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## HOLLAND FIRST AND LAST APPROVALS PROCESS

By Deb Lynch, QA Manager with Holland L.P.

In the spring of 2019 Holland embarked on a one-year plan to consolidate assembly production into a single facility. Closing our facility in Kenova, WV after 30 years of operation and moving those product assembly lines to our facility in University Park, IL was expected to take a full year to complete. We all know what happened in 2020 as the move neared completion. As both states shut down for COVID and we began the process of determining who would stay with Holland and whose employment would end, we learned that only one of the Kenova tenured employees, Miguel Celdran, the Production

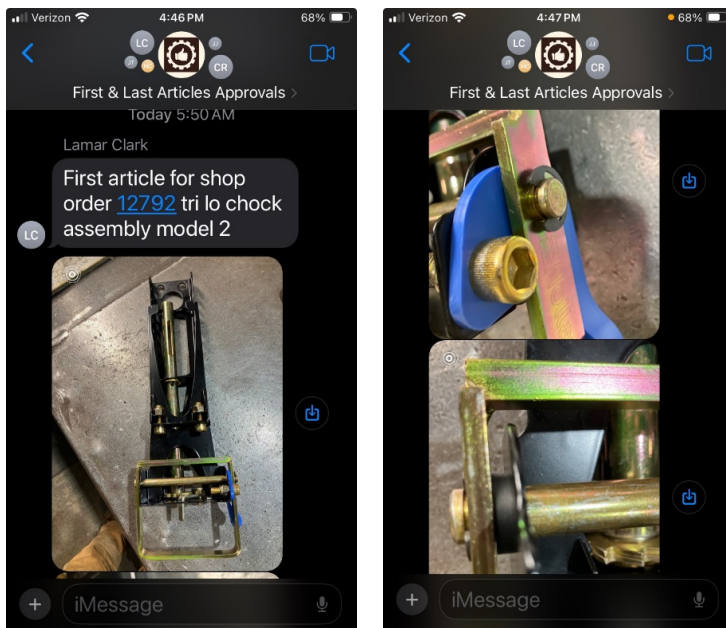
Manager, planned to stay with Holland, but would not be relocating to Illinois.

With only essential workers allowed in the building, and only one employee who knew the process, how do you keep the quality of production at the level it was in Kenova, keep production rates at the needed level, provide training and inspect parts, all from a distance and with newly hired staff?

Miguel began training staff, spending weeks traveling back and forth from his home in West Virginia to Illinois. A proficiency program, like what he had established in Kenova, was put into place so that he felt confident leaving the staff to produce product. How we could go about completing inspections was still an issue for the team. Office staff were not considered essential workers in Illinois and could not go in the building. With Miguel several states and hours away, we needed to create a way the non-essential staff could support Miguel and assist in inspections when he was not available, as well as a way for him to inspect parts from his home.

After a virtual ISO-9001 audit, we thought we might have hit on a way to do this and started discussing if we could do a virtual audit. With technology leading the way, why could we not do the same with inspections? As a result, we set up what we now call the First and Last Article Approvals text messages in the summer of 2020. The Customer Service Manager, Engineering staff, Quality Assurance Manager, and Miguel were all put in a text group along with the Production Team Lead, Lamar Clark. When Lamar's production team completes the first article of any shop order, he takes photos of the assembly, sends them to the group via text message with the shop order number, part number and any questions he has. In the beginning, Miguel had final approval, with engineering backing him up when he was out of the office. A text is sent as a response to Lamar's request that the First Article is approved and production proceeds. If there are questions that come up along the way, Lamar takes photos, can Facetime the team, providing a visual tour of the concern in real time.

Messages always contain photos of each part of the assembly, often with 3-6 photos per message. In the example below, the part is identified by its part number, the shop order or router number, and the photos.



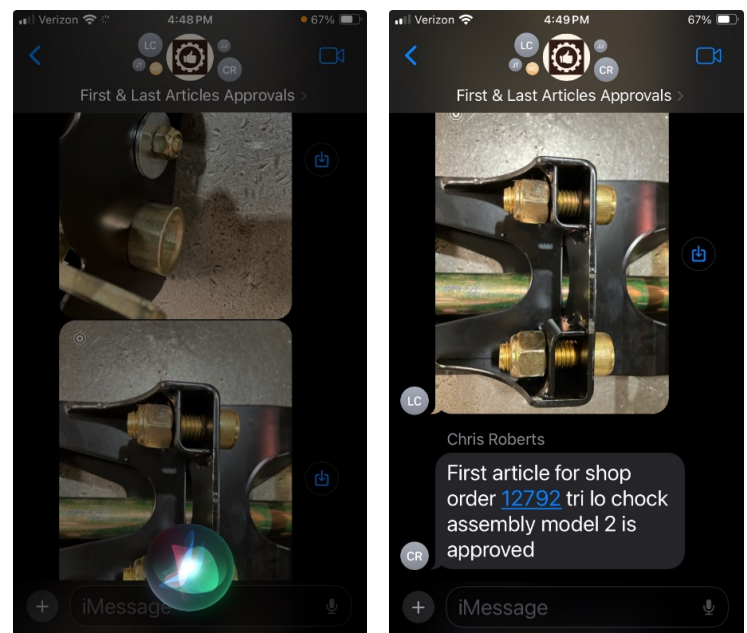
After a month of training employees, and successful use of the texts for inspections, Lamar decided to add what he calls the Second Chance Glance. This gives every employee on the production line, full authority to stop the production line at any time, to ask for an inspection of the parts, the assembly, or to point out an error in the assembly that a co-worker may have made. This process, has been very well accepted with morale soaring among the team, now given the authority to stop the line at any time.

Visual aids were added at all workstations to communicate quality inspection points and photos of what good looks like. All the work instructions and assembly drawings were reviewed with the idea that our

new, less experienced team did not have the tribal knowledge that Miguel's Kenova-based team had; so, we needed to make sure the details were included and not assumed. Lamar asked for presentations around each product line, what it is used for, how it secures a load, and what type of loads it secures. Engineering provided all the requested information and documentation. The level of proficiency increased dramatically once the staff understood how important each assembly is to the securement of a load on a rail train. Quality has improved dramatically with a single quality escape since the implementation of the text messages.

In January of 2024 Miguel moved from his role as Production Manager to Customer Service Manager, allowing him to reduce his travel significantly. The new Production Manager was added to the text message group and while he is not allowed to approve inspections (Miguel and Engineering continue to be the point persons for this process), he is aware when a shop order has been approved for shipment and can direct the staff accordingly.

Both the AAR M-1003 auditor and the ISO-9001 auditor assigned to the site have commented on the unique way we found to address the issues of inspections when your inspector cannot be in the building. Both auditors have challenged us to successfully produce text messages that were 6 months old. The data found, we were able to pass both audits successfully, as well as retrieve inspection information when we needed to for a customer request.



## WELCOME AAR MID GENERAL MANAGER MICHAEL WILEY

Submitted by Mike Ruby – Trinity Rail

Please join us in welcoming Michael Wiley the new general manager of the AAR Mechanical Inspection Department. Michael replaced Stephen Berkshire who retired in 2023.

Michael is a professional railroader with over 28 years of extensive leadership experience directing all facets of mechanical processes, rules compliance, efficiency and reliability regarding freight car inspection and repair. Served on several industry committees over the years including RSAC, ARB and CRB. Some long-term responsibilities included development of reliability strategies and efficiencies via data collection and analytics, as well as collaborating with technology department for system applications development and implementation.



Certified Instructor with Instructional Design Certification from University of North Florida. Over 10 years of experience developing training and instructing mechanical forces in rules safety, departmental policies, regulatory standards, and industry rules.

An avid outdoorsman with interests including fishing, hunting, and shooting. My number one activity outside of work and the rail industry is to be a doting grandfather to 15 grandchildren.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF TRANSLATING DOCUMENTS

Submitted by Blanca Grosjean – TrinityRail

For large companies with significant Spanish-speaking workforce and key operational hubs in Mexico and the southern states, translating documents becomes a pivotal tool for ensuring seamless operations, maintaining control of your documents, and fostering a cohesive culture.

By providing documents in the user language, companies can bridge the linguistic gap, empowering employees to grasp vital information accurately and execute tasks efficiently. In the context of a company with facilities in Mexico, the translation of documents holds even greater significance. The smooth transmission of crucial information ensures consistent adherence to your guidelines and industry regulations, fostering a culture of compliance and quality control. Eliminating potential misunderstandings arising from language differences. For example, translated standards and procedures contribute to a robust framework for maintaining operational excellence, bolstering productivity, and upholding quality standards in the workplace.

Seamless translations are not just about language, they foster a sense of inclusivity and collaboration within our diverse workforce. When employees can access essential information in their native language, they feel more than just engaged, they feel part of a more unified and productive organizational culture that transcends linguistic and cultural barriers.

By prioritizing document translation, we are not just ensuring smooth operations, but also averting potential risks and legal complexities. Clear and accurate translations diminish the likelihood of errors, misunderstandings, and

noncompliance, reducing the possibility of costly operational setbacks and legal ramifications. This emphasis on translations provides a sense of security and confidence in our operations.

## WELCOME JEFFREY OSTRANDER – RSI REGULATORY AND INDUSTRY AFFAIRS

Submitted by Patty Long, RSI



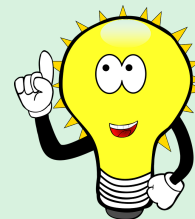
I am very excited to announce that Jeffrey Ostrander will be joining us effective immediately to help manage the RSI's Quality Assurance, Equipment Leasing and ARCI Committees. We are very lucky that Jeffrey was wrapping up work for another Smithbucklin client and was eager and willing to jump into this. Jeffrey brings

strong operations and project management skills to this role, having worked at several other Smithbucklin associations. Prior to that, he worked for 7 years with the American Institute of Architects. Some of you have already met Jeffrey as he has begun attending some of the working group calls. He will be reaching out to other committee heads over the next few weeks. As you might imagine, Sheena left very thorough records (meeting minutes, budgets, committee recommendations, etc.) and Jeffrey is in the process of downloading and digesting a lot of that.

## 2025 AAR QUALITY ASSURANCE AUDITOR CONFERENCE



The AAR Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) has already begun planning next year's conference. Everyone be sure to save the date, which will be February 25 – 27, 2025. The venue will be in Phoenix again next year.



## Have an Idea for an Article?

Please submit your drafts to Gary Alderson at [alderson@alltranstek.com](mailto:alderson@alltranstek.com) or Alfredo Ricardo at [ricardo@alltranstek.com](mailto:ricardo@alltranstek.com)

## Interested in Joining RSI QAC?

Contact Jeffrey Ostrander at [jostrander@smithbucklin.com](mailto:jostrander@smithbucklin.com)

## Not Getting the Newsletter and Want to Subscribe?

Contact Jeffrey Ostrander at [jostrander@smithbucklin.com](mailto:jostrander@smithbucklin.com)



## 2024 AAR QUALITY ASSURANCE TRAINING SCHEDULE

Course	Date	Location
Basic Auditor Training Class	October 22-24	Nashville, TN
Advanced Auditor Training Class	November 5-7	Lincoln, Nebraska
Root Cause Analysis Class	November 19-20	Pueblo, Colorado

### USEFUL LINKS

[Railway Supply Institute](#)

[RSI QAC & Previous Newsletters](#)

[RSI Tank Car Resource Center](#)

[Registry of M-1003 Certified Companies](#)

[M-1003 Frequently Asked Questions](#)

[American Society for Quality - Training](#)

[RSI 100](#)

[AAR M-1003 Certification on-line Application](#)

[AAR M1003, Section J Specification for Quality Assurance](#)

[AAR Training Schedule](#)

[AAR Circulars](#)

[MSRP Publication Current Revision Status](#)

[AAR Online Material Nonconformance Reporting System \(Chapter 7\)](#)

[AAR FAQ Page includes QAPE](#)

### THE FOLLOWING RSI QAC TEAM MEMBERS WORKED ON THIS NEWSLETTER:

Gary Alderson – AllTranstek

Donna Jacobi – Amsted Rail

Jeffrey Ostrander - RSI

Alfredo Ricardo – AllTranstek

Michael Ruby – TrinityRail

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