



TRB 86th Annual Meeting

How to Get the Most Out of the TRB Annual Meeting

January 21-25, 2007

Washington, D.C.

TRANSPORTATION RESEARCH BOARD
OF THE NATIONAL ACADEMIES

Whether you are a student; recent employee of a transportation-related agency, company, or association; or a professional attending your first TRB Annual Meeting, this guide will help you understand the many opportunities available to increase your professional expertise, interact with recognized professionals throughout the industry, get involved in committee activities, and *network, network, network*.

In short, use this guide to develop your *plan of attack* to the get the most out of participating in the TRB Annual Meeting.

What Is the TRB Annual Meeting?

TRB—Transportation Research Board—is *the* annual meeting of the transportation industry. TRB involves all aspects of transportation and all modes—highway, rail, freight, water, and air. You will be one of approximately 10,000 people attending. It is your opportunity to interact with Federal and State agency personnel, private sector and trade association employees; international professionals; academic researchers; professors; and students.

Where Is TRB Annual Meeting Held?

TRB Annual Meeting activities are held at three Washington, D.C. hotels, dubbed the “Connecticut Avenue Collection”: Marriott Wardman Park Hotel, Omni Shoreham Hotel, and Hilton Washington Hotel. Shuttles operate regularly between the three hotels although you might welcome a brisk walk between hotels after sitting through several sessions.

What Do You Do When You Arrive at TRB?

Once you have checked into your hotel, visit a TRB Registration desk—there is one at each of the three Connecticut Avenue Collection principal hotels. When you check-in with TRB you will receive a name badge, a Compendium of Papers CD-ROM of peer-reviewed research papers, and the Annual Meeting Final Program, which is a comprehensive listing of all Annual Meeting activities. Use the program to confirm the schedule prepared based on the website preliminary program.

Important: The last few pages of the Program provide floor plans of each TRB meeting hotel. These hotel guides will help you navigate your way from event to event. TRB and hotel staff are available to help participants find their way within and between the hotel meeting sites.

What Happens at the TRB Annual Meeting?

- **Workshops.** Sunday is reserved for educational workshops and some professional and academic meetings. Some workshops require advanced registration and a fee; others are open to anyone.
- **Paper Podium Sessions.** Oral presentation of 4 or 5 peer-reviewed research papers recommended for presentation by a sponsoring TRB committee. The sessions have time set aside for discussion with the audience. Anyone can attend.
- **Conference Sessions.** Panel of 4 to 5 invited presentations, some of which may be based on peer-reviewed papers. These sessions generally focus on current or emerging topics of interest. Anyone can attend.
- **“Meet the Author” Poster Sessions.** Poster presentations of peer-reviewed research papers, with the opportunity to learn about current research and talk with authors about their approach and findings. Anyone can attend.
- **Spotlight Sessions.** Each year, TRB identifies specific topics to receive special attention at the Annual Meeting. Sessions relating to these topics are highlighted in the Annual Meeting Program. Anyone can attend.
- **Technical Activities Standing Committee Meetings.** TRB has an extensive array of Technical Committees that study and report on topics and practices in their particular areas. The Committees’ work is national and sometime international in scope. Members represent Federal, State, and international transportation agencies, private sector companies, transportation-related associations, consultants, and academia.
- Most of the TRB standing committees, task forces, and subcommittees hold a meeting in conjunction with the Annual Meeting program. These meetings may include invited presentations, paper presentations, networking and information sharing opportunities, and routine committee business. These meetings are the workhorses of TRB and offer you a good opportunity to roll up your sleeves and get involved in addressing issues important to you or your organization.
- **Section and Group Meetings.** Overseeing the activities of TRB Standing Committees are Group and Section Executive Boards. Many of the Section and Group Meetings are by invitation only or specified for *Members Only*. However, anyone may attend Section and Group meetings that are open.
- **Other TRB-Sponsored Events.** There are a number of networking events at the TRB Annual Meeting, including the **New and Young Attendees Welcome Session** on Sunday afternoon. First-time presenters can also learn how to improve presentation skills by attending the **Presentations That Won’t Leave Your Audiences in the Dark!** session, also on Sunday afternoon. There are a number of other special events, including the Chairman’s Luncheon, the Thomas B. Deen Distinguished Lecture, the Dwight David Eisenhower Transportation Fellowship Program Research Showcase, the International Participants Reception, and the Annual Meeting exhibits. The non-commercial exhibits are an extension of the Annual Meeting educational program. Located in the Marriott Wardman Park Hotel, these exhibits complement the formal sessions and provide a variety of opportunities for information sharing and interaction.

How Should You Start Planning for the TRB Annual Meeting?

Before the meeting, your first stop is the TRB Annual Meeting website: www.TRB.org/Meeting. It contains a link to the *Annual Meeting Announcement*, a short publication that provides important TRB survival information—such as overall information about when and where to register once you arrive at TRB, session topics and locations, special events, Sunday workshop information, general meeting logistics, and most important of all—how to register for the meeting and make hotel reservations. *A word to the wise: TRB hotels fill quickly, so make your reservation as soon as possible.*

Sessions, Poster Sessions, and Workshops. Once you have registered for the Annual Meeting, you will be able to access the online *Interactive Preliminary Program*, which is usually available in mid-November. Use the Interactive Preliminary Program to research sessions and other events by title, key word, author, and subject. Session announcements will include topic, presenters, and titles of presentations. From this, you can create your own itinerary. You will receive the official TRB Annual Meeting Program when you are onsite at the meeting in January. It will provide complete information regarding all sessions and meetings.

NOTE: Registrants soon realize that the 500+ sessions and other activities include topics they really want to learn about, but find conflicts with other sessions or events of interest. If you plan to attend with colleagues or, in the case of academics, with a group of students, then you should each review the program, identify sessions of interest and then meet with colleagues to decide who will attend which session. You can then meet to compare notes over coffee or a meal. Plan your travel and dates of attendance around the events you really want to attend.

Committee and Subcommittee Meetings. To identify the committee, task force, or subcommittee meetings that may be of interest, visit www.TRB.org/Activities/Committees/CommitteesDivA.asp. Here you will find additional information on TRB committee scopes and membership. Click on the committee you are interested in and you will see the mission of each, members, and their affiliation. Some committees and subcommittees also maintain websites or webboards where additional information may be available, including committee meeting agendas.

How Can You Get Actively Involved in the Meeting?

During Sessions: Ask questions. You can do this during the Q&A or following the session. Speakers and moderators welcome questions about the topic and the profession.

Committee, Task Force, and Subcommittee Meetings: Don't be shy about attending a committee meeting. Most committees are looking for potential new members (especially those 35 and under) and encourage participation from members and nonmembers. In most cases, meeting attendees are asked to introduce themselves to the group and briefly mention research they are currently involved in or other transportation-related subjects in which they have a particular interest. Committee rooms are usually set up conference style, with ample perimeter seating for newcomers and nonmembers.

What Can You Do to Be Involved in TRB After the Annual Meeting?

Committee Activities: Annual Meeting participants are encouraged to remain involved, perhaps by participating in the activities of a specific committee(s) as a new member, a friend of the committee, an international member, or a student member. While the number of official committee members on any given standing committee is limited, others can sign on as a "friend" of the committee or be involved through subcommittees. In this way, you can stay current with committee activities.

Submit a Research Paper or Offer to Make a Presentation at a Future Annual Meeting. While many committees issue official "Calls for Papers," anyone can submit a research paper for peer-review and consideration for both presentation at the Annual Meeting and/or publication in the *TRRecord*, TRB's Journal of Transportation Research. A large number of TRB Annual Meeting sessions are organized around peer-reviewed research papers. Others are organized around a particular topic of current interest for which individuals may be invited to make a presentation (no research paper required). The paper submission deadline is August 1 each year.

Spread the Word about TRB: Share what you learned with your colleagues and encourage them to become involved in TRB. As an Annual Meeting registrant, you will begin receiving the TRB E-Newsletter, which you are encouraged to share with others.

Any Other Helpful Hints to Enhance Annual Meeting Participation?

Dress Code. The TRB Annual Meeting is a gathering of transportation professionals. Business attire is standard for all TRB scheduled events. For men, a suit or at least a coat and tie are the norm. For women, similarly professional attire and comfortable shoes are recommended. Casual dress is OK for after hours.

TRB Etiquette. Turn off your cell phone (or turn it to vibrate) when you are in a session.

Should you be interested in only one paper presented in a workshop or session, it is OK to stay for that paper and then quietly leave between speakers. Please do not leave during a presentation—it distracts the audience and the presenter. If you must leave early, or come in late, do so quietly and try to sit near the exit. It is important that you do not stand at the exit which must remain clear due to Fire Marshal regulations.

Ask questions. Most presenters and moderators leave time for Q&A. Stand up, speak up. If you're shy about asking a question during the session, speak to the individual(s) after the session.

TRB After Dark. Many organizations, corporations, vendors, and universities host hospitality suites and receptions in conjunction with the TRB Annual Meeting. While these events are not part of the official Annual Meeting program, you may see notices about these events posted on the hotel "Reader Boards." Keep your eyes and ears open for these events—they are good opportunities to meet other professionals in a more casual environment.

Food. To keep TRB registration fees at a modest level, the fee does NOT include any food functions. Hotel food and drink (especially coffee and water) can be expensive, but the hotels have food outlets with varying priced menus and there are reasonably priced restaurants and eateries easily accessible from the Connecticut Avenue Collection hotels. A list of nearby restaurants is available from the hotel concierge.

Looking for a Job? TRB hosts an Employment Opportunities room at the Marriott Hotel during the Annual Meeting. Bring your resumé to leave in the room and check out job openings. TRB is also a great place to schedule interviews with prospective employers.

Network, Network, Network. TRB is an excellent opportunity to meet people at all stages of their careers and network, network, network. Collect business cards from presenters or others you meet. After the Annual Meeting, follow up with an email to ask a question, request a copy of their presentation, or ask for information referred in a presentation.

Many transportation professionals find their committee work to be an important, vital connection to the others in the transportation industry and an asset to their professional growth. It is never too early (or too late) to build your network of contacts.

Pace Yourself. TRB is a 5-day event and it's important to conserve your energy. You do not need to go to sessions all day, every day.

If you have other suggestions that could help other first time attendees please send them to:

Vicky Glenn: VGlenn@VHB.com

Kim Fisher: KFisher@NAS.edu