



American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association

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Edwin “Ed” McKechnie Honored as ASLRRRA’s 2025 Schlosser Distinguished Service Award Recipient

WASHINGTON, February 5, 2025 - The American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association (ASLRRRA) has selected Edwin “Ed” McKechnie as the 2025 Schlosser Distinguished Service Award, honoring his decades of service to the short line industry and the Association.

Before he was active in the short line industry and helping guide ASLRRRA member parent company Watco through a period of tremendous growth, Ed McKechnie spent years in public service, first in the Kansas Governor’s office, as a congressional staff member in Washington D.C., and then as a member of the Kansas Legislature.

While representing Watco as a member of ASLRRRA, Ed McKechnie played a significant role in moving two short line industry-critical ideas forward – the Short Line Tax Credit, and the Short Line Safety Institute. Both initiatives would have far-reaching effects on the industry.

“Ed’s impact on the short line industry is legendary. His legislative and business career has been focused on driving transformational change in every organization he has been involved with,” said Chuck Baker, President, ASLRRRA. “At ASLRRRA, his leadership as Chair of our Board of Directors, and his steering of the Legislative Policy Committee led to two Congressional mandates that have been instrumental in assisting short lines in their relentless drive to improved safety – the Short Line Rehabilitation Tax Credit (45G), and the Short Line Safety Institute (SLSI). The former has led to \$9B of investment in upgraded rail and bridges to date, addressing the leading cause of derailments on short lines. The SLSI is focused on elevating

safety culture, prioritizing safety on short line railroads over other competing demands. Our industry is certainly better as a result of Ed's contributions and relentless drive to make it so."

Edwin "Ed" McKechnie – Distinguished Service Award Winner

After graduating from Pittsburg State University in 1986, McKechnie held several different jobs with political offices before successfully running for the Kansas state legislature in 1990. In the decade he held his seat, McKechnie served on committees including transportation, appropriations, Legislative Post Audit, governmental organization and higher education.

In 2000, McKechnie joined Watco to lead commercial and business development, focusing on growing the business and finding new opportunities in the transportation industry. Representing ASLRRA member Watco in Association work, McKechnie brought his talents back to Washington to influence Congress.

He was a member of ASLRRA's Railroad Industry Working Group and Finance & Administration Committee and served on the Executive Committee in various capacities. In 2011, McKechnie was elected chair of ASLRRA's Board of Directors.

While working in different private-sector roles, McKechnie continued to serve his home state of Kansas. In recognition of his accomplishments, Pittsburg State University awarded McKechnie the Meritorious Achievement Award in 2016. His service to Kansas was documented as part of the Kansas Oral History project.

McKechnie's passion for public service also involves education. He is special assistant to the vice president, business development and government relations at Pittsburg State University, and has served for seven years on the Pittsburg Unified School District (USD) 250 School Board where, combined with his work at Pittsburg State, he was the original author of legislation, called the Kansas Literacy Blueprint, that was signed into law in 2024.

For more on Ed McKechnie and his contributions to the industry, click [here](#).

The Schlosser Distinguished Service Award, named for former ASLRRA Chair Thomas L. Schlosser, is the highest individual honor bestowed by the ASLRRA, recognizing long-term, significant service to the ASLRRA and the short line industry. McKechnie will be honored on April 7, 2025 at the [ASLRRA Annual Conference and Exhibition](#) in Denver, Colorado.

For a video on the background of the Schlosser Distinguished Service Award and past Award recipients, click [here](#).

About ASLRRRA - The American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association (ASLRRRA) is a non-profit trade association representing the interests of the nation's 603 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