2019’s Railroad Day Successfully Conveys Industry Message

Railroad Day was a resounding success, as 350 meetings with congressional offices resulted in substantive conversations on extending the short line tax credit, the impact of heavier and longer trucks, and the commitment to a balanced regulatory environment to ensure the success of the railroad industry. Since Railroad Day, 18 co-sponsors have joined House bill H.R. 510 to make the 45G tax credit permanent, and seven have joined the Senate version, S.203.

Social media generated 804 uses of #railday2019, potentially reaching 1.5 million people, with many member offices tweeting about visits including Georgia Senator Johnny Isakson and Representative Jody Hice, Illinois Senator Dick Durbin and Representative Daniel Lipinski, Indiana Representative Greg Pence, Missouri Representative Vicki Hartzler, New York Representative Chris Collins and Ohio Representative Troy Balderson. In addition, many member offices ‘liked’ ASLRRA’s tweets concerning important topics, people and events of the day.

Following a full day of meetings, more than forty congressional offices were represented at the evening reception at Union Station. In addition, all three members of the Surface Transportation Board - Ann Begeman, Martin Oberman and Patrick Fuchs - attended.

Railroad Day photos may be viewed here. Also, remember to mark your calendars for Railroad Day 2020 - March 4, 2020.

ASLRA Welcomes Interns Davis Strench and Max Dyson

This summer, ASLRA will employ two interns who will work on projects including data mining, policy review and marketing. Davis Strench and Max Dyson will also have the opportunity to attend meetings on Capitol Hill with ASLRA’s policy and lobbying teams.

Strench is a recent University of California - Berkeley graduate. A D.C.-area native, Strench’s passion for railroading led him to become a certified freight conductor with the San Francisco Bay Railroad. He has also worked at the Santa Cruz and Monterey Bay Railway and Union Pacific Railroad.

Dyson is a rising junior at James Madison University where he is majoring in political science. His life-long interest in politics has recently turned to the connection between politics and infrastructure, which is where Dyson sees true bipartisan agreement and the potential for progress and change.

Everyone at ASLRA welcomes both interns and is looking forward to working with them.
FRA Proposes Rule to Harmonize Qualification and Certification of Locomotive Engineers, Conductors

The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) has issued a notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM) regarding the qualification and certification of locomotive engineers, revising regulations to make the current rules consistent with those for the qualification and certification of conductors.

Rule changes include amending the program submission process, using a single FRA review board to handle engineer and conductor petitions for review, and revising filing requirements for petitions to the Operating Crew Review Board.

The FRA predicts the revisions would result in cost savings and other benefits, such as reducing the paperwork and reporting burden on railroads and locomotive engineers.

Written comments on the proposed rule are due July 8. ASLRA staff is reviewing the rule and will submit comments on behalf of the Association.
Railroad Day 2020 Set for March 4
Please see the above story for a review of Railroad Day 2019. Photos of the day can be viewed [here](#).

**ASLRRRA Announcements**

**The Association Seeks Contributions to its Comprehensive Disaster and Emergency Mitigation Directory**

Help your fellow railroader - ASLRRRA is seeking the assistance and knowledge of railroads, suppliers, and contractors who have experience with disaster recovery and emergency preparedness. Recent weather events in the Midwest have caused catastrophic damage to the national rail network and underscored the critical need to develop a comprehensive directory of disaster response / emergency preparedness resources for short line and regional railroads.

All ASLRRRA members - railroads and suppliers alike - stand to benefit from the knowledge and lessons learned by others in the industry who have experienced natural disasters and emergency situations on their railroads. The ASLRRRA is asking members to submit a range of materials and resources including checklists, tips & tricks, best practices, white papers, key contacts and sample correspondence with FEMA and other state and federal aid-providing agencies, as well as experts willing to assist in conducting educational webinars.

This is a great opportunity for short line and regional railroads and industry suppliers to showcase accomplishments and share expertise that will ultimately benefit others throughout the railroad industry. Please feel free to forward resources and materials directly to ASLRRRA’s summer intern Davis Strench at dstrench@aslrra.org or contact Davis directly if you’d like to discuss ways you can lend support. Thank you for your help!

**RTA Surveys Members About Rail Tie Purchases – Please Respond!**

The Railway Tie Association (RTA) and ASLRRRA are working together to collect information regarding rail tie purchases. The information will be used to help illustrate the impact of the short line tax credit on the short line and regional railroad industry.

The primary contact person at each ASLRRRA member railroad has been sent an e-mail to a brief survey regarding rail tie purchases in 2018 and 2019. Please take the time to complete the survey. The information is helpful to both organizations as we lobby Congress to make the short line tax credit permanent.
Access ASLRA’s Strategic Communications Webinar Series – Available On Demand

ASLRA has a wealth of educational webinars available online at the click of a mouse. Visit the On Demand Webinars resource library on the ASLRA website to access dozens of relevant and timely webinar recordings on a wide range of topics, including the recent series of Strategic Communications webinars presented by Corporate Crisis Group’s John Ambler. Available FREE to ASLRA members, this special series is located under the Communications tab on the site and titles include Government and Community Relations Fundamentals, Media Training Basics, and Crisis Communications Fundamentals for Railroaders.

Check out this special series and more - including webinars on Finance, Human Resources, and industry-specific Legal issues, by visiting ASLRA’s On Demand Webinars resource library. On Demand Webinars are available FREE to ASLRA members and by subscription to non-members.

OUT AND ABOUT

Gelnar Attends AREMA Meeting in New Jersey

ASLRA’s Vice President of Safety and Compliance J.R. Gelnar attended a meeting for the American Railway Engineering and Maintenance-of-Way Association’s (AREMA) Committee 18 for light density and short line railways at ASLRA member HDR’s offices in New Jersey on May 6.

The committee received sub-committee reports and reviewed material for a future contractor webinar. On May 7, committee members toured the Port of New York and New Jersey’s Greenville Yard and the 65th Street and New York and Atlantic Railway Bay Ridge Line.

Strang Offers Railroad Day Preparation Tips at LRW Event

ASLRA’s Senior Vice President of Safety and Regulatory Policy Jo Strang provided insider tips at a League of Railway Women (LRW) networking event held the night before Railroad Day. She urged attendees to focus on the day’s three main topics: Extend the Short Line Tax Credit (45G); oppose any increases to truck size or weight; and preserve the balanced economic regulation of the railroad industry.

Strang further advised attendees to share their local perspectives; be concise in what they are asking for; and show appreciation for the congressional time both in person and through social media. And, of course, because attending multiple meetings across Capitol Hill involves considerable walking, she reminded them to wear comfortable shoes.
Many ASLRA members and friends attended the event, including ASLRA’s Vice President of Member Engagement & Sales Kathy Keeney and Director of Regulatory Affairs Crystal Gitchell.

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ASLRA is Pleased to Welcome Two New Members

Global Train Services LLC, based in Anchorage, Alaska, is a team of Advanced Train Control experts dedicated to improving railroad operational efficiencies by developing software tools that leverage existing PTC technology. The company also provides expertise in federal compliance and implementation of technology. Our contact is CEO Eileen Reilly.

Modern Railway Systems, based in Littleton, Colorado, specializes in rail signal systems for transit owners and operating railroads. It provides complex train control systems and its capabilities extend to the communications, power distribution and rail operations disciplines. MRS is a subsidiary of Stacy and Witbeck, one of the largest rail transit contractors in the U.S. Our contact is Business Development Manager - Freight Melissa Weiler.

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ASLRA Events

Webinars

Shaping Your Grant Application for the USDOT Reviewers – 05/16/2019
This webinar focuses on tips to improve the competitiveness of your FY 2019 BUILD application.

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.