



December 22, 2021

*Happy Holidays!*



*We wish all our members and their families a safe and joyous holiday season!*

**Please Note:** We will not publish Views and News next week, Dec. 29. We will ring in 2022 with a new issue on Jan. 5.



## TSA Mandates Cybersecurity Measures

In response to [two security directives and a related informational circular](#) from the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) mandating cybersecurity actions and measures, ASLRRRA and the Association of American Railroads have created [a document](#) offering guidance to railroads.

The TSA's mandates are scheduled to go into effect Dec. 31, 2021 and require four categories of action for affected railroads. These

actions include developing and adopting a Cyber Incident Response Plan and completing a cybersecurity vulnerability assessment. Class II and III railroads fall under one or both of the security directives if they host impacted passenger or Class I traffic, or they transport certain high-security materials through established high-threat urban areas.

TSA estimates less than 35 short lines will be subject to its directives. The document produced by ASLRRA and AAR helps short lines understand whether the TSA's directives affect them, and offers more explanation on specific deadlines and other requirements. ASLRRA is also reviewing initial drafts of guidance materials drafted by TSA and will alert members when they are publicly available.

Those with questions should contact ASLRRA's [Fred Oelsner](#).

### TC&W's Festive Locomotive Brings Santa and Mrs. Claus to Arli-Dazzle Celebration in Minnesota



*The Twin Cities & Western Railroad (TC&W) participated in the Arli-Dazzle winter celebration in Arlington, Minnesota on Dec. 4, delivering Santa and Mrs. Claus aboard a TC&W locomotive for their grand entrance to the Christmas parade.*

*The Arli-Dazzle is one of the biggest lighted parades in Minnesota, drawing people from all over to join the festivities, including a parade and winter fireworks.. TC&W crews decorated a locomotive with holiday lights to deliver both Christmas spirit and Santa and Mrs. Claus to this festive winter event.*

*Photo and caption courtesy of TC&W*

For more examples of how ASLRRA members are celebrating this season, see our Members of Note section below.

**DISASTER PREPAREDNESS RESOURCES**

Be Prepared! Download ASLRRA's member-exclusive templates and checklists to build or enhance your railroad's emergency response plans. Visit [www.aslrra.org/disasterprep](http://www.aslrra.org/disasterprep).



### **ASLRRA Submits Comments on DOT's Draft Strategic Framework**

ASLRRA [submitted comments](#) in response to the U.S. Department of Transportation's (DOT) Dec. 3 [Notice of Request for Public Comment](#) (RFC), soliciting input on the draft DOT strategic framework.

In the comments, ASLRRA encouraged the agency to use the Federal Railroad Administration's Office of Research Development & Technology to assist in advancing safety; to permit the use of eABS and AGTMS technology to increase fluidity in the supply chain; and to engage stakeholders in any regulatory action. ASLRRA also offered suggestions on grant program administration, including those recently made available in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.

### **ASLRRA Responds to STB's Docket Concerning First- and Last-Mile Service**

On Dec. 16, ASLRRA [filed comments](#) on the Surface Transportation Board's (STB) [Docket EP 767](#), First-Mile/Last-Mile (FMLM) Service. ASLRRA responded to the three concerns put forth by the STB – seeking examples of FMLM issues, useful FMLM metrics, and data recording of FMLM issues.

ASLRRA urged the STB not to require short line railroads to create systems to track and report uniform metrics, as it is not clear what metrics would be helpful, or what the cost burden associated with the collection will be. Finally, it is not clear that there is a FMLM issue from short line customers, as short lines are "laser focused on providing excellent customer service."

### **RRB Q&A Explains Importance of Paying Attention to Tax Withholding**

The Railroad Retirement Board (RRB) reminds railroad employees that certain beneficiaries must be aware of changes in tax withholding when they turn 62. Information about tax withholding is the focus of the RRB's [December Q&A](#).

According to the RRB, some parts of a railroad retirement annuity are treated differently for federal income tax purposes. One part is treated like a social security benefit, while others are treated like private pensions, resulting in U.S. citizens or residents receiving two tax statements in January. When an employee turns 62 some of the Non-Social Security Equivalent Benefit (NSSEB) portion transitions to a Social Security Equivalent Benefit (SSEB), affecting how much tax withholding is in place, resulting in an insufficient amount of taxes being withheld.

Follow the link above for more information, including other ways to learn about the taxability of railroad retirement benefits.

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## Association Letter Urges THUD Subcommittees to “Go Big” With Funding

ASLRRRA wrote [a letter](#) this week to the House and Senate Appropriations Transportation, Housing and Urban Development (THUD) subcommittees, urging them to provide as much funding as possible for discretionary grants under the Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI), Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) and Infrastructure For Rebuilding America (INFRA) programs and the newly established Grade Crossing Elimination program, while also backing the research and development efforts that fund the Short

Line Safety Institute.

As ASLRRRA wrote to the THUD subcommittees, short line freight rail is instrumental in helping to ease the supply chain crisis. In addition to the \$1 billion in annual guaranteed funding over five years that Congress provided for the CRISI program, Congress increased the permissible spending authorization for congressional appropriators to provide as much as another \$1 billion in the THUD bill.

Toward that end, ASLRRRA urged the appropriators to go big, and noted that “short line freight rail infrastructure has an incredibly long list of unmet needs...We estimate more than \$12 billion in investments are needed to ensure that the critical short line industry can modernize.”

ASLRRRA also expressed support for increased funding availability for other discretionary grant programs as the best means to address supply chain needs.

**Employee Health Insurance**  
The Coalition Health Plan is available exclusively to ASLRRRA members, designed to reduce medical premiums and simplify the healthcare experience for employees. [Click to learn more...](#)

## ASLRRRA Members of Note

### ASLRRRA Members Radiate Holiday Spirit Through Volunteerism, Community Participation, Special Events

Whether they gave Santa and his friends a ride, helped him pick up his toys or brought people to meet him, ASLRRRA members were active in a number of ways this holiday season.

Many ASLRRRA members held toy drives or participated in programs benefitting the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve Toys for Tots Foundation. New York, Susquehanna & Western Railway, Middletown & New Jersey Railroad and Dover & Rockaway River Railroad were the railroad operators for Operation Toy Train, collecting over 31,000 toys in northern New Jersey and southern New York over two December weekends.

In November, the North Shore Railroad Company (NSHR) hosted North American Railcar Operators Association (NARCOA) motorcar drivers for their Toys for Tots drive along the NSHR and Union County Industrial Railroad lines.

Other members engaged their communities in different ways. Watco railroads partnered with rail safety organization Operation Lifesaver to give train rides to elementary school students and participated in their local Christmas parades. Supplier member CDL Electric Company decorated a flatbed trailer like Snoopy's red doghouse, festooned with lights and tinsel, to participate in parades in Joplin, Missouri and Pittsburg, Kansas, while an R. J. Corman train brought Santa to Midway, Kentucky to meet children and pick up their letters. And two of Atlantic Railways' special agents joined the Pelion Police Department in helping the town of Pelion, South Carolina safely conduct its Christmas parade.

Being able to resume holiday excursions was another highlight of this year's events. ASLRRRA member Strasburg Rail Road offered several themed rides, including Santa's Paradise Express, the Night Before Christmas Train and the Christmas Tree Train. ASLRRRA member parent company R. J. Corman's My Old Kentucky Dinner Train hosted its own Christmas ride, the North Pole Express.

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## ASLRRRA Announcements

### Online Resources Assist Members with Disaster Preparedness

ASLRRRA's [disaster preparedness website](#) features numerous resources to help railroads plan for adverse events and recover from them when they occur. The Association has updated its disaster preparedness site to include some financial assistance resources for small business owners and individuals living within a designated natural disaster area. This [new link](#) identifies different types of financial disaster relief for which some companies and their employees may be eligible.

Other resources on ASLRRRA's page include templates and checklists members can use to develop emergency plans, which can also be utilized as training tools. There are also instructions for filing emergency dockets, direct links to [ready.gov](#), the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's disaster preparedness website, and links to ASLRRRA's [On-Demand Webinar library](#) featuring recordings that discuss topics such as crisis communications and hazardous materials incident reporting.

### Association Social Media Accounts Highlight the Short Line Industry with "12 Days of Short Lines"

Anyone wanting a fun way to learn more about the diverse materials and products shipped by ASLRRRA member railroads need look no further than the Association's social media accounts.

A recent series of posts on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) parody the song "The 12 Days of Christmas," transforming the Christmas classic into "The 12 Days of Short Lines," highlighting items small freight railroads move for their customers.

For example, the short line version begins, "On the first day of Christmas my short line shipped to me – some wood pulp to make my TP." On other days, the parody mentions "plastic used in kids' toys," "wood to build a bookshelf" and "flour to make cookies."

ASLRRRA's holiday posts are a fun way to celebrate the season, but the Association's social media profiles are also good sources of information for railroaders, suppliers and industry stakeholders. ASLRRRA uses social media to highlight important industry news, celebrate member achievements and share crucial resources. It is another way the Association works to support the short line industry.



Follow @ASLRRRA on both Twitter and Facebook to view each of the posts, as well as the accompanying illustrations.

### **ORR Safety Helps ASLRRRA Members Save on Cold Weather Personal Protective Equipment and More**

Winter is officially here, and COVID-19 cases are surging again, meaning companies have double the reason to ensure they are providing the personal protective equipment (PPE) necessary for workplace safety. ASLRRRA Preferred Provider ORR Safety can help the Association's members protect their employees with a wide variety of products and services.

ORR Safety is an ISO 9001-registered distributor of PPE and related services to the industrial market. For over 70 years, ORR Safety has worked with over 20,000 companies, helping to protect hundreds of thousands of workers. With more than 40 years of railroad experience, ORR Safety has worked with customers and suppliers to provide innovative solutions to many of the unique challenges inherent in this complex and demanding industry.

ASLRRRA members benefit from exceptional, personalized service and discounted pricing on a huge assortment of products and equipment needed to implement an effective and efficient safety program, including foot and leg protection, signs, ergonomic products, hearing protection, clothing protection, eye protection, lighting & electrical products, hand protection, respiratory protection, storage containment and environmental spill cleanup, traffic control, head protection and more.

Visit [aslr.org/discount](https://aslr.org/discount) to view ORR Safety's online e-catalog and start saving today!



As an ASLRRRA Preferred Provider, ORR Safety offers Discounts on Personal Protective Equipment and Related Services to ASLRRRA Members.

Click to learn more!





## ASLRRRA Webinars – Live or On-Demand

### Find a Recording of ASLRRRA’s Annual Membership Meeting Online

ASLRRRA held its Annual Membership Meeting virtually on Dec. 16, and a recording of the meeting as well as meeting presentation slides are now available online for those who were unable to attend.

The meeting featured reports from the chairman of the Board of Directors, ASLRRRA President Chuck Baker and each regional vice president. Baker talked about the work ASLRRRA has accomplished in 2021, including the ways the Association has interacted with legislative and regulatory bodies on behalf of its members. Find the recording in [ASLRRRA’s On-Demand Webinar library](#) and view it at any time.

And, as always, ASLRRRA members looking for other useful information can access the over 150 recorded webinars available in ASLRRRA’s library, covering topics from safety and operations to legal issues and human resources. ASLRRRA members can view recordings at any time for free, while non-members can purchase a subscription to access our library. Go to [aslrra.org/webinars](http://aslrra.org/webinars) and log in to see what is available.

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

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## Industry Events and Announcements

### P&L Transportation CEO to Retire



*Tony Reck*

Tony Reck, CEO of P&L Transportation, Inc. and its subsidiary railroads, announced his retirement after 50 years in the railroad industry. Three of P&L’s subsidiaries are ASLRRRA members, and Reck has served on ASLRRRA’s Board of Directors as vice president-Southern Region and on the Association’s Legislative Policy Committee.

Although Reck is retiring as P&L CEO, he will continue his involvement with the company as chairman of the Board of Directors. To succeed Reck, P&L’s board has chosen current president of P&L Transportation and its subsidiaries, Tom Garrett. Garrett will take on the role of CEO in addition to his current position, with the change effective Jan. 1.

Reck joined the first management team of Paducah and Louisville Railway in 1986 as vice president of marketing and sales and was elected president and CEO in 1988. Since then, P&L has grown from a single railroad to a company with six subsidiaries: four railroads and two intermodal terminals.

## **Nominations Due Soon for *Railway Age* Magazine's Fast Trackers Awards**

*Railway Age* magazine will honor the rail industry's notable young professionals with its annual Fast Trackers 20 Under 40 awards. [Nominations](#) for the competition are due Jan. 7.

Railroad professionals in the U.S., Canada and Mexico who are under the age of 40 as of January 1, 2022 are eligible for the competition. Nominees are judged based on their industry experience and education, leadership skills, industry contributions and community involvement. Individuals can nominate themselves, and there is no limit on the number of entries a company or person can submit.

## **Railroaders Earn Professional Development Credits Through the University of Wisconsin's InterPro Program**

The University of Wisconsin-Madison's College of Engineering offers professional education courses through its Interdisciplinary Professional Programs (InterPro) section, and several are relevant to railroad personnel.

A course titled "Highway-Rail Grade Crossing Safety" will be held in a live online format Feb. 1-4. Participants will learn about basic principles of grade crossing safety and how to apply them to new and existing projects. Thirteen professional development hours are available through this course. Click [here](#) to learn more or to register for the course.

On Feb. 14-17, the program will offer another online course titled "Fundamentals of Electric Rail Vehicle Systems" that covers basic design criteria of the rail car, rail car sub-systems and their integration with other sub-systems. This course offers 14 professional development hours. Click [here](#) for more information or to register.

InterPro also offers courses on demand, which are available for viewing online at any time. Relevant courses for railroad professionals include:

- [Emergency Railroad Bridge Inspections](#) – Introducing participants to the technical, procedural and safety aspects of emergency inspections.
- [Propulsion for Light Rail Vehicles](#) – Explaining the four methods of energy management system in light rail vehicle propulsion systems and characteristics of each, as well defining retrofit.
- [Fundamentals of Traction Power Systems and Overhead Contact Systems](#) – Helping participants understand concepts related to electrically-powered rail systems.

Follow the links above for more information or to register for these on-demand courses.

[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.