



January 13, 2021



## Mark Your Calendars for ASLRRRA's Regional Meetings

ASLRRRA is pleased to announce we are planning to hold **in-person** regional meetings in June of 2021.

Registration and hotel blocks will be open in the near future for these meetings. ASLRRRA staff will be working closely with the hotel venues and be mindful of changing Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) meeting guidelines, and will be prepared to pivot

to a virtual meeting should circumstances warrant.

- Central & Pacific Region Meeting - June 7-9, 2021, Kansas City, Missouri  
Hotel: [Kansas City Marriott Downtown](#)
- Eastern & Southern Region Meeting - June 21- 23, 2021 Louisville, Kentucky  
Hotel: [Galt House](#)

**REMINDER:** ASLRRRA does not work with third-party organizations to book hotel rooms for our events, including the annual convention, regional meetings and special training sessions. We do not authorize third-party travel companies to contact you directly via phone or email. We urge you to follow information on our website or links we provide to book your hotel rooms directly with the hotels in our room block.


If you are contacted by a housing company purporting to be working with ASLRRRA, we urge you to end the phone call or not respond to the email message and not provide any credit card or other secure information. Please report those contacts to our General Counsel Sarah Yurasko at [syurasko@aslrra.org](mailto:syurasko@aslrra.org), who will review for further action.

## STB Seeks Nominations for Two Small Railroad Representatives on Advisory Council

The Surface Transportation Board (STB) is [accepting nominations](#) to fill two vacancies for small railroad representatives on the Railroad-Shipper Transportation Advisory Council (RSTAC).

The RSTAC focuses on issues important to small shippers and small railroads. This includes railcar supply, rates, competition and claims procedures. The council also helps develop ways to identify, address and prevent obstacles to interstate transportation.

RSTAC members are appointed to three-year terms. Nominations are due by Feb. 12. Follow the link above for the STB's press release, which includes an additional link to nominee requirements and nomination instructions.



## 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).



### DOT and RRB Announce Annual Adjustments to Civil Penalty Amounts

The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) issued a [final rule](#) providing the inflation adjustment to civil penalty amounts that can be imposed for various DOT regulation violations.

A number of DOT agencies have penalties affected by the rule, including the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) and Federal Railroad Administration (FRA). The rule lists each affected penalty and the adjusted penalty amount under the appropriate agency.

In conjunction with the DOT's final rule, the Railroad Retirement Board has also issued a [notice](#) announcing its updated penalty inflation adjustments for civil monetary penalties, which includes increases to penalties under the False Claims Act and the Program Fraud Civil Remedies Act.

### CISA's New Security Action Guide Emphasizes a Unified Approach to Cyber and Physical Security

The Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) [published](#) the Cybersecurity and Physical Security Convergence Action Guide to help organizations address cyber and physical threats.

The [guide](#) explains how current threats often target both cyber and physical assets, and emphasizes the need to take a unified approach that avoids treating physical security and cybersecurity divisions as separate entities.

CISA goes on to define convergence - the "formal collaboration between previously disjointed security functions" - and provide an overview of its benefits and a general framework for a convergence strategy.

ASLRRA urges members to review their company cybersecurity processes. Critical infrastructure organizations, including railroads and rail industry suppliers, have been identified as targets of malicious actors and there have been a number of breaches within the industry over the past year.

CISA offers a wide array of resources for critical infrastructure organizations and small businesses to assess cybersecurity risk and protect themselves. Find out more [here](#).

### Railroad Retirement Board Appoints New Director of Administration

Daniel Fadden is the [new director of administration](#) at the Railroad Retirement Board (RRB).

Fadden has been with the RRB since 1983, primarily working in the agency's field service. He has held a number of roles since then, most recently as the director of field service overseeing the RRB's 53 field offices nationwide.

Fadden is also the RRB's senior executive officer, chairing the Executive Committee. He will continue to serve that role in addition to his new duties.



## Bowers & Company Video Explains PPP Loans

ASLRRRA supplier member Bowers & Company CPAs has created a [video](#) to help employers understand the Small Business Administration's (SBA) Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loans, which have been authorized for a second round of funding.

The half-hour video discusses steps for those applying for PPP loans a second time, as well as others who may be new to the process. Second-time borrowers must meet certain requirements in order to be eligible for PPP loans. For example, they must have no more than

300 employees and have experienced at least a 25 percent reduction in gross receipts between comparable quarters in 2019 and 2020.

Those with additional questions can contact their Bowers representatives. Those who are not Bowers clients can submit questions to [info@bcpllc.com](mailto:info@bcpllc.com).

ASLRRRA also has a wealth of information regarding COVID-19-related legislative actions that could affect its members, as well as other resources to help with regulatory issues and small-business concerns. View ASLRRRA's [COVID-19 page](#) for more.

## Connect with Lawmakers to Help Them Understand the Importance of Short Lines

At least 70 new members were elected to Congress on Nov. 3, and most have been sworn in. Currently the House and Senate are still undertaking organizing activities that will determine membership for committees relevant for short line priorities, such as the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee and the Senate Commerce Committee. ASLRRRA staff will be setting up Short Line Railroad 101s with freshmen members, as well as new members of relevant committees.

If you would like to schedule a meeting with your member, whether they are newly elected or veteran lawmakers, please contact ASLRRRA's Vice President, Congressional Affairs [Tom Lynch](#) or Assistant Vice President, Congressional Affairs [Mara Stark-Alcala](#) for assistance.

ASLRRRA's website also features helpful facts about the short line industry and important legislative issues that can be shared with lawmakers and others. Read more [here](#).

A graphic banner for 'COMPLIANCE TEMPLATES'. The banner features a honeycomb pattern of hexagons in shades of blue and yellow. Each hexagon contains an icon and a label: 'ETHICS' (scales of justice), 'REGULATIONS' (document with pencil), 'POLICIES' (gavel), and 'REQUIREMENTS' (magnifying glass). A central hexagon contains a head with a question mark. The text 'COMPLIANCE TEMPLATES' is prominently displayed on the left. Below it, a call to action reads 'Click here for member-exclusive templates and additional resources.' The ASLRRRA logo, 'ASLRRRA Products &amp; Services', is located in the bottom right corner.

## 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](#) via email or on (202) 585-3439.

### ASLRRA Welcomes New Associate Business Member Rcrane



We are pleased to welcome to our membership rolls [Rcrane](#), based in Cary, Ill. The company provides rapid bridge and track maintenance and replacement services with patented equipment, which performs at high levels of safety.

Rcrane also has developed innovative stealth switches for industrial development that provide permanent

or temporary customer and spur connections that improve project efficiency for railroads. Our primary contact is [Paul Markelz](#), founder/inventor and CEO, who can be reached on (630) 258-1240.

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## ASLRRA Announcements

### State Programs Offer Rail Grant Funding, and ASLRRA's Member Discount Program Can Help Members Apply

In recent weeks, the [North Carolina](#) and [Pennsylvania](#) Departments of Transportation have awarded millions of dollars in grant funding for infrastructure improvements to ASLRRA members in those states. While the federal government is an important source of grant money for short lines, many states also have their own programs that award money to railroads for various projects.

ASLRRA has tapped industry experts to assist member railroads in the preparation and submission of grant applications for programs currently available from the Department of Transportation (DOT), and other sources.

ASLRRA's preferred providers for grant writing services include Bergmann, HDR, Inc., and Global Train Services (GTS) and all three companies offer discounted rates, industry expertise, and exceptional service to ASLRRA members.

Visit [www.aslrra.org/discounts](http://www.aslrra.org/discounts) and select Grant Writing Services to learn more about these exceptional preferred providers.

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## ASLRRA Out and About

### Baker to Give Rail Update at Kentucky Transportation Conference

On Jan. 22, ASLRRA President Chuck Baker will speak at the Kentuckians for Better Transportation virtual conference, which takes place Jan. 20-22.

Baker will provide an update on short line railroads, one of several presentations focused on issues related to various transportation modes. Participants will also hear from state legislators. Follow the [link](#) to learn more.

### Gelnar Appointed Member of NCUTCD Technical Committee

ASLRRA's Vice President of Safety and Compliance JR Gelnar was recently appointed a technical member of the Railroad and Light Rail Transit Technical Committee, part of the National Committee on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (NCUTCD).

The NCUTCD helps develop standards, guides and warrants for traffic control devices and the practices used to regulate, warn and guide traffic on streets and highways. It offers recommendations to agencies such as the Federal Highway Administration concerning issues like proposed revisions and interpretations of the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD).

As a member, Gelnar will be eligible to vote on committee matters.

**ASLRRA's Member Discount Program Includes Grant Writing Services!**

Visit [aslrra.org](http://aslrra.org) to learn more!



## ASLRRA Webinars – Live or On-Demand

### Make January a Month of Learning with ASLRRA's Live Webinars

These early months of 2021 are full of webinars on topics like FRA Part 243 compliance, ASLRRA's Coalition Health Plan, and more. View our webinar [list](#) here, and register today!

[Part 225 Back to Basics, Part 2: Rail Equipment](#) - January 14, 2021

In part two of this three-part series FRA Railroad Safety Specialist Mike Wissman will cover Reporting/Recordkeeping Rail Equipment Accident/Incidents - FRA F 6180.54, FRA F 6180.81 & FRA F 6180.78. Registration is free for ASLRRA members.

Sponsored by:



[Short Line Business Development, Growth and Marketing Panel](#) - January 21, 2021

Join Rob Russell of OmniTRAX and Dan Kippley of Ellis and Eastern Company to discuss growing the railroad business and pitching the benefits of rail to shippers and the communities where short lines operate. ASLRRRA President Chuck Baker will facilitate the panel. Registration is free for ASLRRRA members.

Sponsored by:



[COVID Relief Bill – PPP and Other Tax Considerations](#) - January 26, 2021

Join financial and tax experts from Bowers & Company CPAs for a detailed discussion about the latest COVID-19 Relief Bill and what it means for your business and employees. We will cover a number of important topics, including:

- Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), Round 2
- Employee Retention Credit
- Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA): Employer Paid Leave
- Miscellaneous Business and Individual Tax Provisions.

Registration is free for ASLRRRA members.

Sponsored by:



**Access ASLRRRA's On-Demand Webinars to Learn About Railroad Retirement Benefits**

Retirement, sickness and unemployment benefits are important issues to our railroad members and their employees, so ASLRRRA worked with the Railroad Retirement Board (RRB) to produce several webinars, recordings of which are available in ASLRRRA's On-Demand Webinar library.

The RRB webinars include:

- RRB General Eligibility and Employee Benefits
- RRB Spouse Benefits and Working After Retirement
- RRB Survivor Benefits and General Information
- RRB Unemployment and Sickness Benefits

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In addition to the RRB webinars, ASLRRA has a wealth of other recordings available online, covering a variety of topics for those in a number of career fields. [On-demand webinars](#) are free for ASLRRA members, and paid subscriptions are available to non-members.

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

## Industry Events and Announcements

### University of Tennessee Transportation Program Offers Track Inspection Training Course

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville's Tennessee Transportation Assistance Program (TTAP) will hold a training course focused on railroad track inspection and safety standards March 15-19 in Chattanooga, Tenn.

The course will teach participants how to organize, conduct and document track inspections, measure track parameters, understand federal track safety standards and use inspection results to guide maintenance activities.

Registration is limited to 40 participants due to COVID-19 restrictions, and organizers will adhere to Tennessee's COVID-19 guidelines, which could include event cancellation. Follow this [link](#) for more information or to register.

[Click here](#) for a listing of industry events.

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