



July 6, 2022



ASLRRRA Calls on President Biden to Quickly Appoint Emergency Board to Settle Rail Labor Negotiations

ASLRRRA President Chuck Baker joins with others in calling for the appointment of a Presidential Emergency Board (PEB) to conduct hearings and issue settlement recommendations to help bring an expedited end to stalled labor talks.

In a [letter](#) to President Joe Biden, Baker notes that although only a few short lines are directly represented by the National Carriers' Conference Committee, effectively all traffic moved by short line railroads moves over a Class I railroad at some point on its journey from origin to destination. As the U.S. freight rail network is completely interconnected, ASLRRRA's members and customers will be impacted by the resolution of this matter.

Baker urges the swift appointment of accredited and impartial arbiters with rail expertise to ensure a positive, credible outcome to the process.

FRA Releases Rail Crossing Elimination Grant Funding Notice

The U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Railroad Administration released a [notice of funding opportunity \(NOFO\)](#) for the [Railroad Crossing Elimination \(RCE\) Program](#). It is a new competitive discretionary grant program providing over \$573 million to improve grade crossing safety across the U.S.

The program will fund projects to create grade separations, close or relocate crossings, improve or install warning devices at crossings as part of separation or relocation projects, and more. Funding can also be used for planning and preliminary design efforts.

Short line railroads are not directly eligible for RCE grants, but ASLRRRA encourages members interested in pursuing funding for a particular grade separation project to coordinate with an eligible public entity applicant. Applications are due Oct. 4.

As a reminder, ASLRRRA's [Preferred Providers](#) offer members assistance with grant applications for a variety of funding programs.

Railroad Crossing Elimination Grant Program Webinar Scheduled for July 14

The FRA's July 14 webinar will provide an overview of the RCE grant program. FRA staff will discuss funding availability, application procedures, required documentation and more. Click [this link](#) for more information or to register.

Jake Safety Award Winners Can Access Certificates Online

Each of this year's [Jake Award](#) winners can now use [this link](#) to download and print their award certificate to display in the workplace. Last week, ASLRRA [announced](#) the winners of its annual Jake Awards, honoring a record 364 member railroads for their above-industry-average safety record during 2021.

For the second year in a row, the number of railroads earning Jake Awards with Distinction also set a record. Ninety-one percent, or 332, of all award winners had zero reportable injuries for the entire year.

ASLRRA also recognized 20 members as President's Award winners. These railroads are Jake Award recipients posting the lowest reportable injury frequency rate per Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) regulations measured within person-hour categories. There is one winner per person-hour category in each of ASLRRA's member regions, Central, Eastern, Pacific and Southern. ASLRRA will recognize the President's Award winners at this year's [Regional Meetings](#) in the fall.

View a list of Jake Award winners [here](#), Jake Award with Distinction winners [here](#) and President's Award winners [here](#).



RRB Q&A Discusses Unemployment and Sickness Benefits

A new benefit year began July 1 for benefits under the Railroad Unemployment Insurance Act, so the latest [Railroad Retirement Board \(RRB\) Question and Answer \(Q&A\)](#) focuses on unemployment and sickness benefits.

The RRB explains the most current eligibility requirements and daily benefit rates payable for both unemployment and sickness benefits in the new year. Also included are explanations of circumstances that might affect employees' ability to collect benefits and how an individual can apply for and claim both types of benefits.



Full House Committee Passes Draft Spending Bill for FY23

On June 30 the full House appropriations committee passed a proposed fiscal year 2023 transportation spending bill, with several items beneficial to the short line freight rail industry.

Aside from the significant increase in funding for Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) Grant Program, other grant programs received funds in addition to what was allotted in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), namely RAISE grants and Port Infrastructure Development Program (PIDP) grants. Absent from the bill is language concerning truck size and weight increases, which is a win for freight rail.

ASLRRA's Government Affairs team continues to monitor this bill and others that contain provisions that could impact short line railroads and freight rail in general. There were such issues in both the Energy and Water spending bill and the Commerce, Justice and Science (CJS) spending bill, specifically funding for new locomotive technologies in the former and language focused on passenger rail service and cracking down on train cargo theft in the latter.

The transportation spending bill and other spending measures are expected to be considered by the full House of Representatives in the coming weeks.



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

Click to learn more!



ASLRRA Announcements

Room Block Closes July 7 for ASLRRA Joint Committee Meeting in August

Room blocks for ASLRRA's [Joint Committee Meeting](#) in Boston, Massachusetts close tomorrow, July 7. Members wanting to attend the meeting and take advantage of the group hotel rate need to book their reservations before then.

ASLRRA members on the Association's constituent committees will gather to discuss important issues affecting the short line railroad industry. This year's Joint Committee Meeting takes place Aug. 2 and 3. MassRobotics will host the first day of events in the company's Boston office. Click [here](#) to view meeting details, or [here](#) to register for the event.

Still Time to Register for July's General Code of Operating Rules (GCOR) Training Seminar

Offered for the first time in three years, railroads that have adopted the GCOR as their operating rules will want to attend this important training seminar presented by experts from ASLRRA and Iowa Northern Railway.

The comprehensive three-day program may be used by railroads to meet operating rules training as required by 49 CFR Part 240, 242 and 214 Subpart C. Attendees will have an opportunity to participate in daily interactive discussions with peers and regulatory experts and registration includes an online assessment and Certificate of Completion awarded upon successful completion of the program. Attendees must bring their Eighth Edition GCOR for reference; training will cover chapters 1 - 10, 14 and 15.

Training will be held July 26-28 at the Holiday Inn & Suites BienVenu Event Center in Cedar Falls, Iowa. A hotel airport shuttle is available (must be booked in advance) and registration includes daily breakfast and lunch. Attendees may use the [hotel booking link on ASLRRA's website](#) to take advantage of the negotiated room rate of \$105/night. Reservations must be made by Friday, July 8, when the room block expires.

View the complete lineup of [upcoming training seminars](#) on ASLRRA's website and register today!

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 webpage](#).

Help Us Tell the Short Line Industry Story

ASLRRA's members do amazing things every day, and the Association is eager to share those stories with a wider audience in "Views & News" and on social media.

ASLRRA would love to hear what its members and their employees have accomplished, whether it's engaging the community, achieving a milestone, making a big business deal or completing a major project. Maybe there are pictures of the company president being dunked in a water tank to raise money for a local animal shelter. Or your railroad hosted a special train ride for a deserving community group. Let us know!

Please send any details about your news, including contact information, to ASLRRA's [communications team](#). Photographs are also encouraged.

2022 ASLRRR TRAINING SEMINARS [click to learn more](#)

- May 17-18 FRA Engineer/Conductor (240/242) and Railroad Operating Rules (217) Training
- June 7-8 FRA Drug & Alcohol (219) Training
- Coming soon ASLRRR Leadership Development Training, Regulatory Module
- July 26-28 General Code of Operating Rules (GCOR) Training
- August 9-10 Advanced Designated Supervisor of Locomotive Engineers (DSLE) Training
- Coming soon FRA Roadway Worker/Bridge Worker Safety Training



ASLRRR Webinars – Live or On-Demand

Upcoming Webinars

[FRA Updated Part 240/242 Audit Process](#) – July 19, 2022

The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) has revised their approach and process in performing Part 240/242 audits of railroads, including short lines, and these revisions were implemented at the beginning of 2022. Join the FRA's Kevin Lewis to review and discuss this process and common findings.

The webinar is free for members and \$25 for non-members.

Learn How to Better Protect Railroad Employees with ASLRRR's On-Demand Webinars

Ensuring the safety of railroad workers is a multi-faceted responsibility. ASLRRR's [On-Demand Webinar Library](#) features information about many different aspects of employee health and well-being, including:

- Roadway Worker Protection (RWP) Hot Topics
- Diagnosis, Protocol, Compliance and Regulation – A Guide to Better Understanding Sleep Apnea
- Marijuana and CBD - New Drug Testing Issues
- Protecting Roadway Workers from Zika, West Nile, Tick Bites and Other Warm-Weather Threats

These webinars are only a few of the over 170 recordings available on a wide variety of topics including finance, human resources, communications and technology. ASLRRR members can access the On-Demand Webinar for free while non-members can purchase a subscription. [Click here](#) to access the webinar library today.

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

Industry Events and Announcements

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.