



In This Issue:

- **Legislative Visits Continue** – A representative from the office of Iowa Senator Chuck Grassley visited an ASLRRRA member today. Learn more in [the article](#) in our Legislative Update section.

Headlines

Registration is Open for ASLRRRA's Finance & Administration Seminar and General Counsel Symposium; CLEs are Available!

Registration is now open for ASLRRRA's [Finance & Administration Seminar and General Counsel Symposium](#). Both events are held in conjunction with the Association's [Central and Pacific Region Meeting](#), which will be held Oct. 25-27 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Continuing legal education (CLE) credits are available for those attending the General Counsel Symposium.

Registration for the Central and Pacific Region Meeting is [already open](#). Participants at the meeting will hear from a number of industry experts covering topics such as railroad hazmat issues, conductor certification audits and more. There will also be a Short Line Leader's Panel, a Transload Panel and sessions titled "Discussion with a Shipper" and "Design and Construction of the Merchants Mississippi River Bridge".

Discounted room rates in the ASLRRRA [hotel block](#) are available until Sept. 26. ASLRRRA is also welcoming 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.

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The advertisement features several images of mechanical parts: a black and orange engine, a yellow cylindrical component, a blue and silver motor, and a wheel set. On the right side, there is a photograph of a blue and black freight train engine pulling several railcars.

Legislative Update



Sherry Kuntz, staff member in the office of Iowa Senator Chuck Grassley, takes a picture on a Davenport Industrial Railroad locomotive. Kuntz visited the ASLRRRA-member railroad today for a tour and a discussion of freight rail industry issues.

Iowa Senator Staffer Tours Davenport Industrial Railroad in Iowa

Today, staff member Sherry Kuntz from the office of Senator Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa) visited ASLRRRA member Davenport Industrial Railroad (DIR) in Iowa. Kuntz toured the rail facility and talked about issues affecting short line freight railroads, including the potential impact of the proposed two-person crew size rule on DIR.

Cultivating relationships with lawmakers is important for a number of reasons. Engaging lawmakers offers a chance to educate them about issues with which they may be unfamiliar, such as the impact of grant funding on short lines' ability to afford infrastructure projects; the safety and environmental benefits of shipping by freight rail; and the positive impact short lines have on the local, state and national economy.

ASLRRRA's staff members are able and eager to help short lines connect with their representatives in Congress. At the same time, many lawmakers are interested in meeting their constituents and learning more about those they serve. Such meetings often also serve as a good opportunity for railroads to have fodder for a positive public relations campaign – something politicians also enjoy.

Contact ASLRRRA's [Zach Radford](#) or [Crystal Gitchell](#) for help reaching out to legislators or scheduling visits.

Regulatory Update

SBA Letter to FRA Asks for Extension of Crew Size Proposed Rule Comment Period

The Small Business Administration (SBA) has [sent a letter](#) to the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) in support of an extension of the comment period on the FRA's [notice of proposed rulemaking](#) (NPRM) mandating minimum crew sizes.

ASLRRRA asked the SBA's Office of Advocacy to voice its support for the extension to accommodate the Association's work, gathering information from its members to submit meaningful comments to the FRA. ASLRRRA recently sent a survey to its railroad members to determine which members operate with one-person crews, information ASLRRRA will use to follow up with affected railroads to understand the potential impact of the rule on members' operations and business costs.

The initial comment period was set to close Sept. 26, but the SBA's letter asks for a minimum 60-day extension. During this time, ASLRRRA can more fully assess the effect of the rule on its members. As the Office of Advocacy points out, the Regulatory Flexibility Act (RFA) requires federal agencies to evaluate the impact of proposed rules on small businesses and consider less burdensome alternatives.

August RRB Q&A Explains Differences Between Railroad Retirement, Social Security Benefits

The [August edition](#) of the Railroad Retirement Board's Question and Answer series compares railroad retirement benefits to social security benefits.

According to the article, benefits under the Railroad Retirement Act are generally higher than those under the Social Security Act, particularly for railroad employees with 30 or more years of creditable service. Also discussed are disability benefits, whether railroaders can receive benefits at earlier ages than social security recipients and what, if any, benefits are provided by social security that are not provided through railroad retirement.

ASLRRRA's Member Discount Program Includes Grant Writing Services!

Visit aslrira.org/discounts to learn more.



Announcements

September Regulatory Training is Packed with Content

The Regulatory Module of ASLRRRA's Leadership Development training seminar is unique in the way it covers 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.

This 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 facilitated, interactive dialog with expert instructors and peers. [Register today!](#)

Register for Training and Apply for a Scholarship to Fund It

Thanks to new and expanded [scholarship programs](#) managed by ASLRRRA's Short Line Education Fund, nearly \$30,000 is available to employees of small railroads to attend ASLRRRA seminars and other industry-specific training programs. The online application takes less than 30 minutes and applicants receive up to \$1,200 for registration, travel and lodging. [Apply now!](#)

Become an ASLRRRA Preferred Provider

ASLRRRA is accepting proposals from companies interested in serving as a Preferred Provider in the association's Member Discount Program. We've issued a Request for Information (RFI) seeking associate member companies who provide background screening services to association members throughout the United States. To receive a copy of the RFI and an overview of ASLRRRA's Member Discount Program, please email ASLRRRA's SVP of Education and Business Services, [Sabrina Waiss](#). Participation in ASLRRRA's Member Discount Program is limited to member companies; non-member companies interested in learning more about the benefits of membership may contact ASLRRRA's Senior Vice President of Membership, [Kathy Keeney](#).

We welcome your input! To suggest products and services you'd like the Association to include in the Member Discount Program, please email [Sabrina Waiss](#).

ASLRRRA's Grant Writing Preferred Providers Offer Customized Help for Association Members

ASLRRRA's railroad members continue to have opportunities to apply for federal funding through various grant programs, and federal agencies are taking steps to help with the application process. While these resources are useful, ASLRRRA offers further assistance through its Member Discount Program, which features [Preferred Providers Bergmann, HDR and Global Train Services \(GTS\)](#) offering Association members help with grant applications.

The [Railroad Crossing Elimination \(RCE\) Grant program](#) is currently accepting applications, and the Federal Railroad Administration's (FRA) Office Hours webinars to help those interested in applying for these grants will continue this week with a discussion of [environmental considerations](#).

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) [Higher Blends Infrastructure Incentive Program](#) (HBIIIP), for which rail fueling facilities are considered eligible entities, is also accepting grant applications. Approximately [\\$100 million in grant funding](#) will be available.

And, although the notice of funding opportunity (NOFO) for Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) grants has not yet been released, ASLRRRA anticipates the program to open soon and encourages Association members to [take steps now](#) to ready themselves to submit CRISI grant applications.

ASLRRRA's grant-writing Preferred Providers have years of experience helping short lines apply for federal funding programs and can help Association members while offering their services at premium prices. Go to ASLRRRA's [Member Discount Program homepage](#) and click on the Grant Writing Services link to learn more.

Regional Meeting Participants Will Hear From a Wide Variety of Railroad Industry Representatives

In addition to hearing from leaders in the short line industry, attendees at this year's [Eastern and Southern Region Meeting](#) will also have a chance to get updates from other industry representatives, including those from Class I railroads CSX and Norfolk Southern, shippers KBX Rail and Home Depot and transload company RSI Logistics.

ASLRRRA's Supplier Committee will hold an in-person meeting at this event. In addition, networking opportunities include a Young Professionals Social Hour, Sandhouse Sessions for railroads and suppliers, and golf. Space is still available for golfers who have not yet signed up for the tournament.

Moreover, those who call to [reserve a room](#) at the Hyatt Regency Atlanta before the end of the week may be able to secure one of the very last spots in ASLRRRA's room block at the discounted meeting rate. Do not miss a chance to [register today](#) for ASLRRRA's Eastern and Southern Region Meeting, Sept. 26-28 in Atlanta, Georgia.

ASLRRA Out and About

Keeney, Ogborn Staff Booth at AREMA's Annual Conference Expo Hall

ASLRRA Senior Vice President of Membership and Business Development Kathy Keeney and Senior Advisor Mike Ogborn represented the Association at the American Railway Engineering and Maintenance-of-Way Association (AREMA) 2022 Annual Conference & Expo this week in Denver, Colorado.

Keeney and Ogborn staffed a booth in the event's expo hall, speaking with participants about ASLRRA, its product offerings and upcoming meetings and training opportunities.



ASLRRA's Kathy Keeney and Mike Ogborn share a selfie from the Association's booth at the AREMA annual conference in Denver.

ASLRRA 2022 Regional Meetings

Southern/Eastern | Atlanta, GA | September 26-28, 2022

Central/Pacific | Milwaukee, WI | October 25- 27, 2022

General Counsel/Finance & Administration | Milwaukee, WI | October 25- 27, 2022

ASLRRA 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.

Webinars On Demand

Improve Knowledge of the FRA's Part 243 Regulations With On-Demand Webinars

A recent three-part webinar series focused on the Federal Railroad Administration's (FRA) Code of Federal Regulations Part 243 concerning training for safety-related railroad employees. The webinars were presented by Rio Grande Pacific Corporation Director, Safety, Training & Regulatory Compliance Mitch Harris, Spark Training Solutions President Katie Inouye and ASLRRRA's Vice President of Safety & Compliance JR Gelnar.

Recordings of the entire series can be found in ASLRRRA's [On-Demand Webinar library](#). Look for these titles in the regulatory category:

- FRA Part 243: Part 1 – Initial Training Requirements
- FRA Part 243: Part 2 – Requirements for Compliance
- FRA Part 243: Part 3 – Discussion and Q&A

In addition, ASLRRRA offers more than 200 recordings covering a variety of railroad topics. Recordings are free to members and available by subscription to non-members. Follow the link above to learn more.

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

Industry Events and Announcements

FRA Looking to Fill Five SES Leadership Positions

The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) has five senior executive service (SES) positions open and is seeking qualified individuals to fill the posts. Hiring individuals for these jobs will help the FRA's organizational expansion efforts and meet the mission of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL).

The FRA has openings for:

- [Director, Office of Railroad Planning and Engineering](#)
- [Director, Environmental Program Management](#)
- [Director, Office of Industry Data and Economic Analysis](#)
- [Associate Administrator \(AA\) for Research, Data Solutions and Innovation](#)
- [Director, Office of Rail Program Development](#)

Use the links to learn more about and apply for each position.

Railway Age Accepting Nominations for Women in Rail Awards

Railway Age magazine is now [accepting nominations](#) for its 2022 Women in Rail awards, which will honor 20 women for their achievements in the rail industry.

Eligible nominees include individuals in the 50 U.S. states, Canada and Mexico in any area of the railroad industry. They will be judged on a number of aspects including contributions to railroading and community involvement.

August 31, 2022

Railway Age will recognize this year's winners in its November issue. [Click here](#) to submit a nomination form online. Nominations are due Sept. 30.

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.