



VIEWS & NEWS

A publication of the American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association

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Doug Golden Scholarship Helps Desiree Miller Expand her Role at Atlantic Railways

Atlantic Railways Executive Assistant Desiree Miller might call herself a "rookie when it comes to the railroad," but she is experienced enough to know that working at a short line means taking on many different responsibilities. To become more familiar with these tasks, Miller recently completed a Railroad Track Inspection and Safety Standards course through the University of Tennessee-Knoxville, training that was funded in large part by a scholarship from ASLRRRA and former board member Doug Golden.



Photo Courtesy of Desiree Miller

Desiree Miller of Atlantic Railways uses a track gauge to take measurements during a University of Tennessee rail inspection and safety course. Miller received a Doug Golden Scholarship through the ASLRRRA Short Line Education Fund to help pay for her training.

"We are a short line, so everyone has multiple tasks and I want to be the best asset I can be for our company. Receiving this training is going to allow me to inspect our rails to make sure they are safe and up to code. It was a lot to take in but I cannot wait to put it to good use," said Miller.

In addition to being a full-time executive assistant to Atlantic Railways President John Elkin, Miller is a part-time special agent for the railroad, which requires her to conduct inspections of rail cars and property. Taking the University of Tennessee's track inspection course allows her to expand her special-agent role and do more to assist the one other inspector at Atlantic Railways.

Miller is one of four short line railroad employees who have received a scholarship for industry-specific training in track, bridge and signal inspection and maintenance and/or locomotive and freight car inspection and maintenance through ASLRRRA's program. Each scholarship winner received up to \$1,200 to pay for course registration fees and travel, lodging and other related expenses.

"The scholarship was useful because it almost covered the entire cost of the trip. I would have still taken the class, but having the majority paid for was a perk for my boss and the financials of our company," said Miller.

Golden, who retired as president of ASLRRRA member Carolina Coastal Railway and has served on ASLRRRA's Board of Directors and on the Small Railroad Committee, expressed a desire to support the education and training needs of small railroads. An initial \$12,000 donation from the Douglas Golden-

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Mary Cullen Charitable Fund to ASLRRRA's Short Line Education Fund made these first scholarships possible.

Scholarships are still available for employees of short line and regional railroads, defined as small railroads earning \$10 million or less in annual revenues. Individuals can apply by completing an [online application](#), and scholarships will be awarded to qualified candidates on a rolling basis until all funds are distributed. Questions may be directed to ASLRRRA's accounting manager, [Julie Duriga](#).

For information about donating to the Short Line Education Fund, see [our article below](#) in the ASLRRRA Announcements section.

The University of Tennessee Knoxville will hold another Railroad Track Inspection and Safety Standards course March 7-11. The Doug Golden Scholarship can be applied to this class. See our Industry Events section below for more information about this training opportunity.

Help ASLRRRA Make Its Holiday Edition of Views & News Merry and Bright

In the last Views and News newsletter of the year, ASLRRRA would like to showcase the holiday celebrations of its members. If your railroad ran a Polar Express train ride, participated in a holiday parade, organized a jingle bell 5K, lit a supersized menorah or welcomed Santa to your headquarters, we would love to share those images with the short line community.

Please send us your picture and a brief caption [via email](#) no later than Monday, Dec. 20. We will include submissions in our Dec. 22 issue of Views and News and feature them on our social media pages.

Access 2021 ASLRRRA Conference Photos, Including Headshots, Online

Attendees of ASLRRRA's Annual Conference and Exhibition who had their professional photographs taken can download the images for personal use [here](#). Use this password to access the gallery: [21037AaHS](#).

A full gallery of conference photographs is also available. View and download these images using this [link](#) and password: [21037Aa](#)



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ASLRRA Submits Comments for House Committee's Hearing

In November, ASLRRA [submitted comments](#) for the record related to the United States House Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure hearing titled "[Industry and Labor Perspectives: A Further Look at North American Supply Chain Challenges.](#)"

The comments outlined the short line industry's vital contributions to North America's supply chain and urged the committee to avoid actions that would exacerbate supply chain problems, including efforts to increase truck size and weight, mandate crew sizes, or stifle the use of technology.

ASLRRA encouraged the committee to advance important funding opportunities like the Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) grants program that helps short line freight railroads invest in infrastructure to continue to support efficiency and improvements to the U.S. supply chain.

FAMES Issues Alert Following Fatal Accident

The Fatality Analysis of Maintenance-of-Way Employees and Signalmen (FAMES) Committee has [issued an alert](#) following a fatal accident earlier this month involving a contractor.

The contractor was marking rails for scrap when he was fatally struck by a spiker. Although the FAMES Committee has not yet analyzed the accident, it urges roadway workers to remain vigilant while on the job site. This includes managing risks associated with the presence of roadway maintenance machines and to ensure clear lines of communication with workers on the ground and roadway maintenance machine operators.

Unified Regulatory Plan, Published by Biden-Harris Administration, Sets Course for Next Six Months

The Biden Administration's Unified Agenda of Regulatory and Deregulatory Actions ([Agenda](#)) was published this week, which includes a Department of Transportation (DOT) Plan with information from the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA).

The agenda reports on the actions administrative agencies plan to issue in the near and long term. Released by the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, the agenda provides important public notice and transparency about proposed regulatory and deregulatory actions within the executive branch.

Most relevant to ASLRRA railroad members is the [DOT Plan](#). This plan reviews the actions taken throughout 2021 in response to executive orders and lays out the priorities of the DOT going forward, particularly concerning safety, COVID-19 response, economic growth, climate change and equity.

Of note, the FRA will be continuing work on "pending proceedings to satisfy mandates resulting from the Rail Safety Improvement Act of 2008 (RSIA08), the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008 (PRIIA), and the FAST Act." FRA's stated regulatory priority for Fiscal Year 2022 is to propose regulations addressing the issue of the requirements for safe minimum train crew size depending on the type of operation.

Information on the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) on Crew Size is available [here](#). ASLRRA staff is actively engaged with the FRA and other stakeholder organizations on the issue of crew size.



Senate and House Wrap Up Year-End Business as Holiday Recess Nears

With the holidays nearing, Congress was busy resolving two major legislative matters that had been looming for weeks.

Yesterday, Congress voted to raise the nation's debt limit by \$2.5 trillion, narrowly avoiding debt default and affording the U.S. with the authority to continue paying the government's bills past next year's mid-term elections and into early 2023. And today, Congress passed the National Defense Authorization Act, a sizeable \$770 billion measure that funds defense programs, sending the measure

to President Biden's desk for his signature.

Meanwhile, a path forward on President Biden and the Democrats' Build Back Better bill remains unclear. The measure, which passed the House in November, awaits action in the Senate, where Senate Democrats are working to advance it before Christmas. Ongoing negotiations and parliamentary maneuvering, however, could delay formal consideration until after the holidays.

ASLRRRA Compliance Assessments



“ Keeping up with federal rule-making and regulatory interpretation is difficult at best, so the ability to review all of our regulatory programs with the knowledge base of the ASLRRRA was invaluable. ”

Visit www.aslrra.org to learn more!

ASLRRRA Announcements

Support ASLRRRA Programs Through a Tax-Deductible Donation to the Short Line Education Fund

In this season of giving, ASLRRRA also asks its members and others to consider the [Short Line Education Fund](#) when making charitable donations. As the story of Desiree Miller and her Doug Golden Scholarship demonstrates, such contributions have a direct impact on railroad employees. In addition, those employees bring their newfound knowledge and skills back to their railroads, helping improve operations and safety overall.

ASLRRRA's Short Line Education Fund is a 501c3 nonprofit organization and may receive tax-deductible contributions from individuals and corporations. Donations support industry training and certification programs; help communicate and promote the value of short line railroads to decision makers and industry stakeholders; and build a valuable library of industry-specific research. Click [here](#) to make a tax-deductible donation today!

Join ASLRRRA's Member Discount Program as a Preferred Provider

Becoming a Preferred Provider in ASLRRRA's Member Discount Program boosts your visibility and underscores your commitment to delivering an exceptional price, product and service to member railroads. The Member Discount Program leverages the buying power of the entire short line industry and the program is designed to:

- Secure significant cost savings on industry products and services;
- Create a vetting process for potential partners and establish exceptional service expectations;
- Generate non-dues revenue to support ASLRRRA programs and services.

Preferred Providers benefit from enhanced marketing opportunities that include exposure across a wide range of electronic, print and event platforms. Visit [ASLRRRA's Member Discount Program page](#) for details and to learn more about ASLRRRA's Tier I and Tier II Member Discount Program Preferred Providers. Companies interested in becoming a Preferred Provider may contact [Sabrina Waiss](#).

Save Money with ASLRRRA's Member Discount Program Partners





ASLRRRA Webinars – Live or On-Demand

This Winter, Curl Up With an Engaging Recorded Webinar

With ASLRRRA's recorded webinars available at any time, users do not have to stay late at work to catch up on the latest industry information offered by subject-matter experts. Access to ASLRRRA's On-Demand Webinar library is possible with a simple mouse click or finger tap on a variety of devices.

Railroad professionals at all levels and in all areas of expertise can find helpful information through the Association's webinars, on topics like regulatory compliance, employee training, health and safety concerns and human resource management.

ASLRRRA members can view recordings at any time for free, while non-members can purchase a subscription to access our library. Go to aslrra.org/webinars and log in to see what is available.

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

Industry Events and Announcements

Scholarship-Eligible Track Inspection and Safety Course to be Held in March

The University of Tennessee Knoxville will hold another [Railroad Track Inspection and Safety Standards](#) course March 7-11 in Chattanooga, Tennessee.

The week-long, in-person class will teach participants about conducting track inspections, understanding the Federal Railroad Administration inspection process, interpreting and using collected data and more. Use the above link for more information, or [this link](#) to register.

As a reminder, this course is eligible for the Doug Golden Scholarship described in our [Headlines section top story](#).

RailTEC Releases Railroad Short Courses Schedule for Summer

The University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign's Rail Transportation and Engineering Center (RailTEC) announced its [Short Courses schedule](#) for the summer of 2022. The two courses available will be offered virtually via Zoom.

Track Engineering Fundamentals will be held July 18-21, while Railroad Project Design takes place the next week, July 25-28. Follow the link above to learn more about each course, or use [this link](#) to go directly to the registration page.

[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.