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It is hard to believe that we are already over half way through 2017. The spring and early summer have flown by!

Much of the spring was dominated by the legislative session and changes in Alabama state government. The Alabama Railway Association had a successful legislative session and hosted a breakfast for members of the House and Senate Transportation Committees.

This summer, the ARA has hosted three member facility tours. Legislators, city councilmen, county commissioners, customers, and others have attended and learned about the impact of the rail industry on Alabama. Check out the feature on [page five](#) for pictures from the tours.

Thank you to those who submitted content for this edition. Please continue to send information for the next newsletter, which will come out at the end of the year.

**Maeci Walker | Executive Director**

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## 2017 Legislative Session

*The Alabama Railway Association enjoyed a successful session.*

Instead of a General Membership Meeting, the Alabama Railway Association hosted a legislative breakfast during the legislative session in Montgomery. Members of the House and Senate Transportation Committees were invited to attend.

Approximately 15 legislators attended. They heard from Executive Director Maeci Walker on the impact of rail in Alabama. ARA Board Member, Elizabeth Lawlor, presented on crossing safety, maintenance responsibilities, and quiet zones. Donald Lovelace, Transportation Technologist for ALDOT, explained Section 130 money and how projects are chosen to receive the funds. And, Christy Sammon, State Director for GoRail, gave an overview of the federal regulations and the national impact of freight railroads.

Events such as this one help ARA educate legislators on the importance

of freight rail to Alabama's economy and allows them to ask questions and seek more information if needed.

ARA also worked with railroad labor on safety legislation this year. [HB 246](#) by Rep. Napoleon Bracy (D - Mobile) and [SB 202](#) by Sen. Greg Reed (R - Jasper) would have added maintenance of way equipment to the existing statute that requires drivers to stop at railroad crossings when a train or "other on-track equipment" is approaching.

The bill passed the House unanimously and was approved by the Senate Transportation and Utilities Committee. Unfortunately, the bill did not make it to the floor of the Senate. So, it died before being approved. We hope to work with labor representatives again next year on the legislation.

2018 marks an election year for the entire legislature and all statewide officials. For information on elections, visit the [Alabama Secretary of State's website](#).



2017 RAIL SAFETY MONTH



Calera, June 1-2



Calera, June 1-2



Tuscumbia, June 10



Foley, June 15 & 17



Calera, June 1-2



Tuscumbia, June 10



# 2017 Rail Safety Month

By Maeci Walker

*Alabama Operation Lifesaver celebrates Rail Safety month with four special stops in Calera, Tuscumbia, Foley, and Selma.*

When it comes to vehicle collisions and fatalities, Alabama is among the worst. Across the state, there are more than 3,500 miles of train tracks. Those tracks create more than 6,000 vehicle crossings.

The staff at Operation Lifesaver has made it their mission to reduce the number of railway collisions. Each year, June has been designated as Railroad Safety Month, and various events are held across the nation to increase rail safety awareness.

Alabama Operation Lifesaver (ALOL) hosted Rail Safety events in Calera, Tuscumbia, and Foley. Due to Tropical Storm Cindy, the Selma stop will be rescheduled.

The Calera event was held at the Heart of Dixie Railroad Museum on June 1 - 2. Altogether, the event drew almost 1,800 visitors - the largest crowd ever! Visitors enjoyed train rides, safety activities, exhibits, and more. Hundreds of children from the YMCA were able to enjoy the festivities on June 2

and learn about the importance of rail safety. The Tuscumbia event, held at the Tuscumbia Depot on June 10, garnered 175 visitors, and the Foley events on June 15 and 17 brought in 375 visitors.

Alabama is currently ranked eighth across the nation in the number of collisions involving cars and trains. The state also ranks number eight in the number of fatalities that come from vehicle-train collisions. A growing statistic is the number of people killed while walking on tracks.

"We have work to do, and we need to remind people that every time they see tracks to think train," explained Nancy Hudson, ALOL Executive Director.

Hudson said the best piece of safety equipment at a railroad crossing is the driver of the vehicle. They should make sure they are focused, paying attention, and make the right choice.

For more information on Alabama Operation Lifesaver, visit their [website](#).

## QUOTE OF THE DAY

"For the freight rail industry, there is no higher priority than safety."

- [AAR President & CEO Ed Hamberger](#)



# Progress Rail Launches “Project Literacy” Program

By Amy Everett

In 2015, Progress Rail CEO Billy Ainsworth held a meeting with Steve Marshall (the Marshall County District Attorney at the time, now Alabama Attorney General) and asked him, “What is the greatest challenge facing Marshall County?” Steve responded that the greatest problem is the high school drop-out rate. Through Progress Rail’s research, we learned that students who do not read on a third grade level by third grade are four times more likely to drop out of high school.

After engaging with local community leaders and government officials (like Steve Marshall and Rep. Will Ainsworth, Representative House District 27), Progress Rail determined that a literacy program with local elementary schools to help at-risk students with their reading skills would be the best first step in helping improve graduation rates.

In 2016, the company launched the Project Literacy program with over 20 volunteers who worked with 45 students from Asbury Elementary School, holding one-on-one reading/mentoring sessions at

the school for one hour, once per week during the school day. In 2017, the program expanded with over 65 volunteers from five local organizations and 130 students at five different schools. The goal is to continue increasing the program year-over-year with volunteers from various organizations reaching more students at additional schools. To do this, we need volunteers! Those who are interested in participating in the program during the 2017/2018 school year should contact Amy Everett at [aeverett@progressrail.com](mailto:aeverett@progressrail.com).

At Progress Rail, we know that literacy and graduation rates directly correlate to a job-ready workforce and job creation, which is imperative to our business success in Marshall County. We also believe that helping improve graduation rates in our backyard contributes to the health, welfare, and economic stability of the community where over 300 of our employees live and work. Today, Progress Rail is a global organization with over 7,000 employees at over 150 locations, but we are proud to be founded and headquartered in Albertville, Alabama.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**RailwayInterchange:** Sept. 17 - 20

**ASLRRRA Southern Region Meeting:** Sept. 25 - 27

**SRPC Conference:** Oct. 18 - 20

**ARA Annual Meeting:** Dec. 6 - 7

## 2016 INJURY FREE

**Jake Award with Distinction:** Autauga Northern Railroad, Bay Line Railroad, Conecuh Valley Railroad, Eastern Alabama Railway, Georgia Southwestern Railroad, Huntsville & Madison County RR Authority, Luxapalila Valley Railroad, Meridian & Bigbee Railroad, Southern Electric Railroad, Tennessee Southern Railroad, Terminal Railway - Alabama State Docks, Three Notch Railway, Wiregrass Central Railroad

**Jake Award:** Alabama & Gulf Coast Railway, Birmingham Terminal Railway

## “Forced Access” would undermine rail investment, service: Sign the GoRail Letter

The U.S. Surface Transportation Board (STB) continues to consider new regulations on freight railroads — including forced access — that stand to harm our economy, consumers, and thousands of farms, factories, mines and other businesses that rely on freight rail. GoRail is circulating an open letter to Congressional leaders explaining how reregulation would undermine railroads’ ability to invest into the network, imperiling local rail service for most shippers and communities.

Contact GoRail’s [Michael Gaynor](#), AVP for Field Operations, to sign the letter.

## Alabama Railway Association Executive Committee

**President:** [Mike Russell](#), Terminal Railway

**Vice President:** [Joe Arbona](#), Genesee & Wyoming

**Secretary/Treasurer:** [Elizabeth Lawlor](#), Norfolk Southern

**At-Large Member:** [Jeremy Cole](#), Southern Electric Railroad

**At-Large Member:** [Jane Covington](#), CSX Transportation

**Associate Voting Members:** [Steve Faulkner](#), Birmingham Rail & Locomotive; [Eddie Horton](#), Stella-Jones



## Norfolk Southern bringing safety train to three Alabama cities

At Norfolk Southern, safety is its number one priority. Operation Awareness & Response (OAR) was launched in 2015 to educate the public about the economic importance of the safe movement of hazardous materials by rail and to connect emergency first responders in Norfolk Southern communities with information and training resources.

To promote this initiative, NS unveiled a brand new safety train with a dedicated locomotive, specially equipped classroom box cars, and several tank cars for additional hands-on and local training. This educational train is coming to three cities in Alabama this fall where the NS team will host regional first responder classes over three day periods: **Huntsville** (September 12-14), **Birmingham** (September 19-21), and **Tuscaloosa** (October 10-12).

The goal of OAR is to strengthen relationships with the first responders across the NS network. Norfolk Southern has been providing safety training for emergency responders through community outreach programs such as TRANSCAER® for years.

OAR will build on those efforts by focusing on

- Building closer relationships with local and state agencies;
- Increasing training opportunities (classroom, web-based, and on-line resources);
- Facilitating table-tops drills and participating in full-scale exercises, and
- Providing better resources for emergency responders, such as the AskRail mobile app that allows first responders to use their mobile phones to look up commodity and response information on shipments.

Dozens of fire and police departments, county and municipal emergency management systems, and paramedics' organizations have been invited through the NS Alabama Division to participate in the free training classes.

For more information, visit [www.JoinNSOAR.com](http://www.JoinNSOAR.com), or contact Glen Rudner, NS Hazmat Compliance Officer, at [Glen.Rudner@exchange.nscorp.com](mailto:Glen.Rudner@exchange.nscorp.com).

## WATCO opens first of its kind rail training center in Birmingham

via [al.com](http://al.com)

Thousands of rail workers will come through Birmingham in coming years to train at WATCO's new state of the art training system.

It's the first training center of its kind for WATCO, a Kansas-based transportation company with 4,800 employees and 175 centers. The company held a ribbon cutting on Monday.

The 10,000-square-foot center in Fairfield is the first of its kind, said Travis Herod, Senior Vice President of Safety and Training. Unlike previous training methods - which have taken place all over the country, but typically in conference rooms nowhere near rail - it allows for hands on learning. The center has railroad simulators that will put trainees in rail simulators identical to conductors' chairs.

Because the center is adjacent to railroad, WATCO's trainees can also practice and learn from actual train engines and other parts.

Dan Smith, Chief Operating Officer of WATCO, called Birmingham one of the company's most critical locations.

"The weather is conducive to year-round training, we've got amazing infrastructure here in this community, and we've got some of our Best people who live right here in Birmingham who are really, really good at teaching our next folks at how to do things," Smith said. "We do a lot of business in Alabama and we want to do more business in Alabama."

## CSX increasing service for two customers in Alabama

Epic Midstream LLC is a leading independent liquid bulk storage and logistics solutions provider headquartered in Houston, Texas. Epic manages the storage and transportation requirements for many of the world's leading market participants. Epic's assets currently consist of eight petroleum service terminals - two marine facilities, five pipeline facilities, and one rail facility. The customer is adding to its terminals a CSX rail served site in Montgomery.

The City of Prattville recently announced the James Hardie Building Project. James Hardie Building is the manufacturer of fiber-cement building parts for homes. The project also brings approximately 200 jobs to the community. The site will be dual served with WATCO (Autauga Northern) short line via the NS and CSX. CSX currently provides 7 day service with existing local service from Montgomery to this site. Read the full press release [here](#).

did you know?

America's railroads move a ton of freight an average of 473 miles on one gallon of fuel. That's like going from Birmingham to Indianapolis.\*

# 2017 ARA Member Facility Tours

As part of ARA's legislative agenda and goals to educate key members of the state legislature and local communities on the importance of freight railroads in Alabama, we have hosted three member facility tours this summer.

On July 11, Stella-Jones Corporation (SJC) hosted members of the local Montevallo community, including the Mayor and city councilmen, and several state legislators for a tour of their Montevallo facility. SJC was founded in 1991 and has grown into an industry leader for the supply of railroad timbers to Class I and smaller railroads. SJC's Montevallo facility has been in operation for over 60 years.

Montevallo produces both mainline and branch line cross ties for replacing standard track, longer switch ties for junctions, and specialty, oversized timbers for railroad bridges. The facility employs 59 full-time employees and will sell upwards of 4,000,000 cubic feet of finished wood products to railroads and contractors throughout the country in 2017.



L-R: Rep. Matt Fridy (R - Montevallo), Rep. April Weaver (R - Brierfield), Sen. Cam Ward (R - Alabaster), Elizabeth Lawlor - Norfolk Southern, Montevallo Mayor Hollie Cost, Sen. Jabo Waggoner (R - Vestavia)



On July 18, ARA partnered with Norfolk Southern to host a tour of their Norris Hump Yard in Irondale. Several Irondale Police Department members, city councilmen, Chamber representatives, state legislators, and others attended.

Norris Yard opened on September 9, 1952, as one of the first automated hump yards of its time. Approximately 2000 cars go through Norris Yard each day. Daily, 14 inbound trains terminate and 14 outbound trains originate at Norris Yard. They also operate 8 local trains a day. There are 12 receiving tracks, 56 classification tracks, and 14 departure tracks with over 50 transportation employees, over 550 mechanical/engineering employees, and over 50 employees at the division headquarters.



L-R: Rep. Tim Wadsworth (R - Arley), Tim Sharitt - Port Birmingham Terminal Manager, KR McKenzie - WATCO Commercial Manager, PSC Commissioner Jeremy Oden, Jason Ford - WATCO Asst. Vice President, Andy Mayo - City of Birmingham, Economic Development

On July 26, approximately 25 people gathered at WATCO's Port Birmingham for a tour of their facility.

Several representatives of the Birmingham Business Alliance, City of Birmingham, state legislators, Public Service Commission, and others were in attendance.

The Port is located on 182 acres with one-half mile frontage on the Black Warrior River. River service connects to the deep water Port of Mobile, and Port Birmingham handles a variety of bulk, break bulk, and liquid materials via truck, barge, and rail.

WATCO employees 18 people at Port Birmingham with plans to continue to grow and diversify their commodities and industry base.

WATCO's rail connectivity in Alabama allows access to destinations across North America via connections to BNSF, CSX, and Norfolk Southern.

## Huge new container cranes on way to Mobile, despite Tropical Storm Cindy

via [al.com](#)

Tropical Storm Cindy hasn't delayed the arrival of two gigantic new container cranes that will dramatically boost capacity at the Port of Mobile. In fact, it looks like they'll arrive a day or two sooner than expected.

Area boaters should have the rare chance to see the cranes moving up Mobile Bay on Saturday morning, if the current schedule holds. It'll be the end of a voyage that began Shanghai in late April and went around the Cape of Good Hope.

According to information released this week by the Alabama State Port Authority (ASPA), the two cranes are built by Chinese company ZPMC and are classed as "super post-Panamax" units. That refers to the biggest class of container ships and cranes currently in use worldwide.

"These things are much bigger than anything we have in the port today," said ASPA Vice President for Marketing Judith Adams. "And we have some big ones."

Adams said the new cranes will work alongside the "post-Panamax" cranes installed at the container terminal in 2008, rather than replacing them. The new ones have a capacity of 100 long tons, or well over 200,000 pounds. They can reach across a width of 22 to 23 shipping containers, compared to a reach of 19 units for the current cranes, and a height of 10 containers stacked on deck.

The cranes will fuel an ongoing boom in container trade through Mobile, and help serve the massive new Walmart distribution center being built west of the city.

In March, ASPA and APM Terminals reported that 2016 had brought a 19 percent increase in container traffic, to a record level of 277,307 TEUs. (Shipping containers come in different sizes; the TEU, or Twenty-foot Equivalent Unit, describes total volume in terms of standard 20-foot-long containers.)

According to the same report, the new cranes are part of a \$47.5 million expansion at the APM Terminals facility, which will increase its annual capacity to 500,000 TEUs - nearly double last year's record-setting benchmark.

Read the full article [here](#).



Sain's Transportation Engineers receiving award for Alabama Section Institute of Transportation Engineers of the Year

## ARA member awards and recognition

The University of Alabama Economic Development Academy recently completed its first Applied Economic Development Honors class with eighteen young professionals from around the state participating in the program. **Rashard Howard, industrial development manager for CSX Transportation**, completed the program and will receive his graduation certificate during the Economic Development Association of Alabama summer conference in July.

The **Huntsville and Madison County Railroad Authority (HMCR)** was recently presented with a Bronze Award for its business initiative at Norfolk Southern's 16th annual short-line meeting May 23rd in Norfolk, Virginia.

The HMCR received the award for increasing business volumes between 251 - 500 carloads as part of the Norfolk Southern's "250 Squared" program. The program is designed to identify new opportunities for rail and offer additional options for shippers.

**Sain Traffic Team Leader, Jeff Stephenson**, was named Transportation Engineer of the Year by [Alabama Section Institute of Transportation Engineers](#).

*The Alabama Railway Association is a non-profit association that was founded in 2003. We are a trade organization that represents all railroads in Alabama, from Short lines to Class I Railroads, along with many Associate Members that supply services and/or materials to support our operations.*

*The purpose of the Alabama Railway Association is to promote and support Alabama railroads within the state of Alabama, to assist in improving rail service within the state of Alabama, to increase railroad safety awareness within the industry and to the public, and to provide for interchange of ideas and cooperation among railroad businesses and state and local governments.*

# THE FREIGHTINTERCHANGE

Alabama Railway Association

[www.alabamarailwayassociation.org](http://www.alabamarailwayassociation.org)

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