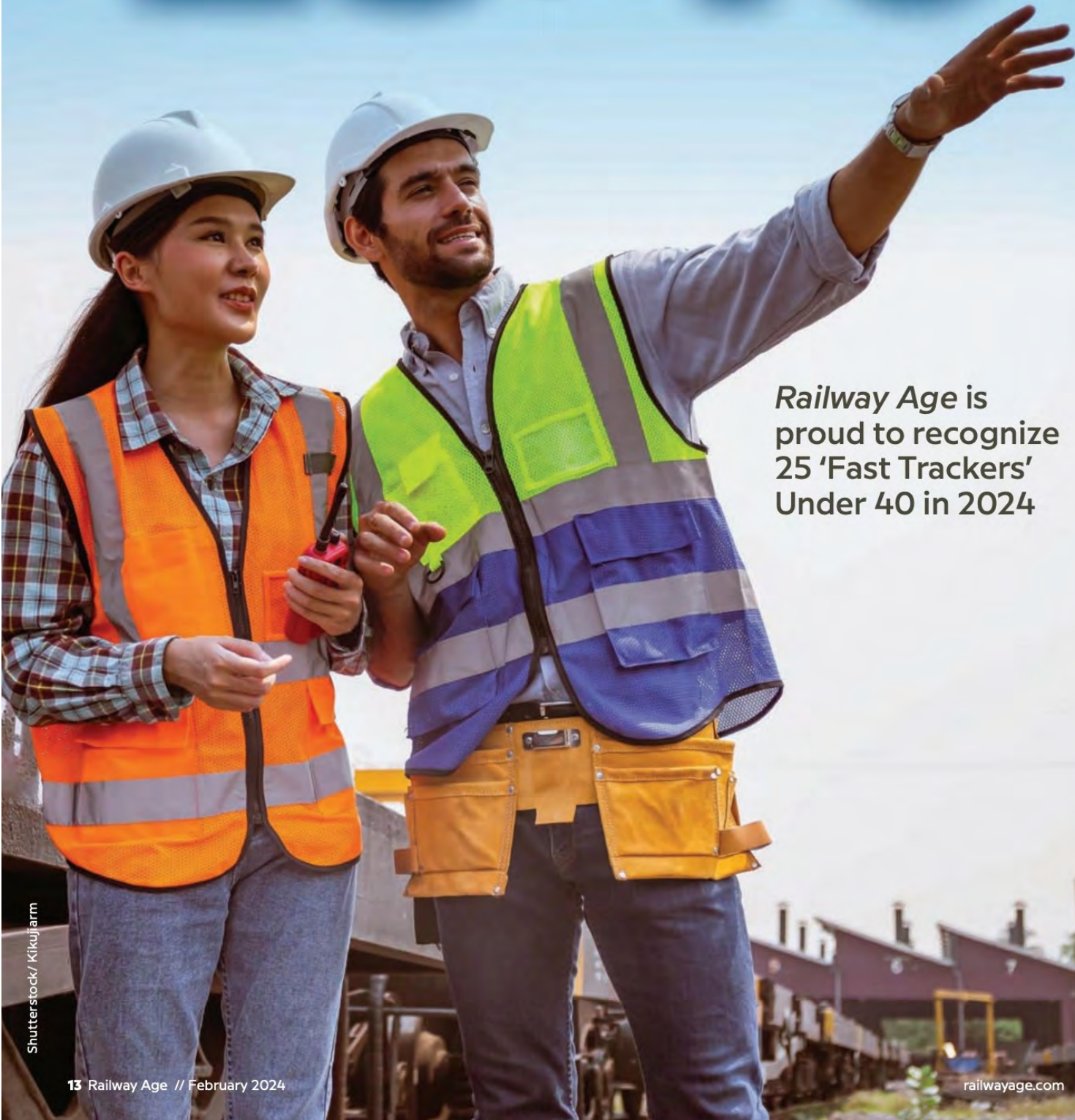


25 UNDER 40



Railway Age is proud to recognize 25 'Fast Trackers' Under 40 in 2024



Established in 2016, our annual awards are presented to top North American railroaders under the age of 40 for making an impact in their respective fields or within their companies in the United States, Canada and Mexico. They represent freight and passenger railroads, as well as the supply and consultant/contractor and government communities. Candidates, who had to be under the age of 40 as of Jan. 1, 2024, were judged on criteria that included industry experience and education, leadership skills, industry contributions, and community service involvement. “The field was strong, which bodes well for the future,” said Michigan State Center for Railway & Education Director Nick Little, program judge. “This year, there was a noticeable reduction in IT people as these skills clearly become assimilated into the more traditional roles. Many nominees talked about internal and external cooperation and cross-functional leadership qualities. I continue to be amazed by the contributions these young people have made in their careers alongside maintaining quality of life. Ten of the 25 are female, which says a lot about the quality of women in rail today. The range of backgrounds and skills range from locomotive engineer to civil engineer and from project leader to operations manager, and everything in between.”



NICHOLAS (NICK) C. LITTLE

Director, Railway Education
Michigan State University Center for
Railway Research and Education
Broad College of Business, Lansing, Mich.

While in high school in Britain, Nick Little started his career with clerical and operating internships at Plymouth on British Rail’s Western Region in the early 1970s. He won a scholarship program with the British Railways Board that gave him a supply management degree plus training in all aspects of BR’s organization. Little then spent 15 years with BR in many locations, including Derby and London. In 1995, Little came to Michigan State University, initially for one year on loan to work on a research program, but he stayed to follow his passion of helping to develop future generations of railway industry expert managers and leaders with deep business knowledge and experience. He took charge of MSU’s Railway Management Certificate Program at the Broad College of Business in 2013.



SEAN PENGELLY

Engineer – Projects & Development

Lake State Railway Company

Pengelly has become the leader in maintaining Lake State Railway Company's (LSRC) relationships with the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) Office of Rail, and the Federal Railroad Admin-

istration's (FRA) CRISI Grant administrators. His has led business development efforts on LSRC for several customers and projects and his leadership has also developed relationships with customers new to rail. Pengelly has taken on key roles in relation to CRISI funded projects on LSRC. These roles have ranged from project development to material procurement, contractor bidding, and grant reporting. Many of these roles were not otherwise present at LSRC and Pengelly helped to create the tools and resources to carry the projects forward. Pengelly serves on a Transportation Research Board (TSB) committee, as well as a committee for the American Railway Engineering and Maintenance-of-Way Association (AREMA). He also supports field visits of the Michigan State University Railway Management Program to LSRC and coordinates and advises on Michigan Technological University senior design projects on LSRC.



JONATHAN WNEK

Project Manager

RailPros

In his 13-plus years in the rail industry, Wnek has been a major contributor to the construction of high-quality rail infrastructure across the U.S. As a specialist in freight and passenger rail corridor design, he has developed track design plans for projects

in numerous states and supported many project areas, including track rehabilitation and track alignment. Wnek has embraced challenging tasks, such as designing track and roadbed in highly constrained areas and revising formerly shelved plans. He has supported high-speed rail projects in multiple capacities, including as Senior Engineer of track geometry for high-speed intercity passenger rail, and helped realign a FRA Class II corridor to a FRA Class 6 corridor, allowing passenger train speeds up to 110 mph. Wnek serves as Chair for AREMA Committee 17 - High Speed Rail Systems and has contributed to multiple publications. He currently serves as Project Manager for the Amtrak LiDAR Extraction Project, which includes extracting all track, signal, structural, station, and electric traction features and assets along the 410-route mile NEC. He is a licensed Professional Engineer in Illinois, Texas, Pennsylvania and Michigan.