



February 3, 2021



ASLRRRA Welcomes Pete Buttigieg as U.S. Secretary of Transportation

On Feb. 2, in an 86-13 vote, the Senate [confirmed](#) Pete Buttigieg as Secretary of the U.S. Department of Transportation. Buttigieg was sworn in on February 3.

ASLRRRA President Chuck Baker welcomed the news of the Senate's action with this statement:

"On behalf of the 600+ small business short line freight railroads serving thousands of shippers throughout small town and rural America, we congratulate the man formerly known as Mayor Pete on his bipartisan confirmation as Secretary Buttigieg. Through his public service in Indiana, his military background, and his Presidential campaign, Secretary Buttigieg has demonstrated his understanding of the importance of efficient logistics networks to a strong and growing American economy that works for everyone. Short lines look forward to working with him on regulatory and legislative actions that support growth and productivity in freight rail transportation alongside safety improvements and environmental sustainability. Short lines want to be part of the solution - on carbon reduction, on improving safety, on reducing road congestion and maintenance needs, and on job creation and economic growth - and are eager to get to work with Secretary Buttigieg and his team at the USDOT and its modal agencies including the FRA."

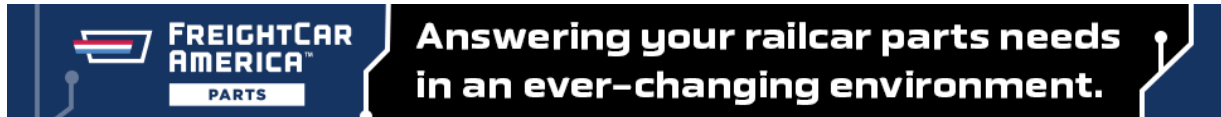
Complete Accident Reports by the End of February to Be Eligible for an ASLRRRA Jake Award

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](#).

Nominations are also being accepted for ASLRRRA's other awards, including the [Business Development Award](#), [Veterans Engagement Award](#), and [Safety Person of the Year](#) and [Safety Professional of the Year Awards](#). 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.



ASLRRA Submits Comments on STB Class Exemption Proposed Rule

ASLRRA has filed [comments](#) in response to the Surface Transportation Board's (STB) [Review of Commodity, Boxcar and TOFC/COFC Exemptions](#), calling the proposed rule, in part, overly complicated.

In 2016, the STB first [proposed](#) revoking existing class exemptions for five freight commodities: crushed or broken stone or rip rap; hydraulic cement; coke produced from coal; primary iron or steel products; and iron or steel scrap, wastes or tailings. ASLRRA submitted comments then, opposing the proceedings for several reasons, including that short line railroads provide a limited scope of service in the movement of the exempt commodities; short line railroads do not exert any market power over the transportation of exempt commodities as they rarely control the rates charged; and the STB's reliance on a 22-year study of revenue-to-variable cost ratios is seriously flawed.

The STB's current proposal is a new approach developed by the board's Office of Economics for possible use when considering class exemption and revocation issues. ASLRRA's comments state that, in addition to the issues already present in the 2016 proposal, the 2020 new approach is overly complicated; relies on models or assumptions for which the office provided no basis for using; provides models that are internally inconsistent; imposes added regulatory burdens not outweighed by any benefits; imposes exorbitant costs on those filing a petition to revoke an exemption or seek to have a commodity exempted; and relies on data not relevant to short lines.

FAMES Issues Alert Regarding Recent Roadway Worker Fatality

The Fatality Analysis of Maintenance-of-Way Employees and Signalmen (FAMES) Committee issued an [alert](#) concerning a recent fatality.

On Jan. 31, a track laborer was marking ties when he was fatally struck by a tamper. The FAMES Committee has not yet analyzed the accident, but reminds roadway workers to remain vigilant, including by identifying the use of roadway maintenance machines during safety briefings and taking steps to manage additional risks associated with the presence of these machines.

ASLRRA publishes FAMES safety alerts and recommendations [here](#), in the [Safety and Compliance portion](#) of its website.



Leadership of House Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittees Announced

The House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee has announced subcommittee chairs and ranking members.

This congress, Rep. Donald Payne (D-NJ-10) will be chairman of the Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines, and Hazardous Materials, and Rep. Rick Crawford (R-AR-01) will return as the ranking member.

The House Appropriations Committee has also announced its subcommittee leaders. Rep. David Price (D-NC-04) and Rep. Mario Diaz-Balart (R-FL-25) will return as chairman and ranking member, respectively, of the Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies (THUD). We will provide updates on Senate committees once they are announced.

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 Three New Members

We are pleased to welcome the following companies to our membership rolls:



[Appalachian Railcar Services](#), based in Eleanor, W.Va. ARS is a broad-based organization serving rail customers across the U.S. It provides a range of industrial logistics services including certified tank and freight car repair, various interior/exterior cleaning, coating and lining services, track maintenance, plant switching operations, and railcar storage. Our primary contact is General Manager Train Operations [Don Hawk](#).



[Precision Vehicle Holdings](#) based in Cincinnati, Ohio. It is a customer service organization focused on the automotive and rail industries that provides a full range of finished vehicle logistics services, including yard management, railcar loading and unloading, shuttle services, and a complete suite of customized software applications. It also does real estate development, pre-trip, and railcar maintenance and repair. Our primary contact is Business Development Director [Darrin McElroy](#), who can be reached on (859) 421-2387.

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[USA Rail Terminals](#), a subsidiary of [Alpenglow Rail](#) based in Denver, CO. USA Rail Terminals owns a 51-acre Kansas City Southern Railroad-served private railcar storage yard in Texas, strategically located within the Port Arthur and Beaumont refinery and petrochemical corridor. The Port Arthur facility stores over 900 railcars and provides a full suite of rail services. Our primary contact

is CEO [Rich Montgomery](#), who can be reached on (720) 328-0944. Many thanks to Mike Ogborn for the assist with this membership.

Virtual Meeting Content Available

Access hours of General Session keynotes, panel discussions & Breakout Education Sessions from ASLRRA's Virtual Convention and General Counsel Symposium.

On-Demand



Click to learn more...

ASLRRA Announcements

ASLRRA Mourns Charles Purdy III, Pioneer in Rail Information Services



ASLRRA expresses its condolences to the family, friends and colleagues of Charles McCord (Mac) Purdy III. He was 79.

Purdy was a former U.S. Air Force pilot who later became president of RMI, a company that provides rail information services to the transportation industry. He held that position for nearly 20 years before retiring in 2008.

RMI was a strong supporter of ASLRRA and an exhibitor and sponsor during the early days of ASLRRA's exhibitions. RMI is now a part of ASLRRA member Wabtec.

According to Judy Petry, president and general manager of ASLRRA member Farmrail System, Inc., Purdy was "instrumental in the development of electronic car reporting systems for the short lines and was much loved and respected by his short line customers and friends."

"He left an indelible mark on the industry - the likes of which few others will ever achieve," said Petry.

Recent AAR Railway Alert Network Message Details DHS Warning of Heightened Domestic Terrorist Threat

A recent Railway Alert Network (RAN) message from the Association of American Railroads (AAR) is now available to members for viewing on ASLRRA's [website](#).

The RAN Security Advisory discusses a recent bulletin issued by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) warning of a heightened threat from domestic extremists.

The DHS's [National Terrorism Advisory System \(NTAS\) Bulletin](#) warns that Domestic Violent Extremists (DVEs), motivated by a range of issues including anger over COVID-19 restrictions and the 2020 election results, remain a threat to individuals and critical infrastructure.

The AAR's advisory further notes that the rail industry security posture is at Alert Level 2, the second of four levels under the North American railroad industry's unified security plan implemented in January 2002.

Only Six Weeks Remain Until the Diesel Emissions Reduction Act Grant Application Deadline

With the Biden Administration making environmental issues an important focus area, cleaner transportation will no doubt become a high-profile issue. The Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) [Diesel Emissions Reduction Act \(DERA\) program](#) offers funding for projects achieving significant reductions in diesel emissions and exposure.

Railroads using unregulated, high-fuel-usage locomotives and over 20,000 gallons or more of fuel annually might be good candidates for a DERA grant, which could help companies switch to more environmentally friendly engines. Projects planned for areas designated as having poor air quality will also be given priority.

The EPA is currently accepting DERA grant applications, which are due March 16. The agency planned three webinars for interested applicants, with the last one scheduled for Feb. 11. Webinars are free to attend, and links can be found at the website above.

In addition, ASLRRA's Member Discount Program features preferred providers who can help with the preparation and submission of grant applications. Find out more on ASLRRA's [website](#).

Claim Your Spot in SLSI's March Leadership Development Training Course – Only Seven Remain

In light of COVID-19 restrictions, the Short Line Safety Institute (SLSI) has successfully pivoted to continue its popular and effective [Leadership Development Training Program](#) online. Due to the virtual format, however, attendance is limited to maximize opportunities for participation.

There are seven spots left in next month's leadership course, which will be held March 9-12. The program helps new and experienced railroad manager improve their leadership skills in areas such as communication, constructive feedback, coaching and team building. There is also additional emphasis on connecting leadership skills to a stronger safety culture.

Follow this [link](#) to learn more or register.

Enhance Your Company's Visibility as a Preferred Provider with ASLRRA's Member Discount Program

Becoming a Preferred Provider in ASLRRA'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 www.aslrra.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](#).

ASLRRRA Out and About

Gelnar Discusses Recommendations, Distributing Alerts During Recent FAMES Committee Meeting

Last week, ASLRRRA's Vice President of Safety and Compliance JR Gelnar attended a meeting of the Fatality Analysis of Maintenance-of-Way Employees and Signalmen (FAMES) Committee virtually.

Committee members had the option to attend the meeting in person or online. The committee developed recommendations regarding working in multiple track territory, which will be released in February.

A process for developing and quickly distributing alerts to the industry regarding a recent incident was discussed and approved with a larger distribution on social media. Further, the Committee agreed upon a regular and timely updating of the data distributed in previous reports.

Association President Baker to Speak at Virtual Freight Conference

ASLRRRA President Chuck Baker will speak at the virtual [Freight in the Southeast](#) Conference, which will be held Feb. 8-10.

Baker will speak on the first day of the conference. Each day focuses on a different topic, specifically freight outlook and performance on Feb. 8, rural America and agriculture on Feb. 9, and resiliency sustainability and diversity on Feb. 10. This is the second of a two-part virtual conference, the first of which took place in December.

ASLRRRA Industry Award Nominations Open!



Nominations being accepted for 2021 Safety Person, Safety Professional, Business Development, and Veterans Engagement Awards. **Nominations due by March 5!** *Click to learn more...*



ASLRRR Webinars – Live or On-Demand

Upcoming Webinars

[Coalition Health Plan, an Exclusive ASLRRR Member Benefit](#) - February 16, 2021 (Note new date)

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 ASLRRR members looking for a solution to reduce their medical premiums and simplify the healthcare experience for their employees. This webinar is available only to ASLRRR 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 ASLRRR 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 ASLRRR 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 ASLRRR's JR Gelnar to help field audience questions. Registration is free for ASLRRR members.

Legal Professionals Can Find Popular Recordings in ASLRRR's On-Demand Webinar Library

ASLRRR's recorded webinars cover topics important to legal professionals in the railroad industry. Some of ASLRRR's most popular titles in this category are:

- Hot Off the Press: What's New at the STB
- Crossings: The Necessary Evil We Must Contend With
- A Practical Guide to the Railroad Industry Agreement (RIA)

Find these titles in ASLRRR's [On-Demand Webinar library](#). In addition, ASLRRR offers more than 100 recordings covering a variety of career fields. Follow the link above to learn more.

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

Industry Events and Announcements

Civil Engineer Society to Release 2021 Infrastructure Report Card

The American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) will release their quadrennial Infrastructure Report Card on March 3. America's infrastructure will earn a cumulative GPA based on 17 category grades, including bridges, dams, drinking water systems and much more.

After the grades are unveiled, ASCE will convene a program of elected officials, decisionmakers, and thought leaders to discuss solutions for raising our infrastructure GPA. To register for this virtual program, visit the website [here](#).

University of Tennessee to Hold Railroad Education and Training Courses in March, April, May

The University of Tennessee's Center for Transportation Research has scheduled several [railroad education and training courses](#) through May, including "Railroad Track Inspection & Safety Standards," "Basic Railroad Track Maintenance," "Railroad Track Design" and "Railroad Bridge Inspection."

Two separate track inspection courses will be held in March and April, with one each of the other three courses held in May. Follow the link above to learn about each course, or click [here](#) to view the Center for Transportation Research's railroad page.

[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.