



Preliminary Agenda

2026 National Highway-Rail Grade Crossing Safety Conference

Monday, April 6 to Thursday April 9, 2026

Georgia Tech Hotel & Conference Center

800 Spring St NW, Atlanta, GA 30308

nationalrailcrossingconference.org

Monday, April 6

3:00 pm **Registration Begins**

7:00 pm **Welcome Dinner and Reception**

All are welcome, including spouses, to meet with your fellow attendees and colleagues as we prepare for a full day of informative sessions that begin Tuesday morning. The reception is business attire and will be held in the main conference room. The Executive Planning Committee members are slated to provide welcoming remarks.

Jason Mobley, Georgia Department of Transportation

Jim Dahlem, Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) – Headquarters

Frank Frey, FRA – Moderator

Allan Rutter, Texas A&M Transportation Institute

Tuesday, April 7 – Moderator Jim Dahlem, FRA

7:00 am **Breakfast** – Please join us in the restaurant on the ground floor.

8:00 am **Welcoming Address and Safety Briefing**
Executive Planning Committee

8:15 am **Opening Remarks – Setting the Stage**
Keynote Speakers

9:00 am **Operation Lifesaver, Inc.**
Learn about the latest crossing safety trends and outreach initiatives.

9:45 am **Mid-Morning Break**
Refreshments provided, meet with exhibitors



- 10:00 am** **Overview of Signal Preemption**
Learn how preemption is used at crossings near traffic signals. This overview will cover when preemption is used, how the preemption timing is determined, and new industry practices in use.
- 11:00 am** **International Update**
Hear from our partners around the globe on the latest in crossing safety. Network Rail, United Kingdom; Transport Canada; Japan; Australia
- 12 noon** **LUNCH** – with Exhibitors
- 1:30 pm** **Humped Crossing Database**
Explore the new humped crossing database used to identify locations where low-profile vehicles may be at a higher risk of getting hung up and stuck on crossings. Also, see the latest in research on how FRA has built this database using LIDAR.
Francesco Bedini, FRA
- 2:15 pm** **Autonomous Train Operation Technology**
Learn about the latest development utilizing self-propelled, zero-emission, battery-electric rail vehicles to transport freight without train locomotive engineers, autonomously, along the freight corridor, including negotiating through grade crossing locations.
Frank Frey, FRA
- 3:00 pm** **Afternoon Break**
Refreshments provided, meet with exhibitors
- 3:20 pm** **Section 130 Funding Program (FHWA)**
Attendees will hear from FHWA on the latest updates to the Section 130 Program.
Scott Gable, FHWA HQ
- 4:00 pm** **Section 130 Funding Program, Best-Practices from States**
Learn from the states themselves how they are successfully using Section 130 Funds, including identifying crossings, overcoming challenges, and bringing projects to completion.
- 5:00 pm** **Dinner on your own** – Enjoy Atlanta, see the welcome packet for local events, things to do, and places to see!



Wednesday April 8 – Moderator: Frank Frey, FRA

- 7:00 am** **Breakfast** – same venue location
- 8:00 am** **Housekeeping** – wrap-up from previous day
- 8:10 am** **Coffee Hour, 10 Minute Quick Hits to Start the Day**
Learn about some new ideas being implemented nationwide. Each topic will show a 10-minute overview with 10 minutes at the end for questions of the panel.
- Inventory data best-practices, FRA and NCDOT
 - Left turn gates, California PUC
 - Trainfo blocked crossing detection
 - Wireless crossings, Caltrain
 - Amtrak loss of shunt research
 - Questions for the panel
- 9:10 am** **Rail Bikes**
Learn about how rail bike companies have proliferated a lot in the last few years. Hear about the risks associated with them, and how agencies are dealing with the issue.
Frank Frey – FRA
- 10:00 am** **Mid-morning break**
Refreshments provided, meet with exhibitors
- 10:20 am** **Florida Rail Safety Coalition**
Learn about a unique partnering initiative that Florida DOT has initiated, and how this can be a model for other states.
Kelli Phillips, Florida DOT
- 11:00 pm** **Top 100 High-Risk Crossing Initiative - Nationwide with FRA & State Partners**
Jim Dahlem, P.E., Transportation Specialist - FRA
Frank A. Frey, General Engineer - FRA
- 11:30 am** **LUNCH** – with Exhibitors
- 1:00 pm** **What's New With AAR, and AASHTO - including The Council on Rail Transportation**
Jeffrey Moller, AVP Transportation Systems & Practices – Association of American Railroads
Shayne H. Gill, Program Director - American Association of State Highway and Transportation
The Council on Rail Transportation – with Shayne Gill



- 2:00 pm Class I Railroad Updates**
Hear an overview of Class I crossing safety programs and priorities, and ask questions for the panel
BNSF, UP, CSX, NS, CPKC, CN
- 3:10 pm Afternoon Break**
Refreshments provided, meet with exhibitors
- 3:30 pm Local Update**
Learn about the GDOT I-75/I-16/Norfolk Southern Interchange project, the largest project in GA state history. What lessons can we learn from completing a mega-project like this?
Also, hear from local Atlanta city officials on how they have worked with GDOT on implementing crossing projects. See how local-state partnerships can deliver safety improvements to the traveling public.
- 5:00 pm Adjourned**
- 6 :00pm Evening Reception and Awards Dinner**
During the dinner hour, the **Hoy A. Richards Career Achievement Award** will be presented. This award recognizes a career of exemplary achievement milestones in improving safety at level-grade crossings. Other distinguished recipients will also be awarded and celebrated.

NOTE TO EXHIBITORS

YOU MUST BREAKDOWN ALL EXHIBITS NO LATER THAN 10am Thursday

Thursday April 9 – Moderator: Allan Rutter, Texas A&M Transportation Institute

- 7:00 am Breakfast** – same venue location
- 8:00 am Housekeeping** – wrap-up from previous day
- 8:10 am “Money, Money, Money” – FRA Grant Programs**
After hearing about projects, new technologies, and best-practices, learn how to pay for those improvements. You will gain an understanding of the various grant programs offered by FRA, including who can apply for them, what types of projects are eligible, and what prior years’ programs have yielded.
- FRA Office of Railroad Development



- 9:10 am Research Update**
Learn about the latest research in rail-highway crossings going on at the USDOT Volpe Center. This will provide a great snapshot into what new technologies or practices are under development and may be coming to a crossing near you in the future.
Marco DaSilva – USDOT Volpe Center
- 9:45 am Morning Break**
Refreshments provided
- 10:00 am Pedestrian Crossing Safety**
Learn about the latest in pedestrian safety accident trends at crossings and what types of countermeasures are being used to mitigate the risks.
- 10:45 am OPEN SESSION - Odds & Ends**
Discussions relating (*but not limited to*) Quiet Zones, Emergency Notification System (ENS) Sign, Grade Crossing Handbook, AASHTO and AREMA, etc...
- 11:30 am Conference Closing Remarks** – next workshop update
- 12 noon Adjournment**
- On-the-go boxed lunches or sit-down lunch provided
 - Travel home safely

Any questions... please reach out to Jason Mobley at jmobley@ga.dot.gov