



FORUM



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How Freight Rail Works

In thousands of counties across America, freight rail is moving 40% of the nation's commerce, providing over 300,000 family-wage jobs, and enabling millions more by connecting local businesses to the global marketplace. Freight rail does this in a way that is unique among transportation modes: with few exceptions, railroad infrastructure is privately funded. Every year America's freight railroads invest 40 cents of every dollar earned in the most cost-effective, efficient freight rail system in the world. For BNSF Railway, that investment in its 28-state network totals more than \$55 billion since 2000.

What role can freight rail play in promoting resilient counties?

The answer is all around us. Every year access to the nation's freight rail network enables billions of dollars in economic development and job creation. But, it can also help smartly position counties for growth and quality of life. Here are just a few examples:

- **What we need every day:** Freight rail is essential in delivering the things we rely on every day, from food, cars, and building materials to the energy products that fuel our economy.
- **Saving counties' tax dollars:** On average, each freight train takes 280 trucks off the highway. In addition to avoiding traffic congestion, that means millions in tax dollars avoided in wear and tear on county roads and bridges.
- **Saving the environment:** In 2016, BNSF Railway enabled its customers to reduce their carbon emissions by 34 million metric tons. Freight railroads move 40% of the nation's commerce, with just 2.2% of greenhouse gases. And, we can haul one ton of freight 500 miles on one gallon of fuel. —That's sustainable transportation.
- **Moving it safely:** Freight rail moves hazardous materials essential for our economy, and for our health and safety—like water purification products, with an incident-free safety record of 99.998% from origin to destination.
- **Partnering to manage impacts:** Moving the nation's freight can create impacts, like noise and blocked crossings, for example. Grade separating those crossings can be a challenge, but it can also eliminate automatic train horn noise and help the existing surface street system work more effectively.
- **Avoiding incompatible land use:** Communities and railroads share a core interest in avoiding land use conflicts by ensuring that proper land use practices are followed. When commercial, retail, and residential development occurs next to active rail lines and facilities, extensive conflicts can result, and solutions are often elusive.



Which railroad(s) serve your county?



What topics would you like to discuss?

- Economic development, facility siting issues (shipper commitments, business volume?)
- Rail-roadway grade separations (Generally, 5% railroad participation if crossing is closed.)
- Quiet zones (Process can be extensive, with community, FRA, and railroad all having a role.)
- Noise, blocked crossings, or other local impacts (Railroads manage this differently, but they do have an interest in addressing these concerns.)
- At-grade crossing improvements (Federal 'Section 130' funds may be available for light/gate upgrades; for crossing deck maintenance/upgrade, the railroad covers the deck, county covers the road approaches.)
- Other topics: _____



Any other thoughts?

WHO TO CONTACT

It is sometimes difficult to know who to contact at a railroad. The large "Class I" railroads each have government and community affairs teams who can help; working with economic development, engineering, public projects, or other departments, railroad personnel can assist in finding a solution, or pursuing an opportunity. The Association of American Railroads (www.aar.org) maintains a list of railroad contacts and websites that can help. At BNSF Railway, just visit our website (www.bnsf.com) for assistance in your state.

Association of American Railroads (Class I's): www.aar.org

BNSF Railway: www.bnsf.com

Union Pacific Railroad: www.up.com

CSX Railroad: www.csx.com

Norfolk Southern: www.ns.com

Kansas City Southern: www.kcs.com

Canadian National: www.cn.ca

Canadian Pacific: www.cpr.ca

American Shortline and Regional Railroad Association: www.aslrra.org