



February 10, 2021



## ASLRRA Membership Invoices Emailed to Company Contacts

Please be on the lookout for ASLRRA 2021 membership dues invoices that went out by email to all member companies this week.

They were emailed to the main billing contact at your organization from [accountsreceivable@aslrta.org](mailto:accountsreceivable@aslrta.org). If you haven't received your invoice and believe you should be the main billing contact, please check your spam filter or reach out to us at the email above requesting that a copy of your invoice be directed to you.

ASLRRA takes payments via check, ACH and credit card. While we are happy to continue to receive payments via check, please note that because of delays in the postal service and our remote working operations at ASLRRA headquarters there may be a delay in processing.

If you choose to pay by ACH/wire, please provide as much detail as possible in the transaction notes, including invoice number, or in the remittance advice emailed to [accounting@aslrta.org](mailto:accounting@aslrta.org). As always, dues payments to ASLRRA are deductible as a regular business expense except for the portion of annual dues attributable to lobbying activities - that portion for 2021 is 15 percent.

We very much appreciated the incredibly high renewal rate and all of our members who stayed with us in 2020 and supported our activities. We hope for your continued support in 2021 as we plan to deliver many high-quality networking and education opportunities, including an in-person annual convention in Phoenix this November.

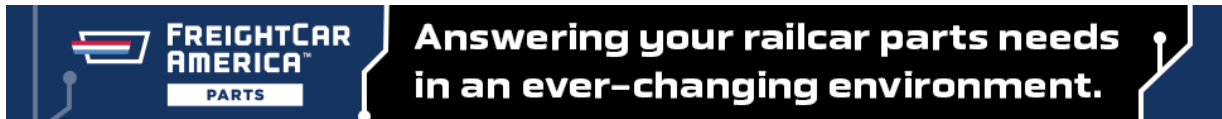
There's much to do this year - a new administration and a new Congress addressing grant programs, tax issues, and railroad operational issues, many regulatory areas to work on with the FRA and the STB, new railroad industry training templates to assist with regulatory compliance, the rollout of vaccines - so we hope you'll be with us for the journey as a member.

### Complete a Short Transportation Research Board Survey to Help Identify Rail Research Needs

ASLRRA encourages its members to complete a short online survey for the Transportation Research Board (TRB).

The TRB's Freight Rail Transportation Standing Committee has created a Freight Rail Research Needs Survey to identify issues important to those in the rail industry. Responses will help guide research projects conducted by the TRB's various research communities.

Survey responses are due by Friday, and should take five to ten minutes to complete. Click [here](#) to access the survey.



### **ASLRRA Submits Comments on Two Matters: FMCSA’s Proposal to Revise Guidance and FRA Proposed Rule on Railroad Workplace Safety**

ASLRRA jointly filed [comments](#) with the Association of American Railroads (AAR) in response to a [notice of proposed regulatory guidance](#) from the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA).

ASLRRA and the AAR support the FMCSA’s proposal, which eliminates ambiguity by clearly defining what the FMCSA considers a “yard.” Furthermore, the changes will not affect safety, as there is no increase to the amount of time a driver may be on-duty.

ASLRRA and AAR have also filed [comments](#) in response to the Federal Railroad Administration’s (FRA) [notice of proposed rulemaking](#) (NPRM) concerning railroad workplace safety. The associations’ comments support both of the proposed amendments.

One amendment will remove the reference to a specific standard (that can become outdated quickly), and the second that codifies a current long-standing waiver related to unmanned drone roadway maintenance machines. The FRA has said these changes will reduce regulatory burdens without compromising safety.

### **Changes to Phone System Aimed at Improving Customer Access to RRB Services**

The Railroad Retirement Board (RRB) [will introduce](#) two changes to its nationwide toll-free telephone system in order to improve customers’ access to agency staff and services. The changes take effect Feb. 15.

A virtual hold function is meant to address customers’ lengthy wait times. Callers will be able to request a call back from a representative instead of waiting on hold for someone to become available.

The RRB will also increase the number of hours per week claims representatives will be available to answer calls. The toll-free number will accept calls from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. every business day, including Wednesday.

Follow the link above for more information about the changes, as well as details explaining other ways customers can access certain services or complete certain actions without help from an agency representative.

### **CDC Responds to Request for Clarification Regarding Recent Mask Order**

ASLRRA staff has received clarification of the recent Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) directive requiring the wearing of face masks on conveyances and in transportation hubs.

In a notable point, the CDC confirms that those who are the lone occupants of a conveyance, such as a locomotive cab or hi-rail truck, are exempt from the mask-wearing order. This is similar to exemptions provided to commercial truck drivers who are the lone occupants of their vehicle.

Rail employees who are the only person in the work area, such as in a private office or in railroad yards, are also exempt from wearing a mask. The CDC has updated the [Frequently Asked Questions](#) portion of its mask requirement website to address certain rail situations.

## ASLRRRA Website Features New RAN Alert and FAMES Safety Alert

The Association of American Railroads (AAR) has issued a new Railway Alert Network (RAN) Security Awareness Note regarding passenger rail locomotive breach incidents. The note is now available for viewing by ASLRRRA members on ASLRRRA's [website](#).

The note identifies locomotive breach incidents in 2019 and 2020, underscoring the need for railroads to consider such a threat when conducting security risk assessments.

Also available on ASLRRRA's website is the most recent safety alert issued by the Fatality Analysis of Maintenance-of-Way Employees and Signalmen (FAMES) Committee.

The FAMES [alert](#) summarizes the analysis of 89 accidents involving roadway workers fatally injured by trains or on-track equipment in multiple-track territory, focusing on the 46 incidents involving two or more tracks.

The alert identifies several findings, such as over half of the accidents occurred on adjacent track where work was not taking place, and a safety briefing failed to identify conditions or was not conducted in one third of the accidents.

Also included are several safety recommendations, focusing in large part on urging roadway workers to fully understand the track conditions for a particular job and to comply with the warnings and guidance of watchmen while working.



## Senate Leaders Unveil Committee Assignments

Following the completion of a power-sharing agreement on Feb. 3, both Democrat and Republican Senate leaders, Chuck Schumer and Mitch McConnell, respectively, announced their parties' committee assignments.

On key committees for short line interests, Senator Maria Cantwell (D-Wash.) will now be the chairperson of the Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee, whose jurisdiction includes freight rail issues such as safety, as well as grant programs including

the Consolidated Railroad Infrastructure Safety and Improvement (CRISI) program. Former Commerce Committee Chairman Roger Wicker (R-Miss.), will now be the committee's ranking member.

On the Senate Finance Committee, which was crucial to the 45G short line tax credit permanency effort, Senators Ron Wyden (D-Ore.) and Mike Crapo (R-Idaho) are the top two members, with Wyden regaining the committee's gavel as chairman. The chairman of the Environment and Public Works Committee, which has jurisdiction for matters such as truck weights and Clean Air Act compliance, is now Senator Tom Carper (D-Del.), and Senator Shelley Moore Capito (R-W.Va.) is the ranking member.

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For other committees, including those having jurisdiction over products that short lines transport, Senator Joe Manchin (D-W.Va.) is the new Energy and Natural Resources Committee Chairman with Senator Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska) as the new ranking member. Similarly, Senator Debbie Stabenow (D-Mich.) is the new Agriculture Committee Chairwoman with Senator John Boozman (R-Ark.) as the committee's new ranking member.

Click [here](#) to view the full list of assignments for Democrats, or [here](#) for Republican lists.

## House and Senate Move Forward on COVID Relief Package

At the end of last week, the House and Senate passed budget resolutions that will allow them to move forward on a \$1.9 trillion COVID-19 relief package with simple majority in each chamber. House and Senate Democrats are coordinating with President Biden on the composition of the bill.

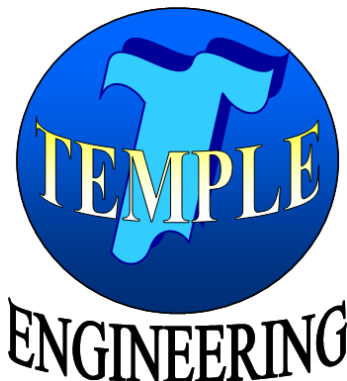
House Committees recently began releasing draft legislative text ahead of committee consideration. The House Transportation and Infrastructure (T&I) Committee, which is responsible for rail policy, is considering their piece of the package today. The T&I legislation mostly focuses on the hard-hit transit, passenger rail, and aviation industries, providing no grant funding for highways or freight rail. The draft bill would extend and expand benefits for Railroad Unemployment Insurance recipients. Find more information about the T&I bill [here](#).

The final package is also expected to include additional funding for the Paycheck Protection Program, which many of our members have tapped into. Once House and Senate committees finish their work on the legislation, the full House and Senate will each need to consider and pass the package and reconcile any differences.

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## ASLRRRA New Members

*Know a company that would benefit from joining and participating in ASLRRRA? Please contact ASLRRRA's Vice President of Membership and Business Development [Kathy Keeney](#) via email or on (202) 585-3439.*



### Welcome New Associate Business Member: Temple Engineering, Inc.

We are pleased to welcome to our membership rolls [Temple Engineering, Inc.](#), based in Independence, MO. It is a woman-owned chemical manufacturing company supplying rail customers with radiator treatment, fuel additives, cleaners/degreasers and disinfectants since 2003. With more than 75 years of combined railroad chemistry experience/knowledge and a chemist on staff, Temple Engineering is able to provide custom solutions to unique problems. Contact Temple Engineering customer service at (816) 415-3323.



**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 Announcements

### Complete Accident Reports by the End of February to Be Eligible for an ASLRRRA Jake Award

ASLRRRA is gearing up to announce 2020 President's and Jake Award winners, but cannot do so without its members submitting reports to the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA).

To be eligible for a President's and/or Jake Award, railroad and switching members must complete the required FRA accident/incident reports for every month of 2020. Any reports submitted after Feb. 28 will not be considered.

For more information, please see visit our [safety awards page](#) or contact ASLRRRA's [Fred Oelsner](#).

### Nominate Deserving Employees and Companies for ASLRRRA's Annual Industry Awards

Less than a month is left to submit nominations for ASLRRRA's industry awards, including the [Business Development Award](#), [Veterans Engagement Award](#), and [Safety Person of the Year](#) and [Safety Professional of the Year Awards](#).

Winners of each award not only earn bragging rights, they gain exposure to the wider railroad industry through ASLRRRA publications, webinars and meetings, and have been highlighted in industry print and online media.

For example, the 2020 ASLRRRA Business Development Award winners were not only featured in multiple profiles through ASLRRRA's publications, social media accounts and website, they participated in a panel during the 2020 Connections Convention where they shared their stories with conference participants.

The same is true for ASLRRRA's Safety Person and Safety Professional of the Year award winners. Their achievements are noted on the Association's website, and they were invited to record a speech for presentation at this year's virtual convention.

Veterans Engagement Award winners were profiled in ASLRRRA publications, and the Association's [Members Supporting Veterans](#) web page recognizes winners, finalists and nominees for their work supporting and engaging members of the U.S. Armed Forces.

Follow each link to learn about last year's honorees, read award criteria and find out how to submit a nomination. Nominations for all awards are due March 5.

### Explore the Benefits to Becoming a Preferred Provider with ASLRRRA's Member Discount Program

Becoming a Preferred Provider in ASLRRRA's Member Discount Program boosts your visibility and underscores your commitment to delivering an exceptional price, product and service to member railroads. The Member Discount Program leverages the buying power of the entire short line industry and the program is designed to:

- Secure significant cost savings on industry products and services;
- Create a vetting process for potential partners and establish exceptional service expectations;
- Generate non-dues revenue to support ASLRRRA programs and services.

Preferred Providers benefit from enhanced marketing opportunities that include exposure across a wide range of electronic, print and event platforms. Visit [aslrria.org/discounts](http://aslrria.org/discounts) for details and to learn more about ASLRRRA's Tier I and Tier II Member Discount Program Preferred Providers. Companies interested in becoming a Preferred Provider may contact [Sabrina Waiss](#).

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## ASLRRRA Out and About

### ITTS Virtual Conference Features ASLRRRA's Baker, G&W's Arbona

The Institute for Trade and Transportation Studies (ITTS) held the second part of its Freight in the Southeast virtual conference this week, and ASLRRRA President Chuck Baker spoke on Feb. 8 about the region's rail network and the rail industry in general.

In addition to providing an industry update, Baker presented slides showing rail network maps and other relevant information for each of the 10 ITTS-member states, including the number of carloads shipped annually and types of commodities moved.

The first of the two-part conference took place in December, and featured Joe Arbona, assistant vice president at ASLRRRA member Genesee & Wyoming Railroad Services Inc. Arbona's address, which focused on short line railroads as drivers of economic development, took place on Dec. 15. Arbona has also served on the ASLRRRA Board of Directors representing the Central Region. View a recording of his talk [here](#).

### Baker to Provide Rail Industry Outlook at AASHTO's Washington Briefing

ASLRRRA President Chuck Baker will speak at the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials' (AASHTO) virtual [Washington Briefing](#), held Feb. 23-25.

AASHTO's 2021 Washington Briefing will focus on the partnership between state departments of transportation (DOTs) and the new administration and Congress to advance action on infrastructure issues.

On Feb. 24, Baker will speak on issues related to freight rail and offer an industry outlook to an audience comprising representatives from state DOTs and others.

## CONNECT REMOTELY AND CONTINUE LEARNING WITH ASLRRRA WEBINARS

With more than 100 recordings available, there's a webinar to meet the needs of everyone on your team. Visit [aslrra.org/webinars](http://aslrra.org/webinars) to view a complete list of available recordings.



## ASLRRRA Webinars – Live or On-Demand

### Upcoming Webinars

[Coalition Health Plan, an Exclusive ASLRRRA Member Benefit](#) - February 16, 2021

Jeff Wipperman and Mark Avery, senior vice president and practice leader, employee benefits, respectively, at HUB International will provide an overview of the Coalition Health Plan, specifically designed for ASLRRRA members looking for a solution to reduce their medical premiums and simplify the healthcare experience for their employees. This webinar is available only to ASLRRRA members.

[FRA Part 243 Discussion and Q&A](#) - February 17, 2021

In this discussion, moderated by Federal Railroad Administration Staff Director of Human Performance Programs Robert Castiglione, along with ASLRRRA Safety Committee Chair Mitch Harris and Vice President of Safety and Compliance JR Gelnar, participants will talk about the Part 243 program and compliance procedures. This is intended to be an interactive session and attendees will have an opportunity to participate in Q&A throughout the presentation. Registration is free for ASLRRRA members.

Sponsored by:



[Part 240/242: Harmonization of Certification](#) - March 10, 2021

The Federal Railroad Administration's Kevin Lewis discusses the FRA's work on revising its regulation governing the qualification and certification of locomotive engineers to make it consistent with its regulation for the qualification and certification of conductors. At the end of the presentation, Lewis will be joined by ASLRRRA's JR Gelnar to help field audience questions. Registration is free for ASLRRRA members.

## Access ASLRRRA's On-Demand Webinar Library for Industry-Specific Financial Guidance

Most short line railroads are small businesses, yet their financial issues are not necessarily the same as other similarly sized companies. Through its webinars, ASLRRRA has provided helpful financial guidance on industry-specific issues. Recordings of those webinars can be found in ASLRRRA's [On-Demand Webinar library](#). Available titles include:

- 45G - What to do now that it's renewed (2020)
- Sales and Use Tax: Supreme Court Rulings Effect on Short Lines (2019)
- Tax Reform Traps and Issues (2019)
- Tax Reform Includes Substantial Changes to Depreciation (2018)

In addition, ASLRRRA offers more than 100 recordings covering a variety of railroad topics. Recordings are free to members and available by subscription to non-members. Follow the link above to learn more.

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

## Industry Events and Announcements

### Two Publications Accepting Nominations for Awards Recognizing Young Professionals

*Railway Track & Structures* magazine is accepting nominations for its inaugural Fast Trackers 10 Under 40 awards to recognize railway engineering professionals who have had an impact in their respective fields or within their companies.

Winners of the award will be recognized in the April issue of *Railway Track & Structures*. Follow [this link](#) to nominate an individual for the award. Nominations are due March 5.

Nominations are also being accepted for *Progressive Railroading* magazine's [Rising Stars 2021 awards](#), recognizing up-and-coming railroad industry leaders who have a positive impact on their companies, organizations, departments or teams. Nominations are due Feb. 26.

*Progressive Railroading* will publish profiles of the winners in the September issue of its magazine. Nominees must be younger than 40 by Sept. 1, and currently work in the North American rail industry.

[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.