

Rail Exchange Launches New Web Site

Anyone interested in touring Rail Exchange, Inc., a single-source supplier of parts for rail cars, can visit the plant in Chicago Heights, Illinois or visit www.railexchangeinc.com where you will be greeted by the mighty whistle of a locomotive as it pulls into the station.

Aboard www.railexchangeinc.com you'll learn about Rail Exchange's many offerings, including products for locomotives, freight cars, tank cars, repair shops and its array of specialty ladders.

"The old Web site was long overdue for an overhaul," says Dean Bartolini, president and CEO of Rail Exchange, Inc., which was founded in 1979. "It simply wasn't working for us anymore. The new site has been up for only a short time and already we've received numerous inquiries from new customers and positive feedback from existing customers who reported that the site was informational and easy to use."

ALL ABOARD WITH ONE SUPPLIER

IT'S EASY TO DO BUSINESS

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LOCOMOTIVES

FREIGHT CARS

TANK CARS

LADDERS

REPAIR SHOPS

When you think of Rail Exchange, think of grab irons and much much more.

Founded in 1979, Rail Exchange has been a mainstay in the railroad industry, supplying locomotive and freight car manufacturers and repair shops parts for nearly 30 years.

Rail Exchange manufactures more than 125,000 grab irons on a monthly basis along with hundreds of other parts for locomotive and freight car manufacturers as well as repair shops.

Get all aboard with one supplier for all your railcar parts needs.

Home | Locomotives | Freight Cars | Tank Cars | Ladders | Repair Shops | It's Easy to Do Business | Quality Assurance | Our Staff | FAQ | Map & Directions | Brochures and Newsletters | Sales Inquiries

Rail Exchange, Inc.
P.O. Box 340
Chicago Heights, IL 60412
Phone: 708-757-3317
Fax: 708-757-6828

The new site provides an overview of Rail Exchange's primary product lines and gives guidelines for how customers can request custom orders. Information on the company's quality assurance program, a staff overview, answers to frequently asked questions, along with a map and directions to the Chicago Heights plant are also included.

Email addresses for key personnel are listed and sales inquiries may be directed to staff people for prompt, personal attention.

Rail Exchange's brochures and recent newsletters are also posted to the site for easy downloading by anyone requiring additional information.

"The Web site has really been a boom for us. With everyone surfing the Internet for one-stop shopping, Rail Exchange is not to be missed," says Bartolini. "We offer most parts anyone could want to outfit a locomotive or freight car and we're getting out the word, not just in print, but electronically as well."



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20 Years and Counting...

Rail Exchange has long been proud of its outstanding record for keeping employees happy. Testament to that fact is that the company has six employees who have been with it for two decades or more.

Reaching, and in some cases, exceeding, the 20 year milestone are:

Frieda Hoffmann—With the company since it was founded, Hoffmann, who works in shipping, was with me when I started Rail Exchange, Inc. in 1979. She is a 28-year veteran of the company.

Next up is Cheryl Pahrte, vice president of administration, with 25 years of service at Rail Exchange.

John Cosenza, who heads up customer service, is another long-term employee with 23 years.

Pat Wilsens, maintenance, also has 23 years to his credit.

Tom Wisinski, material control and sales, has 22 years under his belt.

Bob Dodd, a machinist, is nearing the 20 year mark, having been with Rail Exchange for 19 years.

I'm proud and honored to have so many employees who have stood the test of time and have been with



The 20 year gang includes: front row, left to right: Frieda Hoffmann, Cheryl Pahrte and Dean Bartolini. Back row, left to right: Bob Dodd, Pat Wilsens, John Cosenza and Tom Wisinski.

Rail Exchange for most of its existence. They are not only loyal employees who treat our customers as they would like to be treated, but they are good friends and advocates of Rail Exchange.

Dean M. Bartolini
President and CEO

Rail Exchange Boosts Safety Record

Two years ago, Rail Exchange, Inc. retained Network Safety Consultants to educate the company on measures they could take to boost their safety record. The move has paid off.

In just two years, the number of injuries is down dramatically, which has boosted productivity and cut downtime. Implementing the safety consultant's recommendations, Rail Exchange established an extensive proactive safety program that included the formation of a safety committee under the direction of quality control manager, Mitch Pakosz, monthly safety training for workers and supervisor meetings.

By taking proactive safety measures and educating supervisors to potential hazards, good working conditions have gotten even better by paying attention to everything from general house-keeping to instructing personnel on how to repair a potential problem.

"Our safety record is definitely the result of a team effort. All parties have been involved," explains Mike Bartolini, general manager at Rail Exchange.



The Rail Exchange safety committee, from left: Juvenal Gonzales, Dave Owens, Salvator Rodriguez, Matt Bartolini, Benny Montgomery, Mitch Pakosz and Cesar Flores-Garcia.

"A lot of what we've learned from the consultant is that injuries are the result of people's actions, so we watch out for each other and communicate back and forth to avoid someone taking unsafe actions," he says. "The safety record we've established and are continuing to maintain is the direct result of employee action so we're going to continue the ongoing training and monthly discussions about how we can improve safety.

"People want to come to work knowing that they are in a safe environment," adds Bartolini. "We work hard to keep the plant safe and our people healthy because our people are our most valuable asset.

"They are what make Rail Exchange the successful company that it is."

New Shear Boosts Capacity 250%; Cuts Scrap

In 2007, Rail Exchange, Inc. invested \$220,000 in a new wire straightening cutting shear from Shuster-Mettler Corporation. Just a few months after its installation, the company has increased its cutting capacity by 250 percent. Prior to installing the new shear, Rail Exchange cut billets or bars of steel for its product lines by hand.



“Before the new shear, we were cutting two shifts with four people on two machines. During a good day on one shift, I would get roughly 2000 pieces. Now, we’re cutting on one shift with one operator and we’re netting 6000 to 8000 pieces a day. It is just more efficient and more automated,” says Ken Nelson, forge shop manager, Rail Exchange, Inc.

The new shear has reduced scrap, too. Instead of cutting bar stock as was done previously, the new machine cuts coil stock, which means fewer leftover pieces. “I have a huge savings on material alone,” explains Nelson. “Before, on 10,000 pounds of material, we had 5 to 10% of material waste. Now, with the coils, our waste is 1% or less.”

Accuracy has also increased. “Now I can hold 5/10,000 tolerance on the length. Parts are right on the money,” says Nelson.

The shear, which is dedicated to cutting coils, is capable of cutting two different sizes. Presently, it is used to cut 3/4-inch coils, but it can do 1/2-inch or smaller.

“It is easy to run, but it has posed a new challenge,” says Nelson of the new technology. Currently, two operators are trained to run the shear. It takes approximately 30 days to train to run the machine correctly due to its complexity.



Coil stock is fed into the new shear (inset photo) as shear operator, Everett Bates, collects and stacks bars that have been cut.

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