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ASLRRRA Member Railroads Successfully Compete for FY21 CRISI Grants

Awardees Include 24 Short Line Freight Railroad Projects in 17 States

WASHINGTON, June 2, 2022 – Today the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) [announced](#) the selection of grant recipients for the Fiscal Year 2021 Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) Program. Many short line projects were among the recipients, and an ASLRRRA-member short line – the [Lake State Railway Company](#) in Saginaw, Michigan – was the location chosen by Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg today to officially announce the awards. The Secretary highlighted two short line projects in Michigan receiving grant awards for major track rehabilitations and infrastructure improvements - the Great Lakes Central Railroad and West Michigan Railroad Co.

The FRA announced nearly \$369 million in awards, with a total of 46 projects receiving grants in 32 states and the District of Columbia. The agency received more than 122 eligible CRISI applications requesting approximately \$1.2 billion in funds, illustrating the significant need for public rail infrastructure investment in projects with public benefits across the U.S.

Many active ASLRRRA short line railroad members won awards, which will be critical in helping these railroads rebuild vital assets, bolster safety, improve efficiency, and better serve customers.

“We thank Congress for making these vital resources available, and we applaud the FRA for putting them to use in such a smart, efficient way,” said Chuck Baker, President of the American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association. “There’s no better bang for the buck than investing in short line freight rail, which is so often the critical first and last mile for moving goods and freight nationwide. The investments announced today will enhance the safety of freight movement, promote an environmentally sustainable mode of transportation, take freight off crowded highways, and provide a profound economic benefit to hundreds of short line freight rail customers and communities, largely in small town and rural America.”

Short line railroads find CRISI a particularly attractive program, as a railroad can apply directly for a grant, and many types of capital projects typical of a short line are eligible under the grant. Short line railroads can also apply for the program in partnership with another eligible entity, such as a state department of transportation or a rail authority.

“In conversations with short line railroad owners and managers over the last few days, I’ve heard comments about how these CRISI grants will ‘transform the railroad’, ‘allow us to be good stewards of the railroad for the next generation’, and ‘are a tremendous win for many stakeholders, most importantly our customers.’ These grants will benefit small businesses nationwide, spurring growth and creating jobs in the manufacturing, agricultural, chemical, and construction industries,” said Baker. “With so many challenges facing the country’s supply chain, these awards will boost American competitiveness by strengthening weak spots in the rail network and removing bottlenecks. Short line freight railroads look forward to continuing to work with Congress and the FRA to ensure these resources are put to use quickly.”

Short line railroad-related grant recipients and project beneficiaries, listed by state, include:

- **Alabama & Tennessee River Railway (Alabama) – \$4,962,110** to make improvements including upgrading siding to handle increased traffic and speed, enhancing signaling, eliminating bridge defects and other efforts that will improve safety;
- **Alaska Railroad (Alaska) – \$3,144,277** to replace an aging 62-foot, single-span thru girder bridge with a new 75-foot, single-span deck plate girder bridge to increase capacity;

- **Port of Little Rock (Arkansas) – \$5,569,373** to help the inland port railroad increase capacity and reduce fuel use, including adding 11,215 feet of track, constructing an engine maintenance facility, a training room with up-to-date equipment, a safe room in case of tornadoes, a storage room and a tools and parts room to increase capacity;
- **Florida Gulf & Atlantic Railroad (Florida) – \$8,300,000** to replace 70,000 ties, install approximately 14,300 new ties, rehabilitate 11 sidings and repair 60 grade crossings to meet growing demand;
- **Georgia Southwestern Railroad (Georgia) – \$2,950,000** to assist with upgrading rails and crossties along 65 miles of track, carry out maintenance, prevent closures and derailments and continue to support 286,000-pound loads and Class 2 track status to ensure and improve reliability and safety;
- **Heart of Georgia Railroad (Georgia) – \$6,190,136** to assist with replacing rail and crossties and upgrade track to accommodate 286,000-pound loads along 51 miles of track, as well as replace 18 miles of rail, replace 2,750 crossties and carry out surface and ballast improvements to improve efficiency and train movement;
- **Burlington Shortline Railroad (Illinois) – \$1,769,767** to replace two bridge spans that are 100-years old, ensuring carload weight does not need to be reduced to 263,000-pounds and that bridges do not need to be taken out of service, ensuring freight remains off roadways and on rail;
- **Chicago, Fort Wayne & Eastern Railroad (Indiana) – \$8,383,761** to replace existing rail infrastructure, including approximately 154,176 linear feet of rail, 42,826 ties and over 10,000 tons of ballast, and to replace 43 at-grade crossing surface with rubber seal/asphalt designed for handling heavier loads and improving efficiency;
- **Elkhart and Western Railroad (Indiana) – \$2,618,173** to upgrade a nine-mile branch line to Class 1 track safety standards, expand rail siding capacity and replace three grade crossing surfaces, improving safety;

- **Iowa Northern Railway (Iowa) – \$7,173,452** to install 27.3 miles of continuous welded rail (CWR), including replacing 39-foot sections of jointed rails, enabling track to achieve an FRA Class 3 status allowing train speeds up to 40 MPH, improving efficiency and enhancing safety;
- **Cimarron Valley Railroad (Kansas) – \$10,991,971** to assist with replacing 51,618 crossties, performing 3,577 flash-butt welds to rail, relaying 3.7 miles of rail in curves, applying new ballast to 67 miles of track and surfacing 85 miles of track, increasing volume, enabling the safe transportation of hazmat, preventing derailments and addressing climate change through transportation of biofuels;
- **Kyle Railroad (Kansas) – \$9,367,112** to assist with replacing 23.5 track miles of obsolete 85-pound sectional rail with new, modern 115-pound continuous welded rail, as well as replacing rail turnouts, improving and rebuilding crossings, replacing crossties, improving efficiency, enhancing safety, extending rail service to agricultural communities and advancing resilience;
- **Central Kentucky Lines Railroad (Kentucky) – \$7,380,600** to fund three efforts: a new freight rail-to-truck transload facility, rehabilitated track on the railroad’s mainline and improvements to an existing main yard transload facility, including switch replacements, rehabilitated grade crossings and track and facilities, all of which will help improve service;
- **Great Lakes Central Railroad (Michigan) – \$21,340,300** to assist with installing 4.25 miles of new rail, eliminating joints on an additional 41.25 mainline track miles, replacing or rehabilitating 11 bridges and culverts, and installing approximately 30,000 ties on mainline and siding track, improving safety, providing a more reliable transportation option for farms, factories and shippers, and addressing climate change through reduced idling, decelerating and accelerating from more efficient operations;
- **West Michigan Railroad (Michigan) – \$8,697,910** to fund improvement on about 10 miles of track, including rail and cross-tie replacements, reconstructed roadbeds and bridge and turnout repairs,

with approximately 5.6 miles of track to be rebuilt, aiding the growth of existing industries and attracting new industries;

- **Twin Cities & Western Railroad (Minnesota) – \$1,478,000** to make improvements to 12.2 miles of track, including addressing deteriorating conditions by performing rail “joint elimination” via flash-butt welding to convert the existing infrastructure to continuous welded rail that is stronger, safer, reduces mainline derailments and decreases repair and maintenance costs, enhancing safety and creating economic benefits by connecting rural stakeholders;
- **Nebraska Central Railroad (Nebraska) – \$6,317,982** to assist with completing the preliminary engineering, environmental clearance, final design and construction of four rail sidings, including through three grade crossings, to meet increased rail demand, alleviate congestion, increase the rail network's resiliency and provide rail access to non-rail served industries;
- **New York, Susquehanna and Western Railway (New York) – \$2,931,122** to fund environmental analysis for and installation of 6.9 miles of continuous welded rail, new rail ties, ballast/surfacing, and four new switches, remedying fatigue problems associated with the jointed rail, allowing for the railroad's main line to carry 286,000-pound railcars and increase track speeds from 25 mph to 30 mph, increasing capacity, safety and reliability;
- **Red River Valley & Western Railroad (North Dakota) – \$6,704,544** to assist in replacing 14.5 miles of old jointed rail, enhancing safety, bringing economic opportunities to rural businesses and farms and addressing climate change by moving grain production northward;
- **Central Railroad of Indiana (Ohio) – \$6,067,200** to assist in making safety improvements to four crossings, including enhanced signaling;
- **Wheeling & Lake Erie Railway (Ohio) – \$6,868,768** to assist with constructing a new connecting track and extension of yard tracks to eliminate switching movements and allow trains to directly access the yard from two railway subdivisions, improving safety and reliability;

- **Colebrookdale Railroad and Eastern Berks Gateway Railroad (Pennsylvania)** – \$14,681,397 to install continuous welded rail to handle 286,000-pound cars, rehabilitate or replace 14 bridges, construct two rail-served transload yards and six new sidings to increase capacity and meeting growing demand.
- **Gettysburg and Northern Railroad (Pennsylvania)** – **\$1,840,000** to rehabilitate 24 miles of track to improve safety standards, construct a new runaround track adjacent to existing track, upgrade 16 crossings with warning devices to LED signals, replace wigwag warning circuitry at two grade crossings and repair seven failed or failing culverts; and
- **Appalachian and Ohio Railroad (West Virginia)** – **\$1,617,824** to replace an antiquated traffic control system and install a new, modern rail detection system on the entire signaled section, improving safety.

A notice of funding opportunity (NOFO) for the Fiscal Year 2022 CRISI awards is expected in August 2022. The amount available for that competition will be significantly more than was available in FY21 – totaling nearly \$1.6 billion – with approximately \$1.3 billion expected to be open to all projects after certain set-asides from the law are honored.

“ASLRRRA is working to ensure that all members are well-informed and ready to compete for the next round of funding through various methods including hosting webinars, encouraging the use of our Grant Writing Preferred Partners, and providing timely information directly to our members,” said Baker. “We will continue to work with our member railroads and our state and local partners to make our case in future CRISI funding rounds as to why investing in short line freight rail projects is such an effective method to build resilience across America’s supply chain.”

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About ASLRRRA - The American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association (ASLRRRA) is a non-profit trade association representing the interests of the nation’s 600 short line and regional railroads and railroad supply company members in legislative and regulatory matters. Short lines operate 47,500 miles of track in 49 states, or approximately 29% of the national railroad network, touching in origination or termination one out of every five cars moving on the national railroad system, serving customers who otherwise would be cut off from the national railroad network. www.aslrra.org