



September 2021

## **Railtex/Infrarail 2021 successfully brings the whole industry back on track**

This week, the NEC Birmingham welcomed back Railtex, the 15<sup>th</sup> International Exhibition of Railway Equipment, Systems and Services, and Infrarail, the 13<sup>th</sup> International Railway Infrastructure Exhibition. A total of 5,000 attendees from the railway industry met on the three days of the exhibition to network and explore collaboration opportunities, of which some 3,000 were trade visitors from management, engineering, planning and technical design backgrounds, with real purchasing decision powers and investment plans.

“We are so delighted with the outcome of our first show after eighteen months without face-to-face events. There is nothing like meeting in person to forge lasting relationships, meet colleagues and renew acquaintances. These last three days have provided the whole industry with an opportunity to get back on track through meaningful encounters and content both current and crucially relevant. And that in itself is a huge success,” says Olaf Freier, Railtex/Infrarail Portfolio Director on behalf of Mack-Brooks Exhibitions.

A first analysis of the exhibitor feedback shows that participating companies were extremely satisfied with the outcome of Railtex/Infrarail 2021. A vast majority of exhibitors were able to reach their target groups and praised the high quality of trade visitors. Many exhibitors have also reported that they were able to make new business contacts and had received positive sales enquiries. They also expressed their enthusiasm at being back onsite after eighteen long months without an event of this stature. Exhibiting companies showcased a wide variety of new products and innovative solutions, with a clear focus on greener solutions, sustainability and decarbonisation, as well as digitalisation. Product demonstrations also took place and were very well received among visitors; the on-track display was also a popular feature of this edition.

During the Opening Ceremony on Tuesday morning, Nicola Hamann, Managing Director of Mack-Brooks Exhibitions, welcomed all attendees and expressed her gratitude to everyone who made the long-awaited reunion possible. The opening ceremony carried on with a message from Darren Caplan, Chief Executive at Railway Industry Association (RIA). Andrew Stephenson MP, Minister of State at the Department for Transport was also one of the key speakers who expressed their views on the future of the industry and upcoming projects, including HS2 and other development plans in northern regions of the UK. Keith Williams, Chair of the Williams Rail Review, was present to talk about the Williams-Shapps plan for rail and how the Government aims to turn the UK rail network into the backbone of a cleaner, more modern and more environmentally friendly public transport system across the country.

To support the industry on this future journey, Mack-Brooks Exhibitions has announced that the two exhibitions would be co-located once again in 2022, this time at Olympia London from 10 – 12 May. By doing so, Railtex and Infrarail will provide the right business platform to support the levelling up of UK towns, cities and regions. The one-stop-shop will offer a multitude of specialised components, from rolling stock to infrastructures, signalling technologies, station equipment and passenger

information systems, so that a coherent, functional and modern network can emerge all across the UK.

Beyond the main exhibition, there was also a rich supporting programme packed with keynote speakers from leading industry names, technical seminars, project updates and Q&A sessions as part of a comprehensive seminar programme across the three days. The programme included two conferences streams: The Future Focus Conference and Unlocking Innovation Zone, two recurring features organised by the exhibition's Main Show Partner RIA – the Railway Industry Association.

Railtex and Infrarail are part of a series of targeted trade exhibitions which also include EXPO Ferroviaria in Italy and SIFER in France. Together, the four trade shows have continued to receive strong support from major organisations shaping the European rail industry since their first editions and are set to use these same connections to provide a recovery platform for companies that have been affected by the pandemic. After Railtex/Infrarail this week, the next stops on the road to recovery will be in Milan from 28 – 30 September 2021 for EXPO Ferroviaria, and Lille, from 26 – 28 October 2021 for SIFER.

Further information is available on the Railtex/Infrarail website: <https://www.uk-railhub.com/>

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