



11703 Fairfax Woods Way #12101  
Fairfax, VA 22030  
[www.springrecruits.com](http://www.springrecruits.com)

Contact:

Michele Malski

[Michele@springrecruits.com](mailto:Michele@springrecruits.com)

(Cell) 570-498-0935

### **Laying the Tracks for the Future: *with FASTPORT & SPRING***

**Fairfax, VA** – April 15, 2019 – As retirements and turnovers continue to affect the rail industry’s workforce, so too does a loss of employee’s vital skills and industry knowledge. In addition, there is a growing need for structured and documented training programs as regulations continue to suggest. Recognizing this growing concern in the rail industry, two company members of the ASLRRA, FASTPORT, a veteran employment software company, and a start-up Succession Planning for Railroads Investing in the Next Generation (SPRING), a succession planning company, have aligned interests to introduce and offer railroads a free resource and cooperative solution for recruiting and retention. After connecting at the ASLRRA Connections Convention, FASTPORT’s Executive Director of Apprenticeships, Dave Harrison, and Founder and President of SPRING, Michele Malski, have established a plan to promote and develop Registered Apprenticeship training programs within the rail industry in 2019.

FASTPORT, Inc. is a contracted Department of Labor (DOL) industry intermediary to increase apprenticeship programs for civilian and veteran talent and has a commercial co-venture with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation’s Hiring Our Heroes Program to develop the preeminent employment marketplace to connect employers and military candidates. Through the support of the DOL, FASTPORT aims to expand their reach from the already 8,000+ new apprentices since January 2017 in various industries including transportation organizations. They, together in collaboration with SPRING, aim to create new apprenticeships in the rail industry to help formalize existing training programs, create national reliable models for industry-based instruction and on-the-job training for companies that operate in multiple locations across the country, and when possible, source apprenticeship candidates, serving as a conduit to bridge the skill gap. FASTPORT also provides technical assistance to companies on how to take advantage of federal and state benefits and programs, assists with the registration process, and can help guide companies in the development of occupational competencies. “With FASTPORT’s

established and growing success in implementing the apprenticeship program in other transportation industries such as trucking, the rail industry could also benefit from the same pairing in this program that is made possible by the DOL,” says Dave Harrison, Executive Director of Apprenticeships. “The rail industry has a set standard for operating rules whether companies abide by NORAC or GCOR, have the same goals to achieve increasingly high levels of safety, and have similar federal responsibilities and procedures according to the Federal Railroad Administration and other transportation regulatory agencies. This opportunity will allow railroad and railroad suppliers, large and small, the ability to leverage their existing training and formalize their training processes for specific job duties. It will open the door for talent across the country to recognize a participating company's program on a nationwide level. Apprenticeships are emerging in a time of need. It will introduce solid boots-on-the-ground training resources for many growing short line and regional railroad players that are dedicated to future planning and success,” says Founder and President of SPRING, Michele Malski.

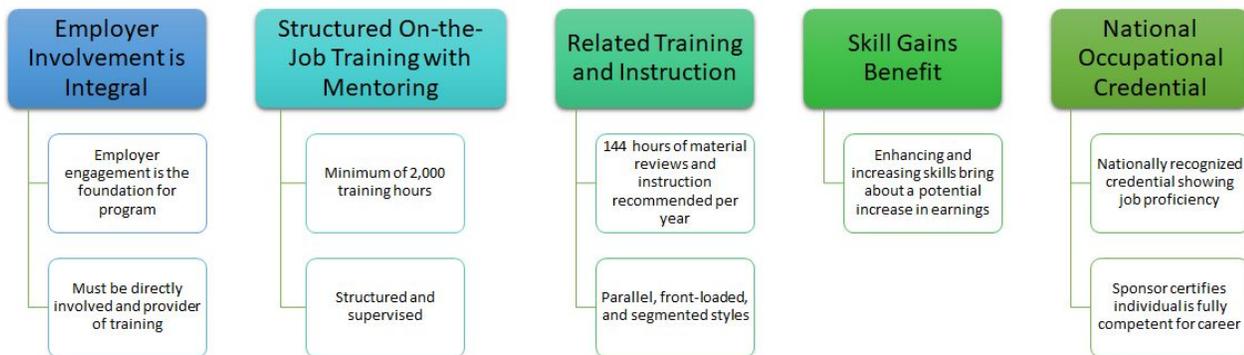
### **Attention on Apprenticeships**

Apprenticeships are a tried and true workforce development strategy that have paid dividends for companies who use the program. Employers who utilize apprentices report higher productivity, higher retention rates and a substantial return on investment. As the economy continues to grow, business leaders across all industries are in the best position to tell their success stories: that apprenticeships fulfill their need to create a pipeline of skilled workers to help them take their companies to the next level. “Companies that are Leaders of Excellence in Apprenticeship, Development, Education, and Research include TMC Transportation, TESLA Motors, JB Hunt, Siemens Corp., United Parcel Service, Werner Enterprises, Inc., Zurich North America, General Motors, and many more. There is a distinct advantage in Veteran Recruiting and retention as an apprenticeship provider, including reduced costs for employers and ability for veteran apprentices to use their G.I. Bill to draw a Monthly Housing Allowance (MHA) in the location in which these programs are established,” says Dave Harrison, Executive Director of Apprenticeships. “Veterans, Guard, and Reserve service men and women are great candidates for the rail industry, and this program helps them put railroading on the map for their future career considerations,” says Malski.

“Our efforts are to link qualified civilian and veteran talent to the many opportunities rail industry employers have to offer, and then retain that talent within our teams through dedicated training programs. We want to ensure a sustainable and successful tomorrow for our industry with new

technology, innovative methods, and hands-on experiences. From marketing specialists to conductors and engineers, our industry has a home for everyone’s strengths. We want to help qualified and veteran talent find their next mission at home through a successful and life-long career in the rail industry. The apprenticeship program is one way to solidify that possibility,” says Malski, Founder of SPRING. “In just a short period, SPRING has communication connections with over 32 colleges, trade schools, and other organizations interested in learning more about the rail industry. We are already building internships and new-hire or mentorship programs with some participating rail employers, both suppliers and railroads alike. These types of programs in which we offer help to establish employer presence, support within local communities, as well as strengthen their bond with future candidates for employment, and so it was a “no-brainer” to further support FASTPORT, a recognized intermediary of the DOL, to also promote the opportunities of apprenticeships. We are excited to grow with our new partners at FASTPORT, as well as the valuable members of the ASLRRRA, and other railroad organizations to assist in providing these much needed resources that help to sustain and promote our industry.”

## Apprenticeship Core Components



### Reasons to Register

By engaging in a Registered Apprenticeship program, there is proven strategies for the development of a skilled, retainable, and sustainable workforce due to desire for the achievement of the nationally recognized Certificate of Completion credential and upon completion of the quality work-based learning program. Registered Apprenticeship programs train at the highest quality as dictated by industry and U.S.

Department of Labor requirements. There is the opportunity for Registered Apprenticeship employer(s) to attain competitive advantage through differentiation due to the achievement of the nationally recognized Certificate of Registration credential upon completion of the registration process with the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Apprenticeship. Most importantly, leveraging this type of training program allows companies large and small to benefit from the funding streams and reduced labor costs designated for Registered Apprenticeship program sponsors and apprentices. FASTPORT and SPRING intend to work together to introduce and engage apprenticeships with railroad employers and promote this opportunity to become a part of the Registered Apprenticeship program starting this year. The cooperative effort aims to secure railroad candidates for this program in 2019.

### **Benefits to Employers**

- Customized training that meets industry standards, tailored to the specific needs of businesses, resulting in highly-skilled employees.
- Increased knowledge transfer through on-the-job learning from an experienced mentor, combined with education courses to support work-based learning.
- Enhanced employee retention: 91% of apprentices that complete an apprenticeship are still employed nine months later.
- Retention values are even more significant for eligible Veterans able to utilize their G.I. Bill to draw a Monthly Housing Allowance (MHA) while participating in a registered apprenticeship program.
- A safer workplace that may reduce worker compensation costs, due to the program's emphasis on safety training.
- A stable and reliable pipeline of qualified workers.
- A systematic approach to training that ensures employees are trained and certified to produce at the highest skill levels required for the occupation.

*For more information, please contact [michele@springrecruits.com](mailto:michele@springrecruits.com) or [dave.harrison@fastport.com](mailto:dave.harrison@fastport.com)*

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# SPRING

*Succession Planning for Railroads  
Investing in the Next Generation*



**About SPRING:** Succession Planning for Railroads Investing in the Next Generation (SPRING) LLC is a succession planning solution to help your company transition into the future by two methods, recruiting and retention. Beyond nationwide job promotion and recruiting services, we offer retention tools and training that uniquely and innovatively hone in on new-hire & mentorship, internship, and other team building programs that will satisfy your succession planning needs and workforce development fundamentals.

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