



President's Message

*International System Safety Society President
Robert Schmedake*

On Recent Changes and Looking to the Future

A lot has been going on since our last *Journal of System Safety*. We had our International System Safety Conference in Boston with the constraints of the government sequestration affecting our profitability. The conference is a very important source of income for this Society — it amounts to at least half of our income in a normal year. While our conference offered excellent professional development and networking opportunities, 2013's conference operated at a financial loss. We have been responding to this loss by addressing the areas of the budget that we have control over. One of these is the frequency of *Journal of System Safety*. While we have every intention of providing the same quantity of material in *JSS*, we will only publish three journals this Society Year (July 2013 through June 2014). More information about this decision is posted on the Society's Website at <http://www.system-safety.org/>.

We have been very active renegotiating the conditions in our 2014 conference contract to ensure we do not operate at a loss. The problem we have with these contracts is that we commit at least one to two years in advance of the conference, and this leaves us vulnerable to the effects of drastic changes in the business environment. In last year's case, we had planned on the same attendance as we had experienced for the conferences of previous years, but we had committed to this in 2011. Between the time we committed and the time the conference actually took place, the sequestration rules on government participation in conferences resulted in reducing our attendance by more than 50 percent.

Fortunately for the society, our reserves were able to cover this year's losses, and we expect the cost-cutting efforts will help keep us operating within our income. We

are also actively seeking alternative income sources that make sense for the Society.

The Job Target Website has been getting a lot of use lately, helping members find system safety positions and helping employers to find qualified applicants. This site is available at <http://www.system-safety.org/jobs/>. This service also has the benefit of generating a small amount of income for the Society each month.

We have made progress on the conference venue for 2014. Our conference will occur from August 4 through 8 at the Union Station DoubleTree Hotel in St. Louis, Missouri. The Website will be set up soon for registration, and we are currently signing up sponsors for the conference. The Boeing Company has signed up as the Corporate Sponsor for the conference, and we are now signing up Gold- and Silver-level

sponsors, as well as exhibitors. Conference information will be available by a link from the Society's Web page at www.system-safety.org.

St. Louis offers a number of activities that should be of interest, which you can learn about at www.explor-stlouis.com. St. Louis is a baseball town; few cities have such loyal fans or a team that so consistently makes it to the playoffs. As luck would have it, the Boston Red Sox and the St. Louis Cardinals will be playing at Busch Stadium during the conference week. Come and see the two teams that played in the 2013 World Series.

In closing, I want to assure you that the Society is committed to providing its membership with an ever-improving quality of service, despite our economic challenges. We will be taking steps to ensure you receive all that we can give, and that at the end of the year, you feel you received the value you expected. ☺

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