

## [EconSouth May–August 2014](#)

**“Tracking the Economy: An Old Industry Chugs Along,”** by Charles Davidson, a staff writer for *EconSouth*

### **Discussion questions**

1. The CSX terminal in Fairburn, Georgia, is an “intermodal” terminal. What does that mean?
2. What form of transportation hauls more goods (in term of ton-miles) than any other transport mode? What percentage is hauled by this transport system? Does this number surprise you? Why or why not? How has the percentage changed since 1980?
3. How has the number of railroad companies and miles of track changed since 1960? Is there concentration in the industry?
4. According to Clarence Gooden of CSX Transportation, what two factors are behind the railroad industry’s strength?
5. What are the three categories of freight carried by trains? How has the relative importance of these three changed over the years? Why is coal decreasing in importance?
6. Is global trade an important factor in intermodal transport? How has international merchandise trade increased in recent decades?
7. What economic factors have helped offset the decline in revenues from hauling coal? What concerns does the industry have in transporting petroleum? What form of transport do Gooden and Lambert feel will replace trains as a way to move oil and gas?
8. How does the railroad industry use technology to run more efficiently? Does this have implications for employment in the industry?
9. In looking at the chart in the article, did you expect airplanes to carry the least freight? Explain economic reasons why you believe trains and trucks carry 73 percent of U.S. freight in ton-miles.

### **Additional resources**

[Class I Railroad Statistics](#), Association of American Railroads, July 15, 2014

The site provides facts and figures on the kinds of products transported by rail.

### [CSX](#)

[“Domestic Demand Will Continue to Drive CSX’s Intermodal Business,”](#) Trefis team, *Forbes*, September 2, 2014

Highlights factors that will contribute to CSX’s growing intermodal business.

[The Economic Impact of America’s Freight Railroads](#), Association of American Railroads, May 2014

Statistics on how the railroad industry helps build a stronger economy.

[“5 Things Norfolk Southern’s Management Wants You to Know,”](#) Dan Caplinger, *Motley Fool*, September 10, 2014

Positive trends in the railroad industry contribute to strong growth for Norfolk Southern.

[“The Need to Move More Freight Will Grow”](#): An Interview with Dan Keen of the Association of American Railroads, *EconSouth* Q&A, May–August 2014

Dan Keen of the Association of American Railroads discusses the strengths, challenges, and future outlook of the railroad industry.

### [Norfolk Southern](#)

[Rail Time Indicators, Association of American Railroads](#)

Combining rail traffic data with more than 15 key economic indicators, this monthly report creates a nontechnical snapshot of the U.S. economy.