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Join ASLRRA President Baker in Virtual Discussion on the Short Line Railroad Response to COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has forced everyone to change the way they conduct their daily lives, and how companies provide goods and services. Railroads also must change the way they conduct business, both within their internal organizations and externally with the customers and public they serve.

Join ASLRRA's live-streamed video panel discussion to hear how short lines are working to protect the health and safety of their employees and interacting with their customers to deliver much needed goods and services. ASLRRA President Chuck Baker will moderate the discussion with short line railroaders covering a range of topics from the approach railroads have taken to transporting operating and engineering crews, locomotive sanitation, policies and procedures, to reopening administration offices and more.

How Short Lines are Adapting Workplaces & Serving Customers
Wednesday, May 27 from 1:00 pm to 2:00 pm EST

Speakers:
Chuck Baker, President, ASLRRA
Mike Lundell, VP Compliance & Operating Practice, Genesee & Wyoming Railroad Services, Inc.
Daniel Hamilton, GM Mechanical, Indiana Rail Road Company
Travis Herod, Sr. VP Environmental, Health and Safety, Watco Companies, LLC

Follow the link above to register for the webinar. Registration is free for ASLRRA members.

SLSI Announces New Resource for Short Lines and New HazMat Director

The Short Line Safety Institute (SLSI) unveiled its newest resource for short lines, a best practices guide meant to help railroads enhance their company’s safety culture.

The document defines the ten core elements of a strong safety culture and identifies specific steps railroads can take to align railroad practices with the core elements. The goal is that by applying best practices, railroads will be able to “continuously elevate safety culture across all of these metrics.”

SLSI’s best practices document is just one of several of the organization’s resources available to short line railroads at no cost. Railroads can request a safety culture assessment from SLSI, or access safety tips, articles and more on the SLSI website. To find out more about programs available from SLSI, visit the SLSI website and review the new videos.

SLSI also announces it has hired John Walsh as its Director of Hazardous Materials Programs, a new position in the organization.

According to SLSI Executive Director Tom Murta, the SLSI was able to expand its services and resources related to safe hazardous materials transportation thanks to a grant from the Pipeline and Hazardous
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Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA), and Walsh “will be instrumental in the development and roll out of future offerings to the short line railroad industry.”

Walsh was most recently assistant vice president of safety and security with Genesee & Wyoming Railroad Services, Inc. He has 15 years of experience in the freight rail industry, and his over-30-year career also includes roles in public safety, security, emergency management, homeland security and compliance.

Please continue to check www.aslrra.org/COVID-19 for up-to-date information on legislative, regulatory, small business, and railroad specific updates.

PHMSA Withdraws Proposed Rulemaking to Regulate Vapor Pressure for Rail-Shipped Crude Oil

The Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) has withdrawn an advance notice of proposed rulemaking (ANPRM) regarding vapor pressure for crude oil transported by rail.

The ANPRM, which was published in January 2017, requested public comments regarding a petition for rulemaking from the New York State Office of the Attorney General asking that PHMSA establish a vapor pressure standard for crude oil shipped by rail.
PHMSA decided to withdraw the ANPRM based on the comments received from stakeholders, as well as a study conducted by the Sandia National Laboratories. The study found that crude oil vapor pressure “is not a significant factor in the severity of pool fire or fireball scenarios,” and study results do not support the creation of additional regulations.

In the withdrawal notice, PHMSA indicated it is no longer considering vapor pressure limits for crude oil transportation by rail or any other mode, nor is it considering imposing vapor pressure standards for other unrefined petroleum-based products and Class 3 flammable liquid hazardous materials.

Paycheck Protection Program Loan Forgiveness Application Released

The Treasury Department has released information explaining how small businesses can apply for loan forgiveness under the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP).

The PPP was enacted under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act to help small businesses retain their employees during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Loan Forgiveness Application explains how to calculate a company’s forgiveness amount, determine eligible payroll and nonpayroll costs, document eligibility for loan forgiveness and apply the CARES Act’s safe harbor for remediating payroll or headcount reductions.

For railroads seeking assistance with PPP loans, ASLRRA’s On-Demand Library features helpful webinars regarding this program. Accessing on-demand webinars is free to members, and by subscription to non-members. Other information can be found at ASLRRA’s COVID-19 resources page.

Truck Size and Weight Issue Revived in Light of COVID-19 Pandemic

Concerns regarding the security of America’s supply chain during the COVID-19 pandemic has led to a revival of calls to allow for bigger trucks on America’s interstates, a move opposed by railroads and other national organizations.

A coalition called Americans for Modern Transportation sent a letter to Congress on March 19 requesting truck size limits be raised to a maximum of 33-foot twin trailers, up from the current 28-foot limit.

Some governors have already allowed for a temporary increase in truck weights to allow for transportation of relief supplies. The Coalition Against Bigger Trucks, which includes emergency medical technicians and law enforcement organizations as members, agrees that extraordinary circumstances such as the COVID-19 pandemic can necessitate drastic measures, but released a statement calling for these changes to continue only as long as absolutely necessary.
ASLRRA opposes any increase to maximum truck size and weight, arguing that larger trucks endanger motorists, damage infrastructure, require significant taxpayer investment in road upkeep and lead to increased highway congestion. The Association especially opposes any COVID-19-related stimulus or infrastructure package that includes controversial provisions such as allowing increased truck size and weight limits.

### ASLRRA New Members

ASLRRA is delighted to welcome a new short line member.

Belpre Industrial Parkersburg Railroad (BIP), based in Marietta, Ohio, is a subsidiary of Cathcart Rail. The railroad began operations this month over 47 miles of track within Washington County, Ohio and Wood County and Parkersburg, W.Va. It connects at Parkersburg with CSX Transportation. Commodities hauled include aggregates, chemicals, coal, construction materials, fertilizers, metals, minerals, petroleum products, plastics, steel and scrap. Railcar storage, transloading and warehousing opportunities are available. Our primary contact at the railroad is General Manager Connie Vail.

### ASLRRA Announcements

**ASLRRA’s Preferred Providers Include GREX With Its Advanced Track Inspection Technology**

GREX’s Aurora Track Inspection Technology is now available to ASLRRA members with preferred pricing. Features of Aurora Track Inspection Technology include state-of-the-art imaging technology that pinpoints potential problems and marks their exact location, helps railroad to plan repairs in the most efficient way possible, provides detailed report that enables railroad to streamline capital maintenance programs and helps ensure railroad is in line with industry regulations with compliance reports.
Turn tie inspections into savings and safety with four scale tie grading 1-4; GPS coordinates for all ties; tie grade summaries per mile; 39’ FRA tie condition report; joint bar location report and joint tie condition report.

Visit www.aslrra.org/discount to learn how GREX’s Aurora Track Inspection Technology can make your operations safer and more efficient. Members interested in becoming preferred providers with ASLRRRA’s Member Discount Program can contact Senior Vice President of Education and Business Services Sabrina Waiss at swaiss@aslrra.org.

Tell Your Story: How Does Your Railroad Recognize Veterans?

Railroads have long worked with the U.S. military, and images of soldiers boarding trains en route to training or overseas assignments and lines of railcars carrying tanks and supplies are iconic. Still today, veterans and railroads find themselves a particularly good match for each other, with military experience often well suited to our industry.

May is National Military Appreciation Month in the U.S., and in honor of the longstanding partnership between the military and railroads, ASLRRRA wants to recognize the efforts of its members to acknowledge veterans and military members, and highlight how your railroad supports today’s military operations.

Those stories will be featured in ASLRRRA publications. Please submit information to Vice President of Communications Amy Krouse at akrouse@aslrra.org.

ASLRRRA Webinars

Review Legal Issues With ASLRRRA’s Top-Rated On-Demand Webinars

ASLRRRA has a wealth of educational webinars available online at the click of a mouse. Visit the On-Demand Webinars resource library on the ASLRRRA website to access dozens of relevant and timely webinar recordings on a wide range of topics, including the following selection of popular legal titles:

- **Hot Off the Press: What’s New at the STB**
  
  Presented By: Crystal Zorbaugh, associate attorney, Baker & Miller PLLC

- **Crossings: The Necessary Evil We Must Contend With**
  
  Presented By: Michael Barron, Jr., attorney, Fletcher & Sippel LLC

- **Not in my Backyard: Responding/Reacting to NIMBYism in the Community**
  
  Presented By: Janet Gilbert, partner, Fletcher & Sippel LLC

- **A Practical Guide to the Railroad Industry Agreement (RIA)**
  
  Presented By: Keith Borman, ASLRRRA senior vice president and general counsel and Mike Ogborn of Ogborn Consulting
View these popular recordings and dozens more covering finance, communications, human resources and technology by visiting ASLRA’s On-Demand Webinars resource library. Access is free to ASLRA members and available by subscription to non-members.

In addition to on-demand webinars, ASLRA is always working to provide its members with top-notch education, bringing industry and subject-matter experts right to your desk. Find out about our upcoming live webinars below, using the links to learn more or register.

**Upcoming Webinars**

**Effect of COVID-19 on Industry and Trends** - May 26, 2020

Joseph Bryan, vice president of freight and logistics advisory services at ASLRA member WSP USA will explore the lasting effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on the railroad industry, looking at the acceleration of existing trends as well as new developments.

**How Short Lines are Adapting Workplaces & Serving Customers** - May 27, 2020

Please see more information for this webinar in our Headline News section.

**45G - What to Do Now That It’s Renewed** - June 2, 2020

45G has been renewed for five years, and the renewal comes with some special rules relating to retroactivity, accrual versus cash-basis taxpayers, 45G expenditures versus income tax expenditures, and more. In this webinar, David Ayoub and Rick Tidd, partners-in-charge at Bowers & Company, CPAs, will explain these rules and discuss how short lines can take advantage of this important credit.

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

**Industry Events**

[Click here](#) for a listing of industry events. Changes due to COVID-19 restrictions will be noted as information becomes available.

Views & News is published by American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association. Please contact [Amy Krouse](#), editor, with questions or comments.