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ASLRRRA JAKE SAFETY AWARD PROGRAM BREAKS RECORDS FOR SECOND CONSECUTIVE YEAR

*418 Railroads Honored for Better Than Industry Average Safety Performance, and 371 Railroads
Earn 'Jake With Distinction' for **Zero** Reportable Injuries*

WASHINGTON – May 6, 2026 – The short line industry has achieved a new safety record in 2025, according to data from the Federal Railroad Administration. The American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association (ASLRRRA) today announced that of the 418 member railroads that earned a 2025 Jake Safety Award, a record-breaking 371 short lines earned a “Jake with Distinction” for **zero** reportable injuries in 2025.

To achieve a Jake Award, an ASLRRRA member railroad must perform better than the average reportable injury frequency rate per 200,000 person-hours worked for railroads other than Amtrak, Class I, commuter, and transit operations as evidenced by Railroad Injury and Illness Summary Forms submitted to the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) for each of the 12 months of 2025. In 2025, a Jake Award winner must have an injury frequency rate lower than the industry average of 2.24, a reduction from the prior year. In fact, the industry average frequency rate has dropped by 3% in each of the past two years.

“Safety is the top priority for short line railroads. The Jake Award program serves as a key method for celebrating the industry’s top safety performers and is used as a benchmark by

many short lines to measure how well their safety programs are working,” said Chuck Baker, President of ASLRRA. “What stands out this year is that the average industry injury frequency rate has declined once again, raising the bar even higher for earning a Jake Award. Even so, more short line railroads than ever before, 418 to be exact, achieved injury rates below the industry average, and a record-high 371 reported zero injuries. Zero is remarkable! We are pleased that the numbers are reflecting the unrelenting efforts made by short line railroads throughout the country as they each seek to achieve zero injuries in an unforgiving environment.”

Many of this year’s award winners have taken the opportunity to participate over the last several years in programs delivered by the Short Line Safety Institute, a not-for-profit company charged with elevating safety culture on short line railroads, and the ASLRRA’s own Short Line Training Center. And dozens and dozens more of this year’s winners have benefited from state and federal help in investing in their infrastructure, particularly through the CRISI program.

“Investing in infrastructure addresses the primary causes of derailment on short lines – worn and outdated track and ties. Training and an unwavering commitment to compliance with regulations also helps keep employees safe. And a strong safety culture ensures that railroaders always make the safe choice – even when no one is watching. The Short Line Safety Institute has been a valuable tool available at no cost to short lines to assess and improve safety culture, address hazardous materials training for employees and area first responders, and enhance leadership skills for safety professionals,” said Chuck Baker.

Award Background

The Jake Awards are named for the late Lowell S. “Jake” Jacobson, the former President and General Manager of the Copper Basin Railway. After achieving a perfect safety record for the CBRY in 1993, Jake realized that there was no award that recognized smaller railroads’ safety records. In 1999, the ASLRRA Safety Committee adopted the Jake Awards, and since then has continued Mr. Jacobson’s legacy of rewarding and drawing attention to the high safety

standards of the small railroad industry. He was inducted into the [Short Line Railroading Industry Hall of Fame](#) in 2024. For more information on Jake's legacy, click [here](#).

Since its inception in 1995, the Jake Award program has distributed more than 8,200 Jake and Jake with Distinction Awards to America's small railroad community.

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 50,000 miles of track in 49 states, or approximately one third 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.