



American Short Line and
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Celebrating America's Railroads: Connecting Communities, Powering Commerce and Driving Economic Growth

WASHINGTON – July 2, 2026 - As the United States celebrates its 250th anniversary, America's short line and regional railroads proudly recognize their enduring role in building America's economy, connecting communities, and supporting industries that fuel prosperity. For nearly two centuries, freight railroads have served as the backbone of the American supply chain, delivering the goods that keep businesses operating and communities thriving.

From connecting farms to markets and factories to ports, to supporting small businesses and global commerce, the nation's more than 600 Class II and Class III railroads continue to strengthen the communities they serve and move the nation's economy forward.

"Railroading is more than moving freight—it's about connecting people, communities, and opportunity. The spirit of America's railroads lies in the dedication of the men and women who keep them running, carrying not only the nation's commerce but also its history, resilience, and promise for the future." said Chuck Baker, President, American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association (ASLRRA).

In 1827 the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad ushered in the era of common-carrier rail transportation, laying the foundation for a national network that would unite communities, fuel industrial growth, expand commerce, and help shape the United States into a global economic leader. Today regional and short line railroads operate more than one-third of the nation's rail network, playing an essential role in connecting

rural and small town communities to the national and global marketplace. Often referred to as the "first and last mile" of freight transportation, Class II and Class III railroads provide critical service to thousands of businesses that would otherwise have limited access to cost-effective rail transportation.

These railroads move an incredibly diverse range of commodities, including agricultural products such as grain, corn, soybeans, wheat, fertilizer, and animal feed; forest products including lumber, paper, wood pulp, and timber; construction materials such as sand, gravel, crushed stone, cement, and steel; and energy products including ethanol, propane, renewable fuels, and petroleum products. They also transport chemicals, plastics, automotive parts, food products, consumer goods, recycled materials, industrial equipment, and military shipments that support national defense and emergency preparedness.

Beyond freight transportation, short line and regional railroads serve as economic development partners for the communities they serve. By preserving rail access for manufacturers, warehouses, ports, and agricultural producers, they help attract new businesses, create family-sustaining jobs, reduce highway congestion, and strengthen local economies. Their flexibility and customer-focused service allow businesses of all sizes to compete in domestic and international markets.

For generations, railroads have connected America. Today, they remain committed to delivering opportunity, advancing innovation, and investing in the infrastructure that will power the nation's next 250 years.

For more information on how short lines are celebrating and honoring America's 250th Anniversary, click [here](#).

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About ASLRRRA - The American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association (ASLRRRA) is a non-profit trade association representing the interests of the nation's 600 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