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- **LPC to Meet at Eastern and Southern Region Meeting** – ASLRRRA's Legislative Policy Committee will meet at the Association's Eastern and Southern Region Meeting in Atlanta in September. Learn more in [the article](#) in our Legislative Update section.
- **Register for the Central and Pacific Region Meeting in October.** – Learn more about the education opportunities available at our second regional meeting in [the article](#) in our Announcements section below.
- **Leadership Development Training Seminar Hotel Block Discounted Rates Extended** – Participants now have until Friday to take advantage of discounted hotel rates for ASLRRRA's Leadership Development Training Seminar in September. Learn more in [the article](#) in our Announcements section below.

Preparing for CRISI

The latest news indicates the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) *could be opening the 2022 Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) grant program as soon as this week*. In anticipation of the release of the notice of funding opportunity (NOFO), ASLRRRA revisits its Preparing for CRISI series and presents the steps railroads can begin taking to prepare their grant applications.

ASLRRRA thanks Blank Rome Government Relations Senior Advisor Richard Sherman for the information he has provided each week. Click on the links below for each step to read the full article in previous editions of ASLRRRA's Views & News newsletter.

CRISI Steps One Through Five – From Registering Your Railroad to Using FRA's Templates

[One: Register Your Railroad](#)

Before pursuing funding through CRISI, the applying entity must be properly registered in two federal systems: The [System for Award Management](#) (SAM) and [grants.gov](#). Grant applicants must first be set up in SAM to register in grants.gov and all recipients of federal funds must be registered in SAM. All application materials are submitted through grants.gov.

[Two: Prepare Foundational Documents](#)

The FRA requests that applicant provide three foundational documents as attachments: a project statement of work (SOW), a schedule and a budget. It is not uncommon that the FRA receives CRISI applications in which these documents are incomplete or do not fully agree with one another, the narrative or other parts of the application. Completing these

Important Links

ASLRRRA's [On-Demand Webinar Library](#) features grant webinar recordings.

ASLRRRA's [Member Discount Program Preferred Providers](#) offer grant writing services.

The most recent FRA CRISI webinar is [here](#).

three documents at the beginning of the grant writing process reduces the risk of this problem, and having the documents early assists with preparation of other application elements

Three: Communicate the Transportation Analysis

Effective communication of the transportation analysis supporting a CRISI application is fundamental to making the case for the project. Most CRISI applications will have a forecast for traffic of some type, often in the form of revenue carloads transported over twenty years, sometimes more, from the expected completion of construction.

It is surprisingly easy to provide an excellent data-driven transportation and benefit-cost analysis in the application attachments but neglect to communicate that information well in the grant application narrative. The narrative document must bring forward all important data and findings, including at least summary versions of traffic forecasts and scenarios.

Four: Coordinate With Partners

Some short line projects seeking federal CRISI funds will involve getting the permission of outside parties, so identifying and working on these tasks early in the grant application writing process is important. A common scenario for short lines is when a major Class I freight railroad must approve the proposed grant-funded project. Short lines should review their lease agreements closely because leases can include clauses specific to pursuit and use of public grant funding. Short lines should also presume that Class I permission will be required if the proposed project could affect the Class I's property or operations. The fact that a Class I won't contribute any monetary resources to the proposed CRISI-grant-funded project does not eliminate the need to meet all their legal and operational coordination requirements.

Five: Use the FRA's Templates

FRA guidance directs grant applicants to templates for three required attachments for their capital grant programs: the [statement of work \(SOW\), schedule, and budget](#). These templates have sometimes been confusing to CRISI applicants because they are provided in the form of drafts of what will become the starting point for attachments to a formal federal grant agreement if the application is successful. Nevertheless, applicants should use these templates as requested by FRA, ideally without modifying the language and structure of the documents as provided. Rather, applicants should seek to insert the requested data where indicated, and as indicated.

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The advertisement features several images: a truck engine, a wheel set, a traction motor, and a blue freight train.

Regulatory Update

FRA Continues Office Hours Webinars Discussing RCE Grant Program Applications

The Federal Railroad Administration's (FRA) Office Hours webinars continue this week with a discussion of the statement of work (SOW) document that must be submitted with grant applications.

In response to a high level of interest in the [Railroad Crossing Elimination \(RCE\) Grant program](#), the FRA is holding Office Hours webinars every Thursday through Sept. 8, focusing on a different aspect of the [notice of funding opportunity \(NOFO\)](#) during each session. While these webinars are focused on RCE grants, the information discussed could be insightful for railroads planning to apply for other grants, like the Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) program.

Click the links below to register for the FRA's remaining Office Hours sessions. Each webinar requires a separate registration.

- [Aug. 25 – Statement of Work](#)
- [Sept. 1 – National Environmental Policy Act \(NEPA\) and environmental considerations](#)
- [Sept. 8 – NOFO "nuts and bolts," e.g., grants.gov, SAM registration, and other required elements](#)

The FRA has also made recordings of its previous Office Hours webinars available online, along with a recording of the original RCE grant program NOFO webinar. These earlier webinars discuss the project narrative and project and applicant eligibility, project type and life cycle. Find these resources at the FRA's [Training and Guidance Webinars page](#) under the Grants and Loans tab.

USDA Accepting Applications for Higher Blends Infrastructure Incentive Program Grants

Approximately [\\$100 million in grant funding](#) will be available to eligible entities to expand the sales and use of renewable fuels through the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) [Higher Blends Infrastructure Incentive Program](#) (HBIIIP).

The program includes grants of up to \$5 million with cost-sharing of as much as half of all total project costs. Funding can be used to build and retrofit biofuel-related infrastructure such as pumps, dispensers and storage tanks. **Eligible entities include rail fueling facilities.**

Grant applications are due Nov. 21. A copy of the funding notice can be found [here](#). Other helpful websites include information about [how to apply](#) and provide a [program fact sheet](#).

Legislative Update

ASLRRRA's Legislative Policy Committee to Meet at Eastern and Southern Region Meeting

ASLRRRA's Legislative Policy Committee (LPC) will meet on Sept. 26 at the Association's [Eastern and Southern Region Meeting](#). The LPC meeting is one of several different opportunities for Region Meeting participants to discuss important issues facing the short line freight rail industry.

Meeting attendees can also learn about the transload business from RSI Logistics Vice President Kelley Minnehan and Director of Operations Matthew Frey; explore revenue enhancement opportunities through passenger rail with Railroad Development Corporation Executive Vice President Nate Asplund; or find out about the Part 228 hours of service requirement and the ASLRRRA waiver from Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) Specialist Bill Smith.

Golf Registration Open – In addition to the variety of educational opportunities offered, participants can sign up to play golf at the [Stone Mountain Golf Club](#) and enjoy several networking opportunities throughout the duration of the event.

The Eastern and Southern Region Meeting takes place Sept. 26-28 in Atlanta, Georgia. [Click here](#) to register for the meeting. A [hotel block is also open](#) at the Hyatt Regency Atlanta. ASLRRRA encourages participants to book a hotel room within the block to receive the best price.

Mississippi Congressional Staffers Tour Watco Railroad

Anna May from the office of Congressman Michael Guest (R-Miss.) and Missy Younger from the office of Congressman Trent Kelly (R-Miss.) visited ASLRRRA member Mississippi Southern Railroad (MSR) last week.

May and Younger joined Ailsa von Dobeneck, assistant vice president-government relations of MSR parent company Watco, for a tour of the rail facility and a discussion of short line legislative priorities. Von Dobeneck gave the staffers a general overview of the short line freight rail industry and fielded a number of questions regarding infrastructure investments and the Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) grant program.

Visits like these are an important way to make connections with lawmakers

and help them understand more about the short line industry and the effects of federal legislation on railroad operations. Summer, when many lawmakers are in their hometowns while Congress is in recess, is a good time to reach out to representatives. Contact ASLRRRA's [Zach Radford](#) or [Crystal Gitchell](#) for help contacting legislators or scheduling visits.



Anna May (second from right), a staff member from the office of Congressman Michael Guest (R-Miss.), and Missy Younger (third from right), a staff member from the office of Congressman Trent Kelly (R-Miss.), joined Watco Assistant Vice President-Government Relations Ailsa von Dobeneck (second from left) for a tour of ASLRRRA member and Watco company Mississippi Southern Railroad and a discussion of short line freight rail industry priorities.



Announcements

Hotel Room Block Discounted Rates Extended Until Friday for Leadership Training in Phoenix

Those attending ASLRRRA's [Leadership Development Training - Regulatory Module](#) can still get [discounted hotel room rates](#) through the end of the work week. The training seminar takes place Sept. 13-14 in Phoenix, Arizona.

The Regulatory Module of ASLRRRA's Leadership Development training seminar is the only industry training of its kind, covering a broad selection of topics in a single setting. In addition to Federal Regulations 101 and Leadership Qualities for Managers, the two-day course will cover Part 217, Part 218, Part 219, Part 225, Part 228, and Part 243.

The leadership seminar is essential for front-line supervisors and managers and anyone involved in day-to-day railroad operations. Attendees will gain an in-depth understanding of regulations that govern railroad operations and participate in interactive dialog with expert instructors and peers.

ASLRRRA will also host [FRA Roadway Worker/Bridge Worker Safety \(214\) Training](#) Oct. 4-6, also in Phoenix. Part 214 training discusses the Federal Railroad Administration's revised program approval process and findings from field audits conducted on short lines' Part 214 programs.

Space in both training seminars is limited, so interested participants are encouraged to register early. Don't forget, funding for this training is available to eligible employees of small railroads through ASLRRRA's scholarship program. Follow [this link](#) to learn more and apply.

ASLRRRA Members Save Money with Vetted Preferred Providers

The money railroads save using Preferred Providers from [ASLRRRA's Member Discount Program](#) could pay their annual Association dues and then some! ASLRRRA's Member Discount Program leverages the buying power of all association members to secure discounted pricing on essential business products and services. ASLRRRA members receive exclusive access to programs tailored specifically for the short line railroad industry with discounted pricing, special offers and guaranteed exceptional service.

Member Discount Program offerings currently include personal protective equipment plus safety eyewear and shoe programs from ORR Safety; tie inspection services from Loram Technologies; drug and alcohol testing services from Spark Training Solutions; grant writing services from Bergmann, GTS and HDR; positive train control (PTC) products and services from GTS and Ayers Electronic Systems; and employee health insurance from HUB International. Visit our [Member Discount Program page](#) for details and to learn more about ASLRRRA's Member Discount Program Preferred Providers.

Interested in becoming a Preferred Provider? ASLRRRA is seeking to add new products and services to its Member Discount Program offerings. The program is open exclusively to ASLRRRA associate members who are committed to providing exceptional service along with volume discounts to short

line railroads. Preferred Providers benefit from a broad range of marketing/promotional activities, including visibility on [ASLRRA's website](#) and in print and electronic communications. Interested companies may contact [Sabrina Weiss](#) for more information on becoming a Preferred Provider.

Registration is Open for ASLRRA's Central and Pacific Region Meeting

Attendees at ASLRRA's [Central and Pacific Region Meeting](#) in Milwaukee, Wisconsin can hear from short line industry leaders like Iowa Interstate Railroad Chairman Henry Posner III and OmniTRAX CEO Dean Piacente, as well as representatives from the Federal Railroad Administration and the Railroad Retirement Board.

The meeting, which will be held Oct. 25-27, also offers several networking opportunities. [Registration](#) for the Central and Pacific Region Meeting is now open.

The meeting is held in conjunction with the Association's [Finance and Administration Seminar and General Counsel Symposium](#), which offer invaluable industry-specific information for finance, human resources and legal professionals. Interested participants can reserve a room in the ASLRRA [hotel block](#) for the seminar, symposium and regional meeting. Early bird room rates for this meeting end Sept. 26.

ASLRRA is also accepting sponsors for the regional meeting, finance seminar, and symposium. Click [here](#) to learn more about sponsorship opportunities for the regional meeting, or [here](#) for the seminar and symposium.

ASLRRA Out and About

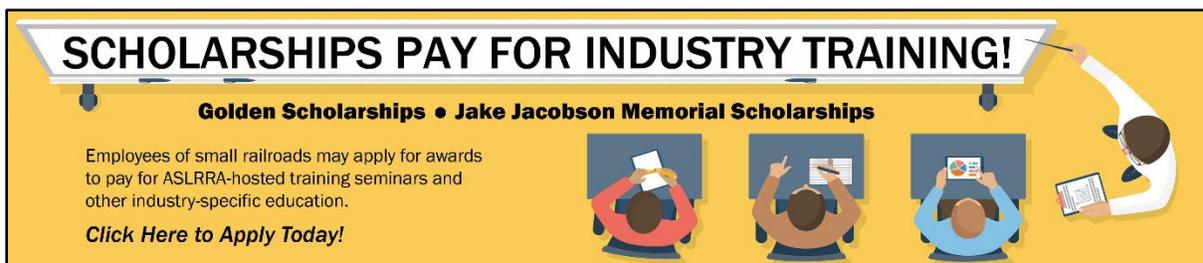
Gelnar Attends FAMES Meeting in Nebraska

ASLRRA Vice President of Safety and Compliance JR Gelnar attended the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) Fatality Analysis of Maintenance-of-way Employees and Signalmen (FAMES) Committee meeting Aug. 23-24 in Omaha, Nebraska.

Union Pacific Railroad hosted the meeting, during which committee members reviewed past recommendations and updated them for future release.

Ogborn Talks About the U.S. Approach to Funding at Canadian Short Line Conference

Today, ASLRRA Senior Advisor Mike Ogborn spoke at the Railway Association of Canada's 2022 Short Line Conference in Edmonton, Alberta. Ogborn participated in a discussion called "Funding vs. Financing" and his presentation was titled "Short Line Funding - U.S. Style."



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The graphic features a yellow background with a white banner at the top containing the main title. Below the banner, the text is arranged in a column on the left. On the right side, there are four stylized illustrations of people: three are shown from behind, sitting at desks and looking at documents or screens, while one is shown from the side, standing and pointing at a screen. The overall design is clean and professional, using a color palette of yellow, white, and blue.

ASLRRRA Webinars

Upcoming Live Webinars

[A Case Study in Joining EPA's SmartWay Program](#) – Sept. 21, 2022

Patriot Rail Director of Environmental Compliance Harrison Roughton will share his experience with the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) SmartWay program. This webinar will also explain how railroads can apply the SmartWay tool, including which locomotives are included and which are not.

Click [here](#) to learn more about ASLRRRA's education offerings.

Industry Events and Announcements

Oct 4-6: Short Line Safety Institute Leadership Development Class Takes Place in Tacoma

SLSI's highly rated [Leadership Development Class](#) is being hosted by Tacoma Rail Oct. 4-6. Only six spots are available for this interactive class. Click [here](#) to register and to access special-rate hotel information.

Interested in scheduling a class for your railroad? [Contact](#) the SLSI to learn more.

Short Line Safety Institute Publishes New Safety Research and Safety Tip

The Short Line Safety Institute (SLSI) continuously analyzes the results of its Safety Culture Assessments across the short line industry, identifies areas of opportunity to advance safety culture and then develops resources to help the industry to continuously improve.

This week, the SLSI has made available research results addressing two areas – 1) how employees perceived their railroad's response to COVID 19, and 2) if there are differences in the perception of a railroad's safety culture based on management status and size of railroad. The first is titled "Working on the Railroad During COVID-19: A Case Study" and can be found [here](#), while the second, titled "Keeping Safety on Track: Factors Affecting Perceptions of Safety Training Quality," can be found [here](#).

The SLSI also released a new [Safety Tip](#), which the Institute provides for use in safety briefings or other training. The focus of this month's tip is [mutual trust](#), one of the [ten core elements of a strong safety culture](#). Download [this tip](#) or the [corresponding video](#) to review and discuss tools that your team can use to create a sense of mutual trust between management and employees.

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