



April 28, 2021



New ASLRRRA Environmental Page Offers Resources, Talks Short Line Benefits

The issue of climate change has never loomed larger, and while the news often seems dire, railroads are proving to be a bright spot in the fight against global warming.

Railroads are positioned to help boost economic growth while lowering greenhouse gas emissions, and ASLRRRA is committed to supporting its members in meeting those goals. The Association's new [Environmental Impact](#) web page includes facts about rail's fuel efficiency; links to resources for members; stories about how short lines are using environmentally friendly practices; and descriptions of ASLRRRA's legislative priorities to support rail.

As part of its efforts to tell the short line story and advocate for its members, ASLRRRA welcomes stories from its members about the ways they are reducing their carbon footprint or improving sustainability. Send your company's stories to ASLRRRA's Amy Krouse at akrouse@aslrra.org.

Also included on the page is a discussion of SmartWay, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) program. [SmartWay](#) is a voluntary public-private program meant to help companies advance supply chain sustainability. ASLRRRA recently became an official SmartWay Affiliate, and railroads can become [SmartWay Carrier Partners](#).

In a webinar on Earth Day, ASLRRRA members provided tangible examples of the benefits of shipping by rail to a number of SmartWay's shipper participants, identifying ways that shippers could incorporate rail in their transportation plan - including transloading, and cross-docking. The webinar is available [here](#).

[ASLRRRA encourages its members to join SmartWay as a Rail Carrier](#). The free program allows companies to measure and document their fuel efficiency, comparing that performance to other companies and sharing their efforts with customers. Shipper and logistics partners can access this information when planning their shipments and evaluating modes of transportation. Another webinar with SmartWay and ASLRRRA talked about the benefits of becoming a partner. Members can view the recorded webinar [here](#).

ASLRRRA Chairman Doc Claussen also discussed the environmental benefits of rail in a column for the Knoxville News Sentinel. Read more about it in our ASLRRRA Out and About section below.

Learn about SLSI Programs at This Year's Regional Meetings

Education is always an important part of [ASLRRRA's regional meetings](#), and this year's in-person events offer participants a chance to explore the Short Line Safety Institute's (SLSI) Safety Train and learn about the programs offered by SLSI.

April 28, 2021

Meeting participants can tour the Safety Train and meet with SLSI staff members and hazardous materials instructors to learn about the various programs available at no cost to short line railroads. These include Hazardous Materials training, Emergency Preparedness, Reporting and Response exercises and functional drills. SLSI can also help railroads develop a customized Transportation Emergency Response Plan (TERP).

Please remember, those wanting to take advantage of this opportunity must add “SLSI Safety Train Tour” when completing meeting registration.

In addition to the Safety Train, this year’s regional meetings will provide engaging content and insightful panel discussions, with the opportunity to learn from colleagues during interactive breakout sessions. There will also be a number of networking opportunities, including a golf outing, which is offered at both the Central & Pacific and Eastern & Southern meetings this year.

Register now to take advantage of early bird pricing for both the meetings and golf. Participants can also register for ASLRRA’s General Counsel Symposium, which is being held in conjunction with the Eastern & Southern Region meeting.

[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.

As a reminder, ASLRRA does not work with or endorse any third-party companies to make hotel 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.

ASLRRA 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.



FRA Announcement Solicits Rail Research Proposals

The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) issued a [Broad Agency Announcement \(BAA\)](#) soliciting proposals on research topics that will directly impact the safety and efficiency of U.S. freight and passenger rail operations.

According to the FRA’s website, “The BAA solicits concept papers for applied technology research projects to support the strategic objectives of the Office of Research, Development, and Technology in the topic areas of Track, Equipment, Train Control, Human Factors, Workforce Development, and Infrastructure Resiliency.”

Submissions are due June 4. More information can be found at the System for Award Management website [here](#).

DOT Adds RAISE Grant Webinars to Meet High Demand

The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) has scheduled additional [webinars](#) for applicants wanting to learn more about competing for Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) grant program. Grant applications are due July 12.

The [RAISE grant program](#), formerly known as BUILD and TIGER, helps fund transportation projects with a significant local or regional impact. The webinars explain how to compete for RAISE grants and how to prepare a benefit-cost analysis. The “How to Compete” webinars are geared toward specific audiences: all applicants, tribal and rural applicants and planning grant applicants.

Due to high demand, the DOT has added three sessions, one for all applicants on May 18, one discussing benefit-cost analysis preparation on May 13, and one for planning grant applicants on May 20. There is still space in these three webinars, as well as the May 4 webinar geared toward rural applicants. All other webinars have reached capacity.

Follow this [link](#) to view the full webinar schedule and register. All webinars will be recorded and made available at the same registration website.

ASLRRRA's [Member Discount Program](#) also features three preferred providers offering assistance with preparing and submitting grant applications.

Railroad Retirement Board Q&A Explains How Dual Benefits Payments are Made

In the [April edition](#) of its question and answer (Q&A) series, the Railroad Retirement Board (RRB) discusses dual benefit payments for those who may be eligible for both railroad retirement and social security benefits.

When an annuitant is eligible for both railroad retirement benefits and social security, the railroad retirement annuity is reduced by the amount of the social security benefit. Other Tier I benefits can be reduced based on receipt of federal, state or local government pensions. The tier II portion of railroad benefits is calculated differently, and therefore is not reduced based on social security benefits.

The Q&A also discusses dual benefit restrictions for spouses, divorced spouses and widow(ers). Follow the link above to read more.

Updated Railroad Access Letter Templates Available on ASLRRRA Website

ASLRRRA has updated its railroad essential worker access letter templates for members. Both templates are now available in the [Regulatory Response](#) section of ASLRRRA's COVID-19 resource web page.

The letter templates can be used by railroad employees and contractors who require access to a site where such access is limited due to COVID-19 restrictions.

Expiration Date Extended for DHS Terrorism Advisory Bulletin

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has updated and extended a [National Terrorism Advisory System Bulletin](#). The expiration date is now May 15 instead of April 30.

The bulletin discusses a heightened threat environment due to domestic violent extremists (DVEs) who are motivated by a range of issues. The bulletin was first issued Jan. 27.



FRA Deputy Administrator Officially Biden Pick for Top FRA Role

President Joe Biden has now officially [nominated](#) Amit Bose for the role of administrator of the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA).

Bose is currently the FRA's Deputy Administrator and has been serving as Acting Administrator. Previously, he has served in senior-level roles in the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) and FRA under two DOT secretaries. He has almost two decades of experience in the public service sector and worked for New Jersey

Transit, the New Jersey Department of Transportation and as a transportation staffer at the U.S. Congress before joining the DOT, in addition to a stint at a major engineering consulting firm.

“ASLRRA and our 500+ railroad members look forward to continuing to work with Mr. Bose and his world-class team at the FRA on regulatory and legislative issues that will result in continued freight rail improvements in safety and environmental sustainability while enabling significant industry growth,” said Chuck Baker, President, ASLRRA. “With his background at the FRA and the USDOT, on the Hill, at a transit agency, and in the private sector, Amit is able to bring a well-rounded perspective to the many issues at hand. He understands the benefits that short lines can provide the country, and is rightly focused on safety as the FRA’s #1 priority. He’s an excellent choice for FRA Administrator.”

ASLRRA Thanks All Who Participated in This Year’s Virtual Railroad Day

Thanks to everyone who participated in Railroad Day on Capitol Hill earlier this month. With 475 attendees, we were able to hold more than 260 virtual meetings with Congressional offices.

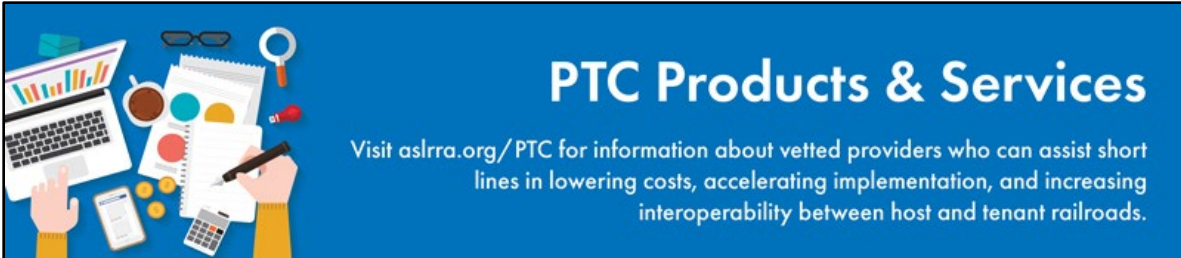
We presented a strong coalition of railroads, suppliers, labor and shippers, illustrating to policy makers the breadth our industry and the important services we provide. In the follow up since Railroad Day, ASLRRA’s staff has addressed approximately 70 requests from Congressional offices for additional

information on issues covered during Zoom meetings on April 13 and 14.

In addition, following up directly has enabled us to discuss matters of significance for the short line industry such as CRISI funding or the opportunity for a member of Congress to visit a railroad as the pandemic subsides and we return to meeting in person. If you have not already reached out to the Congressional offices with which you met, we urge to do so. The timing is perfect to engage with them.



Texas Congresswoman Kay Granger (in red jacket) speaks with railroad representatives during Railroad Day on Capitol Hill. Granger was one of many federal lawmakers who personally attended their Railroad Day Zoom meetings to discuss issues important to the rail industry.

A blue banner with white text and icons. The icons include a laptop with a bar chart, a smartphone, a calculator, a magnifying glass, a notebook with a pencil, a coffee cup, and a pair of glasses. The text reads: "PTC Products & Services" and "Visit aslrra.org/PTC for information about vetted providers who can assist short lines in lowering costs, accelerating implementation, and increasing interoperability between host and tenant railroads."

PTC Products & Services

Visit aslrra.org/PTC for information about vetted providers who can assist short lines in lowering costs, accelerating implementation, and increasing interoperability between host and tenant railroads.

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.

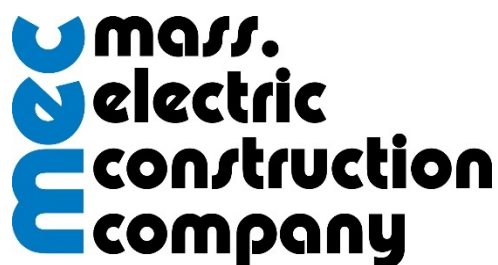
Consulting Company and Electrical Contractor Join ASLRRRA

We are pleased to welcome two Associate Business Members this week.



[Columbia Strategic Consulting Group, LLC](#), based in Fort Worth, Texas, delivers critical advocacy and coordination expertise to get vital infrastructure projects funded and built, advances government affairs priorities at all jurisdictional levels, and provides a unique capability to advise clients on tribal and first nation affairs. The Group's approach to problem-solving and

expediting projects merges commercial, operations, data analytics, and government affairs into a one-stop shop. Together, the firm's partners have led teams that secured over \$600 million in public funding for key rail and logistics projects in the U.S. and Mexico, totaling well over \$2 billion. Our primary contact is [Partner/President Nate Asplund](#), who can also be reached on (904) 625-3544.



[Mass. Electric Construction Company](#) (MEC), with multiple offices in cities including Irving, Texas, is a premier electrical contractor specializing in signal, communication, traction power and OCS systems. MEC is an industry leader in rail systems installations, with over \$3 billion in transit and rail work completed. Our primary contact is Controller [Michael Iannitti](#), who can also be reached on (972) 505-4700. We are happy to welcome MEC back as a member of our Association.

ASLRRRA Announcements

This Year's Finance and Administration Seminar Cancelled, Other Meetings Unaffected

ASLRRRA regretfully announces that the Finance and Administration Seminar has been cancelled for 2021. Anyone who has already registered will receive a phone call or email from ASLRRRA staff about refunding registration fees.

The General Counsel Symposium and Eastern and Southern Region Meeting will still be held as scheduled. The symposium will be held June 21-22 at the Galt House Hotel in Louisville, Ky., while the meeting will be held June 21-23 in the same location.

Coalition Health Plan with HUB Insurance Helps Members Reduce Premiums

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

As the 5th largest broker in the world with over 500 locations in North America, HUB International is well equipped to provide ASLRRRA members with a vast network of benefits experts and best-in-class resources anywhere in the U.S. When you partner with HUB, you're at the center of a vast network of experts who will help you reach your goals through risk services, claims management, and compliance support. Visit the ASLRRRA [Member Discount Program website](#) and select Employee Health Insurance to start saving today.

ASLRRRA Out and About

Baker Talks about Legislative and Regulatory Issues on Small Business Advocate Radio Show

Yesterday, ASLRRRA President Chuck Baker [spoke](#) on the Small Business Advocate Show with host Jim Blasingame. The two discussed legislative and regulatory issues facing short line railroads.

The conversation examined these issues in the context of working with the Biden Administration and a new Congress, especially as they develop infrastructure and surface transportation reauthorization proposals.

This is Baker's third time joining Blasingame on his radio show. He previously talked about the future of railroads in the U.S. economy and the Staggers Act.


Chairman Claussen Highlights Environmental Benefits of Freight Rail in Knoxville Paper

ASLRRRA Chairman Doc Claussen co-wrote an Earth Day [opinion piece](#) for the Knoxville News Sentinel with Tennessee state Senator Becky Massey discussing how freight railroads are "leading the charge on sustainable transportation."

The article not only highlights the ways shipping by rail can reduce greenhouse gas emissions, it talks about how railroads implement the latest technology to further increase fuel efficiency and lower

pollution. This includes using ultra-low-emission locomotives being produced at local company and ASLRRRA member Knoxville Locomotive Works.

Claussen and Massey encourage Tennessee lawmakers to recognize the ways freight rail promotes sustainability while spending millions to support the people and businesses relying on the logistics industry, and to cultivate rail with fair, balanced policy.



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



ASLRRRA Webinars – Live or On-Demand

Recordings Focused on Legal Topics Available in ASLRRRA’s On-Demand Webinar Library

Discussions of important legal topics can be found in ASLRRRA’s [On-Demand Webinar](#) library, including such titles as:

- A Practical Guide to the Railroad Industry Agreement (RIA)
- Not in My Backyard: Responding/Reacting to NIMBYism in the Community
- Crossings: The Necessary Evil We Must Contend With

In addition to these titles, ASLRRRA offers more than 100 recordings covering a variety of railroad topics, from human resources to crisis communications. 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

May 13: OneRail and REMSA to Hold Panel Discussion on Climate Change and Infrastructure

On May 13, the OneRail Coalition and the Railway Engineering-Maintenance Suppliers Association (REMSA) will hold an online panel discussion titled “Get Onboard: How Rail is Leading the Charge on Climate and Infrastructure.”

Rail industry suppliers and infrastructure and policy experts will meet to talk about how the rail sector is addressing climate change using technology and sustainable practices. Follow this [link](#) for more information or to register.

May 25: Joint PHMSA and FRA Webinar Discusses Tank Car Qualification and Maintenance Programs

The Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) and the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) will present a webinar on developing a successful tank car qualification and maintenance program on May 25.

The webinar's intended audience includes tank car owners, facilities, manufacturers, shippers, trade associations and any other parties interested in tank car safety. The guidance presented is consistent with the intent of a National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) safety recommendation regarding an accidental rail tank car chlorine release in 2016.

Follow this [link](#) to register for the webinar.

June 8-11: SLSI Leadership Development Training Course to be Held Online

The Short Line Safety Institute will hold a [virtual version](#) of its [Leadership Development Training course](#) June 8-11.

The interactive course is designed to help railroad managers at all levels improve their leadership skills, including those related to communication, constructive criticism, coaching and team building. The Leadership Development Training is offered at no cost to short line railroads.

Follow the links above for more information or to register. Railroads can also arrange to have a training course for their employees at their location. Contact SLSI's Sam Cotton at sam.cotton@shortlinesafety.org with questions or to schedule a course.

IRPT Mobile App Changes Navigation Notice Settings to Allow Customization

New navigation notice settings have been added to the Inland Rivers Ports and Terminals (IRPT) mobile app, allowing users to choose which specific navigation notices they want to receive through push notifications.

The IRPT app communicates important waterway information to industry users, including maintenance operations and emergency notifications. Current users can change their notification settings by accessing the notifications section in the app's menu.

Users do not need to be IRPT members to download or use the app. Learn more about the app and find download instructions [here](#).

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