



The Illinois Chamber of Commerce helps to amplify our voice in Springfield and DC, so that a wider variety of interest groups are aware of the work we do and our impact on freight movement both here in Illinois and also across the nation. The Chamber has been integral in helping Illinois business and governmental officials understand the importance of freight rail infrastructure and rallying support for grant funding necessary for infrastructure upkeep.

—Asim Raza, Chief Legal Officer, Director of Real Estate & Marketing

Terminal Railroad Association of St. Louis (TRRA)

was founded by a group of railroads to move freight across the Mississippi River and incorporated in 1889.

In 1797, the first river ferry was established in the region by Captain James Piggott, who operated the ferry between the Post of St. Louis and Illinoistown (later East St. Louis). The business was acquired in 1819 by Samuel Wiggins, who had acquired some 900 acres of land along the Illinois banks of the Mississippi directly across from present day St. Louis. The Wiggins Ferry Company not only operated the ferry business for individuals wanting to cross the river, they also developed extensive yards, depots, warehouses, railroad tracks and elevators. The Wiggins Ferry Company became a major connecting point for the many railroads terminating at East St. Louis, Illinois, and St. Louis, Missouri. As the first bridge spanning the Mississippi River would not be completed until 1874, the only way to move train traffic over the river was by ferry, car by car. By 1870, the Wiggins Ferry Company had established a rail-car ferry system, with inclines on both sides of the river, to move rail traffic over the Mississippi.

At the time of the formation of the Terminal Railroad Association in 1889, the original eight owner railroads owned a substantial interest in the Wiggins Ferry Company. When the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railway Company, the only other stockholder of the Wiggins Ferry Company, was admitted to the association in 1902, the Terminal Railroad Association gained complete control over the Wiggins Ferry Company.

Predecessor corporations of the present day TRRA constructed the James Eads Bridge, the first bridge over the Mississippi River, in 1874. Another predecessor company built the Merchants Bridge in 1890. Today, TRRA owns and operates the Merchants Bridge, MacArthur Bridge, a rail switching facility in Madison, Illinois, and several key railroad routes in St. Louis, Missouri, and Madison and St. Clair Counties in Illinois.



TRRA has played a vital role in promoting freight rail movement through St. Louis and boosting the local economy. TRRA has rail connections to all six United States Class I railroads and Amtrak allowing each railroad to connect east/west and north/south. TRRA also provides direct rail service to over 70 industries in the St. Louis metropolitan area. Through the ports and interstate highways in the St. Louis area, TRRA also links freight between modes, which increases access to multimodal alternatives. TRRA's connectivity allows shippers and haulers to have choices that will help freight to avoid bottlenecks and ensure more reliable freight movements.

Based on train counts, the two Mississippi River bridges owned by TRRA, the Merchants Bridge and the MacArthur Bridge, account for the busiest geographic Mississippi River crossing. Besides crossings in Baton Rouge and New Orleans, Louisiana, TRRA's bridges are the only Mississippi River bridges that are not owned, operated and controlled by a single railroad. Because of their age, both bridges operated by TRRA require significant investment. Merchants Bridge is in particular need for capital investment, so TRRA has applied for federal grant funding to cover part of the expense and has committed to funding the rest of the need. That project has already completed environmental clearances with final permitting expected for spring 2019. Investing in Merchants Bridge will allow TRRA to reduce the time bottleneck caused by the bridge's current condition and ease movement of the nation's freight. Repairs to the bridge will also make it more resilient to seismic impacts, potentially reducing the impact of a major seismic event on the nation's freight flow.

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