



September 6, 2017

ASLRRRA Staff are Ready to Assist in Hurricane's Aftermath

In the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey, ASLRRRA is reaching out to our member railroads in and near Houston to answer questions and offer assistance. There may be federal funds available for infrastructure restoration. Short lines with bridges affected by the storm are encouraged to contact ASLRRRA's [Jo Strang](#), so that a list may be compiled and made available to the U.S. Department of Transportation. Additionally, our member railroads are encouraged to contact ASLRRRA's [JR Gelnar](#) to assist with gaining access if needed to areas under local police control.

One of the most important take aways from Harvey is that coordination among federal, state and local response agencies and officials are the key to rapid response to damage that may arise. The Federal Railroad Administration Announced an Emergency Declaration well prior to landfall. [Click here](#) to read the notice. Social media as well as practice exercises have had a positive impact on the response. Volunteers and the private sector continue to be important factors in rescue, assessment and charitable efforts.

While Hurricane Harvey continues to set records for cost of damage and widespread impact, Florida Governor Rick Scott has declared a state of emergency for all 67 of the state's counties as rapidly growing Hurricane Irma is expected to make landfall later this week. The Governor encouraged all to prepare for the worst and hope for the best and urged that "all Floridians remain vigilant and stay alert to local weather and news". ASLRRRA's staff is keeping close tabs on any new developments and plan to reach out to our short line members later this week.

Please tag @ASLRRRA, or send photos to ASLRRRA's [Amy Krouse](#), so we can share our member's stories.

USDOT Posts Notice of Funding Opportunity for TIGER Grants

The U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) has [announced](#) that the [Notice of Funding Opportunity](#) for the FY17 TIGER Grant Program is now available. In addition, USDOT is hosting a series of webinars during the FY 2017 TIGER grant application process. Webinars on *How to Compete for TIGER Discretionary Grants* will be held on Wednesday, September 13th and Tuesday, September 19th. To register, please visit the [TIGER Webinar Series](#) webpage. Please contact USDOT's [Michael Russo](#) for more information. ASLRRRA's [Jo Strang](#) is available for questions or concerns.

Do you know? How many short lines are in the US? What impact do they have on the US Economy? How much are they investing in infrastructure? Order your Short Line and Regional Railroad Facts and Figures today to find out!

Don't Miss the Golf Opportunity at our Southern Region Meeting

Don't miss the annual golf outing following ASLRRRA's Southern Region Meeting! This year's event will be held at [Patriots Point Links](#) on September 27, on the edge of Charleston Harbor and offers spectacular views of the city, Fort Sumter, and ships arriving from all over the world. Transportation will be provided to the course and golfers will enjoy an awards reception at the clubhouse after the outing is finished. [Click here](#) to register!

Legislative Update

The BRACE Act Needs Your Support!

As Congress returns for the autumn session, attention will turn to budget, infrastructure and tax legislation. It has never been more important for elected officials to hear from short lines and their customers. Please [visit our website](#) for plenty of information, handouts, and maps, and contact our Washington team's [Fred Oelsner](#) if you'd like assistance communicating the importance of extending the 45G Short Line Tax Credit by email, phone call or in person.

Grass Roots Visits

Grass Roots visits are a proven, effective way to tell the short line story to our representatives in Washington DC as well as in our state capitols. Please contact our Washington team's [Lindsey Collins](#) for more information, and plan your invitation and visit today!

North Shore / LVRR hosts Argentina Delegation



On August 29, ASLRRRA member [Lycoming Valley Railroad](#) (LVRR) and parent North Shore Railroad Company hosted a delegation from Argentina who was touring the Marcellus region in north central Pennsylvania through Penn State University's (PSU) Cooperative Extension. This visit was arranged by Tom Murphy of PSU. Roy Blanchard, industry consultant and contributing columnist, joined the discussion. The delegation consisted of Argentinian provincial officials and a federal representative. PSU provided an interpreter for Spanish - English and English - Spanish translation. The delegation were eager to compare Argentina's

Development challenges with examples from U.S. businesses. For example, Argentina is a country of very strong unions - especially in trucking - and a very weak and under maintained government rail system. However, similar to the U.S., there are large deposits of shale gas in country and rail could be a part of the transportation solution as the shale fields are developed. *Photo - taken in LVRR Newberry Yard, Williamsport, PA - depicts Todd Hunter 3rd from left and Roy Blanchard 3rd from right along with the delegation and LVRR SD40-2 #3025.*

New England Short Line Group Asks U.S. Rep. Elizabeth Esty to Support Permanent Tax Credit

U.S. Representative Elizabeth Esty, (D-CT-5), met with about half dozen industry officials on August 28 at the Railroad Museum of New England - and the Short Line Tax Credit was a prominent topic of discussion. The tax credit - which allows smaller railroads to claim a 50-percent tax credit for every dollar invested, up to a cap equivalent to \$3,500 per mile of track - was enacted in 2005. Congress let the tax credit expire at the end of last year and officials of Connecticut's freight railroads are hoping that Esty, who serves on the House Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure, can use her influence to get the incentive restored. Esty said that helping smaller railroads thrive is critical to Connecticut's economy. Restoring the tax credit would allow small railroad operators

to have a level of certainty when planning capital projects, said Howard Pincus, president of ASLRRRA member Naugatuck Railroad Co. “The ability to plan things is critical,” Pincus said. “We are looking at bridges that need to be redecked. That can get pretty expensive pretty fast.” Jerry Vest, senior vice president of Genesee & Wyoming Railroad Co. (G&W), was also on hand. G&W is the parent of ASLRRRA members Connecticut Southern, New England Central and Providence & Worcester Railroads, all with operations in Connecticut. Vest praised Esty for meeting with state railroad industry leaders. Cynthia Scarano, vice president of Massachusetts-based Pan Am Railways, parent of ASLRRRA member Springfield Terminal, also joined the discussion, pointing out the economic importance of short lines to shippers.

OmniTRAX and BRG Host Senator Inhofe



On August 14, [OmniTRAX](#) and its subsidiary, ASLRRRA member [Brownsville & Rio Grande International Railway](#) (BRG) co-hosted an event for Senator James Inhofe (R-OK) on South Padre Island, Texas. Senator Inhofe spoke of his hope and desire to see the Section 45G short line tax credits made permanent, and of his work in rolling back harmful government regulation. Joining Sen. Inhofe at this event was BRG President Norma Torres, OmniTRAX VP of Government Affairs David Arganbright, and Viking Navigation LLC Principal Adam Nordstrom. Senator Inhofe's wife Kay recalled riding the Sand Springs Railway near Tulsa, OK as a child to visit her father's office

when the line provided interurban passenger service. Today, ASLRRRA member Sand Springs Railroad is also operated by OmniTRAX. Senator Inhofe is an original cosponsor of the BRACE Act - legislation to make Section 45G permanent. He is Chairman of the Senate Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee and serves on the Senate Surface Transportation Subcommittee in addition to the Armed Services Committee. *Photo L-R: Adam Nordstrom, Viking Navigation LLC, Sen. Inhofe, Mrs. Kay Inhofe, David Arganbright, OmniTRAX, and Norma Torres, BRG.*

Regulatory Update

FAMES Releases Safety Alert Concerning Incidents

FRA's *Fatality Analysis of Maintenance-of-way Employees and Signalmen (FAMES) Committee* has issued a [Safety Alert](#) based on a comparison of available roadway worker fatality data over a span of 27 years (1986-1994 and 1997-2014) that indicates that the highest number of roadway worker incidents occur during the months of October, November and December. The pattern is undeniable and alarming. In recognition of these trends, FAMES would like to take this opportunity to remind all roadway workers to be hyper-vigilant with regard to the application of on-track safety protection. “If you see someone fouling a track without on-track safety protection, say something to them. If you have concerns regarding the application of on-track safety at the job site, invoke your legally protected right to make a good faith challenge and remain clear of the tracks until the challenge has been resolved. Let's work together and watch out for each other.”

The Mission of the FAMES Committee is to analyze all fatalities and selected related incidents in order to make recommendations to reduce the risk of future occurrences and eliminate fatalities to roadway workers. WE CAN SAVE LIVES!

FMCA Declaration of Emergency for Houston and Affected Areas

It may be useful for short lines and their customers to know that restrictions on shipments of emergency fuel into Hurricane Harvey affected areas have been streamlined per the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration's (FMCA) Regional [Declaration of Emergency](#) Under 49 CFR Section 390.23.

RRB Advises Rail Workers Impacted by Hurricane Harvey

The U.S. Railroad Retirement Board (RRB) is reminding rail employees out of work due to Hurricane Harvey and its aftermath that they may qualify for unemployment benefits. To determine eligibility or file claims for benefits, affected railroaders should call the RRB's toll-free telephone number at 1-877-772-5772 or visit the [website](#). Most RRB offices are open to the public from 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday, and 9 a.m. to noon on Wednesday, except on Federal holidays.

Member News

Southwest Gulf Railroad Company (SGRR) Will Begin Construction of New Line

ASLRRRA member [Southwest Gulf Railroad Company](#) (SGRR) has announced that the Medina Line will be a common-carrier railroad near Dunlay, Texas, anchored by The Medina Quarry, an existing limestone quarry at the northern end of the line operated by SGRR parent Vulcan Materials Company. "This is a testament to what's possible when we work together," said Erik R Emmert, vice president of SGRR. "This project will serve as a catalyst for jobs and economic opportunity for decades to come right here in Medina County. We look forward to continuing our work with the community and being good neighbors." Houston-based WT Byler Co, Inc., which has performed hundreds of miles of railroad construction in Texas and Louisiana, will serve as the general contractor. The STB granted SGRR the authority to build and operate The Medina Line in 2008.

Restoration of Freight Service in the Houston Area Making Progress

[BNSF Railway Co.](#) has announced that service has resumed on its Houston Subdivision, as well as on a greater portion of its Galveston Subdivision and on its Conroe Subdivision. BNSF maintains an around-the-clock command center to coordinate its efforts throughout the region. They are also working to implement an additional reporting tool to assist customers in submitting information to BNSF on the status of their shipping and receiving facilities that will help further enable the recovery.

For its part, [Union Pacific Railroad](#) has repaired track between Houston and Bryan, TX, and between Houston and Angleton, TX. The Class I also completed work to begin switching operations south of its Englewood and Settegast yards. Bridge inspections and track and signal repairs will continue where UP has access. In areas without road access – such as in the Baytown, TX, area – the railroad will use helicopters and drones to inspect infrastructure.

Sandersville Railroad Taps new General Superintendent

Clay Elrod is the new General Superintendent with the [Sandersville Railroad](#) (SAN). Mr. Elrod comes to the SAN with over eight years of experience with Norfolk Southern.

Patriot Rail Co. Expands Business Portfolio

[Patriot Rail Co. LLC](#), parent company of eleven ASLRRRA member short lines and one switching member, and sister company [Diversified Port Holdings LLC](#) (DPH) will partner to expand their business portfolios. Through its principal subsidiaries Seaonus and Portus, DPH operates a maritime port logistics business in the U.S. Gulf and Atlantic coasts. Both Patriot Rail and DPH are based in Jacksonville, FL. Customers are increasingly seeking bundled port and rail solutions, said Patriot Rail Chief Executive Officer John Fenton. "In the past DPH and Patriot have partnered in providing these solutions to our customers," Fenton said. "The combining of the businesses will enable us to further enhance service delivery for our customers while increasing our cost competitiveness."

Mott MacDonald Announces Staffing Changes

ASLRRA associate business member [Mott MacDonald](#) has announced that Andrew Gardner, a Vice President and light rail expert based in Vancouver, Canada, has been named Transportation Planning Practice Leader for the West and Canada Units of Mott MacDonald. Todd Heacock, an engineering veteran with 40 years of experience in consulting and structural engineering, has joined Mott MacDonald as a Senior Vice President of Structural Engineering for North America, based at Mott MacDonald's headquarters in Iselin, NJ. Margaret Simmons-Cross, Senior Vice President, based in Seattle, has been named Division General Manager for the Greater West Division of Mott MacDonald.

Register Today!

Webinar: Registered Apprenticeship - What Is It & Why Should You Do It?

On Thursday, September 7 at noon please join David Harrison, Executive Director, Fastport National Apprenticeship Program, to learn more about the "earn and learn" training model of a Registered Apprenticeship, outline the benefits of implementing an Apprenticeship Program within your organization and guide your company through the next steps in developing a Registered Apprenticeship Program. Brought to you by the ASLRRA Veteran's Recruitment Committee. No charge for ASLRRA members. Please [click here](#) to register, or for same day registrations please call 202-628-4500.

Webinar: Chlorine: Chemical/Physical Properties & Emergency Response



On September 11, please join Kevin O'Rourke, Instructor / Presenter, Hawkins, Inc. and Erica Bernstein, Director - Outreach, Chlorine Institute, for a highly informative webinar about chlorine! Learn all about chlorine's basics, its chemical and physical properties, as well as what to do when there is an emergency situation. Transporting chlorine can be done safely and our speaker from the Chlorine Institute will delve into the details you need to know when handling this commodity. No charge to ASLRRA members or non-member railroads. Be sure to register by [clicking here](#) for this can't miss webinar!

Webinar: HR Series Pt. IV - End of Leave Considerations and Transition

On September 14, please join us for the final webinar of our four-part series. Tracey Donesky, Partner, Stinson Leonard Street LLP, and Bobbi Allen, Director of Human Resources, Iowa Interstate Railroad Ltd. will focus on the many varied, overlapping and at times complicated considerations that come into play when employees return from leave. Topics covered will include legal and practical considerations relating to: return to work; fitness for duty functional capacity evaluations (FCE); reinstatement; leave, transitions, and other alternatives. Please [click here](#) to register.

Please view additional webinars by [clicking here](#).

Registration is Open!

ASLRRA's Southern Region Meeting

Don't miss ASLRRA's Southern Region Meeting, this year to be held at the Charleston Marriott in Charleston, SC on September 25 - 27, 2017! Please [click here](#) to find out more and register today!

ASLRRA's Eastern Region Meeting

Registration is open for ASLRRA's Eastern Region Meeting, this year at the Omni Providence Hotel in Providence, RI on October 23 - 25, 2017. [Register today!](#)

ASLRRA's Central/Pacific Region Meeting

Registration is open for ASLRRA's Central/Pacific Region Meeting, this year at the Intercontinental Kansas City at the Plaza in Kansas City, MO on November 13-15, 2017. Please [click here](#) to register today!

General Counsel Symposium/Finance & Administration Seminar

Registration is open for ASLRRA's General Counsel Symposium/Finance & Administration Seminar this year at the Intercontinental Kansas City at the Plaza in Kansas City, MO on November 15-17, 2017. Please [click here](#) to register today!

Views & News is published by the American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association. Please contact Elizabeth Sands, Editor, epetty@aslrro.org, with member news, questions or comments.