



American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association

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ASLRRA Honors Exemplary Careers Dedicated to Railroad Safety

*Safety Person and Safety Professional of the Year Both Employed by
Patriot Rail Company*

WASHINGTON, June 25, 2021- The American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association (ASLRRA) has announced its selection of two individuals for their decades-long dedication to railroad safety, and both recipients are employees of Patriot Rail Company, LLC – an ASLRRA first! George Johnson Jr., Locomotive Engineer, will be honored as the Safety Person of the Year, and Herman Crosson, Vice President Safety, Training & Regulatory will be honored as the Safety Professional of the Year. The awards will be presented at ASLRRA's upcoming Annual Convention, November 17 - 19, 2021 in Phoenix, Ariz.

"The ASLRRA is pleased to recognize two individuals who have dedicated their careers to providing leadership in safety performance. There is no higher calling on a railroad than the commitment to bringing all team members home safely, every night, despite multiple competing priorities," said Chuck Baker, President of ASLRRA. "This year's applicant pool was the most competitive we have ever had. We are honored to recognize George Johnson, Jr. and Herman Crosson, both of Patriot Rail Company, for their significant contributions to their company's safety culture, their community, and to the freight rail industry. Safety must come first for freight railroads every day, and these two leaders help make that goal a reality."

Safety Person of the Year - George Johnson Jr., Locomotive Engineer, Patriot Rail Company

The Safety Person of the Year recognizes a short line and regional railroad employee who has demonstrated outstanding safety achievement through visible promotion of safety programs and initiatives, as well as leadership by example. In addition, the individual must contribute off-duty time to activities promoting community safety and involvement in social service.

George Johnson's efforts have contributed to thirty-nine years (and counting!) of injury free service at the Golden Triangle Railroad (GTRA). He prioritizes addressing potential safety hazards, and fellow employees take note of his consistent, focused situational awareness.

"You have to fight complacency every minute – just because we've always executed a move or a procedure a certain way without a safety threat doesn't mean that the next time it couldn't be different," Johnson has stated.

Johnson's mission for his company and community is to educate and encourage others to stay adaptable and prepared for working safely in the rail industry. At every level of his career, George has trained new rail service employees in safety and operational expectations. Upon becoming Designated Supervisor of Locomotive Engineers more than 15 years ago, he formally assumed responsibility for training and certification of new and previously certified locomotive engineers.

Johnson serves as the chairman of GTRA's Safety Committee and led the implementation of many new initiatives at the company including the Federal Railroad Administration's (FRA) new power brake rules and the implementation and maintenance of the GTRA 5S program (a system of organizing spaces so work can be performed efficiently, effectively, and safely), serves as the senior on-the-job train-the-trainer, and is GTRA's liaison with a key customer's (International Paper) safety committee.

"George's active focus on safety has led to a 39-year career of incident-free service, professional excellence, and compelling safety leadership in the railroad industry," said John E. Fenton, CEO of Patriot Rail. "George believes in rules because rules keep railroaders alive. He

carries this approach into his life outside the cab, and which is why George is such an effective teacher, leader and partner.”

Johnson gives back to his community as well. He is a 25-year volunteer member for the local Operation Lifesaver chapter, and volunteers in his local church, performing wellness checks for church members and serving as a mentor to children and young adults.

Safety Professional of the Year - Herman Crosson, Vice President Safety, Training & Regulatory, Patriot Rail Company

The Professional of the Year is awarded to a short line and regional railroad safety management employee who is able to work effectively with personnel at all levels of the organization and industry, and supports the success of the short line industry in safety through the sharing of expertise and knowledge and the application of all regulatory requirements.

“As Patriot Rail’s safety leader, Herman inspires by example, starting with his continuing current FRA certifications as Locomotive Engineer and Conductor. The VISION ZERO campaign that Herman implemented at Patriot Rail begins with Herman’s own personal commitment and applies to everyone throughout the organization – Remember: No job is so important, no service so urgent that we cannot take time to perform all work safely. We can never afford to place productivity ahead of safety. Patriot’s VISION ZERO centers on engaging employees, enabling alignment and ownership of safety by all,” said John Fenton, CEO of Patriot Rail.

The introduction that Mr. Crosson uses to describe Patriot’s VISION ZERO program illustrates his inclusive philosophy. “Getting to incident-free performance requires rethinking how we approach safety activities, the measures we use to monitor progress and define success, and the way we approach engagement of employees at all levels. It means creating an environment where incidents are not acceptable and where we do everything possible to prevent them.”

In addition to spearheading the Vision Zero project, Crosson drives Patriot Rail’s Safety Committee program, which focuses employees on identifying and preventing root cause practices, in addition to complying with regulations. Operating employees nominate their peers as leaders, and teams meet monthly conducting a range of inspections and identify new potential risks. This constant engagement promotes a dialogue across the company on continuing best practices – a critical element of a safety-focused culture.

Beyond his safety responsibilities at Patriot Rail, Crosson urges members of the community to keep safety at the forefront of their minds. A member of the U.S. Army National Guard, Crosson's selfless devotion to duty was recognized with his promotion to Colonel effective December 20, 2020. Upon his appointment to his current post June 1, 2020, Crosson became the first African-American commander of the South Carolina National Guard 59th Troop Command at McEntire Joint National Guard Base, leading 1,600 soldiers. Over the past year, the Brigade has supported 280,000 COVID testing and vaccination sites in South Carolina, and data centers for vaccination scheduling. At the onset of COVID, the Brigade delivered more than 100,000 meals to school children, and the medics have supported hospitals during the COVID surges which helped offset the need for civilian medical professionals.

Crosson is also actively involved in his church, assisting with security.

About ASLRRRA - The American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association (ASLRRRA) is a non-profit trade association representing the interests of the nation's 603 short line and regional railroads and railroad supply company members in legislative and regulatory matters. Short lines operate 47,500 miles of track in 49 states, or approximately 29% of the national railroad network, touching in origination or termination one out of every five cars moving on the national railroad system, serving customers who otherwise would be cut off from the national railroad network. www.aslrra.org