



In This Issue:

- **Registration Last Call** – Sign up by Friday to secure one of the last spots in ASLRRRA's GCOR Training Seminar in Iowa. [See the article](#) in our Announcements section for more.
- **CRISI Spotlight** – Our CRISI grant series includes stories about ASLRRRA members and how they have used their awards to make improvements. [This week's story](#) features Lancaster and Chester Railroad.

Headlines

Registration Opens for ASLRRRA's Eastern and Southern Region Meeting

[Individuals can now register](#) for ASLRRRA's first of two regional meetings, the Eastern and Southern Region Meeting, which will take place Sept. 26-28 in Atlanta, Georgia.

The meeting will include general and breakout sessions, networking opportunities, an opening reception and a young professionals gathering. A [hotel block is also open](#) at the Hyatt Regency Atlanta. The early bird registration rate for the meeting ends Aug. 15, while discounted room rates end Aug. 26.

ASLRRRA is also accepting sponsors for the meeting. [Click here](#) to view a current list of sponsors and enquire about sponsorship opportunities.

The [Central and Pacific Region Meeting](#), held in conjunction with the [Finance and Administration Seminar and General Counsel Symposium](#), will take place Oct. 25-27 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Registration for these events will open soon, but participants can already [book hotel rooms](#) in the Association's hotel block at the Hyatt Regency Milwaukee.

President Biden Appoints Presidential Emergency Board to Address Stalled Rail Labor Talks

On July 15, President Joe Biden [signed an executive order](#) creating a [Presidential Emergency Board](#) (PEB) to help resolve a dispute between Class I freight railroads and rail labor unions that has dragged on for over two years.

Biden [named](#) Ira Jaffe the PEB chair. He is joined by David Twomey and Barbara Deinhardt. Jaffe has chaired or served on five other emergency boards and has been involved in labor and employment arbitration cases for over 40 years. Twomey is a professor at Boston College who has helped resolve major rail and airline disputes, while Deinhardt is an independent arbiter who has chaired the New York State Employment Relations Board and the New York State Workers' Compensation Board.

The PEB has 30 days to prepare and present a report to the president, followed by 30 days during which the railroads and unions must work to reach an agreement based on the report's recommendations.

On July 6, ASLRRA [wrote a letter](#) to Biden urging him to appoint a PEB to facilitate discussions. The Association's letter was one of many sent by various rail, shipper and other groups eager to avert a strike that would have severe consequences for the nation's already strained supply chain. The [U.S. Chamber of Commerce](#) called for appointment of a PEB, as did members of the [Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation](#).



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Bentley

Regulatory Update

D.C. Court of Appeals Upholds FRA Brake System Safety Standards Final Rule

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit [has largely ruled against](#) two freight railroad unions, the Transportation Division of the International Association of Sheet Metal, Air, Rail, and Transportation Workers and the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, in their petition for review of a Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) [final rule concerning brake system safety standards](#). The rule went into effect Dec. 11, 2020 and has remained in effect through the duration of the unions' petition.

The unions argued that the FRA did not meet statutory obligations to prioritize safety in its rulemaking, that the FRA denied them an opportunity to seek reconsideration, and that the agency published its rule in an untimely way. The court ruled that the portion of the rule lifting end-of-train calibration requirements for certain telemetry devices did not meet the FRA's safety obligation, but also ruled that all other challenges failed on the merits or for lack of jurisdiction.

ASLRRA and the Association of American Railroads (AAR) [submitted comments in March 2020](#) on the initial notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM). Both associations supported the proposals in the NPRM, which would expand the time freight cars could be off-air before needing a new brake test. They also supported the FRA's proposed codification of certain long-standing railroad industry waivers.

Legislative Update

ASLRRRA Sends Letter to Senate Subcommittee Leaders Urging Full CRISI Funding and More

On July 19, ASLRRRA President Chuck Baker [submitted a letter](#) to Senators Brian Schatz (D-Hawaii) and Susan Collins (R-Maine), the chair and ranking member, respectively, of the Senate Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing, Urban Development and Related Agencies. The letter called on Schatz and Collins to ensure the Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) grant program is funded at the fully authorized \$1 billion level in the Senate's fiscal year 2023 transportation appropriations bill.

In the letter, Baker addressed several other funding-related concerns, including asking lawmakers to ensure a level playing field for short line CRISI applicants. Baker also urged the senators to fund other key discretionary programs, as well as the Short Line Safety Institute and Operation Lifesaver, at robust levels, and called on them to continue excluding language allowing longer or heavier trucks on the nation's roads.

The letter from Baker is similar to [one sent to Schatz and Collins](#) by 16 of their Senate colleagues in May. However, the senators' letter focused specifically on the merits of the CRISI program, again asking Schatz and Collins to ensure the program is fully funded.

U.S. House Legislative Round Up: STB Reauthorization Postponed, House Expected to Pass Spending Bills

The House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee postponed consideration of a bill that would have expanded the authority of the Surface Transportation Board (STB) and imposed significant new requirements on the freight rail industry.

There is no new planned date for the bill's consideration. ASLRRRA's Congressional Affairs Team will continue to engage with committee staff to articulate concerns with the bill, as well as note areas of the bill that could be helpful for freight rail.

The full House of Representatives is moving forward with passing several spending bills for fiscal year 2023, which begins Oct. 1. The House is expected to pass a minibus of spending bills, among which is the transportation spending bill, which provides a robust amount of funding for the CRISI grant program and no troublesome trucking provisions. There is no timeframe for Senate action.



As an ASLRRRA Preferred Provider, Spark offers Discounts on Drug & Alcohol Testing Services to ASLRRRA Members.

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Preparing for CRISI

The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) has signaled it will be opening the 2022 [Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements \(CRISI\) grant program](#) in August. With a historic \$1.6 billion available for projects this year – over four times the resources in 2021 – ASLRRA is eager to help its members prepare for the funding opportunity release.

The Association is providing guidance through a series of articles focused on steps members can take to position themselves to take advantage of this program. We will also profile CRISI grant recipients and the success they have had with the program.

CRISI Step Two – Preparing Foundational Documents

Project foundational documents are important components of a successful CRISI application. The FRA requests that applicant provide three documents as attachments: a project statement of work (SOW), a schedule and a budget.

It is not uncommon that the FRA receives CRISI applications in which these documents are incomplete or do not fully agree with one another, the narrative or other parts of the application. Completing these three documents at the beginning of the grant writing process reduces the risk of this problem, and having the documents early assists with preparation of other application elements.

Project Statement of Work

A SOW is a technical document and should communicate to a railroad engineer exactly what the applicant proposes to build, acquire or rehabilitate, and all the tasks that will be performed to deliver the project.

A SOW only needs to be as long and as detailed as necessary to capture the project. For instance, a simple track rehabilitation project in existing right of way might be addressed in a two-page statement. A SOW may be accompanied by and reference engineering drawings or reports, depending on project type, complexity and level of readiness.

Project Schedule

The schedule can be as simple as a table listing the project tasks and deliverables, showing their anticipated start and finish dates. Preparing a graphical presentation, such as a Gantt chart, can be helpful.

A schedule should be conservative, identify the expected award announcement date, and assume a year from that point to the execution of the grant agreement before construction begins.

CRISI Tip Sheet

- **Remember to include** all needed ancillary tasks in the SOW, such as for procurement, construction engineering, project management, land acquisition, permitting, and institutional coordination.
- **Take into account** time needed for applicable permitting and procurement, construction seasons and work windows when developing a schedule.
- **Be sure to consider** federal requirements like those in the Buy America Act and Davis-Bacon Act when developing the budget.

Important Links

ASLRRA's [On-Demand Webinar Library](#) features grant webinar recordings.

ASLRRA's [Member Discount Program Preferred Providers](#) offer grant writing services.

The most recent [FRA CRISI webinar](#) is here.

Project Budget

The project budget should be a quantity-cost-based "bottom-up" budget. If there are multiple quotes and vendors, applicants may wish to assemble a unified budget worksheet with estimates and quotes as attachments. The budget should present key assumptions, such as if materials will be new or relay, or if they must meet a specific technical standard. Ideally, labor, equipment and materials costs will be broken out.

It is also important to include assumptions around cost escalation, relative to the proposed schedule, plus some management contingency. The FRA is more worried about cost underestimates than overestimates because awards cannot be increased over what was requested in the application if applicants later discover they have underbudgeted for their projects.

CRISI Spotlight: The Lancaster and Chester Railroad and the South Carolina Piedmont Freight Rail Service Improvement Program



ASLRRA member Lancaster and Chester Railroad purchased this and two other Tier 4 locomotives with CRISI grant funds it received in 2019. The railroad made a number of other improvements with its \$8.75 million award, tackling projects that will boost safety and efficiency and provide more environmentally friendly shipping services.

year, will allow the rail line to support heavier 286,000-pound cars over the Catawba River Bridge. Loads were previously limited to 263,000 pounds. Trains will also be able to operate at increased speeds, up to a maximum 25 miles per hour from a maximum 10 miles per hour.

"An intimidating prospect to start with, the project was greatly helped by the use of appropriate consultants and once awarded, management was greatly enhanced by help from the FRA officials," said Doc Claussen, vice president of L&C parent company Gulf & Ohio Railways. "Particularly, evaluation of the track before and after the project by the FRA geometry car helped L&C specifically target work areas."

In 2019, ASLRRA member Lancaster and Chester Railroad (L&C) received an \$8.75 million CRISI grant and with it was able to complete a laundry list of upgrades that had previously seemed out of reach.

Thanks to the fact that short line freight railroads can compete independently for CRISI grants, L&C was the sole funding applicant and awardee. With the grant, L&C purchased three new Tier 4 locomotives, which meet the Environmental Protection Agency's most stringent emission requirements, to replace three Tier 0 locomotives.

In addition, L&C is rehabilitating the Catawba River Rail Bridge and upgrading 46 miles of track with 33,750 new crossties, and 14,000 tons of ballast and surfacing. The project, which will be completed this

Announcements

Members Receive Preferred Pricing on Drug and Alcohol Testing Services with Spark Training Solutions

Spark Training Solutions is the exclusive Preferred Provider of drug and alcohol testing services in the Association's Member Discount Program. Spark is passionate about helping railroads and contractors meet Federal Railroad Administration drug and alcohol testing requirements, delivering key differentiators for drug and alcohol testing services including railroad-industry-specific expertise, online tools and key national partnerships.

Spark's expert team has built a program to offer drug and alcohol testing services and programs to help railroads and contractors find the most effective strategies to manage their company, Part 219, and other DOT-regulated programs. Drug and alcohol program services include clinic and mobile or onsite testing services, laboratory and medical review officer (MRO) services, electronic chain of custody forms and third-party administrator (TPA) random testing and consortium. Visit ASLRRA's [Member Discount Program page](#) and click on the Spark Training Solutions logo to start saving today.

Register Today for ASLRRA's Summer Training Seminars

Interested participants [must register by the end of this week](#) to secure a spot in ASLRRA's General Code of Operating Rules (GCOR) Training Seminar, held July 26 to 28 in Cedar Falls, Iowa.

Training will be held at the Holiday Inn & Suites BienVenu Event Center. The comprehensive three-day program may be used by railroads to meet operating rules training as required by 49 CFR Part 240, 242 and 214 Subpart C. Attendees will have an opportunity to participate in daily interactive discussions with peers and regulatory experts and registration includes an online assessment and Certificate of Completion awarded upon successful completion of the program.

The next ASLRRA training seminar is the [Advanced Designated Supervisor of Locomotive Engineers \(DSLE\) Training Seminar](#), which will be held Aug. 9 to 10, also in Cedar Falls. The seminar will provide training on DSLE responsibilities, including application and administration of 49 CFR Part 240 and Part 242 similarities and differences.

ASLRRA will also offer two additional [training seminars](#) in the fall. Both the ASLRRA Leadership Development Training - Regulatory Module and the FRA Roadway Worker/Bridge Worker Safety (214) Training will take place in Phoenix, Arizona. Leadership development training is scheduled for Sept. 13-14, while roadway and bridge worker training will occur Oct. 4-6. Registration for these seminars will open soon.

Thanks to a donation from the family of Jake Jacobson, ASLRRA is offering a [new scholarship](#) to eligible railroad member employees to help them pay for training registration fees. Up to \$425 will be awarded to qualified individuals attending ASLRRA-hosted training such as the seminars described above. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis until all funds are distributed. Click [this link](#) to apply.

ASLRRA Out and About

ASLRRA, SLSI Staff Attend Rail Liability Conference in Missouri

ASLRRA's Senior Vice President, Law and General Counsel Sarah Yurasko and Vice President, Safety and Compliance JR Gelnar, along with the Short Line Safety Institute's (SLSI) Executive Director Tom Murta, spoke at the 27th Railroad Liability Conference hosted by ASLRRA member Ironhorse Resources in St. Louis, Missouri.

Yurasko and Murta provided an update of their respective organization's current activities and services, while Gelnar participated in a panel discussion of the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and their overlapping jurisdiction over railroads.



Top: ASLRRA's JR Gelnar (right) participated in a panel discussion at the 27th Railroad Liability Conference.

Left: SLSI's Tom Murta (standing) gives an update on the organization at the conference. ASLRRA's Sarah Yurasko (seated) also provided an Association update for participants.

2022 ASLRRA TRAINING SEMINARS [click to learn more](#)

July 26-28	General Code of Operating Rules (GCOR) Training	August 9-10	Advanced Designated Supervisor of Locomotive Engineers (DSLE) Training
September 13-14	ASLRRA Leadership Development Training, Regulatory Module	October 4-6	FRA Roadway Worker/Bridge Worker Safety Training

The graphic features a central image of railroad tracks crossing, with lines connecting to the seminar details. The details are presented in four colored boxes: pink for July, red for August, teal for September, and green for October.

ASLRRA Webinars

Webinars On-Demand

Recordings of Rail Industry Communication and Reporting Systems Webinars Available Online

Subject-matter experts have joined ASLRRA to discuss important railroad industry communication and reporting systems, and those webinars are available as [On-Demand Webinar](#) recordings. Look in the Association's online library for titles like:

- What's New Regarding Confidential Close Call Report System?
- Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) 101 – Railroad Communications
- Emergency Notification Systems (ENS) Review

These webinars are only a few of the over 170 recordings available on a wide variety of topics including finance, human resources and technology. ASLRRA members can access the On-Demand Webinar for free while non-members can purchase a subscription. [Click here](#) to access the webinar library today.

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

Industry Events and Announcements

August 16-18, Michigan City, Indiana: TRB Freight Rail Committee's Summerail '22 Event

Individuals can now register for the Transportation Research Board Freight Rail Committee's 15th Annual Summerail '22 event taking place August 16-18 in Michigan City, Indiana.

Summerail is geared toward anyone interested in a career in freight logistics or rail, including graduate and college students. It includes presentations on top industry issues, an opportunity to present research work, and tours of freight and passenger operations and museums in the Michigan City area. Presentations will include discussions of positive train control (PTC), precision scheduled railroading (PSR) and more. [Click this link](#) to view and download an information sheet and registration form.

Attend the University of Wisconsin's Railroad Courses In Person, Live Online or On Demand

The University of Wisconsin-Madison's College of Engineering is offering several [railroad courses](#) this fall, which will be available in in-person and online formats.

- Sept. 13-14: [Fundamentals of Railway Train Control and Signaling](#)
 - Learn the essentials of modern railway train control and signaling systems. Attend in person or live online.
- Oct. 12-13: [Fundamentals of Railway Bridge Engineering and Management](#)
 - Learn about basic railway bridge engineering and design under the AREMA Manual for Railway Engineering, and the latest design procedures, materials, and methods used in current railway bridge engineering practice. Attend in person or live online.
- Oct. 24-25: [Introduction to Railroad Engineering and Operations](#)

July 20, 2022

- Gain a working knowledge of railroad engineering and operations, along with related concepts for freight, intercity passenger, and rail transit systems. Attend in person or live online.

Also available are three asynchronous courses that can be accessed online at any time.

- [Emergency Railroad Bridge Inspections](#)
- [Propulsion for Light Rail Vehicles](#)
- [Introduction to Traction Power and OCS Systems](#)

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.