ASLRA Convention Delivered Outstanding Education, Welcomed New Chairman, and Celebrated Industry Excellence

ORLANDO, Fla. – April 9, 2019 – More than 1,700 members of the short line industry attended the American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association’s (ASLRA) 2019 CONNECTIONS Convention, held at the Orlando World Center Marriott in Orlando, Florida. Thirty-six education sessions were offered in ten different ‘tracks’ geared toward industry crafts, as well as a full-day Hazardous Materials Instructor Training session presented by the Short Line Safety Institute.

The Expo Hall provided attendees with the opportunity to connect with 194 industry suppliers. The Board elected Doc Claussen, Vice Chair of Gulf & Ohio Railways, Inc. as the Chair of ASLRA, Stefan Loeb of Watco Companies, LLC. as the Vice Chair, and the ASLRA honored industry a range of exemplary industry high achievers.

“Our CONNECTIONS convention continues to be a fantastic return on investment for our members,” said Chuck Baker, President, ASLRA. “The opportunities for railroaders to network with peers, get up to speed on issues that matter to our industry, attend education provided by industry experts, and make connections in our Expo hall are unparalleled.”
New ASLRRRA Chairman

During the ASLRRRA Board Meeting, Doc Claussen, Vice Chairman of Gulf and Ohio Railways, Inc. was elected Chairman of ASLRRRA. Claussen has served for the last three years as the Vice Chairman of the American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association and Chairman of the Short Line Safety Institute. In addition to his work with the Association he also serves on the board of the Historic Tennessee Theatre Foundation, the University of Tennessee College of Nursing Advisory Board, and the board of the Boys and Girls Clubs of the Tennessee Valley. He has eleven years of experience with Gulf & Ohio following a career as a diagnostic and interventional radiologist.

At the same meeting, Stefan Loeb, Executive VP and CMO, Watco Companies, LLC was elected as Vice Chair of the ASLRRRA. Loeb has previously served on the Board of Directors representing the Central Region and is a member of the BNSF Short Line Caucus and the Rail Industry Working Group.

ASLRRRA was pleased to honor member companies who have excelled in providing job opportunities for veterans and innovative business success.

Veterans Hiring

The Veterans Recruitment Award recognizes an ASLRRRA member who has demonstrated a commitment to hiring veterans, as evidenced by the percentage of employees who are veterans of the U.S. Armed forces. Buckingham Branch Railroad Company was the 2019 recipient.

“Veterans bring a strong work ethic and valuable experience to the railroad industry,” said Baker during the award presentation. “Our Association’s members recognize that value and make significant efforts to recruit Veterans.”

Business Development Award
The Business Development Award recognizes the essence of the short line story – leveraging the uniqueness of their operation and its partners to deliver customer value. The railroad must demonstrate one or more of the following: utilization of the railroad’s unique operating characteristics to deliver value; partnership with other development authorities, Class 1s, or companies; delivering economic success to both the railroad and the community it serves. In 2019, ASLRRRA honored the following railroads:

- **Delaware-Lackawanna Railroad** – honoring their 510% carload growth from 1993, the first year of DL operations, through 2018, one carload at a time.
- **Lake State Railway Company** – recognizing the successful launch of a new line of business, moving logs from Michigan to West Virginia in support of a customer, enabling the retention of jobs in West Virginia during a market disruption in the aftermath of a hurricane.
- **Texas & New Mexico Railway** – commending the successful development of a new opportunity, using the Wink Terminal in the Permian Basin oil fields to address the need to move stranded crude oil, and provide diesel to area operations.

###

**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, touching in origination or termination one out of every four cars moving on the national railroad system, serving customers who otherwise would be cut off from the national railroad network.