

[Catalyst](#)[Journal of Transport & Land Use](#)[Freight and Logistics E-News](#)[Videos](#)[Annual Reports](#)[Research Reports](#)[Research Summaries](#)[Proceedings](#)[Library Services](#)[Subscribe to Newsletters & Announcements](#)[Order Publications](#)

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[Current Issue](#) | [Previous Issues](#) | [Subscribe](#)

[12th annual Freight and Logistics Symposium scheduled for Dec. 5](#)
[Sorel shares vision for Mn/DOT at MFAC quarterly meeting](#)
[Freight experts discuss innovative strategies and alternative fuels](#)
[Transportation Club Expo scheduled for March 24](#)
[FHWA 'Talking Freight' seminars](#)

12th annual Freight and Logistics Symposium scheduled for Dec. 5

Symposium will examine energy uncertainties affecting supply chains in the Upper Midwest

Skyrocketing energy costs are squeezing every sector of the economy like never before, triggering a chain reaction of price increases and a rethinking of total-cost concepts for freight and goods distribution. The 12th annual CTS Freight and Logistics Symposium, titled "Energy Uncertainties: Supply Chain Impacts in the Upper Midwest," will explore these issues on **December 5, 2008**, at the Four Points Sheraton in Minneapolis.

Energy uncertainties may affect location decisions (manufacturing, supply positioning, and warehousing), inventory carrying and turning, and delivery mode choice. Representatives from the business community, academia, and the public sector will discuss the impact of energy issues on the supply chain as well as options for meeting energy needs and possible public policy alternatives. Craig Simon, president of supply chain services with FedEx, will make the keynote presentation about companies adapting to the next generation of global trade and generating new efficiencies along the way.

For registration and more information, visit our Web site at www.cts.umn.edu/events/FLOGSymposium. You may also contact Sara Van Essendelft, 612-624-3708, cceconf5@umn.edu.

Sorel shares vision for Mn/DOT at MFAC quarterly meeting

The Minnesota Freight Advisory Committee (MFAC) met May 30, 2008, for its spring/summer quarterly meeting in Bloomington, Minnesota, to discuss a variety of topics including 2008 transportation legislation, renewable fuel, and the statewide transportation plan.

Tom Sorel, Minnesota Department of Transportation (Mn/DOT) commissioner, headlined the event by sharing his philosophies about the department's shifting direction and priorities. Sorel is leading initiatives to regain public trust in the department by integrating the public's values in investment decisions, being accountable to the public and legislature through timely follow-ups of important issues, and maintaining a department-wide philosophy based on servant leadership.

Sorel added that he hopes to regenerate a spirit of innovation at Mn/DOT and emphasize partnerships with the business and freight community.

Betsy Parker, Mn/DOT government affairs director, provided an overview of 2008 transportation-related legislation in Minnesota. She highlighted a number of provisions affecting freight transportation in the state. In particular, provisions in HF 3486 contained a number of changes related to truck size and weight. Next, Bruce Heine, director of government and media affairs for Magellan Midstream Partners, LP, talked about liquid pipelines in Minnesota and issues related to the movement of straight ethanol in such systems. Heine, whose company has 1,050 miles of refined-products pipelines, five distribution terminals, and two tank farms, also explored the possibility of expanding Minnesota's pipeline to the East Coast to transport ethanol. Last, Cecil Selness, director of the Mn/DOT Office of Freight and Commercial Vehicle Operations, presented an overview of freight-related aspects of the statewide transportation plan (STP) being developed by Mn/DOT. To support this effort, Selness surveyed attendees about freight transportation issues and priorities. The STP is a long-range plan for transportation investment and decision-making in Minnesota.

MFAC is a partnership between government and business to exchange ideas and recommend policy and actions that promote safe, productive, and sustainable freight transportation in Minnesota. MFAC consists of representatives from Minnesota's shipper and carrier communities as well as a variety of other interested organizations, and provides advice to the Minnesota Department of Transportation (Mn/DOT) and the Metropolitan Council regarding

freight issues and investments. For more information, refer to the [MFAC Web site](#), or contact Bob Gale, Mn/DOT Office of Freight and Commercial Vehicle Operations, at 651-366-3664, e-mail: robert.gale@dot.state.mn.us

Freight experts discuss innovative strategies and alternative fuels

As the cost of energy continues to rise, experts are looking for new and inventive ways to use and transport new fuels, all while keeping costs down and without sacrificing time or quality.

Four such experts showcased their ideas last May at the CTS Transportation Research Conference in St. Paul. The session "Freight Transportation: Alternative Fuels Production, Innovative Strategies" featured four different perspectives on improving the shipment of alternative fuels like ethanol on national freight lines. William Gardner from Mn/DOT moderated the presentation.

Lisa Fang Wu, with the Minnesota Department of Agriculture, described challenges facing rail transportation, including track deterioration, slow rail turnaround, limited destinations, and hesitation from rail owners to accept public funding. That especially makes transporting heavy material like ethanol difficult and more expensive, she explained.

While the majority of ethanol plants are located in the Midwest, more than 80 percent of alternative fuel consumers live on the coasts, meaning heavy ethanol needs to be shipped via rail—usually at a hefty price, she said.

According to Alexander King, an analyst with L.E. Peabody & Associates, Inc., one solution is to use intermodal rail products to widen market access and lower transportation costs, especially in rural areas. These intermodal products include truck trailers fitted for travel on rail tracks, which could streamline the transportation of products such as ethanol. In addition, these conversion cars can transport ethanol in smaller doses, rather than in bulk, which is the current standard.

Rail-compatible vehicles like "RailMates" make it possible to ship more manageable loads, which, in turn, encourage small buyers to purchase only appropriate amounts, King added.

Justin Scott, with Wilbur Smith Associates, wrapped up the session with a presentation about his extensive Minnesota commercial truck-parking study for Mn/DOT, which focuses on current parking situations at public and private rest areas.

By studying driver behavior, inventorying parking space availability, estimating truck counts, and surveying statewide companies, Scott found a significant lack of public parking spaces and an excess of private ones. His research also discovered that most trucking companies lack a formal parking policy for their employees.

Together, the group recommended that rail companies cultivate more public and private partnerships to fund the expansion of lines. They also supported freight tax credits, investment credit, and passage of the Freight Rail Infrastructure Capacity Expansion Act of 2007. These investments in transportation, they said, will expand the use of alternative fuels and ultimately reduce the cost and time of transporting products across the country.

Related resources:

- [2008 CTS Transportation Research Conference Coverage](#)

Transportation Club Expo scheduled for March 24, 2009

The Transportation Club 2009 Expo and Luncheon will be held on **March 24, 2009**, at the Sheraton Bloomington Hotel, 7800 Normandale Blvd (at Hwy 100 and I-494), Bloomington, Minnesota. Luncheon cost: \$35. The expo, the largest transportation exhibition in the United States with more than 80 exhibitors, follows the luncheon and is free. For more information, please visit www.transportationclub.com, or contact the Transportation Club at 952-239-1226 or office@transportationclub.com.

FHWA 'Talking Freight' seminars

Upcoming topics and dates for the "Talking Freight" online seminars from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) are listed here. See the [Talking Freight Web site](#) for further details.

October 15, 2008 Rising Fuel Prices/The Effects of Energy Prices on Global Trade Patterns 1:00 pm - 2:30 p.m. EDT



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