



September 1, 2021



FY 2021 CRISI Grant Application Period Open

Funding for the Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) Grant Program [was announced](#) Aug. 27, with the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) making nearly \$362 million available for intercity passenger and freight rail projects.

ASLRRRA urges its members to consider CRISI grant funding, an important funding opportunity for short lines, as it is one of the few programs to which small railroad companies can apply directly, without a community or local government partnership. Eligible projects, according to the FRA, are those that "address congestion challenges, highway-rail grade crossings, upgrade short line or regional railroad infrastructure, relocate rail lines, improve intercity passenger rail capital assets, and target railroad trespassing."

Some of the CRISI funds are being set aside for specific purposes, including 25 percent, or no less than \$93.7 million, for rural projects, and no less than \$25 million for projects targeting rail trespassing. There will also be separate, non-CRISI funding available for trespassing suicide prevention campaigns and to support wages for railroad trespassing enforcement.

CRISI grant applications are due Nov. 29. Follow this [link](#) to see the official Notice of Funding Opportunity. In addition, to provide grant applicants with more information about the CRISI program and tips for creating strong applications, the FRA will host a webinar on Sept. 21. Click [here](#) for more information or to register.

Short lines should also consider preparing now for longer-term and larger grant opportunities for their railroad. The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), which was recently passed by the Senate and will be considered by the House this fall, will have unprecedented levels of investment in CRISI and other programs that are critical to the freight industry, providing our members enormously expanded opportunities to compete for investment grants to implement new technology, upgrade aging track, rehabilitate bridges, and initiate important safety measures that allow us to better serve our customers.

ASLRRRA's Member Discount Program also features Preferred Providers Bergmann, HDR, Inc. and Global Train Services (GTS) that can help railroads with the application process. All three companies have extensive expertise and offer discounted rates and exceptional service to ASLRRRA members. Log in to the [ASLRRRA website](#) for more information.

ASLRRRA Announces Four Winners of the 2021 Business Development Awards

Four railroads are winners of ASLRRRA's 2021 [Business Development Awards](#) and will be honored at this year's [ASLRRRA Conference and Exhibition](#) in Phoenix, Ariz.

ASLRRRA congratulates Iron Horse Resources, Lake State Railway Company, Pan Am Railways and R. J. Corman Carolina Lines. Each company demonstrated excellence through business practices in ways that included utilization of the railroad's unique operating characteristics to deliver value; partnership

with other development authorities, Class 1s, or companies; and delivering economic success to both the railroad and the community it serves.

"The Business Development Award honors the essence of what short lines are all about – developing a keen understanding of their customers' needs, identifying opportunities to grow with their customers, and having the drive to turn every one of those opportunities into a benefit for their customers and the communities they serve," said Chuck Baker, President, ASLRRRA. "In this pandemic year when simply staying afloat signaled success for many businesses around the globe, these awardees went above and beyond to deliver significant value to customers whose businesses were also upended, a testament to the flexibility, persistence, and long-term vision that the short line industry embodies."

For more details on the winning submissions, click [here](#).

ASLRRRA's Jake Award Initiator Mourned; Remembered as a Titan of the Short Line Renaissance



Lowell "Jake" Jacobson passed away on July 24 at the age of 80. Jacobson was passionate about promoting railroad safety and that passion inspired a generation of short line railroaders to work hard at improving workplace safety.

Jacobson was the originator of what is today's ASLRRRA Jake Safety Award program, which honors short line railroads for above-industry average safety performance. Each year, short lines compete vigorously for this honor, and the short line industry has become safer as a result. This competition is a testament to the persuasive power Jake Jacobson brought to the subject of improving railroad safety and ASLRRRA is truly grateful for his devotion to this cause.

"Lowell "Jake" Jacobson was a legend in the railroad industry, and the Association's history is deeply entwined with Jake's. When his Copper Basin Railway achieved a perfect safety record in 1993, he realized that no award existed to recognize small railroads' safety records, thus the Association's 'Jake' Awards were instituted. Garnering a

Jake Award is a highly valued win for our members, recognizing their railroad's above-industry safety performance, and reflective of the passion that Jake Jacobson had for safety, and his impact on our industry," said ASLRRRA President Chuck Baker.

Jacobson's commitment to safety did not stop with his work with the Copper Basin. In addition to instituting industry safety awards, and involvement in the ASLRRRA, Jacobson served on the board of Arizona Operation Lifesaver, a nationwide non-profit public safety and education program which works to eliminate collisions and deaths at railroad crossings and rights-of-way.

"Operation Lifesaver, Inc. is very appreciative of Jake's tireless dedication to grade crossing safety and trespass prevention, and his years of service on the Arizona Operation Lifesaver Board of Directors," said Jo Strang, Chair of the OLI Board of Directors and Senior Vice President, Safety & Regulatory Policy, American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association.

Jacobson is fondly remembered by his many friends and ASLRRRA members for his keen wit and story-telling abilities.

Viking Navigation, LLC Principal Adam Nordstrom worked with Jacobson when Nordstrom led government affairs for ASLRRRA as a partner at the former Chambers, Conlon & Hartwell firm. Nordstrom recalled of Jacobson, "Whenever we spoke, Jake would say, 'It's a beautiful day in God's

September 1, 2021

Country.' Back then, he meant the wide skies and stark beauty of the Copper Basin. I am sure he can say the same about where he is today with first-hand knowledge. Jake had an indomitable personality, Wild West charisma, and the belief that small railroads made the world a better place when every employee returned home safely. He was a Titan from the Age of the Short Line Renaissance who left his brand on our industry and on the hearts of those honored to work with him."

Jacobson became the chief operating officer of the Copper Basin in 1986 when the short line was sold to Rail Management Corp. He served as president and COO for more than 30 years, retiring in February 2020. The short line operates a 54-mile line and seven-mile branch line in Arizona and interchanges with Union Pacific Railroad. Prior to joining the Copper Basin, Jacobson worked for Union Pacific Railroad for 29 years.

Originally awarded by Jake Jacobson, in 1999, ASLRRA took over the annual safety recognition program and named it the Jake Awards after Jacobson. This year, the association chose 346 Jake Award recipients for above-industry average safety performance in 2020 and 316 Jake With Distinction Award winners for injury-free performance last year. Since its official inception in 1995, the Jake Award program has distributed more than 6,200 Jake and Jake with Distinction Awards to small railroads.

Jacobson is survived by his wife Patricia, a son and daughter, and several grandchildren.



FRA Activates Hurricane Ida Emergency Relief Docket

The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) activated the [Emergency Relief Docket \(FRA-2021-0001\)](#), effective Aug. 28. This docket applies to Hurricane Ida, and the emergency relief provisions of 49 CFR § 211.45 are in effect.

FRA is standing by to review and process any waiver submissions as quickly as possible and in accordance with the requirements of 49 CFR 211.45. To enable expedient consideration of any emergency

waiver request, please submit that request via e-mail to FRAWaivers@dot.gov with a courtesy copy to john.alex@dot.gov, carmen.patriarca@dot.gov, veronica.chittim@dot.gov, c.hayward-williams@dot.gov, devin.rouse@dot.gov and lucinda.henriksen@dot.gov.

Members with questions about the emergency waiver process are encouraged to contact ASLRRA's [JR Gelnar](#).

Railroad Retirement Board Q&A Talks About Service Month Credits

The Railroad Retirement Board's (RRB) newest installment in its monthly question and answer (Q&A) series discusses [deemed service month credits](#).

Railroad retirement benefits are calculated based on months of service and earnings credits. The Railroad Retirement Act allows employees to receive credit for additional service months under certain circumstances, even if the employee did not work every month of the year.

The RRB's Q&A explains how service month credit is determined, or deemed, and offers some examples of the specific calculations used. There are also descriptions of how deemed service months can affect railroad retirement annuities and how they can increase an employee's tier II amount.

New FRA Document Offers Agency Overview of Responsibilities and Priorities

An updated presentation by the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) offering an overview of the agency and its responsibilities is now available on [ASLRRRA's website](#).

The document, titled "FRA 101: Getting to Know FRA," includes an FRA organizational chart, a breakdown of FRA districts and Safety Management Teams, and descriptions of the areas of research on which the FRA focuses. A copy can be found at the link above, or by accessing ASLRRRA's [Safety & Compliance page](#) and scrolling down to the "Other Resources" heading.



U.S. Senator Raphael Warnock Visits ASLRRRA Member Railroad

Senator Raphael Warnock (D-Ga.) joined OmniTRAX and ASLRRRA member Georgia & Florida Railway (GFRR) personnel for a locomotive demonstration in Albany, Ga. on Aug. 31.

After a safety briefing, GFRR General Manager Gene Renner, OmniTRAX Senior Vice President, Operations John Bradley and OmniTRAX COO Gord Anutooshkin explained to the senator the role of OmniTRAX's four railroad operations in Georgia and the role played by GFRR in serving major employers and supporting

economic development in and around Albany. As lifelong residents of southwest Georgia, Renner and GFRR Engineer Tyler Bonaparte stressed GFRR's community engagement and local relationships

Before boarding GFRR Unit 9459, Senator Warnock was briefed on the correct manner to board a locomotive. The Senator commented that GFRR "took safety very seriously." Once aboard, Warnock sat at the control stand while Bonaparte explained the operation of a locomotive. The senator engaged in a discussion about the benefits of rail, highlighting the reduction in the number of trucks on highways, the safety of rail operations and the environmental advantages of rail.

"Gene and Tyler fired up the locomotive, and had the Senator sound the horn. The smile on his face said it all," said Bradley. "[Warnock] was very engaged, asking questions the entire time, and as he

blew the train horn his team exclaimed in unison unprompted 'All aboard the Warnock Express!'



Photo Courtesy of Georgia and Florida Railway

Georgia and Florida Railway Engineer Tyler Bonaparte (right) explains locomotive controls to Senator Raphael Warnock (D-Ga., left). Warnock toured the Albany, Ga. rail yard of ASLRRRA member GFRR on Aug. 31.



Advanced DSLE & Labor Relations: September 28-30

Regulatory Module of Leadership Development: October 5-7

General Code of Operating Rules: October 26-28

Fall 2021 Training Seminars

Visit aslrra.org/training to learn more

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.

ASLRRRA Pleased to Welcome Two New Supplier Members



Nordhues Railway Value Solutions, based in Omaha, Neb., is a new consulting firm led by a railway supply industry veteran. The firm concentrates on bringing innovative technological value solutions to the rail industry along with product management, sales, and process improvement consulting. Our primary contact is Owner and President [Connie Nordhues-Bieber](#), who can be reached on (402) 650-0562.



Rail Vision
ANALYTICS

[RailVision Analytics](#) was founded in 2018 with the simple premise that railroads have vast amounts of untapped data that can be used to drive operational improvements. Its tablet app, EcoRail, is the 'Waze' of the rail industry. Its platform collects data available from your locomotive's event recorder and then uses advanced AI algorithms to provide real-time

insights on saving fuel and improving safety, all at an affordable price for Short Line operators. Our primary contact is CEO [Dev Jain](#). Many thanks to ASLRRRA's Fred Oelsner for the assist with this membership.



Annual Conference Offers Many Education, Networking Opportunities

[Registration](#) for this year's [ASLRRRA Annual Conference and Exhibition](#) is in full swing. The Association is eager to welcome railroad and supplier member employees to the in-person event, held Nov. 17-19 in Phoenix, Ariz.

Education is an important part of ASLRRRA's conference, and this year is no exception. There will be 11 different education tracks with over 35 breakout sessions and nearly 100 subject-matter experts covering a wide variety of industry topics.

Meeting in person also allows for productive interactions in our [Exhibit Hall](#) and networking opportunities through the [golf tournament](#), opening reception and sponsored breaks. ASLRRRA will also be recognizing industry award honorees at the convention, including winners of the Business Development Awards and Veterans Engagement Awards, and the inaugural class of the Short Line Hall of Fame.

September 1, 2021

A [conference hotel block](#) is open with special rates at both the Sheraton Phoenix Downtown and the Hyatt Regency Phoenix. The discounted room rate is only available until Oct. 11. As a reminder, ASLRRA does not work with or endorse any third-party companies to make room reservations. Reservations should be made directly with the hotel using information provided in the link above.

Conference Exhibition Hall to Feature New Green Zone

Things are shaping up well in the exhibit hall for ASLRRA's Annual Conference and Exhibition in Phoenix. More than 80 percent of the booths have been sold and some 130 companies are participating.

One of the many highlights this year in the Exhibit Hall is the newly created Green Zone, where companies that provide products/services that improve the environment and promote sustainability are featured.

Please take time to learn more about their offerings before the show by clicking on their websites below or visiting them in the Expo Hall during Show Preview hour or other open show times on Wednesday and Thursday during the annual conference. Their 25 booths are in the 100, 200 and 300 aisles and are easy to find: just look for the green carpet and pipe and drape.

Green Zone exhibitors include:

[Cedar AI](#)
[Cummins](#)
[Edwin Bohr / Electronics](#)
[HEPACO](#)
[International Name Plate Supplies](#)
[NRE](#)

[Pandrol](#)
[Progress Rail, a Caterpillar Company](#)
[Purify Fuel](#)
[Rail Yard Studios](#)
[Wabtec](#)
[ZTR](#)

Interested in a booth in the Green Zone or elsewhere? Please contact [Kathy Keeney](#) for more details.

ASLRRA Announcements

In-Person Training Seminars Now Scheduled for September, October

ASLRRA is happy to announce its [fall training seminars](#) have been rescheduled and are now set to take place in person in September and October. All seminars will be held in Cedar Falls, Iowa.

The Association is working with member Iowa Northern Railway Company to offer these seminars, which will help members meet regulatory and compliance training needs. ASLRRA's Vice President of Safety and Compliance JR Gelnar will be joined by Iowa Northern Assistant General Manager Mark Vaughn and others to offer instruction on labor relations, leadership development, the General Code of Operating Rules and more. View scheduled events below and click each link for more information or to register. The number of participants is limited for each event, so register today!

[Advanced DSLE and Labor Relations Training](#) – Sept. 28-30

This comprehensive Advanced Designated Supervisor of Locomotive Engineer (DSLE) and Labor Relations Training Seminar is intended to provide railroad managers with training on a complex designation that they address daily. Attendees will receive training on DSLE responsibilities, including application and administration of 49 CFR Part 240 and Part 242 similarities and differences; locomotive event recorder operation and data analysis; and labor relations and human resources topics.

[ASLRRA Leadership Development Training, Regulatory Module](#) – Oct. 5-6

This is the Regulatory Module of the Leadership Development Training program developed collaboratively with the Short Line Safety Institute (SLSI). This module covers critical information for railroad supervisors and managers to strengthen the understanding and application of certain regulations to enhance the railroads' overall safety practices and culture.

[General Code of Operating Rules \(GCOR\) Training](#) – Oct. 26-28

This training seminar is intended for railroads that have adopted the GCOR as their operating rules and may be used to meet operating rules training as required by 49 CFR Part 240, 242 and 214 Subpart C. The eighth edition of the GCOR will be released before the course, and attendees must bring their copy of the GCOR eighth edition for reference.

ASLRRA Out and About

Chuck Baker Represents ASLRRA at BNSF Short Line Meeting

ASLRRA President Chuck Baker participated in BNSF's "Short Line and Transload" event, held virtually on Aug. 31. BNSF leadership presented updates on marketing, performance and transportation and government affairs. Baker is a member BNSF's Short Line Caucus, along with other short line members who interchange with BNSF.

Gitchell, Radford Share Short Line Perspective During NTSB Member Visit to Canton Railroad

On Aug. 31, ASLRRA Member Canton Railroad hosted National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) Member Tom Chapman, and members of his staff.

This visit included a presentation and discussion of short line operations and safety practices, as well as an overview of short line operations, their contributions to the local and national economy, and short line priorities for continued success. There was also a visit to the yard to see various types of locomotives. Canton Railroad President and CEO John Magness hosted the group, and the Association thanks him for a very informative and productive afternoon.

September 1, 2021



ASLRRA's Crystal Gitchell (second from left) and Zach Radford (far right), joined (L to R) NTSB staff member Linda McGunigal, NTSB Member Tom Chapman, Canton Railroad President and CEO John Magness and NTSB staff member Ivan Cheung for a tour of the railroad and a discussion of short line contributions and priorities.

Members of ASLRRA's legislative and government affairs teams Crystal Gitchell and Zach Radford were also on hand during the visit to share the industry perspective. Gitchell coordinated this meeting as part of the Association's efforts to continue to increase ASLRRA's outreach to and engagement with government officials at all branches and levels. ASLRRA members eager to showcase their railroads and help educate regulators, are encouraged to contact Gitchell at cgitchell@aslrra.org.

ASLRRA's Member Discount Program Includes Grant Writing Services!

Visit aslrra.org to learn more!



ASLRRA Webinars – Live or On-Demand

Register to Receive CLE Credits from Select ASLRRA Webinars

Thanks to a partnership with the Association of Transportation Law Professionals (ATLP), ASLRRA is offering continuing legal education (CLE) credits for some of the [live webinars](#) available through the Association's newest webinar series.

September 1, 2021

These new webinars are based on popular topics discussed at ASLRRRA's 2021 General Counsel Symposium in July, and are meant to cover topics important to railroad employees in various departments, such as operations, safety, compliance, human resources and legal.

There are currently five webinars scheduled for September, with more to be added to ASLRRRA's [Event Calendar](#) once they are confirmed. During each webinar, attendees will have the chance to hear from subject-matter experts, ask questions and receive valuable tips and takeaways.

Follow each of the individual links below for more information or to register for the webinar.

[STB, Hot, Hot, Hot!!!](#) – Sept. 9, 2021

Stinson LLP Partner David Rifkind will cover new STB members, new dynamics, and old merger rules. This webinar will examine some of the Board's key decisions this past year and offer a look ahead at what is likely on the agenda for the coming year. CLE credit is available for this webinar.

Sponsored by:

The logo for Stinson LLP, featuring the word "STINSON" in a bold, black, sans-serif font. The letters "I" and "N" are stylized with a red diagonal line through them.

[Small Business Administration – National Ombudsman Overview](#) – Sept. 16, 2021

This webinar, targeted for companies with 500 employees or less, will provide an overview of the Small Business Administration's (SBA) Office of the National Ombudsman. An SBA representative will provide an overview of their office and how to file comments with their office, as well as answer questions about the process. Please note, individual issues and regulation issues will not be addressed during this webinar. Registration is free for both ASLRRRA members and non-members.

[National Transportation Safety Board \(NTSB\) Investigations](#) – Sept. 21, 2021

The National Transportation Safety Board investigates only approximately 20 rail calamities each year. Tom Tobin and Dan Braude of the Wilson Elser Law Firm have represented railroads and other transportation providers in dozens of NTSB investigations and will take some of the mystery out of the process. Their presentation will provide insight to questions concerning which rail accidents the NTSB is most likely to investigate; what happens in the days the NTSB is on scene at an accident; how long NTSB investigations typically take; and more. CLE credit is available for this webinar.

Sponsored by:

The logo for Stinson LLP, featuring the word "STINSON" in a bold, black, sans-serif font. The letters "I" and "N" are stylized with a red diagonal line through them.

Search ASLRRRA's On-Demand Webinar Library for Popular Webinar Recordings

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

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

Industry Events and Announcements

IRPT's 2021 Conference Will be Held in October

Inland Rivers Ports and Terminals (IRPT) will hold its 2021 Conference Oct. 18 to 20 in Biloxi, Miss.

The in-person conference will be held at the IP Casino Resort Spa, and includes updates on legislative efforts, discussions of intermodal operations and port resilience, presentations from federal agency representatives, and more. Use this [link](#) to learn more or to register for the event.

[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.