

Freight Rail and Construction: From Soaring Skyscrapers to Family Homes

America has always been about building things. From erecting the world's first skyscrapers to constructing the suburbs that opened up home ownership to millions, America continues to build today in order to create a more prosperous tomorrow.

U.S. freight railroads play a critical role in the nation's ability to build. In 2016 alone, railroads transported approximately 181,000 carloads of cement, 763,500 carloads of crushed and broken stone, 306,260 carloads of lumber and wood products and 440,760 carloads of construction steel.

For residential and commercial construction, railroads transport a variety of building materials, including steel, stone, non-metallic minerals, wood products and plastics. And at the end of the residential construction process, a newly built dwelling is filled with durable consumer goods such as household appliances — carried by rail.

Current Stats: In 2016, U.S. Class I railroads moved 540,000 carloads of construction materials (1.95 % of total carloads), carrying 48.4 million tons (3.2 % of total tons) and earning gross revenue of \$2.2 billion (3.4 % of total revenue).

Economic Impact: Freight rail generated approximately \$24.6 billion in economic output through construction materials in 2014 alone and directly supported more than 25,500 jobs related to that industry.

At a Glance

- **Lumber**

Rail shipments of lumber go hand-in-hand with the construction of new homes. In 2016, U.S. Class I railroads moved 103 million tons of lumber and wood products, including milled lumber and other construction panels.

- **Steel**

Approximately 20% of all steel products go directly into construction after they have been processed at steel rolling mills. In 2016, U.S. Class I railroads delivered 27.9 million tons of basic steel products.

- **Stone, Sand and Gravel**

Raw materials like crushed stone, sand, gravel, limestone and gypsum are used in virtually every construction project, from roads to runways to buildings and sewer systems. In 2016, U.S. Class I railroads moved 18.6 million tons of stone, sand and gravel.