



## Preliminary Agenda

### 2025 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](http://nationalrailcrossingconference.org)

#### Monday, April 6

3:00 pm Registration Begins

6:00 pm Welcome Event

6:00pm Reception and Cocktail Hour

7:00pm Dinner

All are welcome, including spouses, to meet with your fellow attendees and colleagues as we prepare for a full day of informative sessions that begins Tuesday morning. The reception and dinner are 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

**Frank Frey**, Federal Railroad Administration

**Matt Bond**, California Public Utilities Commission

**Allan Rutter**, Texas A&M Transportation Institute

#### Tuesday, April 7

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.  
**Rachel Maleh**, Executive Director - OLI

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



- 10:00 am Overview of Traffic 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.  
**Nicole Jackson**, Benesch  
**Karen Hankinson**, Olsson
- 11:30 am LUNCH – with Exhibitors**
- 1:00 pm International Update**  
Hear from our partners around the globe on the latest in crossing safety.  
Canada; Japan; Australia; Germany; Netherlands  
**Allan Spence**, Chair of the UIC Global Crossing Network (GLCN)
- 2:30 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
- 3:00 pm Afternoon Break**  
Refreshments provided, meet with exhibitors
- 3:15 pm Diagnostic Review Process**  
The Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT) has developed a diagnostic process that emphasizes collaboration, technical expertise, and regulatory alignment. Rather than prescribing rigid procedures, UDOT empowers diagnostic teams—comprising UDOT staff, railroads, local roadway authorities, and other stakeholders—to apply their professional judgment in identifying safety improvements and operational needs.  
**Tyler Schmidt**, Utah DOT  
**Travis Bailey**, Olsson  
**Lance Kippen**, Olsson
- 4:15 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



5:00 pm

**Dinner on your own** – Enjoy Atlanta! For information on the arts, entertainment, sports, and culinary scene in the area, please see the Explore Georgia website at:

<https://exploregeorgia.org/city/atlanta>

Or scan the QR Code:



**Wednesday April 8**

7:00 am

**Breakfast** – same venue location

8:00 am

**Housekeeping** – wrap-up from previous day

8:15 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, **Matt Bond**, California PUC
- Trainfo blocked crossing detection, **Gareth Remple**, Trainfo
- Wireless crossings, Caltrain
- Amtrak loss of shunt research
- Questions for the panel

9:15 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

9:45 am

**Mid-morning break**

Refreshments provided, meet with exhibitors

10:00 am

**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

11:00 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



- 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
- 2:00 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
- 2:45 pm**      **Afternoon Break**  
Refreshments provided, meet with exhibitors
- 3:00 pm**      **Section 130 Funding Program - FHWA**
- 3:30pm**      **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**      **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.

**Thursday April 9**

- 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.  
**Jim Dahlem**, FRA  
**Matt Bond**, CPUC
- 10:45 am      OPEN SESSION - Odds & Ends**  
Discussions relating (*but not limited to*) Quiet Zones, Emergency Notification System (ENS) Sign, Grade Crossing Handbook, GXAPS, Reg Reform Updates, AREMA, etc...
- 11:45 am      Conference Closing Remarks** – next workshop update
- 12 noon      Adjournment**  
  - Lunch on your own
  - Travel home safely