
Messages from Former and Current Chairmen and Presidents of RTRI

On June 12, The former and current presidents and chairmen of RTRI delivered following messages to all the employees.

(1) Message from the former chairman Eisuke Masada

Since 2007, I have served as chairman of RTRI for 13 years, fulfilling the task of obtaining authorization of RTRI as a public interest corporation by government and hosting WCRR2019. Today I pass my responsibility as chairman to Prof. Masao Mukaidono. During these 13 years, although the world experienced the Lehman Shock, the transport revenue of JR companies steadily increased and we have been able to add some more large-scale equipment to our testing facilities. We have promoted cooperation with overseas research organizations and have been sending a larger number of researchers to these organizations. In addition, the activities and presence of RTRI's Railway International Standards Center have been firmly established and the center has been recognized as an international standardizing organization

RTRI set and implemented two master plans, RESEARCH 2010 and RESEARCH 2020. Over these years, RTRI contributed to the development of railway technologies even after the first wave of railways speed increase ended. We have established simulation technologies for railways and developed operation and power supply control and maintenance technologies based upon the rapidly advancing information network technology. In the meantime, RTRI has established its reputation as an impartial railway research body through the efforts to restore the damaged areas after the Great East Japan Earthquake in 2011 and a lot of heavy rain disasters and to develop new disaster prevention technologies. I believe this has been achieved by continuous efforts of the management people and all the staff of RTRI and deeply appreciate them.

I have to leave office amid this uncertain, unforeseeable situation due to the Covid-19 pandemic. At this moment, we cannot clearly imagine what shape the world take after Covid-19. But I believe, with RTRI's efficient and flexible response and expertise, we will be able to overcome the radical social change. I hope further development of RTRI and even more energetic research efforts of all the staff members at RTRI.

(2) Message from the new chairman Masao Mukaidono

Since I have served as councilor of RTRI for many years, I know very well what RTRI's researchers are doing and I hope to contribute to RTRI's further development. I am deeply interested in safety and security and have been proposing to build "safety science" that analyzes safety through the integrated research into the aspects of technologies, organization and human resources. Now I am so pleased to get involved in the railway safety and safety culture.

RTRI has been building trust in the society through establishing advanced technologies as one and only specialized railway technical research organization. We have the responsibility to continue, maintain and develop what has been built so far. In the prospectus of RTRI, it reads “RTRI develops advanced, broad range technologies covering basic ones to practical applications, accurately responds to the need of the society and contributes to the development of science and culture of Japan.” We have to continue this contribution to the society with united efforts and with pride. The Covid-19 pandemic has drastically changed the world and pushed us towards a new era. No organizations will be able to survive without changing their ways of working. RTRI also has to open a new trail. However, a crisis can be transformed into an opportunity and this is the time to share our wisdom. We need to go forward into a new society.

Although the society is always changing, I believe we should not change our basic principles. Keeping the respect for the basic principles and ideals, we should read the changing times and the future and respond to them flexibly. Business entities should respect three categories of safety. First one is the safety of customers, that is, product safety in the field of manufacturing and in the world of rail operation, railways’ safety itself. The second is the safety of employees that means labor safety ensuring safe, healthy and happy lives for employees. The third is the safety of the corporate entity which means a sustainability achieved through complying with laws and orders, fulfilling corporate social responsibility and gaining trust of the society. My responsibility at RTRI is to overview RTRI’s activities from a different, broader and longer perspective and to create, with all the board members and staff members, a comfortable workplace where all the employees can work happily and with high motivation.



Former chairman Masada



New Chairman Mukaidono

(3) Message from the former president Norimichi Kumagai

Since I became president of RTRI in 2013, the third year as a public interest corporation, I was keenly aware of the necessity to drive the growth of RTRI as a public interest corporation. This objective took shape as the master plan RESEARCH 2020 and RESEARCH 2025 outlining the direction that RTRI should take in the next 30 years. In addition, a new research division and a laboratory were added during these years. I am pleased that these division and laboratory have been expanding their activities and producing a lot of research outcomes. It was particularly memorable that “Vision” of RTRI was set and our “Mission” and “Strategy” were clearly defined.

Throughout these years, I have been addressing “reconfirming RTRI’s unwavering role,” “emphasizing safety technology, speed-increasing technology and basic research including simulation technology development,” and “fully utilizing RTRI’s broad range, crosscutting research capabilities based on the expertise achieved over the long history as a research institute.” I have also stressed, as the base of all the activities, “maintaining the trust of the national government and railway operators and providing high-quality research outcomes quickly and flexibly.” Setting a research map and readdressing basic research were also important tasks. Now I am confident that the research and development at RTRI has reached a highly advanced level with the dedication and motivation of all the employees.

The new president Watanabe has a multilateral perspective, excellent communication skills and tireless energy and is absolutely the right person for this position to drive the sustainable development of RTRI. I am very much looking forward to his leadership in the years ahead.

Researchers need to seek original inspiration and enhance their research potentials at the same time. In order to solve issues, they have to work together as a team as well as pursuing each one’s originality, and this is the crosscutting, collective power of RTRI. Now, we are in the midst of

unstable, uncertain reality beyond our expectation, but it is a favorable aspect of this circumstance to be able to arm ourselves with digitalization technologies that will create new railway systems. I hope that the researchers at RTRI will always keep in mind that we need to gain trust of rail operators and the society, face the threatening situation with the wisdom and potentials as a team and overcome challenges. I am looking forward to your renewed inspiration and best efforts under the leadership of the new chairman and president.

(4) Message from the new President Watanabe

I would like to express sincere thanks to the former chairman Prof. Masada who has been providing us valuable advice on the management and R&D over years and the former president Dr. Kumagai who has been managing RTRI under the powerful leadership. Thanks to the dedication of Prof. Masada and Dr. Kumagai, RTRI has been implementing the research and development as an institute trusted by the government and railway operators and enhancing its presence.

Currently, Japanese and global rail industries are facing an unprecedented predicament due to Covid-19 pandemic. However, this year, 2020 is the starting year of the master plan RESEARCH 2025 and we will continue our activities without any changes according to the principles described in the plan, “Enhancing safety with an emphasis on improving resilience to natural disasters,” “Developing innovative railway systems based on digital technologies,” “Creating high-quality research outcomes by pursuing excellence across all fields of activities,” “Enhancing international presence of the Japanese railway technologies,” “Creating a work environment to help the employees develop their full potential and undertake challenging tasks”. We will steadily continue the research and development aimed at improving safety, cost reduction, environmental protection and improving convenience in order to enhance the value of railways and to provide customers safe and comfortable rail transport services again.

I would like to fulfill the responsibility of managing RTRI, keeping in mind the following three policies.

Firstly, we should keep an adventurous spirit to take on challenges. While digitalization technologies have been showing a spectacular progress, the circumstances around railways are dramatically changing in terms of passengers’ behaviors and supply chains business practices. Therefore, we may have to advance into new research fields and we may not be able to produce useful outcomes just by following our conventional ways of thinking and doing research. I hope that RTRI’s researchers will be always ready to change things to be changed and address new research fields and challenging tasks.

Secondly, we need to raise the basic research ability of each researcher including the insight to understand the essence of problems or various phenomena, problem solving ability based on scientific and engineering approaches. For this purpose, we will put emphasis on basic

research that is important to train researchers' fundamental research capability. Since RTRI needs to conduct investigations into disasters and troubles of railway facilities quickly and to propose effective measures, human development and construction of testing facilities for these activities will be continued.

The third task is to implement RESEARCH 2025. I will be doing this task, adding necessary changes to the plan according to the circumstances.

I am always trying to "think positively and enjoy working". As research and development is to create new values that nobody has come up with before, it's fun. Now is the time for us to enjoy our everyday work and keep going forward together.



Former president Kumagai



New President Watanabe