



# NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Contact:** Julie Fortman  
620-231-2230  
[jfortman@watcocompanies.com](mailto:jfortman@watcocompanies.com)

## **Eleven Watco Companies' railroads recognized for outstanding safety**

**PITTSBURG, KS—April 18, 2006**—Watco Companies, Inc. (Watco) announced today eleven of its railroads will receive safety awards from the American Shortline & Regional Railroad Association (ASLRRA). The awards will be presented at the ASLRRA's 93<sup>rd</sup> annual convention in Orlando, FL next week.

Railroads receiving recognition include the Appalachian and Ohio (AO), Arkansas Southern (ARS), Eastern Idaho (EIRR), Great Northwest (GRNW), Kansas and Oklahoma (KO), Louisiana Southern (LAS), Mission Mountain (MMT), Mississippi Southern (MSR), Palouse River and Coulee City (PCC), Pennsylvania Southwestern (PSWR), Stillwater Central (SLWC) Railroads.

“We are extremely proud that so many of our railroads have earned these awards,” said Gary Vaughn, Watco vice president of safety. “We recognize our railroads and employees for safety improvements and celebrate our successes, but now the railroad industry is doing the same and recognizing the Watco railroad family as being among the safest in the industry.”

Known as “Jake Awards”, these awards are presented annually to shortline railroads in the United States that have achieved outstanding safety records in the previous year. Safety records comparisons are based on the average of all United States short lines Frequency Severity Index (FSI). This index takes into account not only all reportable injuries, but the severity of those

-- more --

injuries. To qualify for a “Jake Award”, a railroad had to achieve an FSI better than the industry average, which was 4.46 in 2005. To qualify for a “Jake Award with Distinction”, a railroad had to achieve an FSI of zero, meaning no injuries or accidents for the 2005 year.

Watco railroads with zero accidents or injuries that will receive the “Jake Award with Distinction” include the ARS, GRNW, LAS, MMT and MSR. Watco railroads with a lower than industry-average FSI that will receive the “Jake Award” include the AO, EIRR, KO, PCC, PSWR and SLWC.

“Our employees, the entire Watco Team, played a part in achieving these awards,” Vaughn said. “We have achieved tremendous improvement in safety and must continue this trend.”

Watco Companies, Inc. (Watco), a Pittsburg, Kansas, based company, operates 17 railroads in 15 states. Watco operates the Alabama Southern, Appalachian and Ohio, Arkansas Southern, Eastern Idaho, Great Northwest, Kansas and Oklahoma, Kaw River, Louisiana Southern, Mission Mountain, Mississippi Southern, Palouse River and Coulee City, Pennsylvania Southwestern, South Kansas and Oklahoma, Stillwater Central, Timber Rock, Vicksburg Southern and Yellowstone Valley Railroads. Watco also operates industrial switching locations and mechanical and locomotive shops across the United States. More information about Watco can be found on their website at [www.watcocompanies.com](http://www.watcocompanies.com)

###