



April 21, 2021



## HAPPY EARTH DAY 2021

Tomorrow, April 22, is Earth Day, and there is no better time to highlight our industry's potential to help to solve one of the Biden Administration's challenges - driving to a smaller carbon footprint.

President [Biden](#) will pledge to cut U.S. greenhouse-gas emissions by at least half by the end of the decade, the *Washington Post* [reports](#). Already the leader in fuel-efficient surface transportation, the railroad industry is now making every effort to be a part of the

solution to improving the environment, and the short line industry is all in on a variety of fronts.

- ASLRRRA has formed an Environmental Committee, chaired by Sean Strong, assistant vice president of environmental at Watco and staffed by Jo Strang, ASLRRRA's senior vice president of safety and regulatory policy. The committee will address environmental issues in two areas - sustainability and compliance.
- ASLRRRA is now an affiliate member of the Environmental Protection Agency's SmartWay program, and is working to educate our members on the benefits of becoming a Rail Member. Members can view the recorded webinar [here](#). The Association is also hosting another webinar with Smartway tomorrow at 2 p.m. EDT titled "[Benefits of Freight Rail - Capacity, Safety & Clean Air!](#)" Registration for this free webinar closes at midnight tonight.
- We have launched a [new page](#) on our website to highlight the environmental benefits of rail, and to communicate the many ways that short lines are already doing their part - from using electric locomotives, to improving fuel efficiency, to winning business that moves volume from trucks on overcrowded roads.

Have great examples of your business reducing its carbon footprint or improving sustainability in other ways? Send it to [akrouse@aslrra.org](mailto:akrouse@aslrra.org).

### Reconnect with Colleagues at ASLRRRA's In-Person Regional Meetings

After a years-long absence, golf will be making a return to ASLRRRA's [Central & Pacific Region meeting](#), held June 7-9 in Kansas City, Mo. A golf outing will also take place during the [Eastern & Southern Region meeting](#), held June 21-23, in Louisville, Ky.

Golf offers participants a way to practice social distancing while still being able to foster the personal connections many people have missed during the pandemic. Those who would like to participate in this activity should be sure to add the separate golf option when registering for their meeting.

And, of course, beyond golf, ASLRRRA regional meetings provide an engaging range of content with insightful panel discussions; informative subject matter experts; interactive breakout sessions with peer-to-peer collaborative learning; solid takeaways related to business best practices, tools and resources; and hours of networking with industry peers and supplier partners.

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Registration is now open for the regional meetings as well as the General Counsel Symposium and Finance & Administration Seminar being held in conjunction with the Eastern & Southern Region meeting. Be sure to register early to take advantage of reduced early bird pricing.

[Central & Pacific Region Meeting](#) - June 7-9, 2021 - Kansas City, Mo.

[Eastern & Southern Region Meeting](#) - June 21-23, 2021 - Louisville, Ky.

[General Counsel Symposium](#) - June 21-22, 2021 - Louisville, Ky.

[Finance & Administration Seminar](#) - June 22-23, 2021 - Louisville, Ky.

As a reminder, ASLRRRA does not work with or endorse any third-party companies to make room reservations. Reservations should be made directly with the [Kansas City Marriott](#) at (816) 421-6800 or the [Galt House Hotel](#) at (888) 838-8306 through the phone numbers or links provided.

ASLRRRA will also be closely watching COVID-19-related health and safety guidelines issued by meeting venues, local governments and/or federal agencies like the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and will take action to implement their guidance. Such actions may or may not include requiring indoor social distancing, limiting room capacity and mandating mask wearing.

## Thank You to All Volunteers Who Help Make ASLRRRA a Successful Organization

April 18 through April 24 is [National Volunteer Week](#), and ASLRRRA is grateful to the many people who lend their time and talent to the Association.

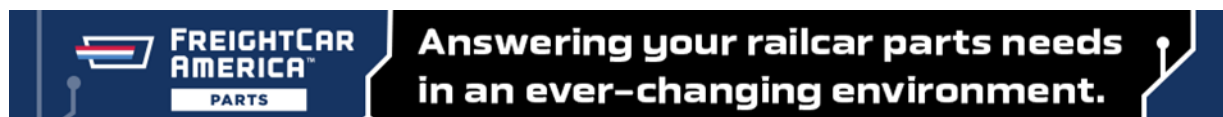
ASLRRRA member employees play a number of important roles. Volunteers serve on the Association's Board of Directors and various committees, helping to guide ASLRRRA's work, and meet members' needs.

During last week's Railroad Day on Capitol Hill, volunteers acted as Zoom meeting hosts and helped ensure each talk remained focused on key topics and stayed on schedule. ASLRRRA depends on volunteers for other events as well, and they are invaluable when it comes to executing regional meetings and the annual Connections Convention.

And this list does not even take into account those who go beyond ASLRRRA to engage the community in important rail initiatives, particularly safety. Many volunteers with ASLRRRA are also active in organizations like Operation Lifesaver, making educational rail-safety presentations to community members and students nationwide.

Thank you to all those who volunteer with ASLRRRA, and to those employees and family members at ASLRRRA member companies who volunteer at their respective organizations and within their communities.

WE COULDN'T DO IT WITHOUT YOU!





## ASLRRRA Reminds Members HOS Documentation Can be Sent Via Email

The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) has reached out to ASLRRRA staff to notify our railroad members that the Excessive Hours of Service Report (Form FRA F-6180-3) hours of service documentation may be sent via email to Bill Smith at [William.smith@dot.gov](mailto:William.smith@dot.gov).

Sending forms through the mail is acceptable, but there may be a delay in processing due to COVID-19 teleworking procedures currently taking place at the U.S. Department of Transportation. Those with questions should contact ASLRRRA's [JR Gelnar](#) or [Jo Strang](#). They can also email Bill Smith, the FRA's hours of service subject-matter expert, using the email address listed above.

## DOT Schedules Webinars to Help Applicants Navigate Process for RAISE Grant Program

The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) has finalized dates and times for its Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) grant [informational webinar series](#).

The [RAISE grants](#), formerly known as BUILD and TIGER, will award \$1 billion in fiscal year 2021 to infrastructure projects in all 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. To help interested parties navigate the application process, the DOT will host four webinars.

Two will explain to all applicants how to compete for RAISE grants. One will focus on helping tribal and rural applicants compete for grants, while another will discuss preparing a benefit cost analysis for the RAISE application.

Please see the links above for specific information for each webinar, and to register. Webinars will be recorded for those who cannot attend sessions live. The RAISE grant notice of funding opportunity can be viewed [here](#).

ASLRRRA also has three preferred providers in its [Member Discount Program](#), Bergmann, HDR and GTS, that can help members prepare applications for RAISE grants and other funding sources.

## NTSB Issues 2021-2022 Most Wanted List of Safety Improvements

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) [released](#) its Most Wanted List of Transportation Safety Improvements for 2021-2022, featuring [10 mode-specific safety improvements](#).

Only one item on the list was related to rail. It calls for improved rail worker safety. Of the remaining nine most-wanted items, two concern aviation, five concern highways and one each concern marine and pipelines.

This year's list included improvements that are specific to certain transportation modes, while previous most-wanted lists featured broad, multi-modal safety issues.

## AAR Cybersecurity Advisory Discusses Complement to CISA Detection Tool

The Association of American Railroads (AAR) issued a Railway Alert Network (RAN) Cybersecurity Advisory discussing a new Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) resource for detecting compromised accounts.

The AAR advisory can be found on ASLRRRA's [website](#), and is related to a CISA document posted last week. Both explain Aviary, a companion tool to CISA's Sparrow detection capability that provides more effective visualization and analysis of cyber attack data collected by Sparrow.

Older RAN and CISA alerts can also be found on ASLRRA's website, at the link above. Members must log in to search for and view the information.

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## Republicans Prepare to Present Own Infrastructure Plan, While ASLRRA Hopes for Bipartisanship and More Short Line Funding

The GOP is developing a [scaled-down version](#) of President Biden's infrastructure investment plan that tightens the definition of infrastructure and rejects corporate tax increases as a means of funding.

Preliminary estimates put a \$600 to \$800 billion tab on the Republicans' plan, which would be paid for by as-yet-unspecified

user fees.

ASLRRA hopes for bipartisan agreement on any infrastructure plan, and supports more funding for the nation's ailing infrastructure, especially for short line railroads. While the ideas outlined in Biden's larger plan are a good start, ASLRRA would like to see increased rail funding, which is lacking compared to what would be allocated to roads and highways.

ASLRRA also wants to see a solution developed for anticipated revenue shortfalls for the Highway Trust Fund, which the Association addressed in a recent letter to Congress advocating a mileage-based user fee to subsidize the fund.

## Letter to Congress from ASLRRA, Other Transportation Organizations Supports Vehicle Miles Traveled Implementation Program

ASLRRA joined the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) and other organizations in a [letter](#) to Congressional leaders advocating for the creation of a "comprehensive national vehicle miles traveled (VMT) implementation program."

The letter supports a VMT program, or mileage-based user fee, as a way to finance the Highway Trust Fund in light of declining income from motor fuel taxes due to the increased use of more fuel-efficient cars and electric vehicles.

The letter also urges Congress to use current research and information from pilot programs to begin creating a national VMT system in cooperation with the public and private sector. It calls the fee a "much-needed long-term replacement for the user fees that we currently rely on to build our roads and bridges."

## Legislators Bring Back Railroad Funding Bill

Last week, Pennsylvania Representative Lloyd Smucker, along with New Hampshire Representatives Ann McLane Kuster and Chris Pappas, [reintroduced](#) the [Invest in American Railroads Act](#).

The bill would make improvements to the Railroad Rehabilitation and Improvement Financing (RRIF) Program, which provides funding for infrastructure investment in short line and passenger railroads. Advocates see the program as underused, so the Invest in American Railroads Act is intended to help states, local governments and private groups use the RRIF program to upgrade existing rail infrastructure and build new rail lines and facilities.



At Loram, we serve the rail industry with collaborative, custom solutions to even the most demanding track maintenance challenges. We're harnessing cutting-edge ideas to find track flaws, pinpoint where ballast is needed and automate its delivery, streamline tie and aggregate delivery, and empower you to work more efficiently.

Visit [aslrra.org/discounts](http://aslrra.org/discounts) to learn more about this Preferred Provider.



## 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](mailto:kathy.keeney@aslrra.org) via email or on (202) 585-3439.

### Concrete Product Company and Inter-Rail Group Subsidiaries Become Members

ASLRRRA is pleased to welcome two Associate Switching members and one Associate Business member this week.



[Coreslab Structures](#), with numerous locations across North America, supplies a variety of precast/prestressed concrete products. It possesses in-house service expertise regarding all facets related to railroad bridge structures, reducing out-of-service track times to bare minimums. Our primary contact is Vice President & General Manager [Dennis Drews](#), who can also be reached on (913) 287-5725. We are delighted to welcome them back as Associate Business Members.



Inter-Rail Transport of Kansas City LLC, based in Kansas City, KS, and So Cal Ramp Services LLC, based in Mira Loma, CA, have joined as Associate Switching members of ASLRRRA. Both are subsidiaries of Centreville, MD-based [Inter-Rail Group, Inc.](#), and provide an array of terminal management services including automotive, industrial, and intermodal switching as well as railcar maintenance and repair. For over four decades, Inter-Rail Group has provided high-quality auto terminal services to railroads and automobile manufacturers. Its crews handle more than 20 percent of the new vehicles sold annually in America. Our primary contact is [Santos Aguins](#), Director - Switching Operations, who can also be reached on (626) 890-1878.

## ASLRRA Announcements

### Preferred Provider Loram Offers Track Inspection Technology to ASLRRA Members

Loram's Aurora Track Inspection Technology is available to ASLRRA members with preferred pricing through the Member Discount Program. Features of Aurora Track Inspection Technology includes state-of-the-art imaging technology that pinpoints potential problems and marks their exact location; helps railroad to plan repairs in the most efficient way possible; provides detailed report that enables railroad to streamline capital maintenance programs; and helps ensure railroad is in line with industry regulations with compliance reports.

Turn tie inspections into savings and safety with four scale tie grading 1-4; GPS coordinates for all ties; tie grade summaries per mile; 39' Federal Railroad Administration tie condition report; joint bar location report; joint tie condition report.

Visit ASLRRA's [Member Discount Program](#) page to learn how Loram's Aurora Track Inspection Technology can make your operations safer and more efficient.

### Training Videos for Members Provide Instruction on PATT and Drug and Alcohol Testing

To assist members with industry best practices and compliance, ASLRRA offers a wealth of safety and compliance resources, including popular [training videos](#).

Training videos are available as a direct download from the association website. The Post-Accident Toxicological Testing (PATT) Video is an interactive training video produced by the industry, with input from the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), that provides instruction on when and how to administer post-accident drug and alcohol tests.

ASLRRA also offers a Reasonable Suspicion Drug & Alcohol Signs and Symptoms Video that provides detailed direction on drug and alcohol testing guidelines. This video teaches railroad workers how to recognize possible impairment, what substances to test for, how to conduct a proper test, and steps to take in case of a positive test, among many other components.

Federal Regulation Part 219.11(g) requires PATT and signs and symptoms training for supervisors of regulated employees. Utilizing these resources will ensure compliance with training requirements.

While most downloadable materials are available at no cost to ASLRRA members many are available to non-members for a fee, including training videos and most - but not all - compliance program templates. Visit [www.aslrra.org/safety](http://www.aslrra.org/safety) to access the full complement of safety and compliance tools, resources and information available from the ASLRRA.

## ASLRRA Out and About

### Staff Members Discuss Advisory Committee During Public Meeting Call

ASLRRA's Jo Strang, Sarah Yurasko and JR Gelnar participated in a meeting call with the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) on April 16.

The FRA invited the public to participate in a call to discuss recommendations to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Rail Safety Advisory Committee (RSAC). Strang made verbal comments regarding the membership process, RSAC structure and small business considerations.



## ASLRRRA Webinars – Live or On-Demand

### Upcoming Webinars

[Benefits of Freight Rail - Capacity, Safety & Clean Air!](#) - April 22, 2021

*Be sure to register by midnight EDT tonight to attend this webinar.*

This Earth Day, the EPA's Smartway and ASLRRRA will host a special webinar to talk about America's short line railroads and spark discussion on an alternative way to transport goods. Registration is free for both members and non-members.

[Rail Trends: Freight Railroads Helping America Recover](#) - April 27, 2021 (NOTE NEW DATE)

Join AAR Assistant Vice President of Policy & Economics Luisa Fernandez-Willey as she discusses the current state of the railroad industry, the movement of key commodities, and leading economic indicators crucial in understanding the economic recovery. Attendees should block up to 90 minutes for the webinar in order to participate in Q&A at the end of the presentation.

### ASLRRRA Recorded Webinars Help Railroads Understand Other, Non-COVID Employee Health Issues

While COVID-19 still looms large, there are other health and safety issues facing railroad employers and employees. Recordings of webinars covering these issues can be found in ASLRRRA's [On-Demand Webinar](#) library in the Human Resources category. They include such titles as:

- Diagnosis, Protocol, Compliance and Regulation - A Guide to Better Understanding Sleep Apnea
- Marijuana and CBD - New Drug Testing Issues
- Protecting Roadway Workers from Zika, West Nile, Tick Bites and Other Warm-Weather Threats

In addition to these titles, ASLRRRA offers more than 100 recordings covering a variety of railroad topics. Recordings are free to members and available by subscription to non-members. Follow the link above to learn more.

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

## Industry Events and Announcements

### SLSI Safety Tip Discusses Emergency Response Information on Hazmat Shipping Papers

The latest [Short Line Safety Institute \(SLSI\) Safety Tip](#) is the second in a series of hazardous materials (hazmat) tips focused on required documents.

The SLSI's newest tip describes the information that needs to be provided with hazmat rail car shipping papers. When reviewing shipping papers, railroad personnel should check for and evaluate emergency response information to ensure it includes all necessary details and is presented appropriately so as to be immediately accessible to the train crew.

Other safety tips can be found on the [SLSI website](#), covering topics like track defects, personal safety and protecting shoving movements.

In addition to a number of [online resources](#), SLSI provides [hazmat](#) and [leadership development](#) training courses to railroads at no cost, and can provide a [safety culture assessment](#) to help railroads evaluate and improve their overall safety culture.

### Bergmann Project Manager Talks About Short Lines on Company Podcast

The April 20 episode of [Insights by Bergmann](#), a podcast produced by the ASLRRRA member, features a discussion of short line railroads with Lucas Brewer, a project manager with Bergmann's Northeast Infrastructure region.

Brewer gave an overview of short lines and explained why they are integral to society. He works with a variety of railroad clients on different programs and projects and manages the company's short line and regional railroad grant writing program.

Bergmann is a preferred provider with ASLRRRA's [Member Discount Program](#), offering members help with grant applications for state and federal programs.

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

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