ASLRRA representatives Jo Strang and Judy Petry testified at separate hearings on Capitol Hill in favor of equitable transportation funding opportunities and the need for permanence for the 45G tax credit.

Strang, ASLRRA’s senior vice president of safety and regulatory policy, spoke on March 13 before the U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation’s Subcommittee on Surface Transportation and Merchant Marine Infrastructure, Safety and Security. Her testimony focused on the importance of an infrastructure plan that provides funding to short line railroads commensurate with their small-business size and capabilities, available to rural communities, and managed with processes that are transparent and efficient.

Strang further discussed the pros and cons of current funding programs such as TIGER and INFRA, and called on lawmakers to support the 45G tax credit, noting that it is the single most important thing Congress can do to help Short Lines.

“The credit has been a major factor in maximizing infrastructure investment, both by the short lines and by their shippers that are the beneficiaries of the improvements. It is simple to administer, it targets the money on the projects that yield the highest benefit, and it makes railroads safer,” said Strang in a press release.

Petry, who is chairman of ASLRRA’s Board of Directors and president of Farmrail, testified about recently expired tax provisions before the House Ways and Means Tax Policy Subcommittee. At that hearing, which took place March 14, Petry emphasized the importance of the 45G tax credit and the role it plays in boosting the national economy.

“Using Farmrail as an example, over the last five years we have invested $34 million in infrastructure improvements of which $7.7 million was made possible by the credit,” said Petry in a press release. “The credit also incentivizes shippers to increase investment. In South Dakota, for example, the improvements made by the 670-mile Rapid City Pierre & Eastern Railroad since 2014 have already attracted over $311 million in new facility investments by local companies. Shippers invest in their facilities once they are convinced that their short line is a reliable connection to the national rail network, and the tax credit helps make that a reality.”

To view hearing click here for House testimony. Petry appears in the 4th Panel. Click here for Senate testimony.

ASLRRA Members Recognized as Industry Stand-Outs

Railway Age magazine and CSX each recently recognized ASLRRA members for their excellence in the railroad industry.

Lake State Railway (LSRC) and Indiana Rail Road (INRD) were named Railway Age’s Short Line of the Year and Regional of the Year, respectively, while Genesee & Wyoming, Inc.’s Chairman, President and CEO John C. “Jack” Hellmann was named the magazine’s Railroader of the Year.

Lake State Railway earned its award for turning its business around. In 2013, LSRC was suffering from a steady decline in carloads and operating on worn out tracks. That year, it implemented a new strategic-growth plan and a five-year capital plan, which has improved customer relationships, attracted new clients, and resulted in the
addition of over 200 new cars and 25 miles of track. Today, LSRC has over a half-billion dollars’ worth of on-line industrial development projects in progress.

Indiana Rail Road (INRD) has won its second Regional Railroad of the Year honor from Railway Age. The company was first recognized in 2012. What caught the judges’ attention this year was INRD’s expansion of its non-coal traffic base using an aggressive growth and diversification strategy. This strategy included creating an intermodal alliance with CN, and opening a warehouse and cross-dock with Venture Logistics and rail-to-truck transload facilities in Indiana and Illinois. INRD hauls over 600,000 truckloads of product each year.

As Chairman, President and CEO of Genesee & Wyoming, Hellmann oversees the world’s largest short line and regional railroad holding company. Under Hellmann’s leadership, the company has recently invested more than $2 billion in acquisitions and operating agreements and has expanded into related transportation markets. Hellmann has been with Genesee & Wyoming since 2000, when he joined the company as its chief financial officer.

CSX awarded Northern Ohio & Western Railway (NOW) its CSX Short Line Development Award at the 2018 CSX Short Line Workshop held the week of March 5 in St. Augustine, Fla.

According to OmniTRAX, NOW’s parent company, the award recognizes the “cooperative efforts that generated the highest switch carrier carload percentage growth.”

NOW’s shipping volume increased more than 150% in 2017, a result of shipping additional covered hoppers of lime from Carmeuse Lime.

**Operation Lifesaver Finds 2017 Increase in Safety Incidents Concerning**

New statistics from the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) showed an increase in railroad grade crossing incidents and rail trespass casualties in 2017, a fact that the rail safety education nonprofit organization Operation Lifesaver, Inc. found troublesome.

According to the FRA, crossing collisions increased 3.1 percent, while crossing deaths increased 7.4 percent and crossing injuries decreased 4.3 percent. Total railroad trespassing casualties, including deaths and injuries, was up 13.3 percent. The 2017 rail trespass casualty rate, which measures the number of deaths and injuries per million train miles, was 1.55, its highest level in the last decade.

“We are very concerned about the increase in crossing incidents and deaths, and alarmed by the sharp rise in trespass deaths,” said interim OLI President Wende Corcoran in a press release. “We will be focusing public attention on these issues during Rail Safety Week, September 23-29, in the U.S. and Canada. Throughout the year, Operation Lifesaver state programs continue to work closely with the FRA and our safety partners at freight, passenger and commuter railroads and in communities across the country to help people stay safe near tracks and trains.”

**Legislative Update**

**Railroad Day 2018 Breaks Attendance Records**

Please submit your visit summaries within the App, or clicking here. This enables rapid follow up from our team at CC & H.

Railroad Day 2018 posted record-breaking numbers, with almost 700 railroad industry representatives engaged in some part of Railroad Day. The railroad industry met with 330 congressional offices.
As a result of the information blitz, the Building Rail Access for Customers and the Economy (BRACE) Act gained six more co-sponsors. Representatives Darin LaHood (R-Ill.), Ro Khanna (D-Calif.), Jamie Raskin (D-Md.), Diana DeGette (D-Colo.) and Salud Carbajal (D-Calif.) all signed their support for the BRACE act, which would make the 45G tax credit permanent.

In the Senate, Tina Smith (D-Minn.) also became a co-sponsor, bringing the number of co-sponsors of the bill to 256 in the House and 56 in the Senate.

Welcome New Members!

The ASLRRRA membership department has been busy onboarding 10 new members in the last few weeks. Many of them are associate business members joining so they can display their products/services before our short line members at our annual convention.

We are pleased to welcome the following companies to our organization:

**Arrow Material Services**, based in Sewickley, PA, is a leading industrial services company, offering material handling, inventory management and industrial cleaning services. Founded in 1954, it currently operates 34 facilities in 19 states. Chief Commercial Officer Bill Henderson is our primary contact and can be reached on bhenderson@arrowmaterialservices.com or (859) 940-9513. Please look for their booth in the exhibit hall at next month’s annual convention in Nashville.

**AST - Angewandte System Technik GmbH Energie & Umwelttechnik**, for the last 35 years it has specialized in developing and manufacturing energy saving environmental protection systems; various kinds of measurement systems; and control technology; power electronics for railway and other industries. Kevin Lopresti, North America Manager Field Sales & Service, is our primary contact and can be reached on kevin.lopresti@ast.de or (403) 470-8826. Thanks to our friends at New York & Atlantic Railway for suggesting that they join our Association. Please look for their booth in the exhibit hall at next month’s annual convention in Nashville.

**Bottom Line Company**, based in Pittsburg, TX, is a contractor that performs railroad bridge repair, replacement and maintenance and general track construction and MOW work. Commercial Manager Rick Middaugh is our primary contact and can be reached at rick.middaugh@alliedtrack.ca or (905) 520-4593. Many thanks to Allied Track Services, an affiliated ASLRRRA member company, for their assist with this new membership.

**Century Engineering, Inc.**, based in Dover, DE, is a consulting and design engineering firm engaged in the planning, design and construction management of a wide range of infrastructure and facilities projects. Scott Rathfon, executive vice president, is our primary contact and can be reached on srrathfon@centuryeng.com or (302) 734-9188. Many thanks to our friends at Carload Express for recommending that they join. Please look for their booth in the exhibit hall at next month’s annual convention in Nashville.

**K&K Rail Services**, based in Pickering, ON, through its acquisitions of used locomotives and railcars is a supplier of locomotives, locomotive components, and railcar parts. As a subsidiary of K&K Recycling Services, it has over 25 years’ experience in the equipment dismantling and metal recycling business. Our primary contact is Glenn Miller, account manager, who can be reached on gmiller@kkrecycling.ca or (416) 881-5555.

**Leica Geosystems**, based in Norcross, GA, is the industry leader in measurement and information technologies. Brian Daniel, rail segment manager, is our primary contact and can be reached at brian.daniel@leica-geosystems.com or (800) 367-9453. Please look for their booth in the exhibit hall at next month’s annual convention in Nashville.

**McConway & Torley**, based in Pittsburgh, is a leading manufacturer of railcar parts and components, including couplers, knuckles, yokes and other various end-of-car components. Sales Manager Scott Kramer is our primary contact and can be reached at scott.kramer@trin.net or (412) 765-9487. Please look for their booth in the exhibit hall at next month’s annual convention in Nashville.
James McHugh Construction, based in Chicago, IL, provides general contracting services for the railroad industry including civil work, structures, bridge and bridge replacement, yards, capacity improvement, facilities, and design-build warehouses. Senior Vice President Steve Wiley is our primary contact and can be reached on swiley@mchughconstruction.com or (312) 821-0325. Please look for their booth in the exhibit hall at next month’s annual convention in Nashville.

Rotor Blade, LLC, based in Pawleys Island, SC, provides aerial side trimming, hazard tree topping and aerial patrolling for overhead electric distribution and transmission lines, directly for utilities, railroad or line-clearing contractors. General Manager Robert Lane is our primary contact and can be reached on rlane@rotor-blade.com. Thank you to our friends at Iowa Interstate Railroad for suggesting they join our Association. Please look for their booth in the exhibit hall at next month’s annual convention in Nashville.

Thermal Brick Energy, based in Maysville, KY, specializes in providing electric rail switch heaters and control cabinets along with other engineered heating solutions for the railroad industry. Vice President Brian Tucker is our primary contact and can be reached on brian_tucker@thermalbe.com or (859) 838-3363. Please look for their booth in the exhibit hall at next month’s annual convention in Nashville.

Regulatory Update

Department of Transportation Names TIGER Grant Recipients

On March 9 the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) published a list of 41 recipients of discretionary grant funding through the Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) program. Together the grants totaled almost $500 million.

Eight projects involving rail received grants this year, representing to over $100 million in funding. They were:

- Mid-Atlantic multimodal transportation hub, Baltimore County, Maryland, $20 million.
- Blue Ridge Road grade separation and intersection improvements, North Carolina Department of Transportation, $19.9 million.
- Route 3, Ramp A and bridge over rail lines, New Jersey Department of Transportation, $18.3 million.
- Southwest Chief Route stabilization project, Colfax County, New Mexico, $16 million.
- Wabash River Rail Bridge infrastructure revitalization, Indiana Department of Transportation, $10 million.
- High Plains strategic freight-rail capacity improvement project, Oklahoma Department of Transportation, $9.9 million.
- Barker Road grade separation, Spokane Valley, Washington, $9 million.
- Repair of the Jaype-to-Lewiston rail line, Clearwater County, Idaho, $3.2 million.

More than 64% of the grant money went to rural projects, which the DOT called “a historic number” in a press release.

The criteria used to select grant recipients included credit given to projects demonstrating safety, quality of life, economic competitiveness and environmental sustainability. Rural projects received special consideration if they emphasized providing rural communities with improved access to safe, reliable and affordable transportation.

To view a complete list of grant recipients, along with a brief description of each project, click here.

Weekley is RRB’s Chief Financial Officer

The U.S. Railroad Retirement Board (RRB) has named Shawna R. Weekley its new chief financial officer (CFO). Weekley has been the RRB’s deputy CFO since January 2017.

As CFO, Weekley will be in charge of the agency’s financial management, which includes overseeing its Bureau of Fiscal Operations. She will also serve as a member of the RRB Executive Committee.

Prior to working at the RRB, Weekley was at the U.S. Department of Energy for 14 years, most recently as director of accounting and finance at the Office of Science in Chicago.
STB to Solicit Feedback on Regulations

The Surface Transportation Board (STB) will begin holding informal meetings in April to gather feedback on regulations related to emergency service and service inadequacies. The meetings will continue through the second quarter of 2018. ASLRRA will closely follow this issue and share its opinion on the matter.

The STB is specifically looking for input regarding 49 C.F.R. Part 1146, Expedited Relief for Service Emergencies and 49 C.F.R. Part 1147, Temporary Relief Under 49 U.S.C. 10705 and 11102 for Service Inadequacies. According to a press release, these directed service regulations are rarely used, so the STB is exploring modifications that might “offer a more meaningful path of relief in times of serious rail service challenges.”

Those interested in providing comments are encouraged to meet with staff in person at STB headquarters or through teleconference. Since the meetings are informal, no official transcripts or minutes will be prepared.

New Officers Elected to RSTAC

The Surface Transportation Board’s (STB) Railroad-Shipper Transportation Advisory Council (RSTAC) elected new officers at a recent meeting in Washington, D.C.

The council’s new chairman is Larry Malski, who is president of the Pennsylvania Northeast Regional Railroad Authority. Vice chairman is Wayne Hurst, who is also chairman of the National Wheat Foundation, and secretary/treasurer is Nathan Asplund, president and CEO of Florida East Coast Railway.

The RSTAC comprises 15 appointed members who represent large and small shippers and railroads. It provides advice on regulatory, policy and legislative matters, as appropriate, to the STB Chairman, the Secretary of Transportation, the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation, and the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee.

Trump Appoints Permanent STB Chair

President Trump has appointed Ann Begeman of South Dakota to be the chairman of the Surface Transportation Board (STB). Begeman has been acting chairman since January 2017.

Begeman was first nominated to the STB by President Obama and confirmed by the Senate in 2011. She is currently serving her second five-year term, which will end in 2020. Members of the STB are limited to two terms.

“We are very pleased with the action taken by the White House in naming Ann Begeman Chairman of the Surface Transportation Board. Ann has ably guided the STB as Acting Chair with her experience in the ways of Washington, and deep knowledge of the transportation industry. Her willingness to listen to all sides, and her insightful and smart assessment of complex problems have served the industry well,” said ASLRRA President Linda Bauer Darr.

Member News

Updated Records Retention - Regulatory Requirements Document Available to ASLRRA Members

ASLRRA, with the assistance of the Safety and Training Committee, has updated the Records Retention - Regulatory Requirements document available on the ASLRRA website. The document is a quick and easy reference for members needing information about required records and retention duration.

The Records Retention - Regulatory Requirements document is divided into sections by railroad department, each containing a list of required records with corresponding CFR Part/Subpart and required period of retention. Members can find it on ASLRRA's website under the Member Resources tab, Compliance Templates, Program and Record Keeping Requirements, but they must log in to the ASLRRA website and will be required to electronically sign a non-transferable license agreement in order to access this and other compliance template documents.
Industry Events

Iowa DOT and FRA Hold Short Line Safety Seminar

Iowa’s Department of Transportation (Iowa DOT) partnered with Region 5 Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) inspectors for a short line safety seminar March 14-15 in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. The seminar included a general session, field exercises, and classroom sessions. Field exercises were held in cooperation with the Cedar Rapids and Iowa City Railroad (CRANDIC).

Representatives from several ASLRRA member railroads attended the seminar, including CRANDIC, Boone & Scenic Valley Railroad, Iowa Interstate Railroad, Iowa Northern Railway Company, Keokuk Junction Railway Company, Burlington Junction Railway and Progressive Rail.

Left: Participants listen during a classroom session at the Iowa Department of Transportation’s bi-annual Short Line Safety Seminar in Cedar Rapids.

NCDOT to Present Drone Workshop

The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) will host a workshop on unmanned aircraft systems (UAS), also known as drones, on April 19 in Nags Head, N.C.

The workshop aims to demonstrate the benefits of drone technology, specifically in commercial and government operations. In the past year, NCDOT has held workshops throughout North Carolina, teaching hundreds of participants about UAS operations, data management, and various applications for government and commercial users.

The event is free, but registration is required. Registration closes April 17.

FHWA and FRA to Discuss GXDash! in Upcoming Webinar

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) are continuing their joint webinar series with a demonstration of FRA’s new Highway-Rail Crossing Collisions Dashboard GXDash!, and an overview of the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) chapter eight and emergency notification system (ENS) signs.

Registration is free, but all interested parties must register in order to participate. The deadline for registration is April 20. Follow this link in order to register.

External users without an @dot.gov e-mail address must request an account before registering. To request an account, click here.
KSRRA’s Rail Freight Conference is May 9-10

The Keystone State Railroad Association (KSRRA) will hold its annual Rail Freight Conference May 9-10 in Johnstown, Penn.

Pennsylvania’s Secretary of Transportation Leslie S. Richards will be the keynote speaker, and other presentations include a panel discussion examining the past and future of Pennsylvania’s rail freight industry. Click here for more information about the conference, or to register.

Please click here to view a list of upcoming industry events.

Register Today!

2018 CONNECTIONS Convention Offers Legislative and Regulatory Education

Online Registration Closes MONDAY, March 26!

Continue the momentum of this year’s Railroad Day on Capitol Hill by participating in legislative and regulatory education breakout sessions at the 2018 ASLRRA CONNECTIONS Convention.

Education is the cornerstone of ASLRRA’s Annual CONNECTIONS Convention. In addition to powerhouse general sessions, this meeting delivers nearly 40 individual breakout sessions covering a wide range of industry-specific topics. Click here to view the phenomenal educational lineup!

Also, time is running out to donate items to the silent auction. Click here for information on how to donate and ideas for items to donate.

Join us at Gaylord Opryland in Nashville, Tenn. April 7-10. Follow the link to register for the convention. Remember, online registration closes March 26.

Upcoming Webinars

March 27, 2018 - Tax Reform’s Substantial Changes to Depreciation - The Job Cuts & Tax Reform Act has made substantial changes to depreciation law. Learn about changes such as bonus depreciation changes affecting 2017 tax returns and Section 179. Moderators will also discuss including new expensing options for residential and non-residential real estate, as well as changes to Qualified Improvement Property rules and luxury automobile limitations. Attendees will have an opportunity to participate in Q&A at the end of the presentation. Click here to register.

April 3, 2018 - OSHA Overview: Join Ralph Weber, Safety Culture Assessor for the Short Line Safety Institute, who will discuss the importance of OSHA guidelines and where to look for common errors. Ralph will guide participants through an overview of OSHA regulations relevant to the rail industry. There will be time for Q&A at the end of the presentation. Click here to register.

April 18, 2018 - Cybersecurity Part III: Resiliency for Short Lines - In part one and part two of the cybersecurity webinar series, attendees learned about cybersecurity frameworks and security controls. The third webinar in the series will cover the final step in the evolution of your overall security posture: how to be cyber-resilient. Learn about strategic cybersecurity decision making and leadership and how to apply that to your business. Attendees will have an opportunity to participate in Q&A at the end of the presentation. 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.

**Views and 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.