Written by Jane Alexander, Editor-In-Chief
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As I edited my way through the March issue, I got a kick out of seeing my September 2010 column referenced in the “Viewpoint” by Jay Burnette of Inpro/Seal.

Speaking for his very innovative company, Burnette’s “view” is that use of technology can play a major role in helping industries deal with disappearing knowledge and experience bases. His message is spot on, and one that fits well with the mission of the “2011 Maintenance & Reliability Innovator of the Year Award” that MT’s parent company, Applied Technology Publications, has launched. Although we’ll be rolling out this program with a big bang at next month’s MARTS Conference (www.MARTSconference.com), here, in 500 words, is the gist of how you can participate and what’s in it for you if you do:

Starting in May, you can submit your innovations (one entry per person) for judging through a special Website set up solely this purpose. (Full details on this and what to include in your submission package will be published in the April 2011 issue and on www.MT-online.com.)

Your idea must be original—*not plagiarized from other sources*. You’ll also need to sign a publication release that will allow us to share your idea with the public at large. If your idea is currently in use at your facility and/or if you have an employment condition requiring you to disclose all ideas to your company, you will also need to provide a release from your employer that would permit us to publish your submission. Ideally, your submitted innovation should be capable of being used by others.

The judges will expect you to explain why you came up with your innovation; what it does; and what impact it has in terms of reliability, uptime, availability, throughput, safety, environment, efficiency, etc. Ideas will be categorized in one of three groups:

- Innovative devices, gizmos and gadgets
- Innovative process and procedures
- Innovative use of outside resources (i.e. third-party tools, including software)

We'll accept entries from May 1 to December 31, 2011, and score them based on practicality, simplicity and impact. Don't wait until the last minute: There's too much on the line. For one thing, starting with the upcoming June issue and running through December, we'll be featuring six "Maintenance & Reliability Innovator of the Month" winners selected from all entries that have been received.

And why should you bother to enter? In early 2012, you could be named as one of three category winners (see above). Or, you might find yourself being honored as the whole-ball-of-wax, grand-prize "2011 Maintenance & Reliability Innovator of the Year"—*and enjoying all the bragging rights and other things that come with it.*
(Award presentations, including prizes, will be at the 2012 MARTS, and we'll want you there.)
Speaking of prizes, since I've exceeded my allotted 500 words, you'll have to wait until next month to learn what some of them are. Let's just say that Applied Technology Publications and sponsors of the "2011 Maintenance & Reliability Innovator of the Year Award Program" (including those busy innovators at Inpro/Seal) have some great things to share with YOU.
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