ASLRRA, CloudMoyo Partnership Provides Leadership, Technology Education for Members

In an effort to help members better address challenges and seize new opportunities, ASLRRA has partnered with supplier member CloudMoyo on an education initiative focusing on next-generation technology, operational efficiency, ways to increase revenue, workplace safety and regulation compliance. Several webinars are already scheduled through the end of this year: an Oct. 2 fireside chat discussing on-the-job training strategies; a Nov. 6 webinar on operations testing for safety compliance; and a Dec. 3 discussion on digitally transforming the Rate EDI Network (REN).

“ASLRRA is pleased to partner with CloudMoyo, leveraging their experience delivering enterprise solutions for Class Is, to provide an opportunity for short line and regional railroads to understand and evaluate how various technology applications can help them modernize and improve their operational efficiencies,” said ASLRRA President Chuck Baker.

The CloudMoyo-sponsored webinars are free for ASLRRA members, and $25 for non-members. View the links above for more information or to register for a specific event.

Disaster Preparedness and Response Resources Now Available on the ASLRRA Website

In the wake of several Hurricanes this season, ASLRRA has developed and provided resources on its website to help members develop emergency response plans in preparation for severe weather, natural disasters or other events that could cause damage to the rail network and disrupt normal business operations.

A variety of templates and checklists are available for download, including emergency docket filing instructions and a waiver template. Disaster plan materials include those for hurricanes, earthquakes, tornadoes and other weather events, emergency response plan guidance and an internal crisis management plan. Also online are materials for an incident involving hazardous materials.

Recent incidents, including harsh winter storms, flooding and hurricanes, underscored the need for ASLRRA’s members to have access to such resources. With help from railroad and supplier members, the Association was able to compile materials it hopes will provide crucial guidance before, during and after any disaster.

ASLRRA welcomes additional resources, tools, checklists, contacts or other information from its members that could be added to the site. Please contact JR Gelnar at JRGelnar@aslrra.org or Sabrina Waiss at SWaiss@aslrra.org with any suggestions.
The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) issued a safety recommendation report on Sept. 16 to Class 1 railroads and ASLRRA regarding train emergency brake communication.

The recommendation was made as a result of an investigation into an incident last October in which problems with an air brake system on a Union Pacific freight train left it unable to stop. The train hit a stationary Union Pacific freight train, killing the engineer and conductor of the striking train. The accident also derailed three locomotives and 57 railcars of the striking train and nine railcars of the stationary train.

ASLRRA will respond to the NTSB’s safety recommendations, which advise the Association to suggest its member carriers “inspect the end-of-railcar air hose configurations to ensure the hose configurations match the intended design” and “review and revise their air brake and train handling instructions for grade operations and two-way end-of-train device instructions.”

The NTSB’s recommendations to Class I railroads were similar to those issued to ASLRRA.

ASLRRA Submits Joint Comments Supporting States’ Application for Preemption Determination

ASLRRA, the Association of American Railroads (AAR) and BNSF Railway Company collectively submitted comments in support of the states of North Dakota and Montana in their application to the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) for a preemption determination concerning a Washington State law governing crude oil shipments.

The application, submitted by the Attorneys General for North Dakota and Montana, argues that federal hazardous material transportation law preempts Washington State’s law regulating the volatility of crude oil transported in the state for loading and unloading. Both states contend that Washington’s law is essentially a ban on Bakken oil, which is oil produced in the Bakken Formation of North Dakota and Montana.

The joint comments say that Washington State’s regulations “undermine the uniformity of PHMSA’s regulation of crude oil transportation and cause unnecessary delay to hazardous material transport.” Additionally, the state’s way of classifying crude oil based on vapor pressure differs from that of

---

**ASLRRA SAFETY & TRAINING**

Reasonable Suspicion Drug & Alcohol Signs and Symptoms Training Video
Visit [www.aslrra.org/safety](http://www.aslrra.org/safety) for more info
PHMSA, which identifies all crude oil as a Class 3 flammable liquid and does not classify crude oil based on vapor pressure, and therefore PHMSA’s classification scheme preempts Washington’s.

Based on the noted reasons, ASLRRA, AAR and BNSF collectively urge PHMSA to issue the preemption determination requested by North Dakota and Montana.

**ASLRA Compliance Assessments**

Keeping up with federal rule-making and regulatory interpretation is difficult at best, so the ability to review all of our regulatory programs with the knowledge base of the ASLRA was invaluable.

Visit [www.aslrrea.org](http://www.aslrrea.org) to learn more!

---

**Senate Transportation Appropriations Bill Has Good News for Short Lines**

The Senate Appropriations Committee has now marked up and passed a fiscal year 2020 Transportation Appropriations bill. On the programs most relevant to short lines, there was largely good news:

- The committee proposed $255 million for the CRISI grant program, which is the same as the FY19 enacted level, although less than the House’s $350 million proposal for FY20.

- They proposed $1 billion for the BUILD grant program, which is above the $900 million enacted in FY19 and the same as the House FY20 proposal.

- They suggested $2.5 million for the Short Line Safety Institute’s work, which is the same as the FY19 level and lower than the $3 million House proposal.

- There were no unwelcome truck size and weight provisions, and in fact there was an inclusion of language noting that there is a significant research program that needs to be undertaken and completed before any such provisions should be considered.

The House and Senate will need to harmonize their proposals and package them together before passing final legislation that can go to the president’s desk for signature. That action will hopefully be completed by Thanksgiving, although a delay beyond that would unfortunately not be surprising.
ASLRRA Announcements

Don’t miss the education available at ASLRRA’s Eastern Region Meeting and Finance and Administration and General Counsel Symposium

While railroad employees at all levels will benefit from the educational sessions offered at ASLRRA’s regional meetings, the Association’s Finance and Administration and General Counsel Symposium is geared toward short line professionals in the finance, human resources, accounting, administration and legal sectors.

This year’s symposium takes place Oct. 9-11 in Columbus, Ohio, immediately following the Eastern Region Meeting held Oct. 7-9.

Symposium sessions cover a variety of topics key to the personnel and management aspects of railroad operations, including state and federal marijuana laws, sales and use tax laws, railroad retirement planning, insurance and risk management issues and employment law. As with regional meetings, participants will also have multiple networking opportunities.

The Eastern Region Meeting itself offers other informative educational sessions for participants, including general sessions on Liquified natural gas and disaster preparedness, and breakout sessions discussing crisis communications and cyber security.

Follow the links above for more information or to register for the symposium or regional meeting. Sponsorships are still available. Interested companies can contact Amy Westerman at awesterman@aslrра.org for more information, or click here to learn about the different sponsorship packages available.

Sign Up for Short Line Safety Institute Training at ASLRRA’s Eastern Region Meeting

There is still space for those interested in participating in the Short Line Safety Institute’s (SLSI) safety train tour or hazardous materials training at ASLRRA’s Eastern Region Meeting in Columbus, Ohio.

The safety train tour takes place in the afternoon on Oct. 9, and includes a tour of safety train equipment and information on SLSI’s hazmat training program.

SLSI’s hazardous materials training is a day-long program on Oct. 10. Participants will review five modules covering topics such as safety and spill response procedures. Use the link above to find out more or register for either event.
ASLRA Out and About

ASLRA Staff Meets with Delegation from Bangladesh to Share Information About Rail Practices and Issues

ASLRA staff met this week with rail sector decision-makers from Bangladesh to discuss rail practices and issues in both countries. The U.S. Trade and Development Agency hosted and sponsored the meeting, titled the Bangladesh: Rail Maintenance, Efficiency and Safety Reverse Trade Mission. The delegation met with ASLRA staff, including President Chuck Baker, Kathy Keeney, JR Gelnar, Crystal Gitchell and Fred Oelsner during Railway Interchange in Minneapolis.

Bangladesh’s national railway system comprises approximately 1,700 miles of total track and carries approximately 65 million passengers annually. Rail is a principal mode of transport in Bangladesh. The country is one of the most densely populated in the world and offers U.S. suppliers opportunities to meet needs in the areas of urban and metro rail system development and expansion, as well as improvements in efficiency and safety.

ASLRA President Chuck Baker, left, receives a token of appreciation from rail representatives from Bangladesh during a meeting between ASLRA staff members and a Bangladeshi delegation to discuss rail practices and issues in both countries.

Photo from ASLRA
Industry News

Progressive Railroading Highlights the Push for Diversity in the Railroad Industry

A recent Progressive Railroading article notes that despite strides made by women in railroading, much more needs to be done to expand the pool of talent being recruited and hired by rail companies, particularly in light of a 2016 Federal Railroad Administration workforce trend report identifying lack of diversity as one of the industry’s top five workforce challenges.

The article highlights the ways women are starting to claim more of the railroad industry’s top positions, including recent appointments of Cathrin Banks as president of ASLRRA member Maryland and Delaware Railroad Company and Lorie Tekorius as president and chief operating officer of ASLRRA supplier member The Greenbrier Companies. They join career railroaders like former ASLRRA board chair Judy Petry, who started as an accountant at ASLRRA member Farmrail Corporation and eventually rose to the top position as president. Despite these achievements, railroading is still a largely male-dominated industry.

The growth of the rail industry and larger numbers of veteran employees reaching retirement age leaves a bigger void for recruiters to fill. That, combined with a decreased pool of workers qualified in science, technology, engineering and math fields, has forced companies to shift their approach to hiring and “cast a wider net” in their search for new employees.

Contributing to rail’s hiring challenges includes a view of the industry as obsolete and railroad jobs as stressful and demanding. Michele Malski, founder and president of ASLRRA member SPRING, created her company as a way to help railroads recruit and retain employees who may not have originally considered railroading a viable career. Malski tells Progressive Railroading that building a diverse workforce will depend in large part on the industry’s ability to change its public image, what Malski terms a “brand renaissance.”

Ultimately, companies must also retain their new employees. To do this, some, like ASLRRA supplier member Alstom, have specific training and leadership programs to support women employees. Alstom’s “Women of Excellence” program is an employee-led group to promote workplace innovation and well-being.

Like Alstom, ASLRRA recognizes the hiring challenges facing railroads, and offers mentoring and retention program ideas through its Young Professionals Committee, which Malski currently chairs.

Railroads may be fighting an uphill battle when it comes to finding and keeping employees with a variety of experiences and backgrounds. Nevertheless, it is a battle worth fighting, as a more diverse workforce itself can be a tool to attract other qualified job candidates, which is what the rail industry needs to support its current and future growth.
ASLRRRA Webinars

**Effective On-the-Job Training Strategies** - Oct. 2, 2019

In this webinar, Senior Railroad Consultant Ashok Madhavan of CloudMoyo will cover strategies that can make on-the-job training programs simple, effective, and compliant in today’s rail transportation industry.

**Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) 101 Railroad Communications** - Oct. 3, 2019

Learn what Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) is and how many different message types are used. Follow the sequence of events for a single railcar to see when these kinds of communication are needed and why and when each carrier communicates with connecting roads. JoAnne Miner, digital product manager at GE Transportation, will lead this webinar.

[Click here](#) for more ASLRRRA 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.