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FreightWeekSTL 2026 Closes with Milestone Countdown Celebrating Freightway's First Decade

Panelists spotlight Top 10 achievements shaping the St. Louis region's rise as a nationally competitive logistics hub

[ST. LOUIS, MO/June 24, 2026] FreightWeekSTL 2026 concluded with its final virtual session celebrating the 10th anniversary of the official launch of the St. Louis Regional Freightway. The session brought together key stakeholders for a fast-paced, story-driven “Top 10” countdown highlighting the biggest milestones from the Freightway’s first decade—and how a sustained commitment to collaboration has turned ideas into measurable momentum for the bi-state region.

Through the countdown, panelists highlighted major infrastructure investments, strategic marketing efforts and regional initiatives that have strengthened the St. Louis region’s position as a nationally and globally competitive logistics hub. From the creation of the Priority Projects List to transformative infrastructure investments and targeted industry initiatives, the discussion underscored the breadth of progress achieved over the past decade.

The session featured Mary Lamie, Executive Vice President of Multimodal Enterprises at Bi-State Development and head of the St. Louis Regional Freightway. She was joined by Dennis Wilmsmeyer, Executive Director of America’s Central Port, and Steve Zuber, President of BarberMurphy Group, both longtime partners who have helped shape and advance the Freightway’s efforts since its early formation.

Lamie opened the discussion by reinforcing the organization’s role in aligning priorities and bringing partners together. “The Freightway coordinates infrastructure priorities with public- and private-sector leaders who represent freight-related interests of the St. Louis region’s business community,” said Lamie. “We also market the region’s global logistics hub to site selectors, shippers and carriers while working to leverage national and global supply chains.”

As Executive Director of America’s Central Port—one of the largest public ports on the inland waterway system—Wilmsmeyer has worked closely with the Freightway to align port development, barge transportation and industrial growth with broader regional priorities, helping connect river assets into a larger multimodal strategy. Reflecting on the early days of the initiative, Wilmsmeyer emphasized the importance of elevating the region’s story on a broader stage.

“We were kind of founding members, if you will, 10 years ago when the Freightway got started,” Wilmsmeyer said. “We, along with others, saw a need for marketing the St. Louis region with all the assets that we have here in order to let the rest of the world know what we have going on.”

Representing the private-sector perspective, Zuber highlighted how the Freightway’s efforts are strengthening regional competitiveness and driving real-world investment across Missouri and Illinois.

“From the broker seat, I can tell you the Freightway has changed how our region competes for industrial investment,” Zuber said. “I’m so glad to be here to celebrate 10 years of that impact.”

The countdown began with highlighting **No. 10 – Establishing the Freightway’s Priority Projects List**, a foundational initiative of the Freightway’s Freight Development Committee that brings together public- and private-sector stakeholders to identify and advance key infrastructure improvements. “This year’s priority project list includes 29 projects representing a total investment of \$9 billion,” said Lamie, noting the emphasis on projects that enhance reliability and strengthen multimodal connectivity.

Panelists then moved to **No. 9 – Delivering the Merchants Bridge**, a \$222 million rehabilitation project that expanded capacity and increased speeds on a critical Mississippi River crossing connecting eastern and western rail networks. The bridge is owned by Terminal Railroad Association of St. Louis. “That project more than doubled our rail capacity by allowing two trains to cross the bridge simultaneously,” said Lamie, noting its role in supporting a corridor used by six Class I railroads and Amtrak. “That project reflects the strong interdependence between rail and barge transportation.”

From there, the countdown turned to **No. 8 – Launching the Ag Coast of America**, an initiative that leverages the St. Louis region’s geographic advantage along the Mississippi River and its role as a key gateway for agricultural commodities moving to global markets. Panelists noted that this activity is concentrated within a 15-mile stretch that passes directly in front of the Gateway Arch and is supported by 16 barge transfer facilities that provide direct connections to rail and truck transportation.

“The St. Louis region handles the highest amount of agricultural products and fertilizer along the inland waterway system,” said Lamie, highlighting its ability to connect Midwest production to global markets efficiently and cost-effectively. “While we’re not a traditional coastline, the region functions as an agricultural coastline.”

The discussion then shifted to **No. 7 – Debuting Featured Real Estate Sites** at [TheFreightway.com](https://www.thefreightway.com), a key tool to support site selection and industrial growth across Missouri and Illinois. Lamie explained that the platform includes more than 50 vetted, developer-ready sites, along with an additional list of rail-served properties designed to meet the needs of logistics users and manufacturers.

Zuber commented on the value of this online resource. “This section of the website has become the go-to resource for brokers working industrial deals across the bi-state region,” Zuber said. “You’ve got one map, both states and consistent criteria—that’s what site selectors need. That kind of exposure is hard to buy.”

For **No. 6 – Forming Partnerships Supporting Transformative Projects**, panelists highlighted the Freightway’s role in building strategic relationships with other regions, ports and supply chain stakeholders to improve freight connectivity. Examples include collaboration with Kansas City to support I-70 improvements across Missouri, agreements with the Ports of Savannah and New Orleans, and partnerships with Midwestern feeder ports that have helped generate efficiencies and cost savings for shippers.

The countdown continued with **No. 5 – Gaining Recognition as the Most Efficient Inland Port in the Nation**, reflecting the scale and productivity of the region’s port system. Lamie noted that while the region’s port district covers a relatively small portion of the Mississippi River, it carries a disproportionately large share of freight—moving significantly more tonnage per mile than other inland port districts and reinforcing its competitive advantage across the national freight network.

Wilmsmeyer added that the Freightway’s focus on measuring and communicating efficiency has played a key role in elevating the region’s standing. “It’s just brilliant what the Freightway has come up with, with the efficiency metric,” he said. “We saw for years that inland port systems were expanding their footprint, but what this does is allow us to tell the entire country—and really the world—how efficient we are here in the St. Louis metropolitan region with our river systems.”

At **No. 4 – Creating FreightWeekSTL to Advance the St. Louis Region as a Global Freight Hub**, Lamie highlighted the event’s continued growth since its launch in 2018 alongside the Inland Marine Expo in downtown St. Louis.

FreightWeekSTL has since evolved into an annual hybrid event that brings together industry leaders to explore trends, showcase innovation and strengthen collaboration across the freight and logistics ecosystem.

As the countdown entered its final stretch, panelists turned to **No. 3 – Launching the St. Louis Regional Aerospace and Aviation Task Force**, an initiative created in 2024 to support one of the region’s fastest-growing advanced manufacturing sectors. Lamie pointed to the effort building on billions of dollars in aerospace investment while expanding workforce development opportunities, including career pathways that can lead from entry-level positions to high-paying roles within just a few years.

Zuber reinforced the critical nature of this work, noting the scale of investment already underway and the importance of aligning workforce development with that growth.

“From the industrial brokerage side, it’s been remarkable to watch,” said Zuber. “We weren’t a region trying to prop up a struggling industry—we were sitting on roughly \$5 billion in new investment, creating hundreds of new jobs. The question wasn’t whether the industry would grow, it was whether we’d have the workforce to support it.” He added that the Freightway’s role in coordinating stakeholders has helped turn that growth into a competitive advantage. “That’s what collaboration looks like,” Zuber said. “The Freightway didn’t build the ecosystem, but it brought everyone to the table, gave them a platform and turned a regional asset into a regional advantage. From our industry’s perspective, that kind of coordinated momentum sends a clear signal—St. Louis is open for business.”

Next, the panel highlighted **No. 2 – Generating Millions of Dollars in Earned Media Coverage**, reflecting a deliberate effort to elevate the region’s freight and logistics story on the national and global stage. Strategic communications, FreightWeekSTL programming and targeted outreach have resulted in thousands of placements and tens of millions of impressions across local, regional and national outlets, helping further position the St. Louis region as a world-class logistics hub.

“This visibility and consistent media attention is really helping us build awareness of that target market—and that target market really focuses on shippers, carriers, site selectors and our industry partners,” said Lamie.

The countdown concluded with **No. 1 – Demonstrating the Power of Collaboration**, a defining theme that underpinned every milestone highlighted throughout the session.

“Our region’s success in freight and logistics is built on partnerships and collaboration, and the Freightway is where all of those connections come together,” said Lamie. “This really is a model for public-private partnerships, and it’s what allows initiatives like the Ag Coast of America and our status as the most efficient inland port to have an impact that goes far beyond our geography.”

She added that those partnerships play a critical role in guiding investment decisions and strengthening the region’s global position. “At the end of the day, these partnerships help determine which transportation investments have the greatest impact on our daily lives,” Lamie said. “It’s not just about the Mississippi River, rail, ports, highways or airports—it’s the collaboration that ties everything together and positions the St. Louis region as a launchpad to the world.”

As the final session concluded, panelists underscored that the Top 10 milestones reflect both the progress made during the Freightway’s first decade and a proven model for continued growth driven by collaboration across industries, modes and regions.

To learn more or view any of the virtual panel sessions from FreightWeekSTL 2026, visit FreightWeekSTL.com.

About St. Louis Regional Freightway

Established as the St. Louis region's authority for coordinating support for industrial businesses and the logistics infrastructure they depend on, the St. Louis Regional Freightway (the Freightway) provides site selection and business assistance to manufacturing, logistics and multimodal transportation companies and their service providers. As an enterprise of Bi-State Development, the Freightway partners with public sector and private industry businesses to advocate for infrastructure development that supports the movement of freight, leads initiatives to grow the region's talent pool, and plays a critical role in marketing the region as a world-class manufacturing and distribution cluster within the City of St. Louis and seven adjacent counties in Missouri and Illinois. To learn more, visit TheFreightway.com.