ASLRRRA Honors Peter Gilbertson for Decades of Service to the Short Line Industry

ORLANDO, Fla. – April 9, 2019 – The American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association (ASLRRRA) has selected Peter A. Gilbertson, President and CEO of Anacostia Rail Holdings Company, as the recipient of the 2019 Thomas L. Schlosser Distinguished Service Award in recognition of his significant service to the short line industry over a thirty-plus year career.

Peter Gilbertson quite literally wrote the book on how to start a short line. That was more than 30 years ago when he and Larry McCaffrey, a fellow railroad attorney specializing in railroad acquisitions, published a detailed handbook covering everything from buying short lines to negotiating the regulatory hurdles. It was considered the bible by many short line operators in the early post-Staggers Act era.

He is past chairman of the Regional Railroads of America (RRA) and was a driving force behind the merger of RRA and the American Short Line Association that created today’s ASLRRRA. He felt that the merger was an important move to avoid a divide between larger regional railroads and smaller short lines. Such a split could have diluted the voice of the short line industry in
government affairs efforts and in dealings with Class I partners. Gilbertson went on to serve as ASLRRRA’s first Legislative Policy Chair, guiding ASLRRRA’s grassroots campaign.

“Peter is a thought-leader in our industry, pioneering many of the processes that are commonly used today, such as the ‘10901 exemption’, and the formation of regional railroads,” said ASLRRRA President Chuck Baker. “He was one of the first to understand the power of the short line story and worked to ensure that the fledgling industry would have a voice at the table, advocating for the formation of the ASLRRRA, and short line inclusion in important industry committees. Throughout his career, short lines have been blessed by his industry engagement, willingness to share his expertise, and ability to create opportunity where previously there was none.”

After a role as a leading member of a prominent law firm that used provisions of the Staggers Act to develop and win some of the first 10901 exemption cases, he joined the management team of a start-up regional railroad in Iowa in 1986. After this experience he and others formed Anacostia & Pacific, a development firm that assisted in the formation of regional railroads such as MidSouth, Montana Rail Link, Paducah & Louisville and Twin Cities and Western.

After assisting others, Mr. Gilbertson led the formation of Anacostia Rail Holdings, which owns and operates the Chicago South Shore & South Bend, Gulf Coast Switching, Louisville & Indiana Railroad, New York & Atlantic, Northern Lines and Pacific Harbor Line.

He represented ASLRRRA in negotiations with the Association of American Railroads (AAR) that led to the “Rail Industry Agreement” and chaired the STB Railroad Shipper Transportation Advisory Council. He is an alternating member of the board of the AAR and a member of the board of trustees of the University of Denver.

Named for former ASLRRRA Chairman Thomas L. Schlosser, past winners of the Schlosser Distinguished Service Award have included Mort Fuller, Gary Griswell, George Betke, Keith Hartwell, Judy Petry, Mike Ogborn and Tom Schlosser.
About ASLRRA - The American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association (ASLRRA) 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.