Written by Robert C. Baldwin, CMRP, Editor
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Robert C. Baldwin, CMRP, Editor Interesting thing about anniversaries, the ones that end in zero always seem to trigger more memories than the others. As I look forward to the Tenth Annual SMRP Conference October 27-30, 2002 in Nashville, TN, my thoughts are drawn to the organization's first conference, as well as the 18 months that preceded it.

Representatives of 20 companies met March 23-24, 1992 at the Chicago Ritz Carlton Hotel to lay the groundwork for a new professional organization: The Society for Maintenance & Reliability Professionals (SMRP).

The group, assembled at the invitation of HSB Reliability Technologies and MAINTENANCE TECHNOLOGY magazine, developed a mission statement and organized committees to develop bylaws and membership criteria, nominate officers, and plan society activities such as a conference.

In October, a year and a half later, the group held its first conference in Nashville. It was superb, with three concurrent tracks packed with informative sessions. Perhaps the most important ingredient of its success was that the program was developed by practitioners for practitioners. That is mostly still true today.

The conference, as well as its sponsor, has continued to grow and thrive. Attendance this year is expected to reach 500 people, and SMRP has nearly 1000 individual members and 100 executive (company) members.

This is truly great progress, but it is only a drop in the bucket. There are more than 160,000 industrial sites in the United States, plus thousands of commercial and government sites, all with some type of maintenance organization.

SMRP has done a great job of getting top maintenance organizations together to discuss best practices. But where are the others?

How many potential members are there? If the distribution of best practices follows Pareto's 80/20 rule, 80 percent of the best practices "wealth" is "owned" by 20 percent of industrial sites. That means 32,000 industrial sites possess significant best practices and would have much to contribute. So SMRP's membership directorate has plenty of opportunity.

Speaking of opportunity, I hope the editorial staff of MAINTENANCE TECHNOLOGY magazine will have an opportunity to meet you in Nashville this month at SMRP's Tenth Annual Conference.

If not, I hope you consider yourself among the top 20 percent and will sieze the opportunity offered by SMRP to share maintenance and reliability best practices at future conferences, workshops, and meetings. **MT**

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