

2026 OTA Annual Conference

September 21-22

Renaissance Columbus-Westerville | Westerville, Ohio

Day 1

Monday, September 21

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 - Rebecca Pohl Liette, Pohl Transportation, Inc. and OTA Chair - Thomas Balzer, CAE, Ohio Trucking Association	Admiral Ballroom
12:30 p.m.	Making Sense of the Market <i>Jonathan Starks, FTR Transportation Intelligence</i> Gain a clear, data-driven view of the forces shaping market activity in 2026 and what they signal for growth heading into 2027. While the economy continues to show steady momentum despite ongoing headwinds, the trucking cycle remains largely capacity-driven. Looking ahead, sustained growth will depend on a meaningful return of demand to support the next phase of the upcycle.	Admiral Ballroom
1:30 p.m.	Exhibits Break	
2:00 p.m.	State Trends, Legal Risk & the Trucking Resurgence Plan A Panel Discussion featuring: - Mark Colson, Alabama Trucking Association - Shannon Newton, Arkansas Trucking Association - Doug Marcello, Saxton & Stump - Thomas Balzer, CAE, Ohio Trucking Association (moderator) This panel will explore the current legal landscape impacting the trucking industry, including key litigation trends, regulatory developments, and emerging risks shaping operations across the country. Panelists will share insights from their respective states and discuss how these shifts are influencing policy, enforcement, and day-to-day business decisions, while also connecting these developments to the Trucking Resurgence Plan. Attendees will gain a practical understanding of where legal and regulatory pressure points are building and what they may mean for carriers moving forward.	Admiral Ballroom
3:00 p.m.	Exhibits Break	

3:30 p.m.	Concurrent Education Sessions	
	Montgomery, Carrier Vetting, and Cargo Theft: Raising the Standard of Care in Trucking <i>Justin Austin and Eric Sehlhorst, AON</i> This session will examine how the Supreme Court's <i>Montgomery</i> decision is reshaping expectations for brokers, motor carriers, and shippers, with a heightened focus on carrier safety performance and due diligence. It will explore carrier vetting as both a legal and operational defense, including what a defensible process looks like and how it is likely to be evaluated in litigation. Attendees will also learn practical steps to strengthen safety, compliance, and documentation to remain competitive and preferred partners in a post-<i>Montgomery</i> environment, along with how disciplined vetting and ongoing monitoring can help reduce cargo theft risk and produce measurable improvements in the near term.	Captain A
	EPA and The Impact on the Transportation Industry <i>Austin Hill, Stoops Freightliner</i> Explore the impact of EPA and state regulations on the transportation industry in this session led by Austin Hill with <i>Stoops Freightliner</i>. Discover how these regulatory changes affect vehicle purchasing decisions, compliance strategies, and cost considerations. Learn about the opportunities for innovation and gain insights into the importance of proactive planning and adaptation for industry stakeholders.	Captain B
	On the Frontlines: The Industry's Role in Combating Human Trafficking <i>Dylan Wecht, Truckers Against Trafficking (TAT)</i> Human trafficking is happening in our own backyards and across North America's roadways. Attendees will learn about free TAT training and resources, along with case studies of victim recoveries by transportation professionals. The session will also highlight practical ways that moving, trucking, bus and energy industries can get involved. The presentation will have an interactive component, with participants able to take part in a before-and-after poll to watch their real-time understanding of their role in combating human trafficking grow.	Port
	Beyond the Average: Practical Strategies for Building a More Profitable Truckload Network <i>Brad Heisterkamp, KSM Transport Advisors, LLC</i> Truckload carriers generate more data than ever, but companywide averages and traditional performance measures do not always reveal which customers, lanes, and operating patterns are creating value. This session will blend real-world trucking operations experience with practical data analysis to show how carriers can move beyond reporting results and begin making better network decisions. Attendees will learn how to identify the factors driving performance, test long-held assumptions, and translate findings into actions across pricing, sales, and operations.	Starboard

	Women in Motion: Ohio Chapter Meet & Greet Stop by for a casual gathering to connect with women from all sectors of Ohio trucking. Learn about the new Women in Motion Ohio Chapter, grow your local professional network, and unwind before the evening activities in a relaxed, friendly environment. All roles and career stages are welcome!	The Studio (Next to the hotel restaurant)
4:30 p.m.	Industry Vendor & Attendee Networking Reception <i>Open to all conference attendees and exhibitors.</i>	Backyard
6:30 p.m.	Conference PAC Dinner at Three Creeks Kitchen + Cocktails <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 22

Time	Event	Location
8:00 a.m.	Breakfast for All Conference Attendees & Vendors	Admiral Ballroom
8:30 a.m.	Adapting and Growing in a Fluctuating Market A Panel Discussion featuring: - Tamara Paul, Trio Trucking, Inc. - Brian Pohl, Pohl Transportation, Inc. - Doug Sibila, Total Distribution, Inc. - Thomas Balzer, CAE, Ohio Trucking Association (moderator) The trucking industry continues to face shifting freight demand, rising costs, regulatory change, and ongoing uncertainty. In this panel discussion, long-tenured industry leaders will share how they have navigated cycles of volatility while continuing to grow and strengthen their organizations. Panelists will discuss practical approaches to managing risk, building resilience, investing through downturns, and identifying opportunities in change. Attendees will leave with grounded, experience-based insights they can apply to their own operations in today's evolving market.	Admiral Ballroom
9:30 a.m.	Exhibits Break	
10:00 a.m.	Leading Enforcement: Perspectives from Ohio's Regulatory Agencies <i>Invited Agency Leaders</i> Hear directly from leaders representing Ohio's key transportation regulatory and enforcement agencies in this moderated conversation focused on policy direction, compliance priorities, and the evolving regulatory landscape. The discussion will open with a brief update on current enforcement trends and priorities impacting motor carriers. Panelists will then share their perspectives on agency coordination, compliance expectations, and the challenges shaping commercial vehicle safety in Ohio.	Admiral Ballroom

11:00 a.m.	Exhibits Break	
11:30 a.m.	Chair & Awards Luncheon 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