

Rail Exchange Climbs the Ladder of Success

Grab irons and Rail Exchange. The two have become synonymous in the rail industry and with good reason. Rail Exchange has been manufacturing grab irons for more than 30 years.

However, few people know that Rail Exchange is making a name for itself as a manufacturer of everything that goes into ladder assemblies as well. In fact, Rail Exchange manufactures tank car ladders, two-step, four- and eight-step ladders for freight cars at prices competitive in throughout industry.

Rail Exchange will do all the assembly, too, saving customers time and the expense involved with storing the material and assembling it at a later date.

Rail Exchange will punch holes into flat or angled stock, then assemble the grab irons onto the ladder with huck bolts or rivets.

130-ton capacity, multiple forging lines and two Amada metal cutting saws to do the work.

For more information on ladder as-



Salesmen Matt Bartolini (left) and Rick Leonard display an assortment of ladders manufactured by Rail Exchange available either painted or unpainted.

All ladders come primed to prevent surface-to-surface rust that occurs where two unprimed metal surfaces meet.

To keep up with the growing ladder business, Rail Exchange uses two Huck powerrig hydraulic units, two Bertsch #11 roll plate bending machines, an Accurpress press brake with

semblies and pricing, contact Rail Exchange at 708-757-3317 or email Matt Bartolini in Sales at mattbart@railexchangeinc.com.



P.O. Box 340
Chicago Heights, IL 60412-0340
Phone: 708-757-3317
Fax: 708-757-6828
www.railexchangeinc.com

Surviving a Recession

How long as it been since we could honestly say that business was good? Two years, is that all? It seems longer.

That said, surviving economic downturns is nothing new to the rail industry, as many of you know. Business is cyclical with its ups and downs. During the up times, you have to take steps to prepare for the inevitable downturn. When business is down, you have to take extra steps to ensure your survival. That's exactly what we've done here at Rail Exchange. In fact, we've taken several specific steps that will ensure not just that we will survive the current economic conditions, but prosper when the country emerges from his recession.

For starters, we've cut costs wherever we could without sacrificing product quality or safety. We've cut back on our utilities, labor, insurance and maintenance.

Next, we've worked to solidify our relationship with our banking contacts. We're secured a credit line with our bank and worked hard to reduce any outstanding debt.

Through it all, we have not lost focus of our people. We've maintained our key people and rewarded

them when there has been an uptick in business, if only for a month at a time.

Finally, we've kept a close, close watch on our inventory. We don't need to be carrying excess inventory during times like these.

Many of the lessons we've learned during this recession and steps we've taken to run leaner will remain in place even as business picks up, which it will—eventually.

When times are good again, we'll still work hard at maintaining our costs and nurturing our relationships with our bank and our people, while keeping excess costs and inventory at bay. Why? Because business is cyclical and while we'll enjoy the up turn to come, we'll keep our eye on the goal: delivering our customers quality, competitively priced products on time.

And we'll always be a little wary. Caution is not a bad thing because we all know that what once business cycles up again, there is nowhere for it to go but down.

For now, however, we're looking toward the recovery.

To that end, we want you to know what is happening with our ladder

business. In short, it is growing everyday. Read more about what we're doing with ladders, both painted and unpainted on the cover page of this newsletter.

We've also included a story on lead times. Read more about them on page three.

Finally, we're happy to say we've earned the SECO Award for the ninth time. See more on this on page four.

As always, thank you for your patronage, loyalty and friendship.

Best wishes for a prosperous 2011.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dean M. Bartolini".

Dean M. Bartolini
President and CEO



A Lesson in Lead Times

If lead times mean anything, it is that no one can quite agree on what they should be, least of all sales and manufacturing.

These two departments are seemingly always at odds when it comes to deciding lead times: Sales promises short lead times; manufacturing is always crying for longer lead times. It is no surprise that customers always seem to side with sales when it comes to this debate.

The fact is, lead times vary by market conditions. When an order is placed with Rail Exchange, customers are given an estimated delivery date. When the order is ready to ship, the customer is notified by email when to expect the order.

When business is slow, customers may be happily surprised to find their order delivered in record time. While Rail Exchange always strives for fast turnaround times, lead times can and will vary depending on a number of factors ranging from the date of approved prints to material availability.

For this reason, Rail Exchange's customer service becomes an important link between the customer and Rail Exchange's manufacturing department. The customer service team, headed by John Consenza and including Matt Bartolini and Rick Leonard, both from the sales department, will keep customers apprised of delivery dates and will ensure that the customer's shipping instructions are followed to the letter.

If, at any time, a customer has a question about Rail Exchange, the Website (www.railexchangeinc.com) includes a list of all contacts, complete with their email addresses, the ability to place orders for grab irons online and general information on the company.

Matt Bartolini (left), sales, reviews delivery dates with John Cosenza, customer service, and Michele Jones, who schedules customer shipments.





Rail Exchange Takes Home SECO Award for Ninth Time

For the ninth time, Rail Exchange, Inc. has received the SECO (Supplier Evaluation Committee) Award from TTX Company. Only top companies that receive a high overall SECO rating based on annual evaluations earn the TTX Excellent Supplier designation and the award.

The award recognizes Rail Exchange for its commitment to customer satisfaction and product excellence.

This year marks the 19th year of TTX's SECO Program, a process defined from its inception as an effort to improve the communication of mutual expectations and performance between TTX and its suppliers. According to TTX, it has resulted in better documentation of mutual interests and provided an improved focus on areas where expectations are being met, as well as on areas where improvement is needed.

The TTX Excellent Supplier designation for 2009 was awarded to suppliers having a SECO rating of at least 90.0 and an "A" rating in all categories. Rail Exchange achieved A rankings

and high marks in all five of the categories which were graded including quality, cost, delivery, service and financial administration.

The ratings assigned to each supplier by the SECO group represent the consensus view expressed by representatives from the TTX Fleet Management, Equipment and Finance departments based upon hours

of review and discussion.

"It is an honor to have received the SECO award nine times," said Dean Bartolini, president and CEO, Rail Exchange, Inc. "It is a recognition of the hard work and attention to detail that we strive to achieve with all of our products on a daily basis, not just for TTX, but for all our customers."



Dean Bartolini, president and CEO, Rail Exchange, Inc., proudly adds a ninth SECO Award to the eight that already hang on the conference room wall.

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For additional copies or more information, contact: Dean Bartolini, editor, at 708-757-3317.