ASLRRA’s Jake Award Winners Honored at Regional Meetings This Fall

At ASLRRA’s Regional Meetings, 308 railroad recipients of its annual Jake Awards, recognizing above-industry average safety performance during 2016, will be honored. To earn a Jake Award, an ASLRRA member railroad must perform better than the Class II and III industry average injury frequency rate as reported by the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) during the prior year.

Of the 308 Jake Award recipients, 272 railroads will be honored with a Jake with Distinction designation, recognizing their FRA reportable injury-free performance in 2016.

In addition, railroads in each of ASLRRA’s four regions will be honored with the President’s Award for the best safety performance based on operation man-hours in 2016. President award winners can be viewed here.

“Our short line members place a high premium on running safe operations. The Jake Awards recognize the significant number of our member railroads who perform better than industry average with respect to injury frequency – with nearly 90% of our Jake Award recipients performing injury-free on an annual basis,” said Linda Bauer Darr, President of ASLRRA. “The Short Line Safety Institute is assisting in these efforts by addressing not only the compliance aspect of safety, but the people side of safety, or safety culture, working to continuously improve the safety record of the short line industry.”

Still Room at One of ASLRRA’s Regional Meetings!

If you were not able to attend the Southern Region Meeting in Charleston, it’s not too late! You can still join us at upcoming regional meetings in Providence, October 23-25 or Kansas City, November 13-15.

At the Eastern Region Meeting in Providence - take advantage of networking opportunities with the Small Railroad and Young Professionals Groups, and recognize colleagues for their outstanding work in safety with the Jake Awards.

At the Central Pacific Meeting in Kansas City, don’t miss our keynote speakers, Mr. Rick Webb, CEO Watco Companies, one of the fastest growing short lines, and Brian Hancock, EVP and Chief Marketing Officer of Kansas City Southern, who will share the KCS perspective on how to position rail as the preferred mode to move freight to grow market share.

Also in Kansas City, the Finance and Administration Seminar and General Counsel Symposium is a must-attend event. You won’t find this exceptional combination of Finance, Human Resources and Legal content at such a low
price anywhere else. The General Counsel Symposium will be approved for up to 8 Continuing Legal Education (CLE) credit hours (total number of credits depends on your state requirements). Sponsorships are still available for these meetings. Contact Kathy Keeney today!

Follow @ASLRRA on Twitter!

Please tag @ASLRRA, or send photos to ASLRRA’s Amy Westerman, so we can share our member’s stories via social media.

Legislative Update

**BRACE Act Still Most Co-Sponsored Tax Legislation, Tax Reform Efforts Underway**

As the effort to produce tax reform legislation in Congress is now underway, ASLRRA continues to promote the importance of the 45G short line railroad rehabilitation tax credit in supporting critical infrastructure maintenance and improvements.

There is stand-alone legislation in both the House (H.R. 721) and the Senate (S.407) to make the credit permanent, and those pieces of legislation have received massive support in the form of Congressional co-sponsorships: 247 co-sponsors in the House, and 55 in the Senate. In the Senate, that is the single most heavily co-sponsored piece of tax legislation in this session of Congress!

Please visit [www.aslrra.org/BRACE](http://www.aslrra.org/BRACE) to learn more about this important tax and infrastructure legislation.

The Short Line Tax Credit leverages private sector investment in rail infrastructure by providing a tax credit of 50 cents for every dollar spent on track improvements. If passed, this legislation will provide more clarity for our small business members so that they can plan and budget for track, grade crossing and bridge work in 2018 and beyond. For support in reaching out to your elected representatives, please contact our Washington team’s Fred Oelsner.

Grass Roots Visits

**US Congressional Staff of Mitch McConnell and Thomas Massie In Attendance to Celebrate TRAM Construction 35th Anniversary**

October 17, staff of U.S. Congressman Thomas Massie (R-Ky.), of U.S. Senators Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.), and of Governor Matt Bevin (R-Ky.) joined ASLRRA member company, TRAM Construction (TRAM), for the company’s 35th anniversary celebration in Garrison, Ky.

TRAM Founder and President Terry LeMaster gave an overview of the company and their current operations. TRAM is a family owned and operated railroad contracting company that provides track services and railroad materials for the private and public sectors. TRAM currently has 25 employees, and has served clients throughout the Midwest and Southeast regions of the United States during its 35-year history.

Regulatory Update

**DOT Report on ECP Brakes Finds Costs Exceed Estimated Benefits**
As reported in Politico - “DOT’s updated regulatory impact analysis of a 2015 braking mandate for certain unit trains found that its costs exceed its estimated benefits, putting the rule one step closer to repeal later this year.

While costs and benefits associated with the electronically controlled pneumatic braking requirement both decreased, the estimated benefits plummeted even more compared to the original analysis. DOT attributed the change to the decline of tank cars transporting flammable energy goods since 2015 and to railroads failing to order ECP brakes on new trainsets, meaning required installations would have to be done via costlier retrofits.

The FAST Act directed DOT to update its analysis to take into account studies by GAO and the National Academies on ECP brakes, though the department indicated it will review the National Academies report during the comment period. Freight railroads and some lawmakers had protested the ECP requirement, arguing that not enough data exists to justify the cost of retrofitting them onto locomotives. DOT has until early December to justify the ECP requirements or repeal them.” Comments on the updated analysis are due Nov. 1, and the ASLRRA staff will be tracking this closely.

**Railroad Retirement Spouse and Widow(er)s’ Annuities and Public Service Pensions**

The Railroad Retirement Board recently published instruction on spouse and widow(er)s’ annuities and how they are affected when public service pensions are also given. Frequently asked questions and their responses can be found at www.rrb.gov, or by calling toll-free at 1-877-772-5772.

**Member News**

**Short Line Safety Institute Hires Jill Medeiros**

The Short Line Safety Institute (SLSI) is pleased to announce the arrival of Jill Medeiros as Manager of Administration for the SLSI. In addition to serving as the editor of the SLSI’s Safety Culture Assessments, she is now trained to successfully serve in the capacity of a Safety Culture Assessor.

Ms. Madeiros grew up in a railroad family and always had a keen interest in the industry. Back in 2011 when her active duty military husband received orders to Hanscom Air Force Base in Massachusetts, she was faced with a decision to continue her current line of work, which was teaching English at the college level, or to take a leap of faith and try her hand at the railroad. She chose the railroad. Jill spent four years at Pan Am Railways in their transportation department, starting out as the Assistant Director of Manpower and working her way up to the General Manager of Manpower and Personnel.

“Being able to continue to learn and grow in the railroad industry, especially in rail safety, is a wonderful opportunity, and I believe wholeheartedly in the mission of the SLSI and the important work it does with short line and regional railroads,” said Madeiros.

**MassDOT Announces Freight Rail Infrastructure Grant Awards**

The Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) announced the awarding of seven grants totaling more than $2.2 million as part of the 2016 Industrial Rail Access Program (IRAP). Several ASLRRA members were recipients of grant funding, including Providence & Wooster Railroad and Pioneer Valley Railroad Company Inc.

IRAP is a competitive state-funded public/private partnership program that provides financial assistance to eligible applicants who are prepared to invest in industry-based rail infrastructure access improvement projects.

“Improving access to the Commonwealth’s freight rail network is an important step in stimulating economic growth,” said Transportation Secretary and CEO Stephanie Pollack. “We look forward to collaborating with the recipients to advance their important projects and ensure that Massachusetts businesses have the tools and resources to grow and thrive.”

Read the entire release [here](#).
Strato Expands Its Executive Team with New VP of Quality Assurance

ASLRRA member Strato, Inc. is pleased to announce an addition to its executive management team. Paul Olmstead joined Strato as Vice President of Quality Assurance in September 2017. Paul brings over 25 years of international experience in engineering, manufacturing, and quality assurance programs.

Paul has a proven set of essential skills to ensure Strato continues to exceed its customers’ quality expectations and meets regulatory requirements during its expansion into new markets and products. Full release here.

Mott MacDonald Chosen to Revitalize JFK Airport

The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey has chosen a team led by ASLLRA member, Mott MacDonald to implement the vision plan set out by the Governor’s Airport Advisory Panel for the redevelopment of John F. Kennedy International Airport. Mott MacDonald will work in partnership with the renowned architectural firm Grimshaw, with the support of skilled specialty consultants.

The vision plan is intended to revitalize the airport and place it among the ranks of world-class airports. In addition to concept design for near-term improvements, it includes a 30-year master plan that covers terminal, gate, aircraft parking, and airfield capacity; airport transportation access and parking systems; air cargo facilities; and airside support facilities (fueling, deicing, maintenance, and cogeneration). The overall project is expected to drive investment of up to $10 billion.

“Sixty million passengers traveled through JFK last year,” said Nick DeNichilo, President and CEO of Mott MacDonald in North America. “New York City deserves an airport that reflects its world-class status. We believe that our previous work on behalf of the Port Authority, and our record of landmark aviation projects around the world, have prepared us to meet this challenge.” Full press release here.

Virginia Railway Express Selects Rockwell Collins’s ARINC for PTC Solution

Working to increase safety and reliability and with a focus on meeting the Positive Train Control (PTC) requirements mandated by the Rail Safety Improvement Act of 2008, Virginia Railway Express (VRE) has signed an agreement with ASLRRA member Rockwell Collins to implement the company’s ARINC RailwayNet service.

“Many in the rail industry are working hard to meet the upcoming PTC mandate,” said Ken Schreder, vice president, Strategic Programs and 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. Through RailwayNet, Rockwell Collins is helping VRE meet the PTC mandate efficiently, cost-effectively and securely.” Full press release here.

Texas Port of Columbia, Frontier Rail to Reopen Washington Short Line

Port of Columbia and ASLRRA member Frontier Rail officials gathered in Dayton, Washington, to mark the reopening of the Columbia Walla Walla Rail Line (CWW).

The port owns a 37-mile stretch of rail that spans two counties and provides service from Dayton to Walla Walla, Washington. A segment that runs between Prescott and Dayton has been closed for nearly three years due to repair work on eight bridges and a section of track near the Touchet River, port officials said in a press release.

The port leases the rail line to Frontier Rail, which operates the line as CWW. The repairs were funded by the Washington State Department of Transportation, Port of Columbia, private shipper matching funds and Frontier.

Frontier worked “hand in hand” with the port to reopen the line, port officials said.
"We are beyond excited to see the rail line resume service," said Port Manager Jennie Dickinson. "Given the history of rail in the settling of this area, we thought celebrating this important event at the oldest train depot in state of Washington made sense."

**Special Opportunity: CyberSecurity Training from Transportation Security Administration**

The Transportation Security Administration, in collaboration with Department of Transportation and United States Coast Guard, will be hosting a FREE cybersecurity workshop for Transportation Sector stakeholders on Wednesday November 1, 2017 in Arlington, VA.

The full-day agenda will be Headlined by a joint government/industry cyber incident response table-top exercise, and will conclude with a discussion of strategic priorities and objectives that the working group will seek to address in the coming year. The workshop will focus on cyber risk awareness and provide participants the opportunity to discuss transportation related cyber risk management strategies for the future. Click [here](#) for questions.

**Register Today!**

Please view and register for ASLRA’s webinars by [clicking here](#).

**Webinar: The Effect of the Obama Investment Tax on Real Estate**

On October 17, join David Ayoub, Partner, Bowers & Company to answer the question - What effects has the Obamacare 3.8% Net Investment Income Tax had on you and your Owner/Shareholders? Do you own real estate? Does an owner rent real estate to the railroad? Does an owner own other operating entities in separate entities? Is there a way to plan to avoid the 3.8% tax on real estate? Do Shareholders loan money to the Company, and is that interest income subject to 3.8%? The webinar will explore ways to help mitigate the effects of the Net Investment Income Tax.

**Webinar: A Class I Safety Overview**

On October 31, 2017 join the Short Line Safety Institute and Mrs. Becky Hamilton, Director of Safety, CSX Transportation, for a presentation about the safety programs at CSX. The webinar will review the importance of safety for her company and interchanging partners.

**Webinar: Sales and Use Tax: Preventing Future Issues**

On November 28, 2017 prepare for Sales Tax Audits including current climate, what to look for, and how to prepare. During this webinar, we will be covering several aspects of Sales and Use Tax, including Sales Tax Nexus, Situs of Sale, Taxable versus Non-taxable Sales Exemptions, and Sales Tax Audits. Attendees will have an opportunity to participate in live Q&A at the conclusion of the webinar.

**ASLRA Regional Meetings**

**Eastern Region Meeting**

Register on-site for ASLRA’s Eastern Region Meeting, this year at the Omni Providence Hotel in Providence, RI on October 23 - 25, 2017.
**ASLRRRA’s Central/Pacific Region Meeting**

Registration is open for ASLRRRA’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 ASLRRRA’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 Amy Krouse, Editor, [akrouse@aslrra.org](mailto:akrouse@aslrra.org), with member news, questions or comments.