Standing Committee On Rail Transportation
Washington, DC
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Short Line Safety Institute

Ron Hynes, Executive Director
Agenda

• Evolutionary change in railroad safety
• Short Lines Safety Institute 2015 Pilot Project
• Current accomplishments
• Our path forward in 2016
The Need for a Safety Institute

Reduce human-factor accidents/incidents

- Improve the safety culture of small and medium size railroads
- Provide training resources
- Provide Research
- Communicate safety information
There have been many safety improvements to railroad locomotives, cars, track, & signals.

- Better ways of maintaining and inspecting track
- Better wayside equipment defect detection systems
- Better methods for internal rail defect detection
- Computer-aided train dispatching systems
The Need for a Safety Institute

Over the last several decades:

• Mechanical-caused derailments and accidents have been greatly reduced
• Track-caused derailments are down
• Broken rail derailments are down
• Dispatcher errors are greatly reduced
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Reduce human-factor accidents/incidents

• Human Factor accidents have not been reduced to the same extent
• People are people; people make mistakes
• Education and training are essential
• The need for a change in safety culture is the next step in reducing accidents
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Safety culture can be improved over time

- Class I railroads have made positive changes in their safety culture
- Rate of human factor accidents are lower for Class I’s
- Innovative safety programs have taken hold
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Safety culture can be improved over time

• Improve the safety culture of smaller railroads
• Examine how safety is prioritized in the organization
• Make positive changes to improve safety culture
Our Start – 2015 Pilot Project

Pilot Project for Safety Culture Assessments

- Sponsored by FRA Research & Development
- SLSI partners with FRA, UCONN, and VOLPE
- Define safety culture
- Develop safety culture assessment protocols
- Contract safety culture assessors
- Provide training and observation
- Site visits to selected railroads
Stand Alone SLSI for 2016

The Short Line Safety Institute is Independent

• Works closely with the ASLRRAA
• However, it is a separate corporation
• SLSI has its own Bylaws
• SLSI has its own Board of Directors
• SLSI has its own Board of Advisors
Going Forward in 2016

Next steps:

• Complete the 2015 Pilot Phase
• Hire and train staff
• Retain and train safety culture assessors
• Begin safety culture assessments
• Produce educational tools
Standing Committee On Rail Transportation

Questions?

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