



ASLRRRA will not publish Views & News next week. Our next issue will be November 30. We hope everyone enjoys a happy and restful Thanksgiving!

In This Issue:

- **Mark Your Calendars for ASLRRRA's Annual Conference** – Booth sales are off to a strong start for ASLRRRA's Annual Conference and Exhibition. Learn more in our [ASLRRRA Announcements section](#) below.

Headlines

Association Mourns Death of Former ASLRA President Howard Croft



Croft

ASLRRRA is saddened to report the [passing of Paul Howard "Howard" Croft, Jr.](#), 95, who served as president of the American Short Line Railroad Association (ASLRA), precursor to the modern ASLRRRA, from 1968 to 1989. He was the longest-tenured president of the short line Association.

Croft was born on Sept. 15, 1927 in Illinois. After high school he fought in the South Pacific during World War II before being honorably discharged in 1947. After graduating from the University of Illinois with a bachelor's degree in railroad civil engineering, Croft worked at the Illinois Central Railroad, eventually becoming division engineer.

In 1964 Croft joined the Louisville & Nashville Railroad and attained the position of division superintendent. In 1968 he was elected president of ASLRA.

As ASLRA president, Croft represented some 400 small railroads whose operations covered all 50 states. This diverse group of railroads had family or industrial or government ownership with deep roots in their service areas, but were also very dependent on their Class 1 railroad connections.

During Croft's tenure, the large railroads went through an unprecedented period of bankruptcy and contraction followed by deregulation and restructuring. The short line industry under Croft's leadership adapted to that change and thrived in unforeseen ways.



Former ASLRRR President Howard Croft (right) passed away on Nov. 9. He served from 1968 to 1989 and was instrumental in implementing some of the member benefits that ASLRRR still provides today. He is pictured here at a 2014 Association event with former ASLRRR Chair Ed McKechnie.

Croft was instrumental in working with ASLRRR members and the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) to set up template programs that members could adopt to comply with many FRA requirements such as blue flag, radio operations and procedures and more. These programs set the stage for ASLRRR's current work developing safety and operation templates for members' benefit.

In addition, Croft worked closely with FRA attorneys on behalf of ASLRRR railroad members. He also helped start the CTITF program to bring cost-effective healthcare insurance pricing for small railroad companies, which brought them significant savings.

ASLRRR's associate business members have their own reason to appreciate Croft's influence – during his tenure he worked with the ASLRRR board to open the Association to suppliers. And, as a lover of gadgets and technology, Croft introduced computerization to ASLRRR and overhauled the Association's accounting systems.

"I've often said the short line industry of today stands on the shoulders of giants – visionaries like Howard Croft who passionately believed in the value of short line railroads, and their all-American story. Howard's drive to create an Association with lasting impact is notable, as we enter our 110th year," said Chuck Baker, president of ASLRRR. "Many of the initiatives begun by Howard are still in place today – our advocacy with regulatory agencies and Congress on behalf of our members, as well as education, template programs and more – all with a focus on serving our members in the same way they serve their customers – hands on, seeking the best solutions, and intent on excellence. Rest in peace, Howard."

Croft was not a lawyer or a product of the regulatory environment railroads lived in, which was usually found in trade association leadership. With his strong rail operations background, he guided ASLRRR's disparate members and represented them effectively both in front of their Class 1 brethren and in the halls of government. As ASLRRR members grew in numbers and stature, Croft expanded the organization he led to represent them.

"[Croft's] energy, capacity to listen and adapt, and ever-present good humor enabled him to hold his burgeoning group together while championing their collective interests in other forums," said Larry McCaffrey, who worked with Croft through a previous role with firm Chambers, Conlon and Hartwell. "In short, he was the consummate politician in the best sense of the term – respected and trustworthy. His mark on today's transformed short line and regional railroad industry is indelible."

Beyond his railroad career, Croft was an avid photographer and photographed every meeting and ASLRRR event. He was witty and gregarious, an astute people person. Croft is survived by his wife of 72 years, Betty, three children, eight grandchildren and 14 great-grandchildren.

A Celebration of Life service will be held for Croft on Dec. 3 at the Legacy Church of Christ in North Richland Hills, Texas. Memorial donations in Croft's name can be made to [Christian Care Centers Foundation in Mesquite](#), [Christ's Haven for Children in Keller](#) or [Trinity Terrace Foundation in Fort Worth](#).



Regulatory Update

FAMES Issues Railroad Bridge Safety Report and Separate Safety Alert

The Fatality Analysis of Maintenance-of-way Employees and Signalmen (FAMES) Committee recently issued two notices, [a railroad bridge safety report](#) and a [safety alert](#) concerning a recent worker fatality.

The safety report presents information from the committee's review of available data on 18 railroad bridge fall accidents, which resulted in 17 fatalities and one serious injury. Findings show that failure to use fall protection was a primary contributing factor in 15 of the 18 incidents. There was also insufficient training of bridge workers in 11 of the 17 fatal falls and insufficient management oversight in 8.

As a result of this data, FAMES has offered several safety recommendations to railroads. These include having comprehensive, written bridge worker safety instructions readily available to employees; conducting thorough hazard analysis of all bridge work, with discussions at job briefings; and training in and use of fall protection.

FAMES also issued a separate safety alert after a roadway worker was fatally injured when the rigging strap used to load a switch point broke. The employee lost control of the load and the switch point, resulting in the fatal injury.

The alert urges roadway workers to remain vigilant, including inspecting all slings and load-lifting devices for excessive wear or stretch and broken or cut fibers, as well as inspecting the load itself for conditions that might compromise the lifting device, such as a sharp edge against a lifting strap.

This fatal injury was the second fatality to occur this month, prompting FAMES to remind railroad employees that the fourth quarter of the year is statistically the deadliest time of year for roadway workers and extra caution is necessary when conducting operations.

ASLRRA provides copies of FAMES Committee communications on its website, along with information from the FRA's Switching and Operations Fatality Analysis working group. Find these resources on the [FAMES/SOFA page](#) under the Safety & Compliance tab.

Members Using ASLRRA's Hours-of-Service Waiver Receive Reminder About Requirements

ASLRRA issued a reminder to members using the ASLRRA 6 and 1 Hours-of-Service Waiver of certain hours-of-service (HOS) waiver requirements.

The requirements note that any employee working both six-day scheduled assignments, and five-day scheduled assignments followed by a six-day unscheduled assignment resulting in six consecutive days of initiating on-duty periods that do not extend into the early morning hours (midnight to 6 a.m.),

may receive 24, rather than 48, hours off duty. The HOS record of any employee working an assignment subject to this waiver must have a notation that the waiver applies to this assignment.

Other points talk about requirements for non-union railroads regarding the waiver as well as time off for employees performing non-covered service and the statutory limit of hours worked per calendar month.

Railroads currently listed on the waiver that are not using and do not intend to use the waiver in the future should contact ASLRRRA's Vice President of Safety and Compliance [JR Gelnar](#) to be removed from the waiver list. Those with other questions or concerns can also contact Gelnar at the email link above.

Railroads With Port Operations Invited to Participate in EPA Listening Session to Discuss Program Plans

ASLRRRA members with locomotive operations at ports are invited to participate in an Environmental Protection Agency listening session focused on building the Clean Ports funding program.

The Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 (IRA) allocated \$3 billion to the EPA to fund zero-emission port equipment and technology and help ports develop climate action plans to reduce air pollutants. The new Clean Ports program will build on the [EPA's Ports Initiative](#), which collaborates with the port industry, communities and all levels of government to improve ports' environmental performance and increase economic prosperity.

To gather stakeholder input regarding the best way to build the IRA Clean Ports funding program, the EPA is holding a listening session on Dec. 6, the second of two such sessions. Participants will have the opportunity to share their thoughts on critical technologies for reducing emissions, challenges to transitioning to zero-emission equipment, ways the program can complement other available funding programs and more.

Read about and register for the listening session [here](#). Included on the registration page is a list of questions participants are encouraged to come prepared to discuss.

Legislative Update

Happy Birthday IJJA! Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act Turns One This Week

The social media accounts of government officials like President Joe Biden and Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg are celebrating the one-year anniversary of the passage of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IJJA), which has come to be known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL).

ASLRRRA joined many who lauded the IJJA when it was first passed a year ago. The Association [released a statement](#) calling the IJJA a "historic victory for the short line industry," because it provided significant increases for important short line funding opportunities like CRISI, INFRA and RAISE grants, as well as the grade crossing elimination program.

Since the passage of the IJJA, communities across America have already begun putting IJJA funds to use on projects that improve rail lines, roads, bridges, energy and water infrastructure and more. ASLRRRA members have secured millions in grant awards and are actively competing now for additional federal grant funding for crucial railroad infrastructure projects.

Funding like that provided through the IJJA is an important source of income for our short line members who are responsible for their own infrastructure upgrades but often operate on smaller profit margins that make large-scale projects more difficult to finance. ASLRRRA continues to advocate

on behalf of its members to raise awareness of this need for robust funding programs while also encouraging and supporting members pursuing these revenue streams.

OneRail Letters Request Robust Funding for Rail Programs in Fiscal Year 2024 Budget Proposal

Although Congress is still working to finalize the budget for fiscal year (FY) 2023, work has already begun on planning budget requests for FY 2024. Rail advocacy group OneRail Coalition recently sent letters to [Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg](#) and [Office of Management and Budget Director Shalanda Young](#) in support of specific budget requests benefiting U.S. rail.

The letters ask for \$1 billion for CRISI grants, as well as \$1.5 billion for RAISE grants, \$1.2 billion for INFRA grants, \$50 million for Railroad Rehabilitation and Improvement Financing (RRIF), \$45 million for railroad research and development and more. OneRail also asks the agencies to support robust funding for grade crossing safety efforts and reject any increases to federal truck size and weight limits.

ASLRRA is a member of [OneRail](#) along with the Association of American Railroads (AAR), the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) and other industry and labor groups. The coalition is dedicated to educating the American public about the importance of a strong freight and passenger rail systems.

Save Money with ASLRRA's Member Discount Program Partners



Announcements



Booth Sales Off to Strong Start for ASLRRA Annual Conference in New Orleans – Mark Your Calendars for the April 2023 Event

ASLRRA reminds everyone to mark their calendars for the Association's Annual Conference and Exhibition which will take place April 2 - 4 in New Orleans, Louisiana.

More than 125 booths have already been reserved for the expo portion of our 2023 Annual Conference and Exhibition. For the last few weeks selection priority was given exclusively to member companies that had booths at this year's conference in St. Louis.

Booth sales are now open to all ASLRRRA members. For more details, please contact Senior Vice President – Membership & Business Development [Kathy Keeney](#). Sponsorship sales for New Orleans will officially start shortly, with right of first refusal to those companies that sponsored specific events or items at our 2022 annual conference.

Hotel room block and attendee registration will open in early December. The ASLRRRA team is excited about the location and the events organized, and hopes you'll make plans to join us in New Orleans.

Norfolk Southern's Veterans Programs Educate, Engage and Support Military Members and Veterans

Class I railroads support ASLRRRA's Annual Conference and other events, so in continued recognition of National Veterans and Military Families Month, the Association is happy to share the story of Norfolk Southern's efforts to engage veterans in the workplace and in the community.

As part of its diversity and inclusion efforts, Norfolk Southern has developed a program called VeteraNS. The mission of [VeteraNS](#) is to provide Norfolk Southern military reservists, veterans, military families and other employees an environment that encourages growth and respect, while promoting communication and education on matters of military and veteran related-topics. VeteraNS members promote outreach to military and veteran organizations in the communities in which Norfolk Southern has a business relationship.

Norfolk Southern is recognized nationally as a Fortune 500 leader in hiring military veterans. Currently, more than 10 percent or 2,011 of Norfolk Southern's employees are U.S. veterans. The [VeteraNS webpage](#) features employees and their stories from service to serving the Class I railroad.

The railroad also works with community partners to help military members and veterans. Last week, Norfolk Southern partnered with the American Red Cross to assemble comfort kits for homeless veterans. This event was a well-oiled machine of logistics, from the order and delivery of the kit items to the volunteer effort to support homeless veterans living in Georgia.

Employees signed up to participate while some dropped in during their lunch break to assist in building the kits. The Red Cross crew provided support for this event as well as information about this vulnerable group of individuals. The kits consisted of personal care items, and NS employees wrote personal messages to include in each of the 500 kits assembled.



Above: Norfolk Southern President and CEO Alan Shaw took a selfie with other team members while helping put together Red Cross comfort kits for homeless veterans.



Right: New VeteraNS leader Richard Scott (center) recently led a group of Norfolk Southern employees in a walk to benefit the fight against veteran suicides.

Nominate an ASLRRRA Member for the Veterans Engagement Award

ASLRRRA is accepting nominations for its 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 ASLRRRA's Annual Conference and Exhibition, April 2-4, in New Orleans. Find Veterans Engagement Award nomination criteria and a nomination form [on ASLRRRA's website](#). Award nominations will be due in February 2023.

ASLRRRA Members Save Money with Vetted Preferred Providers

ASLRRRA's Member Discount Program leverages the buying power of all Association members to secure discounted pricing on essential business products and services. ASLRRRA members receive exclusive access to programs tailored specifically for the short line railroad industry with discounted pricing, special offers and guaranteed exceptional service. Visit our [Member Discount Program page](#) for details and to learn more about ASLRRRA's Member Discount Program Preferred Providers.

Interested in becoming a Preferred Provider?

ASLRRRA is seeking to add new products and services to its Member Discount Program offerings. The program is open exclusively to ASLRRRA associate members, and Preferred Providers benefit from a broad range of marketing/promotional activities, including visibility on [ASLRRRA's website](#) and in print and electronic communications. Interested companies may contact [Sabrina Waiss](#) for more information on becoming a Preferred Provider.

ASLRRRA Out and About

Gitchell Represents ASLRRRA in Meeting at Northwestern University

ASLRRRA Assistant Vice President, Legislative and Regulatory Crystal Gitchell was in Chicago this week to participate in Northwestern University's Business Advisory Council on behalf of the Association. The group advises the university transportation program and includes members from all freight and passenger modes.

Baker Talks Short Lines at Two Events This Week, Joins Members at RailTrends

ASLRRRA President Chuck Baker spoke about short line issues at the 2022 RailTrends conference in New York City yesterday, joining Association of American Railroads President and CEO Ian Jefferies in a fireside chat discussing the state of the rail industry.

The conference also featured a short line panel discussion with representatives from several ASLRRRA member companies, some of whom are also on ASLRRRA's Board of Directors. Board Chair Stefan Loeb participated in the panel, as did Board Member Justin Broyles. In addition, ASLRRRA member Watco's Executive Chairman Rick Webb received RailTrends' 2022 Railroad Innovator Award for his outstanding achievement in the railroad industry.

Later this week, Baker will also address the California Air Resources Board (CARB) during the board's November meeting. Baker will talk about short lines and how CARB's proposed In-Use Locomotive Regulation will harm these California small businesses.

WEBINARS AVAILABLE ON DEMAND

With nearly 200 recordings available, there's a webinar to meet the needs of everyone on your team. Visit aslrta.org/webinars to view a complete list of available recordings.



ASLRRA Webinars

On-Demand Webinars

Webinar Recordings Address FRA Part 219, Control of Drug and Alcohol Use

Understanding and complying with federal regulations concerning drug and alcohol use is important to ASLRRA's members. The Association offers several on-demand webinars focused on issues related to the Federal Railroad Administration's Part 219, including:

- Part 219 Education Materials and Correction Affidavits
- Overview on the Expanded Scope of Part 219
- Drug & Alcohol Rules & Regulations
- Marijuana and CBD – New Drug Testing Issues

These webinars focus on regulatory requirements, testing programs and issues and educational materials for railroads.

Visit ASLRRA's [webinar homepage](#) and log in to view all the on-demand offerings 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 recordings for free at any time, 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.