Railroad Day on Capitol Hill is March 7, 2018 - Make Your Room Reservations Now!

Railroad Day on Capitol Hill has proven to be the single most effective way to get our message to Congress. The size of the event, the geographical diversity of the participants, and the unified railroad industry message focuses Congress on our issues. Your participation makes the difference!  Click here to reserve your room at the Marriott Marquis or call 202-824-9200 and mention Railroad Day for our group rate of $279 per night. Railroad Day Registration will open later this week.

ASLRA Hosts 2017 Tax Reform Briefing

Join us on Tuesday, January 16th for a webinar on the recently passed tax reform bill. Our discussion will cover implications for both individuals and business, and planning considerations to consider going forward. Included in the presentation will be an overview of the passed tax reform legislation, changes and considerations for individuals and businesses, and future individual and business opportunities.

Register now - click here.

Sponsored by:

Legislative Update

ASLRA Continues Push for 45G Short Line Tax Credit

ASLRA continues to promote the 45G short line railroad rehabilitation tax credit, which supports critical infrastructure maintenance and improvements, despite its absence from the recently passed tax reform bill and the government spending extension.
The bill’s champions in Congress continue to show strong support for 45G, helping us find a way forward in January as Congress is set to consider spending bills for fiscal year 2018, including a tax extenders package and other must-pass legislation. ASLRRA is working to support their efforts in any way possible, and the Legislative Policy Committee is fully engaged.

The short line railroad tax credit leverages private sector investment in rail infrastructure by providing a tax credit of 50 cents for every dollar spent on track improvements, capped at $3,500 per track mile. If extended, this credit will provide more clarity for ASLRRA’s small business members so that they can plan and budget for track, grade crossing and bridge work in 2018 and beyond.

For support in reaching out to your elected representatives, please contact our Washington team’s Fred Oelsner. Also, please visit www.aslrra.org/BRACE to learn more about this important tax and infrastructure legislation.

Regulatory Update

FRA Issues Notice Regarding Accident Monetary Threshold

The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) has indicated that the Accident Monetary threshold for reporting will remain the same in 2018. A final rule will be issued in the near future. For more detail click here.

FRA Issues Guidance Clarifying Enforcement of Mandatory Phase Out of DOT 111 Cars

The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) has issued HMG - 130 as written guidance for DOT 111 cars in Class 3 flammable liquid service. FRA suggests that field inspectors utilize enforcement discretion when allowing residual DOT 111 tank cars moving for cleaning, retrofitting and/or repurposing after the applicable phase out deadline and loaded DOT 111 cars loaded and offered into transportation prior to the phase-out date to travel to destination with a violation or requiring an OTM. If you have a questions, contact jrgelnar@aslrra.org.

Member News

The Delaware-Lackawanna Railroad Announces Record Year in 2017

Boosted by carloads of wheat used in flour production and sand for natural gas exploration, the Delaware-Lackawanna Railroad, an ASLRRA member, logged a record year in 2017, handling 8,572 rail cars in the calendar year.

The DL operates 88 miles of trackage in Lackawanna, Monroe and Northampton counties of Northeast Pennsylvania, owned by the Pennsylvania Northeast Regional Railroad Authority.

“This report surpasses the former record of 8048 cars handled during 2015 and is very indicative of the economic growth that is occurring amongst the 20 plus industries served by the DL in Lackawanna and Monroe Counties in northeastern Pennsylvania,” said Larry Malski, President of PNRRA. The year over year carload growth rate for 2016 compared to 2017 was 31%.

The DL also added two new industries requiring rail service NEPA with one in Scranton named Scranton Transload and one in Stroud Township named Northwoods Paper. The regional railroad also handled over 100 special high and wide carloads of extremely heavy, high and wide components for the new Invenergy Jessup Power Plant.

ARE Acquires Media Wing, LLC

ASLRRA member ARE Corporation (American Rail Engineers), headquartered in Irvine, CA, has acquired Media Wing, LLC, a New England based UAV/Drone Data Collection, dba AirShark, and Video Production Company. The
acquisition expands ARE’s industry-leading engineering, software development, bridge inspection services and nationwide footprint to include unmanned flight operations, image analysis, GIS modeling and video rendering.

Dave Anderson, CEO of ARE, expressed his enthusiasm for the benefits the acquisition offers its customers: “We are very pleased to have Media Wing and AirShark as part of the ARE team. Bringing the companies together adds extraordinary value to the deliverables we provide and the ability for us to help our clients make informed decisions.” Fred Depuy, Founder of Media Wing, added, “each company embraces a culture of safety, professionalism, innovative thinking and continuous improvement that offers the market an exciting value proposition.”

Reading & Northern Railroad Smashes All Business Records

Reading & Northern Railroad (R&N), an ASLRRA member, smashed through the 30,000 freight cars moved benchmark on its way to the most successful year in its history.

By the end of 2017 R&N had handled 31,175 carloads, an increase in carloadings and revenue of close to 15 percent over 2016 and almost 50 percent over the last five years! This unprecedented growth came across all of the many commodity lanes handled by R&N.

Its anthracite coal business was up over 40 percent. Once again R&N is ”The Road of Anthracite”. This explosive growth was fueled by a late-year announcement of a major sale of Pennsylvania anthracite to the Ukraine, replacing Russian coal. Following a July announcement of the deal at the White House by Trump Administration officials, R&N was told to prepare to move over 300,000 tons of anthracite by year-end. R&N stepped up and managed to provide all the cars needed for the business and served as many as eight different origins as the entire anthracite community pulled together to fill this huge order.

2017 was the culmination of over 25 years of investment and risk-taking for R&N’s CEO/Owner Andy Muller, Jr. Muller said, ”It is never my intention to rest on our success and to pocket our profits. My goal is to build the best railroad in the nation. And to do that we have to constantly invest in the railroad. My investment decision might not make sense to outsiders but the proof of my strategy is apparent to anyone looking at our record of constant growth and success.”

In other news, R&N also announced record ridership on its scenic railway. Almost 120,000 people rode on the Reading and Northern and Lehigh Gorge Scenic Railway passenger rail offerings in 2017. This is approximately a 15% increase from 2016’s record-breaking year when Reading & Northern broke the 100,000 passenger mark for the second time running.

To read the press releases, click here.

Operation Lifesaver Develops New Education Materials for Students

Operation Lifesaver, Inc., the national nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting safety at railroad crossings and along railroad rights-of-way, has developed engaging new materials for its trained volunteer speakers to use in safety presentations with students in kindergarten through middle school.

“Operation Lifesaver is working to change people's behavior around railroad tracks and crossings with our educational materials and tips for people of all ages,” said OLI Interim President Wende Corcoran. “Every year, approximately 900 trespassers and over 1,000 motorists are involved in incidents along train tracks or at grade crossings,” she continued. “Reaching school-aged students with free presentations by our volunteers that are interesting, fun, and that convey lifesaving information is an important part of our multi-faceted approach to reducing those numbers.”
OmniTRAX to Sell 18-acre Property to City of Sand Springs, OK

OmniTRAX Inc., affiliate Sheffield Crossing LLC is selling an 18-acre property to the city of Sand Springs, Oklahoma, for a retail development. The lot is part of OmniTRAX's Sand Springs Railway Co. and the adjacent 146-acre former steel mill site, which the short-line holding company purchased from Gerdau in 2014.

The property is being developed for mixed use, including industrial, rail, retail, office and transportation/logistics. An original development agreement between Sand Springs and OmniTRAX was approved in September 2016.

"The city of Sand Springs is pleased with the continuing partnership with OmniTRAX, and we look forward to working together to spur job growth and bring development at this large, centrally located property within our city," said Mayor Mike Burdge in a press release. "The ability of the city to control a portion of the property for retailers is important as it allows us to reach out to those specific retailers needed for our citizens."

Red River Valley & Western Railroad Appoints Victor Meyers President, Mark Wegner is Chief Executive Officer

Red River Valley & Western Railroad (RRVW), an ASLRRA member, is pleased to announce that effective January 1, 2018, the new executive leadership team of Victor (Vic) Meyers as president and Mark Wegner as chief executive officer.

Board Chair, Martha Head, is very pleased with the new team. "I have had the opportunity to work closely with Mark and Vic at Twin Cities & Western Railroad (TC&W). I know that the strategic thinking, leadership skills, operational knowledge, commitment to safety, concern for employees and customer service they have brought to TC&W will be invaluable to RRVW."

Mr. Meyers most recently served as vice president of operations of TC&W, headquartered in Glencoe, Minnesota, where he provided leadership and guidance for the company’s long-range strategic plan as well as day-to-day operations support to ensure the safe, effective and efficient movement of freight rail transportation services throughout TC&W’s operating territory. In this role, he had direct leadership responsibilities for multiple departments including Transportation/Operations, Maintenance of Way, Mechanical, Safety, Accounting, Human Resources, Administration and Information Technology.

Meyers joined TC&W in 2013. Prior to that he worked for more than seven years at BNSF Railway in a variety of positions.

Mark Wegner is the current president and CEO of TC&W. He will continue in these positions while adding service as the chief executive officer of RRVW to his leadership responsibilities.

Mark Murphy Joins Antea Group as Vice President

With over 35 years of experience, Murphy specializes in emergency response and incident management for environmental spill events and natural disasters. He has provided technical direction and project management for spill-related events across chemical, manufacturing, oil & gas and railroad industries, including on-shore, off-shore and near-shore events.

Mark comes to Antea Group, an ASLRA member, from GHD where he served as Vice President and North American Railroad Service Line Leader. At GHD, he was responsible for the development and management of a large-scale
incident response program used to deploy qualified first responders, emergency management personnel and industrial hygiene professionals to support environmental spill events across the USA, Canada and Mexico. Mark is a member of the International Spill Control Organization and is a certified Incident Commander by the Transportation Technology Board.

“We are thrilled to have Mark join our firm,” says Gary Wisniewski, CEO of Antea Group USA. “His credentials speak for themselves and we are excited to integrate his knowledge and insights into our emergency response services and broader railroad segment offerings.”

Welcome New Members
ASLRRA is pleased to welcome five companies as new Associate Business Members.

**Ballast Tools Equipment**, based in Festus, MO, designs, builds, sells, and leases high-performance, high-durability specialty equipment for railroad track maintenance and construction. BTE’s machines are used throughout North America and internationally, serving Class I railroads, short lines and contractors. Our primary contact is Laura Villmer, marketing coordinator, who can be reached on lvillmer@btequip.com or (636) 937-3330. Look for them in Booth #1200 at our April annual convention expo in Nashville.

**Corporate Crisis Group**, based in Houston, TX, is a full-service strategic crisis management and communications firm, and has been providing functionally integrated planning, training and response since 2002. Its services include crisis management, risk assessment, planning, crisis communications, corporate security training and emergency management. Firm Partner John Ambler is our primary contact and can be reached at jambler@corporatecrisisgroup.com or (833) 227-4747.

**ICC Group**, based in Elburn, IL, is an established and growing employee-owned general contractor that operates throughout the U.S. It has a strong track record of performance in bridge and heavy highway civil projects with a portfolio of work that includes highly visible and complex projects for Class I, II, III and commuter rail owners, state and local government agencies, and the Army Corps of Engineers. Daniel R. Kelly, vice president of preconstruction, is our primary contact and can be reached at dankelly@icceo.com or (630) 200-8180. Look for them in Booth #728 at our April annual convention expo in Nashville.

**Mullican & Hart**, P.C., is a Tulsa, OK-based law firm that represents short line and Class I railroads in Oklahoma, Kansas, Arkansas and Texas. It has more than 75 years’ combined experience defending railroads in matters, including FELA, grade crossing, property damage, labor issues, environmental issues, employment issues, contractual matters, administrative law matters, and appellate work. Firm Partner Robert Hart is our primary contact and can be reached at rhart@mullicanhart.com or (918) 794-6500. Many thanks to our friends at Farmrail for recommending that the firm join our Association.

**Nisus Corp.**, based in Rockford, TN, manufactures AWPA standardized, non-restricted use wood preservatives. Nisus provides green solutions for railroad crossties, switch ties, bridge timbers and pilings. Ken Laughlin, divisional vice president of wood preservation, is our primary contact and can be reached on kenl@nisuscorp.com or (865) 577-6119. Look for them in Booth #529 at our April annual convention expo in Nashville.

Register Today!

**Webinar: 2017 Tax Reform Briefing**

Join us on Tuesday, January 16th for a webinar on the recently passed tax reform bill. Our discussion will cover implications for both individuals and business, and planning considerations to consider going forward. Included in the presentation will be an overview of the passed tax reform legislation, changes and considerations for individuals and businesses, and future individual and business opportunities. Sponsored by Bowers & Company.
Webinar: Emergency Notification Systems (ENS) Review

Join the SLSI on February 8th at 2 PM EST for a discussion and review of what ENS is and how it works, with our expert, James Dahlem, Office of Railroad Safety, FRA. Our presenter will take us through how ENS works and how it may be able to benefit your railroad.

JOIN US AT CONNECTIONS 2018

Registration Now Open for ASLRRA CONNECTIONS 2018

Gaylord Opryland
Nashville, Tennessee
April 7-10, 2018

Join us April 7-10, 2018 for ASLRRA’s Annual CONNECTIONS Convention, offering great networking opportunities, a packed exhibit hall, powerhouse speakers, and breakout education sessions on a vast range of industry topics. You don’t want to miss this fantastic event! A few reasons to attend include:

- Nine Education Tracks with 30+ Breakout Sessions and Super Sessions
- Keynotes Delivered by BNSF Executive Chairman Matt Rose and WIRED Magazine Editor-In-Chief Greg Williams
- More than 250 Exhibitors, Expo Hall Social Activities, Meals & Networking
- ASLRRA-PAC Fundraising Event at the Grand Old Opry
- Railroading in Heels Reception for Women in Railroading
- Young Professionals Mentoring Session/Happy Hour and separate Peer Mentoring Breakout Session
- Silent Auction Fundraiser Benefiting the Short Line Education Fund
- Pinewood Derby Benefiting the PAC
- Golf Outing at Hermitage Golf Course
- Closing Event aboard the General Jackson Riverboat

Follow this link to register. Also, our room block is now open, and if history is any indication, this will sell out fast! Join us in Nashville!

Prime sponsorship opportunities and booth spaces are still available for the CONNECTIONS convention. Looking to boost your profile at the event? Companies can purchase an ad for less than $1,000 in our Official Convention Program that is distributed at the convention and is chock-full of information that all attendees want/need to know. Contact ASLRRA’s Kathy Keeney for more information or visit our website.

Applications Due Feb. 16 for Susan Murray Scholarship Program

Applications are now being accepted on a competitive basis for the Susan C. Murray Memorial Women’s Scholarship, awarded annually to a daughter or granddaughter of an employee of an ASLRRA railroad or associate member company.

The scholarship is administered by IHS Markit, parent company of ASLRRA member The Pocket List of Railroad Officials. Please click here for the application and other program details.

Completed applications are due Feb. 16. For more information, please contact Kathy Rogers on kathy.rogers@ihsmarkit.com.

Views & News is published by the American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association. Please contact Amy Krouse, Editor, akrouse@aslrra.org, with any questions or comments.