



Center for Railway
Research and Education

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

Railway Management Certificate Program XX

Week/Module 4: Railway Operations

November 3 - 7, 2025

Presenters

Jack Zhang

Executive Vice President of Locomotive

Jack Zhang is executive vice president of locomotive for Progress Rail, with executive leadership and responsibility for global sales, engineering, operations, product and project management, aftermarket, quality and advanced rail technology.

Jack joined Progress Rail in 2023 as senior vice president of corporate and organizational strategy. He began his career with GE Transportation in 2002 and has worked for over 20 years in the rail industry, including experience in product management, commercial leadership, operations and field services.

He holds a bachelor's degree in Business Technology from Montana State University-Northern.



BRIAN CALLEAR

Senior Vice President, Locomotive Operations & Supply Chain
Progress Rail, a Caterpillar Company



Brian Callear serves as senior vice president of locomotive operations and supply chain at Progress Rail, a Caterpillar company. In this role, he oversees locomotive manufacturing and operations while continuing to lead the global supply chain strategy for the locomotive team.

Brian joined Progress Rail in 2023 as director of procurement, bringing with him more than a decade of experience in supply chain and operations leadership. Prior to this, he spent three years as facility manager at Caterpillar's Hodges, South Carolina, foundry, where he led significant improvements in output, safety, and quality. His leadership was instrumental in driving operational stability and embedding a strong safety culture, while also representing Caterpillar within the local community.

Earlier in his career, Brian held various roles within Caterpillar's Global Purchasing organization, including global category procurement manager. He played a key role in implementing commodity strategies for casting and machining and contributed to major cost-reduction initiatives through the team RPM process.

Known for his enterprise-wide perspective and commitment to excellence, Brian continues to leverage his deep expertise in procurement, supply chain and operations to drive strategic sourcing decisions and operational efficiencies across Progress Rail's locomotive business.

Brian is based in Muncie, Indiana.

John Lullo

Locomotive Operations Director, Muncie Locomotive Facility

John graduated from the University of Illinois at Chicago with a degree in mechanical engineering. He started his rail career in 2013 in LaGrange, IL as the 2nd shift e-locker assembly supervisor. In 2021 John moved to Muncie, IN to setup the e-locker production line, and later that year, he became the production manager for e-lockers, final assembly and final test.

John was promoted to operations director at the Muncie, IN plant in 2023.



MICHAEL IDEN



Michael Iden is a consultant with Tier 5 Locomotive LLC, offering strategic guidance on locomotive technologies, fleet modernization, and emissions reduction across the rail industry. He brings over five decades of engineering and operational expertise, with a career spanning Class I railroads, OEMs, and industry innovation.

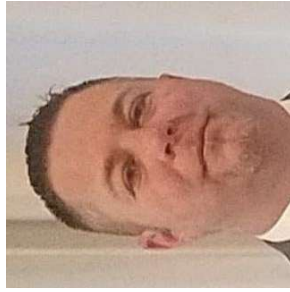
Mike began his career as a management trainee with the Southern Railway System and later held engineering roles at Electro-Motive Division of General Motors, and the Chicago & North Western Transportation Company as Assistant Chief Mechanical Officer. He joined Union Pacific Railroad in 1995, where he served as General Director of Car and Locomotive Engineering. In this role, he led initiatives in locomotive emissions compliance, locomotive crashworthiness, and fleet integration following 2 major mergers. He also pioneered the development of ultra-low-emission “Genset” switching locomotives, introduced diesel-battery hybrid switchers in the early 2000s, and introduced Distributed Power technology to expand train capacity and fuel efficiency. At UP he was also deeply involved in testing liquefied natural gas as an alternative locomotive fuel, and electronically-controlled pneumatic (ECP) brakes. He was awarded 13 U.S. and 1 Canadian patents, all assigned to Union Pacific.

Since retiring from Union Pacific, Mike has focused on locomotive propulsion and technology consulting and thought leadership, especially improving the selection and management of new technologies. He is a registered professional engineer in 3 states and was previously a federally licensed locomotive engineer.

Mike holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Mechanical Engineering from the Milwaukee School of Engineering and a Master of Management degree from Northwestern University, earned through a General Motors fellowship.

Outside the office, Mike contributes regularly to Railway Age and other industry platforms, advocating for collaborative standards and sustainable innovation in freight and passenger rail.

Presenters



Dan Rimer
Sr. Director-Back shops



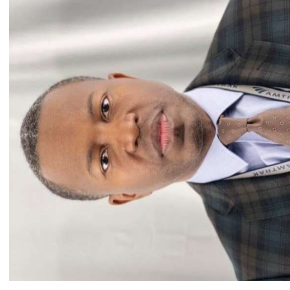
Rob Hagley
Superintendent II
Beech Grove Ops.



Offard Burkhardt
Mgr. Equipment Planning



Gus Thoele
Asst. Superintendent
Car Ops



Gevoris McCreary
General Foreman
Components



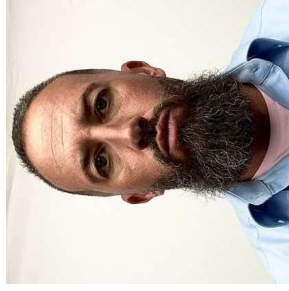
Lowell Baker
Asst. Superintendent
Facility Maint.



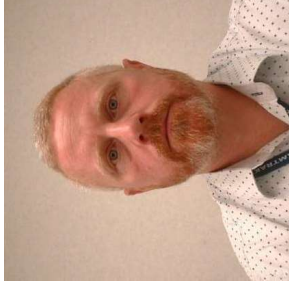
Troy Gorham
Superintendent I
LR/HR Back Shop Support



Matt Graves
BIC Coordinator



Mark Wright
Cont. Improvement Mgr.



Ryan Woodlee
Training Coordinator

JEFFREY SRIVER



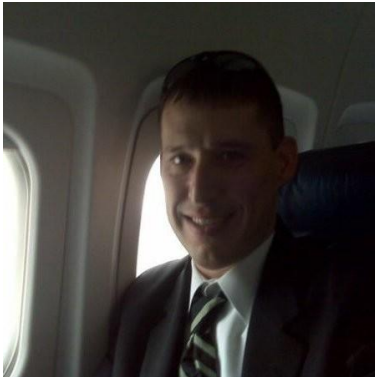
Jeffrey Sriver joined the Chicago Department of Transportation in 2009 and is currently its Director of Transportation Planning.

His team at CDOT is responsible for short-, medium-, and long-range planning, analysis and research activities encompassing all transportation modes, facilities, users, systems, and networks serving the City.

Jeff also leads CDOT's participation in the CREATE Program, a \$5.8 billion region-wide freight and passenger railroad infrastructure improvement plan, as well as CDOT's involvement in Union Station planning and redevelopment. In addition, he oversees planning for CDOT and IDOT's multi-year re-envisioning of the City's iconic North Lake Shore Drive corridor through Lincoln Park.

Prior to joining CDOT Jeff led Strategic Planning activities for the Chicago Transit Authority. He has also been a consultant on urban transportation initiatives in the U.S. and internationally. Jeff has a Bachelor's Degree in Civil Engineering from Purdue University and a Masters in Transportation from MIT.

JOHN PARKER



With nearly 25 years of experience in the rail industry, and 20 years of in management positions, I believe my background and experience will make a good fit for your organization. During my tenure as a Director of Train Operations and Chief Dispatcher for CSX Transportation at the Chicago Division Dispatch Office, I coordinated interchange between CSX Transportation and foreign line partners in Chicago, and coordinated movement between the Chicago Dispatch Office and field offices throughout the division. As part of my experience in the Chicago area, I also served as the founding representative for CSX Transportation at the

Chicago Integrated Rail Operations Center (CIROC). During my time at the CIROC, I assisted with the coordination of communications between all carriers to assist with train movement. This experience in the Chicago area has given me an extensive working knowledge of train operations in the City of Chicago across all major carriers.

Other experience within the rail industry includes interpreting rules for managers, dispatchers, and train and engine service managers, managing track maintenance, schedule and payroll. Duties have also included handling appeals and arbitrary claims. Additionally, I have experience with management in the field as a Terminal Trainmaster at the Willard Terminal in Ohio where I managed day-to-day operations including train classification operations, held safety briefings, and performed operational testing for 300 train and engine service employees that reported to the Willard, Ohio Terminal.

Not only have I had the opportunity to build leadership qualities within the rail industry, but also during my service as a Fire Chief for a volunteer fire department. As a Fire Chief, I managed 30 firefighters and emergency operations for the city of New Whiteland, Indiana, and developed skills in managing others in high stress situations.

BILL THOMPSON



William C. Thompson is Chief Engineer at the Association of American Railroads (AAR), where he leads engineering efforts for one of the rail industry's most ambitious infrastructure initiatives - the \$4.4 billion CREATE Program in Chicago.

With 38 years of experience in heavy haul railroad engineering, design, research, and operations, William brings deep technical expertise and strategic insight to projects that enhance rail fluidity, safety, and community connectivity.

Prior to joining AAR, William spent 23 years at Union Pacific Railroad, where he held various engineering and project management roles focused on grade separation, capacity expansion, and urban mobility. His leadership has been instrumental in advancing the 75th Street Corridor Improvement Project, the largest component of the CREATE Program, which aims to alleviate congestion at Chicago's Belt Junction and improve freight and passenger rail operations across the region.

William is a Registered Professional Engineer and holds a degree in Civil Engineering. He is a frequent contributor to industry forums and collaborates with public and private stakeholders to promote sustainable infrastructure development and rail innovation.

Outside the office, William supports educational outreach and workforce development initiatives that encourage careers in transportation and engineering.

DONALD BRADLEY



Donald Bradley is a rail transportation professional with over 36 years in the rail industry. He currently works in the rail equipment leasing side of the industry with CIT Rail, a division of First Citizens Bank. CIT Rail is a leading rail equipment lessor with a fleet of more than 128,000 railcars and locomotives. As Senior Vice President, Business Intelligence at CIT Rail, Donald oversees a group responsible for market research, competitor assessments, revenue forecasting, model development, and developing dashboarding tools. Prior to CIT Rail, he spent 17 years in the rail transportation / logistics industry, including experience with the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway, GE Rail Services and IntelliTrans, LLC.

Donald holds a bachelor's degree in business economics from Indiana University-Bloomington where he is a founding board member of the IU Kelley School of Business Transportation & Supply Chain Executive Board, where he collaborates with other industry leaders and mentors IU students to educate and draw talent to the rail transportation industry. In addition, he has an MBA from University of Chicago with concentrations in finance and strategy.

Outside of his professional life, Donald is an avid music fan, including time spent learning to play guitar and going to live shows. In addition, he is looking forward to spending time traveling with upcoming trips to see his son play volleyball in the Deaflympics in Tokyo Japan next week, and visiting his daughter, who will be studying abroad in Spain, in 2026.



LAWRENCE (LARRY) B. JORDAN
CEO & PRESIDENT - WI-TRONIX



Larry Jordan, Chief Executive Officer and co-founder of Wi-Tronix, is committed to a global vision of saving lives by improving the safety, service reliability, and operational efficiency of transportation systems for the rail industry.

An inventor and innovator, Larry holds multiple patents in the area of locomotive control systems. He believes passionately that innovation can provide the future of rail safety.

Prior to founding Wi-Tronix, Larry started his career at General Motors in the Electro-Motive Division (EMD) for 15 years, both as a Project Engineer and a Manager of Electronic Systems Integration. Today, Larry leads the Wi-Tronix team in providing remote monitoring, video analytics, and predictive diagnostic solutions to railways, ensuring the most efficient and reliable movement of goods and people throughout the world.



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 1, 2024

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MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY WELCOMES RON BATORY

EAST LANSING, MI — Michigan State University's [Center for Railway Research and Education](#) announces Hon. Ronald L. Batory assumes the role of the Edward A. Burkhardt Chair in Railway Management & Executive Director, to further provide leadership, vision, strategy, and direction to the center's program starting October 1, 2024.

Batory's experience now spans over 52 years in the railway industry fulfilling an array of leadership and advisory capacities in both private and public sectors, thus bringing extensive expertise and knowledge of the full breadth of North American railways to this role. The CRRE, housed in MSU's [Broad College of Business](#), will foster continued growth and recognition as a leading center for railway management research and education.

"I'm both humbled and honored to serve the Center for Railway Research and Education," said Ron Batory. "Contributing through an academic venue is a unique opportunity to collaborate with growing rail transportation talent and passion residing in our logistics system."

In this role, Batory will help fulfill the vision of the center's benefactor Ed Burkhardt, whose generous gift established the Burkhardt Professor in Railway Management, a key component of the center's mission to bring innovative leadership and new thinking to the industry.

"I look forward to Ron's experience and knowledge as the center develops new and improved educational programs," said Nick Little, CRRE director. "Expanding the center's relationships with key rail industry leaders will provide students and staff with valuable information and opportunities."

The CRRE is delighted to welcome Batory in this capacity, renewing his relationship with MSU. Batory was once a member of the center's advisory group establishing the Railway Management Certificate Program in 2007. Since then, hundreds of continuing education participants from all parts of the North American railway industry and selected areas around the world have completed the program and enhanced their knowledge and career opportunities.

ABOUT MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

Michigan State University has been advancing the common good with uncommon will for more than 165 years. One of the world's leading research universities, MSU pushes the boundaries of discovery to make a better, safer, healthier world for all while providing life-changing opportunities to a diverse and inclusive academic community through more than 200 programs of study in 17 degree-granting colleges.

ABOUT THE BROAD COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

The Broad College of Business creates and disseminates knowledge through collaboration, developing global transformational leaders who positively impact organizations and society.



RON BATORY BIOGRAPHY

Ronald L. Batory is a career professional with more than 52 years of associated experience in the railroad industry. He spent the first 23 years of his career working for both eastern and western Class I railroads in addition to serving along with a court appointed Trustee's successful oversight of a regional railroad bankruptcy.

Then in 1994 he was appointed President of The Belt Railway Company of Chicago, a multiple owned subsidiary of then nine competing Class I carriers. His leadership success of serving their needs in Chicago Gateway led to CSX and Norfolk Southern Corporation later recruiting him to Consolidated Rail Corporation in preparation of their Surface Transportation Board approved partitioning of the eastern carrier and establishing what is now commonly known as the Shared Assets Areas.

Accomplishment of that unique task in providing a plane of equality for joint competition later favored him in being appointed to his last position of President and Chief Operating Officer for the entire corporate entity.

Upon his retirement in 2017 he pursued public service in Washington, D.C., which resulted in a Presidential nomination and unanimous consent by the United States Senate to become the 14th Administrator of The Federal Railroad Administration.

Ron is a graduate of Adrian College, Adrian, Michigan, with a B.A. degree along with an M.A. degree from Eastern Michigan University. He continues to serve on various governing and advisory boards associated within the sectors of both industry and education.

Ron resides in Santa Fe, New Mexico, with his wife, Barbara.



James M. Derwinski

CEO/Executive Director

Metra Work History

As CEO/Executive Director of Metra, James M. Derwinski oversees one of the nation's largest, busiest and most complex commuter rail systems. With 243 stations, 11 routes and some 1,200 miles of track, Metra serves as an economic engine that extends far beyond its service area.

Following a long, distinguished career with Metra, Mr. Derwinski was unanimously elected CEO/Executive Director by the Metra Board in 2017. Mr. Derwinski began his career at Metra in 1997 as an electrician, rising steadily through the ranks before assuming the role of Chief Mechanical Officer in 2013.



A six-year U.S. Navy veteran, Mr. Derwinski served our country as an electrician in America's nuclear submarine fleet. Upon leaving the service, he began his career with Chicago & North Western Railroad in 1993.

A longtime champion of public transportation, Mr. Derwinski is both a founder and chairman of the Commuter Rail Coalition (CRC), an advocacy organization that launched in 2019. CRC is an association of commuter rail agencies, operators and other interested parties acting together to educate and engage stakeholders on the importance and value commuter railroads bring to the nation as a whole and the communities they serve.

Also, Mr. Derwinski is a member of the American Public Transportation Association Board of Directors (APTA), serving on several key committees; is a member of the Safety Operations and Management Committee of the Association of American Railroads; serves on the MxV Rail Board of Directors; is Chairman of Illinois High Speed Rail Commission; and was recently named a member of the first-ever Passenger Rail Advisory Committee for the Surface Transportation Board.

He is currently leading Metra in restoring commuter confidence in public transportation in a post-COVID environment. Under his leadership, Metra is bringing together business and community leaders to reignite the region's economy. Always looking to the future, Mr. Derwinski is overseeing new transportation initiatives, including updating Metra's aging fleet of railcars, contracting to deliver the first all battery passenger equipment in the United States, and making transit service more affordable and available to underserved communities.

Metra

Metra is the rail system serving the six-county Chicago area. Metra provides service to and from downtown Chicago with 243 stations over 11 routes totaling nearly 500 route miles. We remain one of the largest and most complex rail systems in North America, with a service area encompassing more than 3,700 square miles.

TONY HATCH



Tony Hatch has been a senior transportation analyst on Wall Street for over twenty years, starting at Salomon brothers; proceeding to Argus, Painewebber, and most recently at NatWest Markets (USA) prior to starting his independent analyst/consultancy in 1999 and working with CV Brokerage. Mr. Hatch's coverage has been focused on the freight transportation segment, particularly surface transportation. Mr. Hatch is known for his knowledge of the intermodal area, where the various modes of freight transport converge, on which he has held several dozen specialized conferences.

Recently, Mr. Hatch has been providing not only "traditional" institutional transport research but also providing due diligence and other services to "new" forms of transport investment such as private equity, infrastructure and hedge funds in such areas as intermodal, rail maintenance and construction, rail cars and 3pls. He has a research partnership with PLG Consulting and an equity marketing partnership with CV Securities. Along with Progressive Railroading magazine he co-founded, co-presents and leads "railtrends", the most comprehensive railways conference every fall in New York City.

With over a quarter century's experience in the field, Mr. Hatch has been active as an independent analyst and consultant, doing work for major railroads such as Norfolk Southern, CSX, Union Pacific, BNSF, Kansas City Southern, Canadian National as well as the Association of American Railroads, the American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association, the United Transportation Union, the Canadian Transportation Agency, the Railway Association of Canada, the Intermodal Association of North America, the North American Association of Rail Shippers, AREMA/NRC/RSI, the Railway Association of the UK, Australian Railways, Railinc/Steelroads, various other freight shipper and supplier organizations (including NITL, NGFA, and NEARS/SEARS/MARS/SWARS, etc), and management consulting firms such as Oliver Wyman/ Mercer Management, and Mitchell Madison Group / USWeb. He has also worked with an extensive list of private equity firms in the space, both here and in or involving Europe, Brazil, China and Australia.

Mr. Hatch, when directly on "The Street", was named to various honor rolls, including the Institutional Investor ("ii") and Wall Street Journal All Star Teams and he has garnered the top spot in the prestigious Greenwich Poll. He is a Past President of the Motor Carrier Analysts Association. He was just recently named to the board of Axion, a recycled-materials rail tie manufacturer. His career highlight had been testifying before Congress on railroads, starting in 1998, among other testimonies.

Mr. Hatch graduated from Harvard College with an A.B. in American History in 1982. He lives in New York City, and enjoys baseball (watching LA Dodgers! – and playing), English soccer (Spurs) and history, US politics, and sports cars.

EDWARD A. BURKHARDT

Founder and Chairman, Rail World Inc.

Edward Burkhardt has been fascinated with trains since he was a young child.

He took his first railroad job working the track gang on the Great Northern to earn money for college. After graduating from Yale University with a B.S. in Industrial Administration and a graduate degree in Rail Transportation, Burkhardt



ultimately became Chairman, President, and CEO of Wisconsin Central. Using a rather simple formula of ‘good people, good equipment, and lots of service and attention to the customer’, Burkhardt built Wisconsin Central into the nation’s largest regional railroad at the time.

Burkhardt later founded Rail World, Inc. With operations in the United Kingdom, Poland, New Zealand, Ukraine, and the Baltics, his career literally spans the globe.



**The Eli Broad
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VALERII (VAL) KUCHERENKO

Director, Railway Education

A commercially savvy professional in international sales, marketing, and supply chain strategy, with over 20 years of experience driving operational excellence and competitive advantage across the transportation and logistics sector. This journey has included leadership roles at Fortune 150 and



CPG companies, with a strong foundation in maritime and intermodal operations.



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After six rewarding years with CPKC, supporting cross-border collaboration and commercial strategy, the transition to Michigan State University marked a new chapter focused on advancing industry partnerships and shaping the future of rail through research, education, and program development at the Center for Railway Research and Education (CRRE).

This global perspective is grounded in deep market knowledge across North America and Europe, strengthened by five international assignments in the USA, Spain, Italy, Russia, and Canada. Academic credentials include an MBA from McMaster University, Certified Logistics Professional (CCLP) designation from Canada's Logistics Association

and a specialized M.I.S.E. (Maersk International Shipping Education) certification from Copenhagen, Denmark.

Outside of work, life is anchored by a close-knit family - married with two sons who continue to inspire pride and purpose. A lifelong hockey enthusiast, drawn to the sport's grit, strategy, and camaraderie, much like the values that guide a career in transportation and leadership.