



North American Section

IRSE North American Section 2008 Activities

2008 brought new challenges to the North American Section, and the members and Local Committee responded with very gratifying results. Our Annual General Meeting (AGM) was expanded from the former format and our first major project for the Body of Knowledge was completed. Overall it was a banner year for the NAS, and we expect our 2009 results to continue to provide the members with exciting opportunities for professional enhancement.



This year's Annual General Meeting at the Gaylord Texan Resort and Convention Center, Grapevine, Texas. The meeting was held in conjunction with the Railway Systems Suppliers Inc. (RSSI) annual C&S Exhibition, and was one of the more important industry meetings of the year. (Note that the photo at left of a conference bag was provided by Wim Coenraad and was NOT taken in Texas!)

On May 20th, 2008 the Institution of Railway Signal Engineers (IRSE) North American Section (NAS) held its first technical meeting. This was in reality a half day conference consisting of six presentations from internationally renowned speakers. The overall theme of the conference was "Lessons learned here and abroad on the Safety Approval Process for microprocessor based train control and train management", and the event was well attended by over 50 interested guests. The speakers included:



- **Kendrick Bisset**, NAS Local Committee Chair – Kendrick provided an introduction of the IRSE and the NAS as well as acting as the moderator for the first session.

- **Bill Scheerer**, IRSE North American Country Vice President - Bill discussed the IRSE NAS beginnings from 2002 and the progress made since.
- **Joe Noffsinger**, NAS Local Committee Member – Joe introduced the theme for the conference and how it is strikingly relevant to the members.



- **Allen Fisher**, IRSE President – Mr. Fisher introduced the global reach of the IRSE, and provided insights into Safety approvals from a UK perspective.

- **Grady Cothen**, Deputy Associate Administrator for Safety. Standards and Program Development, FRA – Mr. Cothen gave those present an in depth discussion on the Federal Railroad Administration view of the process and approach to compliance for the safety case.



- **Mark Hartong**, Electronic Engineer, FRA – Mr. Hartong provided those present with practical assessment of the Signal Product Safety approval and assessment within the FRA, and how the process is conducted.
- **Wim Coenraad**, Past IRSE President – Mr. Coenraad discussed the European Safety Acceptance practice and experience with it.
- **David Thurston**, NAS Local Committee Vice Chair – Dave acted as the second session moderator and provided backgrounds on the last presentations.



- **Al Fazio**, General Manager of NJ Transit's RiverLINE LRT operation (photo at left) and
- **Rob Troup**, Signal Manager for SYSTRA Consulting (photo at right) – Mr. Fazio and Mr. Troup provided details on FRA applications for joint operation of LRT vehicles and freight train.



- **Bill Petit**, Past NAS Local Committee Member – Bill gave insights into the new Interoperable Communications Based Signaling as prescribed by the new AREMA manual (photo at left).

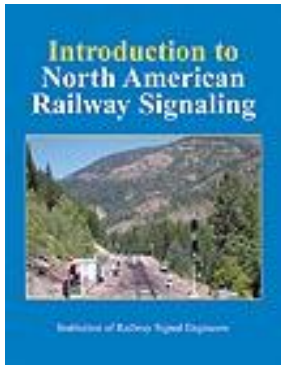
- **Larry Light**, Senior Director, New Technology for Amtrak – Mr. Light presented an evaluation of two key projects (ITCS in Michigan and ACSES on the Northeast Corridor) and the experience with the FRA.



Immediately following the last session of presentations, the North American Section held the Annual General Meeting to review the business for 2008. Remarks were made by Mr. Alan Fisher, IRSE President concerning the business of the IRSE. The business of the Section included the election of two members to the Local Committee. These positions were filled by:

Vic Babin, Chief Electrical Engineer, Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District - to a two year term.

Ed Mortlock, Manager of Signals and Train Control, Parsons Transportation Group – to a two year term.



Also at the Business Meeting, Chairman Bisset announced that the first NAS publication was completed and available for purchase in June. The book is titled: ***Introduction to North American Railway Signaling***, and is available at the Simmons Boardman web site at <http://www.transalert.com/>. Special IRSE member pricing has been established to provide significant savings. All members are encouraged to utilize this new resource in their activities. Special thanks go to Kendrick Bisset and to the other authors and editors for all of their hard work.



As is the tradition with NAS Annual General Meetings, a Technical Visit was made to local rail facilities. This year's visit was made to the Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) Control Center and Car Shop in Dallas, Texas. Members were treated to an inside look at the DART operations and maintenance technique for railcar systems. As you can see from the photo at left, this years NAS shirts were made in yellow and black to honor our Technical Visit host, DART.

What is the Institution of Railway Signal Engineers? The IRSE is an international organization of professionals in the railroad communication and signal field. The United Kingdom based organization was chartered in 1912, and presently has 4,500 members worldwide. The goals of the Institution are, first: "The advancement ... of the science and practice of signalling ... by the promotion of research, the collection and publication of educational material and the holding of conferences, seminars and meetings", and second: "The maintenance of high standards of practice and professional care amongst those working within the industry...".

The IRSE sponsors technical papers at section meetings such as the NAS and general conferences throughout the world. Each year the papers are gathered in the Annual Proceedings, which are provided free to all IRSE members, along with a summary of the discussions. In addition, the IRSE publishes a monthly magazine for members, the IRSE News, with technical articles and information on the Institution.

The North American Section (NAS) was formed on May 24, 2002 to support the goals of the Institution in North America. The NAS presently has over 50 members, and is encouraging railroad communication and signal professionals to join. While prospective NAS members must also be members of the IRSE, the NAS Local Committee would be pleased to offer assist anyone interested in the applying for the benefits of membership with their application. NAS membership at present is free. IRSE membership is available at several levels, from Associate to Fellow with appropriate membership fees. Information on IRSE and NAS membership can be found at www.irse.org.

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