



June 2, 2021



Congratulations to 346 ASLRRRA Railroad Members—Winners of Jake Awards for Safety

ASLRRRA has announced the winners of this year's [Jake Safety Awards](#), recognizing 346 member railroads as Jake Award winners. Of that number, 19 were recognized as [President's Safety Award](#) winners, and 316 received [Jake Awards with Distinction](#).

The Jake Award program recognizes member railroads for above-industry-average safety performance during 2020. To be honored with a Jake Award, an ASLRRRA-member railroad must perform better than the Class II and III industry average reportable injury frequency rate as recorded by the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) during the calendar year, and must have completed all FRA-required employee-on-duty reporting for 2020. The average reportable Class II and III industry frequency rate for 2020 was 2.18 per 200,000 employee on-duty hours.

The 316 railroads receiving Jake Awards with Distinction had zero FRA-reportable injuries in 2020, while the 19 President's Award Winners are Jake Award recipient railroads that posted the lowest reportable injury frequency rate per FRA regulations as measured within man-hour categories.

“Safety is the number one priority on every railroad. Our member railroads are focused not only on compliance, but on creating a strong safety culture where each employee feels accountable for safety, day in and day out,” said Chuck Baker, President of ASLRRRA in a [press release](#). “This year ASLRRRA member railroads reduced their injury rate by 10%, significantly outpacing the overall industry decline of 8% in an impressive year for railroad safety. That includes a record 316 ASLRRRA member railroads receiving Jake with Distinction Awards reflecting zero employee-on-duty accidents on their railroads in 2020. This is a testament to each member's focus on operating safely in spite of a disrupted and uncertain supply chain during the pandemic; investment in maintenance and new technology; and to the Short Line Safety Institute, which has provided significant leadership in the area of safety culture to short line railroads.”

The Association applauds this year's President's Award winners, who will receive their awards at the [Central and Pacific Region Meeting](#) in Kansas City, Mo. and the [Eastern and Southern Region Meeting](#) in Louisville, Ky. Those wanting to attend the regional meetings this month can still register for either event.

ASLRRRA also thanks the following members for their generous sponsorship support of the Jake Awards: Titanium Sponsors Genesee & Wyoming Railroad Services, Inc. and Rio Grande Pacific, and Iron Sponsors Aspen Insurance Company and Iowa Interstate Railroad, Ltd.

KCS and CN CEOs to Join ASLRRRA at Central and Pacific Region Meeting! There is Still Time to Register!

Working with Class I railroads is a big part of the business for many short lines. ASLRRRA's regional meetings will feature newly added presentations from Class I representatives to help keep members informed of what is happening in that sector.

Don't miss hearing from Kansas City Southern (KCS) CEO Pat Ottensmeyer and Canadian National Railway (CN) CEO JJ Ruest at the [Central and Pacific Region Meeting](#), taking place June 7 to 9 in Kansas City, Mo. Their talk will be moderated by transportation analyst Tony Hatch. Hear first-hand about the proposed KCS and CN merger!

ASLRRRA Welcomes New Assistant Vice President of Congressional Affairs



ASLRRRA is excited to welcome Zachary M. Radford, the Association's new Assistant Vice President of Congressional Affairs. He will report to ASLRRRA's Vice President of Congressional Affairs Tom Lynch.

As part of the congressional affairs team at ASLRRRA, he will work with the association staff and the member short line railroads to pursue legislative support for critical issues facing short lines, including infrastructure grant programs and surface transportation and tax policy.

"Zach brings significant transportation legislative experience that will serve the Association and its members well - and immediately - as Congress works to bring a transportation or broader infrastructure bill to the President's desk," said Chuck Baker, President of ASLRRRA. "I've

known Zach for many years, initially working with him back when he was the transportation staffer for Senator Blumenthal of Connecticut, a key member of the Senate Commerce Committee. His work was always relentless, creative, and of the highest integrity. Zach's immersion in transportation and infrastructure issues from his time serving two Senators, his government affairs work with WMATA, and standing up the Washington Metrorail Safety Commission have uniquely positioned him to dive right in, helping to move short line issues forward in D.C."

Mr. Radford has provided leadership in advocacy, strengthened stakeholder ties, and tackled legal and regulatory challenges in the transportation sector in many roles. In Congress, Mr. Radford served U.S. Senator Richard Blumenthal as Senior Policy Advisor & Counsel, influencing rail safety bills, the 2015 FAST Act and the 2018 FAA Reauthorization. Mr. Radford also served as a legislative assistant to Senator Jon Tester, advancing the Senator's Appropriations Committee work among other responsibilities. In addition, Mr. Radford has served as a Federal Relations Officer at the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, Director of External Relations at the Washington Metrorail Safety Commission, and as a private consultant. Previously, Mr. Radford practiced law in California.

"I'm pleased to be joining the organization at such a critical time, especially as Congress considers infrastructure legislation that will impact the short line industry for years to come," said Mr. Radford. "I look forward to ensuring that the short line freight industry is well considered as key policy decisions are made, so our members can continue to serve as the vital freight connection linking small-town and rural America with our national network."

Radford received his bachelor's degree from Georgetown University, and his Juris Doctor from the Washington University in St. Louis.



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RFP: Operate Freight Rail Service and Maintain Port-Owned Rail Infrastructure at the Port of Hueneme/Oxnard Harbor District/May 17, 2021.

Proposals due July 17. www.portofh.org/rfp



RRB Q&A Explains Railroad Retirement Survivor Benefits

In the [May installment](#) of its question-and-answer series, the Railroad Retirement Board (RRB) focuses on survivor benefits.

In certain cases, surviving widow(er)s, children and some other dependents of railroad employees can receive monthly benefits if the employee was “insured” by the Railroad Retirement Act at the time of death. Lump-sum death benefits can also be paid in some

circumstances.

A key point to note is the requirement that the deceased employee must have been “insured” under the Railroad Retirement Act. To be insured, the employee must have had at least 10 years of railroad service, or five years performed after 1995, and a “current connection” with the railroad industry based on the month the annuity begins or the month of death, whichever happens first.

The Q&A goes on to define a “current connection” and explain the eligibility requirements for surviving spouses in different situations, such as those who have or have not remarried and divorced spouses. It also describes when children and other dependents are eligible for benefits, and how survivor benefits might be subject to reduction or affected by receipt of other benefits.



Congressmen Tour A&O and CSX Facilities as Part of Bipartisan Program

The Appalachian and Ohio Railroad (an ASLRRRA member) and CSX hosted Congressman Paul Tonko (D-N.Y.) and Congressman David McKinley (R-W.Va.) for a tour of the companies’ rail facilities in Grafton, W.Va.

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Photo courtesy of Jonathan Perman

New York Congressman Paul Tonko (center) and West Virginia Congressman David McKinley (far right) board a CSX locomotive during a tour of ASLRRA member Appalachian and Ohio Railroad and CSX facilities in West Virginia.

The tour took place as part of the Bipartisan Policy Center's American Congressional Exchange Program. The program brings together two members from opposing parties for several days of education in each member's district. ASLRRA is proud to have had a hand in supporting this program and highlighting the importance of short lines in rural America.

Both Tonko and McKinley, along with a representative from the Bipartisan Learning Center, learned about rail operations from employees in the office and in the railyard. They also viewed the rolling stock and climbed aboard a CSX locomotive.

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A Dedicated Partnership

ASLRRA New Members

Know a company that would benefit from joining and participating in ASLRRA? Please contact ASLRRA's Vice President of Membership and Business Development [Kathy Keeney](mailto:kathy.keeney@aslrra.org) via email or on (202) 585-3439.

ASLRRA Pleased to Welcome Two New Suppliers to Our Membership Rolls

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[Danella Rail Services](#), based in Jacksonville, Fla., is a division of Danella Companies. Danella's Rail Service Division offers industry-leading rail infrastructure construction, maintenance and rehabilitation services. Our primary contact is Business Development Manager [Eddie Johnson](#), who can also be reached on (252) 714-2945. Please visit

their booth at our regional meetings in Kansas City and Louisville to learn more about them.



[National Precast LLC](#), based in Vancouver, Wash., manufactures precast concrete architectural and rail products. It makes "tub-style" precast grade crossings for both freight (Premier), light rail (RXR), and intermodal/port (Heavy Duty) applications with the ability to customize an architectural finish.

As a single-source provider, National Precast handles every aspect of design and manufacturing so your project can stay on schedule and on budget. [Rail Product Manager Brett Sparks](#) is our primary contact and can be reached on (360) 980-1879.



ASLRRA Announcements

Register Today to Hear from Class I Executives at the Eastern and Southern Region Meeting

As with the Central and Pacific Region Meeting, ASLRRA's [Eastern and Southern Region Meeting](#) in Louisville, Ky. will feature a Class I update. The head of business development at CSX Transportation, Tom Tisa, will talk about moving through COVID as a critical workforce, and the road ahead. Registration is open for this meeting.

Legal professionals can also still register for the [General Counsel Symposium](#), held June 21 to 22 in conjunction with the Eastern and Southern Region Meeting in Louisville. Sessions will discuss the Surface Transportation Board, appellate advocacy, National Transportation Safety Board investigations and more. Attendees at the General Counsel Symposium can elect to earn CLE credits for an additional fee.

Participants at all three meetings can also take advantage of multiple networking opportunities, including meals and breaks with fellow industry professionals and meeting sponsors, a golf tournament

and a young professionals social gathering. There is also an opportunity to tour the Short Line Safety Institute (SLSI) Safety Train and talk to SLSI representatives about resources offered by the institute. Follow the links above to register for respective meetings.

Learn More About ASLRRRA's Small Railroad Committee at the Eastern and Southern Region Meeting

ASLRRRA is looking for railroad members interested in joining the Association's Small Railroad Committee. Those who are considering joining the committee are invited by committee Chair Dan Sabin, president of Iowa Northern Railway Company, to attend the Small Railroad Committee meeting held during the [Eastern and Southern Region Meeting](#) in Louisville, Ky.

Members of the Small Railroad Committee participate in calls and meetings and work collaboratively to identify needs and services to support small and independent railroads throughout the industry. The committee's mission is to serve as an information-gathering resource for small railroads and offer ASLRRRA the collective perspective of member companies concerning matters impacting small railroads. Committee membership is open to all ASLRRRA railroad members who are small or independent railroads and are not part of a holding company.

Those interested in joining the committee and attending the meeting should email [Sabrina Waiss](#) to be added to the committee list and given meeting details. Please contact [Sabrina Waiss](#) or Chair [Dan Sabin](#) with any additional questions about committee membership.

Training Videos Help ASLRRRA Members Remain Compliant with FRA Requirements

ASLRRRA is dedicated to railroad safety and compliance and strives to assist members with industry best practices and compliance throughout their operations by offering essential resources, including [training videos](#) that are available as a direct download from the association website.

The [Post-Accident Toxicological Testing Video](#) is an industry-produced interactive training video that provides instruction on when and how to administer a post-accident drug and alcohol tests. Federal Regulation Part 219.11(g) requires Post-Accident Toxicological Testing (PATT) training for supervisors of regulated employees. This PATT eLearning course has been reviewed by the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) and will ensure compliance with the PATT training requirements.

The [Reasonable Suspicion Drug & Alcohol Signs and Symptoms Video](#) 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. Part 219.11(g) requires signs and symptoms training for supervisors of regulated employees. Training with this video will ensure compliance.

Both videos are available at no cost to ASLRRRA members and to non-members for a fee. Visit www.aslrra.org/safety to access the full complement of safety and compliance tools, resources and information available from the ASLRRRA.

ASLRRRA Members Save Money with Loram's Tie Inspection Services

Loram's Aurora Track Inspection Technology is available to ASLRRRA members with preferred pricing. Features of Aurora Track Inspection Technology include state-of-the-art imaging technology.

Aurora scans track to reveal the exact condition of every tie along the way. It pinpoints potential problems and marks their exact location; helps railroads plan repairs in the most efficient way possible; provides a detailed report that enables railroad to streamline capital maintenance programs; and helps produce compliance reports to ensure the railroad is in line with industry regulations.

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' FRA tie condition report, joint bar location report and joint tie condition report.

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

ASLRRA Out and About

Gitcheell to Join Rebuild Rural Coalition Meeting with Biden Administration and Agency Representatives

ASLRRA's Assistant Vice President of Legislative and Regulatory Policy Crystal Gitcheell will participate in a Rebuild Rural Coalition meeting with members of the Biden Administration to discuss the administration's infrastructure proposal and priorities.

The meeting will include representatives from a number of federal agencies, and participants will have the opportunity to submit questions to specific departments and agencies regarding rural infrastructure. ASLRRA plans to make the needs of rural short lines known, and will follow up with those at the meeting to keep the conversations going forward.

The National Economic Council (NEC), Domestic Policy Council (DPC), Department of Transportation (DOT), Department of Commerce (DOC), National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA), United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Department of Energy (DOE) and Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD) are all scheduled to participate.

ASLRRA continues its relationship with the Rebuild Rural Coalition through meetings and calls with key staffers in the federal government. The coalition brings together rural stakeholders in the transportation, health, technology and education sectors.



As an ASLRRA Preferred Provider, Loram offers Discounts on Tie and Track Inspection Services to ASLRRA Members.

[Click to learn more!](#)





ASLRRRA Webinars – Live or On-Demand

Upcoming Webinars

[Employee Retention Credit](#) - June 29, 2021

In this webinar, Nicole Teska and Chelsea Sweet of Bowers and Company CPAs will explain how Employee Retention Credit rules have changed in 2021. They will discuss how to determine eligibility, how much the credit can be worth and how to claim the credit. Also,

Teska and Sweet will discuss how those who have not yet analyzed their credit for 2020 can still file an amended return.

Sponsored by:



Find Information on Important Financial Issues in ASLRRRA's On-Demand Webinar Library

Financial issues can be tricky for small railroads, as there are often many different pieces to the complete financial puzzle. ASLRRRA's [On-Demand Webinar Library](#) includes recordings from subject-matter experts offering important financial insight to Association members.

Recorded webinars include these titles presented by Bowers & Company CPAs:

- Navigating a Customer Bankruptcy
- Capital Expenditure Expensing and Employee "Benefit" Issues
- Using Cost Data for Decision Making
- Understanding Financial Statements

In addition to these offerings, ASLRRRA has more than 100 webinar recordings in its [On-Demand Webinar Library](#). Recordings are free to members and available by subscription to non-members.

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

Industry Events and Announcements

June 4: Next Hay Seminar to Discuss Achieving Energy Efficiency and Reduced Emissions in Rail

The next in the William W. Hay Railroad Engineering Seminar Series will feature Michael Iden discussing the challenge freight railroads face to both reduce carbon emissions and increase energy efficiency in operations.

The June 4 online seminar is free to the public, but registration is required. Follow this [link](#) for more information or to register.

June 8 and June 10: Railinc Offers Introduction to Umler Webinars

Railinc will hold two separate webinars on June 8 and June 10 giving an overview of the Umler application, a registry for rail equipment in North America.

Some of the topics covered include how to grant Umler permissions and assign equipment rights and how to add, modify or delete equipment within Umler. Railinc recommends the webinar to all those new to the Umler program.

Registration is free but required for these webinars. Click [here](#) to register for the June 8 webinar, or [here](#) for the June 10 webinar.

Virginia Seeking Public Input on Statewide Rail Plan

The Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) is [inviting](#) stakeholders to offer feedback on the state's rail plan by completing a survey.

DRPT is developing the 2022 Virginia Statewide Rail Plan, which will provide guidance to Virginia's transportation secretariat regarding freight and passenger rail needs. The [rail plan website](#) includes a link to the survey as well as more information about the plan conveyed in a public meeting video and a presentation given to Tier 1 stakeholders at a May 20 meeting.

The deadline to complete the survey is June 13.

[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.