ASLERRA Member Discount Partner CAPTRUST Makes Key Predictions for 2018

CAPTRUST Financial Advisors, an ASLERRA member discount partner, offered its thoughts on financial trends that could materialize in 2018. The three predictions described in CAPTRUST’s article largely highlight a continuation of current trends rather than drastic changes in the financial arena.

In its first prediction, CAPTRUST highlights “increasing complexity for plan sponsors.” Plan sponsors find their responsibilities becoming more complicated due to changes caused by such events as the proliferation of new products and services and the introduction of new rules and regulations.

Secondly, CAPTRUST discusses an increased emphasis on employer-offered benefits. As employee values change, employers are diversifying their benefits. The different types of benefits offered, coupled with a diverse working group comprising baby boomers, Generation X’ers and millennials, creates a complicated investment world for advisors.

Finally, CAPTRUST predicts that market volatility will return. According to the article, the stock market is due for a correction, as it has been almost two years since the last 10 percent market selloff.

CAPTRUST’s services include providing financial counseling for retirement plan sponsors. As an ASLERRA member discount partner, CAPTRUST offers ASLERRA members special discounts on select services. Other discount partners include Elavon and GREX. For more information about the ASLERRA member discount program, click here.

2018 CONNECTIONS Convention Delivers a One-Two Punch!

ASLERRA’s annual CONNECTIONS convention, April 7-10 at Gaylord Opryland in Nashville, Tenn., features two big-name speakers whose talks promise to inform and inspire convention attendees.

**WIRED Magazine Editor-in-Chief, Greg Williams**
Opening General Session: Monday, April 9, 9:00am

Greg Williams is an authority on technology trends and the ways they impact business and society. He is able to challenge audiences to think differently and distills complex ideas into entertaining, engaging and accessible insights.

**BNSF Railway Executive Chairman, Matt Rose**
Closing General Session: Tuesday, April 10, 10:00am

Matt Rose’s wealth of knowledge and experience make him one of the most respected businessmen in the rail industry. He has made a name for himself as a leader who is optimistic and supportive but also decisive and always focused on customer service.

Click here to learn more about Williams and Rose.
In addition to the two speakers, the convention features dozens of educational sessions. Education is the cornerstone of ASLRRA's Annual CONNECTIONS Convention. In addition to powerhouse General Sessions, this meeting delivers more than 40 individual breakout sessions covering a wide range of industry-specific topics. Click here to view the phenomenal educational lineup!

Follow these links to register for the convention or book a room in ASLRRA’s room block at the Gaylord Opryland Resort.

Legislative Update

ASLRRA Continues Push for 45G Short Line Tax Credit

ASLRRA continues to promote the 45G short line railroad rehabilitation tax credit, which supports critical infrastructure maintenance and improvements, despite its absence from the recently passed tax reform bill and the government spending extension.

The bill’s champions in Congress continue to show strong support for 45G, helping us find a way forward as Congress is set to consider spending bills for fiscal year 2018, including a tax extenders package and other must-pass legislation. ASLRRA is working to support their efforts in any way possible, and the Legislative Policy Committee is fully engaged.

The short line railroad tax credit leverages private sector investment in rail infrastructure by providing a tax credit of 50 cents for every dollar spent on track improvements, capped at $3,500 per track mile. If extended, this credit will provide more certainty for ASLRRA's 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. Also, please visit www.aslrra.org/BRACE to learn more about this important tax and infrastructure legislation.

Follow @ASLRRA on Twitter!

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

Regulatory Update

Report Discusses Retirement Board’s Customer Service Performance

The U.S. Railroad Retirement Board (RRB) released a report with questions and answers discussing the implementation of its Customer Service Plan in fiscal year 2017.

The questions and answers address the RRB’s performance in four benefit areas: retirement applications, survivor applications, disability applications and payments, and railroad unemployment and sickness benefit applications and claims. The information applies to fiscal year 2017, which is from Oct. 1, 2016 to Sept. 30, 2017.
In its Customer Service Plan, the RRB identifies standards governing its decisions to pay or deny benefits, as well as the time frame in which such decisions are supposed to be made. The plan also describes the level of service customers should expect during their interactions with RRB staff, and the RRB issues reports detailing how well it has adhered to stated guidelines.

During fiscal year 2017, the RRB’s overall benefit timeliness index was 98.9 percent, meaning that 98.9 percent of the time, the RRB provided benefit services within time frames indicated in the Customer Service Plan.

Member News

R. J. Corman Completes Sale of Roadway Worker Training

On January 19, R. J. Corman Railroad Group announced the completed sale of its Roadway Worker Training (RWT) company to RailPros, a Texas-based consulting firm that specializes in rail engineering, design and management. The sale was part of R. J. Corman’s efforts to shift emphasis back to its core competencies in order to step up company growth.

Roadway Worker Training, which employs roughly 100 people, is based in St. Augustine, Fla. According to a press release, the company “specializes in providing employee training, contract personnel for employee-in-charge and flagging services, consulting and video production.”

As Johnny Johnson, president of RailPros Field Services, explained in the press release, “As the largest provider of contract flagging in North America, the addition of RWT will expand our geographic footprint. RailPros operates a people-centric business, and we look forward to integrating the companies to provide an even more comprehensive suite of products and services for our clients.”

Carload Express Plans to Develop Newly Acquired Delaware Building

Carload Express, Inc., which operates four ASLRRA member railroads, has purchased a 37,000-square-foot building in Seaford, Del. in order to develop an intermodal rail/truck facility and a storage and distribution center.

The building, which sits on a 6.63-acre land parcel, was formerly a BASF polymer plant. The proximity of the property to a main north-south rail line made it a good match for Carload Express.

Carload Express operates 318 route miles in areas in Delaware, Maryland, Pennsylvania and Ohio, handling approximately 90,000 carloads a year.

Central Maine & Quebec Railway Announces Promotion

Central Maine & Quebec Railway (CMQ) promoted Chad Mowery to vice president of operations and welcomed J. Wesley Logan as general manager of operations, effective January 1 and 15, respectively.

Mowery had been CMQ’s general manager since joining the company in 2015 after 16 years with other railroads in transportation, engineering and mechanical management positions. Logan has over ten years of operations management experience, most recently working at Goderich-Exeter Railway and the Southern Ontario Railway.

Asplund is New President of Florida East Coast Railway

Nathan Asplund is the new president and chief executive officer of Florida East Coast Railway, succeeding James Hertwig on January 8.

Previously, Asplund was president and CEO of the Red River Valley and Western Railroad (RRVW). During Asplund’s tenure RRVW had almost $90 million in customer investments and achieved record volume for rail transportation and car repair.

In addition to rail, Asplund has experience with intermodal and maritime transportation, working with companies like BNSF Railway and Crowley Maritime Corporation.

TNW Corporation Hires Director of Customer Success
The TNW Corporation, whose subsidiary TXNW Railway is an ASLRRA member, has hired Joey Evans to lead the newly-formed Customer Success Department as director of customer success.

In his new role, Evans’s responsibilities involve “directing all revenue car accounting operations; planning and implementing strategies to generate additional revenue; managing customer service and support; and ensuring the accuracy and efficiency of TNW’s metrics reporting systems,” according to a press release. The Customer Success Department comprises five other employees, whom Evans will supervise.

Before joining TNW, Evans was Customer Success Manager at GE Digital, managing several prominent accounts in the short line railroad division.

Chamber of Commerce Publication Profiles North Shore Railroad

The Chamber of Commerce in Williamsport and Lycoming, Pa., profiled ASLRRA member North Shore Railroad Co. (NSHR) in the January issue of its newsletter, the Chamber Connection.

The article discussed NSHR’s significance to the Williamsport/Lycoming area, where the company has its headquarters and where its largest rail operation, the Lycoming Valley Railroad, is based. As a freight hauling company, NSHR services 85 to 100 companies, which supports approximately 11,000 jobs in central Pennsylvania.

While NSHR is not a passenger train service, the company likes to give back to the community by running tour trains 20 weekends a year. Some of its most popular tours are the Fall Foliage and Santa Express trains, run in October and December by the Lycoming Valley Railroad and sponsored by the Williamsport/Lycoming Chamber of Commerce.

In addition to the Lycoming Valley Railroad, NSHR comprises five other railroad lines, each of which operates in a specific geographical area.

TPSC FounderDies

Founder and CEO of Transportation Produces Sales Company (TPSC), Walter Winzen, died January 19.


Winzen is survived by his wife, Debra; seven children and ten grandchildren. TPSC is an ASLRRA Associate Member Company.

Register Today!

Please view and register for ASLRRA’s webinars by clicking here.

Jan. 31, 2018 - SLSI Year-End Review

The Executive Director of the Short Line Safety Institute (SLSI), Tom Murta, will review events from 2017 and discuss goals for 2018, looking at the institute’s current progress, new training, improvements and latest benchmarks. There will also be an opportunity for attendees to ask questions at the end of the presentation. Click here to register.

Feb. 8, 2018 - Emergency Notification Systems Review

The Short Line Safety Institute (SLSI) will host James Dahlem from the Office of Railroad Safety at the Federal Railroad Administration. Dahlem will discuss emergency notification systems (ENS), including a review of what it is, how it works and how it can benefit railroads. Click here to register.
ASLRRA Offers On-Demand Webinars

ASLRRA’s expanded educational offerings now include On-Demand Webinars! ASLRRA webinars already provide flexible training to meet busy schedules; now members can access valuable educational content at their convenience. Webinars cover a broad range of topics, including Regulatory Updates, Veteran Recruitment, Finance for Railroads, Social Media, Protecting Roadway Workers, and much more. Visit our website to view a complete list of On-Demand Webinars, presentations and takeaway materials.

Make Your Voice Heard in Washington - Railroad Day 2018

Railroad Day on Capitol Hill has proven to be the single most effective way to get our message to Congress. The size of the event, the geographical diversity of the participants, and the unified railroad industry message has focused Congress on our issues. Register Now and plan to be with us March 7, 2018.

Railroad Day on Capitol Hill is only successful if a very large number of you attend. It is a day that can have a very positive impact on you. When you turn out in force you demonstrate that those issues affect a large group of individuals who employ an even larger group of people from across the country. And you can't rely on the other guy to carry your message. You need to come to Washington and join with your fellow rail industry workers to help drive home to Congress the significant role that this industry plays in restoring America's economy, improving America's environment, and connecting America in the global marketplace. The continued success of this event is dependent on your participation.

Registration Open for ASLRRA CONNECTIONS 2018

Gaylord Opryland
Nashville, Tennessee
April 7-10, 2018

Join us April 7-10, 2018 for ASLRRA's Annual CONNECTIONS Convention, offering great networking opportunities, a packed exhibit hall, powerhouse speakers, and breakout education sessions on a vast range of industry topics. You don’t want to miss this fantastic event! A few reasons to attend include:

Follow this link to register. Also, our room block is now open, and if history is any indication, this will sell out fast! Join us in Nashville!

Prime sponsorship opportunities and booth spaces are still available for the CONNECTIONS convention. Looking to boost your profile at the event? Companies can purchase an ad for less than $1,000 in our Official Convention Program that is distributed at the convention and is chock-full of information that all attendees want/need to know. Contact ASLRRA's Kathy Keeney for more information or visit our website.

ASLRRA AWARD NOMINATIONS OPEN FOR 2018

Help Your Company Earn Recognition for Achievement in Hiring Veterans

The ASLRRA Veterans Recruitment Committee works to raise awareness among veterans about opportunities for employment in the short line industry, and recognizes short line industry employers for their achievement in recruiting and hiring veterans.

The 2017 Richard F. Timmons Award winner will be announced at the 2018 ASLRRA CONNECTIONS Convention. The Veterans Recruitment Committee requests that you take a few minutes to complete this short survey on behalf of each of your member companies. To be considered for this award please complete the survey by Friday, February 16, 2018.

The results will be invaluable in building benchmarking data for our industry, and your stories will be an important source of inspiration and best practices for our membership. We will also use this information to select the 2017 Timmons Award winner.

To access the survey, please click here.
Submit Nominations for Safety Person and Safety Professional of the Year

The Safety Person of the Year Award is open to an employee, except those considered to be professional safety management employees, of a member railroad who:

- has never had a reportable personal injury in their career
- works with management of their company to make their safety programs effective
- exhibits a high degree of safety awareness
- contributes off-duty time to activities promoting safety awareness in the community

The Safety Professional of the Year Award is open to any railroad management employee of an ASLRA member railroad who is responsible for safety programs, training and the overall management of safe behavior and actions on their railroad(s), who:

- is an excellent communicator, motivator and organizer
- is selfless in their actions, doing the job for results, not recognition
- consistently produces documentable safety achievements
- is respected by peers, senior management and subordinates alike

Nominations should be submitted electronically via email to Cara Boyle at cboyle@aslrra.org and must be received by Friday, February 2, 2018.

Click here to learn about last year’s winners!

ASLRA Extends Deadline for 2017 Marketing Award Submissions to January 26

ASLRA’s Marketing Awards competition recognizes Class II and III railroads that have implemented the most innovative and successful marketing and customer service initiatives in the short line railroad industry, as determined by a panel of industry experts. Please visit our website to view the requirements and submit your entry! Don’t miss the chance for your railroad to compete for this prestigious honor and join the distinguished circle of prior winners!

If you have questions, please contact Cara Boyle by phone at (202)585-3447 or email at cboyle@aslrra.org.

Applications Due February 16 for Susan Murray Scholarship Program

Applications are now being accepted on a competitive basis for the Susan C. Murray Memorial Women’s Scholarship, awarded annually to a daughter or granddaughter of an employee of an ASLRA railroad or associate member company.

The scholarship is administered by IHS Markit, parent company of ASLRA member The Pocket List of Railroad Officials. Please click here for the application and other program details.

Completed applications are due Feb. 16. For more information, please contact Kathy Rogers on kathy.rogers@ihsmarkit.com.

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