

# Rail Shipper 101

## Navigating Rail Logistics: Mastering the Essentials

May 19, 2025 Plaza San Antonio Hotel & Spa

**NCTA**  
**commtrex**



Space is limited;  
register early!

Join us for “Rail Shipper 101,” a one-day course sponsored by NCTA and Commtrex, tailored to equip young executives and emerging leaders in transportation and logistics with a solid foundation in rail logistics. As the commodity shipping sector evolves with new leadership and groundbreaking technologies like Artificial Intelligence reshaping demand forecasting, route planning, and pricing strategies, this program offers a perfect blend of general insights and specialized sessions to empower attendees to navigate the complexities of rail shipping with confidence.

### Who Should Attend

This course is ideal for emerging leaders in the transportation and logistics industry. Whether your focus is operational logistics or commercial strategy, you’ll gain the skills needed to excel in your role.

“Rail Shipper 101” will be held on May 19, 2025, at the Plaza San Antonio Hotel & Spa. Open to all industry professionals—NCTA membership is not required. Attendees can also request Professional Development Hours (PDH).

Note that the course has been conveniently timed and located to allow participants to also attend either NCTA’s [Spring Conference](#) or its [Operations & Maintenance Conference](#). Attendance at either of those events requires separate registration at the preceding links.

**REGISTER HERE**



**THE COURSE  
FEE IS \$599**

Contact Melinda Canter  
with questions.  
Email: [Melinda@MoveNCTA.org](mailto:Melinda@MoveNCTA.org)  
Phone: (720) 227-1049

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## COURSE SCHEDULE

### MORNING SESSION (GENERAL LOGISTICS 101 FOR ALL ATTENDEES)

**8:30 AM – 9:15 AM**

**Logistics 101: Foundations of Commodities Transportation**

- Overview of transportation modes and their role in commodity shipping.
- Rail transportation basics: types of railcars, freight movement, and industry terminology.
- Integration of trucking, intermodal, and warehousing logistics.

**9:15 AM – 10:00 AM**

**Railroading 101: Understanding the North American Rail Network**

- Fundamentals of rail infrastructure: yards, tracks, and service networks.
- Key stakeholders: railroads, shippers, and third-party service providers.
- How railroads prioritize traffic and allocate capacity.

**10:00 AM – 10:15 AM**

**Break**

**10:15 AM – 11:00 AM**

**Technology and Artificial Intelligence in Logistics**

- Emerging technologies in the transportation and logistics sector.
- Role of AI in logistics optimization: forecasting demand, route planning, and pricing analysis.
- Real-world examples: AI-powered tools for railcar tracking, predictive maintenance, and cost optimization.
- Leveraging big data for actionable insights.

**11:00 AM – 11:45 AM**

**Transloading and Warehousing Essentials**

- Transloading: What it is and why it's critical for logistics.
- Best practices for managing warehousing and outdoor storage.
- Real-world examples of efficient transloading and storage solutions.

**11:45 AM – 12:30 PM**

**Optimizing Delivered Costs Across All Modes**

- Total transportation cost analysis: Rail vs. truck vs. intermodal.
- Tools and strategies for cost optimization.
- Case study: Reducing delivered costs for commodities.

**12:30 PM – 1:15 PM**

**Working Lunch**





## AFTERNOON SESSION: TWO SEPARATE TRACKS

### Track 1: Operational Logistics for Fleet and Infrastructure Management

12:30 PM – 1:15 PM

#### Railcar Maintenance and Fleet Optimization

- Key maintenance requirements for railcars.
- Common challenges and solutions for fleet upkeep.
- Managing costs and improving uptime through preventative maintenance.

1:15 PM – 2:00 PM

#### Rail Engineering and Track Maintenance

- Basics of track infrastructure and engineering.
- Capacity planning and loading/unloading infrastructure.
- Collaborative approaches to improve efficiency and reduce downtime.

2:00 PM – 2:15 PM

Break

2:15 PM – 3:00 PM

#### Railcar Storage Strategies

- Short-term vs. long-term storage solutions.
- Understanding storage costs and compliance requirements.
- Best practices for managing storage during market shifts.

3:00 PM – 3:45 PM

#### Rail Fleet Lifecycle Management

- Evaluating when to lease, buy, or retire railcars.
- Long-term planning for fleet expansion or contraction.
- Metrics and KPIs for managing fleet performance.

### Track 2: Commercial Logistics for Business and Strategy Management

12:30 PM – 1:15 PM

#### Negotiating Freight Rates and Contracts

- Freight rate structures and influencing factors.
- Strategies for negotiating favorable rail freight contracts.
- Identifying and evaluating optimal lanes for pricing.

1:15 PM – 2:00 PM

#### Railcar Leasing and Procurement

- Types of railcar leases (full-service, net, bare).
- Selecting the right lease structure for your business.
- Managing lease contracts and ensuring flexibility.

2:00 PM – 2:15 PM

Break

2:15 PM – 3:00 PM

#### Transloading, Warehousing, and Outdoor Storage

- Identifying the best transloading facilities for your supply chain.
- Managing warehousing costs and optimizing storage solutions.
- Outdoor storage considerations and environmental factors.

3:00 PM – 3:45 PM

#### From Insight to Impact - Tools and Tech to Optimize Transportation Decisions

- Leveraging data to identify trends and opportunities.
- Utilizing tools to enhance data visualization.
- Integrating technology to enhance logistics decision-making.

3:45 PM – 4:30 PM

#### Rejoining as a Group: Wrap-Up and Q&A

Key takeaways from each track.

Open forum for questions with instructors from both tracks.

Resources for continued learning and next steps.

6:00 PM – 7:00 PM

Networking Reception (jointly held with attendees of NCTA's Spring and O&M Conferences)



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# MEET THE INSTRUCTORS



## Richard Kloster

**President and Founder of Integrity Rail Partners**

Richard Kloster is the President and Founder of Integrity Rail Partners, Inc., a private transportation consulting company that provides strategic consulting services to the rail equipment and railroad industries in December 2019.

IRP supports its operating and investor clients by providing insight and analysis for the purposes of strategic planning, investment decisions, acquisitions, and many commercial activities, focusing on the areas of market research, market development, pricing, marketing, demand forecasting, portfolio and asset management, strategic planning, product management, business development, and operations.

Dick has an extensive background in market research, market development, pricing, marketing, demand forecasting, asset management, strategic planning, product management, business development, operations, and sales. He is primarily engaged in the analysis and forecasting of the rail equipment supply chain. He has been forecasting the rail freight and rail equipment markets for over twenty years for a variety of clients. His insight and analysis are used by operating companies and investors for the purposes of strategic planning, investment decisions, acquisitions, and many commercial activities.

Prior to this, Dick was with AllTranstek, LLC, the industry's leading rail car fleet management company, as SVP and Chief Commercial Officer; was a founding member of the FTR Consulting Group, an affiliate of FTR Intel; with GE Railcar as Vice President Business Develop and Sr. Portfolio Manager; and earlier, several Class 1 and shortline railroads in operational and commercial roles. Dick has an MA from the University of Alabama and a BS from Northern Illinois University; is an executive board member of the National Industrial Transportation League (NITL), a board member of the Railway Supply Institute, has served on several other industry committees and organizations, is a frequent industry presenter, and holds 3 patents for rail car innovations.



# MEET THE INSTRUCTORS



## Harry Zander

Chief Commercial Officer  
Intramotev

Harry Zander is the Chief Commercial Officer at Intramotev, a St. Louis-based manufacturer of battery-electric, self-propelled railcars. With over 30 years of experience in the rail industry, he has served as Chief Revenue Officer of Patriot Rail, a leading shortline railroad holding company with over 30 railroads, and as SVP of New Product Development at TrinityRail, a major railcar manufacturer. Harry also spent more than two decades as an executive in the rail asset leasing industry and has served on numerous boards and executive committees of industry trade associations, including as a current board member of the North American Rail Shippers Association (NARS). He is a past president and current board member of the Midwest Association of Rail Shippers (MARS). He has a BS in Economics from the University of Colorado and a Masters In Finance from Insead.



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# MEET THE INSTRUCTORS



## **Tomeka Watson Bryant**

**General Manager**

**New Orleans Public Belt Railroad**

**Tomeka Watson Bryant serves as the General Manager of the New Orleans Public Belt Railroad, where she directs daily operations of the New Orleans Public Belt, including railroad strategy, safety strategy and process improvement initiatives. Watson Bryant, a second-generation railroader, brings both operations and commercial experience in the railroad industry to lead NOPB, a Class III railroad on the nation's fourth largest rail gateway that connects with six Class I railroads and serves Port NOLA and local industry.**

**Most recently, Watson Bryant served as Marketing and Sales Manager for the Public Belt and pioneered a successful safety program. Her professional background includes Class 1 railroad experience, launching her career as a Trainmaster for both CSX and NOPB. She holds a Master's in Business Administration from Pfeiffer University, and a B.S. in Exercise Science from Elon University.**



# MEET THE INSTRUCTORS



## David Maggied

President, Transportation at Eco-Energy

As the President of Transportation, David Maggied leads Eco-Energy's transportation and logistics operations, overseeing all transportation assets, freight management, and supply chain activities. With over twenty years of experience in transportation and logistics, David has developed and managed supply chains for a diverse range of commodities across nearly every region of North America. His data-driven approach emphasizes analytics to assess performance and inform strategic decision-making. Under his leadership, David has successfully launched two operating divisions within Eco-Energy: their Trucking Division and the rapidly growing Third Party Logistics (3PL) Business, both aimed at capitalizing on revenue-generating opportunities.

Prior to joining Eco-Energy in 2011, David spent nine years at Delek US, where he served as the Manager of Transportation. During his tenure, he played a crucial role in expanding the transportation division to accommodate the organization's rapid growth.

A native of Nashville, TN, David earned an MBA from Vanderbilt University's Owen Graduate School of Management, as well as a bachelor's degree from Middle Tennessee State University.

In addition to his professional accomplishments, David proudly served in the US Army, achieving the rank of Staff Sergeant before receiving an honorable discharge.

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# MEET THE INSTRUCTORS



## Sandra J. Dearden

President & CEO

Highroad Consulting, Ltd.

Sandra Dearden enjoyed a 27-year career, working for three Class I railroads, before founding Highroad Consulting, Ltd. in 1996. Highroad has a full-time staff, supported by more than thirty contract consultants with senior management or middle management line experience in their respective functional areas.

Highroad has gained recognition as a leading expert in rail transportation based on its institutional knowledge and leading-edge software and analytical models. One of the keys to Highroad's success is INSIGHT: Rail-Edition® (INSIGHT), an innovative, copyrighted cost model developed by Highroad staff under Dearden's direction. It is the only rail costing model in the country that is not based on URCS, a generalized costing system used by the United States Surface Transportation Board for formal proceedings.

The URCS model used by the STB has not been updated since it was released in 1989, and some of the special studies behind the costs were performed in the 1950's. Congress has deemed URCS to be "fatally flawed", but the STB has not received funds to repair or replace URCS. INSIGHT is based on current railroad operations and financial data filed by railroads in required annual reports to government agencies. INSIGHT costs are the only non-URCS costs that have been presented and accepted in STB proceedings.

Sandra Dearden also conceived and directed the development of VIEWPOINT™, an analytical process to develop rail strategies and carrier strategies. Products of a VIEWPOINT™ project include:

- Benchmarking to determine a client's competitive position.
- Shipment profiles for each lane summarizing competition and rate recommendations.
- Cost studies to judge the railroads' pricing elasticity.
- A comprehensive report of findings, including leverage points identified during analysis.

Other analytical tools include REIDI™ (acronym for Regional Economic and Industrial Development Initiative) to strategically locate manufacturing plants, transloads and warehouses, linking shippers new to rail transportation.

Sandra has presented expert testimony in numerous proceedings before the Surface Transportation Board. In 2003, she released a white paper with cost evidence that revealed the railroads were over-recovering with their fuel surcharge programs. The white paper was the topic of a feature article in Traffic World magazine. In May 2006, the Surface Transportation Board responded to shipper complaints and conducted a hearing on the fuel surcharges, STB Ex Parte 661.

HIGHROAD prepared cost evidence for four shippers that filed statements into the proceeding, and Dearden filed testimony with cost evidence that revealed the surcharges were 4 – 5 times higher than the total cost of fuel in the lanes analyzed.

In its decision, the STB ruled fuel surcharges based on a percentage of rates constituted an unreasonable practice and ordered the railroads to change their fuel surcharge programs on regulated traffic to reflect actual fuel cost increases. In October 2008, Crain's Chicago Business ran a feature story about Ms. Dearden and her work on railroad fuel surcharges.

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# MEET THE INSTRUCTORS



## Martin Lew

Founder and CEO  
Commtrex

Mr. Martin Lew is the Founder and Chief Executive Officer of Commtrex, the largest tech-enabled rail logistics platform with managed services, empowering shippers to find and connect with transloaders, storage locations, warehouses, lessors, and a wide range of service providers.

Under Lew's leadership, Commtrex has partnered with all seven Class I Railroads and has grown to over 3,000 active members, many of whom are commodity shippers moving freight by rail across North America. Commtrex has been named to the FreightWaves Freight Tech 100, the Logistics Tech Outlook Top 10 Freight Management Companies, a participant in the Plug & Play Supply Chain Innovation Program, a finalist in with the BSGA Shark Tank Competition, and one of the 10 Most Promising Digital Companies at the Texas Digital Summit.

Prior to Commtrex, Mr. Lew was the Head of Global Sales and Origination for Mabanft Coal Trading, Vice President and Head of Origination for JP Morgan's Coal and Environmental Markets Group, Associate for the North American Coal and Emissions Trading Desk at Bear Stearns, and CEO of Equate Systems. Mr. Lew holds a Juris Doctorate from Boston College Law School, and a Bachelor of Arts Degree with majors in Communications and Political Science from the University of Southern California.

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