

NRC CHAIRMAN'S COLUMN



Big Deals in Little Rock!

We are only days away from the annual NRC Rail Construction and Maintenance Equipment Auction. This year's auction is being held on Friday, April 17, on Blackmon Auctions' yard in Little Rock, Arkansas. The auction will include more than 100 pieces of equipment, mostly consigned and occasionally donated from dozens of our member companies. Our auction is being held in conjunction with Blackmon's annual spring auction of surplus Union Pacific Railroad equipment, which is a win-win-win for UP, NRC, and all of the buyers in attendance, as it gets more equipment and more buyers together in the same place at the same time.

On consigned items, a 2% seller's fee and 1% of the 10% buyer's commission proceeds from this sale go to the NRC Safety Training and Education Fund, which is used to support the production of our safety training videos and our scholarship program. These are both terrific programs that benefit our association and the rail industry; we need the continued support of our membership in order to be successful. For donated items, 100% of proceeds go to these funds.

As always, there will be a pre-auction social gathering the night before the auction, which is a great opportunity for NRC members to visit with suppliers and colleagues from the rail industry and have some fun too. Hope to see you in Little Rock! I will update everyone on the auction's outcome in next month's column.

It's mid-April and many of our projects are just getting started. The seasons have changed and our member companies are back to work in most parts of the country. As we continue to plow forward with the work we have carried over from last year or recently gained through the bidding process in the first quarter, we are all busy now. There continues to be plenty of opportunities for additional work through the remainder of the year, so sharpen your pencils and get your share. We are also seeing positive signs related to more work being outsourced to private rail contractors by the Class 1's. As we were informed at our conference in January, the major roads are planning to spend tremendous amounts of money to improve their infrastructure and expand their systems. As these railroads continue to invest large amounts of money into their systems, their need to hire rail contracting companies will continue to increase. We welcome this positive trend and look forward to providing more of our services to the railroads.

On the legislative front; there are many pending decisions currently making their way through the congressional process that could affect our industry. The NRC will continue to advocate in an aggressive

manner for federal policies that support both public and private investments into our country's infrastructure and oppose any additional regulatory burdens. The time spent in front of our elected officials is extremely important in having our voices heard and getting our message out, so save the date for Railroad Day on the Hill on June 4.

At the moment, Congress is working on the reauthorization of MAP-21 (the surface transportation reauthorization bill), a passenger rail bill, a Surface Transportation Board reauthorization bill, a PTC deadline extension bill, a rail project environmental permitting streamlining bill, the annual transportation appropriations bill, and a short line railroad tax credit bill, all of which have the potential to significantly affect our industry. If you're not making your voice heard, rest assured your political opponents are, and we won't get what we need from these pieces of legislation.

So again, please save the date of June 4th, 2015 for Railroad Day on The Hill. We look forward to a big turnout in DC for this event and need our membership's full support to get our messages across.

For further information on all NRC planned events, please visit the new and improved www.nrcma.org.

Have a safe day.

By Bill Dorris, *Chairman of the Board of the NRC*



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