November 20, 2019

Petry Appointed to Alaska Railroad Board of Directors

Alaska Governor Michael Dunleavy has appointed Farmrail System, Inc. President and General Manager Judy Petry to the Alaska Railroad Corporation Board of Directors. She will take over the railroad management vacancy left by outgoing member Bill Sheffield.

Petry is the immediate past chair of ASLRA’s Board of Directors, and has served on ASLRA’s board since 2004. She first got her start in the railroad industry in 1987 as an accountant at Farmrail. She also held roles as manager of customer service and controller before being named president and general manager in 2014. Besides her work on ASLRA’s board, Petry has also been chair of three ASLRA Connections Conventions.

Reserve a Booth at ASLRA’s Annual Convention – Exhibit Sales Now Open

Exhibit sales are open to all ASLRA members for ASLRA 2020 Connections, which will be held May 2-5, 2020 at the Gaylord Texan in Grapevine, Texas. The first round of sales to renewals was completed recently. While sales have been brisk and more than 140 booths have already been reserved for the expo hall, there are still plenty of good spaces to choose from.

This year’s event will feature more dedicated exhibit hours and new opportunities for engagement in the exhibit hall at the Gaylord Texan, a venue that is popular with our attendees and exhibitors. Please contact ASLRA’s Kathy Keeney at (202) 585-3439 to reserve a space or to access the link to the digital floorplan.

As a reminder, booths are only available to ASLRA members, so contact Keeney about membership first if you are interested in exhibiting in 2020. Sponsorship sales for the annual convention will begin shortly along with advertising sales for the official convention program.
ASLRA’s Jo Strang Participates in FRA Grade Crossing Technology Symposium

ASLRA’s SVP Safety and Regulatory Policy, Jo Strang, participated in a Symposium hosted by the Federal Railroad Administration on November 19, 2019 on Highway-Rail Grade Crossing Technology.

The intent of the Grade Crossing Symposium series is to share in detail various grade crossing safety and technology advancements, ideas, and funding solutions, and to provide a roadmap for how to implement those technologies. Strang represented short line rail perspectives and shared examples alongside Class Is, represented by BNSF.

Senate Commerce Committee Approves NTSB Board Member Nominee

On Nov. 13 the U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation approved by voice vote the nomination of Michael Graham to be a member of the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) for the remainder of the current term and for a new term to end Dec. 31, 2025.

Graham was most recently a director of flight operations safety, security and standardization for Textron Aviation. He was also a pilot in the U.S. Navy and a flight instructor.

Graham’s nomination now awaits a vote on the floor of the Senate. If confirmed, he will join the three current NTSB members: Chairman Robert Sumwalt, Vice Chairman Bruce Landsberg and Jennifer Homendy.

Department of Transportation Announces BUILD Grant Recipients

The U.S. Department of Transportation has identified projects receiving funds through the Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) Transportation Discretionary Grants program. A total of $900 million will go to 55 projects in 35 states.

Half of the money was awarded to projects in rural areas. A majority of funding supported roads and bridges, with a smaller portion allotted to transit and rail. Some rail-related grants will fund a project in Alaska to replace an aging petroleum and cement marine terminal for safer transfer of fuel and cement from ships to rail, heavy truck and existing pipelines, and a project in Phoenix to lower freight rail tracks and eliminate five at-grade railroad crossings near the Phoenix Sky Harbor Airport.

Additionally, a new rail-truck transload facility will be built at the Spokane International Airport in Washington state, allowing freight to be delivered by rail, reducing interstate freight traffic and making the area safer, and the Port of Beaumont Navigational District in Texas will reconstruct the Main Street Terminal, replace a grain dock and add and upgrade rail track to increase rail interchange capacity and add cargo handling capacity.

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS RESOURCES

Be Prepared! Download ASLRA’s member-exclusive templates and checklists to build or enhance your railroad’s emergency response plans. Visit www.aslra.org/disasterprep.
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ASLRRA Focuses on Final Bills for 2019 as Congress Nears Thanksgiving Break

It is now evident that the continuing resolution (CR) meant to fund the government through Dec. 20 is expected to pass Congress this week in a “clean” fashion, meaning that there will be no other legislation attached to the bill. One avenue for getting the 45G tax credit extended was to have it as part of a package attached to a spending bill like the CR.

In a continuing effort to extend 45G, the D.C. lobbying team at Chambers, Conlon & Hartwell (CC&H) and the members of ASLRRA’s Legislative Policy Committee (LPC) are working with other tax extenders groups to make sure that a tax extenders package is included with whatever legislation moves just before Dec. 20, whether it is a full-year appropriations bill or another CR.

We encourage all ASLRRA members to make calls to their congressmen and senators this week to impress upon them the dire need to pass an extenders package that includes 45G, now expired almost 23 months. Without the credit, infrastructure projects are on hold and businesses in rural and small-town America that count on rail services are impacted. Urge your representatives to go to House and Senate leaders Nancy Pelosi, Kevin McCarthy, Mitch McConnell and Chuck Schumer and insist that a tax extenders package be passed before the end of the year.

We also continue to work with both the House and the Senate to ensure that the final transportation appropriations bill takes into account short line priorities such as CRISI and BUILD grants and the Short Line Safety Institute whenever the bill is completed. If there are any questions, contact CC&H partner Ed McKechnie at ed.mckechnie@cch-llc.com.

ASLRRRA Policy Team Cautions Against Any Mandated Crew Size Actions

The ASLRRRA policy team has also been meeting with congressional offices over the last few weeks to discuss the Safe Freight Act, H.R. 1748. The bill currently has 131 cosponsors. ASLRRRA opposes the bill, which would require a two-person crew on all railroads.

ASLRRRA New Members

ASLRRRA is delighted to welcome four new members this week - one returning Railroad Member and three new Associate Business Members.
Wheeling & Lake Erie Railway, a Class II railroad based in Brewster, Ohio, is the largest Ohio-based railroad and among the largest regional railroads in the country. Its service area includes 840 miles of track in Ohio, Pennsylvania, West Virginia and Maryland. It connects directly with three Class I railroads and interchanges with 14 short lines and regionals. Commodities hauled include sand, coal, minerals, lumber, chemicals, aggregates and paper. Our primary contact is President Jonathan Chastek.

Hiab USA, based in Perrysburg, Ohio, is the industry leader for on-road load handling equipment. Hiab truck-mounted cranes are America's best-selling articulated crane, delivering heavyweight performance with a surprisingly lightweight unit. Our primary contact is Jani Koskinen.

Rail Movement Planner (RMP), based in São Paulo, Brazil, is a fully operational, state-of-the-art solution for real-time circulation planning and train dispatching. It provides timetabling, conflict detection and solving and is running at several railroad operating centers worldwide. Rail Movement Planner optimizes train circulation automatically, or as per train controller's request. Many thanks to Progress Rail for recommending that they join ASLRRA. Our primary contact is Vice President Carlos Eduardo Fontenelle Carneiro.

Railyard Supply, based in Barto, Pa., specializes in facilities systems and industrial product distribution focused toward railroads. Capabilities include in-house engineering for design and construction of equipment and construction projects, in-house custom fabrication of facilities equipment including fluid control, sand systems, air compressor systems, as well as RYDM software and equipment for monitoring fuel data, tank inventory, AEI locomotive tracking, leak detection, and derail operation. It is licensed and insured for railyard construction projects. Our primary contact is Sales Director Ryan Wolfe.

ASLRRA Announcements

Grant Writing Service Providers Help ASLRRA Members
Each week, ASLRA will highlight one of its carefully chosen Member Discount Program providers to help members learn more about the companies offering valuable services at discounted prices.

ASLRA has tapped industry experts to assist member railroads in the preparation and submission of grant applications for programs currently available from the U.S. Department of Transportation, and other sources.

ASLRA’s preferred providers for grant writing services include R.L. Banks and Associates, HDR and Bergmann, and all three companies offer discounted rates, industry expertise, and exceptional service to ASLRA members.

Visit [www.aslrra.org/discounts](http://www.aslrra.org/discounts) and select grant writing services to learn more about these exceptional preferred providers.

**Partnership Between New York Railroad and Fire Department Trains Firefighters for Tough Situations**

To further tell the short line story, ASLRA will profile some of its members who are noteworthy movers and shakers in the railroad industry. These railroads’ savvy decision-making and ingenuity make their achievements worth sharing.

Over the past several years, ASLRA member New York and Atlantic Railway (NYA) has hosted firefighters from the New York Fire Department (FDNY) for training exercises.

NYA first started working with FDNY in 2010, when the freight line hosted the TRANSCAER Tank Car Safety Train. Other sessions followed, including one in 2013 involving engine and ladder companies and HazMat Battalion 1, and later a variety of drills for members of FDNY’s Special Operations Command using NYA’s East New York Tunnel.

The mile-long tunnel is ideal for the FDNY to simulate subterranean and confined space rescue operations, often in conditions with limited radio signals. Tactical rescue operations learned by first responders in these drills are by no means limited to tunnel emergencies and have broader applications that may include building collapses, and other situations involving confined, or dark spaces with limited points of ingress and egress.

This summer, FDNY held several exercises at NYA facilities. In May, NYA hosted the FDNY for a week-long drill involving over 250 firefighters from the Rescue/Special Operations Battalion. The events, held at the East New York Tunnels and in Red Hook at New York Harbor, simulated a response to a mass-casualty event.

Then in September, NYA and FDNY revisited a previous training session at the East New York Tunnels with the department’s Rebreather Unit, where all of the unit’s firefighters practiced rescue and recovery operations, including breaching, lifting and shoring exercises, while wearing their rebreathing apparatus in simulated heavy smoke conditions that may exist in building fires and similar emergencies.
Using NYA’s East New York Tunnels allows the FDNY to go beyond typical response scenarios - where the distance from the fire truck, or command post, to the incident may be only a few dozen feet - and create a 3,500-foot-long course featuring unique hazards and conditions that may be encountered both under and above ground. FDNY used theatrical smoke generators to recreate heavy smoke conditions and covered tunnel exits for a near-blackout environment, and during one exercise, members from the New York City Community Emergency Response Team acted as simulated casualties experiencing varying degrees of distress and injury.

During these training sessions, NYA provides more than just a venue. NYA employees and contractors partner with first responders providing support for on-track safety, site security, and supplying rail carts to help stage drills and set and reset obstacles.

All of this work helps train FDNY for a variety of emergency events they may encounter above and below ground city-wide, but they are not the sole beneficiaries of the invaluable training. FDNY rescue personnel are often dispatched to assist with emergencies and disasters across the country and around the world. FDNY members from the city's Urban Search and Rescue Team assisted in finding survivors of Hurricane Maria in Puerto Rico in 2017.

An additional benefit of the drills with NYA has taught New York's firefighters more about railroad and freight equipment, as well as the hazards associated with rail cars and on-track movements, which better prepares them to operate in more safe conditions when responding to rail incidents.

“We are pleased to partner with and support the FDNY and other public safety agencies in our service territory in helping them train and prepare for a host of emergencies they may encounter whether below or above ground,” said NYA's Manager Operations Support James Nunes. “The training and skills developed will help keep them and their fellow first responders safe while performing their duties, helping keep us, the general public, safe.”

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**ASLRRA Webinars**

**ASLRRA’s Upcoming Webinars**

**RRB Spouse Benefits and Working After Retirement** - Nov. 21, 2019

Jodi Huskey, a Railroad Retirement Board district manager, will discuss railroad retirement eligibility requirements for spouses and divorced spouses and review work limits after retirement in the second of three Railroad Retirement Board webinars. This webinar is free for all ASLRRA members and non-members.

**Digitalize REN & ISS to Improve Compliance & Settlements** - Dec. 3, 2019

In this webinar, industry expert and CloudMoyo Product Manager Bishram Keshri will share how short line and regional railroads can digitally transform REN and ISS to accelerate the settlement lifecycle, reduce time and costs and improve compliance by managing ISS within a REN-compliant, secure environment with increased visibility into the settlement process.

**FRA Regulatory & Program Requirements for Short Lines Part 1** - Dec. 4, 2019
Part one of this two-part series will review 18 Federal Railroad Administration regulations. ASLRA Vice President Safety and Compliance JR Gelnar will provide a simple description and overview of each regulation and discuss which regulations require programs and training.

Click here for more ASLRA events.

Industry Events

Click here for a listing of industry events.

Views & News is published by American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association. Please contact Amy Krouse, editor, with questions or comments.