



## Off to a Running Start!

Getting the year off to a good start is always important. 2014 finished strong for most NRC member companies, and it appears that 2015 will be another good year for the industry. There will be a lot of opportunities afforded to our members to offer pricing proposals and bids. We are already seeing this for projects in the design stage and projects that are moving forward for planned spring starts. I wish everyone the best of luck in getting off to a good start for the 2015 construction and maintenance season - let's keep the momentum going!

Prior to the close of 2014, the NRC held our annual Board of Directors election. This year's election was held for five open seats on the Board, and twenty people from various member companies threw their hat in the ring to be elected. The rail industry professionals that ran for election this year represented the full range of construction, engineering, equipment, and supply sides of the industry, and we were honored by their participation. The number of talented folks on the ballot made for some awfully tough voting! We respectfully thank everyone that was on the ballot.

The election results brought us one new director in Steve Bolte, Senior Director of North American Sales at Harsco Rail, along with the five incumbent directors re-elected to the board:

- Mike Choat, President of Railroad Controls Ltd, who was automatically re-elected as Secretary-Treasurer and will become the NRC Chairman in 2018-19.
- Marc Hackett, Director of Ballast & Roadbed Maintenance Services, Loram Maintenance of Way
- Larry Laurello, President, Delta Railroad Construction Greg Lippard, VP of Rail Products and Sales, L.B. Foster Co.
- Scott Norman, VP of Estimating and Project Development, Herzog Contracting Company

I would like to congratulate each of these five Board members on their re-election and send a special welcome out to Steve Bolte, the newly elected Director. I look forward to working with all of them and all of you in the coming year to make our association the very best that it can be.

The NRC began our activities for 2015 by holding our annual conference at the Diplomat Resort in Hollywood, FL. This year's conference ran from Wednesday, January 7 through Saturday January 10. I will update our membership on the conference activities in next month's column. Conference highlights will include the planned capital spending programs for the Class 1s and some of the larger regional railroads and short line holding companies as well. In addition, transit agencies across the country

are updating and expanding their systems and were at the NRC Conference to detail these plans. This year's conference was booked solid well in advance of the holidays, and another attendance record is likely to fall. Our association continues to grow and take on new membership, which is a positive sign for our industry and hopefully an endorsement of the value the NRC provides.

In 2015, the NRC will continue to maintain a strong focus on improving the overall safety of the rail contractors that perform construction and maintenance activities in our industry. We are releasing two new safety training videos ("Safety Around Replacing Grade Crossings, Part 1" (preparation) and "Safety Around Replacing Grade Crossings, Part 2" (execution)) at the conference, and we'll continue to add to the library moving forward.

We will also continue to take an active role in the FRA's Railroad Safety Advisory Committee process and keep our membership updated on issues that are being discussed for possible changes. The two most recent rules issued through that process, the Part 219 Drug & Alcohol Testing rule and the Part 243 Minimum Training Standards rule, are both going to have a major effect on the operations of rail contractors.

In addition, as an association based in Washington DC, we will continue to attempt to influence federal legislation that affects our industry. At the end of 2014, we were relatively pleased with the results of two bills that finally made their way through a historically unproductive Congress: the FY2015 transportation appropriations bill funded both a healthy transit New Starts program and a TIGER 7 grant program, and the short line railroad tax credit was reinstated for all of 2015 in a last-minute tax package.

However, much legislative work remains for next year: the surface transportation reauthorization bill for highway and transit policy and investments expires in May of 2015, and we'll need to get immediately back to work on the FY2016 transportation appropriations process and on getting the short line tax credit in place for 2015 and beyond. 2015 will also likely bring new versions of three pieces of rail legislation that were introduced in September 2014 but then ignored for the rest of the session: the passenger rail reauthorization (PRRIA) bill, STB reauthorization, and a rail safety bill.

Finally, please save these two dates in 2015: The NRC Rail Construction and Maintenance Equipment Auction will take place on April 17 in Little Rock, AR; and Railroad Day on Capitol Hill will take place on June 4 in Washington, DC

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](http://www.nrcma.org)  
[nfo@nrcma.org](mailto:nfo@nrcma.org)