

On track

Equipment suppliers,
service providers
cite safety, accuracy,
efficiency in inspection
product upgrades

By Julie Sneider, Assistant Editor

Track inspection and rail defect detection equipment suppliers and service providers are continuously updating their offerings to help railroads accurately and cost effectively detect and/or prevent broken rail, tie and track component wear.

For a glimpse into what's new in the track inspection product and services arena, *Progressive Railroading* recently contacted representatives from 10 equipment suppliers and service providers. Their respective takes, collected via phone interviews or emails, follow.

dFuzion Inc.

In 2007, dFuzion Inc. obtained a contract from the Federal Railroad Administration's (FRA) Office of Research and Development to create an ultra-portable ride quality meter that integrated real-time GPS location information with acceleration data that could be collected off in-service vehicles. After developing the prototype for FRA track inspectors, dFuzion saw the value in creating a commercial version of the ride performance investment system.

Now known as rMetrix®, the system is available in two versions: the standard rMetrix and the newer autonomous version known as rMetrix-A. The FRA, Amtrak and some light-rail systems are among the company's customers using the rMetrix system to assess ride performance, said dFuzion Chief Executive Officer Robert Borgovini.

The rMetrix system collects data used to assess the train ride's quality without the use of a dedicated test car or permanently attached sensor.

The rMetrix-A is unmanned, so it can be installed anywhere on the train to record data. The system runs the information through a standard performance engine, where it de-

termines irregularities and sends the information in real time to dFuzion's centralized database, where customers can view it through an online portal, Borgovini said.

"Basically, it's designed around a subscription-based service in which you get access to the data," he said. "As we modernize the hardware, we can replace it when we need to. I think customers appreciate that they aren't going to have obsolete technology in a couple of years."

dFuzion President Treasa Parakkat anticipates the subscription model will increase in popularity as railroads seek new ways to contain costs.

"Technology is evolving so fast. It's getting smaller, more portable and cheaper," she said. "It's the data ... that will tell you how to keep tracks safe for customers."

DFUZION INC.



rMetrix®



rMetrix®-A

dFuzion's rMetrix® system, which comes in two versions, can assess train-ride quality.