

## My Take: It's Not Necessarily Rocket Science

Written by Jane Alexander, Editor-In-Chief  
Monday, 13 June 2011 14:06

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Or maybe I should say, “It’s not necessarily rocket science that’s going to put U.S. industry back in the global driver’s seat and on the road to a robust and sustainable tomorrow.” From everything I’m seeing and hearing, a lot of what we need boils down to plain old innovation—*fueled by plain old innovative thinking.*

There’s plenty of emphasis on the development of that type of thinking these days; we try to focus on it early and often. In fact, innovative thinking is a key element in the capacity-assurance-related editorial that our contributors offer up to you month in and month out. But we’re not the only information source that has drunk the Kool-Aid: If you’re like me, I bet you’ve hardly been able to pick up a newspaper or consumer-oriented magazine, tune in to a morning drive-time radio broadcast or click on an evening TV newscast lately and not learn about somebody or something sponsoring some activity or initiative that honors and rewards the minds and skills of those who choose to innovate.

That’s what our “2011 Maintenance & Reliability Innovator of the Year Award” is all about: honoring and rewarding the minds and skills of those of you who have chosen to innovate in your work—*and who take the time to tell us about it.* There’s more than just bragging rights on the line, however. For example, Applied Technology Publications will provide the Grand Prize winner with a memorable trip to MARTS 2012 next March. But, that’s not all! The competition also features great prizes from several major corporate sponsors, including (as we go to press):

- An iPad from Inpro/Seal for the Grand Prize winner and each of the [three category winners\\*](#)
- An electronic water conditioner unit from Scalewatcher® for the Grand Prize winner and each of the three category winners.

All winners, including six monthly winners (June through December of this year) will receive “Maintenance & Reliability Innovator Award” shirts and write-ups about their innovations in upcoming issues of Maintenance Technology and Lubrication Management & Technology

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magazines. Speaking of which, our monthly winner for June is reader Dale Westrick, who submitted an idea for a self-cleaning spray assembly for industrial operations (look for more details in the July issue).

As I said before, the solutions to industry's problems don't necessarily involve rocket science: Opportunities to innovate toward a better tomorrow are all around us, just waiting to happen—*even in maintenance and reliability*.

In many cases, all it takes to harness them is innovative thinkers who aren't willing to settle for same-o, same-o.

If that's you, get busy and enter your innovation or innovative idea for judging (and encourage others to do likewise). We've set up a simple submission process at [www.reliabilityinnovator.com](http://www.reliabilityinnovator.com), where you can learn more about the contest guidelines, sponsors and prizes. Don't procrastinate. This competition ends December 31, 2011. We'll announce the Grand Prize and category winners in early 2012. Good luck!

**MT**

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\* Categories include: 1) Innovative devices, gizmos and gadgets; 2) Innovative process and procedures; and 3) Innovative use of outside resources (i.e. third-party tools, including software).