

# 2025 OTA Annual Conference

September 22-23

Renaissance Columbus Westerville

## Day 1

Monday, September 22

Time	Event	Location
9:00 a.m.	Exhibitor Set-Up	
9:30 a.m.	OTA Board of Trustees Meeting	Captain A
11:30 a.m.	Opening Lunch for All Conference Attendees & Vendors	Admiral Ballroom
12:00 p.m.	OTA Annual Meeting & State of the Association Address <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Jay Sewell, Sewell Motor Express and OTA Chair</li><li>Thomas Balzer, CAE, Ohio Trucking Association</li></ul>	Admiral Ballroom
12:30 p.m.	Putting ATRI Data to Work for You <i>Rebecca Brewster, American Transportation Research Institute (ATRI)</i> Join Rebecca Brewster, President & CEO of the American Transportation Research Institute (ATRI), for a data-driven look at the research shaping the future of the trucking industry. From truck parking to operational costs and driver wellness, ATRI's studies offer actionable insights that can inform strategic decision-making. This session will highlight key findings and demonstrate how leaders can leverage ATRI research to improve operations and stay ahead of industry trends.	Admiral Ballroom
1:30 p.m.	Exhibits Break	
2:00 p.m.	The Road Ahead: Economic Outlook and Policy Shifts Impacting Trucking <i>Ben Ayers, Nationwide Economics</i> This session offers a timely, expert-led overview of the U.S. economy and the key factors influencing business conditions. Senior Economist Ben Ayers will examine national trends related to inflation, interest rates, employment, and consumer behavior, while also discussing how emerging policy shifts—such as tariffs and budget changes—may shape the economic landscape. The session will include relevant insights for business leaders in Ohio and beyond, equipping attendees with valuable context for strategic decision-making.	Admiral Ballroom
3:00 p.m.	Exhibits Break	

3:30 p.m.	<b>Concurrent Education Sessions</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <b>Driven to Join, Driven to Stay: Recruiting &amp; Retaining Top Drivers</b>  <i>Sarah Hughes, GMS</i>  The trucking industry faces one of the toughest labor markets in history, with growing demand for qualified drivers and high turnover. This session explores proven strategies to attract new talent and, more importantly, keep them behind the wheel. In this session, learn everything from creating a strong employer brand and seeking talent in new labor pools to building driver-first cultures. You will walk away with fresh ideas on how to reduce churn, to keep your folks happy, and your fleet moving. </li> </ul>	Captain A
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <b>Temperature, Tariffs &amp; Theft, Oh My! How to Avoid the Most Expensive Holiday Ever</b>  <i>Joe Lucci, Acrisure Truck Group and Chris Montez, U.S. Marine Insurance Group</i>  This session will explore the most pressing risks affecting trucking &amp; logistics companies. Join us as we dive into the modern risks of temperature-sensitive shipments, impacts of global tariffs on freight valuation, and theft trends within the supply chain. Attendees will learn strategies to mitigate these risks and better protect their businesses - with takeaways ranging from how to attain proper insurance coverage, to complying with FSMA requirements, and protecting yourself from freight fraud. Come sharpen your knowledge on the most pressing risks within the supply chain and learn how you can make a difference! </li> </ul>	Captain B
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <b>Corporate Governance Challenges and Opportunities in the Trucking Industry</b>  <i>Heather Heberlein, Roetzel &amp; Andress</i>  This session will explore key issues and emerging opportunities in corporate governance within the trucking industry. Attendees will gain insights on best practices, compliance considerations, and strategies to strengthen leadership and organizational performance. </li> </ul>	Port
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <b>Value Creation and M&amp;A Activity in the Trucking Industry</b>  <i>Tom Springer, Schneider Downs Capital, LLC</i>  Tom Springer, Shareholder at Schneider Downs Capital, LLC, will share practical insights on how trucking companies can drive long-term value and prepare for potential ownership transitions. This session will explore strategies for value creation, common exit options for business owners, and key considerations in today's M&amp;A environment. Attendees will gain a deeper understanding of how to position their companies for future growth and navigate the evolving landscape of industry consolidation. </li> </ul>	Starboard
4:30 p.m.	<b>Industry Vendor &amp; Attendee Networking Reception</b> <i>Open to all conference attendees and exhibitors.</i>	Backyard
6:30 p.m.	<b>Conference PAC Dinner</b> <i>Additional fee; separate pre-registration is required. Bus leaves from the Banquet Entrance located just outside the Admiral Ballroom at 6:00 p.m.</i>	Three Creeks Kitchen + Cocktails, Gahanna

## Day 2

Tuesday, September 23

Time	Event	Location
8:00 a.m.	Breakfast	Admiral Ballroom
8:30 a.m.	<b>Emergency Lane: Effective Messaging for Transportation Executives - Because the Court of Public Opinion is Always in Session</b> <i>Bruce Hennes, Hennes Communication</i> When a crisis hits — whether it's a crash, a viral video, or regulatory trouble — what you say in the first few hours can shape the outcome for years. In this fast-paced session, Bruce Hennes of Hennes Communications shares proven strategies to help transportation leaders manage public perception, respond effectively under pressure, and protect their most valuable uninsured asset: their reputation. Drawing on decades of experience guiding executives through high-profile incidents, Bruce will equip you with practical tools to lead with credibility, clarity, and control when it matters most.	Admiral Ballroom
9:30 a.m.	Exhibits Break	
10:00 a.m.	<b>OTA's Legislative Impact: Progress, Priorities, and the Trucking Caucus</b> <i>Thomas Balzer, CAE, Ohio Trucking Association and Invited Members of the Trucking Caucus</i> Join Tom Balzer, CAE, President & CEO of the Ohio Trucking Association, for an inside look at the policy wins driving progress in Ohio's trucking industry. From towing reform to CDL scholarships and expanded truck parking across the state, Balzer will break down recent legislative victories and preview the association's top priorities for the year ahead. He'll also be joined by founding members of the newly formed Trucking Caucus— a bipartisan group of legislators committed to advancing policies that support and strengthen the state's trucking industry.	Admiral Ballroom
11:00 a.m.	Exhibits Break	
11:30 a.m.	<b>Chair &amp; Awards Luncheon</b> Join us in honoring the incoming OTA Chair, Fleet Safety Award winners, Safety Professional of the Year, and OTA Hall of Honor recipients. <i>This event is open to all conference attendees and exhibitors.</i>	Admiral Ballroom