

# NRC CHAIRMAN'S COLUMN

## Gaining Momentum and Building Relationships



Track construction and maintenance work continue to roll forward and gain ground. More and more project opportunities are being offered to our member companies and the weather continues to improve, all positives as we move further into the 2014 construction season.

The annual ASLRRA conference was held in San Diego in early April, and this event had another outstanding turnout. It was no surprise to see folks flocking to southern California for this event after the harsh winter most of us endured! NRC member companies do business with short lines throughout the country, providing various services, specialty equipment, and a wide variety of materials used on a daily basis performing new track construction and track maintenance activities. Their annual conference provides an excellent venue for NRC members to build and reinforce relationships with the short lines.

This year's conference had a high level concentration on safety. Following safe practices and guidelines are paramount to all of us being successful, railroads and contractors alike. The safety culture in the rail industry continues to evolve and has become a major part of what we do on a daily basis to keep our employees safe and out of harm's way.

The following people and companies were this year's safety award winners at the conference.

### President's Awards:

- Most hours of injury-free operation – Pacific Harbor Line
- Maintaining the best safety rate for:
  - ◊ 500,000 or more man-hours worked – Union Railroad Company
  - ◊ 250,000 to 500,000 man-hours worked – Pacific Harbor Line
  - ◊ 150,000 to 250,000 man-hours worked – Missouri & Northern Arkansas Railroad Co.
  - ◊ Less than 50,000 man-hours worked – Minnesota, Dakota & Western Railway Co.

Safety Person of the Year – Mr. Oswald (Ozzie) Espana with Pacific Harbor Line  
Safety Professional of the Year – Mr. Thomas A. Leopold – Anacostia Rail Holdings  
Most Improved Safety Record – Northern Plains Railroad, Inc.

Congratulations to the individuals and companies listed above for the well-deserved safety recognition they received at the ASLRRA Conference in San Diego - great job folks!

The recently held NRC rail construction and maintenance equipment auction blew old records out of the water. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the following members of the NRC auction committee for their efforts on a job well done; Paul Laurello with Delta Railroad Construction, Danny

Brown with RailWorks, Jay Gowan with Harsco, Mark Gaffney with Stacy & Witbeck, and Greg Spilker with Progress Rail Equipment Leasing. A thank you also goes out to Thomas Blackmon and his team at Blackmon Auctions; they never fail to bring out the best in a crowd of buyers. The attendances at this year's auction as well as the overall sales were at an all-time high and the event was a tremendous success. The weather cooperated and the crowd enjoyed the day in the sun buying and selling equipment, parts and miscellaneous tools. In all, there were over 250 pieces sold during the course of the day.

Along with consignments from contractors, suppliers and railroads, there were three pieces donated to the auction this year. A big thank you to Balfour Beatty Rail and Delta Railroad Construction for the pieces of equipment they donated this year, of which all proceeds go to the NRC's Safety, Training, and Education funds, primarily the Safety DVD initiative. The NRC greatly appreciates the generosity of these two member companies. These videos are free of charge to our membership, they are up to date using current safe practices and play a large role in each member company's safety training program.

This year's auction was successful primarily due to the efforts put forth by the good people at Quality Track Equipment and Delta Railroad Construction, sister companies owned by past NRC Chairman of the Board and current Board member Larry Laurello, NRC Auction Committee member Paul Laurello, and their family. Larry and Paul take great pride in what they do and hosting this year's auction was no exception. They did a fabulous job as the host company and every one enjoyed the day in Austinburg. Quality Track's new equipment rehab facility in Austinburg is spectacular. I would like to personally thank the entire Laurello family for being such great hosts.

Just a reminder, the AREMA conference this year runs from Sunday, September 28th through Friday, October 1st. The conference is being held at the Hilton Chicago and registration is now open. It is suggested that you register early and book your stay as soon as possible. I look forward to seeing everyone at this event in Chicago.

And finally, it feels odd to even mention 2015, but booth sales for the 2015 NRC Conference and NRC/REMSA Exhibition in Hollywood, FL at the Westin Diplomat will open shortly!

For additional information regarding all NRC upcoming events, please visit [www.nrcma.org](http://www.nrcma.org). For additional information regarding all NRC upcoming events, please visit [www.nrcma.org](http://www.nrcma.org).

Have a safe day.

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