

2023 Slate of Board Candidates

(in alphabetical order by last name)



SAM BECK, Director of Rail Sales, L.B. Foster

Experience

As Director of Rail Sales, Sam Beck is responsible for the short line and regional railroad, industrial and contractor markets for all L.B. Foster rail products and services in the United States and Canada. He joined L.B. Foster in 2021 following a decade of work for two Class I railroads. He first served in a mechanical role for Norfolk Southern, then moved to mechanical foreman and industrial products sales manager for BNSF Railway. He currently is a member of ASLRRA's Mechanical Committee.

He holds a B.S. in Mechanical Engineering from Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology and an M.S. Supply Chain, Transportation, and Logistics from the University of Washington.

Why I'm Running for the Board Position

Throughout my time in the railroad industry, I have been truly honored to not only work side-by-side with, but to be mentored by, many industry leaders from a variety of key departments and functions. I feel that the opportunity to join the ASLRRA Board of Directors would be an avenue for me to give back to an industry that has been so influential on both me and my family as well as to shape the next generation of leaders within the industry. The continued growth and success of the Short Line and Regional Railroad market is a collective effort from a multitude of stakeholders: operations, sales and marketing, other support teams, suppliers, contractors, and Class I Railroads. I offer significant experience for each of these entities through my experience with Norfolk Southern, BNSF Railway, and LB Foster.

My focus in all of my work is solving problems for our internal and external customers and having their best interests at heart. One of my proudest moments in my time at LB Foster centers around CRANDIC Railway. Having spent extensive time with this short line's leadership at ASLRRA meetings and on property, I was approached by their General Manager to discuss transloading marketing with his sales team. Although this request may not necessarily fall into my daily responsibilities at LB Foster, I jumped at the opportunity to learn further about my customer's network and to support them with their business development initiatives by spending time to discuss industry networking, commodity opportunities, and marketing tools. My time spent with CRANDIC Railway exemplifies LB Foster's culture of establishing strong and respectful relationships with our customers, a value that has been prevalent in our 120+ year history in the rail industry.

ASLRRA is a tremendous organization that I am beyond appreciative to be a part of. I continuously push for industry colleagues to join the organization due to the benefits it offers its members, and I have been successful in growing the Mechanical Committee membership. In closing, I find so many similarities between the ASLRRA and the slogan of my hometown railroad, the Indiana Harbor Belt (and ASLRRA member): Proud Past, Bright Future. I thank you for your time in considering me for this position, and I am excited to represent the bright future that is ASLRRA.



TIM BRAKE, CEO of E-Railspot

Experience

Tim Brake is CEO of E-Railspot, a marketplace that facilitates e-commerce for the global railroad industry. It supports buyers, sellers and shippers including procurement professionals, manufacturers, and suppliers through an innovative and robust online marketplace to create a “one-stop shop” to find everything you need spanning all railroad segments.

He was an 11-year Army veteran before joining the Union Pacific Railroad, where he held positions in engineering and procurement. He transitioned into sales with Harsco Rail, Vossloh, and Pandrol before starting his own company, E-railspot.

Why I’m Running for the Board Position

Being able to understand the user and vendor side of this industry gives me a unique perspective that can benefit the short line industry. My best quality is being able to find a solution to almost anything!



AVALISHA “LISHA” FISHER, PE, President of Driven Engineering, Inc.

Experience

Avalisha “Lisha” Fisher is President of Driven Engineering, a civil engineering firm that has expertise in transportation and industrial site design and has been designing track and associated infrastructure for short lines, Class I railroads, and industry since its inception.

Raised in Fairhope, Alabama, she graduated from the University of South Alabama (USA) with a Cum Laude Bachelor of Science degree in Civil Engineering. She is a member of Tau Beta Pi (the engineering honor society), AREMA, actively serves on two AREMA Committees, and is on the Board of Directors for Mobile’s Partners for Environmental Progress (PEP) and the League of Railway Women.

In her 30+ year career, she has provided lead engineering and project management services for numerous significant projects in the Mobile area including: The football field house and football practice fields at the University of South Alabama (USA), dozens of municipal and county road and storm drainage improvement projects, rail expansions at the Evonik plant in Theodore, AL, Alabama Gulf Coast Railroad’s Magnolia Rail Yard, new rail service to the Coastal Growers plant in Atmore, Alabama, rail spurs and main line rail improvements at the Port of Chickasaw and the Port of Mobile, multiple sidings and rail rehabilitation projects for Genesee Wyoming, and numerous industrial, retail, and commercial sites.

She is the founder, president, and sole owner of Driven Engineering, now over 17 years old. She lives in Semmes, Alabama with her husband and inspiration, Christopher Fisher, and has three adult daughters.

Why I’m Running for the Board Position

I have been working in the rail industry for about 20 years now. I am interested in serving on the Board of Directors for ASLRRA and sharing my expertise.



KAREEN GRAY, VP-Sales for Regional Railroads, Short Lines & Ports, Wabtec Corp. (incumbent)

Experience

Kareen Gray is Vice President of Sales for Regional Railroads, Short Lines & Ports. In this role, she is responsible for developing winning commercial strategies and driving customer-focused, outcome-oriented commercialization efforts spanning the entire Wabtec Freight portfolio – Locomotives, Services, Components, and Digital Solutions. Kareen has more than 20 years of rail industry experience with Wabtec, GE Transportation, and GE Capital in a variety of commercial roles. She most recently served as Wabtec’s Vice President of Sales and Transport Logistics driving digital-based solutions for the short line railroad and port segments.

She started her commercial career with Xerox Canada. She earned a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Maryland, College Park. She has served on the following committees: Rail Energy Transportation Advisory Committee (RETAC) National Freight Transportation Association (NFTA), and the ASLRRRA Supplier Committee. She enjoys traveling and is an avid golfer.

Why I’m Running for the Board Position

I have been very fortunate over the past two years to represent Supplier Members and our Supplier Committee on the ASLRRRA Board of Directors. I would be honored to continue representing the Supplier community by running for a 2nd term. Our committee has made huge strides in building a more robust agenda for regional and annual ASLRRRA meetings over the past year, but we have so much more to do. As your voice on the ASLRRRA Board, I would like to continue to deliver on what we have promised you as members of the ASLRRRA Supplier Community. I have thoroughly enjoyed this experience and hope you will consider me for an additional term.



EDDIE HORTON, Regional Sales Manager, Stella-Jones Corp.

Experience

Eddie Horton is Regional Sales Manager with Stella-Jones and sells treated wood cross ties, switch ties and bridge timbers throughout the US (primarily Southeast US). He started in the industry with Stella-Jones as Inside Sales Rep in 2009 based in Pittsburgh, PA. He is a member of the Alabama Railway Association’s Board of Directors.

Why I’m Running for the Board Position

I have established a tremendous base of railroad, contractor and supplier relationships and engage consistently with the supplier group through individual visits at their facilities and at all rail conferences (ASLRRRA, NRC, AREMA, state rail associations etc.). With so many close relationships, I feel strongly that I can be an excellent representative for the “supplier voice.”

Being a supplier of one of the major components for all railroads (crossties) and having spent nearly 15 years learning how every one of the supplier “ingredients” is essential to the overall recipe which makes a successful and functioning railroad, I am well suited to understand and communicate the needs and concerns of the supplier group to the full board. I have come to love this industry and have great respect for all the wonderful people who work so hard to make it happen. I take my appointments and commitments seriously and would labor to ensure that I understand and represent the supplier base with a passionate voice. Finally, in the past ten years I have tried to steer away from additional opportunities with organizations so I could spend as much time at home as possible with my two young daughters, Emilia and Ella. Now, as they are nearing the end of their high school years and preparing for college, I am ready to make the commitment of time and energy to expand my role in this industry and hopefully do that through great organizations like the ASLRRRA.



KEN MANNKA, EVP of Operations, North America for Nexxiot Inc.

Experience

Ken Mannka serves as EVP of Operations, North America for Nexxiot Inc. He has a combined 25+ years of experience leading multifunctional teams in areas of Transportation, Operations, Safety, Training and Compliance in the transportation/ railroad industry and currently leading a technology company advancing the digitalization initiative in the railroad sector. He developed his experience on Class 1, short line, and industrial switching railroads as well as in corporate positions, which provide him a well-rounded and diverse background to draw from.

Why I'm Running for the Board Position

I am interested in serving on the ASLRRRA board as an associate (supplier) board member to provide insight from a diverse and forward-thinking perspective. The last 3 years I have been heavily involved in efforts to bring new technologies to the railroad industry for the benefits of visibility, transparency and accountability by all segments across the lifecycle of a rail shipment. Having the experience of working in each of the segments will allow me to add valuable insights to many issues that the short lines face daily.



DEBBIE TAYLOR, Executive Recruiter, Edna Rice Executive Recruiters

Experience

Debbie Taylor is an Executive Recruiter with Edna Rice Executive Recruiters, premier recruiters in rail, transportation, and mobility since 1988. She works tirelessly to ensure that both the railroads and the suppliers to the industry have access to top-level talent that enable each company to continue serving its customers. Since her recruiting journey began in 2014, Debbie has become a trusted advisor and mentor to executives, investors, employees and employers alike.

Her career began with 25 years in the telecommunications and consulting world. She is a lifelong learner and earned her B.S. in Marketing from Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, and her MBA from Loyola University in Chicago. She is currently

an ASLRRRA Supplier Committee member – serving for one year as a member at large and is today serving as Secretary of the committee. She has served as an active board member for a medical school and volunteers many hours serving in community leadership roles. She also lends her expertise through speaking engagements and contributing articles to industry publications.

Why I'm Running for the Board Position

Edna Rice Executive Recruiting has supported the industry and the association for decades. Because I work with companies and people across all segments and at all levels of organizations, I feel I have a very unique perspective of the industry and the individual companies I partner with, providing me with invaluable insight. Becoming a board member of the association will enable me to continue providing value to the industry at a broader level. As our industry continues to evolve, attracting and retaining talent will continue to grow in importance. My voice on the board will elevate this priority and provide expertise to the board on these issues and more.



JASON WARD, Managing Partner, Industrial Search Partners

Experience

Jason Ward has more than three decades of industrial and international business experience, with a focus on assignments across the industrial and transportation market segments, including heavy manufacturing, processes and converting operations, automotive, electronics, construction, all modes of asset-based transportation and 3PL, Intermodal logistics, import/export, and supply chain. He founded Industrial Search Partners in 2013 with a view toward serving clients in a more holistic way. Prior to starting ISP, Jason led the industrial practice at RSR Partners, where he created and built a multimillion-dollar practice. Previously, he was a Senior Client Partner at Korn/Ferry International. He recruits executives within all functions, including CEO's, presidents, and senior level positions in

operations, marketing, sales, finance, regulatory compliance, and human resources, within both domestic and international markets. Jason also recruits for clients at the Board level.

Prior to joining Korn/Ferry in 1999 as an executive recruiter, Jason's career was centered on asset-based logistics. He was the U.S. Commercial Manager for a prominent European-based owner of a fleet of modern double-hull super tankers. Jason's international business experience includes operations management for a privately held American/Brazilian import/export shipping joint venture and sales and marketing management in the commercial electronic communications equipment sector.

Jason was awarded his master's degree in Business Administration from the University of Connecticut. Prior to this, he served as a Commissioned Engineering Officer in the United States Navy aboard a guided missile cruiser deployed to the Arabian Gulf. He earned his undergraduate degree in Logistics & Marine Transportation from the United States Merchant Marine Academy.

Why I'm Running for the Board Position

Over the years, I have benefited from my participation with the Association. In turn, my firm has been pleased to support PAC initiatives, join HR workshops, and offer donations for the Silent Auction fundraising efforts.

As a supplier of professional services to the ASLRRRA itself, as well as many member railroads, both small and large, I can contribute a C-Level perspective and contacts from the supplier community, and the broader supply chain, in which short line railroading plays such an important role. I have 25+ years of experience and senior level contacts in the logistics and US supply chain segment from Class 1s, LTL and TL trucking and drayage, Jones Act and international shipping community, 3 & 4PL communities, and terminal operators of all types, not to mention shippers, receivers and BCOs. I believe I can add value to the board from a career's worth of PE and banking / finance interaction as well as a broad perspective on leadership development, succession planning and other talent management issues critical to ASLRRRA members.