



January 12, 2022

BREAKING NEWS: ASLRRRA Welcomes Confirmation of Amit Bose as Administrator, FRA. See our article in the [Legislative Section](#) below



ASLRRRA President Inducted into NRC Hall of Fame

The National Railroad Construction and Maintenance Association (NRC) [inducted](#) ASLRRRA President Chuck Baker into the NRC Hall of Fame on Jan. 7 at the NRC's annual conference. Baker worked at the NRC from 2004 to 2019 before being chosen to head ASLRRRA.

Baker began at the NRC with no experience in railroads, construction or the workings of Washington, but approached his starting role with enthusiasm and a willingness to learn. He held a

number of positions – manager, vice president and executive vice president – before he was named NRC president in 2010.

With Baker at the helm, the NRC “enhanced its financial standing and expanded its membership, scope of services, and influence,” according to an NRC press release. For instance, attendance at the NRC’s annual conference went from 350 in 2005 to over 1,000 in 2019, and Baker’s efforts on Capitol Hill helped the NRC grow in stature there.



Joining Baker in this year's NRC Hall of Fame class were Mike Choat, retired CSX chief engineer and former vice president of Wabtec's Railroad Controls, and Stan Herzog, former chairman, CEO and president of ASLRRRA member Herzog, who was inducted posthumously.

ASLRRRA President Chuck Baker (center) poses with Mike Choat (right) and Brad Lager (left) at the National Railroad Construction and Maintenance Association Hall of Fame induction ceremony on Jan. 7. Lager, Herzog chairman and CEO, accepted the award on behalf of inductee Stan Herzog, who was recognized posthumously.

Photo Courtesy of the NRC

Anacostia President's Column Highlights Short Lines' Environmental Efforts

A recent article in ASLRRR member Pacific Harbor Line's [company newsletter](#) features a column by parent company Anacostia Rail Holdings President Peter Gilbertson describing sustainability efforts at Pacific Harbor Lines (PHL) and other Anacostia railroads, which underscores the way short line freight railroads are taking environmental issues seriously and working hard to address them.

One way Anacostia and its subsidiaries are tackling this issue is by joining the [U.S. Environmental Protection Agency \(EPA\) SmartWay program](#). All of Anacostia's railroads are SmartWay partners, which enables them to measure their supply-chain footprint, track their performance and improve their operational efficiency.

ASLRRR is also a member of SmartWay as an affiliate, helping to support its members' efforts to become more sustainable, as well as educate others about these endeavors. To that end, ASLRRR joined with SmartWay to present a [webinar](#) helping shippers understand the benefits of using freight railroads to transport goods. Another webinar, available in ASLRRR's [On-Demand Webinar library](#), explains the opportunities presented by the SmartWay program, while a third allows shippers to discuss the perks of using rail from their perspective.

Anacostia railroads pursue environmentally friendly practices in other ways. PHL has worked to upgrade its locomotive fleet to the most efficient Tier 3+ and Tier 4 units, while all of Anacostia's railroads have installed automatic shut-down devices on their locomotives. PHL is also trying to identify the best alternative fuel to use in its fleet and is testing a heavy-duty battery-powered locomotive developed by ASLRRR member Progress Rail. To learn more about the environmental impact of ASLRRR-member short lines and the ways they, and freight rail in general, are a more sustainable shipping option, please visit [ASLRRR's Environmental Impact page](#).

***Correction:** Last week's email version of "Views and News" contained a headline that incorrectly read: "Illinois Circuit Court Again Rules Federal Law Preempts Crew Size Law." The ruling was made by the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois Eastern Division, not the circuit court, and the headline should have read "U.S. District Court..."*

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DOT Grant Programs Expected to Announce Funding Opportunities Soon

ASLRRA expects notice of funding opportunity (NOFO) releases are likely to occur as early as this month for the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) grant program, and February for Infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA) grants.

Each program received significant funding increases in last year's Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), and Congress created greater flexibility and eligibility for short lines to participate in both programs in partnership with local and state project sponsors. According to the DOT, it will have to undertake 44 new programs established in the IIJA, a process that will move slowly, but programs in existence prior to the bill's enactment are prepared to provide opportunities much sooner.

ASLRRA encourages short lines to prepare now to take advantage of the major increases in funding for these grant programs and others, such as the CRISI program, when NOFOs are made public. To help members navigate the grant process, ASLRRA's [Member Discount Program](#) Preferred Providers [Bergmann](#), [HDR, Inc.](#) and [Global Train Services](#) (GTS) offer grant-writing services at special pricing to Association members.

Order GCOR Eighth Edition Through ASLRRA's Website

ASLRRA has updated the [link](#) on its website through which people can order a copy of the General Code of Operating Rules (GCOR) rulebook. The most current edition of the GCOR is the eighth edition, which was effective April 1, 2020. Use the link above to go directly to the ordering site, or go to ASLRRA's [Safety and Compliance page](#) and scroll down to the General Code of Operating Rules (GCOR) under the Other Resources heading.

Short Line Safety Institute's One-Minute Videos Focus on Hazmat Regulations

To help railroads review important regulatory requirements for shipment of hazardous materials (hazmat), the Short Line Safety Institute (SLSI) has created eight [HazMat Minute](#) videos.

Each brief video offers a review of hazmat regulations covering topics such as tank car inspections, position-in-train documents, shipping papers and more. The videos are designed to be incorporated easily into individual or group training sessions or safety briefings, and several have a corresponding HazMat Safety Tip.

These HazMat Minutes are based on information included in SLSI's [hazardous materials training classes](#). Hazmat training brings SLSI experts to railroads to instruct employees at no cost to the company.

SLSI also offers other hazmat resources online, including longer [Fast Class](#) training videos, [hazmat guides](#) and [safety tips](#), all at no cost. These join the many other [SLSI](#) safety resources available online and as in-person training sessions.

FRA Report Examines Concrete Tie Performance

A [January report](#) from the Federal Railroad Administration's Office of Research, Development and Technology discusses concrete tie performance in places with poor track support, based on research conducted between 2015 and 2019.

With derailments having occurred in places where track support conditions were not ideal, researchers sought to understand how these conditions affected concrete crossties. The study

measured the effects of poor support on the stress state of these ties, specifically examining "critical support conditions for concrete track, the effect of center binding and cracking conditions on tie performance, and the effect of water on tie crack propagation rates."

The results of this study have prompted changes to chapter 30 of the *AREMA Manual of Railway Engineering*, as well as to the FRA's *Track and Rail and Infrastructure Integrity Compliance Manual*. Follow the link above to read the report summary and find links to full reports.



Amit Bose Confirmed as FRA Administrator

The U.S. Senate has confirmed Amit Bose to be administrator of the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) by a vote of 68-29.

Bose is currently the deputy administrator of the FRA, effectively serving as acting administrator prior to today's confirmation.

[In a statement](#), ASLRRR President Chuck Baker welcomed Bose's confirmation.

"On behalf of our country's 600 small business short line freight railroads, I congratulate Amit Bose on being confirmed by the U.S. Senate as Administrator of the Federal Railroad Administration. I'd also note that Amit is the first Indian American to be appointed to this role and that is to be celebrated," said Baker.

"His confirmation comes at a critical time for our industry, right on the heels of passage of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) – a game-changing measure that provides vast new opportunities to help rebuild and bolster our short line freight rail network through such programs as CRISI, INFRA, RAISE, RRIF, PIDP, and the new grade crossing separation program.

We look forward to working with Administrator Bose and his top-notch team at the FRA to put these new resources to work advancing key projects that enhance safety, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and solve our country's supply chain crisis. We are also eager to continue working collaboratively to harness the power and promise of technology to continue moving freight rail forward."



As an ASLRRR Preferred Provider, Loram offers Discounts on Tie and Track Inspection Services to ASLRRR Members.

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ASLRRA Announcements

Optimize Track Inspections with Aurora from Preferred Provider Loram Technologies

Track inspections help railroads identify and manage problems and potential problems to ensure operational safety and regulatory compliance. To aid with the inspection process, ASLRRA Preferred Provider Loram Technologies offers its Aurora Track Inspection Technology to ASLRRA members at preferred pricing through the Association's Member Discount Program.

Aurora uses state-of-the-art imaging technology to scan railroad tracks, evaluating the condition of every tie and identifying problems like rail seat deterioration and rail base corrosion. That data gets turned into an easy-to-understand report customized to railroads' specific needs, helping companies find issues that compromise track safety and efficiency. Not only can railroads then make plans to repair deficiencies, they can evaluate whether they are in compliance with industry regulations.

ASLRRA members can improve operations at a lower cost with Aurora from Loram Technologies. To learn more about Aurora and the other products and services available through other ASLRRA Preferred Providers, visit the Association's [Member Discount Program website](#). Members can save on things like personal protective equipment and employee health insurance, or get support with positive train control or grant writing. [Log in](#) to find out more.

ASLRRA Out and About

ASLRRA Staff Members Participate in Transportation Research Board Meeting in D.C.



ASLRRA Vice President of Communications Amy Krouse, who is also AR040 secretary, joined other ASLRRA staff members in attending the Transportation Research Board's 101st Annual Meeting in Washington, D.C.

ASLRRA staff members Crystal Gitchell, Amy Krouse, Fred Oelsner and Jo Strang attended the Transportation Research Board (TRB) 101st Annual Meeting in Washington, D.C., which is being held Jan. 9-13. ASLRRA President Chuck Baker gave a presentation during the [Freight Rail Transportation Committee](#) (AR040) meeting.

ASLRRA has leadership roles in committees of importance to ASLRRA members. Krouse is AR040

secretary and Strang is chair of the Rail Safety Committee (AR070). ASLRRRA staff participates in many key committees that cover topics such as cybersecurity, safety, state DOT relations, and operations.

The theme for this year's TRB meeting is "Innovating an Equitable, Resilient, Sustainable, and Safe Transportation System." Over 400 sessions and workshops covered all transportation modes, with 30 focused specifically on COVID-19-related issues.

Association Representatives Attend Operation Lifesaver Anniversary Celebration Kickoff at Union Station

Today, rail safety education organization [Operation Lifesaver](#) (OLI) kicked off a year of celebration in honor of its 50th anniversary with an [unveiling](#) of an Operation Lifesaver commemorative Amtrak locomotive at Union Station in Washington, D.C.



ASLRRRA's Jo Strang, who is also chair of OLI's Board of Directors, provided comments at the unveiling. Other representatives of the Association, Chuck Baker, Crystal Gitchell, Sarah Yurasko, also attended.

OLI will [celebrate 50 years](#) in operation with a variety of events throughout the year. In addition to Amtrak, several other railroads will recognize Operation Lifesaver with themed locomotives, including some ASLRRRA members.



Above: ASLRRRA representatives (back row, L to R) Chuck Baker and Sarah Yurasko, along with (front row L to R) Crystal Gitchell and Jo Strang pose with ASLRRRA member Henry Posner, III (top right) in front of an Amtrak locomotive commemorating Operation Lifesaver's 50th anniversary. Strang, who is also OLI's board chair, spoke at the locomotive's unveiling today at Union Station.

Below: OLI's commemorative locomotive is painted in a custom black and yellow color scheme with one of the organization's slogans on the side, "See Tracks? Think Train!" (Photo from media.amtrak.com)

ASLRRA's Member Discount Program Includes Grant Writing Services!

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ASLRRA Webinars – Live or On-Demand

Understand FRA Regulations and Requirements with Recorded Webinars

Federal railroad regulations can be complicated, to say the least. ASLRRA helps members better understand these regulations through its webinar offerings and makes recordings of those webinars available to those who are unable to attend the live session.

ASLRRA's library of recorded on-demand webinars provides an entire section on regulatory topics, including the Association's popular three-part series discussing 49 CFR Part 243, "Training, Qualifications, and Oversight for Safety-Related Railroad Employees." There are also webinars discussing Part 225, reporting railroad accidents and incidents, and Parts 240 and 242, qualification and certification of locomotive engineers and conductors.

Find these recordings in ASLRRA's On-Demand Webinar library under the Regulatory tab. The webinar library also includes other industry hot topics such as railroad retirement and unemployment, social media engagement and crisis communications and much more.

ASLRRA 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 and log in to see what is available.

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

Industry Events and Announcements

Short Line Safety Institute Releases New Safety Poster

The Short Line Safety Institute (SLSI) released a new [safety poster](#) encouraging a positive attitude toward safety.

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The poster is available in two designs and both English and Spanish, with space at the bottom for companies to include their own logos. Companies can download, resize and print the posters or display them electronically.

The poster series was created to address an often-cited opportunity to improve safety culture on railroads - safety communication quality and quantity - based on Safety Culture Assessments conducted on short lines across the country. The posters are one of many safety resources available to railroads at no cost through the [SLSI website](#).

April 5-7: FRA Track and Railroad Workplace Safety Symposium

The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) will hold its first collaborative safety event for railroad track maintenance and construction groups April 5-7 in St. Louis, Missouri.

The event will discuss the many issues related to track and roadway workplace safety, with sessions focused on both the physical track structure and the employees responsible for it. Registration for the three-day symposium is free, with discounted hotel rates available for attendees.

Follow [this link](#) to learn more about the FRA symposium, including sample breakout session topics and a list of speakers, or to register for the event.

[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.