Regional Meetings Offer Specialized Training Seminars

While ASLRA’s annual regional meetings always make education a priority, each of this year’s gatherings will feature special training seminars focused on leadership and Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) regulations. Each seminar must be registered for separately and takes place alongside the meetings.

At the Central Pacific Region Meeting in San Antonio, Texas, ASLRA’s Vice President of Safety and Compliance JR Gelnar will present the ASLRA Leadership Development Training – Regulatory Module. This course strengthens understanding and application of certain regulations to enhance overall safety practices, and was developed for railroad supervisors and managers from multiple crafts.

An FRA Drug and Alcohol Seminar held at the Eastern Region Meeting in Columbus, Ohio focuses on the drug and alcohol program manager and designated employer representative’s (DER’s) roles and duties with respect to FRA drug and alcohol testing.

At the Southern Region Meeting in Charlotte, N.C., railroads’ reporting officers, general managers, safety officers and legal representatives can enhance their understanding of 49 CFR Part 225 with the FRA Part 225 Accident/Incident Reporting Seminar. Participants can interact with FRA experts and peers to help bring clarity to the complicated and sometimes confusing world of accident and incident reports classification and investigations.

The two-day seminars are offered in conjunction with the regional meetings, and attendees will share networking events, meals and exhibit area time with those participating in the regional meetings. Please note that since the meetings and seminars run concurrently, those registering must select a specific event when signing up at the link above.

ASLRA’s Crystal Gitchell Receives Progressive Railroading Rising Star Award at Railroad Superintendents Meeting in Virginia

ASLRA’s Assistant Vice President of Legislative and Regulatory Policy Crystal Gitchell was recognized as one of Progressive Railroading magazine’s Rising Stars at the American Association of Railroad Superintendents Annual Meeting in Norfolk, Va. on July 22.

Gitchell and 20 others received their awards at the event from the magazine’s Senior Associate Editor Julie Sneider. Each winner is also profiled on the Progressive Railroading website. To win the award, applicants needed to be under 40 years of age and recognized as making or having made a positive impact on his or her company, organization department or team. Additionally, winners are viewed by others as an up-and-coming leader in the railroad industry.

Click here to view Gitchell’s profile or here for links to other winners’ profiles.
FRA Statistics Show Overall Decrease in Reportable Railroad Employee Injuries from January to April 2019

The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) has released statistics for reportable on-duty employee injuries and fatalities comparing January through April 2018 with the same period in 2019. For all railroads, the number of incidents was 1251 compared to 1298 at the same time last year. In the “other freight”, which includes short lines, there were 161 reportable injuries compared to 152 in 2018, but no fatalities either year. In the “other passenger” category the number of injuries also rose, with 387 compared to 363, but again no fatalities.

ASLRRA recognizes those railroads with better-than-average safety records - like member Chicago South Shore & South Bend Railroad which is celebrating five straight years of injury-free performance - through the Jake Awards. Jake Award and Jake Award with Distinction winners are recognized at ASLRRA’s annual regional meetings.

Comprehensive Oil Spill Response Plans for Eligible Trains Due to PHMSA in August

ASLRRA wants to remind its members that, according to a final rule that went into effect April 1 this year, comprehensive oil spill response plans (COSRP) must be filed with the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) by August 27 for trains moving certain quantities of liquid petroleum oil. These quantities are:

1. Any liquid petroleum oil or other non-petroleum oil subject to this part in a quantity greater than 42,000 gallons (1,000 barrels) per packaging; or

2. A single train carrying 20 or more loaded tank cars of liquid petroleum oil in a continuous block or a single train carrying 35 or more loaded tank cars of liquid petroleum oil throughout the train consist.

   a. Tank cars carrying liquid petroleum oil products not meeting the criteria for Class 3 flammable or combustible material in § 173.120 of this chapter, or containing residue as defined in § 171.8 of this chapter, are not required to be included when determining the number of tank cars transporting liquid petroleum oil in paragraph (a)(2) of this section.

High hazardous flammable trains that are not moving petroleum oil by rule definition are not required to have a COSRP but must report movements to State Emergency Response Commissions (SERC) and/or Tribal Emergency Response Commissions (TERC). Follow this link to view a summary with more
information, or contact ASLRRA’s Vice President of Safety and Compliance JR Gelnar at jrgelnar@aslrra.org with any questions.

Recent Budget Agreement has Downside, Upside for Short Line Interests

Although the 2019 Bipartisan Budget Agreement for fiscal years 2020 to 2021 lacks any action on tax provisions, like the 45G railroad infrastructure tax credit, it’s good news for the appropriations process overall, and for grant programs within that process that ASLRRA is carefully following on behalf of our members, such as CRISI, BUILD, INFRA, and the Short Line Safety Institute.

ASLRRA is hoping a must-pass appropriations bill, which should come up in September, will be a vehicle onto which tax extenders and provisions like 45G can be attached.

Support for 45G continues to grow. There are currently 245 co-sponsors of HR 510, the House version of a bill to make the tax credit permanent, and 56 co-sponsors of the Senate version, S.203. Such support is bipartisan, with the number of co-sponsors split almost equally between parties for both bills.

Follow the link to read a brief summary of the agreement.

ASLRRRA Out and About

Oelsner Represents ASLRRRA at PST Client Conference

ASLRRRA’s Assistant Vice President of Data and Technology Fred Oelsner attended PS Technology’s 2019 Client Conference July 14-16 in Vail, Colo. with representatives from over 20 short lines and Class I railroads. At the conference he gave a presentation on ASLRRRA’s data and technology focus areas and participated in the Leadership Fireside Chat.
Gelnar Teaches at GCOR Training Seminar Before Attending AAR Committee Meetings

ASLRRA and Iowa Northern Railway held their first joint education opportunity the week of July 15th with a General Code of Operating Rules (GCOR) training seminar in Waterloo, Iowa. ASLRRA’s Vice President of Safety and Compliance JR Gelnar was one of the event’s instructors, along with Iowa Northern Railway’s Assistant General Manager Mark Vaughn.

The event was attended by members from multiple states in various regions of the country at Iowa Northern’s new training facility. ASLRRA and Iowa Northern will continue to offer education and training opportunities in 2020 with a schedule and topics released by the end of 2019.

This week, Gelnar is attending an Association of American Railroads (AAR) Hazmat Committee and Tank Car Committee meeting in Chicago. The Hazmat Committee will discuss various topics including oil spill response plans, non-accidental release of a commodity from a tank car and movement of liquid natural gas by rail. The Tank Car Committee will receive an update from the Federal Railroad Administration regarding facility inspections, while discussing UMLER requirements and tank car research. ASLRRA’s Gelnar is a voting member on each committee.

ASLRRA 2019 Regional Meetings Training

- ASLRRA Leadership Training – Regulatory Module | Sept. 11-13 | San Antonio, TX
- FRA Drug & Alcohol Seminar | Oct. 7-9 | Columbus, OH
- FRA Part 225 Seminar | Nov. 11-13 | Charlotte, NC

ASLRRA Announcements

Become a Sponsor at This Year’s ASLRRA Regional Meetings

Sponsorships are still available for ASLRRA’s regional meetings this fall. ASLRRA has improved its educational offerings and networking opportunities for attendees, and meeting sponsors receive added benefits, including a complimentary registration with platinum and gold packages.

Follow this link to learn more about the types of sponsorships and the benefits of each, or go directly to the regional meetings page to find out more about the events featured and other companies that have already signed up as sponsors. Those with questions can also contact Vice President of Meetings Amy Westerman at awesterman@aslrra.org.
ASLRRRA Webinars

**How Short Line and Regional Railroads Can Shift to Digital** - 7/31/2019

CloudMoyo’s Ashok Madhavan will outline the need for a cultural shift in railroads to adopt a safety-first approach and show how the railroad industry can leverage technology in an effort to build a strong safety culture.

**Marijuana and CBD - New Drug Testing Issues** - 8/7/2019

Many state laws legalizing marijuana and cannabidiol (CBD) use have created confusion, and states’ laws are now impacting non-DOT testing programs. Dr. Timothy J. McCormick, president of Transportation Occupational Medicine Consultants, will review the federal regulations, current issues around marijuana and CBD, and address evolving state measures.

Click here for more ASLRRRA 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.