Support Today’s Railroad Day on Social Media

Railroad Day is today, March 7, and more than 500 of your railroad peers are here in Washington to talk to over 330 elected representatives about key issues including extending and making permanent the short line tax credit, preserving balanced economic regulation of the railroad industry, and opposing increasing truck weight limits.

Railroad Day on Capitol Hill has proven to be the single most effective way to get our industry's 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 in a very compelling way.

Those who are unable to attend Railroad Day can still participate through social media. Social media is an important way that legislative assistants and members of Congress identify and track issues and the strong opinions their constituents have about those issues.

Please consider sharing one of the following messages on Twitter:

- 603 short line railroads serve over 10,000 customers employing 1 million Americans across the country.  

- In this increasingly competitive environment, it will be critical for the US to strengthen its most important trade partnerships, not abandon them.  
  #NAFTAWorks #RailDay2018 [http://wapo.st/2EC9huu](http://wapo.st/2EC9huu)

- From #drones to ultrasound, #FreightRail pioneers groundbreaking technology and invests billions to create a 21st-century network.  
  #RailDay2018

Another way to participate is to simply like/retweet messaging from the host organizations - @AAR_freightrail, @ASLRRA, @GoRail - and #RailDay2018.

Please distribute this initiative widely, to customers and employees, and encourage participation.

Ron Batory Sworn in as Federal Railroad Administrator

Ronald Batory was sworn in on February 28 as the 14th administrator of the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA).

Prior to his nomination, Batory served as president and chief operating officer of Conrail until his retirement in April 2017. Before that, he was president of the Belt Railway Co. of Chicago.

Throughout his 45-year rail career, Batory has worked for small and large railroads across the United States. As FRA administrator, he will aim to use “data-driven decision making to further enhance safety while embracing … new technologies that will revolutionize America’s rail transportation network,” Batory said in a press release.

“The American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association, on behalf of the more than 600 short lines we represent, congratulates Ron Batory on his well-deserved confirmation as FRA Administrator,” said ASLRRRA President Linda Bauer Darr. “Ron Batory will bring a wealth of experience to the position and is well-qualified to guide the FRA through the critical work ahead of it including the oversight of Positive Train Control (PTC) implementation. We look forward to collaborating with Administrator Batory on PTC and other safety initiatives.”
ASLRRRA Reaches Settlement with FRA Regarding Training Rule

On February 26, the case that ASLRRRA brought against the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) in the United States Court of Appeals for District of Columbia Circuit, Case Number 15-1240 was dismissed. This was the first time in ASLRRRA history that the organization filed a lawsuit against the U.S. Government.

The case involved training template rules, which require that training templates be developed for each craft on a railroad. In the original rule, ASLRRRA found these requirements to be overly burdensome to small business short line railroads.

ASLRRRA’s Safety and Training Committee, along with J.R. Gelnar, vice president of safety and compliance, have worked diligently for over a year to develop approved training templates for use by the short line industry. The FRA has accepted these templates, and the parties have agreed to dismiss the case. Templates will be made available to member railroads on ASLRRRA’s website in the near future.

For questions and answers provided by FRA regarding the new template program, click here.

FRA Announces Pilot Grant Program to Reduce Rail Trespassing

The Federal Railroad Administration is initiating a pilot grant program to evaluate the effectiveness of funding local law enforcement activities intended to reduce trespassing on rail rights-of-way. The program is geared toward communities at risk for rail-trespassing-related incidents and fatalities.

Eligible projects must be focused on enforcing specific railroad trespassing law, especially in areas where trespassing is more frequent and problematic. Eligible applicants include state, county, municipal, local and regional law enforcement agencies in the U.S. In addition, there must be a demonstrated rail trespass problem in the community, and at least one mile of FRA-regulated railroad mainline track must be in the boundaries of the applying agency’s jurisdiction.

Applications are due no later than 5:00 p.m. EDT April 23, 2018. For more information on application requirements and procedures, please see the notice of funding opportunity on the Federal Register website.

White House to Nominate Two Candidates for Surface Transportation Board

President Trump announced his intent to nominate Patrick Fuchs and Michelle Schultz to serve on the Surface Transportation Board (STB) for five-year terms.

Fuchs, of Wisconsin, is currently a senior professional staff member handling surface transportation and maritime issues for the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation. He has also managed railroad and maritime regulatory reviews at the Office of Management and Budget.

Shultz, of Pennsylvania, is a deputy general counsel at the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority. Previously, she was an associate with a Philadelphia law firm.

Adding Fuchs and Schultz would bring the total number of STB members to four. The board is authorized to have five. Current members include Acting Chairman Ann D. Begeman, who is currently serving her second five-year term, and Vice Chairman Deb Miller.
“We have been calling for a fully-staffed Surface Transportation Board, and therefore are very pleased that the White House has brought forward the nominations of Patrick Fuchs and Michelle Schultz,” said ASLRRA President Linda Bauer Darr. “We have had the opportunity to work with Mr. Fuchs - he’s bright and knows the industry through his work on the Senate Commerce Committee. Ms. Schultz has an equally impressive resume, and we look forward to getting to know her.”

**Date Changed for Office of Advocacy’s Regulatory Roundtables**

The U.S. Small Business Administration’s (SBA) Office of Advocacy has changed the date for its regional regulatory roundtable and NAFTA modernization outreach meetings in Texas. They will now be held on **March 19 in San Antonio** and **March 20 in Houston**.

At both locations, the roundtable meeting will be held from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., with NAFTA outreach from 1:30 to 4:30 p.m. Please note, the Houston location has also changed. View the links below for updated information.

Follow the appropriate links to register for the [regulatory roundtable](#) or [NAFTA meeting](#) in San Antonio, or the [regulatory roundtable](#) or [NAFTA meeting](#) in Houston.

For more information about these events and their background, [click here](#), or to view the Office of Advocacy’s regulatory reform website, [click here](#).

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**ASLRAA Offers Compliance Assessments as a Member-Exclusive Benefit!**

Our expert staff is available to conduct comprehensive on-site compliance assessments for member railroads. Ensure your railroad meets FRA compliance guidelines by scheduling your assessment today!

- Identify Deficiencies
- Reduce Risk Violations
- Gain Understanding of FRA Audit Process

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**Member News**

**CSS to Offer New Railcar Storage Options**

ASLRAA member Chicago South Shore & South Bend Railroad (CSS) is now offering new railcar storage opportunities for customers who need to store empty or loaded freight cars.

The program, which has been in effect since January, is meant to help third-party, off-line customers requiring short and long-term railcar storage, and is the result of new track capacity investments. The new storage is separate from CSS’s program for on-line customers.

CSS interchanges with six Class I railroads and several other regional and switching railroads throughout the Chicago area, putting it in an ideal position to provide storage and interchange service for more customers.

“The need for railcar storage capacity located close to Chicago fluctuates based on ebbs and flows of storage space in the industry,” said CSS President Todd Bjornstad in a [press release](#). “We are offering this because we believe South Shore’s easy access to multiple Chicago railroads gives third-party customers a chance to take advantage of our strategic location.”

**Canton Railroad Company Names New Superintendent of Operations**

Robert J. Sherry is Canton Railroad Company’s new superintendent of operations, managing its rail and transload operations. In addition to managing rail and transload operations, Sherry’s responsibilities include overseeing employee training and safety.

Prior to joining ASLRAA member Canton Railroad Company, Sherry worked as a chief train dispatcher with CSX Transportation. He has had 22 years of experience in rail and logistics.
ASLRA member Wisconsin & Southern Railroad (WSOR), in conjunction with the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT), recently completed a multi-million dollar project to replace approximately 1,000 feet of substructure and deck on Bridge B-256, which spans the Wisconsin River at Spring Green, Wis.

Severe settlement and timber component decay meant that the century-old railroad bridge was close to being taken out of service, affecting many rail-dependent businesses along the line. A state grant from the Freight Railroad Preservation Program, which is administered by WisDOT, covered approximately 80 percent of the project’s roughly $5.8 million cost, with WSOR funding the balance.

Prior to the project’s completion, train weight and speed were restricted due to the severity of the bridge’s deterioration. Completion of the project now means the bridge can handle rail loads of 286,000 pounds gross weight safely.

The Wisconsin River Rail Transit Commission owns Bridge B-256, and WSOR operates it. WSOR is owned by Watco Transportation Services.

**Services Held for Harley Lee Lawrence, Former ASLRA Printer**

Former ASLRA in-house printer Harley Lee Lawrence passed away February 27. He was 87.

Born and raised in South Hero, Vermont, Lawrence enlisted in the U.S. Air Force after graduating high school. He served for 20 years before retiring in 1970. Lawrence later worked at ASLRA for 13 years, retiring from that position in 1993.

Lawrence was married to his wife Jean for 45 years, until her death in 2004. He is survived by his four children, six grandchildren and one great-granddaughter. Services were held March 3, and Lawrence will be interred at Maryland Veterans Cemetery March 16.

**Follow @ASLRA on Twitter!**

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

**Industry Events**

**Iowa DOT to Host Short Line Safety Seminar, Highway-Rail Safety Conference**

Iowa’s Department of Transportation (Iowa DOT) will hold a free short line safety seminar March 14-15 in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. The Iowa DOT will also be hosting the annual multi-state Highway-Rail Safety Conference April 11-12 in Council Bluffs, Iowa.
The Iowa DOT is working with Region 5 Federal Railroad Administration inspectors to provide a general session, field exercises, and classroom sessions. Field exercises will be held in cooperation with the Cedar Rapids and Iowa City Railroad. While the seminar is free, participants are encouraged to pre-register. For more information or to register, click here.

At the Highway-Rail Safety Conference, consultants, representatives from multiple federal and state agencies and railroad and rail industry officials will meet to discuss ideas about how to improve highway-railroad crossings and reduce injuries and fatalities at railroad rights-of-way. Click here for more information or to register for the conference.

Outback Railroad Association Safety Conference Slated for March

The fourth annual Outback Railroad Association Safety Conference, hosted by Montana Rail Link, will be held March 27-29 in Missoula, Mont. Breakout sessions will feature speakers from the Federal Railroad Administration as well as vendor safety training.

In addition to the breakout sessions, an exhibition hall will feature vendors who specialize in railroad safety, tools, products and services. Daily networking time is also scheduled.

For more information, please see the conference website.

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

Register Today!

2018 CONNECTIONS Convention Offers Opportunities to Connect

ASLRRA 2018 CONNECTIONS Convention offers a myriad of opportunities for attendees to engage, interact and network! From the early morning walk/run and a chance to see the special display of track inspection vehicles in the expo hall, to a rousing game of golf at the Hermitage Golf Course, CONNECTIONS offers something for everyone! Visit the Convention website using the links below to learn more and plan your trip!

Join us at Gaylord Opryland in Nashville, Tenn. April 7-10. Follow these links to register for the convention.

Upcoming Webinars

March 14, 2018 - Cybersecurity Part II: Security Controls for Short Lines - In part two of our three-part cybersecurity webinar series, Rockwell Collins’s Justin Smith will discuss the various sources that provide detailed security controls your organization can implement. From the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) to the Center for Internet Security (CIS), there are hundreds of possibilities. You’ll learn where to begin and how to integrate your cybersecurity program and roadmap. Attendees will have an opportunity to participate in Q&A at the end of the presentation. Click here to register.

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 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, with member news, questions or comments.