the recently developed Part 219 drug and alcohol educational materials and multiple Correction Affidavits. A working group was established by the Safety and Training Committee to develop these materials to better assist the membership in the requirements of Part 219. Note: Templates and other materials are available for members on ASLRRA's [Website](#).

On-Demand Webinars

ASLRRA's In-House Experts Discuss Regulatory Issues in Recorded Webinars

October 19, 2022

ASLRRA's subject-matter experts have presented several webinars on regulatory issues. Recordings of these webinars, as well as PDF copies of the presentations, are available at any time to members. Log in to [ASLRRA's On-Demand Webinar page](#) to view the following:

- Emergency Docket Waivers
- FRA Penalties and Violations
- FRA Regulatory and Program Requirements for Short Lines, Parts 1 and 2

Visit ASLRRA's [webinar homepage](#) and log in to view all the titles in the Association's webinar library. Most of the recordings also have a copy of the accompanying PDF presentation available for download. ASLRRA members can access all the recordings any time for free, while non-members can purchase a subscription.

Click [here](#) to learn more about ASLRRA's education offerings.

Industry Events and Announcements

Click [here](#) for a calendar of industry events.

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