

Safety first, then conferences



As I read the industry news from several sources, I realize how fortunate I am to be involved in this industry. What great foresight I had as a teenager 40 years ago when I hired on to the Rock Island.

The railroad industry has been strong and demonstrated great resilience through the uneven economy of the past six years and continues to get stronger. Every day we are reading about new facilities for intermodal, petroleum, frac sand and grain being planned, going into construction or opening. Railroads are rehabilitating lines that have seen only marginal traffic for years but are now running unit trains, or soon will be. Opportunities abound.

Railroads, contractors, material suppliers and equipment suppliers are all busy scheduling and working to meet the demands and deadlines of our customers. With all of the positive aspects of these opportunities, we have to be aware of the possible side effects on our employees that are associated with long hours and stress.

When employees operate under extreme conditions for any sustained period of time, the possibilities of mistakes and injuries increase. It is imperative that we keep our employees safe throughout the year. Proper training and observation after training is the key to their safe return home every day. Don't forget that the NRC

has many safety tools for use by its members, including 14 Safety Training DVDs, more than 100 safety toolbox talks, a pocket safety manual, Roadway Worker Protection safety training materials, safety seminars at the annual conference and an annual safety awards contest. 2012 was the safest year in railroad history. Let's make 2013 a better year yet.

I hope to see everyone at the joint AREMA/REMSA/RSI/RSSI Railway Interchange event in Indianapolis, Ind., from September 29 - October 2. The show is a biennial industry highlight and is not to be missed.

And don't forget to save the date: the 2014 NRC conference will be held at the J.W. Marriott in Palm Desert, Calif., from Sunday, January 5, 2014, through Wednesday, January 8, 2014. Updated information will be posted shortly on www.nrcma.org/go/conference and conference registration and booth sales will begin this summer. We'll again expect to have senior engineering and procurement executives from the major freight railroads, commuter railroads and rail transit agencies presenting the details of their organization's upcoming capital investment plans.

Work safe and keep those around you working safe.

by Terry Benton,
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