

NRC CHAIRMAN'S COLUMN



What a Conference!

We began our activities for 2015 by holding our annual NRC Conference at the Diplomat Resort in Hollywood, FL. Attendees enjoyed the program agenda that included detailed capital spending programs for the major railroads and transit agencies, along with an update on industry trends related to energy transportation. The membership enjoyed listening to the rail industry leaders' talk about their respective companies' plans for the coming year, not to mention the golf, fishing and great weather. The resort was fabulous and everyone I've talked with about the conference said they had a great experience!

I'm starting to think that more and more people are attending our annual conference to not only market their companies' brand and spend some quality time with friends and colleagues in the rail industry, but also to get away from the colder weather that most of us normally deal with in early January. The variance in temperatures between the conference location and many places within the country in early January exceeded 100 degrees! I'm very happy to report that this year's conference was the eleventh consecutive year with record attendance, a positive sign of growth for the NRC and our industry as a whole. Thank you to all that attended, your support is very important to our association's continued success.

Speakers at this year's general session included Kevin Hicks, general director of design & David Connell, VP of engineering with the UPRR, Steve Anderson, VP of engineering with the BNSF, Tod Echler, AVP engineering with CSX, Jim McLeod, chief engineer of design, track, bridges and structures with the CN, Justin Meyer, general manager of capital planning with the CP, Randy Bowman, engineer of track & materials with the NS, Kristine Storm, AVP for Procurement with the G&W, Ron Close, SVP supply chain with WATCO, Ken Koff, chief engineer with OmniTrax, Bruce Marcheschi, chief engineer with Chicago Metra, Bob Bergen, EVP with NY MTA, Erik Stoothoff, chief engineer with MBTA, Albert Hernandez, ADE of planning & development with Miami Dade Transit, Fran Chinnici, chief engineer with FEC and Eugene Skoropowski, SVP of passenger rail development with All Aboard Florida. Tony Hatch, independent Wall Street analyst and president of ABH Consulting, gave a presentation on returns, capital & capacity in an era of changing energy transport. The NRC greatly appreciates the attendance and support of these leaders within our industry that brought a wealth of first-hand information to the conference for everyone to hear. This is the reason most folks attend our conference and no one left uninformed -thank you, speakers.

This year's event was strongly supported by more

than 70 NRC member companies that sponsored various portions of the conference program, a big thank to all that participated. I would also like to thank Chuck Baker, president of the NRC, Matt Ginsberg, VP of regulatory & legislative affairs, Ashley Bosch, VP of grassroots advocacy & events, Alice Post, director of operations, along with their staff at the registration desk and behind the scenes; all these folks work extremely hard to pull off such a great event for our membership, thank you!

A portion of the conference was also dedicated to the NRC Safety Committee's preview of the two latest safety training videos, #17 & #18, of the ongoing series offered free of charge to our membership. These two new videos are based on replacing grade crossings, the preparation and the execution of the actual work. All 18 of these videos have become a very useful tool for all of our member companies to use in providing updated and current safe practices to follow when performing track work or working near an active railroad. John Zuspan of Track Guy Consultants volunteered and took the lead to produce the first of these videos 9 years ago and has continued in the role as the lead producer through all eighteen to date. John was supported during this presentation by Christian Jostlein, safety director with the Holland Company and the NRC Safety Committee Chairman and Stanley Beaver, safety director with Balfour Beatty Rail - thank you guys. Our membership's employees are better trained due to these videos.

Finally, please save these two dates in 2015:

- The NRC Rail Construction and Maintenance Equipment Auction on Friday, April 17th at Blackmon Auctions in Little Rock, AR
- Railroad Day on Capitol Hill will take place on June 4 in Washington, DC

For further information on all NRC planned events, please visit www.nrcma.org.

Have a safe day.

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



The National Railroad
Construction & Maintenance
Association, Inc.
500 New Jersey Ave., N.W.
Suite 400
Washington D.C. 20009

Tel: 202-715-2920
Fax: 202-318-0867
www.nrcma.org
nfo@nrcma.org