

North American Autonomous Truck Conference

From Pilots to Commercial Reality: The Next Era of Autonomous Trucking

Updated: 5/22/2026

2026 is a pivotal year for autonomous truck (AT) deployments in North America, as AT companies seek new revenue-service operations that lead to established business partnerships and operations. The 2026 North American Autonomous Truck Conference (to be held in Fargo ND on June 24) will highlight the industry's shift from pilot projects to large-scale commercial deployments, focusing on interstate and multinational operations, multistate policy and regulatory coordination, manufacturing and equipment trends (such as OEM production of fully autonomous trucks), rapid expansion of middle-mile driverless freight operations, and growing adoption of leader-follower platooning across the agricultural, natural resources, and industrial sectors, all of which reflect an industry movement toward mature, integrated, and scalable autonomous freight networks.

The conference (which is funded in part by Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration) will cover enhanced safety inspection and enforcement practices and include a keynote address from FMCSA leadership. Some of the leading autonomous truck developers in the United States and Canada, the Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance, state departments of transportation, state law enforcement officers, original equipment manufacturers, and AT industry partners are planning to participate in the conference. The panel sessions are expected to include:

JUNE 24, 2026

8:00 a.m. Opening Remarks

8:10 a.m. Keynote Address: Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administrator, Derek Barrs (invited)

8:30 a.m. Autonomous Trucking in Canada and the United States

- o Andrew Phillips, Transport Canada
- o Rich Steiner, Gatik
- o Katelyn Magney-Miller, Partners for Automated Vehicle Education (PAVE)

Session 1: Autonomous trucking in Canada is moving from small-scale pilots to commercial deployment, driven largely by partnerships between retailers and autonomous freight technology firms, while Ontario's Automated Commercial Motor Vehicle Pilot Program provides a uniform regulatory foundation. There is much to be learned from AT operations in both countries. This panel will explore commonalities and differences in autonomous trucking between the U.S. and Canada and prospects for cross-border autonomous truck movements in the future.

9:45 a.m. Federal Framework and Multistate Operations.

- Cory Johnson, Minnesota DOT
- Amanda Abruzzo, Arizona DOT
- Gary McCarthy, Aurora

Session 2: While intrastate operations of autonomous trucks are gaining momentum in the United States, interstate operations are necessary before long-haul hub-to-hub traffic can expand beyond its current footprint. In order to achieve this outcome, regulations must be aligned across states and with the federal government to support widespread operations. In this session, state DOT officials and autonomous truck developers will discuss opportunities for coordination across states and how state regulatory approaches will be complemented by emerging federal regulations.

10:45 a.m. Break

11:00 a.m. Equipment Manufacturers' Plans for Producing New Autonomous Trucks

- Richard Bishop, Bishop Consulting

Session 3: Most AT companies are working with and/or have long-term partnership agreements with original equipment manufacturers. In the near future, fully autonomous trucks will be available for purchase from OEMs, potentially leading to widespread commercial adoption. This session of the conference will focus on: (1) prospects for increased supplies of ATs in the future resulting from collaborations between OEMs and autonomous truck developers, and (2) the integration of autonomous trucks into product lines and fleet inventories.

11:45 a.m. Lunch (Provided)

12:45 p.m. Inspection and Safety Enforcement

- John Sova, Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance
- Richard Russell, Torc Robotics

Session 4: Enhanced safety inspections for autonomous trucks ensure that these driverless vehicles meet regulatory requirements, maintain safe operations, and are integrated safely into the existing freight network. In this session, a panel of safety experts will describe developments in safety enforcement and enhanced inspections in the United States and Canada and potential protocols for cross-border movements.

1:30 p.m. Middle/Last Mile Operations

- o Rich Steiner, Gatik
- o Bart Teeter, Bot Auto

Session 5: Middle-mile autonomous trucking (which typically involves hub-to-hub, warehouse-to-store, or distribution center-to-distribution center routes) has become the most commercially mature segment of the autonomous freight industry in the United States. Several companies are now operating driverless trucks at scale, especially in states with favorable regulatory environments. In this panel, AT truck companies will discuss developments and opportunities for growth in this sector of industry.

2:15 p.m. Platooning

- o Maynard Factor, Kratos Defense
- o Eric Belford, Montana DOT

Session 6: Platooning in highly-automated mode is being increasingly utilized in agricultural and natural resources industries. For example, leader follower platoons are being demonstrated in the Ohio/Indiana I-70 Corridor and in movements of agricultural goods in the Northern Plains and forestry products in Canada, some of which are occurring under challenging conditions (e.g., steep grades, low GPS connectivity, dust, and harsh weather). This session will look at current platooning operations in North America, advances in platooning technology, the potential for new platooning operations, and impediments to widespread deployment.

2:45 p.m. Break

3:00 p.m. Growth in Level 4 Autonomous Trucking

- o Richard Bishop, Bishop Consulting
- o Gary McCarthy, Aurora
- o Bart Teeter, Bot Auto
- o Richard Russell, Torc Robotics
- o Rich Steiner, Gatik

Session 7: In this closing session of the conference, autonomous truck companies will discuss their visions for business growth and new deployment opportunities, as well as remaining challenges and obstacles to growth.

4:00 p.m. Q & A