Editor’s Overview

The Winds of Change

by Ricia Sturgeon-Hendrick

Last month, we alluded to the changing climate and hurricanes’ effects on our industry’s fall events. This month, we lead with the feature A Change of Plans by Lee Freeland. It relates how Hurricane Irma chased the convention of the National Association of Elevator Contractors (NAEC) up the eastern seaboard from Orlando, Florida, to Atlantic City, New Jersey. Then, as the new convention date approached, so did another hurricane, off the coast of New Jersey. Luckily, it passed harmlessly, and NAEC had a slightly smaller event three weeks later than planned. It was an admirable feat of coordination. Steve McDuffie, who won the William C. Sturgeon award, put it differently. He said of the organization’s executive director, “The real person who deserves this award is Teresa Witham. This feat rivals the evacuation of Dunkirk, but if Teresa had been involved, more people would have gotten out quicker.”

Other events piled into October: in Northampton Gathering Does It Again, David Cooper says the Symposium on Lift and Escalator Technologies in the U.K. was bigger and better than ever. According to Caleb Givens in Schedule Conflict Doesn’t Hurt Wisconsin Symposium, NAESA International’s Wisconsin Symposium in Lake Geneva, Wisconsin, was well attended, even though it followed NAEC by one day. Many suppliers who exhibited at both events carried smaller tabletop exhibits from New Jersey to Wisconsin on the plane. Many of the same suppliers were off to Interlift in Germany just a week later. They deserve much praise, as well.

Our focus this month is Remote Monitoring Systems. Last month, we had an article about Otis equipping 31,000 technicians with iPhones and an Otis-built service app that wirelessly connects elevators to the technician, with their history instantly available. I mention this because Otis trademarked the term “REM” (for “Remote Elevator Monitoring”) years ago. The subject drew great interest and eight articles — all of them excellent — about a wide variety of equipment:

♦ Evolution of Monitoring Design by Luc Hebert and Stéphane Dufour encourages a system with open architecture to interface with other building subsystems.
♦ Efficiency of Lift Maintenance Enhanced by Digitalizing Data by Koos van Lindenburg and Joey Tienhooven examines the results of a Liftinstituut survey on how customers want to receive inspection data.
♦ LiftAI by Rob Wurth and Rich Madarasz describes the value of nonproprietary monitoring and artificial intelligence (AI) in tailoring service routes.
♦ Pixel Technologies Systems Improve Maintenance Response Times, Enhance Safety by Matt Irvin examines the Australian company’s offering of its LMS monitoring system for round-the-clock oversight of elevators.
♦ Transitioning to New Maintenance Strategies With Remote Monitoring by Dan Bryant, Johannes Guntsch, Kyle Hendren and Christopher Pearce outlines how the Internet of Things helps a service organization transition from preventive to predictive maintenance.
♦ Optimum Uptime by Kaija Wilkinson is an interview with the Texas-based Kings III Emergency Communications about its Online Remote Monitoring (ORM), designed to give customers insight into their elevators’ operation without being there.
♦ New Infrastructure of Elevator Remote Monitoring System and Expansion of Services by Shunji Takao, Ryouichi Sakai and Masaaki Yoshida introduces Hitachi’s new communication infrastructure for elevator remote monitoring and new services that utilize it.

As I look back over the years of how monitoring elevator systems has changed and how new technology — like the Internet, AI and virtual reality (VR) — has affected it, I wonder what the next step will be? If you can see everything about an elevator system from the comfort of your desk, maybe you will just send out a few drones to do repairs — or, with VR, you do the “remote repairs” from your desk. Ah, the winds of change — they are thrilling, amazing and scary! 😍

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