

Rail Exchange Celebrates 25 Years 1979-2004

There were high hopes of success in the late 1970s when Fred LaCorte and Dean Bartolini, both in sales at the Alco Spring plant in Chicago Heights, came up with the idea of manufacturing grab irons for railroad freight cars and locomotives.

So when they signed the official partnership deal in March 1979, they were optimistic, but never dreamt of the success to come.

LaCorte and Bartolini are the first to credit Rail Exchange's employees for much of the company's success.

Early on, Rail Exchange developed a plant/employee Mission Statement to achieve a "100 percent commitment from all employees to supply high quality, competitively priced products to customers."

That commitment to quality holds true today.



From left to right: Nick Adducci, Dean Bartolini, Joe Perozzi and Fred LaCorte formed the Rail Exchange partnership in March 1979.



Dean Bartolini (left) and Fred LaCorte today.



Open Letters from Fred LaCorte & Dean Bartolini

We are part of the largest transportation force in the world, the Railroad Industry. As a railway supply company, Rail Exchange began its journey by telling all of our customers that we're "long term."

A large poster entitled, "Who's the Boss" has been displayed for several years. The messages related to the importance of obtaining and sustaining customer relationships through meeting their needs. The bottom line is that the customer is everyone's boss. This message represents the culture within our company that we strive to meet everyday.

To be a viable company for the next 25 years, we must enlarge our vision to encompass innovations. Our customers are continuously trying to improve their products and market share. Rail Exchange must keep pace with its customers and stay on the cutting edge of all available technology to meet tomorrow's expectations.

We have the will and desire to prosper due to all the employees that make up Rail Exchange.

I want to personally thank our customers, my partner and all the employees that have been instrumental in Rail Exchange's success. Also, the many suppliers to

Rail Exchange that responded to our every need.

You are all very much appreciated; we take no relationships for granted.

And I thank God for always being available to each and every one of us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Fred N. LaCorte".

Fred N. LaCorte
Chairman & CEO

Twenty-five years looking forward seems like a long time. Looking back, it is as if it were yesterday.

It has been a remarkable journey to this point. A lot of highs and lows. At certain points, we flourished. At others, we merely survived. The truth of it all is that Rail Exchange is still operating and contributing to our economy as a supplier to the industry and an employer to many.

To our many customers and our 65 employees, thank you. What more can I say. You've all been there through the ups and the downs. We've built friendships and memories for which I am extremely grateful.

You can never predict the future, but if the past is an indicator, a newsletter will be written at our 50th Anniversary.

Best wishes and a heartfelt thank you to every customer who has had the confidence in Rail Exchange to come back to us over and over again; thank you to our customers who have become more than clients, but friends; and thank you to each and every employee who contributed to Rail Exchange over the years.

We are deeply grateful.

Best wishes for a healthy and prosperous 2004.

Sincerely,

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

Dean M. Bartolini
President



Thank you! Thank you!

A big thank you to everyone at Rail Exchange who has contributed to 25 great years! We couldn't have done it without you.

Happy Anniversary!

Administration & Sales

F.N. LaCorte, 25 years
Dean M. Bartolini, 25 years
Frieda Hoffmann, 25 years
Cheryl Pohrte, 22 years
Tom Wisinski, 19 years
Noe Villanueva, 7 years
Mike Bartolini, 5 years
Matt Bartolni, 3 years

Material Control

John Cosenza, 20 years
Benny Montgomery, 6 years
Bill Gillette, 4 years
Jim Defrank, 2 years
Willie Hopkins, 1st year

Machine Shop & Fabrication

Tom Rocha, 11 years
Danny McWhorter, 6 years
Salvador Rodriguez, 4 years
Jesus Avila, Jr., 4 years
Lenny Wegrzyn, 3 years
Hilbert Gasior, 1 year
Cesar Flores-Garcia, 1st year
Robert Kennedy, 1st year
Pierre Jackson, 1st year
Mark Cole, 1st year
Robert Rich, 1st year

Shipping Department

Jerry Argue, 1st year

Quality Control & Safety

Mitch Pakosz, 5 years

Maintenance

Pat Wilsens, 20 years
Leroy Sellers, 3 years

Maintenance/Forge/Scheduling

Ken Nelson, 10 years

Vincent Crossland, 1 year
Dan Ellington, 1 year
Martel Glenn, 1 year
Juan Fiscal, 1 year
Jamaand Greenwood, 1 year
Edward Harrison, 1 year
Sammie Johnson, 1 year
Ruben Perez, 1 year
Timothy Sanders, 1 year
Paul Coleman, 1st year
Salvador Gonzalez, 1 year
Manuel Castro, 1st year



Forge Shop

Bob Dodd, 16 years
Jesse Jones, 8 years
Rodney Smith, 8 years
Matt Hodges, 7 years
Antonio Castro, 7 years
James Sandifer, 6 years
Juvenal Gonzalez, 5 years
Rodolfo Segundo, 4 years
Jeremy Rodney, 1st year
Terronice Harris, 2 years
Jesse Brock, 1 year
Jason Bush, 1 year

In Memoriam

Martin Lissak, forge shop supervisor
Woody Frank St. John, forge shop supervisor
Oscar Rettig, fabrication
Andy Virgo, sales
Ed Neumann, sales
Jesus Avila, Sr., forge shop
Mike Furnace, forge shop
Pete Brandt, plant manager
Bill Rush, forge shop
Cecil White, forge shop



Rail Exchange Then & Now By the Numbers...

1979

3 owners—Fred LaCorte, Dean Bartolini and Nick Adduci
Business—Railroad salvage, railway supply and warehousing representatives
6 Employees—including owners
0 Equipment
\$650,000 sales
3 Largest customers—North American Car, Thrall Car, U.S. Railway
Location: 1700 S. Union, Chicago Heights

2004

2 Owners—Fred LaCorte, Dean Bartolini
Business—Manufacturer of forged and fabricated parts for the railway and industrial markets
65 Employees, including owners
10 forging centers, machine shop
\$6,000,000 average sales
36,000 square-foot plant
3 largest customers—Union Tank Car, National Steel Car, Johnstown American
Location: 1150 State Street, Chicago Heights

Who's the Boss?

Here's a question you could ask a thousand working people and never get the right answer. The question is: "Who's the boss?"

There's only one boss, and whether a person shines shoes for a living or heads up the largest corporation in the world, the boss remains the same. It's the customer.

He or she is the person who pays everyone's salary and decides whether a business is going to succeed or fail. He doesn't care if a company has been around 100 years. The minute it starts treating him badly, he'll put it out of business.

The man or woman who works inside a big plant might think they are working for the company that writes his paycheck, but that's not true. He's working for the person who buys the finished product, the customer. In fact, this customer can fire everyone in the company from the president down, by simply spending his money someplace else.

This is why taking pride in the work we do is so important to us personally. Doing an exceptionally good job will not only bring satisfaction, it will help get more customers, keep the ones we've got, and insure that we continue to get a paycheck from our bosses.

Some of the largest companies that had flourishing businesses a few years ago are no longer in existence. They couldn't—or didn't—satisfy the customer.

They forgot who the boss really was!

We're on the right track...

...Growing with you!

Ink is a publication for customers and employees of Rail Exchange, Inc. It is produced and distributed by the Rail Exchange, Inc. marketing department, P.O. Box 340, Chicago Heights, IL 60412-0340.

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