

Running Wide Open – Fighting the Calendar



NRC member contractors are fighting the calendar this time of the year. Efforts are being made to finish up ongoing and planned work that got a later than normal start this year due to the long and severe winter. Even with a late start, customers expect their projects to be completed by year-end, so many contractors will be accelerating some projects in order to get everything completed. Resources this time of year get spread very thin based on volume vs. time. This is the trend most years, and it's even more dramatic this year as a greater volume of work has been pushed into the fourth quarter. The better the projects are planned, the better they will do in the end and the more likely they will finish on time. Good luck to all our membership companies in achieving their goals safely and successfully while meeting their customer's expectations.

As we look just beyond the 4th quarter into 2015, the very first event on your calendar for 2015 (perhaps other than sleeping in on New Year's Day and watching college football bowl games) should be the 2015 NRC conference. This year's conference will be held in Hollywood, Florida at the Westin Diplomat Resort & Spa. The conference begins on January 7th and runs through the 10th. This is the first time that the NRC has held our conference at this venue - it is an excellent property and we are excited to welcome you there.

I attended my first NRC conference in 2003, with about 300 people in attendance. Since then, I have seen the attendance grow dramatically, along with the size of the venue needed to accommodate us. Long before I was around, the NRC held its first organized conference in 1978 at the Holiday Inn near Lambert International Airport in St Louis, MO. It was attended by a dozen or so people! Little did they know 36 years ago, but this was the start of something great.

Attendance at the NRC Conference now tops 1,000 people, we have set attendance records for ten consecutive years, and we

remain optimistic that this number will continue to grow for years to come. The conference features 125+ exhibitors these days and is held at some of the finest resorts and hotels in the country, generally in lovely weather in early January. Along with changes in attendance and location, the program format has evolved as well. Our conference program is now lined up with guest speakers from the rail industry that include key engineering and procurement representatives from the Class 1 and short line freight railroads and major rail transit agencies. These speakers focus on explaining their railroad's capital spending plans and highlighting opportunities for contractors and suppliers. We also have expert speakers on hand to enlighten our membership to trends regarding rail legislation, regulation, and financial issues.

If you are a rail industry professional you should be in attendance for this event. I can't emphasize enough the importance of our memberships' involvement at our conferences. You will be afforded many opportunities during the course of the 4-day event to reach out and introduce yourself to many of the industry leaders face to face. I look forward to seeing you in January for our 37th annual conference at the beautiful Westin Diplomat Resort. Registration is open online at www.nrcma.org.

The NRC remains the only trade association dedicated solely to the rail construction and maintenance industry today, and it continues to grow and gain new members each year. If your company is a long time member, thank you for your participation. If your company hasn't joined the NRC or you haven't been to the NRC Conference recently, come on down to Florida in January and check it out!

Have a safe day.

by Bill Dorris,
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