



October 20, 2021



Congratulations to This Year's Railway Age Women in Rail Award Winners

Nine of this year's *Railway Age* Magazine [Women in Rail Award](#) winners work at ASLRRRA member companies. Winners were recognized for their leadership and accomplishments at work and in the community.

All 26 honorees and five honorable mention recipients came from a field of almost 100 applicants representing North American freight, transit and supplier sectors and government and trade organizations. The winners will be profiled in the November issue of *Railway Age*.

ASLRRRA congratulates all those recognized by *Railway Age*, especially:

- **Kristina Chambers**, chief data officer at the TTX Company
- **Janie Bowen Colalillo**, vice president of media services at RailPros
- **Martha (Marti) Lenz**, chief engineer, locomotive at Progress Rail
- **Amy Louk**, manager administration and marketing support at New York & Atlantic Railway
- **Salana McElroy**, group vice president, network optimization at Wabtec Corporation
- **Nicole McKinstry**, assistant vice president of sales operations at The Greenbrier Companies
- **Laura McNichol**, senior vice president of government and industry relations at Watco
- **Christy Mimbs**, director commercial support at Genesee & Wyoming Railroad Service, Inc.
- **Norma Torres**, President and COO of Brownsville & Rio Grande International Railway

And those receiving an honorable mention, in particular:

- **Janet Gilbert**, partner at Fletcher & Sippel and member of ASLRRRA General Counsel Committee and Safety and Training Committee
- **Ruby Siegel**, vice president, senior project manager at AECOM

Avoid Misunderstandings with SLSI's New Communication Tip Sheet

Recently, the Federal Railroad Administration's Office of Research, Development and Technology released the results of the Short Line Safety Institute's (SLSI) [2020 Systematic Review](#) of Safety Culture Assessments conducted on short line railroads. One of the identified opportunities to improve safety culture on short line railroads is in the quality and quantity of safety communication.

In response to this finding, the SLSI has published [Lost in Translation: Safety Communication in the Rail Industry](#), a tip sheet highlighting potential obstacles associated with safety communication, providing tips on how to overcome the obstacles, and stressing the importance of clear and frequent safety communication.

This [downloadable resource](#) joins other recently announced new resources, including [Safety Posters](#) and [Safety Minute](#) videos – all designed by SLSI experts to help railroads address identified opportunities for improving safety culture on their railroads.



Updated Roadway Worker Program Template Available Online

ASLRRA updated its Roadway Worker Protection Program template, and the new version is available on the ASLRRA website, along with updated instructions.

The template was a collaboration between ASLRRA's Engineering Committee and the Federal Railroad Administration and helps railroads comply with 49 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 214 – Railroad Workplace Safety.

Members can access the updated document in the [Compliance Templates](#) section of ASLRRA's [Safety & Compliance](#) page. Those with questions are encouraged to contact ASLRRA Vice President of Safety and Compliance JR Gelnar at jrgelnar@aslrta.org.

Only One Month Left to Apply for FRA CRISI Grants

Applications for the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) [Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements \(CRISI\) grant program](#) are due Nov. 29. ASLRRA encourages its members to pursue this funding for their eligible projects.

CRISI grants are the only grants for which short line and regional railroads are directly eligible. This year, \$359 million in CRISI funding is available for projects that improve passenger and freight rail safety, efficiency and reliability, while a separate \$2.2 million will go toward railroad trespassing enforcement grants and trespassing suicide prevention grants. In addition, at least 25 percent of funds, no less than \$93.7 million, will go to rural projects.

The FRA hosted a webinar in September discussing fiscal year 2021 (FY21) CRISI grants and how to apply for them. A recording of that webinar, as well as a copy of presentation materials, can be found [here](#). The FRA's original notice of funding opportunity (NOFO) for FY21 CRISI grants is available [here](#).

ASLRRA's [Member Discount Program](#) also offers grant-writing assistance through Preferred Providers Bergmann, HDR and Global Train Services. These companies can help railroads apply for CRISI and other grant programs, offering exceptional service at competitive pricing.



Discussions Intensify Between White House and Congressional Leaders on a Path Forward for Infrastructure and Social Spending Bills

Senate and House members returned from recess this week to confront a new slate of deadlines. The next big deadline is Oct. 31 when the current surface transportation extension expires.

Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) promised earlier this month that a potential \$2 trillion reconciliation bill would be considered by that date, and, with it, the bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), which the Senate passed in July and ASLRRA strongly

supports.

As discussions continue between Democratic leaders, it appears likely that Congress will need to extend surface transportation programs later this month beyond Oct. 31. Previous forecasts were for the Highway Trust Fund (HTF), the funding mechanism for roads, highways, bridges, tunnels, and transit systems, to be heading toward insolvency by this point. But with driving and fuel purchasing on the rise this year, the HTF balance is currently approximately \$4.5 billion higher than had been anticipated, removing some of the urgency to address the HTF's chronic revenue shortfall.


As a result, the House Democrats will feel less pressure to address the IIJA as Congress would be able to extend the existing surface transportation law past Oct. 31 without having to transfer funds into the HTF.

Senate Panel Gives Green Light to FRA Nominee, Who Will Now Be Considered by Full Senate

Earlier today the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation advanced by voice vote the nomination of Amit Bose to be FRA administrator. Bose currently serves as deputy administrator, and in that position essentially serves as the agency's acting administrator.

Sen. John Thune (R-S.D.), who noted he did not oppose moving Bose's nomination forward, did express concern over Bose's responses to formal questions regarding automated track inspections and waivers. Thune also voiced his eagerness for better responses as the nomination advances. Bose's nomination now goes before the full Senate for consideration, although Senate leadership has not announced a timeline or scheduling of votes on his nomination.

Don't Forget! Amit Bose will be a keynote speaker at ASLRRA's 2021 Annual Conference & Exhibition in Phoenix, Arizona Nov. 17 – 19. Click [here](#) to register.



PTC Products & Services

Visit aslrta.org/PTC for information about vetted providers who can assist short lines in lowering costs, accelerating implementation, and increasing interoperability between host and tenant railroads.

ASLRRA New Members

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

ASLRRA Welcomes a New Associate Business Member



[Signal South](#), based in Jacksonville, Florida, provides proven railroad signal design and engineering solutions throughout the U.S. Services include engineering services, signal design, crossing warning system design, application software design, survey, utility management, computer-aided drafting, field support/testing, estimating, materials procurement, warehousing and in-service plan management. Our primary contact is Manager of Engineering [Kiel Jaynes](#), who can also be reached on (904) 832-5090. Learn more about them by visiting their booth at next month's annual conference and exhibition in Phoenix.



ASLRRA Conference: Don't Miss Celebrating Your Peers, and Education Developed for Members, By Members

Join us at the [ASLRRA Annual Conference and Exhibition](#) in Phoenix, Arizona, to celebrate member accomplishments and Hall of Fame inductees at our awards ceremony on Nov. 18.

The Association will recognize winners of its [Business Development](#) Awards, RJ Corman Carolina Lines, Pan Am Railways,

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Iron Horse Resources, Inc., and Lake State Railway; [Veterans Engagement Award](#) winner Vancer; and [Safety Professional and Safety Person of the Year Award](#) winners Herman Crosson and George Johnson, both of Patriot Rail. ASLRRA will also honor Carl Belke with the Distinguished Service Award for his career dedication to the Association and the industry and introduce the inaugural group of Short Line Hall of Fame members – Mort Fuller, Maggie Silver and Gene Blabey.

In addition to the awards ceremony, ASLRRA's conference features education sessions covering a wide array of topics. Members of ASLRRA's various committees recommend subjects and speakers for the conference, resulting this year in over 30 [education breakout sessions](#) for railroad professionals in all facets of the industry. Still, the awards ceremony and education sessions comprise only a portion of the [events planned](#) for conference participants.

[Networking opportunities](#) abound at this year's event. These include the Early Bird Happy Hour, First Timer's Reception and two Exhibit Hall Receptions, the popular [Exhibit Hall](#), and a [golf tournament](#) at the JW Marriott Camelback Golf Club.

[Register](#) today to attend this year's ASLRRA Annual Conference and Exhibition, Nov. 17 to 19. Limited space is still available in [ASLRRA's hotel room blocks](#) at the Sheraton Phoenix Downtown and the Hyatt Regency Phoenix.

ASLRRA Members of Note

ASLRRA is pleased to highlight the accomplishments of its members and the strides being made in [freight rail sustainability](#), [business development](#), [veterans engagement](#) and more.

In the next few weeks, ASLRRA will focus on those member companies working to hire and support veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces. These profiles will lead up to a Veterans Day feature focused on the winner of this year's ASLRRA Veterans Engagement Award.

Water Balloon Toss Helps PowerRail Employees Fundraise for Veterans' Organization

At its annual employee picnic, PowerRail turned a fun summer tradition – the water balloon toss – into a fundraiser for Pennsylvania charity Veteran's Promise, which provides services and support to veterans and their families and helps raise awareness of veteran suicides. This fundraiser demonstrates one of the ways PowerRail supports military members and veterans in the company and the community.

Proceeds from the water balloon game, which allowed employees to douse members of the management team for a small donation, along with a 50/50 raffle and matching contribution from PowerRail's president and CEO resulted in a \$1,290 donation to Veteran's Promise.



Photo courtesy of PowerRail

In 2020 ASLRRR member PowerRail donated \$1,290 to Veteran's Promise, a Pennsylvania organization providing services to U.S. veterans and their families. This donation is one of the many ways PowerRail has shown its support for veterans and U.S. service members.

The company itself is veteran friendly, with nearly 12 percent of its workforce comprising veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces and current members of the U.S. National Guard. To support active-duty employees, PowerRail has implemented a new vacation policy allowing service members additional paid time off during a deployment year, and to offset time spent at training.

In recognition of its efforts to support employees who are also members of the U.S. National Guard or Reserves, PowerRail's President and CEO Paul Foster, Vice President of Operations Tom Casper and Assistant Vice President of Customer Service Gene Loureiro each received the Patriotic Employer Award from the Employer Support for the Guard and Reserve organization, while PowerRail Distribution as a whole received the Seven Seals Award.

PowerRail is also active in recruiting veterans to its team. In 2020 the company participated in the Pennsylvania CareerLink Luzerne County's Veteran's Initiative Campaign, which allowed PowerRail to directly talk to veterans through employer seminars.

Through all of these efforts, PowerRail has demonstrated a commitment to America's service members, and ASLRRR applauds them for what the company has accomplished.

ASLRRR Announcements

ASLRRR Mourns Passing of Railroad Signal, Inc. Founder Eddie Don Burns, Jr.



Photo Courtesy of Rachel Stayton

Eddie Burns (left) poses with his daughter Rachel Stayton in front of a Railroad Signal, Inc. truck.

ASLRRA expresses its deepest condolences to the family, friends and colleagues of [Eddie Don Burns, Jr.](#) The lifelong railroader passed away on Oct. 15 at the age of 72.

Burns started in the railroad industry in 1976 as a signal helper with the St. Louis-San Francisco Railway Company. In 1987 he started his own company, Railroad Signal, Inc., manufacturing, installing and maintaining highway-rail crossing signaling systems. Burns was well-known in the rail signaling community and regularly attended ASLRRA annual conventions.

ASLRRA Vice President of Safety and Compliance JR Gelnar, who knew Burns, reflected on the passing of his friend and colleague, "I knew Eddie for 35 years both professionally and personally. We did many signal projects, including his design and construction of a grade crossing signal at the main entrance of the exhibition hall for the 2011 [ASLRRA] Annual Meeting in San Antonio, TX. We shared many good times and created a few good stories together. Eddie was a visionary. Always looking at the bigger picture. He installed signals all over the world. I am sad to hear of his passing. Mine and [my wife] Susan's prayers go out to [his daughter] Rachel and his family. Short lines lost a true pioneer."

Burns taught his daughter, Rachel Stayton, about the rail signal business, and in 2018 she started her own signaling company, Railroad Signaling Solutions (RSS). The two would later work together to install RSS's first knockdown in Grand Canyon National Park.

Burns is survived by his former spouse Marsha Burns, Stayton and her husband Joseph, and three grandchildren. A ceremony celebrating his life will be held tomorrow at 3 p.m. CST and will be broadcast online [here](#).

Meet Positive Train Control Requirements with Help from ASLRRA's Preferred Providers

Positive Train Control (PTC) is one of the most complex technologies mandated for freight railroads to date and its implementation has been an unprecedented challenge, particularly for short line railroads.

ASLRRA has secured grant funding and leveraged capabilities under its own Member Discount Program to qualify sources, develop products and services, and secure agreements to aid Class II and III railroads in PTC implementation. These vetted companies are able to provide solutions that will assist short lines in lowering costs, accelerating implementation, and increasing interoperability between host and tenant operations.

Visit our [Member Discount Program page](#) and select PTC Products & Services to learn more and start saving today.

ASLRRA Out and About

Crystal Gitchell Represents ASLRRA in a Trio of Events this Week

ASLRRA Assistant Vice President of Legislative and Regulatory Policy Crystal Gitchell participated in back-to-back events this week, speaking at two industry meetings and visiting an Association member.

On Oct. 19, Gitchell participated in a panel discussing rail and trucking policies during the League of Railway Women's 2021 Virtual Conference. Then, on Oct. 20, Gitchell talked about intermodal challenges and short line partnership opportunities during the Inland Rivers and Port Terminals (IRPT) Annual Meeting in Biloxi, Mississippi.

While in town for the IRPT conference, Gitchell also visited ASLRRA member Mississippi Export Railroad, touring their rail facilities.

WEBINARS AVAILABLE ON DEMAND

With more than 150 recordings available, there's a webinar to meet the needs of everyone on your team. Visit aslrra.org/webinars to view a complete list of available recordings.





ASLRRA Webinars – Live or On-Demand

Upcoming Webinars

[How Running Repair Agents Benefit Short Line Railroads](#) – Oct. 27, 2021

Vanessa Knapton of The Andersons will explain how running repair agents can provide essential safety and mechanical services at little or no cost, including what running repair agents do for short lines, how to sponsor them, and what rules govern their operations.

Thank you to sponsor



[Harness the Power of Rail Analytics to Improve Safety](#) – Nov. 2, 2021

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Bentley Product Manager Robert Henderson will explore how railroads can unlock the potential of data their organizations already own, through predictive maintenance strategies that use the latest innovations in rail condition analytics. He will also explain how, with cloud-based technology and pre-configured analytics, short lines can now access analytical and decision support tools to realize a faster ROI.

Thank you to sponsor



[Environmental Update – Who's on First](#) – Nov. 3, 2021

HDR Vice President and Senior Professional Associate Kevin Keller will provide an update of current environmental regulations and how they potentially impact the freight rail industry. Attendees will have an opportunity to participate in Q&A at the end of the presentation.

Thank you to sponsor



Recorded Webinars Help Railroads Understand Regulations Governing Rail Accidents/Incidents

Federal regulatory procedures and requirements can be complicated. ASLRRA's On-Demand Webinar library features recordings to help railroads understand regulations and maintain compliance.

Railroad safety and operations professionals can benefit from viewing ASLRRA's three-part webinar series discussing 49 CFR Part 225, Railroad Accidents/Incidents. The information is presented by representatives from the Federal Railroad Administration. Look for the following titles:

- Part 225 Back to Basics, Part 1: Injuries
- Part 225 Back to Basics, Part 2: Rail Equipment
- Part 225 Back to Basics, Part 3: Highway-Rail Grade Crossing

ASLRRA's online resource library offers more than 150 webinar recordings on a variety of topics. Visit aslrta.org/webinars and select the On Demand Webinars button to view a complete list of all available recordings. Access is free to ASLRRA members, and by subscription for non-members.

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

Industry Events and Announcements

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

Views & News is published by American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association. Please contact [Amy Krouse](#), editor, with questions or comments.