NOTE: A glitch in last week’s e-mail prevented some members from receiving a copy of the Feb. 13 edition of Views and News. Click here to view the newsletter.

New Edition of ASLRA’s Magazine Now Available Online

The newest edition of ASLRA’s magazine, Short Line Connector, is now available online. The winter 2019 edition’s lead article explains why all railroads, even those not required to install positive train control (PTC) technology, should stay up-to-date with PTC news. Other articles discuss the importance of having a communications plan outlined before a crisis, and resources available to help railroads and transportation agencies communicate and coordinate on projects. The magazine also features a letter from Board Chair Judy Petry, association updates, new member welcome and ASLRA staff profiles.

Follow the link above to view the magazine online or to download a PDF copy for offline viewing or printing.

Position Available: Associate Administrator for Railroad Safety/Chief Safety Officer

The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) is looking for an executive to serve as the Associate Administrator and Chief Safety Officer for the Office of Railroad Safety. The Associate Administrator for Railroad Safety is the principal program advisor to the FRA Administrator and Deputy Administrator for all aspects of railroad safety. The incumbent is responsible for making significant contributions to the development of the national rail safety programs enforced by the FRA. Additional information regarding this vacancy as well as how to apply can be found at https://www.usajobs.gov/GetJob/ViewDetails/520275600.
NTSB Issues Safety Recommendations After 2016 Chlorine Accident

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) issued five safety recommendations Feb. 14 after completing its investigation of an accident involving chlorine release from a ruptured rail tank car Aug. 27, 2016 in West Virginia.

The accident resulted in eight injuries after 178,400 pounds of liquefied compressed chlorine were released when a DOT-105 rail tank car sustained a 42-inch long crack in its tank shell.

Three of the five safety recommendations were issued to the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA), while one was issued to the Association of American Railroads (AAR) and another to American Railcar Industries, Inc.

The recommendations to PHMSA call for the announcement of a final standard including enhanced fracture toughness requirements for cars transporting poison or toxic inhalation hazardous materials; prohibition of the use of tank cars not constructed of steels meeting highest fracture toughness specifications to transport poison or toxic inhalation hazardous materials; and guidance for DOT-105 pressure tank car owners regarding inspection frequency, critical flaw size and testing methods for identifying cracks.

The NTSB also calls on AAR to “ensure local post-weld heat treatment processes are sufficiently monitored,” and for American Railcar Industries to implement “inspection and maintenance procedures to address cracks in cradle pad weld attachments.”

Final Rule Issued Regarding Oil Spill Response Plans

A final rule was issued by the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) in coordination with the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) requiring railroads to develop and submit oil spill response plans for route segments used by high-hazard flammable trains (HHFTs). The rule applies to HHFTs transporting petroleum oil in a block of 20 or more loaded tank cars, and trains with a total of 35 loaded petroleum oil tank cars. ASLRRA’s regulatory team will review the rule for impacts on our short line members.

The rule modifies existing oil spill response plan requirements. According to a press release, it requires railroads to “establish geographic response zones” and ensure employees and equipment are stationed in those zones, ready to respond to an accident. Railroads must also identify the person responsible for each response zone and the resources to be used when addressing a worst-case discharge, as well as inform state and tribal emergency response commissions about HHFTs.

FRA Releases Q4 2018 Positive Train Control Implementation Update

According to a newly released positive train control (PTC) update from the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), all required railroads either met the Dec. 31, 2018 deadline for implementing PTC systems or submitted adequate information required for a deadline extension.

In an infographic comparing PTC implementation status of freight and passenger rail as of Dec. 31, freight railroads surpass passenger railroads in all categories. Freight railroads have achieved 100 percent completion in areas such as locomotives equipped and PTC operable, employee training completed and radio towers installed. In addition, freight railroads have 98 percent of track segments completed and 83 percent of route miles in PTC operation.
Based on railroads’ self-reported data, four railroads have fully implemented PTC systems on required main lines, while 33 have submitted requests for an alternative schedule and sequence. As of Feb. 11, the FRA has formally approved 25 requests.

**FY19 Appropriations Bill Provides Funding for SLSI, Grants, Includes Language Against Heavier Trucks**

The new Fiscal Year 2019 Appropriations Bill, which was signed by President Trump on Feb. 15, included $40.6 million for railroad research and development, which covers the Short Line Safety Institute (SLSI), and contains language cautioning against the federal increase of truck size and weight limits.

Within the $40.6 million for railroad research granted to the Federal Railroad Administration, $2.5 million was set aside for the SLSI to improve safety practices and training for Class II and Class III freight railroads.

Important grant programs receiving funding included BUILD and CRISI. The appropriations bill doled out $900 million and $255 million, respectively.

Regarding heavy trucks, an accompanying report to the House Transportation, Housing and Urban Development (THUD) bill features language expressing concern over the burden an increase in federal truck size would have on national infrastructure, specifically structurally deficient bridges. Still, there were three provisions allowing for some truck size and weight increases, including one allowing for longer trucks carrying sugar beets on specific routes in Oregon.

**FRA Report to Congress Discusses Strategies to Prevent Trespassing Incidents**

On Feb. 19 the Federal Railroad Administration announced the release of a report to Congress titled “National Strategy to Prevent Trespassing on Railroad Property.”

The report identifies causal factors leading to trespassing incidents on railroad property and provides a national strategy to prevent such incidents. It was compiled as a response to a request for information from the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations.

An examination of trespasser casualties over a four-year period, from November 2013 through October 2017, showed that 4,242 pedestrians nationwide were killed or injured while trespassing on railroad property. This number excludes suicides. The study further revealed the top 10 U.S. counties with the most pedestrian trespasser casualties. Six of the 10 counties were in California.

As a part of its safety mission, preventing trespasser casualties and injuries is a high priority for the FRA. The four focus areas identified in the FRA’s national strategy are data gathering and analysis, community site visits, funding and partnerships with stakeholders.
45G Tax Credit Bills Continue to Accumulate Co-Sponsors

Progress on both our bills - H.R. 510 and S. 203 - that would make the 45G short line tax credit permanent continues. As of this writing H.R. 510 has 116 cosponsors and S. 203 has 21. This is the fastest accumulation of cosponsor support that 45G has ever experienced. Thank you to everyone who has taken the time to send emails or make phone calls in support of these bills. The sustained effort continues to pay off in a big way.

Consider reaching out to your representatives and asking to them to communicate with their leadership the importance of passing 45G as soon as possible, and keep checking here for updates on our progress. Your team in Washington is always keeping a close eye on policy issues that are important to short line railroads.

In our previous update we reported on the possibility of a government shutdown as the FY2019 appropriations process continued. Last Friday, the president approved a $328 billion spending package to fund the nine federal departments that were closed for five weeks at the beginning of the calendar year. Unfortunately for the 45G short line tax credit, tax extenders were not included in last week’s package.

As always, please also consider inviting your representative to your railroad. Members of Congress love hearing from the businesses they represent and many would appreciate an opportunity to learn more by visiting your railroad. Feel free to reach out to your team in D.C. if you are interested in hosting an event. We are here to help. Contact Will Resch at Will.resch@cch-llc.com with questions or for assistance.

ASLRA Announcements

ASLRA Seeking Nominations for Associate Member Board Seats

ASLRA is seeking nominations for individuals wishing to run for election to the board of directors representing associate members.

This year’s Nominating Committee Co-Chairs are two former board members, Steve Friedland of Short Line Data Systems and Beth Garguilo of Lincoln Transportation Insurance Brokers, who will be assisted by ASLRA’s Vice President of Member Engagement & Sales Kathy Keeney.
There are two board seats representing associate members and one board vacancy that will need to be filled at the annual convention in Orlando. Responsibilities for the two-year term involve two in-person board meetings annually and several conference calls throughout the year. Board members are also expected to attend the annual convention and fall regional meetings, and urged to attend Railroad Day on Capitol Hill. The newly elected board member will serve on the Supplier Committee and provide agenda items to benefit the membership.

The nomination period ends Feb. 22. Candidates need to supply the committee with a short biography, photo and a few sentences about why they would like to serve on ASLRA’s Board of Directors. The information will be used for a ballot to be distributed to the primary contact of every member company in good standing.

Please contact Beth on Beth.Garguilo@lincolnins.com or (315) 768-6110 or Steve on sfriedland@sdsrocs.com or (973) 769-6505 to nominate yourself or to suggest another candidate.

**ASLRA Engineering Committee Founding Member Conrad Dies**

John P. Conrad, a founding member of ASLRA’s Engineering Committee, died Feb. 11. The Tyrone, Pa. resident was 62.

Conrad was a professional engineer licensed to provide railroad bridge and railroad consulting engineering services. He worked as a structures inspector with Chessie System Railroads in W.Va., Ohio and Ill., and later as a structures supervisor at CSX Transportation. From 1991 to 2002 he was a partner in Uni-Tech Consulting Engineers at State College, after which launched his own consulting firm. Conrad’s consulting firm was an Associate Member of the ASLRA.

Conrad worked on bridge construction projects for 36 railroads and 580 bridges in a number of states. In particular, he was lead engineer on the reconstruction of North Shore Rail System’s Loyalsock Creek Bridge in Montoursville, Pa., which later this spring will be renamed the John P. Conrad Bridge in his memory.

Conrad is survived by Elaine Boal Conrad, his wife of 42 years, a daughter Heather (Tom) Lancaster, two sons Byron and Tyler and three grandchildren.
Let the CONNECTIONS Convention help you expand your business. Remember – Early Bird Registration Ends February 25!

There are three ways for members to reach a wider audience at this year’s ASLRRA CONNECTIONS Convention in Orlando, Fla.

Sponsorships are a great way to demonstrate support for ASLRRA and the short line industry, as well as reach more than 1800 attendees. Sponsorship options start at $750. Expo Hall booths provide an invaluable opportunity to introduce a new product, new sales and marketing personnel, or a new branding campaign to the short line industry. A booth showcases a company and its offerings in a relaxed, inviting setting that is conducive to making connections and doing business. Standard booths cost $2,300.

Advertising in the event’s Official Convention Program is another way to get a company’s products, services and messaging in front of key industry decision-makers. It can also drive traffic to an Expo Hall booth. Ad options in this glossy 50-page publication start at under $1,000.

These three steps are investments that will pay off before, during and long after the convention. Don’t forget, the last day to receive a $100 discount on registration for ASLRRA’s annual CONNECTIONS Convention is Feb. 25. Sign up soon to reserve a spot at the short line industry’s premier event.

Webinars

**ASLRA Young Professionals Committee: What You Need to Know - 2/27/2019**

This webinar will discuss the ASLRA Young Professionals Committee and why it is important to join. We will review the committee’s mission, vision and future goals and describe resources members can use to keep abreast of all future activities.

**SLSI Security Plans Webinar - 3/27/2019**

In a webinar hosted by the Short Line Safety Institute, join Safety Specialist Lisa Matsinger of the Federal Railroad Administration to discuss security plans, awareness and other critical components.

[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.