ASLRRA Files Comments on the Controversial Proposed Crew Size Rule

ASLRRA filed comments last week and issued a press release voicing our concerns about the Federal Railroad Administration’s proposed rule on crew size. The Train Crew Staffing Rule requires a two-person crew onboard in many situations where short lines operate safely with one. The resulting labor costs may detract from spending on capital that would enhance safety. This is an important issue for our industry and we will be vigilant in representing our members’ interests.

ASLRRA, along with the Association of American Railroads (AAR), has requested, and will participate in a public hearing on July 15, 2016. The comment period will be extended to August 15, 2016. Please see ASLRRA’s comments here. If you have any questions about the proposed rule, please contact Jo Strang, Vice President of Safety and Regulatory Policy at 202-585-3432 or JR Gelnar, Vice President of Safety and Compliance at 202-585-3436.

Short Line Safety Institute Webinar Offered on June 29: Overview of the Safety Culture Assessment

Join the Short Line Safety Institute Staff and Assessors to learn the ins and outs of a SLSI Safety Culture Assessment. Designed for the short line and regional railroad audience, participants will gain an understanding of how a safety assessment works and resulting benefits to the railroad. Participants will have an opportunity participate in Q&A at the end of the presentation. Register today!

Legislative Update

Support for BRACE Act Continues to Build

As of Monday afternoon, H.R. 4626 has been cosponsored—formally endorsed—by 125 Representatives! This is an accomplishment and shows tremendous support for extending the benefits of 45G indefinitely. In the Senate, 26 Senators are on board with S. 2595. But more are needed! These bills are collectively known as the “Building Rail Access for Customers and the Economy” or “BRACE” Act.

What can you do over the next 24 days to help the BRACE Act? Email and call your Representatives and Senators to encourage them to cosponsor this bill. More information can be found on our website.

Gov. Cuomo, New York Legislators Implement Legislation Focused on Grade Crossings and Bridges

New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo and several top state legislators yesterday announced they reached an agreement on legislation designed to improve rail safety. The agreement includes a series of initiatives aimed at reducing the risk of train-motor vehicle collisions at grade crossings across the state. The initiatives will require coordinated, frequent inspections of traffic-control devices at crossings, and impose penalties on railroads and repeat offender
motorists who continue to disobey the law and ignore safety requirements, state officials said in a press release. Read more on the Governor’s news page.

Regulatory Update

**USDOT Unveils New Hazardous Materials Safety Grant**

The U.S. Department of Transportation’s Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) recently announced the availability of $1 million in grant funding for training and outreach programs that help communities prepare for transportation incidents involving hazardous materials. The new “Community Safety Grants” program was created by the Fixing America’s Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act) that Congress passed late last year. The funding may also be used to improve training for state and local personnel who enforce hazardous material regulations, according to a PHMSA press release. Applicants are required to apply electronically through www.grants.gov. Applications are due July 1.

**Grade Crossing Reporting Requirements Amended**

The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) recently published amendments to the National Highway-Rail Crossing Inventory Reporting Requirements located in 49 CFR Part 234 Subpart F. Amendments have been made to three definitions, submission of data by parent companies, updating inventory of crossings within private company, port or dock area, State requested data, and deadline date and timelines for submission of data for new crossings and updates. For a summary of the changes, please click here. If you have any questions, please contact ASLRRA’s Jo Strang or JR Gelnar.

**Railroad Safety and Training Seminar Offered**

In cooperation with the Federal Railroad Administration, Farmrail System, Inc. is pleased to host the 2016 Railroad Safety and Training Seminar in Oklahoma City, OK on August 9-11. Key topics include 49 CFR parts 219, 240/242, Rail Integrity and Hazardous Material, presented by FRA experts and qualified carrier safety-training and compliance personnel. Please click here to view registration information.

**Sample Bridge Maintenance Program & Appendices Now Available on ASLRRA Website**

A sample Bridge Management Program (BMP) has been developed by ASLRRA with input from the FRA. Click here to view the program (requires log in). The adoption of the sample program by the railroad will require extensive involvement and input (as required by provisions of Part 237) of the designated Railroad Bridge Engineer (RBE) and some revisions/additions based upon the individual railroad’s unique operation, structures or circumstances. A link contains all pertinent regulations concerning maintenance of a bridge program. The sample program includes eight appendices that help your railroad comply. An easy to use form for public version of inspection reports is also downloadable. If you have any questions, please contact ASLRRA’s JR Gelnar.

**Member News**

**ARINC Announces Leveraged Communication Infrastructure Component for PTC**

ASLRRA associate business member ARINC recently announced the roll-out of a network and messaging platform for passenger and freight railroads related to Positive Train Control (PTC). “ARINC RailwayNet leverages Rockwell Collins’ expertise to create a common communication infrastructure for all railroads,” said Denny Lengyel, Vice President, Surface Transportation Systems for Rockwell Collins. “ARINC RailwayNet provides the network connections and office applications required to exchange critical information among Class I railroads and their partner short line and commuter railroads.” Click here to read more.
Reading Blue Mountain & Northern Railroad Acquires Locust Valley Line

Reading Blue Mountain & Northern Railroad (RBMN) has acquired the 5.5 mile Locust Valley Line which it has been operating since 2006. By taking on ownership RBMN will be better able to pursue industrial development along this line, which has many excellent sites due to its proximity to I-81. The line runs from Laurel Junction in Delano Township to near Mahanoy City in Mahanoy Township in Schuylkill County. RBMN acquired the line from the Locust Valley Coal Company. Reading & Northern is the largest privately owned railroad company in Pennsylvania and is the only railroad to be named Regional Railroad of the Year three times by Railway Age Magazine, receiving the honor in 2002, 2011 and 2015.

GREX Appoints Todd Euston as Vice President of Engineering

ASLRRA associate business member Georgetown Rail Equipment Company (GREX) has announced the appointment of Todd Euston to the position of Vice President of Engineering. Euston previously served as Director of Inspection Technology for GREX, extending existing and new technology for inspection of railroad track. Euston earned Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees in Civil Engineering from the University of Delaware where he studied Railway Engineering under the late Dr. Arnold Kerr. Euston is a member of AREMA Committee 2 for Track Measurement and Assessment Systems, and is a registered professional engineer in Pennsylvania. GREX pinpoints where ballast is needed and automates its delivery, locates track flaws to keep operations running smoothly, and helps railroads monitor bridges remotely.

ASLRRA’s Upcoming Seminars and Events

Webinar: Reg. Update: MOW Final Rules & Bridge Management
June 28, 2016
This webinar will be held again on July 13th.

Special thanks to our first sponsor of webinars, Simmons Railroad Group.

Webinar: Safety Assessments With the SLSI Team
June 29, 2016

Would you like to sponsor a Webinar? Please contact Jenny Bourque or Kathy Keeney for more information.

Eastern Region Meeting
Sheraton Indianapolis City Centre Hotel
Indianapolis, IN
September 12-14, 2016

Southern Region Meeting
Louisville Marriott Downtown
Louisville, KY
October 24-26, 2016

Operating Practices Training Seminar
Sheraton Baltimore Washington Airport
Baltimore, MD
November 1-3, 2016

Central/Pacific Region Meeting
Renaissance Oklahoma City Convention Center
Oklahoma City, OK
November 14-16, 2016

General Counsel Symposium/Finance & Administration Seminar
Renaissance Oklahoma City Convention Center
Oklahoma City, OK
November 16-18, 2016

Views & News is published by the American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association. Please contact Elizabeth Petty, Editor, epetty@aslrra.org, with any questions or comments.