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## Call for Presentations for: 2023 Southeast Rail Forum

The Southeastern States and Women's Transportation Seminar North Carolina Triangle Chapter (WTS) will hold its bi-annual Southeast Rail Forum (SRF) March 22-24, 2023, in Arlington, VA. This notice is a call for presentations for a limited number of speaking opportunities.

The SRF objectives include highlighting and discussing the following:

- ❖ Rail success stories with an emphasis on **partnerships** (Federal, State, Local, Railroads, Private Sector) in the Southeast;
- ❖ Strengthening todays Rail System for **future** advancement and development as an integral piece of the larger Transportation network;
- ❖ Developing and leveraging sustainable and predictable **funding** sources for Rail projects in the Southeast;
- ❖ Rail's **benefits** to long-term transportation resiliency, equity, emission reductions, and economic development including, transit-oriented development practices, and collaboration to move more people and goods by rail;
- ❖ Challenges and solutions to provide a robust Rail System including **Rail Safety**, Evolving Technology and Maintaining Readiness.

### **Educational sessions:**

There are two types of sessions – plenary and breakout.

*Plenary Sessions* - should be of a general enough nature that they will appeal to a general audience of rail planning and design professionals, freight or passenger rail professionals, or both groups and should contain enough content for 60-90 minutes.

*Breakout Sessions* - may be of a more focused nature and contain enough content for 30-45 minutes.

Additional criteria for sessions:

- May utilize a single presenter, multiple presenters or a panel format. If a panel method is selected, the panel should consist of 3-4 participants, including a moderator.
- Should share case studies from the commercial construction industry.
- Should employ experience-based learning with interactions, hands-on activities and demonstrations.
- Should present innovative techniques or best practices related to rail.
- Should provide a handout and/or other meaningful takeaway for attendees.

## **Proposal information**

SRF/WTS is looking for fresh, innovative, cutting-edge ideas, case studies, and best practices that touch on the benefits of rail in the southeast.

When writing your proposal, it should address what need, problem, or issue you are proposing to present and why it is important to rail in the southeast. Each submission must identify three main take-aways or messages the audience will learn.

## **Important Information for Proposals**

- Proposals must be targeted to the rail industry.
- Proposals must be complete at time of submission – it is not sufficient to note “information to be added later.” Incomplete proposals will not be considered in the review process.
- Sponsorship opportunities exist for those with services, programs or products available on the market but these services and products are not acceptable topics for sessions. We will NOT accept proposals that promote a product, program, or service.
- Panel Session Proposals must demonstrate that sufficient time is incorporated for discussion and interaction with fellow panelists and audience Q&A. Panels should not be “talking heads” but rather allow sufficient time for adequate discussion and exchange between all in attendance.
- SRF/WTS will give preference to panel sessions that include multiple institutions and diverse perspectives. Topical experts, industry veterans, and thought leaders are preferred.
- The biography should be written in the third person, and consist of full sentences.
- SRF/WTS reserves the right to recommend a different session format, combine sessions, and schedule sessions. Scheduled session times may not be changed.

We invite proposals for compelling educational sessions. The driving criteria for proposal selection include:

- Engaging and can hold audience attention (sessions that require audience engagement and participation are highly desired);
- Rail industry knowledge and/or experience (sessions that are led or co-presented by rail industry/ rail design employees are highly desired); and
- Thoughtfulness and creativity.

In addition, we ask that presentation include the following information:

- Funding source for project or research,
- Services Provided,
- Stakeholder Involvement, and
- Return on Investment.

## **WTS Expectations**

WTS expects all speakers to:

- Sign the SRF speaker agreement that outlines the speaker's roles and responsibilities.
- Deliver content as developed and agreed upon.
- Submit all program materials, including handouts and PowerPoint slides, electronically by **February 24, 2023**.
- Grant WTS the right to distribute conference materials to attendees.

## **Speaker Expenses**

Speakers will not be reimbursed for any expenses incurred in developing content or materials for their presentations, conference registration, travel to/from the conference, or accommodations.

## **Submission instructions**

Your completed presentation proposal form, which can be found at [www.southeastrailforum.com/call-for-presentations](http://www.southeastrailforum.com/call-for-presentations) , should be submitted by close of business on **Friday September 9, 2022** .

Those who submit a presentation will be notified by **November 18, 2022** whether their presentation was accepted.

## **Questions**

For questions, please contact Jenny Fleming at [jfleming@vhb.com](mailto:jfleming@vhb.com) or 919-741-5787.