Honoring David Tittsworth, Staunch Railroad Advocate and Entertainer Extraordinaire

By Keith Hartwell

The short line industry and our Association lost a great friend with the passing of David Tittsworth last week. He died at the age of 66 after a long battle with multiple myeloma.

Those of you who attended Railroad Day on Capitol Hill will remember David as the very talented piano player and singer who entertained us with songs about ourselves and our industry. Although most knew him as our entertainer, David’s connection to the railroad industry is long and deep. A University of Kansas Law School graduate, he served as chief counsel of the state’s Department of Transportation. He came to Washington in 1987 and worked first for the House Budget Committee and then as a senior counsel to the House Subcommittee on Transportation, Trade and Hazardous Materials. He quickly became an expert in railroad law and was at the center of the many issues confronting our industry. As we all know those issues could sometimes be contentious and we would find ourselves on opposite sides. But David was a problem solver and we rarely left the room without a solution.

In 1991 we at Chambers, Conlon & Hartwell convinced him to join our firm as a partner. After two years his congressional mentor, Congressman John Dingell, convinced him to return as his chief counsel on the House Energy and Commerce Committee, where he was once again a key player in all matters pertaining to railroads. Following his departure from Congress he worked for 18 years as president and CEO of the Investment Adviser Association.

Although I could not keep David tethered to our lobbying firm, I did convince him to put his considerable talents to work for our Association. For over 20 years he was the star of our Railroad Day
on the Hill banquets and the man who helped us recognize our Short Line Association leaders as they retired from our service. He had talent and charisma and a theatrical presence that made our events memorable. Most important he gave us all an opportunity to laugh at ourselves and our industry in a way that is too often missing in today’s world.

David’s cancer was first diagnosed just a few months before our annual Railroad Day banquet in 2016, and although he was just beginning his treatment he insisted that the show must go on. And it did. Indeed during all the years of his illness he never missed the opportunity to perform. He loved what he did, and he was delighted to share that love with all of us.

It was my great privilege to have had him as a colleague and a friend. He will be sorely missed but always well-remembered.

Keith Hartwell is the former president of ASLRA’s lobbying firm, Chambers, Conlon & Hartwell, and David Tittsworth’s song-writing collaborator.

**ASLRA and Short Line Safety Institute Mourn Death of Colleague Kim Davies-Schrils**

ASLRA is sad to announce the unexpected death of our Short Line Safety Institute (SLSI) colleague Dr. Kimberly Davies-Schrils, director of research and organizational development.

Davies-Schrils passed away on Dec. 19 of the flu. She was 41. She is survived by her husband John, son Jarod (18), and daughter Kiera (15).

Davies-Schrils held a PhD in Industrial/Organizational Psychology with a research specialization that includes topics such as safety culture, fatigue, and worker well-being. She had a history of dedication and enthusiasm for research methodology, organizational development, and public service, and brought to the SLSI years of experience from her work in the federal, academic, private, and non-profit sectors.

Prior to joining the SLSI, Davies-Schrils worked at the Volpe National Transportation Systems Center as an engineering psychologist in the Human Factors Division where she led multiple research and evaluation projects aimed at improving safety in the railroad industry.

A resident of Palm Harbor, Florida, her hobbies included playing the piano, spending time with her family and friends, music and video gaming.

A memorial service was held on Dec. 29. A memorial fund has been established to assist her family with immediate memorial and college expenses. More information, and a tribute wall, can be accessed [here](#).

**ASLRA’s Newest Preferred Provider Offers PTC, Grant Writing Services to Members**

Global Train Services (GTS) is ASLRA’s newest preferred provider, offering positive train control (PTC) implementation and support services and grant writing services at a discounted rate to ASLRA members through the Association’s Member Discount Program.

GTS can help with PTC implementation in a variety of ways, including developing operating rules and training plans, troubleshooting and fixing PTC system issues and creating and defending required filings.

For members looking to apply for such government grant programs as CRISI, BUILD or INFRA, GTS is able to offer varying levels of aid, from guiding railroads through the grant process to completing the entire grant application.
“GTS joining our Preferred Partner Program will benefit our members in multiple ways,” said ASLRRRA President Chuck Baker. “ASLRRRA is fortunate to be able to pull together top-caliber expertise to assist our members in navigating grant writing processes, and the complicated execution requirements of PTC. GTS’s founder, Eileen Reilly, has been actively involved in our industry for a long time and she is a world-class expert on PTC and related railroad technology issues.”

**DISASTER PREPAREDNESS RESOURCES**

Be Prepared! Download ASLRRRA’s member-exclusive templates and checklists to build or enhance your railroad’s emergency response plans. Visit www.aslrra.org/disasterprep.

**USDOT Announces Available Funding for INFRA Grants**

The latest round of funding for the Infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA) discretionary grant program is now available, U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) Secretary Elaine Chao announced Jan. 13.

According to the DOT’s notice of funding opportunity (NOFO), $906 million is available for fiscal year 2020 awards. INFRA grants are authorized by the Fixing America’s Surface Transportation (FAST) Act, and funding will go to projects focused on infrastructure improvements.

Grant awards are divided between large and small projects, with the minimum large-project grant being $25 million and the minimum small-project grant $5 million. The DOT will reserve 10 percent of funds for small projects. Additionally, at least 25 percent of available money will go to rural projects.

Applications are due Feb. 25. Please remember, ASLRRRA’s Member Discount Program offers grant writing services, with a number of preferred providers able to help with the submission of grant applications.

**REGISTER NOW!**

ASLRRRA 2020 Connections Convention
May 2-5 | Gaylord Texan
ASLRRRA Announcements

Register Now for Both Railroad Day on Capitol Hill and ASLRRRA’s Connections Convention

ASLRRRA is helping railroad industry professionals whose New Year’s resolution is to boost work efficiency. Interested participants can kill two birds with one log-in by registering online for both Railroad Day on Capitol Hill on March 4 and ASLRRRA’s annual Connections Convention May 2-5 in Grapevine, Texas.

Railroad Day offers railroad industry professionals the opportunity to speak with representatives in Congress about key issues. All members of the rail industry, from Class I, II and III railroad personnel to shippers, suppliers, labor rail representatives and others are welcome to attend.

Two months later, ASLRRRA will be hosting its annual Connections Convention at the Gaylord Texan Resort. This premier educational event for those in the short line industry, as well as affiliated stakeholders, offers informative general and breakout sessions as well as a number of networking opportunities and social events.

Follow the links above for more information about each event, and to register.

Delaware-Lackawanna Revitalizes Pennsylvania Rail Line and Makes, Then Breaks, Its Own Shipping Records

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

While trade disputes and a decline in coal carloads contributed to a decrease in overall rail traffic in 2019, some short lines posted record-breaking numbers last year. ASLRRRA member Delaware-Lackawanna Railroad is one of several companies showing the key role small railroads play in regional economic development.

For the third-straight year, Delaware-Lackawanna set a record for freight carloads, moving 9,690. That number marked a 2.5 percent increase over 2018. Both 2018 and 2017 were also banner years for the railroad, when carloads increased 10 percent and 31 percent, respectively, over the preceding year.

Delaware-Lackawanna’s success stems from its revival of a railroad corridor once considered unprofitable. The company’s ability to provide reliable shipping services has attracted new business and encouraged development by rail-dependent industries in the northeast Pennsylvania area. When the railroad first started 26 years ago, it handled a mere 500 or so carloads a year.

The efforts of the railroad have not gone unnoticed. ASLRRRA awarded Delaware-Lackawanna a Business Development Award at its 2019 Connections Convention, recognizing the railroad for its achievements in leveraging the uniqueness of its operation and its partners to deliver customer value. The company has also received $2.8 million in grants from the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation to improve rail infrastructure and handle growing rail traffic.

Delaware-Lackawanna is the designated common carrier rail operator for lines owned by Pennsylvania Northeast Regional Railroad Authority (PNRRA). The railroad’s 88 track miles traverse four Pennsylvania counties, shipping a variety of goods including grain, paper, plastic, petroleum and fuel products, chemicals and stone.
Applications Now Being Accepted for Susan C. Murray Memorial Women’s Scholarship

Daughters and granddaughters of ASLRRA railroad or associate member company employees can submit applications for this year’s Susan C. Murray Memorial Women’s Scholarship. The scholarship will honor a woman who excels in academics and extracurricular activities and demonstrates the determination to succeed in her chosen profession.

The scholarship is named for the late Susan Murray, an executive at Commonwealth Business Media who helped launch what is now ASLRRA’s annual Connections Convention. Commonwealth Business Media was a precursor to IHS Markit, which publishes railroad-related works like The Pocket List of Railroad Officials, the Official Railway Guide and the Official Railway Equipment Register.

IHS Markit partners with ASLRRA to present the scholarship. Applications are due Mar. 13. More information and an application form can be found here.

ASLRRRA Webinars

The ASLRRRA is pleased to offer flexible training options that fit your busy schedule with our live and pre-recorded webinars. ASLRRRA webinars will help you stay current on industry issues and acquire new skills! Click here for more ASLRRRA events.

Industry Events

Mark Your Calendars for the AAR’s Damage Prevention and Freight Claims Conference

The Association of American Railroads (AAR) has announced the date for its annual Damage Prevention and Freight Claim Conference. It will be held June 8-11 in Niagara Falls, Ontario.

Conference events include keynote speakers from CN, Railway Association of Canada, National Research Council - Canada and the Forest Products Association of Canada.

There will also be conference breakouts for forestry, metal, and food products, automobile shipments, and freight claims, as well as open committee meetings for the Damage Prevention and Freight Claim Committee and the Quality Lead Team for Roll Paper.

Conference website and hotel registration information will be announced in February.
Click here for a listing of industry events.

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