



**Registration is now open!**

**INFORMS Freight Rail Planning & Operations Conference**

**May 8-9, 2023**

**BNSF Headquarters  
Leadership Training and Conference Center  
2400 Western Center Blvd  
Fort Worth, Texas**

**Organized by the Railway Applications Section (RAS) of the  
Institute for Operations Research and Management Science (INFORMS)**

**Hosted by BNSF**

RAS is pleased to announce that registration is now open for the 2023 INFORMS Freight Rail Planning & Operations Conference on May 8-9, 2023, with an optional pre-meeting dinner on the evening of May 7. BNSF has graciously agreed to host the conference in their meeting facilities in Fort Worth, Texas.

The goal of the conference is to provide a forum for individuals in the area of the railway planning at a strategic, operational, and tactical level, as well as those designing and maintaining operations support systems, to share current practices, their views on best practices and their expectations for the future evolution of these practices and systems. This is intended to be an approachable, “no equations” conference focused on managerial practices, and the outcomes and high-level methodologies of any technologies being applied. We have already secured an exciting and informative line-up of speakers, with additional ones soon to be announced (see below).

**Schedule:**

Sunday, May 7

- Travel to conference

- Optional Sunday evening dinner (pay for separately)

Monday, May 8

- Conference commences at 8 am, with main sessions concluding by 5 pm (lunch and coffee breaks included in registration fee)
- Conference dinner with keynote speaker (included in registration fee)

Tuesday, May 9

- Sessions commences at 8 am, wrapping up at noon
- Networking lunch (included in registration fee)

### Who should attend:

Individuals interested in the areas of service design, capital planning (physical plant, rolling stock, labor), operational control functions and related technology support functions. This includes planning, IT, operations research, and data analysis professionals within the rail industry, and the outside firms and universities that collaborate with these professionals. This also extends to professionals that support the execution of the operating plan, such as individuals designing and supporting the blocking, train scheduling, trip planning, car movement, crew management, and locomotive management systems, as well as the individuals representing plan adherence and monitoring functions and activities such as unit train scheduling.

### Logistics:

- Registration site is up! Click [here](#) to register.
- Meeting location: BNSF Leadership Training and Conference Center, 2400 Western Center Blvd, Fort Worth, Texas 76131
- Conference Hotel: to be announced, along with any shuttle services
- Registration fee includes lunches, coffee breaks, and Monday night dinner (optional Sunday evening dinner to be paid for separately)

	<b>Early-bird (ends April 16, 2023)</b>	<b>Regular fee</b>
Regular	\$225	\$250
Student/Retired	\$125	\$150

### Speaker Line-up:

Much of our speaker line-up is in place. We are working to confirm some of the specific speakers for our panels. Confirmed speakers/sessions are as follows:

#### Keynote Speakers

**Jon Gabriel, Vice President – Network Strategy, Design & Innovation, BNSF Railway**

*Transforming the Supply Chain Landscape through Innovation*

**Adriene Bailey, Partner – Transportation Practice, Oliver Wyman**

*The Growth Journey: Rounding the First Bend*

### **Panel Sessions**

*Each panel will include representatives from at least 3 Class I railroads. Each panelist will give a brief overview of their current planning practices, to be followed by a guided interactive discussion lead by the program chair. Members of the audience active in the areas covered by each panel will be welcome to provide additional insight into their approaches to the issues under discussion.*

#### **Panel 1: Current service design organizational structure and practices**

*This panel will focus on each railroad's current service design process, including planning of manifest, unit, and intermodal services. It will attempt to cover the process from plan inception through to execution monitoring and control.*

#### **Panel 2: Current network and resource planning practices**

*This panel will focus on each railroad's current planning processes for investment in the physical plant (yards, sidings, signaling, etc.), railcars, locomotives, and human resources (crews, field operations management and support). Cross-linkages to the service design process will also be explored.*

#### **Panel 3: Trends in software systems for planning and operations execution support**

*Railroads collectively invest many millions in maintaining and improving their systems for planning and execution support. Over the past decade we have seen a variety of systems development efforts including the renewing/replacement of legacy trip planning/blocking/train management systems, development of movement planners, new yard systems, locomotive and railcar management systems, forecasting systems, etc. This panel will highlight selected examples of such systems investments and explore the lessons learned and future directions for such efforts.*

### **Topical Presentations** (all in-person, unless otherwise indicated)

**Jonatan Gjerdrum, Head of Network Development and Analytics, Green Cargo (remote)**

*The Swedish experience operating a fully reserved, capacity managed wagonload freight rail network*

**Yury Gorbonov, Director, Surface Transportation Practice, Oliver Wyman**

*Introducing the new Web-enabled MultiRail Enterprise for railway service design and network analysis*

**Ravi Ahuja, Founder/CEO & Krishna Jha, Executive Vice President, Optym Rail**

*Solutions for the management of mine to port railways*

**Daril Vilhena, Co-CEO, Cedar AI**

*Maximizing the productivity of rail yards through performance focused systems*

**C. Tyler Dick, Assistant Professor & Jiaxi Zhao, PhD Candidate, University of Texas at Austin**

*Modeling the Network Effects of Yard Congestion and Disruptions*

**Brandi Wood, Product Manager - Movement Planner/Service Design, Wabtec & Stefano Rieppi, AVP Fleet and Capacity Planning, Norfolk Southern**

*Line of road simulation at NS using Wabtec Service Design (Schedule Viewer)*

**Henning Preis, Jan Eisold, Uwe Höppner & Nikola Besinovic, Faculty, Technical University of Dresden (remote vs in-person TBD)**

*Decision Support for Optimal Resource Scheduling in Classification Yards*

**Conference Sponsors:**

A special thanks to our conference sponsors, who through their support have allowed us to keep registration fees low, and ensure broad-based participation.

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**RAS Sponsors:**

The on-going financial support by our RAS sponsors has allowed our many programs to continue over the years, including the problem-solving competition, the student paper award, poster competition, and our new conference participation scholarship.

**Gold Sponsors**



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Stay tuned for further announcements for details on program and hotels/logistics. If you have questions, would like to participate as a speaker or panelist, or otherwise volunteer please contact one of the following members of the organizing committee: Carl Van Dyke (TransNetOpt, [carl@cvdzone.com](mailto:carl@cvdzone.com)) or Andrea Arias (BNSF, [Andrea.AriasLlorenty@bnsf.com](mailto:Andrea.AriasLlorenty@bnsf.com)).

#### Organizing Committee:

Carl Van Dyke, TransNetOpt  
Andrea Arias, BNSF  
C. Tyler Dick, University of Texas at Austin  
Shantih Spanton, CSX  
Marc Meketon, Oliver Wyman  
Dharma Acharya, Wabtec  
Clark Cheng, Norfolk Southern  
Nikola Besinovic, TU Dresden  
Roger Baugher, Independent Consultant  
Stefano Rieppi, Norfolk Southern