



TECH TRACKS



Helping Members Track Railroad Technology

A publication of the American Short Line and
Regional Railroad Association's Technology Committee

ASLRRA Meeting Dates that Rate

2009 Central-Pacific Region Meeting

August 16-17-18, 2009
Seattle, WA

2009 Eastern Region Meeting

October 11-12-13, 2009
Indianapolis, IN

2009 Southern Region Meeting

November 8-9-10, 2009
Panama City Beach, FL

2010 Annual Convention

May 2-3-4, 2010
Hilton Bonnet Creek
Orlando, FL



Technology Committee Members:

Carl Belke, Chair
Western New York &
Pennsylvania Railroad

Preston Claytor, Vice-Chair
RailAmerica

Bill Everett, Recording
Secretary
ARINC

Cheryl Correll
Watco Companies

John Danyluk
TransCore

Anthony Erb
Environmental Protection
Agency

JUNE 15, 2009

SPECIAL EDITION CONCERNING MOTOROLA ASTRO-SPECTRA RADIOS

This is a special alert to short line and regional railroads that may have locomotives equipped with Motorola Astro-Spectra radios. These radios were produced in the 1980s and 1990s, and are capable of operating in wideband mode (25KHz) or narrowband mode (12.5KHz). Earlier model Spectra radios can only operate in wideband.

As a reminder, all railroad radios will transition from wideband operation to narrowband operation in 2011 and 2012. By Federal Communications Commission order, no wideband operation will be allowed after January 1, 2013. In preparation for this transition, the railroad industry has self-imposed a deadline of July 1, 2010 – one year from next month – for all locomotives operated at interchange or in run-through service to be equipped with narrowband-capable radios.

Radios capable of transmitting both wideband and narrowband interlock band operation with channel display. Other than the Motorola Astro-Spectra, these radios operate narrowband by the user including a leading numeral "0" (zero) when specifying the radio channel. As example, if a user wants to operate on Narrowband Channel 58, they then select "0 5 8". The AAR Spectrum Management Office, which administers railroad radio use, has adopted the leading zero as the standard narrowband channel indicator.

However the Astro-Spectra, as originally produced, operates narrowband by a user including a leading numeral "1" (one) when specifying the radio channel. Again as example, if an Astro-Spectra user wants to operate on Narrowband Channel 58, they then select "1 5 8". Concern for this non-standard has led the AAR Wireless Communications Committee, which is overseeing rail industry conversion to narrowband, to progress the development of a component card that will allow the Astro-Spectra to operate narrowband by using and displaying a leading zero.

Amtrak, CSX and Norfolk Southern have recently arranged with Scholer-Johnson Corporation of Orlando, FL to develop and manufacture component cards for the Astro-Spectra radios they own. These will be built in a special production run later this summer for an order cost (at this writing) of approximately \$150-200 apiece. ASLRRA has spoken with the president of Scholer-Johnson, Mr. David Johnson, who has advised that other interested railroads can be included in this special production run.

Steve Friedland
Morristown & Erie Railway

Tony Habovstak
Control Chief

Tom Howie
RailSoft Systems

Mark Kramer
10East

Eduardo Luckie
GE Transportation

Mark Nordling
Florida Central Railroad

Randall Slomski
Railpower Hybrid
Technologies

Matt Snodgrass
JMA Railroad Supply

Terry Tse
Federal Railroad
Administration

Richard Timmons
ASLRRRA

David Mears
ASLRRRA



This newsletter is provided to all ASLRRRA Members. If you do not wish to receive future editions of Tech Tracks, [please click here](#) to be removed from this email distribution list.

American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association

50 F St., NW, Suite 7020
Washington, DC 20001
202-628-4500
www.aslrra.org



If you are a short line or regional railroad that has locomotives equipped with Astro-Spectra radios and intend for these radios to continue in service, ASLRRRA strongly recommends that you purchase these component cards for them. You may do so by directly contacting Scholer-Johnson at (407) 645-5093.

Please note that ASLRRRA has no relationship with Scholer-Johnson other than for informational purposes. **The cutoff to be included in the special production run of these component cards is August 1, 2009.**

-#-