



May 11, 2022

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- *The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) issued a safety recommendation for ASLRRRA members concerning grade-crossing safety. Read the full text in our [Regulatory section](#) below.*
- *ASLRRRA mourns the passing of Buckingham Branch founder Bob Bryant. Read our tribute article in the [Announcements](#) section.*

ASLRRRA Closes the Books on Another Successful Conference

Over 1,400 attendees met in St. Louis last week for ASLRRRA's Annual Conference and Exhibition, taking advantage of over 30 hours of education sessions covering 11 education tracks and visiting the 165 exhibitors in the Expo Hall.

ASLRRRA welcomed U.S. Representative Rodney Davis of Illinois and Federal Railroad Deputy Administrator Jennifer Mitchell as speakers at the General Session. The industry received an update on the game-changing data collaboration project, RailPulse, and inducted Watco Executive Vice President and Chief Commercial Officer Stefan Loeb as ASLRRRA's 2022-2025 Chairman.

A highlight of every year's General Session is honoring the short line industry's best, and the 2022 Conference saw five notable individuals recognized for their career-spanning accomplishments.

Attendees will soon receive an email with follow-up resources including conference takeaways and an attendee list.

Short Line Railroad Industry Hall of Fame Inductees



ASLRRRA Conference keynote speaker Federal Railroad Administration Deputy Administrator Jennifer Mitchell (right) joined ASLRRRA President Chuck Baker for a fireside chat after delivering her remarks during the event's General Session.



Walter Rich



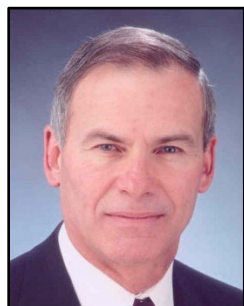
George Betke

The Association inducted two new members into the Short Line Hall of Fame, Walter Rich and George Betke.

Rich, who was inducted posthumously, served as chairman, president and chief executive officer of the Delaware Otsego since 1971 and held leadership roles at its New York, Susquehanna & Western Railway and Central New York Railroad units. He served five years as ASLRRRA chairman and was an influential and dynamic spokesman for the short line industry during the 1980s and 1990s.

George Betke was founder and chairman of Oklahoma-based Farmrail System. Under his stewardship, Farmrail evolved from a 35-mile joint venture into a 347-mile network covering 12 counties. Farmrail became the first short line to establish a formal Employee Stock Ownership Plan as a foundation for teamwork. Betke also designed the public-private financial structure for Finger Lakes Railway, a joint venture that was co-founded by Farmrail. Betke has made invaluable contributions to ASLRRRA as a member of the Association's Executive and Legislative Policy Committees and in 2016 received the Thomas L. Schlosser Distinguished Service Award, the highest honor bestowed by the Association.

[Schlosser Distinguished Service Award](#)



Lieutenant General (ret.) Richard Timmons received ASLRRRA's Thomas L. Schlosser Distinguished Service Award. Timmons came to railroading after a 32-year Army career and was president of the Association from 2002 to 2014. Many of the Association's key initiatives were instituted under his leadership. He was also a tireless advocate for the short line industry, representing the interests of small railroads before Congress and federal and state regulatory agencies and as a member of policy and technical committees of the U.S. railroad industry. In 2006, Timmons was named Railway Age magazine's Railroader of the Year.

[Safety Professional and Safety Person of the Year](#)



Ross Grantham



Nathaniel Mazo

Ross Grantham is ASLRRRA's Safety Professional of the Year. The chief operating officer of Pioneer Lines joined the company in 2019, when it had an annual injury frequency rate of 15.96 per 200,000 employee on-duty hours, well above the industry average of 2.18.

Grantham worked to change the company's safety culture, encouraging employees to recognize and report unsafe conditions, communicate quickly and transparently across the company and commit to excellence in safety practices. In Grantham's first year as COO, Pioneer's reportable incidents decreased by 50 percent and there were zero

reportable human factor incidents. In March 2022, Pioneer Lines achieved a significant milestone - 12 consecutive months without injury across the network,

Nathaniel Mazo is the ASLRRRA's Safety Person of the Year. Mazo, general manager of four OmniTRAX properties, exhibits a high degree of safety awareness. He instituted regional safety programs designed to ensure employees understand the safety goals of the company. As a result of Mazo's leadership, in 2021, his railroads exceeded OmniTRAX's key metrics in operations, safety, and finance, while delivering exceptional safety results.

[Look for Membership Dues Invoices in Your Inbox](#)

May 11, 2022

Membership dues invoices for 2022 have been emailed to the billing contact at all ASLRRA's member companies. Please contact aslrra@aslrra.org if you have not received your invoice or with any questions. We accept payments via ACH, check and credit card.

We appreciate your patience regarding this year's invoices being mailed later than normal, which was due to the Association's transition to a new, more-robust membership database.

Your company's support and participation in the Association remains crucial so that we can effectively work on the industry's behalf on legislative and regulatory matters. And your company won't want to miss another great year of networking and education opportunities, including special training seminars this summer, fall regional meetings in Atlanta and Milwaukee, General Counsel and Finance and Administration symposiums, new guidance on infrastructure funding opportunities, a constant drumbeat of webinar opportunities on key short line topics, new website rollouts, access to next year's annual conference in New Orleans, and more.



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Bentley



NTSB Recommendation Focuses on Grade Crossings

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) has issued the following safety recommendation to ASLRRA members.

On March 7, 2017, four people died and 37 sustained injuries when a CSX Transportation freight train collided with a motorcoach that had become stuck on a high vertical profile highway-railroad grade crossing in Biloxi, Mississippi. The crossing warning system was not in active mode when the motorcoach approached, stopped, and

then moved onto the railroad tracks. As the driver attempted to drive over the crossing, the frame of the motorcoach came into contact with the pavement, and the vehicle became stuck on the crossing. The grade crossing warning system only activated when the train was about 29 seconds away.

As soon as he became aware of the approaching train, the motorcoach driver opened the vehicle's loading door and told the passengers to evacuate. Due to their age and limited mobility, the passengers' evacuation was slow and the aisleway became congested; only six passengers had safely evacuated before the train struck the grounded motorcoach. The train engineer told investigators that he had noticed the motorcoach on the tracks ahead, but he expected it to clear the crossing before the train reached it. Once the engineer realized that the motorcoach might not clear the tracks, he put the train into emergency about 502 feet west of the crossing. About 14 seconds later, by which time the train had decelerated to about 19 mph, it struck the left side of the motorcoach.

The NTSB determined that the probable cause of the Biloxi, Mississippi, crash was the failure of CSX Transportation and the City of Biloxi to coordinate and take action to improve the safety of the Main

Street grade crossing, a high vertical profile crossing on which motor vehicles were known to ground frequently; their inaction led to the grounding of the motorcoach that was subsequently struck by the CSX Transportation freight train.

The railroad industry members can work with local and state highway transportation agencies to:

- Share information on incidents of vehicle groundings on grade crossings with state departments of transportation, as it would enable state authorities to continuously monitor and assess the safety of the grade crossings in their jurisdictions.
- Increase the state department of transportation's awareness of the safety conditions of grade crossings through enhanced communication.
- Communicate with local and state highway transportation about planned railroad projects that might affect the vertical profiles of grade crossings in their jurisdictions.

Additional information about the Biloxi, Mississippi accident can be found at the National Transportation Safety Board's (NTSB's) [website](#) (see, particularly, information regarding Safety Recommendation R-18-13).

Updated Mailing Labels Available on ASLRRA Website for New PATT Laboratory

Effective April 30, Quest Diagnostics will no longer handle Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) post-accident toxicological testing (PATT) laboratory functions. Any post-accident testing taking place after April 30 must be sent to Chesapeake Toxicology Resources in Frederick, Maryland.

ASLRRA has uploaded resources for railroad members to assist with this change, including new shipping labels and an instruction letter. Members can access the documents by logging in to the [Compliance Templates](#) section of ASLRRA's [Safety & Compliance](#) webpage. Railroads are reminded to ensure all FRA post-accident standard and fatality toxicology boxes include correct mailing labels.

STB Mandates Additional Service Reporting from Class I Railroads

The Surface Transportation Board (STB) [will require](#) some railroads to submit service recovery plans, regular progress reports and other data on rail service, operations and employment in response to rail service issues reported by shippers, government officials and others.

All Class I carriers must submit certain specific reports, while BNSF, CSX, NS and UP must also provide service recovery plans and other information. A copy of the full STB decision, Docket No. EP 770 (Sub-No.1) can be downloaded from the STB's press release linked above.



Government Affairs Team Asks Members to Reach Out to Senators

ASLRRA's Government Affairs Team recently asked Association members to reach out to their U. S. House of Representatives member to encourage them to join letters to House appropriators in support of robust funding for the Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) Program.

With letters sent to key House [Democrats](#) and [Republicans](#), ASLRRA's team is turning its focus to the Senate. Association members were helpful in getting many House members to join the letters, so ASLRRA again asks individuals to reach out to their senators and encourage them to join Senator Bob Casey (D-Penn.) in asking appropriators to provide the CRISI program its fully authorized funding levels. Casey's letter is open to both Democrats and Republicans, and a copy of the draft can be found [here](#). Lawmakers can contact Kennedy O'Dell at Kennedy_O'Dell@casey.senate.gov to join Casey. His deadline is tomorrow, May 12.

STB Members to Participate in Reauthorization Hearing Tomorrow

On May 12, all five members of the Surface Transportation Board (STB) will appear at a hearing before the House Transportation and Infrastructure (T&I) Committee. The hearing is focused on reauthorizing the STB.

While there is no official STB reauthorization legislation pending, House Democrats have signaled an interest in advancing one, even as STB has shown an unprecedented level of activity in recent weeks. More on the hearing is [here](#). ASLRRA's Government Affairs Team will monitor the hearing.

2022 ASLRRA TRAINING SEMINARS <small>click to learn more</small>	
May 17-18	FRA Engineer/Conductor (240/242) and Railroad Operating Rules (217) Training
June 7-8	FRA Drug & Alcohol (219) Training
July 26-28	General Code of Operating Rules (GCOR) Training
August 9-10	Advanced Designated Supervisor of Locomotive Engineers (DSLE) Training
Coming soon	ASLRRA Leadership Development Training, Regulatory Module
Coming soon	FRA Roadway Worker/Bridge Worker Safety Training

ASLRRA Announcements

Buckingham Branch Railroad Founder, Robert Earl Bryant, Passes Away

ASLRRA members mourn the passing of [Robert "Bob" Bryant](#) on May 8. He founded the Buckingham Branch Railroad (BB) out of his love of railroading and the desire to continue freight service to his home county of Buckingham and the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Under his guidance, the BB grew from a tiny 17.3-mile-long railroad with two employees to its size today of 280 miles of track with 80 employees, now the largest short line railroad in Virginia. His love of railroading extended well beyond the Buckingham Branch to his being a founding member and longtime president of the Virginia Railroad Association, a fellow in the Virginia Rail Policy Institute, and a member of both the Old Dominion Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society and the C&O Historical Society.

"The Buckingham Branch, built by Bob and continued by his son Mark Bryant (CEO) and Steve Powell (President), is a remarkable success story, and its employees are outstanding representatives of what the short line railroad industry is all about. Bob leaves behind an incredible team and family that has learned so much from him, and a company that will continue to thrive for generations to come. The Buckingham Branch Railroad and its leadership has been a significant contributor to ASLRRRA, always ready to answer the call for a request to participate in initiatives that will move the industry forward," said ASLRRRA President Chuck Baker. "Bob will be missed most certainly, and equally as certainly never forgotten."

Buckingham Branch founder and rail industry advocate Bob Bryant passed away on May 8. Bryant and the Buckingham Branch team have long been active in ASLRRRA initiatives.



"Bob was a great man. He had a gentle spirit, a strong work ethic, and a passion to steadily improve the things around him," said BB President Steve Powell. "For him, there was no obstacle too big to overcome and no detail too small to omit. He will be greatly missed."

A funeral service will be held at Mt. Zion Baptist Church on May 16 at 2 p.m. followed by committal in the church cemetery. The family will receive friends and relatives at Mt. Zion Baptist Church on May 15 from 4 to 5 p.m. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to: Mt. Zion Baptist Church, 6277 Cartersville Road, New Canton, VA 23123.

Bergmann Senior Project Manager Brewer Elected to ASLRRRA Board Position



ASLRRA congratulates Lucas J. Brewer, senior project manager – rail with Bergmann, for his election to the Association's board of directors representing Associate Business Members (suppliers).

Brewer was elected to succeed Jim Hanlon, president of Herzog Technologies, whose term expires later this year. ASLRRA thanks Hanlon for his dedicated service and leadership. Brewer will join current board member Kareen Gray, Wabtec Corporation's vice president sales for regional railroads, short lines and ports, as elected representatives of Associate Business Members. Brewer is also active in numerous ASLRRA roles, including serving on the Engineering and Supplier Committees.

Brewer holds a bachelor's degree in business administration and political science from Houghton College, a master's degree in business administration from Grantham University, and is a graduate of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff Officer College. He began his military and civilian careers in 1996 at entry level positions and has steadily increased his duties and responsibilities over the years. His military career as an engineer officer in the U.S. Army Reserves has included work on engineering projects in North America, Central America, Europe and the Middle East. In his civilian career he has previously worked as the assistant chief engineer for the Western New York & Pennsylvania Railroad.

Register Now for This Summer's GCOR and DSLE Training Seminars

Registration is now open for the [Comprehensive General Code of Operating Rules \(GCOR\) Training Seminar](#) and the [Advanced Designated Supervisor of Locomotive Engineers \(DSLE\) Training Seminar](#), which are scheduled for July 26 to 28 and August 9 and 10, respectively.

ASLRRA has partnered with member Iowa Northern Railway to offer both seminars, which will take place in Cedar Falls, Iowa. The three-day GCOR seminar is meant for railroads using GCOR as their operating rules and can be used to meet training requirements mandated by 49 CFR Part 240, 242 and 214 Subpart C. The DSLE seminar, which lasts two days, provides training on DSLE responsibilities, including Part 242 similarities and differences and application and administration of 49 CFR Part 240.

Space is limited in both courses so interested participants are encouraged to register as soon as possible. Click [here](#) to register for the GCOR seminar, or [here](#) to register for DSLE. Participants must be signed in to ASLRRA's website to register. Contact ASLRRA's [Danialle Lovik](#) with any questions about registration.

There are only three spaces available for next week's [FRA Engineer/Conductor \(Part 240-242\) and Railroad Operating Rules \(Part 217\) course](#) in Nashville, Tennessee. All slots are full for the [FRA Drug and Alcohol Training \(Part 219\) course](#) in June, but individuals can add their names to a waitlist to be notified if space becomes available or if an additional training seminar is scheduled.

ASLRRA Members Save Money with Vetted Preferred Providers

The money you save using Preferred Providers from [ASLRRA's Member Discount Program](#) could pay your annual dues and then some! ASLRRA's Member Discount Program leverages the buying power of all association members to secure discounted pricing on essential business products and services. ASLRRA members receive exclusive access to programs tailored specifically for the short line railroad industry with discounted pricing, special offers, and guaranteed exceptional service.

Member Discount Program offerings currently include drug and alcohol testing services and programs from Spark Training Solutions; personal protective equipment plus safety eyewear and shoe programs from ORR Safety; tie inspection services from Loram Technologies; grant writing services from Bergmann, GTS and HDR; PTC products and services from GTS and Ayers Electronic Systems; and employee health insurance from HUB International. Visit www.aslrra.org/discounts for details and to learn more about ASLRRA's Member Discount Program Preferred Providers.

Interested in becoming a Preferred Provider? ASLRRA is seeking to add new products and services to its Member Discount Program offerings, and we would like to hear from you! The program is open exclusively to ASLRRA associate members who are committed to providing exceptional service along with volume discounts to short line railroads. Preferred Providers benefit from a broad range of marketing/promotional activities, including visibility on [ASLRRA's website](#) and in print and electronic communications. Interested companies may contact [Sabrina Weiss](#) for more information on becoming a Preferred Provider.

ASLRRA Out and About

Baker Attends CAGTC Annual Meeting

ASLRRA President Chuck Baker attended the Coalition for America's Gateways and Trade Corridors (CAGTC) Annual Meeting today in Washington, D.C. Polly Trottenberg, U.S. Department of Transportation deputy secretary, was the keynote speaker, and panel discussions focused on issues like the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and the role of infrastructure in facilitating the movement of goods.



ASLRRA 2022 Regional Meetings

Southern/Eastern | Atlanta, GA | September 26-28, 2022

Central/Pacific | Milwaukee, WI | October 25- 27, 2022

General Counsel/Finance & Administration | Milwaukee, WI | October 25- 27, 2022



ASLRRA Webinars – Live or On-Demand

Upcoming Webinars

[Part 243 Railroad Obligations with Contractors](#) – June 1, 2022

Join FRA Staff Director Rob Castiglione to understand what your obligations are as a railroad when engaging with contractors under Part 243, including Roadway Worker Protection (RWP). Attendees will have an opportunity to participate in Q&A at the end of the presentation. Presenters include Castiglione and ASLRRA's Jo Strang and JR Gelnar.

This webinar is free for both ASLRRRA members and non-members.

Click [here](#) to learn more about ASLRRRA's education offerings.

Industry Events and Announcements

May 25 – U.S. DOT to Hold Online Transportation Equity Information Session

The U.S. Department of Transportation [will offer](#) a virtual informational session on transportation equity on May 25. The event will discuss the agency's first-ever Equity Action Plan, which was released on April 14. Also to be discussed are the ways the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) can help advance transportation equity. [Click here](#) to register for the free webinar. Participants can also submit questions to presenters ahead of time through the registration page.

June 8-10 – International Level Crossing Awareness Day Events to be Held in Denver

The International Level Crossing Awareness Day (ILCAD) campaign will [kick off](#) on June 9 in Denver, Colorado. Taking place the day before the campaign kickoff conference is a special session titled "Trespass and Suicide Prevention," while a technical visit will occur on June 10.

The [event](#) is organized by the International Union of Railways (UIC), Association of American Railroads (AAR), Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) and Operation Lifesaver, Inc. (OLI). ILCAD is a worldwide initiative to increase awareness of safety at level crossings, or highway-rail grade crossings as they are called in the U.S.

This is the fourteenth year of ILCAD campaigns, which are held annually in a different partner country. Railroad industry professionals, road authorities, academics and others from around the world attend the event to discuss crossing safety. Follow the links above to learn more or register.

AAR Quality Assurance Committee Posts Training Course Schedule

The Association of American Railroads Quality Assurance Committee has posted a [schedule and registration links](#) for its quality assurance training courses, including basic and advanced auditor training and a class on root cause and corrective action.

Classes will take place throughout the remainder of the year. Space in each class is limited, so interested participants are encouraged to register as soon as possible. Follow the link above for course descriptions and other information.

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