

## The Rail Renaissance & Career Opportunities



The rail industry continues to grow and expand - billions and billions of dollars are being spent annually to make needed repairs and upgrades to existing rail infrastructure, as well as building new rail lines to serve new business opportunities. New rail lines and storage yards are being constructed wherever shale oil can be extracted, and that's a lot of places: the Bakken in North Dakota and Montana, Niobarra in Wyoming, Barnett and Eagle Ford in Texas, Utica and Marcellus in Pennsylvania and New York. Extracting 'tight oil' from these shale formations has become the new gold rush. Refineries are building new storage yards along the coasts to accommodate the increased shipments of crude by rail and transload facilities are under construction in the Midwest to support the new business. Intermodal facilities also continue to grow and expand on the outskirts of most major cities.

The need for employees associated with this new business is in addition to the overall expected needs of the rail industry in general. The industry is starting to see large numbers of talented, experienced railroaders coming up on their retirement age. Filling openings with new bodies is only part of the hiring concern. It is also about replacing the abilities and skill sets that these experienced people will be taking with them when they leave the rail industry. The rail industry must accelerate our efforts to groom the next generation of employees that will be needed to fill the vacancies created by retirement and handle the potential growth and expansion of rail.

So, there is a critical need to hire the young engineers and business managers that will lead the next generation. The freight railroads are already conducting the industry's largest hiring spree in decades. The numbers of needed employees for the railroads is big and continues to grow. Great career opportunities are available in our industry - spread the word!

To encourage these badly needed rising stars of the next generation, the NRC is proud to offer a merit-based scholarship program for tuition assistance to children or grandchildren of employees of NRC member companies. This program offers scholarships to three students, with the first place winner receiving \$8,000, second place \$4,000, and third place \$2,000.

The scholarships were established in Memoriam of Vinnie Vaccarello (former NRC Board Member, Co-President of All Railroad Services Corp.) and Patsy Crisafi (former NRC Safety Committee Member, Executive Vice President of Roadway Worker Training, Inc.), both industry leaders that lost their lives traveling together in a small plane crash in October 2012.

In addition to providing transcripts and personal

narratives describing their stories and accomplishments (engineering tutors, National Honors Society members, tennis team captains, VPs of Student Body Government, Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, even a Salvation Army Bell Ringer!), applicants were asked to write 500-word essays addressing a specific example of a contractor engaged in a collaborative partnership and describe the extraordinary results that were recognized. The essays we received were well thought out and well written, with applicants covering everything from the Charlotte Lynx light rail and Charlotte Streetcar projects to the massive USDOT/Illinois DOT/Chicago/Metra/Amtrak/Railroad collaboration on CREATE.

This year's list of applications included 28 smart and talented students, sponsored by 25 different NRC member companies. The NRC Scholarship Committee (thanks to Steve Bolte of Harsco, Joe Dalosio of Railroad Construction Company, Scott Goehri of HDR, Daniel Stout of STX Railroad Construction, and Mischa Wanek-Libman of RT&S) that sorted through these applications had some tough decisions to make, but they were able to come to a conclusion, and I'm pleased to announce the following winners of the NRC Scholarship awards for 2014:

- First Place: Weston Craig, attending Miami University of Ohio, son of Scott Craig of KSA
- Second Place: Laura Isdahl, attending Gustavus Adolphus College, daughter of Darwin Isdahl of Loram Maintenance of Way
- Third Place: Rebecca McDonald, attending Austin College, daughter of Phil McDonald of Koppers

We congratulate our 2014 winners and wish to encourage all NRC member companies to sponsor at least one applicant next year for this opportunity. Let's give our judges even more work to do! We would also like to thank all of this year's applicants for their participation - our industry needs the talent that these young people have to offer.

If you haven't yet, it is strongly recommended that you register for the NRC 2015 Conference and NRC/REMSA Exhibition, which will be held Wednesday January 7 through Saturday January 10, at the Diplomat Resort & Spa in Hollywood, Florida. Rooms are filling up fast. Confirmed speakers include engineering executives from the Class 1s, short line holding companies, and some of the biggest and most active rail transit agencies in the country.

For additional information regarding the conference, please visit [www.nrcma.org](http://www.nrcma.org).

Have a safe day.

by Bill Dorris,  
NRC Chairman



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