

# NITL Engage

**The Shippers Voice: Navigating the New Normal In Rail, Ocean and Highway.**

October 7-9, 2024 | AT&T Conference Center at the University of Texas, Austin Campus

## NITL Engage 2024 University of Texas Austin, TX

### *Introduction*

For those of you who were unable to join us at NITL Engage this year, we wanted to share some of the highlights with you. The conference was a great follow up to the successful Engage 2023. While we always hoped all NITL members would attend, mother nature had other ideas. The room was full and those that did attend were fully engaged.

This year's event was held at the AT&T Conference Center at the University of TX in Austin, never a bad place to be. The venue was well suited to our event, providing an excellent meeting space and dining. Feedback from last year's attendees regarding the 2023 room set up was so positive NITL continued using that room layout featuring armchairs and sofas in the front of the room that encouraged folks to sit near the stage. It was a comfortable situation to learn and engage.

Most importantly this year's session topics were some of the best ones I have encountered across the many annual conferences that are held each year. NITL really pushed the envelope in selecting and featuring a number of the tough topics that supply chain professionals have struggled to resolve. The speakers, panelists and moderators were all knowledgeable and offered insights into the many difficult issues facing today's supply chain professionals. I would encourage all of you to make a point to join us next year to experience and be part of NITL's continuing transformation.

### *Session Topics*

#### Integrated Communications in Multi-Modal Supply Chains: Enhancing Connectivity Across Rail, Ocean, and Highway Networks

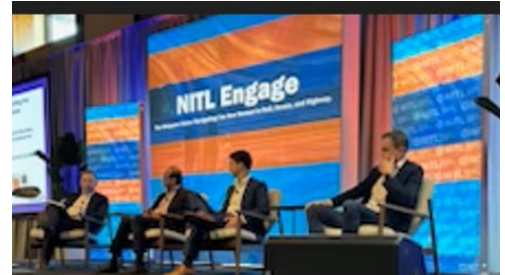
Effective communication is the lifeline that keeps supply chains running smoothly. And, as the utilization of multi-modal transportation options grows, the role of integrated communications plays a crucial role in optimizing the flow of goods and information across rail, ocean and highway networks. Each speaker provided insights in their respective modes and positions in sharing how to best ensure the communication flow between modes. The moderator did an excellent job of not only keeping the session moving but engaging the audience in the discussion.



## ***Session Topics***

### **Navigating Geopolitical Turbulence: Understanding the Impact of Rising Tensions on Global Supply Chains**

There is no denying that we exist in a global economy. Escalating geopolitical tensions in the world present significant challenges and disruptions to global supply chains. The speakers on this panel offered valuable insights and practical strategies for navigating these geopolitical tensions and safeguarding global supply chains. The importance of building resilience and agility in this ever-changing landscape cannot be understated. Moderated by Mark Szakonyi from JOC, the panel led us through how they have positioned their companies to mitigate supply chain disruptions.



### **Securing the Digital Frontier: Navigating the Landscape of Cybersecurity**

In an era defined by digital transformation and interconnectedness and AI, cybersecurity has become a critical concern for businesses, governments, and individuals alike. Businesses are scrambling to secure their networks and looking for direction. This “fireside chat” featured two experts in this field. They not only offered valuable insights and practical guidance for navigating these threats, but they also took the time to explain the issues so the audience could understand the problem and how best to protect their networks.

### **AI-Powered Transformation: Revolutionizing Shipper Operations for Efficiency and Agility**

There is no doubt that AI has arrived, and this session spoke to how shippers are harnessing the power of artificial intelligence (AI) to optimize shippers’ operations and drive innovation in the logistics industry. We are still learning about the transformative impact of AI on shipper operations. This panel touched on demand forecasting and route optimization as well as inventory management and customer service.

### **Sustainability in the Supply Chain: Nurturing Ethical Practices for a Greener Future**

Today sustainability is no longer a buzzword but a necessity within the supply chain. In this session, the panel shared real world examples of companies that have successfully implemented sustainable practices within their supply chains. They discussed the relationship between sustainability and supply chain management and how businesses can integrate ethical practices into their operations.

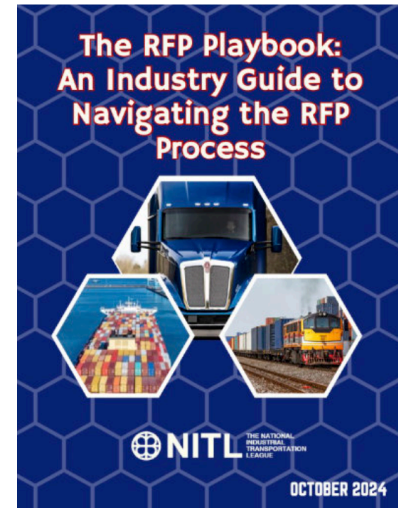




## ***Session Topics***

### **Streamlining the RFP Process: Collaborative Solutions for Carriers and Shippers**

This session is a follow-up and result of last year's Engage conference. During the 2023 Carrier CEO panel there was a lively discussion surrounding the RFP process and how it could be improved. As a result, NITL put together a collaborative team of shippers, carriers and brokers (the first integrated team since the development of the VICS bill of lading in the early 90's). Working together over the last few months, the team put together a white paper outlining issues and recommending best practices for RFP events. The panel presented highlights of their findings and also provided the ability to access the paper on the [NITL website](#). As a follow-up project, the team is looking at developing suggested contract templates that will be available to NITL members. The project is being viewed as a living document to be reviewed and revised as needed.



### **Unforeseen Disruptions: Understanding How Natural Disasters Impact Global Supply Chains Beyond Affected Areas**

This topic could not have been timelier. With hurricane season coming earlier and hitting Florida, North Carolina, and Tennessee during our meeting, proving to be particularly devastating, and supply chains still recovering from the pandemic have been strained. Natural disasters have far reaching consequences that extend beyond the immediate areas of impact, causing ripple effects throughout global supply chains. The speakers talked about the interconnected nature of supply chains and the cascading effects of natural disasters. They shared strategies for enhancing resilience and mitigating risks across the entire supply chain network. It is more important than ever for supply chain professionals to prepare for these events by having a written strategy and conducting business disaster and recovery drills to help mitigate these disruptions.

### **Navigating Nuclear Verdicts: Understanding Trends, Causes, and Future Outlook Across Ocean, Rail, and Highway Transport.**

In recent years, the transportation industry has faced a rising tide of “nuclear verdicts” – massive legal judgments that have significant financial and reputational impacts on companies involved in accidents. The speakers in this session were very engaging and informative as they looked at trends, root causes, and the future of nuclear verdicts with each transportation sector. They also offered recommendations to enhance safety procedures and mitigate risks to protect your organization's reputation. The speakers made what could have been a dry session into a very engaging and informative one. NITL will be holding this session on November 19 at 12:30 et, as we could not get to all the questions from the attendees.





NITL launched our new Emerging Leaders program NELP, and we are looking for others to join and become the next generation at NITL and supply chain leaders. Please take a minute to review what NELP has to offer. If you have questions please reach out to Nancy O'Liddy or directly to our Co-Chairs of the Program, Kris Matthews, Armada or Daniel Anderson, Trinity Rail.



---

## NITL BOARD OF DIRECTORS

NITL also voted in their new Board of Directors at the NITL Business Meeting, they can be viewed at [NITL.org](http://NITL.org) as well. We welcome our new Chair, Ross Corthell, Packaging Corporation of America, and our newest Board member Jim Jamrus, BP. We also thank Jackie Bailey for her leadership as Chair and with our sincerest appreciation to Doug Kratzberg, who has served on the NITL Board for many years, the best in his retirement.

If you are interested in serving on a modal committee or on the Board of Directors, please reach out to Nancy O'Liddy [nancy.oliddy@nitl.org](mailto:nancy.oliddy@nitl.org).



**NITL Chairman Ross Corthell**  
Packaging Corporation of America

---

## WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA WREATHS across AMERICA

The Board of Directors of NITL decided to partner with Wreaths Across America this year to honor our nations heroes at Arlington National Cemetery. We are asking NITL Members to encourage their companies, employees, family, friends and community members to support NITL and WAA by sponsoring a wreath, which will be placed on the graves of those that gave their lives for our freedom. To learn more about NITL's participation and to sponsor a wreath, go to [www.wreathsasscrossamerica.org/NITL](http://www.wreathsasscrossamerica.org/NITL).

