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American Short Line and
Regional Railroad Association's

VIEWS & NEWS



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Upcoming Events

2009 Eastern Region Meeting

October 11-13, 2009
Indianapolis, IN

2009 Southern Region Meeting

November 8-10, 2009
Panama City Beach, FL

CSX Short Line
Workshop
March 7-9, 2010
Saint Augustine, FL

2010 Annual
Convention
May 1-4, 2010
Hilton Bonnet Creek
Orlando, FL

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ASLRRRA WELCOMES MORE NEW MEMBERS

ASLRRRA's Cheryl Huyck and Eileen Keane report on companies newly joining ASLRRRA:

We are pleased to welcome the following new Associate members:

Alternative Motive Power Systems: Alternative Motive Power Systems designs and develops GenSet power and control systems for locomotives operated by both Class I and short line railroads. AMPS systems are tailored to the end user specific requirements while significantly reducing emissions and lowering fuel, maintenance and overall operating costs. AMPS is located at 8550 Jug St., Alexandria, OH 43001 and their main number is (614) 568-7838. Their website is www.greenmotivepower.com and their fax number is (740) 924-9483. Please contact President Dan Frederick at dan@greenmotivepower.com.

Stuart & Branigin LLP: Stuart & Branigin LLP specializes in railroad law, specifically focusing on the defense of railroads. The firm represents their clients' interests in crossing accidents, FELA litigation, trespasser claims, property damage claims, and employment discrimination claims among other areas. Stuart & Branigin LLP is located at 8888 Keystone Crossing, Suite 1401, Indianapolis, IN 46240 and their main number is (317) 575-2551. Their website is www.stuartlaw.com and their fax number is (317) 574-7050. Please contact Partner Bruce A. Hugon at bah@stuartlaw.com.

And we are equally pleased to welcome the following new Sustaining member:

I.C.E. Service Group, Inc.: I.C.E. Service Group, Inc. is an asset based logistics company that provides transportation equipment, including a fleet of rail equipment and intermodal containers. I.C.E. provides services to a wide range of customers in the Industrial, Construction, and Environmental Industries. I.C.E is located at 192 Ohio River Blvd., Suite 100, Ambridge, PA 15003 and their main number is (724) 266-7580. Their website is www.iceservicegroup.com and their fax number is (724) 266-7583. Please contact Senior Program Manager-Project Design Gus Chirgott at gchirgott@iceservicegroup.com.

Are you aware of a company with different products or services than your own and interested in heightening their visibility to short line and regional railroads? Then let Cheryl Huyck know, so that she may acquaint them with the many benefits of becoming an ASLRRRA associate member. Email Cheryl at chuyck@aslrra.org or phone her at (202) 585-3431.

ACTION-PACKED MEETING LEAVES RAILROADERS SLEEPLESS IN SEATTLE

ASLRRA's VP-Meetings & Member Services Kathy Cassidy recently acted as special correspondent to V&N to cover the Central/Pacific Region Meeting in Seattle, Washington, held August 16 through 18. Here is her report:

Bright sunshine and delightful temperatures greeted more than 210 Central and Pacific Region members, suppliers, and government representatives as they gathered last month for the combined regional meeting at the Westin Hotel in downtown Seattle. The group was hosted by Tacoma Rail and the meeting was chaired by Alan Matheson, Roadmaster for Tacoma Rail. Overall meeting feedback indicated that the group had an enjoyable time networking at the variety of social events and learning from the distinguished panel of presenters.

The event got underway early on Saturday, August 15, with the Second Annual Habitat for Humanity Build. This year, more than 30 meeting attendees and Tacoma Rail staff worked on five homes in nearby Tacoma. The volunteers painted one entire home, did interior work on others, including electrical wiring, installing a hot water heater, and framing doors, while another crew cleared and leveled the area around several other homes and then shoveled, hauled, and distributed 12 cu yards of stone around the homes and did the landscaping with the help of the homeowners. (Folks, that's 30,000 lbs. of stone!) Later that evening, ASLRRA President, Rich Timmons, hosted the Habitat participants at a special reception, where he commended them for their good work and announced that Jalene Forbis and Mike Ogborn, Pacific and Central Region Vice Presidents, respectively, were challenging the other two regions to set up similar events at their meetings. As Jalene shared, "Until you actually participate and experience an event like this, where you work side by side with a homeowner that is working towards the goal of moving his family of six out of a garage and into their new home, you just don't fully understand its impact. Sure, all that physical labor does leave you tired and sore at the end of the day, but it also leaves you with a feeling of accomplishment and a sense of camaraderie with your fellow attendees. I can't wait to participate again in the future."

The Habitat event was not without its own adventures for one of the participants, Gary Landrio. Gary was busily framing doors with a crew from Boeing when one of them noticed that the ASLRRA bus had just departed without him. However, all was not lost, as Gary was soon driving back to Seattle with a young lady from the Boeing group in her black convertible. As Gary related, "being left behind is not without its privileges, as I got back to the hotel in style and before the bus did."

On Sunday afternoon, over 50 attendees enjoyed a day in the sun watching the Seattle Mariners beat the New York Yankees, 10-3. The meeting kicked off Sunday afternoon with a new feature, the Small Railroad Best Practices session which was hosted by Rich Timmons and small railroad board representative, Eric Lee. This session provides an opportunity for railroads with under \$1,000,000 in operating revenue to discuss the special challenges that they face and share best practices. Immediately following the session, the opening reception kicked off in the ASLRRA's first ever regional meeting table top exhibit area. The exhibit area was used for the ASLRRA's social activities (breakfasts, breaks, and lunch) for the balance of the meeting.

Another new addition to the regional meeting was a simultaneous training session covering track safety standards, bridge maintenance plans, and bridge worker safety. Attendees of Monday's and Tuesday's Business Sessions heard an overview of all of the challenges facing the industry and they received legislative updates on the tax credit, railroad re-regulation and anti-trust, and proposed climate change legislation. Additional speaker presentations covered topics such as routing rules on loaded TIH cars, positive train control, the new FRA railroad crossing project, the outlook for ethanol and the wind turbine market, ASLRRA's new bulk fuel pilot project, the economic outlook and an overview of the provisions of the safety bill. One of the highlights of the conference was "Putting the FUN in Safety Fundamentals", a presentation put on by the RailAmerica team. Moderated by Bob Jones, ASLRRA's 2009 Safety Person of the Year and Regional VP of RailAmerica, the panelists hail from many of RailAmerica's Central and Pacific Region member railroads. All of the speaker presentations are posted in the documents section on the ASLRRA's members' only website:

<https://members.aslrra.org>. Call the ASLRRA at 202-628-4500 if you need help with your login info.

Monday afternoon, the Central and Pacific Region railroad members held elections, where Bob Jones of RailAmerica was re-elected to the Pacific Region Board, and Norma Torres, Brownsville & Rio Grande International Railroad and Dan Zink, Red River Valley & Western Railroad were elected to full terms on the Central Region Board and John Howell of Blackwell Northern Gateway Railroad was elected to fill Andy Thompson's unexpired term which was vacated when Andy was elected to join the ASLRRRA Executive Committee earlier this year. Central Region Vice President, Mike Ogborn, noted the many contributions and valuable service of two board members that were stepping down: Kirk Hawley of Watco Companies, and David Perkins of Angelina & Neches River Railroad.

Monday night's reception took place in the private Columbia Tower Club, high atop the tallest building west of the Mississippi. The club sits on the 76th Floor where attendees were treated to outstanding views of the Seattle skyline on a spectacularly clear evening. One Central Region member noted that looking out one window, they captured a view of almost every possible mode of transportation: car, freight train, jet plane, seaplane, helicopter, tanker, and sailboat – and all at the same time. The group thoroughly enjoyed the reception and many were reluctant to leave as they tried to capture that perfect photo of the setting sun.

Tuesday afternoon the conference closed with a driving tour of the Port of Seattle and the BNSF Sig Yards. Tacoma Rail's Operation Manager, Tim Flood, worked with the various groups to arrange the tour and the participants all enjoyed it.

The Regional meeting had a lot of winners, thanks to our door prize sponsor, Balfour Beatty Rail: Ron Russ - Portland & Western - Nintendo DS Lite, Eric Hocky of Thorp Reed & Armstrong – Flip Video camera; Jeff Long of A&K Railroad Materials – Apple iPod Touch; and Vic O'Neal of Holland Company – Bose headphones. Additionally, names were drawn in the Annual Convention promotion and Galen White of Louisiana & Northwest Railroad won a free three-night stay at the Hilton Bonnet Creek for next year's convention, and Eric Temple of Portland Vancouver Junction won a free registration to the convention. Additionally, Stephan B. Gibson of Eastern Washington Gateway Railroad won a free registration to next year's Central/Pacific Region Meeting in Kansas City, MO.

ASLRRRA wishes to thank all of the players that helped to ensure the success of this meeting, including our Meeting Chairman, Alan Matheson, and his Planning Committee: Jalene Forbis, Mike Ogborn, Kirk Hawley, Bob Jones, Jim Huenefeldt, Steve Murray, and Judy Petry and our volunteers: Steve & Holly Friedland, Rose Lang, Tim Flood, Beth Garguilo, and Norma Torres.

HOUSE RR SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIR BROWN TOURS RAILAMERICA

Adam Nordstrom of Chambers, Conlon & Hartwell files this special report on the recent visit by House Railroad Subcommittee Chair Corrine Brown (D-FL) to the offices of RailAmerica:

On September 14, Representative Corrine Brown, Chairwoman of the US House Subcommittee on Railroads, visited the headquarters of RailAmerica, Inc. and the Florida East Coast Railway in Jacksonville, FL. Rep. Brown met with both senior management and over 100 FEC and RailAmerica employees in the FEC's newly constructed classroom-style employee training facility. The meeting was also joined by representatives of the broader short line railroad community and a diverse group of suppliers and contractors who support RailAmerica and FEC operations.

Rep. Brown has been a strong supporter of short line railroads and an advocate for federal policies that support the movement of freight by rail. During her remarks to attendees Rep. Brown said, "As Chairwoman of the House Subcommittee on Railroads I have been pushing legislation to extend the short line railroad tax credit. I believe this is important legislation, and I believe that the short lines are important, not just for Florida, but for all of America as well."

RailAmerica CEO John Giles called Rep. Brown “a true supporter of freight railroads.” In his remarks he went on to say, “Jacksonville is not only a home to a large Class I railroad, but also to short lines like the RailAmerica family of railroads, and the Florida East Coast Railway, and other significant short lines. As such, it is very appropriate that our Congresswoman be the chair of the House Subcommittee on Railroads. I can tell you that it has been a pleasure to work with Rep. Brown over the years, and we look forward to continuing that strong relationship between RailAmerica, FEC, the ASLRRRA, and Corrine Brown for years to come.”

Rep. Brown has formed an exploratory committee to evaluate her potential candidacy for the United States Senate.

RAIL ANTITRUST BILL PASSES HOUSE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

The House Judiciary Committee approved H.R. 233 on September 16. The bill proposes, “To amend the federal antitrust laws to provide expanded coverage and to eliminate exemptions from such laws that are contrary to the public interest with respect to railroads.”

The House bill was sponsored by Rep. Tammy Baldwin (D-WI). It is similar to a Senate bill, S.146, that was pulled from Senate floor consideration in early June for purposes including possible revision. The Senate bill’s sponsor, Sen. Herb Kohl (D-WI), has said that he will work to add the antitrust repeal to a forthcoming Surface Transportation Board reauthorization. That measure has not yet been introduced. H.R. 233 now goes to the full House for debate.

CCH UPDATES ON PUSH FOR TAX CREDIT EXTENSION

Jeff Van Schaick of Chambers, Conlon & Hartwell reports the latest on efforts to renew and extend the Short Line Tax Credit:

We are working into the final months of the year and continue to gain momentum. Texas Day on the Hill, which took place on September, 16 has proven twice over to be a huge success. Over half of the 13 co-sponsors added this week are Texans we met with for Texas Day. Excellent work Texans!

There are also other states that have been doing remarkably well and some that have not been doing so well.

- **Negatives:** New Jersey, Arizona, Colorado and Nebraska have are all behind compared with previous years.
- **Neutral:** Oregon - four out of five Representatives from Oregon have signed on, we are just waiting for Representative Walden, who has co-sponsored twice in the past. We have met with his office numerous times and continue attempts to engage the Transportation Aide. If you have a connection to Oregon’s second district, please contact Lauren Flynn in Rep. Walden’s office at 202-225-6730.
- **Positives:** Minnesota, Utah and Pennsylvania have been working hard and the numbers show it. Texas clearly has gained the most traction in recent weeks, and North Carolina has surprised us all shattering previous state numbers. The only North Carolina House Member left is Rep. Brad Miller 202-225-3032 (ask for Michael Canning).
- **Zero:** Delaware, Hawaii, Nevada and Rhode Island have ZERO Representatives and Senators signed on to this bill. In the past, they have.

New additions this week are Reps Barton (TX), Capps (CA), Carter (TX), Conaway (TX), A. Green (TX), G. Green (TX), Harper (MS), Larson (CT), Matheson (UT), L. Smith (TX), Teague (NM), Thornberry (TX), and Watt (NC). See attached for complete list of HR 1132/S 461 co-sponsors.

We are in the home stretch – only 94 days until the section 45G short line railroad tax credit expires. We need to follow the direction of Senate Finance Committee Chairman Baucus and do all we can to get more co-sponsors to make sure we have 3 years and 94 days.

TIGER GRANT DEADLINE ARRIVES

September 15 marked the U.S. Department of Transportation's deadline for Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) grant applications. But before the clock struck midnight, several states and municipalities submitted applications seeking millions of dollars for dozens of rail projects.

Of particular interest, Iowa DOT submitted applications seeking \$109 million in total for rail projects. Included in the rail requests are applications for a \$7 million grant to help the Cedar Rapids and Iowa City Railroad finance the addition of two 9,800-foot tracks for unit trains at a soon-to-be-expanded Archer Daniels Midland facility. Iowa also applied for a \$19.9 million grant to help Iowa Northern Railway fund bridge and line rehabilitation projects between Cedar Rapids and Manly.

Among other state's TIGER grant applications, one of the largest came from Ohio. Ohio DOT is seeking \$258 million toward CSX's \$842 million National Gateway corridor project. Grant projects would help fund the completion of 61 double-stack clearance projects along the corridor.

FRA, STATES RELEASE RAIL IMPROVEMENT GRANTS

Earlier this month, a number of grants were made by federal or state agencies that either directly or indirectly intend to assist short line and regional railroads.

On September 18, the Federal Railroad Administration announced a total of \$14.3 million in grants sourced from the SAFETEA-LU Act's Rail Line Relocation and Improvement program. Among these is \$2,845,581 to North Carolina DOT to administer improvements to the Aberdeen & Rockfish Railroad.

Several grants by state were also made in September, which included the following:

- By New York, \$150,000 for the Rochester & Southern Railroad, to help replace nine bridge decks and assist in the rehabilitation of 13 miles of track to support service to the American Motive Power manufacturing facility
- By Ohio, \$18,000 to help Bellaire Harbor Service relocate and rebuild a 90-car rail spur at its facility on the Wheeling & Lake Erie Railway
- In Wisconsin, \$12,000,000 to the Wisconsin & Southern Railroad – believed to be one of the largest grants ever made to a short line – to complete total reconstruction of the rail line from Plymouth to Kohler in Sheboygan County. This line is 15 miles long and will provide service to industries that were left without rail service when the Union Pacific abandoned the line to Sheboygan Falls in 2006.

STB RELEASES COST OF CAPITAL, QUARTERLY RCAF ADJUSTMENT

The Surface Transportation Board recently released its decision calculating the rail industry's cost of capital for 2008. The STB found that the rail industry's after-tax cost of capital for 2008 was 11.75 percent. The previous year, the cost-of-capital was 11.33 percent.

The STB uses the cost of capital figure in evaluating the adequacy of individual railroads' revenues each year. It also uses the figure when determining the reasonableness of a challenged rail rate, considering a proposal to abandon a rail line or valuing a particular railroad operation. This year and consistent with its decision served January 28, 2009, the STB estimated the cost of equity component of the cost of capital using an average of a Capital Asset Pricing Model (CAPM) approach and a multi-stage Discounted Cash Flow (MS-DCF) model.

Also, the STB recently released the Quarterly Rail Cost Adjustment Factors for the Fourth Quarter, 2009. These factors are calculated by the STB based on statistical data furnished by the Association of American Railroads (AAR).

The STB determined that the Fourth Quarter 2009 RCAF (unadjusted) is 0.996, an increase of 6.2 percent from the Third Quarter 2009 RCAF of 0.938. The RCAF (adjusted) is 0.450, an increase of 5.6 percent from the Third Quarter 2009 RCAF (adjusted) of 0.426.

Link to the full notices for the above on the STB website, www.stb.dot.gov, under "Decisions and Notices."

CROSSING INVENTORY DEADLINE APPROACHING

With the crossing inventory deadline approaching, here again is ASLRRA's Steve Sullivan's report on new regulations and requirements covering grade crossings, as stipulated in the Rail Safety Improvement Act, Public Law 110-432, H.R. 2095 / S. 1189, enacted on October 16, 2008:

Section 204 - National Crossing Inventory:

This requires railroads and states to update the US DOT National Crossing Inventory File (National File) on a regular basis for all existing open crossings, including the inventorying and numbering of any existing or new crossings that are not in the national file, and the transfer of crossings to a new operating railroad when rail lines are sold. Railroads are responsible for public, private and pedestrian crossings; states are responsible for only public crossings.

New Crossings (includes existing crossings that have not been inventoried):

Railroads and states must inventory any new and previously unreported crossings by October 16, 2009.

Definition of a Crossing:

The Act defines a 'Crossing' as follows: A crossing means a location within a state where (1) a public highway, road, or street, or a private roadway, including associated sidewalks and pathways, intersects one or more railroad tracks either at-grade or grade-separated, or (2) a pathway explicitly authorized by a public authority or a railroad carrier that is dedicated for the use of non-vehicular traffic, including pedestrians, bicyclists, and others, that is not associated with a public highway, road, or street, or a private roadway, and intersects one or more railroad tracks either at-grade or grade-separated.

More information on the US DOT National Highway-Rail Crossing Inventory Program is available by linking to <http://www.fra.dot.gov/us/content/801>.

NARS BRIDGE INSPECTION TRAINING SET TO BEGIN OCTOBER 12

The National Academy Of Railroad Sciences (NARS) reports that it still has a few slots left for its bridge inspector training course scheduled for October 12-16. This course, which will be held on the NARS training campus at Johnson County Community College in Overland Park, KS, has been especially targeted for short line and regional railroaders responsible for bridge inspections.

The tuition for this class has been discounted to \$500 per attendee. Additional to tuition, attendees are also responsible for the expense of travel, meals, and lodging; however, NARS has negotiated reduced hotel rates and can also assist with local transportation requirements.

The particulars of this NARS class are as follows:

- Students must bring their own steel-toed boots and prescription safety glasses. NARS will provide non-prescription safety glasses.
- Wednesday and Thursday instruction is conducted in the field.
- On Wednesday, the instructor does a partial inspection on the first bridge for demonstration purposes. The students are then divided into groups of two or three and each group performs an inspection and completes an inspection form. There are deficiencies on this bridge that require attention that the students will discover if they perform a proper and complete inspection. A partial group inspection is performed on the second bridge. This bridge has large voids in the piling, and scour and erosion problems are also visible.
- On Thursday, the instructor leads the group in partial inspections on through-truss, deck-plate girder, through-plate girders, and concrete bridges (conventional reinforced and pre-stressed.)

For more information, please contact Michael Drury, NARS Senior Manager-Technical Training, at michael.drury@bnsf.com or (913) 551-2615.

TRANSCAER TO OFFER FREE HAZMAT RESPONSE TRAINING AT UP IN MEMPHIS

The Chlorine Institute and Transcaer, in cooperation with the Union Pacific Railroad, will provide free one-day hazmat training at UP's Memphis Yard on October 28. The training will include hands-on and classroom activities, and a complimentary lunch. The training will focus on how to deal with hazmat incidents involving chlorine and related chemicals, including how to use emergency kits and tools to cap leaks in various containers.

Trainees will receive certificates upon completion of the course. Union Pacific has advised that, at this writing, some slots still remain for the course and encourages appropriate persons from its short line connections to attend. To sign up, contact the Chlorine Institute, specifically, Frank Reiner at freiner@cl2.com or (703) 741-5767, or Jeannine Greene at jgreene@cl2.com or (703) 741-5774. Sign up is requested no later than October 2.

OHIO TO OFFER FREE TRAINING ON CROSSING DEVICE INTERCONNECTION

The State of Ohio has announced a series of free training sessions covering the state's "new standards, policies and procedures for railroad preemption of traffic signals in close proximity to railroad crossings." This relates to the requirement that all rail-highway grade crossings in the state that are equipped with flashing lights & gates, and are located adjacent to a signalized traffic intersection, be properly interconnected.

The state will hold this training in five cities during the month of November, as follows: in Columbus on November 2; in Lebanon (near Cincinnati) on November 3; in Bowling Green (near Toledo) on November 4; in Cleveland on November 5; and in Akron on November 6.

For additional information and to sign up for this training, contact Susan Arduini at the Ohio Rail Development Commissions at susan.arduini@dot.state.oh.us and (614) 644-0307.

NORTH SHORE RR CELEBRATES 25TH ANNIVERSARY

Gary Shields, president of North Shore Railroads, files this report on the recent observance of the company's 25th anniversary:

On August 1, 1984 Richard and Miriam Robey started a legacy that has endured 25 years and counting.

It was the beginning for the North Shore Railroad, of Northumberland, PA and the Nittany & Bald Eagle Railroad, of Lock Haven, PA. These are now two of six short line railroads that are run by the Robeys' company which, additional to the North Shore and the Nittany and Bald Eagle, include the Juniata Valley Railroad, Lycoming Valley Railroad, Shamokin Valley Railroad, and Union County Industrial Railroad.

August 1, 2009 proved there was much to celebrate for this silver anniversary. It kicked off with an employee dinner and picnic, and in the following week held two train rides for customers, one on the North Shore and the other on the Nittany & Bald Eagle. The customer events were also attended by members of SEDA-CoG, Joint Rail Authority, as well as many other public officials and representatives. The Joint Rail Authority and the Robeys have forged a strong public-private partnership over the years that have been an example across the nation.

Conrail was also a major player in the start of these railroads, as they assisted in locomotive power and even held the company's first Office Car Special.

It is easy to see how far the company has come. Initially, the company handled about 30 cars a week, and now, it switches over one hundred carloads a day.

It is the company's policy to put customer service foremost among all objectives, and it is the reason that they are here after 25 years.

IOWA NORTHERN'S SABIN FEATURED ON BLOOMBERG NETWORK

Dan Sabin, president of Iowa Northern Railway, recently appeared on Bloomberg Network's "Venture" television program to discuss his foundation in the railroad industry and the growth of his own railroad since purchasing Iowa Northern in 1994. Mr. Sabin discussed the current state of short line railroads with interviewer Chris Valerio and his strategy in expanding his own railroad and adapting to changing times. Mr. Sabin also discussed his various capital improvement projects and the move to renewable fuel and wind power in his railroad.

To view the full interview on "Venture," click [here](#).

ASSOCIATE MEMBER DIRECTORY UPDATE UNDERWAY; MEMBER ASSISTANCE REQUESTED

ASLRRA is pleased to announce the implementation of our Fall 2009 Associate Member Directory Update. On September 24th, our Associate members received an email notification disclosing the association's initiative to update our E-Marketplace to accurately reflect the expanding categories with which a member company might identify. The ASLRRA's E-Marketplace serves as a valuable resource for our members, as they can search for services ranging from abrasives to yokes and every railroad product or service in between. If you received the email notification from the ASLRRA, please fill out the attached Associate Directory of Products and Services form and fax to the ASLRRA at (202) 628-6430 or email updates directly to Dave Whorton at dwhorton@aslrta.org. For more information on this initiative, please contact Eileen Keane at ekeane@aslrta.org.

SLIIC COMMITTEE TO LAUNCH OCTOBER 22 IN CARY NC

The date is now set for the start of the new Short Line Information Improvement Committee (SLIIC.) The committee will hold its first meeting at the Railinc HQ in Cary, NC on Thursday, October 22. This location has been selected in order to receive presentations from several Class I railroad and Railinc principals, and future meetings are expected to take place mainly by conference call and/or email exchange.

As mentioned in a previous edition of V&N, SLIIC is a joint AAR/ASLRRA committee. At the October 22 meeting, participants will be working to formalize the committee's mission and tasks, the latter expected to include:

- Promote increased use of industry reference files that facilitate improved business processes
- Continue to promote more and better event reporting by short line and regional railroads, in furtherance of the former Short Line Integration Team (SLIT)
- Act as a body to consider and comment related to industry systems changes, specifically, those changes that, from time to time, require a railroad's (or an information system provider's) systems or data files to be changed to accommodate a new or revised requirement
- Consider and promote best industry information systems practices by short line and regional railroads, in cooperation with their Class I partners

Invited participants, many of whom have already committed their attendance, include representatives from Class I railroads, third party information systems providers, railroads with their own (proprietary or "homebuilt") transportation and billing systems, and other railroaders involved with industry information systems. Concerning the latter, those short line and regional railroaders not yet contacted are welcome to attend and participate. For more information about SLIIC and to confirm your interest, please contact ASLRRA's Dave Mears at dmears@aslrta.org or (202) 585-3436. For information on meeting arrangements, including preferred accommodations near Railinc, contact Railinc's Rob Drew at robert.drew@railinc.com or (919) 651-5156.

RAILINC LAUNCHES INTEGRATED INDUSTRY REFERENCE FILES WEBPAGE

Railinc recently announced implementation of a new Industry Reference Files integrated webpage. This new web-based service includes reference information previously available only by paper publication. Included are direct views and the ability to customize extracts of data contained within the Centralized Station Master (CSM), the Junction, Mark and Route, and the Standard Transportation Commodity Code (STCC) files.

Railinc currently has a beta version of this webpage available at www.railinc.com/irfi. Also included is a mapping feature which allows users to view geographical location of stations and junctions, with details of displayed stations viewable directly by clicking the station or junction icons appearing on the map. This beta version is available free until November 30. Railinc encourages prospective users to feedback questions about, or ideas for improvement of, this webpage.

For more information about the Integrated Industry Reference Files webpage, contact Railinc's Rob Drew at robert.drew@railinc.com or (919) 651-5156.

AAR RAIL TIME INDICATORS REPORT AVAILABLE FREE TO ASLRRRA MEMBERS

The Association of American Railroad has reminded about their "Rail Time Indicators" report. This monthly report combines rail traffic data with more than 15 key economic indicators (such as consumer confidence, housing starts, and industrial production) in a non-technical snapshot of the U.S. economy. By assembling this information in a single place, and presenting rail traffic in the context of the broader economy, "Rail Time Indicators" provides a convenient, clear look at the key trends that can reveal where the economy – and therefore, rail traffic – may be going.

AAR has offered to make this report available to ASLRRRA members. To view a sample copy, click [here](#). To automatically receive "Rail Time Indicators" when it is released each month, please send your email address to Beth Eagney at beagney@aar.org and ask to be added to its distribution list. If you have questions or comments about the content of "Rail Time Indicators," please contact Dan Keen (dkeen@aar.org) or Shannon Stare (ssstare@aar.org.)

RRB ON SPOUSAL BENEFITS: PART 2

The Railroad Retirement Board recently provided ASLRRRA with an FAQ related to the spousal benefits of railroad retirees. In the second part of this two-part series, the following questions and answers provide more information about the benefits payable to spouses and the eligibility requirements:

1. Under what conditions can the divorced spouse of a rail employee receive a spouse annuity?

A spouse annuity may also be payable to the divorced wife or husband of a retired employee if their marriage lasted for at least 10 consecutive years, both have attained age 62 for a full month and the divorced spouse is not currently married. A divorced spouse can receive an annuity even if the employee has not retired, provided they have been divorced for at least two years, the employee and spouse are at least age 62 and the employee is fully insured under the Social Security Act using combined railroad and Social Security earnings. Also, a court-ordered partition payment may be paid even if the employee is not entitled to an annuity provided that the employee has 10 years of railroad service or 5 years after 1995 and both the employee and former spouse are 62. The amount of a divorced spouse's annuity is, in effect, equal to what Social Security would pay in the same situation and, therefore, less than the amount of the spouse annuity otherwise payable (tier I only). The average divorced spouse annuity awarded in fiscal year 2008 was \$476.

2. Would the award of an annuity to a divorced spouse affect the monthly annuity rate payable to a retired employee and/or the current spouse?

No. If a divorced spouse becomes entitled to an annuity based on the employee's railroad service, the award of the divorced spouse's benefit would not affect the amount of the employee's annuity, nor would it affect the amount of the Railroad Retirement annuity that may be payable to the current spouse.

3. What if a husband and wife are both railroad employees?

If both the husband and wife are qualified railroad employees and either had some railroad service before 1975, both can receive separate Railroad Retirement employee and spouse annuities, without a full dual benefit reduction. If both the husband and wife started railroad employment after 1974, the amount of any spouse or divorced spouse annuity is reduced by the amount of the employee annuity to which the spouse is also entitled.

4. Are Railroad Retirement annuities subject to garnishment or property settlements?

Certain percentages of any Railroad Retirement annuity (employee, spouse or survivor) may be subject to legal process (i.e., garnishment) to enforce an obligation for child support and/or alimony payments.

Also, with the exception of the tier I portion of a Railroad Retirement annuity, all other portions of an employee's annuity are subject to court-ordered property settlements in proceedings related to divorce, annulment or legal separation.

5. How can a person get more information about Railroad Retirement spouse annuities?

For more information and/or a benefit estimate, a person should contact an office of the Railroad Retirement Board (RRB) by calling toll free at 1-877-772-5772. Most RRB offices are open to the public from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on federal holidays. This information is also available from the agency's Web site at www.rrb.gov.

WORD ON READINESS: PERSONAL AND FAMILY PREPAREDNESS

This is excerpted from a recent Amtrak publication and is the first of a two parts, the latter to be published in our next edition:

The United States Department of Homeland Security's "Ready" campaign works to increase awareness and preparedness of domestic threats and ways that citizens can plan for an emergency situation. The DHS advises that each home gather a basic emergency supply kit. By their definition, the kit includes:

- One gallon of water per person per day for at least three days (for drinking and sanitation)
- At least a three-day supply of non-perishable food
- Battery-powered or hand crank radio and a NOAA Weather Radio with tone alert and extra batteries for both.
- Flashlight and extra batteries
- First aid kit
- Whistle to signal for help
- Dust mask, to help filter contaminated air and plastic sheeting and duct tape to shelter-in-place
- Moist towelettes, garbage bags and plastic ties for personal sanitation
- Wrench or pliers to turn off utilities
- Can opener for food (if kit contains canned food)
- Local maps

Additional items:

- Prescription medication and glasses
- Infant formula and diapers
- Pet food and extra water for your pet
- Important family documents such as copies of insurance policies, identification and bank account records in a waterproof, portable container.
- Cash or traveler's checks and change.
- Emergency reference material such as a first aid book or information from www.ready.gov
- Sleeping bag or warm blanket for each person
- Complete change of clothing including a long sleeved shirt, long pants and sturdy shoes.
- Household chlorine bleach and medicine dropper- When diluted nine parts water to one part bleach, bleach can be used as a disinfectant. Or in an emergency, you can use it to treat water by using 16 drops of regular household liquid bleach per gallon of water. Do not use scented, color safe or bleaches with added cleaners.
- Fire Extinguisher
- Feminine supplies and personal hygiene items
- Mess kit, paper cups, plates, plastic utensils, paper towels
- Paper and pencil
- Books, games, puzzles or other activities for children

CONFERENCES COMING UP

October 11-13, 2009, ASLRRA Eastern Region Meeting: To be held at the Hyatt Regency Indianapolis, Indianapolis, IN. For complete details, click [here](#). Ready to register? Then click [here](#)!

October 19-20, 2009, Railway Age's 16th Annual Passenger Trains On Freight Railroads Conference: To be held at the Washington Marriott, Washington, DC. For more information, contact Jane Poterala at jpoterala@sbpub.com or (212) 620-7209.

November 2-6, 2009, Railroad Track Inspection & Safety Standards Training Workshop: To be held at the Center for Transportation Research, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, TN. For more information, contact Jenny Jones at gohjones@utk.edu or (865) 974-6549.

November 8-10, 2009, ASLRRA Southern Region Meeting: To be held at the Marriott Bay Point Resort, Panama City Beach, FL. The ASLRRA room block is now available and you can reserve your rooms by [clicking here](#) or by calling (850) 236-6000. More meeting details forthcoming, be sure to check back at www.aslrra.org.

November 11-13, 2009, Association of Car Accounting and Car Service Officers (ACACSO): To be held at the Astor Crowne Plaza, New Orleans, LA. For more information, visit <http://acacso.org> or email acacso@grbx.org.

January 6-9, 2010, 2010 NRC Conference: To be held at the Desert Springs JW Marriott Resort & Spa in Palm Desert, California. The NRC hotel block is now open. For more information about the hotel or the conference, including a draft program overview, go to the NRC 2010 conference link on the left side of the NRC home webpage at www.nrcma.org.

MEMBERS IN THE NEWS

HDR recently announced the election of Kevin Keller, the Vice President of Rail-Environmental in their Kansas City office, to the boards of ARDA and AREMA. Mr. Keller will serve as second vice president with the American Railway Development Association (ARDA) and as vice president of the Engineering Services Functional Group for the American Railway Engineering and Maintenance of Way Association (AREMA) for two years. Mr. Keller brings 27 years of experience in the supervision and management of environmental and engineering programs to his new roles.....**Iowa Interstate Railroad** has announced that their new locomotive No. 513 will be adorned in the paint scheme of the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railroad. Iowa Interstate is among those railroads that continue to run on track formerly operated by the Rock Island. The locomotive is expected for delivery this December.....Iowa Interstate Railroad also recently began testing biodiesel as a locomotive fuel. The testing is an effort to assess the long-term viability of biodiesel as a fuel for locomotives, particularly during the winter months. Iowa Interstate CEO Dennis Miller said the tests could result in more than 600 railroads switching to biodiesel in the near future.....**Lat-Lon** recently announced the debut of their Mobile App for the iPhone. This App can be used to follow assets and view street level and aerial photos to track those assets within feet. The App works with Lat-Lon's Alert Text Messaging system to provide updates on all aspects of fleet management.....**RailComm** was recently recognized by Inc. 5,000 on their list of fastest-growing private companies in the United States. Ranked 93rd among the top software development companies, RailComm showed a revenue growth from 2005 to 2008 of 208.2%. 2009 is the 3rd year in a row that RailComm has been recognized on Inc. 5,000's list.....**Short Line Data Systems** recently upgraded their ROCS system to Version 12 and have been updating their users over the past months. SDS also updated their HOSS system to Version 1E, which clarified many rule interpretations and consolidated data entry methods for a crew's work day.....**Union Railroad** recently repaired its No. 33 locomotive in yellow and red colors, viewed as "safety" colors. The switch has already been made by Union Railroad's sister's Birmingham Southern and Gary Railway. No. 33 will be based out of Union Railroad's shop in Hall, PA.

CLASS I RAIL TRAFFIC

The Association of American Railroads reports that, for the week ending September 12, 2009 – which last year did not include the Labor Day Holiday – U.S. rail volume grand totaled 28.2 billion ton-miles, down 19.0 percent from the comparable week last year. U.S. carload rail traffic was down 19.8 percent, down 21.8 percent in the East and down 18.4 percent in the West. Also for the week, U.S. intermodal rail traffic was down 25.8 percent, Canadian carload rail traffic was down 22.1 percent, Canadian intermodal rail traffic was down 27.5 percent, Mexican carload rail traffic was down 1.0 percent, and Mexican intermodal rail traffic was up 8.4 percent.

For the period January 1 through September 12, 2009, U.S. rail volume grand totaled 1.02 trillion ton-miles, down 17.5 percent from the comparable period last year. Also for this period, U.S. carload rail traffic was down 18.4 percent, U.S. intermodal rail traffic was down 16.9 percent, Canadian carload rail traffic was down 23.1 percent, Canadian intermodal rail traffic was down 16.5 percent, Mexican carload rail traffic was down 14.4 percent, and Mexican intermodal rail traffic was down 19.4 percent.

(NOTE: Canadian traffic totals include those of the U.S. operations of Canadian Pacific Railway and Canadian National.)

RMI RAILCONNECT SHORT LINE TRAFFIC INDEX

The RMI Railconnect Index is waybill-based and totals shipments billed by non-Class I railroads using RMI billing products. For this report, this totals 341 such railroads. This index is calculated weekly. The **below data is as of the week ending September 12, 2009**, the 36th full week of this year. Special thanks to RMI's Cheri Denton for this valuable statistical information.

	Week Ending September 22			Year-To-Date		
	2009	2008	% Change	2009	2008	% Change
CARLOADS HANDLED						
Coal	12,916	15,047	-14.16%	469,770	551,961	-14.89%
Grain	12,948	14,887	-13.02%	453,931	544,300	-16.60%
Farm & Food (Exc. Grain)	4,733	5,157	-8.22%	186,775	205,536	-9.13%
Ores	2,428	2,805	-13.44%	60,989	102,917	-40.74%
Stone, Clay, Aggregates	9,853	11,937	-17.46%	371,492	460,226	-19.28%
Lumber/Forest Prods.	3,337	4,745	-29.67%	128,068	179,407	-28.62%
Paper Products	5,469	7,630	-28.32%	204,763	273,267	-25.07%
Waste & Scrap Materials	4,460	5,790	-22.97%	159,574	237,316	-32.76%
Chemicals	15,119	17,017	-11.15%	546,356	628,901	-13.13%
Petroleum & Coke	3,373	5,685	-40.67%	127,414	209,934	-39.31%
Metals & Products	5,710	10,760	-46.93%	204,110	404,447	-49.53%
Motor Vehicles & Equip.	1,021	1,284	-20.48%	35,751	70,386	-49.21%
Intermodal	5,194	11,511	-54.88%	231,468	451,583	-48.74%
All Other	1,375	3,126	-56.01%	50,700	111,726	-54.62%
Total	87,936	117,381	-25.08%	3,231,161	4,431,907	-27.09%

HELPFUL LINKS (INCLUDING A NEW ONE!)

Medicare recently debuted a new website called "Ask Medicare" to aid caregivers of the elderly U.S. population with information on Medicare eligibility and legal access to the Medicare information of a loved one that a caregiver is overseeing. The site's address is www.medicare.gov/caregivers.

To use the Railinc Embargo & Permit System, including open & prepay station (OPSL) notes, link to <https://aarembargo.railinc.com/epdb/public.do>

Members wanting to review ASLRRRA recommended emergency preparations may link to <http://members.aslrra.org>, enter email and password, click on the word "Documents" at the top of the page, then click on "ASLRRRA Emergency Plans" on the left side. Contact ASLRRRA's Dave Whorton at dwhorton@aslrra.org, P: (202) 585-3430 if you need further assistance.

To reach the Railinc homepage, link to www.railinc.com.

And speaking of helpful links, have you checked out the ASLRRRA website? If not, do so! Additional to an exciting new look, the site is packed with a host of new and improved features and tools. Check it out at its customary location on the World Wide Web: www.aslrra.org.

(202) 628-4500 FAX (202) 628-6430 aslrta@aslrta.org

For More Information on the ASLRRA's benefits and services, please visit our website at:

www.aslrta.org

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