



## In This Issue:

- **Send in Your Railroad's Holiday Train Information** – ASLRRA is collecting details about our members' holiday schedules, including passenger excursions and charity events. Learn more in our [Announcements Section](#) below.

## Headlines

### ASLRRA Makes Staffing Changes, Promotes Zach Radford



*L to R: Zach Radford, Danialle Lovik and Wayne Whitaker*

ASLRRA has made a series of staffing changes this week, including promoting Zach Radford to vice president, congressional affairs.

Radford was previously assistant vice president, congressional affairs. He succeeds Tom Lynch and will be responsible for leading engagement with House and Senate office and advancing key advocacy efforts on

legislative and policy priorities of the short line freight rail industry.

The Association's Manager of Membership and Marketing Danialle Lovik will take on a new role as manager of membership and technology. Her role will now be focused on business process management and ASLRRA's technology systems. She will help provide system support to members, manage the member database and more.

ASLRRA also welcomes Wayne Whitaker, the Association's new manager of design, marketing and education. He will focus on designing and producing marketing and communications materials and managing ASLRRA's website. Whitaker brings nearly 25 years of experience in creative services, including audio and video production for non-profit industry associations.

And ASLRRA bids a fond farewell to Lynch, who previously served as vice president, congressional affairs. He has left the organization for a senior position at The Fertilizer Institute.

### ASLRRA-IANR Partnership Delivers Accessible Education to Short Line Industry

ASLRRA and Iowa Northern Railway Company have officially launched the [Short Line Training Center](#), a comprehensive training resource for short line railroads that combines an online Learning Management System (LMS) with a Mobile Technical Training Center equipped with Locomotive Simulators to deliver essential regulatory, compliance and safety courses and materials to railroad

employees. The project is funded by a Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) grant and training is available to all short line railroads.

The LMS is an online platform and hub that is available at any time to deliver and track industry-specific training and assessments. Features include interactive coursework and assessments and the ability to assign courses to employees, manage team reports and upload training records.

Existing courses include [ASLRRA's 22 Part 243 Model Programs](#) and FRA drug and alcohol reasonable suspicion and post-accident toxicological testing training videos. ASLRRA is also developing new programs including designated supervisor of locomotive engineer (DSLE) and General Code of Operating Rules (GCOR) training.

The Mobile Technical Training Center is equipped with two FRA Type II locomotive simulators plus classroom space for six students and an instructor. The center can deliver personalized, instructor-led seminars and locomotive simulator training on location anywhere in the continental United States.

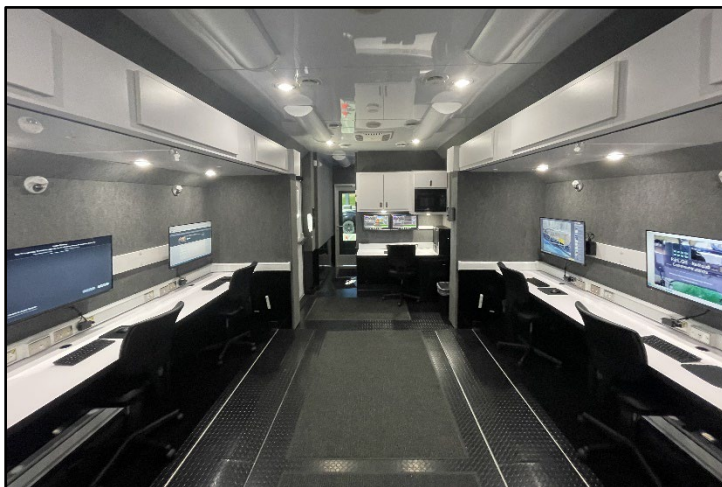
The training center includes generic profiles to match all types of railroad topography to run simulations that closely resemble a railroad's territory without the need to build custom track, enabling railroads to meet a wide range of training and regulatory requirements.

Training is also available at Iowa Northern Railway's Training Center in Waterloo, Iowa, where attendees have access to four FRA Type II locomotive simulators and full classroom facilities for up to 30 students.



View [full details online](#) or contact ASLRRA Senior Vice President of Education and Business Services [Sabrina Weiss](#) for more information.

*ASLRRA's Mobile Technical Training Center (top left) can bring two FRA Type II locomotive simulators (bottom right) and a six-station mobile classroom (bottom left) to any location in the continental United States.*



## ASLRRRA 2022 Regional Meetings

Central/Pacific | Milwaukee, WI | October 25- 27, 2022

General Counsel/Finance & Administration | Milwaukee, WI | October 25- 27, 2022

## Regulatory Update

### RRB Reports Decline in Medicare Part B Premiums in 2023

The Railroad Retirement Board (RRB) [announced a decrease](#) in monthly Medicare Part B premiums in 2023. The premium is now \$164.90, down \$5.20 from 2022.

The RRB attributes this decrease to fluctuations in prices of certain Part B items and services. In particular, the agency notes that the 2022 increase to the premium was due to the cost of a new Alzheimer's disease drug. Since then, the drug's use and price have changed.

The article also discusses Medicare Part D prescription drug coverage plans and includes tables showing income-related Part B premium adjustments for 2023.

### RRB Q&A Focuses on Disability Annuities and How to Apply for Them

In its most recent [Question and Answer \(Q&A\) article](#), the Railroad Retirement Board (RRB) discusses disability annuities for railroad employees, including what they are, who is eligible and how to apply for them.

The RRB explains the difference between provisions for total disability and occupational disability and standards to qualify for either. The article also compares railroad retirement disability annuities to social security disability benefits, with railroad workers being awarded an average of almost \$3,325 a month compared to over \$1,460 for social security.

Answers to other questions explain how to apply for a railroad retirement disability annuity and what documentation is required when doing so.

### PHMSA Awards Grant Funding for Hazmat Programs, Training

The [Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration \(PHMSA\) has awarded](#) over \$32 million in grant funding to support hazardous materials (hazmat) safety programs, hazmat training and more.

Roughly \$24 million in Hazardous Materials Emergency Preparedness (HMEP) grants will go to states, territories and tribes to help them better handle hazmat transportation incidents. Other grants will go to training programs for first responders and other emergency and law enforcement personnel, some grants will help bolster community hazmat incident response and other grants will fund hazmat shipper inspections.

The Short Line Safety Institute (SLSI) [received two grants](#) from PHMSA. A Hazardous Materials Instructor Training (HMIT) grant of \$994,526 will help SLSI train hazmat instructors and enable them to further train hazmat employees. In addition, SLSI received a \$182,140 Assistance for Local Emergency Response Training (ALERT) grant, which is meant to fund training for local emergency responders who

might respond to incidents or emergencies involving rail transportation of flammable liquid. For more information on the Hazardous Materials Training Programs offered by the Short Line Safety Institute, click [here](#).

## **ASLRRA Signs Letter Requesting Comment Period Extension for EPA Proposed Rule**

ASLRRA joined other organizations in [signing a letter](#) to the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) acting assistant administrator and deputy assistant administrator requesting a 60-day extension of the comment period on an EPA proposed rule.

The [proposed rule](#) would modify requirements for Risk Management Programs under the Clean Air Act. Those submitting the letter would like more time to fully review proposed rule provisions and prepare more informed recommendations and other comments, in particular due to new elements signatories say "necessitate more extensive research and discussions with affected facilities."

The comment period is currently slated to close on Oct. 31.

## **SBA to Hold Oct. 7 Roundtable**

To discuss the effect of the proposed rule on small businesses, the Small Business Administration's (SBA) Office of Advocacy will hold a roundtable this Friday, Oct. 7. View more information in our [Industry Events and Announcements](#) section below, or [click here](#) to go directly to the roundtable information page.



## **Legislative Update**

### **Congress Passes Continuing Resolution, Returns Home for Election Day**

Last Friday President Joe Biden signed a continuing resolution (CR) that will extend government funding at current levels until Dec. 16. Congress passed the CR and delivered it to President Biden's desk only a few hours before the midnight deadline, averting a government shutdown.

Passage of the CR allowed members of both the Senate and House to head home, where many will spend their time campaigning for reelection. Neither the Senate nor House is scheduled to return to Washington, D.C. for legislative activity until the week of Nov. 14, when the results of the midterm races will be known and Congress will begin the "lame duck" session before a new Congress takes office in early January.

The focus of the lame duck session is likely to be on two major pieces of legislation: the annual defense spending bill known as the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) and a long-term spending omnibus to keep the government running beyond Dec. 16.

### **Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Hearing Focuses on Major Legislation**

On Sept. 29 the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee held its last hearing before the midterms, titled "Investing in our Nation's Transportation Infrastructure and Workers: Why it Matters."

The Democratic majority and the Republican minority focused on the relative benefits and shortcomings of the transportation-related provisions of major legislation that passed this Congress, namely the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022. Witnesses included representatives of organized labor, Amtrak, transit and two economists.

## Baldwin Bill Looks To Address Rail Service Issues and Clarify Common Carrier Definition

ASLRRA is keeping tabs on [a bill](#) introduced by Senator Tammy Baldwin (D-Wis.) that is meant to reduce rail disruptions affecting the U.S. economy.

The Reliable Rail Service Act looks to more clearly define the common carrier obligation concept that Baldwin argues is not well defined.

While Baldwin's bill seems to focus on Class I railroads, the Association's congressional affairs team is concerned about any negative impact the legislation might have on short line service and will be following this bill closely.



## Employee Health Insurance

The Coalition Health Plan is available exclusively to ASLRRA members, designed to reduce medical premiums and simplify the healthcare experience for employees. [Click to learn more...](#)

## Announcements



*Photo by Rudy Garbely, courtesy of Operation Toy Train*

*In this 2018 photo, volunteers load toys into an Operation Toy Train railcar. Several ASLRRA members operate the trains used to collect items along a route in New Jersey and New York for the Toys for Tots Foundation.*

### Send Your Railroad's Holiday Information to ASLRRA

In anticipation of the upcoming holiday season, ASLRRA is collecting information regarding events its members may be holding, such as themed train rides and charity events.

Many ASLRRA members make special plans for the winter season. This includes the large-scale [Operation Toy Train](#), which collects toys via train in northern New Jersey and southern New York for the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve Toys for Tots Foundation. Member railroads including New York, Susquehanna and Western Railway, Middletown and New Jersey Railroad and Dover and Rockaway River Railroad operate the trains used for the toy collection.

[Strasburg Rail Road](#) is known for its various Christmas train excursions, a tradition for over 60 years. Other members also feature Santa Trains, including Indiana Rail Road, which coincidentally released its [2022 Santa Train schedule](#) yesterday on Twitter.

ASLRRA will share the information it collects from members through various communication channels, which may include future issues of *Views & News* and its social media profiles. Please email ASLRRA's [Communications Team](#) with all your holiday happenings.

### **Skipping ASLRRA's Final Regional Meeting Means Missing Out on Important Short Line Discussions**

Individuals who miss the Association's [Central and Pacific Region Meeting](#) later this month will not have another opportunity to meet to discuss important short line freight rail issues until ASLRRA's Annual Convention in 2023.

They will miss presentations from short line leaders like Iowa Interstate Railroad President and CEO Joe Parsons, OmniTRAX CEO Dean Piacente and Twin Cities and Western Railroad Company President and CEO Mark Wegner, nor will they hear from agency representatives from the Transportation Security Administration (TSA), Railroad Retirement Board (RRB) or Federal Railroad Administration (FRA).

Also taking place Oct. 25-27 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, are ASLRRA's two targeted events meant to help railroad personnel in the accounting, human resources and legal sectors benefit from sessions offering rail-industry specific information and updates. The [Finance and Administration Seminar and General Counsel Symposium](#) will also allow attendees to network with individuals in their career fields, facilitating beneficial industry connections. Continuing legal education credits (CLEs) are also available to symposium participants.

ASLRRA is still welcoming sponsors for both events. Click [here](#) to learn more about sponsorship opportunities for the regional meeting or [here](#) for the seminar and symposium.

### **Apply for Scholarships to Attend ASLRRA's January Training Seminar**

Rail industry employees hoping to attend ASLRRA's [Drug and Alcohol \(Part 219\) Training Seminar](#) next January in Phoenix, Arizona can apply for a scholarship to help pay for costs associated with attending the training.

Employees can apply for a [Doug Golden Scholarship](#) or a [Jake Jacobson Memorial Scholarship](#), both of which are available to employees of small railroads who attend this event.

The seminar will take place Jan. 31 to Feb. 1 in Phoenix, covering 49 CFR Part 219 including all sections of the rule and requirements for all railroads and contractors and featuring interactive discussion of rule requirements and practices. Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) Drug and Alcohol Program Specialist Sam Noe will lead the instruction, joined by ASLRRA Vice President of Safety and Compliance JR Gelnar.

ASLRRA expects this training to fill up quickly. [Register today](#) to secure a spot.

### **ASLRRA Members Benefit from Coalition Health Plan with HUB International**

The Coalition Health Plan is specifically designed for ASLRRA members looking for a solution to reduce their medical premiums and simplify the healthcare experience for their employees.

Partnering with HUB International puts ASLRRA members at the center of a vast network of experts who provide risk services, claims management, and compliance support. Visit ASLRRA's [Member Discount Program page](#) and select [Employee Health Insurance](#) to start saving today.

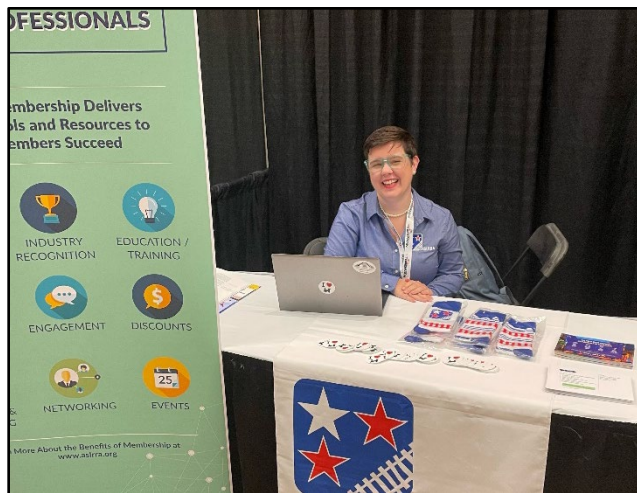
## ASLRRA Out and About

### Krouse Speaks at Virginia Railroad Association's Fall Meeting

ASLRRA's Vice President of Communications Amy Krouse traveled to Charlottesville, Virginia on Sept. 30 to speak at the Virginia Railroad Association's annual fall meeting.

Krouse gave an update on ASLRRA's regulatory and legislative initiatives, including those related to Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) Fiscal Year 2022 implementation, Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvement (CRISI) grants and other grant programs, Fiscal Year 2023 appropriations and the Federal Railroad Administration's (FRA) proposed rule concerning mandatory crew size.

### Gitchell Talks Short Lines with Ports Stakeholders at IRPT Conference



This week, ASLRRA's Assistant Vice President, Legislative and Regulatory Crystal Gitchell attended the Inland Rivers, Ports and Terminals (IRPT) 2022 Conference, where she managed the Association's booth in the conference exhibit hall.

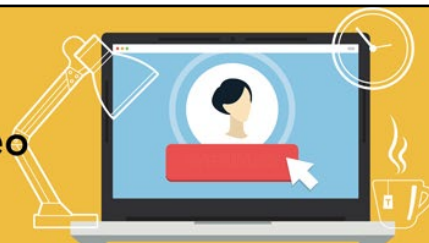
Gitchell spoke with conference attendees about ASLRRA, shipping with short lines and how short lines and ports can work together.

*ASLRRA's Crystal Gitchell was in charge of the Association's booth at the Inland Rivers, Ports and Terminals annual conference this week in Tulsa, Oklahoma.*

## ASLRRA SAFETY & TRAINING

### Post-Accident Toxicological Testing Video

Visit [www.aslrra.org/safety](http://www.aslrra.org/safety) for more info



## ASLRRRA 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.

#### [ASLRRRA 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 ASLRRRA 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.

### On-Demand Webinars

#### **Access ASLRRRA's On-Demand Webinar Library to Learn More About Human Resources Topics**

ASLRRRA's On-Demand Webinar Library features recordings focused on important environmental regulations, the environmental benefits of shipping freight by rail and opportunities for railroads to partner with the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) SmartWay program. Log in to find the following titles:

- Environmental Update – Who's on First?
- Freight Emissions, Carbon Accounting and Sustainability
- Benefits of Using Rail from a Shipper and Logistics Perspective

Visit ASLRRRA's [webinar homepage](#) and log in to view all the titles in the Association's webinar library. ASLRRRA members can access all the recordings any time for free, while non-members can purchase a subscription.

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

## Industry Events and Announcements

### **Oct. 7: Small Business Administration Environmental Roundtable to Discuss Clean Air Act**

The Small Business Administration's (SBA) Office of Advocacy will hold an Environmental Roundtable this Friday, Oct. 7, to discuss two topics.

The first part of the meeting will discuss the EPA's proposed revisions for the risk management program regulations under the Clean Air Act, while the second part will discuss the EPA's proposed



hazardous substance designation of perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and perfluorooctanesulfonic acid (PFOS) as hazardous substances under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA).

ASLRRA recently [signed a letter](#) with other organizations asking the EPA to extend the comment period for the proposed revisions to the risk management program. Find more information about the roundtable [here](#).

### **Nov. 1-3: FRA Hosts Grade Crossing Safety Workshop in North Carolina**

The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) will hold its Grade Crossing Safety and Railroad Trespass Prevention Workshop Nov. 1-3 at North Carolina State University in Raleigh, North Carolina.

The workshop, which is free to attendees, will discuss leading industry best practices, local strategies and case studies to reduce incidents, funding opportunities and more. Click [here](#) to view an event agenda, or [here](#) to register.

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.