January 29, 2020

Make Your Voice Heard. Sign Up for Railroad Day Today!

As the adage goes, there is power in numbers. On Railroad Day on Capitol Hill, hundreds of representatives from the railroad industry, as well as other stakeholders, will convene on Washington, D.C. to bring their stories to those whose decisions directly affect the railroads, suppliers and customers around the country.

Each year, ASLRRA, along with the Association of American Railroads and other industry organizations, schedules hundreds of meetings with U.S. senators and representatives. Making face-to-face connections with legislators is one of the most effective ways to impact legislative decisions, and having more participants adds weight to our message. For that reason, ASLRRA urges its members to participate in this year’s Railroad Day on Capitol Hill on March 4.

Sign up for the event now at ASLRRA’s website. Hotel blocks are available at the Hyatt Regency Capitol Hill, within the vicinity of Railroad Day events, but registration for rooms with special rates for Railroad Day closes Feb. 4. Confirmed participants will also be able to take part in webinars to help them plan for Railroad Day meetings and use the Railroad Day App.

US DOT Updates List of Random Testing Rates for All Agencies

The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) has updated its online chart listing the drug and alcohol random testing rates for each DOT agency in 2020.

As ASLRRA reported earlier, the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration’s (FMCSA) drug and alcohol testing rates both increased to 50 and 10 percent, respectively. Rates for the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) and
Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) did not change. The FRA has two separate employee groups, covered service and maintenance-of-way, with each having different testing rates.

The FRA also recently published its notification of determination announcing this year’s rates in the Federal Register. Additionally, each of the other agencies have published their testing rates in the Federal Register. The FMCSA’s can be found here, FTA here and PHMSA here.

**Railroad Retirement Board’s Reminders Page Features Important 2020 Figures**

Those needing a cheat sheet for all of this year’s important Railroad Retirement Board (RRB) facts, such as Tier I and Tier II earnings bases and tax rates and work deduction exempt amounts, can find them on the RRB website.

Much of the basic information covered in the RRB’s monthly question and answer series and other informational news releases is summarized on the website. The RRB’s Reminders for 2020 page includes a downloadable PDF document allowing users to easily view and print the information when offline.

**ASLRRRA 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 ASLRRRA was invaluable.

Visit www.aslrrra.org to learn more!”

**LPC Meeting Held in Washington, DC**

Member of ASLRRRA’s Legislative Policy Committee (LPC) met this week in Washington, D.C. to discuss 2020 initiatives and priorities. During the meeting, members had the opportunity to thank several members of Congress in person for their support of the 45G short line tax credit.

*Chuck Baker, ASLRRRA President (L) and Jerry Vest, Chairman of ASLRRRA’s Legislative Policy Committee (R), present House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer with a token of their appreciation for his longstanding support of the Short Line Tax Credit.*
ASLRRRA New Members

ASLRRRA is delighted to welcome five new associate business members.

**Mid America Car, Inc.**, based in Kansas City, Mo., has been in business for over 42 years with four departments - car, locomotive, paint, and fabrication. They perform car inspections and heavy as well as light repairs. Director of Locomotive Quality **Patrick Godfrey** is our primary contact.

**Mitsui Rail Capital, LLC**, based in Chicago, is a global railcar leasing company. It offers operating leases for a wide range of freight railcars. Our primary contact is Vice President of Sales, Marketing and Business Development **Kevin Cook**. Many thanks to our friends at the Association of American Railroads for recommending they join our Association.

**Snyder Equipment Company**, a division of New York Air Brake based in Nixa, Mo., is a full-service engineering, manufacturing, and requalification company. Snyder specializes in turnkey digitally controlled fuel systems and equipment, stainless steel manufacturing, and fluid service cabinetry. Our primary contact is Sales Manager **Jason Hagenow**. Look for Snyder Equipment and New York Air Brake in booths 221 and 223 at our 2020 Connections convention. Many thanks to New York Air Brake’s Janice Pfeil for the assist with this membership.

**TerraPact**, based in Boulder, Colo., manages right-of-way agreements on over 5,000 miles of right-of-way corridors across the United States and British Columbia. It actively acquires and/or manages corridor real estate for short line and regional railroad companies. Our primary contact is CEO **Benjamin Myers**.

**TranSystems Corporation**, based in Kansas City, Mo., rejoined ASLRRRA this month. Its transportation consulting services span all modes and provide a full range of architectural engineering and planning services; management and supply chain consulting services; and transportation real estate consulting services. Its industry expertise encompasses freight railroads, passenger rail and transit, states and municipalities, airports and air carriers, shippers and distributors, ports and maritime, trucking and automotive, energy and communications, and the federal government. Principal and Market Segment Leader **Tim Rock** is our primary contact.
ASLRRA Announcements

Members Can Access a Variety of Resources Through ASLRRA’s Website

ASLRRA Members have access to a number of resources on our website, and most are available as direct downloads under the Safety & Compliance and Member Resources tabs. Simply login with a username and password to gain access to these valuable materials, most of which are available free to ASLRRA members.

Compliance Templates - More than a dozen template programs are available for parts of 49CFR, plus additional programs on Alertness and Fatigue, Program and Record Keeping Requirements, and a Contractor Safety Program.

Training Videos - Access downloadable training videos on Drug & Alcohol Signs and Symptoms and Post-Accident Toxicological Testing

Live and On Demand Webinars - Review the list of upcoming live webinars on our website and check out nearly 100 recorded webinars available in our On-Demand Resource Library.

Disaster Preparedness and Response Resources - Be prepared when disaster strikes with ASLRRA’s template materials covering Disaster Plans, HazMat Response Plans, and Emergency Docket waivers and filing instructions.

Member Discount Program - Save money on industry products and services with ASLRRA’s select group of Preferred Providers.

Submit Nominations for ASLRRA’s Annual Business, Safety and Veterans Awards, Women’s Scholarship

Nominations are now being accepted for all of ASLRRA’s annual awards. Nominations for business and safety awards are due Feb. 14, while veterans award entries are due Feb. 28. Scholarship applications are due March 13. Winners will be recognized during this year’s Connections Convention, held May 2-5 at the Gaylord Texan in Grapevine, Texas.

ASLRRA’s Business Development Award recognizes member railroads that have designed and enacted the most innovative and successful business-building initiatives in the small railroad industry. Click here for more information about the business development award, including criteria and how to nominate a railroad.

The Safety Person of the Year Award goes to a non-management employee of a member railroad who works with management on effective safety programs, exhibits a high degree of safety awareness and
contributes off-duty time to activities promoting safety awareness in the community. Click here for Safety Person of the Year nomination criteria or here for a nomination form.

The Safety Professional of the Year Award is open to any railroad management employee of an ASLRRA member railroad who is responsible for safety programs, training and the overall management of safe behavior and actions on his or her railroad(s). Click here for Safety Professional of the Year nomination criteria or here for a nomination form.

ASLRRA’s Veterans Engagement Award honors employers who demonstrate positive policies toward U.S. veterans and who implement unique programs and practices to hire, recognize, support, and engage with veterans in the workplace and the broader community. View the award criteria here or submit a nomination here.

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. Applications are due Mar. 13. More information and an application form can be found here.

ASLRRA Out and About

Trio of Association Representatives Visit Railinc Headquarters in North Carolina

ASLRRA’s Amy Krouse, Fred Oelsner, and Sabrina Waiss visited the headquarters of supplier member Railinc’s in Cary, N.C. on Jan. 19 to learn more about Railinc’s role as a data clearinghouse for the rail industry as well as the products and services they offer short lines.

During the meeting, both sides discussed potential avenues of cooperation between ASLRRA and Railinc to better represent the industry and serve the Association’s members.

Following the Railinc visit, Oelsner traveled to Fort Worth, Texas to participate in the Association of American Railroad’s GIS Committee meeting at BNSF headquarters.

ASLRRA Webinars

On-Demand Webinars: Insights into the RRIF Express Loan Application Process

Applications are now being accepted for the Railroad Rehabilitation and Improvement Financing (RRIF) Express loan program, but the application window closes April 11, leaving little time to figure out how best to navigate the system.

Interested railroads needing help understanding RRIF loans and how to apply can access a recorded version of ASLRRA’s recent webinar titled “Insights into the RRIF Express Loan Application Process” presented by Richard Sherman and David Tennent of The Seneca Group.

The recording of the RRIF Express webinar is only one of many available to members and non-members. Members can even access ASLRRA’s On-Demand Webinars for free. Click here to view the upcoming webinar schedule and learn more about On-Demand Webinars.
Upcoming Webinars

**Recruiting and Retaining Veterans and Transitioning Military** - Feb. 18, 2020

SPRING President Michele Malski and FASTPORT Executive Director of Military Engagement and Apprenticeships Dave Harrison will explain the benefits of establishing a federally registered apprenticeship program and how to start one.

**FRA Penalties and Violations** - Feb. 19, 2020

ASLRRA’s Senior Vice President of Safety and Regulatory Policy Jo Strang, along with Vice President of Safety and Compliance JR Gelnar, will discuss options available to short lines concerning how to prepare for and interact with inspectors during an audit, and available options when a violation has been received. Most short lines are considered a small business, requiring special actions from the FRA.

**Emergency Docket Waivers** - March 11, 2020

The FRA administrator can activate an emergency relief docket if extreme conditions constitute an emergency event to railroad operations. This webinar will explain emergency dockets and provide instruction on how to file a waiver petition for temporary relief from certain safety regulations. ASLRRA’s Senior Vice President of Safety and Regulatory Policy Jo Strang and Vice President of Safety and Compliance JR Gelnar will conduct the webinar.

[Click here](#) for more ASLRRA events.

Industry Events

**UT’s Transportation Assistance Program Offers Railroad Track Inspection and Safety Standards Course**

The University of Tennessee at Knoxville’s [Tennessee Transportation Assistance Program](#) offers railroad-related classes for those in the industry. A new Railroad Track Inspections and Safety Standards Class has been added to the program schedule, and will be held [June 22-26](#) in Granite City, Ill.

According to the University of Tennessee website, this course “describes track defects and acceptable corrective actions, presents a recommended methodology for conducting inspections, and discusses in depth the Federal Track Safety Standards in 49 CFR, Part 213.”

The new addition joins an earlier track inspection class scheduled for [March 9-13](#) in Chattanooga, Tenn. More details, including a course agenda and registration information, can be found at the respective links above.

[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.