

NEWS RELEASE

MARS Winter Meeting Features Top Rail Experts Discussing How Shippers Can Drive Change in 2017

CHICAGO—December 14, 2016 ([James Street Media Services](#))—Freight shippers, Class 1 railroads, transportation management, and rail finance experts will be on the agenda for the 248th meeting of the Midwest Association of Rail Shippers (MARS) to be held January 10–12, 2017 in Oak Brook, Illinois

“Rail Shippers Driving Change in 2017” is the theme of the Winter Meeting, and MARS President Mike Jones says attendees will be looking for information about continued rail service improvements.

“Shippers are eager to work with railroads to keep enhancements from last year moving forward, but they also want to see more change,” said Jones. “The Association of American Railroads (AAR) reported that total U.S. rail traffic increased a bit in November. The AAR called it ‘a glimmer of hope.’ As shippers, we want to build on that glimmer to achieve greater utilization of efficient and reliable rail service.”

The MARS Winter Meeting traditionally attracts more than 600 representatives from rail customers across all commodity groups, Class 1 railroads, short lines, and governing agencies. In addition to keynote presentations and panel discussions, there are educational breakout sessions.

The lineup of keynote speakers include: Carl Ice, president and CEO of BNSF; David Gardner, vice president, North American supply chain, Ingredion; and Clarence Gooden, president, CSX Transportation. Other presentations and panel sessions include:

- “The Economy 2017—Enough Gas in the Tank?” with Eric Starks, chairman and CEO of FTR Transportation Intelligence;
- “State of Intermodal” with David Yeager, CEO, Hub Group;
- “Keeping the Go In Chicago” with Danielle Renner, CSX representative to the Chicago Transportation Coordination Office (CTCO), and William Thompson, chief engineer for the Chicago Region Environmental and Transportation Efficiency (CREATE) program;
- “A Rail Customer/BNSF Sweet Success Story” with representatives from United Sugars, A&R Transport, Burlington Junction Railway, and BNSF;
- “The Transportation Market—Making Sense Out of the Unknown” with Lawrence Gross, FTR Transportation, Anthony Hatch, ABH Consulting, and Jason Seidl, Cowen Company;
- Plus, updates on the Surface Transportation Board (STB), rail equipment, transportation legislation, antitrust issues, and safety.

The educational breakout sessions for this meeting include Railroading 101 and 201, Intermodal 101, Transloading 101, Railcar Fleet Management, and Transportation Management Systems. There is no charge for the educational seminars and it is not necessary to attend the conference to attend a seminar. Anyone interested is welcome.

A complete agenda can be found [online](#).

Conference Schedule

Tuesday, January 10—Evening reception

Wednesday, January 11—Full day of programming and lunch co-hosted with Traffic Club of Chicago

Thursday, January 12—Half-day of programming

Location

[Hilton Chicago Oak Brook Hills Resort](#)

3500 Midwest Rd., Oak Brook, IL

(630) 850-5555

Cost

Members/guests—\$245 if registered by December 26; and \$275 after that date

Registration

- [Online conference information and registration](#)
- Email: mars@mwrailshippers.com
- Phone: (630) 513-6700

Accommodations

Hotel rooms can be reserved [online at the special MARS rate](#) until December 26, or the reserved block sells out.

About The Midwest Association of Rail Shippers

The Midwest Association of Rail Shippers (MARS) is one of five regional North American associations under the North American Rail Shippers (NARS) national organization. Headquartered in the Chicago area, MARS provides an open forum for discussion and resolution of rail transportation issues by bringing railroads, shippers, receivers, and rail supply companies together twice annually for formal meetings in the Chicago area. To review the most recent meeting presentations, and to inquire about MARS membership, please visit the MARS website at www.mwrailshippers.com.

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