



R & N Magazine

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BY: WAYNE A. MICHEL, PRESIDENT



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Chris Peters and Josh Rehrig arriving with the first car of plastics at Crossroads Beverage on June 2, 2020.

You can tell a lot about a company by the way it handles a crisis.

Does it panic and overreact? Does it deny reality and bury its head in the sand? Or does it seize the moment and react appropriately and take advantage of opportunities that might arise.

Let me share with you the story of how Reading Northern handled the pandemic crisis of COVID-19 in the Spring of 2020.

From the outset Andy, Tina Muller-Levan, a co-owner and VP Administration, and I were in constant communication and consultation.

I was laser-focused on the virus because as it turns out I am extremely vulnerable to the virus. I am immuno-compromised and over 66, plus have a couple of other conditions that put me at risk. Although I think of myself as healthy, the fact is I needed to be self-quarantined. And so on March 2nd my wife Ronda and I went into isolation from our Pennsylvania home. Since I had worked remotely for years while spending winters in Florida, it was nothing new for me to work from home. But as the situation worsened and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the Federal government starting issuing guidelines and instructions it became clear that life as we knew it for the railroad had to change.

Things started slowly. Before any government action RBMN made clear we would take extra steps to keep our facilities clean and to make hand sanitizer available to all employees. We stopped non-essential travel and we stopped visitors from coming on the property.

On March 17th we sent out our first blast email to all employees letting them know we were actively reviewing all actions at the Federal and State level. We also told people if they were sick they need to stay home.

I followed that with my own personal note. That note set the tone for a series of weekly emails from Andy or Tina that all basically sent three messages.

1. Stay calm all will be ok.
2. The railroad is open for business and doing fine, which means that our employees could count on their jobs, hours, pay and benefits.
3. Management would provide constant updates so no one had to wonder what was going on.

We were confident from the outset because we knew as a freight railroad we would be an essential service. There was NEVER any thought that any part of our operation would be closed. On the other hand HOW we conducted

our business and how we kept our employees safe was open to question. Also open to question was whether our customers would be allowed to operate and what impact the virus would have on their businesses.

Within days the Federal Government acted and the Emergency Paid Sick Leave Act was passed. On March 19th we shared that information with our employees and gave them our best understanding of what the law meant, noting that we would wait for the actual Labor Department guidelines before saying exactly what was covered.

That same day Governor Wolf of Pennsylvania issued his shut-down instructions, which included a list of essential and non-essential services. Although freight railroads were shown as essential, coal companies were determined to be non-essential.

We immediately went to work to inform the anthracite coal shippers of this decision and to work with our legislators to educate the Governor's staff so they understood that anthracite production was essential as it is used in steel making and other critical industries. Thankfully, the Governor shortly thereafter changed the designation of coal mines to essential.

The Governor's order caused a lot of confusion and consternation with all Pennsylvanians so we immediately reassured our employees that we were open for business. But we also set in place rules for social distancing for those field forces who needed to show up for work and we also set up our office employees to work remotely from their homes.

The following week we learned exactly what the Federal sick leave policy meant. Seeing limitations in the program, especially its delayed start date to April 1st, Andy moved to provide additional sick leave benefits to all our employees. Andy did not want people feeling sick to come to work so we announced that employees who were sick should stay home with pay effective March 23rd.

As the month came to an end Andy reached out personally with a message to all employees. He noted everything was going well; most of our customers were up and running and our business was actually up. He also noted that fuel prices were way down making our operations even more efficient. He noted his first concern was the health of the employees and explained that between the new sick leave benefit he offered and the one offered by the Federal Government no employee should come to the office with any symptoms.

Continued on page 4.

COVER PHOTO

Engineer Chuck Trusdell and conductor John Hartman operate a work train through Muller Interlocking at Mainline MP 75.80 on July 2, 2020. Photo credit Taylor Haupt.

EDITORS

JOLENE BUSHER • TAYLOR HAUPT • SABINE FIDLER

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As he wrote, "STAY HOME. We will pay you during your illness." He also noted office staff was working remotely and field people were practicing social distancing. He noted that meant some practical changes like people driving their own cars to report to locations instead of sharing vehicles. It also meant we had to cancel the Easter Bunny specials. "The point is we are going to be smart and safe." Andy concluded.

A week later Tina announced that Andy and Carol had decided to give every employee below the VP level a \$500 cash gift. Even though our employees were all still working with no reductions in pay, hours or benefits, and even though they were receiving Federal stimulus checks, Andy and Carol did not want any of them worrying about the future. The Mullers understood that with all the news reports and all the hoarding of supplies people were getting very nervous. They wanted to do their part to reassure the 200+ men and women of the Reading & Northern.

Tina began issuing weekly updates on April 14th, which she continued into mid-June.

On April 19th we began supplying masks to all of our employees who were out interacting with customers and each other in the field.

By mid-May Tina noted that there was light at the end of the tunnel and she was looking forward to the day we could all return to our offices. On June 1st she announced that the offices would be open on June 8th. And when the offices opened we had taken steps to ensure barriers between cubicles and constant cleaning of the public spaces.

And so as I write this column, things at the Reading & Northern are back to the new normal. The new normal means we practice social distancing, wearing masks when appropriate, washing hands and staying home when

sick. It also means people like me with serious pre-existing conditions remain at home. Thankfully, we moved to video conferencing and video chats early in the pandemic so it feels like I am with management as we "meet" regularly.

Now for the scorecard.

Most importantly, NOT A SINGLE EMPLOYEE tested positive for COVID-19 this Spring. This was impressive because parts of our service area, most notably Hazleton, which was featured in a 60 Minutes story about the virus impact on businesses like Amazon, were hit hard.

Also important, our business remained steady. We ended the first 6 months of the year ahead of last year's record pace. This does not mean it has been easy. A number of our customers are hurting. As is RBMN practice, we work with our customers to assist them so that they can continue to enjoy the benefits of rail. And despite the virus, business development has continued. In this issue we welcome our newest customer to the fold, Crossroads Beverage, which started receiving plastic resins in June. (See article and pictures on page 7.). And we began construction of a siding into the massive new plastic container manufacturing facility for Iris in Hazleton that will be open by early fourth quarter.

And so we made it thru the Spring of 2020 COVID-19 outbreak stronger and better than ever. We all hope there isn't a second wave and that treatments and vaccines will be available later this year. But we know, no matter what, the men and women of RBMN are prepared to take on any challenge; we will seize the moment. To paraphrase a famous saying, neither snow nor rain nor pandemic will keep the Reading & Northern from the swift completion of our appointed rounds. Or as I like to say, no matter the challenge the Reading and Northern will keep on track. ♦

RBMN is Awarded ASLRRRA Shortline Marketing Award for its work in Developing Transload Business

BY: DAREN GESCHWINDT, VP DISTRIBUTION SERVICES



Loading box car at Ransom.

"The Road of Anthracite" **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

American Shortline & Regional Railroad Association Awards 2020 Shortline Marketing Award to Reading & Northern Railroad

Port Clinton, PA – May 5, 2020

The American Shortline and Regional Railroad Association has named the Reading & Northern Railroad as the winner of its 2020 Shortline Marketing Award. This is the fifth time that Reading & Northern has been honored with this award, winning previously in 2010, 2014, 2016, and 2018.

This is the second major award that the railroad has earned in 2020, having also been named Regional Railroad of the Year by Railway Age Magazine in March, for its work to build a \$14 million bridge near Nesquehoning, PA.

The railroad was awarded the 2020 Shortline Marketing Award in recognition for two projects that occurred in 2019, which are related to its transloading and warehouse operations.

"These projects reflect the entrepreneurial spirit of our Owner/CEO Andy Muller, Jr. Andy encourages our team to take risks and to seize opportunities. That is why RBMN is consistently honored for marketing initiatives. Whether it is buying warehouses, building tracks, or buying equipment for facilities on and off the railroad, RBMN is working hard to develop new business

and to keep our customer satisfied. We want to thank the Shortline Association for recognizing the achievements of all our team members because these projects clearly involve every segment of our company," said Wayne Michel, RBMN President on hearing of the award.

In late 2018 RBMN purchased an 83,000 square foot warehouse in Ransom, PA. Within days of the purchase the railroad learned of a new customer who was looking to warehouse a large amount of raw material to supply its mills in the region. The railroad went to work clearing the racking from the building, constructing a 400 foot long interior boxcar dock, a new switch, and 600 feet of track. All of this was accomplished in time for the customer to start shipping material into the warehouse in mid-January. The Ransom warehouse now features a 6-car, 400 foot interior boxcar dock, both inside and outside storage space, and the ability to load/unload flatbed trucks and box trailers.

In late 2019 RBMN went to work to secure new business to an off-rail customer in the Humboldt Industrial Park in Hazleton, PA. In a matter of weeks RBMN built and made operational the new West Hazleton Transload terminal, which specializes in the handling of steel coils by rail. Those coils are

then moved by truck by RBMN's new sister company, Reading Railroad Transfer LLC, which handles the trucking to the plant. The railroad made significant investment in the transload facility by building a 400 ft x 60 ft pad, a new switch and 850 foot-long siding, and purchased the necessary equipment to lift the steel coils. By handling the material in this way, the coils move hundreds of miles by rail, and then transfer to a Reading Railroad Transfer truck to travel the last few blocks to the plant. One truck is able to cycle between the transload terminal and the plant, making multiple deliveries in a single day.

Reading & Northern Railroad, with its corporate headquarters in Port Clinton, is a privately held railroad company serving over 70 customers in nine eastern Pennsylvania counties (Berks, Bradford, Carbon, Columbia, Lackawanna, Luzerne, Northumberland, Schuylkill and Wyoming). It has expanded its operations over the last 30+ years and now handles over 34,000 carloads of freight and 140,000 excursion train riders over 400 miles of track. Reading and Northern operates both freight services and steam and diesel-powered excursion passenger services, owns almost 1,300 freight cars, and employs nearly 300 dedicated employees. Reading & Northern has repeatedly been honored as one of the premier railroads in the nation. ♦

In April we learned that the American Shortline and Regional Railroad Association (ASLRRRA) awarded us its Shortline Marketing Award. This is a tremendous honor, and this is the fifth time that our company has won this award. This prestigious award was a result of our efforts to build business at our transloads throughout 2019. We have found that transload operations are a great way to extend our market reach by enabling non-rail served customers to take advantage of the economics of shipping by rail.

At West Hazleton we developed a new transload facility to handle steel coils. This project started years ago as an effort to find a way to extend rail service to a company located a short distance from our existing rail lines in the Humboldt Industrial Park. We knew they were bringing material in by rail and then trucking it and we thought we could persuade them to allow us to build into their plant to reduce transportation costs. However, as we worked with them it became clear that the customer did not want the rail line on its property.

Rather than accept defeat, Dan and Wayne kept talking to the customer trying to find a way to provide service. A year ago, we finally hit paydirt when the customer indicated they had a supplier that might be interested in bringing in material by rail and then transloading it. We immediately turned our attention to that shipper. We needed to understand what would be required of RBMN. Basically, we were told we needed to be able to unload 6000 lb. steel coils from gondolas and arrange for their delivery to the end user.

RBMN to the rescue! We started from scratch as we did not have a transload facility in Hazleton; we did not have equipment to handle unloading the coils, and we did not have a truck fleet to deliver the coils. At that point I was told to solve the problems. And solve it we did.

We looked at several different types of equipment, including

various crane trucks, and forklifts, and ultimately determined that a CAT material handler machine would be perfect for the job. A material handler is similar to an excavator that you would see at a construction site, but normally operates with a grapple on the end of the boom, instead of a bucket. A key feature that made this the right machine for the job is its ability for the cab to raise up nearly 20 feet in the air, allowing the operator to see directly into the top of the rail car while operating the machine. With this machine, one operator can efficiently unload coils from a railcar, and load them directly onto a waiting tractor trailer for delivery to the customer.

While the material handler is a key component, it was not the only aspect of the operation that we needed to figure out. The shipper uses a C-hook and crane to load the coils into the cars, and we needed to have a similar apparatus in order to unload the coils. This was needed to pick up the coils without damaging them. Our car shop reviewed the info provided by the shipper and went to work fabricating a C-hook that would attach to the boom of the material handler. With this attachment on the machine, we now had the ability to reach into the car, hook the coils, and transfer them to the waiting truck, with the operator having complete visibility and control of the entire operation.

While we were getting all of the equipment in place, our Maintenance of Way department was simultaneously working to prepare a site to unload the cars. Wayne suggested a site near our West Hazleton crew office. Upon investigation we determined the plot of land was adequate and the location, a few blocks from the customer, was ideal. A crew went to work clearing the land and putting down stone to create a 400 x 60 ft unloading pad. The pad was constructed adjacent to an existing siding that would be used to unload the first cars.

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Ransom warehouse filled.

Continued from page 5.

As part of this project, we also chose to bring the trucking component in-house. We purchased three tractor trailer cab units, three flatbed trailers, and three dry van trailers. With the ability to handle the trucking component, this enabled us to offer a complete logistics solution to the customer. The addition of the trucking component enables us to provide this service at all 4 of our transload locations.

With all of the components in place, the shipper was ready to ship cars. In November we unloaded two test cars and transferred the material to the customer. The test went flawlessly and the customer was thrilled with the results. Following the successful test, the shipper immediately made the decision to turn on the traffic, and sent 33 cars to the new transload in the month of December. With traffic moving, the decision was made to add a new track that would be dedicated for transload cars. A new switch, and 850 of track were built, which can fit 5 cars for unloading, with room for additional cars on the lead.

As a result of our persistence and hard work, we were able to turn what initially looked like a defeat, into a new customer.

In addition to West Hazleton, we also opened our 83,000 sq. ft Ransom warehouse 2019. This facility was purchased in October of 2018, and opened for business in January of 2019. This was a significant purchase for us since this is our first owned and operated "brick & mortar" warehouse building. Previous transload operations have utilized either outside rail yard transloading, or leased warehouse space. When the Ransom warehouse was originally constructed in 1966, the building had a rail siding and a 400-foot long interior rail dock. However, over the years, the building changed ownership and the rail dock was filled in to create additional warehouse space. Our plan when we purchased the building was to have it open for business in June of 2019 as we already had warehouse space and we would use the lead time to advertise for new business.

However, within days of closing on the facility we received a call from a large wood pulp receiver asking if we could store up to 150 carloads of wood pulp somewhere on our railroad. This material would come in by rail from several wood pulp manufacturers and be stored for several months before shipping out by rail to the final destinations. The business was worth 300 revenue carloads for the RBMN. We immediately said yes.

In the lead-up to the January 11th opening there was much work to be completed. Outside the building our forces started by clearing brush and grading the terrain leading to the building. Once the right-of-way was cleared we quickly went to work building track. The project included the installation of a Main track switch, construction

of 260 feet of new track, and the rehabilitation of an additional 330 feet of track, all of which was completed in under 2 weeks.

Inside the building, our team simultaneously went to work clearing the 83,000 square feet of racking, conveyor lines, and other material that had been left behind by the previous owner. We started by clearing the area where the new rail-dock would be located. A crew went to work cutting a hole in the wall, and installing the rail dock door, which accommodates up to Plate F cars. As soon as the racking was cleared from the dock area, we went to work excavating the concrete and fill. During a 10-day period the entire dock was excavated exposing the original track below. Once the dock area was cleared, Maintenance of way forces inspected the track and made the necessary repairs to the track inside the building, placing the track in service in early January.

In just over 2 months we successfully cleared the space and built the necessary infrastructure to enable us to start receiving loaded railcars. On January 11th the first cars of wood pulp were unloaded at the facility. This was a mere 72 days from the date of purchase to the first day of operation at the facility. By moving quickly to put the facility in service we were able to secure the business.

As summer approached we learned that one of our long-time customers was in the need of additional storage space. This would again be an initial shipment of 160 carloads into the warehouse, storage for several months, and then outbound shipment to their plants. With the warehouse up and running, we were able to quickly provide a solution that worked for the customer, resulting in both inbound and outbound carloads for RBMN. By the end of Q3, we had filled our new warehouse to capacity, on two separate occasions, and maintained lower levels of inventory, on a rotating basis, throughout the year. As I write this article, the warehouse is again being filled to capacity as a result of several suppliers looking to warehouse woodpulp in the region, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Throughout the year we also worked to bring lumber into our transload portfolio. As 2019 came to a close we were able to finalize a deal to transload centerbeam cars at our Cressona Transload. This deal brought lumber from Canada to Cressona, PA on rail. Upon arrival at Cressona, the lumber is then transloaded to truck for delivery to a non-rail served customer 4 miles down the road.

We have found that transload operations have enabled us to extend our market reach and also add value for the customer by providing storage and trucking services. Through the transloads, we have been able to grow our rail business by extending service to non-rail served customers, but have also grown the business by providing warehousing solutions, which allowed traffic to move in by rail, be stored for a period of time, and then move back out by rail.

It is always nice to be recognized for our hard work, and we are extremely appreciative to receive this high honor from the ASLRRA. ♦



Loading steel coils onto a Reading Railroad Transfer truck at the West Hazleton Transload.

Crossroads Beverage is Our Newest Customer on the Reading and Northern

BY: DANIEL R. GILCHRIST,
EXECUTIVE VP MARKETING & SALES



First Rail Delivery to Crossroads Beverage. Top left to right: Josh Rehrig, Chris Peters, Tom Cook (RBMN). Bottom left to right: Susan Ludwig (RBMN), Kyle Snyder, Brian Williams, Kiel Richmond (Crossroads Beverage).

It is always exciting to bring on a new customer to the Reading and Northern Railroad and we are very happy to have once again brought online a brand-new customer to the RBMN.

Crossroads Beverage in Tuckerton has a new rail siding and received their first cars in early June.

Crossroads Beverage bottles water in many different size bottles or containers and distributes to major retailers throughout the region. They bring inbound plastics to make their own bottles on site.

We first talked with Crossroads in February of 2019 and discussed their business of bottling water at their site as well as manufacturing the plastic water bottles. We did a quick review and confirmed we could put a rail siding in place for them to unload at least a few cars at a time.

Of course, we also reviewed the RBMN experience with plastics as we already serve 14 other plastics receivers as well as our scheduled delivery times and available car storage. We proposed an aggressive offer to construct the rail siding with RBMN forces and Crossroads went to work on their end to evaluate rail rates and unloading systems for rail.

The folks at Crossroads figured out the details on their end and came back to us in October 2019 and confirmed they were ready to proceed. We were able to work out details quickly enough to allow for RBMN to begin preliminary work on the railroad right of way before the winter freeze even though the siding construction would be a Spring 2020 project.

However in designing the unloading manifold it became clear there was a complication as the property line was too close to allow room for both the rail siding and the unloading equipment. Fortunately, RBMN property abuts the Crossroads property and we were able to arrange for the use of RBMN property for the rail siding in just the right position to work with the design of the unloading manifold.

By November final property arrangements were complete and construction was ready to begin with the clearing and grubbing of the right of way. The site was then ready for rail by March and the siding could at last be installed. By the end of March the track was in but the state went into lock down over the Corona Virus and most construction work stopped, including ballast production. But even without final ballast in place on the siding we declared we were ready to receive cars as soon as the unloading manifold was in place!

The Virus shut down impacted final construction of the rail unloading system but that was finished up in May while we worked out the final details on car ordering and switching procedures with the local Crossroads personnel.

Finally, all was ready and the first car arrived for placement on June 2, 2020. We are very pleased to have Crossroads Beverage online and look forward to many years of helping them grow and prosper as an RBMN customer. ♦



Construction starts on the new siding for Crossroads Beverage.



Rail unloading system with new rail siding is almost done and ready for first cars.



First car of plastics being delivered to Crossroads Beverage.

Reading & Northern to the Rescue... with Boxcars!



BY: RIAN J. NEMEROFF, VP FOREST PRODUCTS

Recently a major RBMN shipper found itself without boxcars. A vessel was arriving and a customer was waiting for the material but due to changes in the logistics plan the shipper did not have sufficient boxcars to handle the business. Who did they call? Not Ghostbusters for sure. Since the material was destined to our new warehouse in Ransom they called RBMN and as always RBMN delivered.

Some history: RBMN has had a boxcar fleet for a number of years. Back in 2013 GATX had a number of box cars in storage on RBMN. Our entrepreneurial owner, Andy Muller, Jr., always looks to add to his growing fleet of rail cars and he thought the boxcars could come in useful in the future. So he purchased 25 cars.

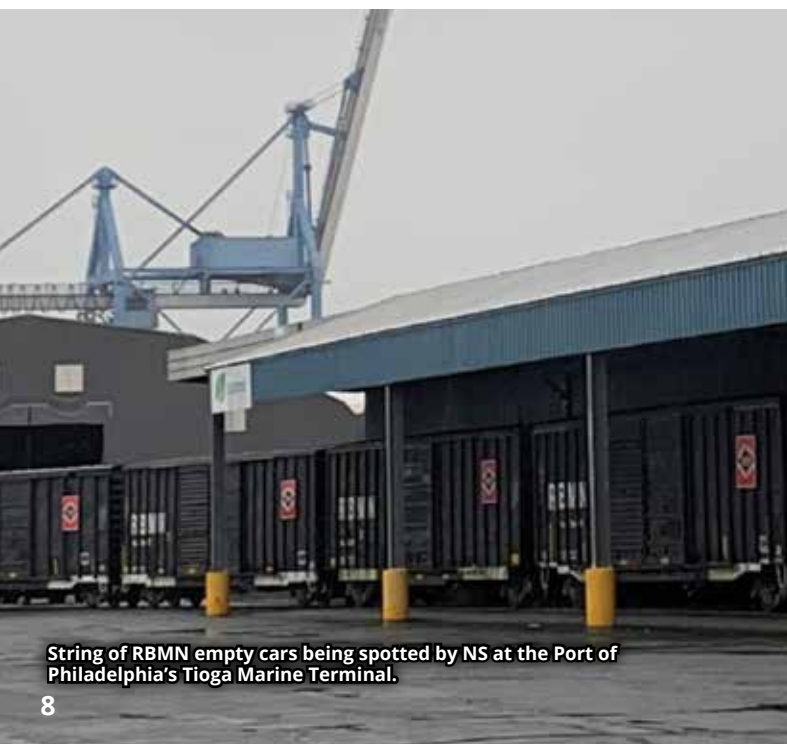
From his childhood model train layout, Andy had a favorite color scheme used by the Lehigh and New England Railroad (L&NE), a fallen flag RBMN predecessor railroad. The color scheme that you can see on the adjacent pictures are black with red and white trim. The L&NE had its fortunes tied to the anthracite coal business, a business which declined dramatically in the fifties and sixties. RBMN is proud to have helped in the renaissance of Pennsylvania anthracite use domestically and internationally.

Since we acquired the boxcars they have been used for on-line transportation of wood pulp from one of our owned or leased warehouses to Procter & Gamble or other occasional destinations. Last year we had an opportunity to use the cars off-line for shipments from our warehouse to Chester, PA.

This year the cars were needed to serve a shipper on Conrail Shared Assets in the Port of Philadelphia at Tioga. One consequence of sending cars into urban areas is they ended up with graffiti. Since RBMN has a zero tolerance attitude towards graffiti on our equipment, the cars were shopped and re-painted by RBMN once they were returned and unloaded.

The RBMN is always ready to help our customers, including with the supply of rail cars. If you think you have a nontraditional opportunity using boxcars please let us know. At the RBMN we love to talk about your business and your ideas. ♦

RBMN Boxcars at the leased Old Forge warehouse facility.



String of RBMN empty cars being spotted by NS at the Port of Philadelphia's Tioga Marine Terminal.



RBMN Boxcars with the distinctive red and white trim at the owned Ransom warehouse.

Human Resources

BY: CHRISTINA MULLER-LEVAN, VP ADMINISTRATION

Back in February we started to hear about this new virus termed Covid-19. We began to hear about the spread of this disease and all the trouble it was causing. Many of us were very concerned about how this virus was spreading so quickly.

In March we began to see different areas around the country begin to close their doors in order to prevent the spread of this "bug." We, at the RBMN, started having conversations focused on our position as an essential business and how we could assist in reducing the spread of this disease, while maintaining our many company functions.

Around the fourth week in March, having the support of our IT department, many of our office staff started working from home. IT worked very hard to make this transition for our office workers as smooth as possible. They worked very closely with individuals to ensure they had access to company files and documents in order to perform their jobs.

As we watched the world shut down around us, we knew our employees would need to be kept informed about what was going on within our company. Some were very concerned about losing their jobs and their income being affected. In response to that concern, we did the following things...

One, we announced that the RBMN would pay full time employees up to two weeks of missed time due to any contagious illness with

the benefit beginning on March 23. Prior to that, on March 19, it was announced that the Federal government implemented the Families First Coronavirus Response Act, a emergency paid sick leave benefit to support those that were losing time at work due to Covid-19. We decided to add an additional benefit on top of that. The RBMN would pay any fulltime employee to stay home with ANY contagious disease. We felt that would ease the minds of our employees, knowing that if they get sick, their income would not change. They would still be able to pay their bills.

Two, we began weekly emails on April 14 to keep our employees informed about the health of the company and the state of our business. We were very lucky that we always had good news. As of the writing of this article, we have had zero confirmed Covid-19 cases among the RBMN employees. We did an excellent job of staying healthy!

Three, Andy and Carol Muller also decided to give out a cash gift of \$500 per full time employee to aid those who may have been struggling due to the new state of things. On April 15, all individuals were able to pick up their gift at one of two offices... Port Clinton or Pittston.

As a company, we did everything we could to keep our employees healthy and informed that the company was doing well; and that we were going to get through this together. ♦

Operations

BY: TYLER GLASS, EXECUTIVE VP OPERATIONS

Just when you think you have seen it all, something comes along and tests the railroad's resolve.

Operations had started out the year by getting all of our employees through rules classes and getting the next round of engineer trainees through most of their classroom training. On top of that we had started our new operating plan once the Nesquehoning Phase II was completed. All was running smooth.

COVID-19 was a challenge very different from any issue we had ever dealt with. On the Operations side we quickly adopted rules to minimize the number of employees in locomotive cabs, vehicles and offices. Facilities did a fantastic job with additional cleaning and supplying people with additional products to keep work spaces clean.

It did take some adjustment but once everyone was accustomed to the new way of operating it was business as usual. The operations folks continued to keep the railroad operating at a high level.

During this time our railroad was reassuring everyone that their jobs were safe, which was helping put people's minds at ease as we navigated through the troubling times.

In addition, our company was still expanding. Norfolk Southern had some locomotive auctions and we were able to add to our stable of locomotives while many companies were looking to minimize spending. This was also a great sign to our employees that to a certain extent it was business as usual.

While we are enjoying a more relaxed atmosphere in the summer months we know that just around the corner maybe another wave of the virus to deal with. We now know what we are dealing with and we will be better suited mentally to get through another challenge if needed.

I want to thank everyone in the organization that did their part to keep the wheels turning during this pandemic. It is never easy, but we have a special group of people that are working towards the same goal. ♦

Safety

BY: TOM COOK, VP SAFETY & TRANSPORTATION

A positive attitude and morale are the foundation of any safety culture. Our employees demonstrated both attributes during the lockdown when it would have been easy to adapt a negative attitude. I firmly believe that this positive attitude and sense of duty kept us safe during the lockdown phase

The railroad cannot operate without our essential Operations, Maintenance of Way, Communications and Signals, Shop, Facilities, Police and Transload employees reporting to work and doing their jobs in the field and in the shops. If they cannot do their jobs, freight cars do not move, supply chains break down, and eventually our customers would shut down. Railroad employees are not commonly mentioned in news reports about essential workers, but they are critical to our economy. Our essential employees understand how important their jobs are, and they demonstrated it by working safely in the field and in the shops through the lockdown. They were able to keep our reportable injuries flat versus last year during the lockdown phase despite the elevated levels of concern and all the distraction that the pandemic created.

It was not easy coming to work when many of our neighbors were told to stay home to protect their safety. Government regulations and company policy would have provided an easy excuse for many of our employees not to come to work. Everyone

had some level of concern and possibly some fear. Nonetheless, our essential workers found a way to overcome fear, concern, and other issues to report for work and keep our company and our customers running. That performance demonstrates the dedication and commitment that these men and women have towards each other, our company, and our customers to keep things moving.

Our employees came to work because many are passionate about railroading, and they work for a company that shares that passion. Our team is very close, and nobody wants to let the team down. Reading and Northern is a great place to work because the company appreciates and rewards our employees. The Muller family gave all employees a very nice bonus during the lockdown to show that appreciation. The leaders in Operations, MOW, C&S, Facilities, Locomotive and Car Departments demonstrated leadership in the field and the shop floor, and that face to face leadership during a time of concern was critical to morale. Good morale and positive attitude ultimately result in a safe workplace.

The attitude and performance of the employees that reported to work during the pandemic was one of the most inspiring things that I have witnessed during my career. They deserve our appreciation, and I will always be proud to have been part of this team during this time in history. ♦

Mechanical Department

BY: DUSTIN BERNDT, VP MOTIVE POWER

During this time of the pandemic beginning in early March, the Engine House remained busy while reminding everyone to keep their space from one another and maintain a safe distance. While heavy locomotive work requires a fair amount of teamwork, we were able to accomplish this and keep ourselves safe throughout these last few months. With routine inspections and working towards finishing some long projects that extended from the winter-time, we still

remained busy. Some of these projects of mention are finishing up the 5018 from some extensive work, and this was the last SD50-2 to complete from our purchase in 2018. We now have four of these locomotives that have been completed with our upgrades and entered active service. We also took on the job last November to begin to fix locomotive 2534. This locomotive had some generator woes that needed repair and I was eyeing up repairing some cab vibrations and wiring for some time now. While correcting these items, we also replaced the turbocharger, the auxiliary generator and cleaned up some oil leaks that existed for some time. We finished all these tasks, improved the mentioned items and returned this locomotive to service in early June.

Also, worthy of mention in the beginning of March would be our purchase of four of our GP38-2 locomotives which would be the 2013, 2014, 2015 and the 2016 from Norfolk Southern. Upon receiving, we quickly noticed the quality locomotive the 2013 was, so it was an easy choice to immediately begin to do some needed work to get it ready to run and be productive in service. That being said, we finished the punch list items to this locomotive, then it got a wonderful paint job completed to put it in the Reading and Northern colors. While we are now in late June we are in the process of working on the next GP38-2 which is the 2015 and doing some routine engine work and long awaited repairs to locomotive 2003.

Last but not least, is the continuing efforts of

our talented steam employees to bring the 2102 back to active service to join the 425. This group of mechanics and machinists have conquered multiple challenges along the way to repair and rebuild many components for the 2102 that were no longer useable or repairable. One big step forward for the project was a recent successful hydro test to the boiler which will enable them to begin the assembly of other components over the boiler. So, as the pieces continue to come together for the 2102, be ready to watch for completion of the engine in 2020!

In conclusion, it was impressive to complete all this locomotive work along with regular maintenance to over 50 locomotives on the roster while continuing to maintain the safety and well-being of the engine house employees during these challenging times. ♦



Locomotive 2015 nearing completion as repairs are made to the truck assemblies. RBMN received this locomotive after purchase in early March of 2020.



Locomotive 2013 on display after receiving it's new paint in Reading & Northern colors.



As most of the state and even country started shutting down due to COVID-19, RBMN C&S forces continued to charge on. After getting through the winter months of wiring and prepping, we were ready to extend the ever growing signal system. The next phase connected the already installed Mohrsville interlocking to a new interlocking appropriately called Muller. This new section allows for an additional 8 miles of signaled territory providing broken rail and switch monitoring. Muller was installed just north of Industrial Drive in Hamburg. MOW forces are working hard to re-install the second track, or #1 main, north between Muller and Kerns which adds nearly two miles of double track territory giving the opportunity to pass and meet trains between Hamburg and Port Clinton. Placing the interlocking adjacent to the Industrial Drive crossing required more in-depth engineering and special logic programming to properly activate the highway grade crossing.

Design work started spring of 2019 which quickly turned into the building of cases and necessary wiring for the additional signal system. A bracket mast signal originally located in Good Spring, PA was taken down and completely rebuilt to stand guard at its new location. A hole was dug and a new concrete foundation was poured to hold this massive signal tower. Upgrades and rewiring was also taking place within the existing crossing bungalow to allow for the new switch, signals, and interlocking. At the same time, communication work was also being



AVP Communications and Signals Matt Collins working on communications equipment for Muller Interlocking.



Signal Maintainers Ryan Rhody and Donald Matter installing the new powered switch machine at Muller Interlocking.

done to help connect locations with fiber internet.

After nearly a year of planning, programming, and building, the new signal system between Mohrsville and Muller came to life on April 28th, 2020.

Another effort to increase safety along the railroad included the development and deployment of a new dragging equipment detector. A dragging equipment detector is a device mounted between the rail with paddles that would get hit if something was either dragging or hanging down. After some time for research and development, we were able to fabricate an in-house dragging equipment detector talker. This is the device that takes the train data and announces a required message to the train crew if their train is experiencing anything dragging or if it is safe to continue on. Once we got a prototype complete, it was installed at a new location along with the dragging equipment detector hardware. This new location is currently under review and inspection. These devices, along with the signal system, provide additional safety measures to our trains traversing the system. We are currently in the process to add more of these inspection devices throughout our system.

At the end of May, we also worked closely with MOW forces to completely replace the antiquated equipment at Stephenson Street Crossing in Duryea, PA. This crossing was upgraded with state of the art electronics and monitoring equipment along with new gates and flashers along with a brand new surface. In conjunction with Stephenson Street, we also upgraded Marcy Street Crossing just over one thousand feet away which included new electronics and monitoring capabilities. Utilizing fiber communications, both of these crossings will communicate back to our headquarters reporting any problems or errors.

It is clear that the C&S Department was fully functional during the COVID-19 pandemic. We continued to push forward with projects and installations making the railroad safer to both the employees and the general public. Stay tuned for more updates, advancements, and clear signals. ♦



Completed view of Muller Interlocking.

Scranton Line

Twenty-Four Years in the Making

BY: CHRIS GOETZ, VP MAINTENANCE OF WAY



The origins of Hill Street Crossing, Delaware Lackawana & Western Rails.

Twenty-four years ago, the Scranton Branch that runs from our Pittston Yard (milepost 0.0) to Minooka Junction (milepost 5.84) barely had a pulse. When first purchased from Conrail in 1996, this line had a track speed of 10 miles per hour. While only three customers are directly served off this line, it is an important link to the Scranton Running Track (MP 6.5 to 10.7) where several other important customers are located.

Since acquiring the branch, the MOW Department has completed several rehabilitation projects which included crossing replacements, thousands of ties, and tons of ballast. These projects were primarily funded by RBMN with little to no state assistance. Approximately 4,000 ties were replaced during the fall of 2006 and the Scranton RAR Track (located on the Scranton Running Track) had a 1200' extension built during the summer of 2012. On June 10th, 2020, we finally reached the goal of rehabilitating this branch to operate like a main line track.

Trains now run over the Scranton Branch 6-7 days a week. RBMN RR worked with PennDOT District 4 and local municipalities on major restorations to four out of the six crossings, that have enhanced safety for both train and public traffic. In the past year, Hill Street, Moosic Road, Stephenson Street and Marcy Street crossings were replaced and resurfaced. All crossings received new rail, ties, timbers, and track materials. The old and defective surface panels were replaced with rubber flangeways and asphalt that will hold up better against harsh PA winter weather conditions. These crossings all received significant surface raises that eliminated poor conditions and help to avoid pooling water, ice, and subsequent deterioration.

With these investments, we were able to increase train speed to 30 mph. This is an accomplishment that benefits the railroad, customers, and the public. The increase in speed will cut train travel time significantly, improve cycle time for railroad cars, and reduce wait times for motorists at intersections.

It is no surprise that the rehabilitation of the line has been driven by the increase in customers and rail traffic on the line. In 1996, RBMN purchased the branch with only 3 customers served over the line. Present day, there are eight customer sidings accessed over the Scranton Branch including some of our larger volume customers. Reading Blue Mountain & Northern Railroad is customer driven, and we will continue to maintain and improve our railroad to better serve our customers. Throughout the years, we have set a strong foundation to retain our customers while also working hard to attract new customers.

While the Reading and Northern Scranton Branch's rehabilitation was a large investment of time, effort and money, we accomplished our goal of raising this track to main line standards and speeds. Its effects on the entire railroad have been significant for our customers and the public, as well as our railroad operations. ♦



Before pic Stephenson St. Scranton Branch MP 2.67



Complete crossing removal at Moosic Rd. Scranton Branch MP 3.39 D Zimmerman in PT-1, A. Scubelek in backhoe.



Dip removed at Hill Street after final pass with surfacing equipment.



Flangeways installed just before paving at Marcy St.



Hill Street ballast dumping, M. Mizikoski checking surface, M. McGinnis cleaning up.



Installing timbers and setting line side plates at Stephenson St. crossing, N. Alberswerth, J. Alba, M. Mizikoski, R. Lake, M. Aigeldinger, R. Rupprecht, M. McGinnis, J. Rodney, R. Monroe.



Paving completed at Hill Street.



Paving completed at Marcy Street.



Matt Mizikoski operating a Mark IV tamper to lift and squeeze ballast under timbers throughout Moosic Road.



Moosic Road completely surfaced, Alex Sr. with his backhoe to level the stone to install rubber flangeways.



Paving completed at Stephenson Street.



Operator Alex Scubelek Jr. removing asphalt in preparation for a complete crossing rehab.



MOW before COVID-19, B. Krumanocker, C. Carl, E. Bleiler.



New timbers, rail and 18" plates installed at Hill St., Scranton Branch MP 1.94



Over time dips form at crossings and need to be lifted, such as this one at Hill Street.



Surfacing gang completed alignment and elevation for Marcy St., Scranton Branch MP 1.48.

Not Missing a Beat for R&N

RR Police & Real Estate Department

BY: MATTHEW JOHNSON, VP ASSET MANAGEMENT

At the beginning of March, the words Covid-19 and Corona virus were beginning to take shape in just about every facet of life. It was not going to just go away as most of us were hoping. As it transitioned into becoming a pandemic the entire world started seeing big changes. We realized we needed to address these challenges and issues in the R&N Police and Real Estate departments.

First and foremost, the railroad is an essential business therefore we knew we were going to be needed and we were not going to be forced to close our doors. Here at the Police Department we looked at what was going on daily as things were rapidly changing at the onset of the virus spreading,

We saw other police departments advising that they were going to be responding to less incidents and try to handle things over the phone or overlook petty incidents. We, on the other hand, knew this was not going to be a slow down for us and we were discussing how we were going to respond to a most likely increase in trespassing. We anticipated this would happen because schools were shut down, sports and other activities were shut down, and non-essential businesses were shut down, which meant more people out and about. So, to prepare we made sure we would try to stick to operating our patrol vehicles individually and did not double up in or switch vehicles. We implemented working on citations, reports, and criminal charges in our patrol cars to limit time spent together in the office. We made sure all of us were equipped with laptops so we could do the job remotely when feasible. We also would try to handle as much through the mail or over the phone as possible.

Unfortunately, in police work it is very difficult to do your job completely remotely and not have interactions with various people whether that be the encounter out in the field, working with other departments at the railroad and other police agencies, dropping off paperwork to a magistrate, or attending court. To protect ourselves as much as possible, we equipped ourselves with masks, gloves, sanitizer, Lysol spray, and Clorox wipes to help keep ourselves, our cars, our phones, and our office areas clean.

When outdoor activities resumed in early April and as the weather was warming trespassing really increased for us more than a normal springtime. When the state abruptly opened fishing season we immediately had an increase in trespassing that exceeded the normal amount of fisherman we see each year, and this led to an increase in trespassing along railroad property. We received many calls reporting incidents and trespassing from the public and from co-workers. We also noticed an increase in the amount of people out and about hiking likely due to having much more free time. Most of these interactions were peaceful with us educating people on the dangers of trespassing on

railroad tracks.

In the Real Estate office, the lock down of non-essential businesses did not lead to a slowdown of day to day activity either. Typically when public utility companies, such as cable, phone, and electric companies, need to perform maintenance of their facilities in railroad right of way, office staff of these companies coordinate their projects with the Real Estate office so their crews can work safely and follow appropriate Real Estate access procedures. Unfortunately, likely due to a breakdown in communication between utility companies' office staff working from home while crews stayed in the field, the Real Estate office experienced an uptick in utility crews trespassing on railroad property. Working together with the Police and our Real Estate inspectors, such trespassing was shut down quickly, and we were also able to educate utility crews on proper railroad access procedures to prevent future occurrences.

We also had an increase in graffiti incidents and in trespassing by off-road ATV like vehicles. ATV parks surround the railroad at numerous locations therefore many of these riders trespass onto other people's properties, including the Railroad's, riding from parcel to parcel. Many neighboring property owners reached out to us to let us know about off-road vehicles issues (mainly ATVs, UTV's, and dirt-bikes). Pennsylvania was one of the first states to allow riding in certain counties and we saw a dramatic increase in trespassing at the end of our M&S Branch line with riders coming in from surrounding states so they could ride their off-road equipment, so we were forced to have countless interactions with many people from many cities and states. Due to the circumstances surrounding Covid-19 we issued many warnings in the beginning phase but then increased to citations and criminal charges as the trespassing continued. Since March we have stopped, cited or charge criminally over 60 off road vehicles. We take trespassing on the railroad very seriously and continued to maintain our zero tolerance for motor vehicles on railroad property. While the Police continued our patrols, the Real Estate office and field staff continued our routine inspections of our properties to stay on top of trespassing as well.

The Police and Real Estate departments are looking forward to a healthy summer and we are happy to start getting back to normal with many of the counties we operate in going to the green phase. We hope the countless people we come across throughout our day walk away with the understanding of our job in what we do to not only keep the railroad and our fellow employees safe but the general public and those who trespass onto the railroad (intentionally or unintentionally) safe. I would like to thank our officers and our Real Estate team for their commitment working tirelessly throughout this pandemic and handling the increase in trespassing. ♦

Working Remotely

The Transition for Customer Service

BY: SUSAN LUDWIG, VP CUSTOMER SERVICE

As many companies have discovered, the idea of entire departments working remotely and not at a physical office every day, was nothing we really thought about several years ago. But when the COVID-19 pandemic started showing up closer to our area, I worked with our IT Department to get as much in place as possible to move to remote working just to be prepared. Using our newly implemented document sharing tool, Sharepoint, we could move all files that required access by multiple employees in my group to this site which would allow my whole team to access files and reports we would use at the office from anywhere we were working. To begin the process of social distancing, we started rotating employees in the office on a daily basis, to allow less contact and to give everyone a little bit of a learning curve to get ready if and when we would all be working from home.

Everyone worked to get their home work stations ready and by March 22nd, the entire Customer Service department was working from their homes. We implemented cell phone usage for communicating with our customers and all incoming calls to the office were transferred to a cell phone so we would not miss any customer calls.

We worked seamlessly since we started working remotely and my group of employees went above and beyond to make sure we

were not missing any vital information. We had phone meetings once a day and with the help of Microsoft Teams, we had a virtual meeting at the end of each day as well. Using Teams we could share our screens if we needed to assist each other with a project and we could share files to work on during our meetings. It also kept us connected on a personal level to continue to be one team.

It was a learning curve for everyone but we were all committed to making it work and making sure our customers were still receiving exceptional Customer Service. A big thank you to my team, Aaron Snyder, Lori Chinchar, Steve Werley, Michele Daub and Jennifer Woodeshick, they all did a fantastic job working remotely. As we hear everyday on the television and radio, we are all in this together.

On June 8th we transitioned back to our onsite offices at the RBMN Headquarters in Port Clinton. With new partitions in place to divide each employee, everyone could have a more private and safe space to work. Everyone is back working in the new normal conditions. We have been a team dedicated to all of our Customers no matter where we may have been working from. Customer Service is here for everyone whether it is from our virtual office, in our headquarters office, or in person. ♦

Persevering through the COVID-19 Crisis

BY: ANDREA COLLIER, VP FINANCE

It is often said, you can't control things that happen, but you can control how you react to them.

When COVID-19 reared its ugly head earlier this year, it took us all by surprise and was something completely out of the railroad's control. When it was first mentioned that office personnel should be working remotely, if possible, I was nervous. This was something the Finance Department didn't have any prior experience with.

The day that initial suggestion became our new reality, my team took control of the situation and ran full steam ahead. We found

out who had the ability to work remotely from home and who would split office days to make sure hands-on responsibilities were handled while reducing office staff in order to maintain social distancing guidelines. I can't thank my team enough for how well each one of them stepped up to this unprecedented challenge. They not only got through it but didn't miss a beat. I am very proud to be a part of the Finance Department of the Reading and Northern where, when unexpected things happen, the people take control and maintain the ability to produce excellent work regardless of the situation. ♦

Upgrading to Provide Better Service

Customer Service & Finance Team Up

BY: SUSAN LUDWIG, VP CUSTOMER SERVICE
& BY: ANDREA COLLER, VP FINANCE

In early 2019 we started researching our options to be able to switch to a new improved system for our Railroad Management. Then in December 2019; we transitioned from our previous system, ShipXpress, to the new system Railconnect from Wabtec. The Wabtec system is a newer more streamlined system that our Customer Service Department and Finance Department can both work in to make processes a lot smoother.

When we switched over to the new system our crews needed to learn the new software for the crew tablets and our customers also had to learn the new system to order and release cars. On the customer service side, we spent several months learning the new system and making sure we had everyone trained. In the Railconnect system we are able to see a visual view of our yard inventory, a detailed history of all cars that moved on our railroad, and a detailed history of all revenue. Wabtec has provided us with many new tools to gather data to assist several departments on the railroad. Using the Advanced Analytics tool we can now assist our Marketing team much better with a one stop shop for all the rates in our database, historical records for carloads and revenue for customers based on many levels of specific criteria. Prior to this system, we had to manually generate Excel spreadsheets and spent many hours trying to accomplish the various requests we would receive for reports. We now have the capability to set up automated reports to send out to various departments at designated times daily. We have a much more detailed view of all movements and revenue throughout the railroad.

Using the assistance of “Sharepoint” and the new Railconnect system, we no longer need to rely on paper copies of invoices and documents to be printed and distributed among departments. We can eliminate the manual steps of printing paper invoices and handing them in for manual entry by Finance. This also eliminates the errors that could have possibly occurred. We simply save all paperwork in our system in a folder for Finance to retrieve and they can email or mail invoices to customers.

In the Finance Department, we have had several new changes to implement, requiring us to take a multi-step approach in effecting this new program. At this point we are getting comfortable using the “Advanced Analytics” and “Cash” systems for mostly their basic functions as we work through some integration issues. Though we are only using the basic functions of the system, we are already seeing benefits. One of the benefits of the new system includes easier access to the same information used by both departments, allowing for easier troubleshooting and resolution of matters. Flexible search options allow for almost-effortless queries of the system. End-of-month accounting is made simpler by Advanced Analytics’ capability of producing month-end journal entries, capturing the railroad’s traffic revenue for the month and complementing our financial reporting program QuickBooks. In the future we hope to incorporate the system’s automated invoicing function, which will eliminate a lot of the time currently spent scanning and renaming the files in preparation for submitting to our customers.

It was a project that took a lot of time and training, but we are all now working well in the new system. We want to thank all departments for the hard work and dedication in accomplishing this project. ♦

35 Years in Passenger Service & the Dedicated Employees that Made it Possible

BY: MATT FISHER, PASSENGER GENERAL MANAGER & TIFFANY HOWELL, CUSTOMER SERVICE SPECIALIST



Passenger excursions began in July 1985 and ran on the 13-mile Temple line between the South Hamburg station and the Temple station. Each of these locations were equipped with ticket booths, souvenirs, restrooms, food and beverages, and free parking. At that time, the passenger department did not have nearly the amount of resources that it does today and for a time, trains ran daily. The passenger department experimented by hosting a variety of themed trips including the hobo weekends, railfan weekends, and clown weekends. One of the railroad’s long-term employees, Eric Quimby, looks back on the clown weekends with fondness.

“I was walking between coaches to entertain children when the rented orange wig flew off my head and out the vestibule window. The wig landed in a field. My heart sank. I was ready at the end of the trip to receive a stern Therman [Madeira] lecture! To my surprise, Tom Nemeth (editor of Railpace Magazine) instead handed me the wig. Tom was photographing the train and saw the flying wig. He came to my relief, saying,

“This must be yours!” – Eric Quimby, Car Host and Narrator since 1986

At that time, the railroad maintained a great working relationship with Conrail which allowed them to take passengers to visit places across Pennsylvania, including the Horseshoe Curve, Philadelphia Gallery at Christmas, Gettysburg, Harrisburg Strawberry Square, and the Philadelphia Zoo.

“Memories from the Blue Mountain and Reading influenced an entire generation of railfans. Growing up, I rode the trains with my family, and it sparked my interest in trains and the railroad. I remember taking the special excursion to the Philadelphia Zoo, it was an amazing day. My parents and I rode on a Railfan Weekend with 425 and 2102, seeing the 2102 in action is something I will never forget.” – Matt Fisher, General Manager of Passenger

Continued on page 20.

Bill Bubeck and Shane Fredrickson on Bill's last day as conductor in December 2019.



Angela Potts and Matt Fisher taken on an early October day in Jim Thorpe. Photo: Scott Herring.



Early days on the LGSR. Bill Bubeck, Dawn Bubeck, Lehigh George, Harry Moore, and Mike Kolbe.



Therman Madeira, Ed Teahl, Jeff Seidel, Beverly Hess, Carol Muller, June Hill, Beatrice Bennecoff, Francis Muller, Betty Clapper, Dennis Reppert, Cindy Reppert, Bernice Teahl, Bonnie Madeira, and Sam Lenhart, seen at West Cressona Yard in the early 1990's.



Steam locomotives 425 and 2102 pictured at the first Railfan Special Day at the former Reading Shops at 6th Street in Reading.



Justin Mengel, Joshua Laughlin, Mike Evangelista, Kenny Miller, Cal Gerhard, Ed Moul on July 13, 2019 Photo: Scott Herring.



Reading & Northern Car Hosts, Bill Bubeck, Jim Danner, Bill Solomon, Russ Scianna, Jr., Eric Quimby, seen in front of the 765 excursion in Bethlehem, PA in AUG. 2015.

Continued from page 19.

Many people remember working alongside the veteran railroaders from the steam locomotive days of the Reading Railroad.

“Working on the B.M. & R with the 2102 and the old-time railroaders like Andy Andrews, Bob Wentzel, and Charlie Kochel, are some of my favorite memories from working on the railroad.” – Bill Bubeck, Car Host, Brakeman, and Conductor since 1988

As the freight department grew, along with the amount of track the railroad owned, the passenger department did not run as many trains. When Conrail began to sell off trackage, Reading & Northern purchased the Reading Cluster and eventually became a 300+ mile railroad. Although it was a smaller operation, the passenger services never stopped in the 1990's and early 2000's. A few trips and excursions were run during this time, but it was not near the amount it had been in the 1980's.

In 2005, the railroad had the opportunity to begin running scenic trips out of the town of Jim Thorpe. Trips were originally only run on weekends between Memorial Day and Christmas.

“Andy Muller rolled the dice and took a huge risk when beginning the train rides in Jim Thorpe. Opening day of the Lehigh Gorge Scenic Railway is one of my favorite memories on the railroad. The turnout was far larger than we anticipated, but we made it happen. The Lehigh Gorge expanded into something bigger than I could have ever imagined.” – Mike Evangelista, Passenger Assistant Manager, Car Host, Conductor, Ticket Agent, and Narrator

The 425 was reintroduced into passenger service in 2007. Bike trains were created in 2014, which were eventually run at least once a month. By 2015, the Lehigh Gorge Scenic Railway grew into a major operation, running every weekend starting in February and daily throughout the summer and October.

“The passenger department has grown so much over the last 16 years. When I began there were only trips in Fall. There have been additions of all kinds from trips originating in Jim Thorpe, hand stamped tickets to computer printed ones, different types of coaches, bike trains, increased trips with months of daily schedules, unbelievable increase in ridership and countless additional staff.” – Angela Potts, Car Host and Ticket Agent

One of the most notable excursions in 2015 was the NKP 765 steam trip ran by Reading & Northern in cooperation with Norfolk Southern and the Fort Wayne National Historic Society. It was the first in a generation to run off RBMN property, traveling from Bethlehem to Pittston and return. Many passenger employees noted this excursion as one of their favorite memories over all their years here.

“Some of the best times on the railroad are on the long excursions, which are so much fun. One of my favorites was when the steam locomotive 765 came into town and we had the opportunity to ride on all the beautiful cars.” – Bill Solomon, Car Host, Conductor, Ticket Agent, and Narrator since 2008

Work on the steam locomotive 2102 began in 2016 and is still ongoing. During this time, excursions out of the Reading Outer Station began running on the weekends and the Schuylkill Haven train station was purchased. This station now holds the Passenger Department headquarters. By acquiring this new building, the Passenger Department was able to expand their operations by hiring more fulltime employees over the years, while also giving the freight department the extra space in the Port Clinton station.

The railroad seeks to support local communities while bringing the history of passenger services to them. Early this year the railroad worked with the borough of Tamaqua to reach an agreement regarding a new platform in the town. (See Tamaqua article pg 26)

One of the things that has not changed is our employees' dedication to the railroad. Many have stayed long-term, some for 35 years.

“We are very family oriented and have several couples and families, some of which have multiple generations working in the Passenger Department.” – Lisa Matz, Fulltime Passenger Employee

When asked why they have stayed, many said it was because of their love for trains, their coworkers, and the work environment. Our most recent conductor to retire from the position is Bill Bubeck. However, he still intends to continue working as a car host.

“The railroad has allowed me to do things I never would

have done otherwise, such as becoming a car host, brakeman, and conductor.” – Bill Bubeck

“I stay at the railroad because I have loved trains ever since I can remember, and my fellow workers and the passengers are nice.” – Dawn Bubeck, Car Host for 23 years

In November 2019, the railroad stayed busy operating Santa trains in Reading, Schuylkill Haven, Pottsville, Minersville, and Tunkhannock, Pa.

“Our Santa Train experience is a favorite for so many people. We have become a tradition for many families. Boys and girls of all ages love to ride with Santa and Mrs. Claus and their helpers. Christmas music and stories abound, the decorations and lights add sparkle and holiday magic to the train rides.

It is nice to see parents and their children spending quality time together, taking pictures with Santa, and drinking hot chocolate and coffee, making memories that will last a lifetime.” – Mary Ann Culp, Fulltime Passenger Employee

The department has seen many changes over the years. One thing that has stayed constant is its crew of dedicated car hosts, ticket agents, conductors, and engineers. Without these people, the passenger service would not be what it is today. We look forward to creating many new memories with our passengers! ♦



Shane Fredrickson and Charlie Kochel seen on the 425 on the Blue Mountain and Reading.



Andy Muller and Carol Muller seen at the Minersville Station in December 2016.



First day of LGSR operations on May 21st, 2005. Rich Bernhardt, Angela Potts, Matt Fisher, Gene Klinger, John Rizzo, Ed Heck, Lyn Morello, John Warda, Aimee Schissler, Ernie Henritzy, and Steve Gilbert.



Santa train characters seen at Pottsville Union Station in December 2015. John Walaitis, Nancy Walaitis, and Aaron Cassel playing Acorn.



Russ Sciana, Mike Evangelista, Jolene Busher, Chad Frederickson, and Bill Bubeck together during a Tamaqua Borough Days excursion in summer 2014.



Easter Bunny trips at Minersville Station in March of 2015. Darrell Matz, Dawn Bubeck, Russ Sciana, Jr., Easter Bunny: Josh Laughlin, Ian McKeown, Mary Ann Culp, and Lisa Matz.

2020 Passenger Department Updates

BY: MATT FISHER, PASSENGER GENERAL MANAGER & TIFFANY HOWELL, CUSTOMER SERVICE SPECIALIST



Even though we have all been affected in some way or another by COVID-19, we have still been making progress in the Passenger Department. Mr. Muller is spending more money in the passenger department than ever before. Andy is a true entrepreneur in this uncertain time. Andy knows that now is the ideal time to get work finished on the passenger equipment, allowing many years of future income once the guests start visiting the railroad in mass volumes. The railroad has no debt and the freight business continues to be very strong.

Although we were in uncertain times and unable to operate passenger trains for a time, the passenger department has stayed busy with projects, some of which needed attention for years. Additionally, with the hard work of our maintenance and shop employees, as well as many contractors, much progress

has been made refurbishing our locomotives and coaches.

On average, we are spending \$10,000 to \$20,000 per coach to do the work. The railroad has spent tens of thousands of dollars to further upgrade all three Rail Diesel Cars, and hundreds of thousands of dollars to buy more diesels, work on steam locomotive 425, and continue working on 2102 for its grand reintroduction. We also spent thousands replacing an old phone system in our Schuylkill Haven headquarters and various other locations. We continue to put information out on our websites and social media. We also are making more ads to go into local newspapers, magazines, and flyers than ever before. The passenger department continues to look for new business, excursion charters, and opportunities.

Continued on page 26.

RDCs seen on a test run on June 24th, 2020 at Devils Hollow south New Ringgold.



Car 2: "Hickory Run" before painting in March 2020.



Car 1: "Black Diamond" before repainting in February 2020.



Car 2: "Hickory Run" after painting in March 2020. The interior of this car was also refreshed with new paint in the hallways, restroom, and kitchen.



Car 1: "Black Diamond" after repainting in February 2020.



Dome Car: "Lehigh Gorge Explorer" the first out of the passenger car fleet to be redone in two-part urethane paint. The appliances in the kitchen were upgraded.



Generator Car 1250 received new paint and an upgraded generator to provide light, heat, and narration on our trains.



Open Air Car 9: "Autumn Breeze" before receiving updates.



Open Air Car 9: "Autumn Breeze" after its update seen early March 2020.



Open Air Car 9: "Autumn Breeze" before and after receiving interior updates.

Continued from page 24.

The railroad is spending money upgrading equipment to make it more efficient. For example, many cars are going from friction bearing to roller bearing. Brake, spring, and wheel work is being completed. Electricity connections (480V) are being upgraded with a new generator added to Head End Power Car 1250. Also, windows in all coaches are being reworked. The finished product is absolutely amazing! These upgraded passenger cars look better than any OCS (Office Car Special) fleet of ANY railroad.

Many of our coaches have received new paint in the last few months including Car 1: "The Black Diamond", Car 2: "Hickory Run", the Observation Dome Car: Car 4 "Lehigh Gorge Explorer", Head End Power Car 1250, and the open air cars. These cars have a sleek new look for our passengers. More importantly, we are using the top-grade, two-part urethane, PPG paint for these projects. With hopes of the paint not fading or chipping for over 15 years. The history of the coaches and their pictures have recently been shared on the Passenger Department's Facebook page and website under the "Our Trains Tab."

Very few railroads have an owner and management that are as dedicated to passenger service as our company. Andy and the Muller family continue to fund passenger because they love running passenger trains and interacting with the public. A big thank you to Andy and his family for their continued support.

In November, the railroad purchased the two F-Units 270 and 275. They were given a new paint scheme. Mr. Muller wanted to stay true to the heritage of the anthracite railroads and keep black as a primary portion of this new paint scheme. A nod to the former Lehigh and New England, similar to the boxcar and gondola fleet seen on the R&N. The light gray matched nicely with black, however, the nose of the 270 was completely changed leaving more black on the top and gray on the bottom with the R&N logo. Red was added in respect of the Philadelphia and Reading Coal and Iron company history. This bright red also can be seen on many R&N coal hoppers. The engines will primarily stay in passenger service, where the black and light gray is neutral to the colors of the passenger equipment. The diesels were proudly spray painted, with great detail, by several employees and contractors. This huge task was completed very quickly with high quality PPG paint.

As you already know, the massive 2102 steam locomotive is being rebuilt. The T-1, 4-8-4 wheel arrangement takes much time and effort to repair into working order. At this point, several Reading & Northern workers and contractors are working five to six days per week to get 2102 back on the rails. Continue to look on our website and Facebook page for updates on the 2102's progress.

The 2102 was originally built in 1945 and restorations began on the locomotive in 2016. Mr. Muller is spending hundreds of thousands of dollars to rebuild this locomotive. The work on the

locomotive has been accelerated with hopes it will be back in service by the end of the year.

The shop has stayed especially busy working on the 2102 this winter/spring. In February the last of over 720 new staybolts were installed. In March water was put in the boiler and pumped up to operating pressure. Work right now includes beading all tubes and flues, buttoning up repairs to the feed water heater and pump, machining new tri-cocks, water glass valves/plugs, and plumbing in various items. In mid-March we saw our first completed item come from the foundry. This new cast fire door frame will be joined by all new grate holders, fingers and side bearers in the coming weeks. All of the stoker equipment is rebuilt and on hand along with the new steam dome lid. In all work is moving along towards having an operational 4-8-4 on the roster. We are looking forward to reintroducing this magnificent steam locomotive back into passenger service. It is expected to bring people in from all over the world! The 425 is also receiving its required inspections for operation this season.

RDC 9166 received a new engine and transmission.

RDC 9167 was purchased by the Reading & Northern Railroad in May of 2017. It has recently received a makeover to prepare it for passenger service. Two major changes to the car include new seats that flip so passengers can face either direction and windows that can be opened and shut. Other upgrades to the car

include a new floor and a new motor for the A/C system.

The car was originally built by the Budd company in the March 1953 for the New Haven Railroad. Over the years, it spent time on the Penn Central Railroad, Metro North, Susquehanna Railroad, Southern Railroad of New Jersey, before being purchased by the Reading & Northern Railroad. During its stay at Metro North, the car was completely rebuilt. While in service for the Susquehanna Railroad it ran in Syracuse, New York between the university and downtown. The car then sat for several years in south Jersey before being sold to the Reading and Northern. We hope to see this car get more use in the coming seasons.

RDC 9168 was also serviced over the winter. It is back in service awaiting the return of the passenger season.

The pride and joy of the fleet, Car 1 "The Black Diamond", was built in 1889 by Jay Gould as a gift for his daughter, Helen. The heavy weight six axle coach was purchased, then rebuilt, by the Reading & Northern in fall of 1996, shortly after the R&N purchased the Lehigh Line from Conrail. Now used privately by the R&N to entertain guests as the premier rail car for the entire railroad, Car 1 is usually the last car on various OCS (Office Car Special) train excursions. Work was done on the back-platform area and roof. It was painted to match Parlor Car 3. More wheel work will be completed on Car 1 later this year.

Continued on page 28.



Open Air Car 11: "Spring Song" before its exterior paint job in early June 2020.



Open Air Car 11: "Spring Song" after its exterior paint job in early June 2020.



A Superheater unit seen in foreground with the 2102 in the background.



Freshly repainted F Units at Reading Outer Station looking very bright on an overcast day.



F Units crossing the Schuylkill River at the Millcreek Wye, Port Carbon, Pa on May 2nd, 2020.

Continued from page 27.

The Reading & Northern Pullman Car 2, "Hickory Run", was built in the late 1920's. The car was one of 30 all-steel heavyweight sleeping cars with 14 single bedrooms. The car had several owners until being purchased by the Reading & Northern in 1998. The R&N takes it out on the Office Car Special (OCS) trains, and it is occasionally used for special passenger events. This car received exterior paint and extensive window work. It is on display at Reading Outer Station.

Our Observation Dome Car 4, the "Lehigh Gorge – Super Dome" was originally built by Pullman-Standard being one of the first dome cars in service for the Milwaukee Road on trains over the Rockies between Chicago and Seattle. It is a perfect way to see the beautiful scenery of eastern Pennsylvania.

The Reading and Northern invested in a new air condition and heating system for the car to make it fully climate controlled to keep passengers comfortable. A huge refrigerator in the kitchen area is now functional with many other kitchen appliances. Two restrooms were added on both ends of this car. A floor runner was added, tabletop work was done in the downstairs area, and

some seats were fixed.

The Open Air Cars are being repainted to match the R&N red paint scheme. Car 9 and Car 11 are fully finished, Car 10 was the final open air to be upgraded. During this process, the open air cars are receiving an interior makeover including painted red floors and mural work on the walls and ceiling. Also, work on wheels, brakes, and springs is top priority.

Coach 213 will have wheel work done later this year. In the meantime, we have completely redone the floor and all walls, seats, and doors were repainted. Coach 213, along with Coach 214, has been repainted to match the new open air paint scheme.

The passenger department has certainly stayed busy over the last few months. We made the best of being shut down and we plan to come back into operation better than ever with our updated and refreshed coaches and engines. Keep updated by following the Reading and Northern Railroad – Passenger Facebook page or by going to www.lgsry.com or www.rbmrr-passenger.com. We look forward to making the best out of the 2020 season with your support! ♦

New Platform Brings Passenger Trains Back to Tamaqua

BY: MATT FISHER, PASSENGER GENERAL MANAGER & TIFFANY HOWELL, CUSTOMER SERVICE SPECIALIST



In February, the Reading & Northern made an agreement with Tamaqua to bring passenger trains back to the train station by building a new platform. It has been a few years since passenger trains have visited Tamaqua. The Reading and Northern Railroad aims to support local communities while continuing to improve the passenger services to keep history alive. Tamaqua is one of the most charming towns on the railroad system with many restaurants and attractions. The town's architecture, including the 1874 train station, is steeped in anthracite coal history.

The original agreement between Tamaqua and the railroad was

that the town would provide \$36,000 towards construction of the new platform. Later, Andy Muller Jr., Owner/CEO of the Reading and Northern announced that the first payment of \$20,000 would serve as full payment for the platform. Mr. Muller discussed plans to add decorative finishes to the platform including Victorian-style lights and fencing. Additionally, Mr. Muller now plans to donate \$10,000 per year over the next two years (\$20,000 total) back to the town for charities of their choice.

Continued on page 32.



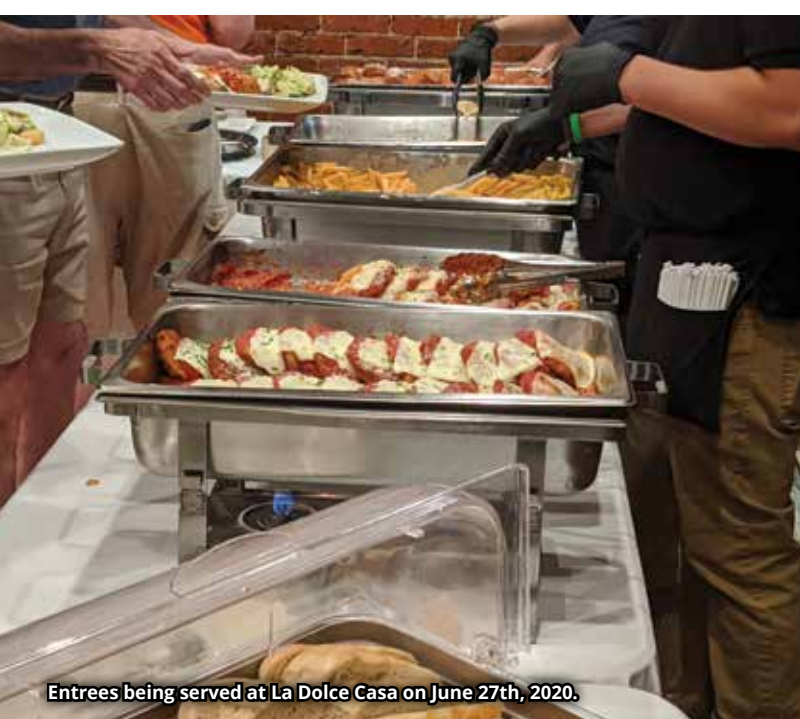
Early work started by fixing the curb in preparation for the platform in early June 2020.



Interior of La Dolce Casa's banquet hall during the Ride & Dine event.



The Rail Diesel Cars at the Tamaqua train station during the June 27th, Ride & Dine.



Entrees being served at La Dolce Casa on June 27th, 2020.



Desserts at La Dolce Casa on June 27th, 2020.



Reading & Northern employees working on placing conduit for lamp posts at Tamaqua.

Continued from page 31.

This year, Mr. Muller decided to give the first donation of \$10,000 early to help the community during the hard times brought forth in early 2020. The Tamaqua Borough Council worked quickly to allocate the funds to Tamaqua's first responders. Seven emergency services will share the donation with \$1,500 going to, Citizens Fire Company, American Hose Company, East End Fire Company, South Ward Fire Company, Tamaqua Community Ambulance Association, and Tamaqua Rescue Squad, and \$1,000 to the fire police. Tamaqua's rescue squads showed their appreciation by thanking the Reading & Northern publicly on their Facebook pages.

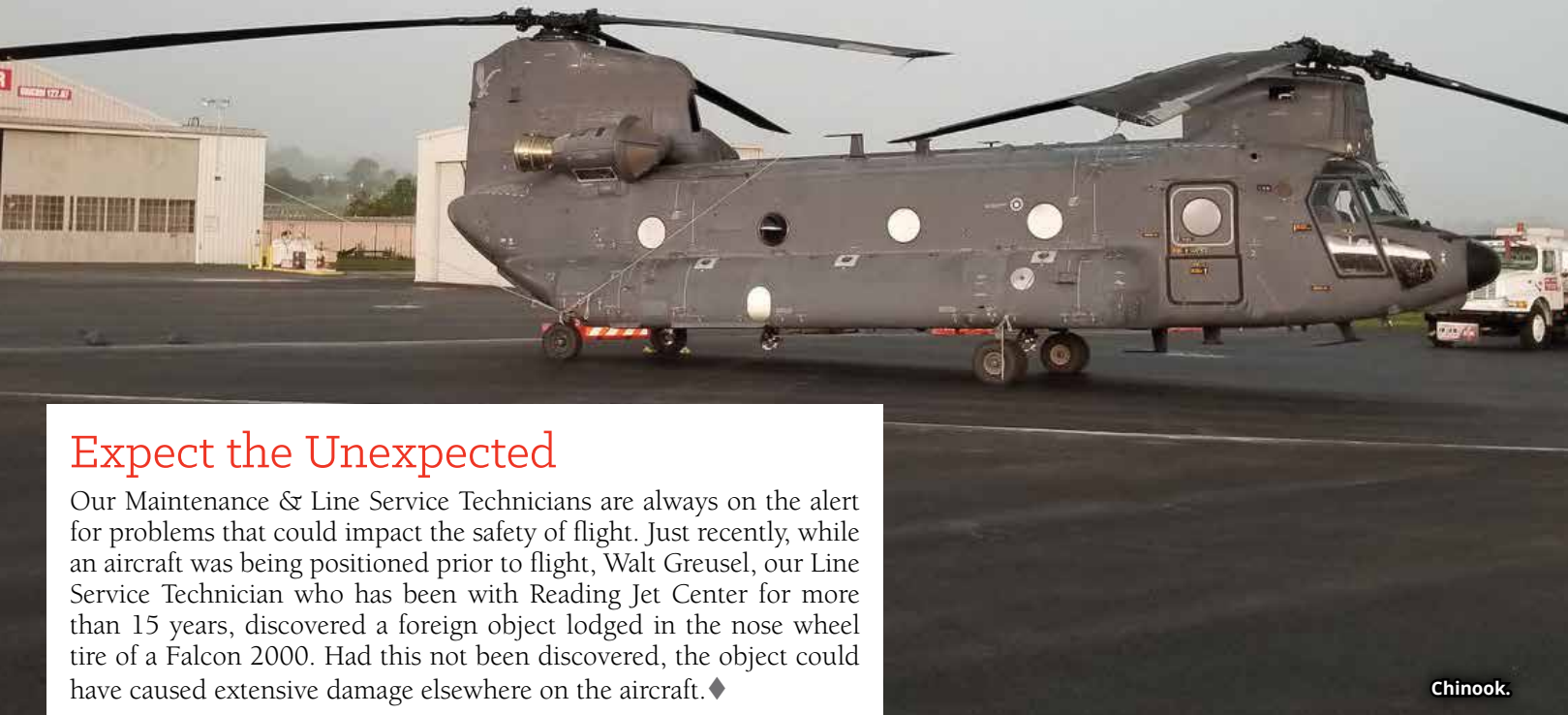
In June, curbing against the original platform under the station being fixed. Next, conduit to provide electricity to the lamps was installed. Then, clean fill was placed at the location of the platform. The final touches included paving the platform with the addition of historic fencing, lamps, and signage.

Although construction of the platform was delayed in the early part of 2020, our first ever Ride & Dine Train excursion still took place on June 27th. Passengers boarded the Rail Diesel Cars at the Reading Outer Station in Reading and traveled to Tamaqua. Once they arrived, they made their way from the train to the restaurant, about two blocks away, to have dinner. At La Dolce Casa, passengers enjoyed an Italian buffet consisting of baked haddock, penne alla vodka, chicken parmigiana and more. The trip immediately had very positive reviews and we are looking forward to the remaining on July 18th, AUG. 22nd, and September 19th.

For more information on Tamaqua train rides, and other future excursions, please visit the railroad at www.rbmnr-passenger.com or call the passenger office at 610-562-2102. We look forward to continuing running trains in Tamaqua and putting the new platform to good use. ♦

Reading Jet Center

BY: ERICA KNIGHT, AIR CONCIERGE AND LARRY YODER, CHIEF PILOT



Chinook.

Expect the Unexpected

Our Maintenance & Line Service Technicians are always on the alert for problems that could impact the safety of flight. Just recently, while an aircraft was being positioned prior to flight, Walt Greusel, our Line Service Technician who has been with Reading Jet Center for more than 15 years, discovered a foreign object lodged in the nose wheel tire of a Falcon 2000. Had this not been discovered, the object could have caused extensive damage elsewhere on the aircraft. ♦

Hazardous Weather Complications

Weather conditions this Spring have been less than favorable. Numerous fronts have crossed the country, making forecasting extremely difficult. During a severe weather watch two transient aircrafts landed for fuel. As fueling commenced, the weather conditions deteriorated preventing their departure. The thunderstorm packed winds of over 50 knots causing one of the Boeing CH-47 Chinook helicopters significant damage, rendering it unairworthy. Boeing Aircraft dispatched a maintenance team; the aircraft was disassembled & transported to a repair facility. The other Chinook was able to safely make it out prior to any damage occurring. Pilots and all onboard were unharmed and experienced no issues. This particular weather situation took "Rain foretold, long last. Short notice soon will pass" to a new height. ♦



Chinook broken.

Red Creek Wildlife

'Tis the Season What to Do if You Find a Baby Squirrel

BY: PEGGY HENTZ, PRESIDENT/EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
OF RED CREEK WILDLIFE

Baby squirrels are the second most numerous animals admitted for wildlife rehabilitation, exceeded only by cottontail rabbits.

It's a rare sight to see a baby squirrel in nature. Squirrels typically remain in the nest until they almost resemble adults. If you find a baby squirrel, something happened to interrupt its life.

Squirrel nests are often destroyed when a tree is cut down and during storms. This may or may not be an emergency. If the nest or babies are down, but the mother is still in the area, she often will retrieve her babies and carry it to a new location. However, she will not approach if people are nearby, so give her the time and opportunity to feel safe.

An uninjured baby squirrel can be placed in a box near the cut tree, or hung in a basket in a nearby tree. Wait a few hours, or until dark before checking on the babies. Don't leave the babies out past sunset. Any babies left after sunset should be brought in for rehabilitation.

Squirrels are one of the only baby animals that typically will "ask for help" when in trouble. A hungry, baby squirrel may approach a person, often climbing onto your shoes or climbing up your pants leg.

How do you know if you should attempt a reintroduction? It depends on what happened in the past twenty-four hours. If you have found a squirrel following a storm or tree trimming event, there's a good chance mom will take over and you should attempt to reunite them. If there's been no event to explain the squirrel's plight, it probably is orphaned and needs help.

How can you tell if a young squirrel is old enough to be on its own? Look at the hairs on the tail. If they stand upright, fanning out perpendicular to the tail, it is weaned and no longer needs its mom. If the hairs lay flat on the tail, or if they stand up vertically, it is not old enough to be on its own. ♦



Baby squirrel three weeks old.



Baby squirrel six weeks old.



Baby squirrels at feed rack.



Baby squirrel eight weeks old.

Red Creek Wildlife

The Perfect Storm

BY: PEGGY HENTZ, PRESIDENT/EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF RED CREEK WILDLIFE

From the beginning, we knew that 2020 would be a challenging year. Mild winters have always been followed by a boom in the wild baby population, increasing the spring admissions of orphaned and injured baby animals.

A typical baby season begins and ends with raising baby Eastern Gray Squirrels. Squirrels breed twice a year, in early spring and again in late summer into early fall. Our first litter of baby squirrels arrived on the last day in February. Within two weeks, 39 squirrels were growing up at Red Creek, a typical number following a mild winter.

By mid-March, the pandemic changed the lives of every person, and wildlife rehabilitators were no exception. Most rehabilitators rely on volunteers to help with raising baby animals, and that volunteer workforce diminished as everyone was encouraged to stay home and self-isolate. As schools closed, many centers that relied on spring school presentations for funding lost the revenue needed to support their rehabilitation programs. As fundraising events were canceled, many rehabilitators were left without the funding to buy supplies necessary to care for the animals.

Pennsylvania has 32 wildlife rehabilitators working out of 23 locations. One by one, wildlife rehabilitators across the state began closing. By March 20th, only eight locations were accepting animals, and many of those were limiting the number of animals or the species that they would take.

As the number of rehabilitators decreased, the demand for services increased. With the closing of schools and businesses, families were enjoying nature, home gardening, exercising outdoors, and finding a higher number of baby wildlife in distress. It was the perfect storm of high demand for animals that needed help and dwindling services available to help them.

Red Creek had also lost revenue from program and event cancellations, had lost all of our summer interns, and many of our volunteers were staying home. Our staff, Board of Directors, and senior volunteers met to brainstorm how we would respond to the dynamic changes taking place. One thing on which we all agreed: we would do everything possible to remain open and save wildlife, but we would do it safely.

We started by submitting a request to the Governor to remain open as a public health service. By reducing the physical interaction between wildlife and people, wildlife rehabilitation protects the public from disease, parasites, and injury. Wildlife rehabilitation helps viruses like COVID-19 from developing by getting wild animals in the hands of those who know how to prevent infections from spreading. The State immediately approved Red Creek as an essential service.

As a convenience for people bringing animals, an after-hours drop-off shed is available at Red Creek for late-night admissions. We enacted social distancing by using this shed as a drop-off site for all animals around the clock, which eliminated the need for the public to enter the clinic building.

Replacing volunteers was our biggest concern, but we also wanted to limit the number of people working together inside of the clinic. We were approved for a payroll protection loan in April and used that funding to hire two additional full-time staff members for animal care. Kaley Egan and Sydney Caruso had both interned at Red Creek in previous summers, and both desired a career in wildlife rehabilitation. It was the perfect opportunity for us to get the help we needed while meeting their life goals. Both women will remain as permanent members of Red Creek's staff and plan on acquiring their permits over the coming winter.

Part of Red Creek's mission is to help increase the number of rehabilitators in Pennsylvania. We meet this objective by supplying educational opportunities for those wishing to learn. WildlifeEDU.com is Red Creek's online learning portal, where people can take courses in wildlife rescue and rehabilitation. We ramped up our advertising for this service, and people responded. Those at home with time to study took advantage of our on-line classes. The increase in participants more than covered our lost revenue from the in-person programs that we lost.

As the months of social distancing continued, Red Creek remained open, and animals began arriving from all over the state. A young man spent ten hours driving to and from Pittsburgh to bring us a litter of raccoons. A baby bunny came from Philadelphia and a robin from Wellsboro. Our intakes doubled, and by the end of June, we had received over 2,500 animals, twice as many as the first half of last year.

By the time this article is published, the second round of baby squirrels will have started. The first nesting brought us a total of 365 baby squirrels, double the count from the year before. If this trend continues through the fall, we can expect over 800 baby squirrels to arrive during the second nesting. But the arrival of squirrels will signal the end of baby season.

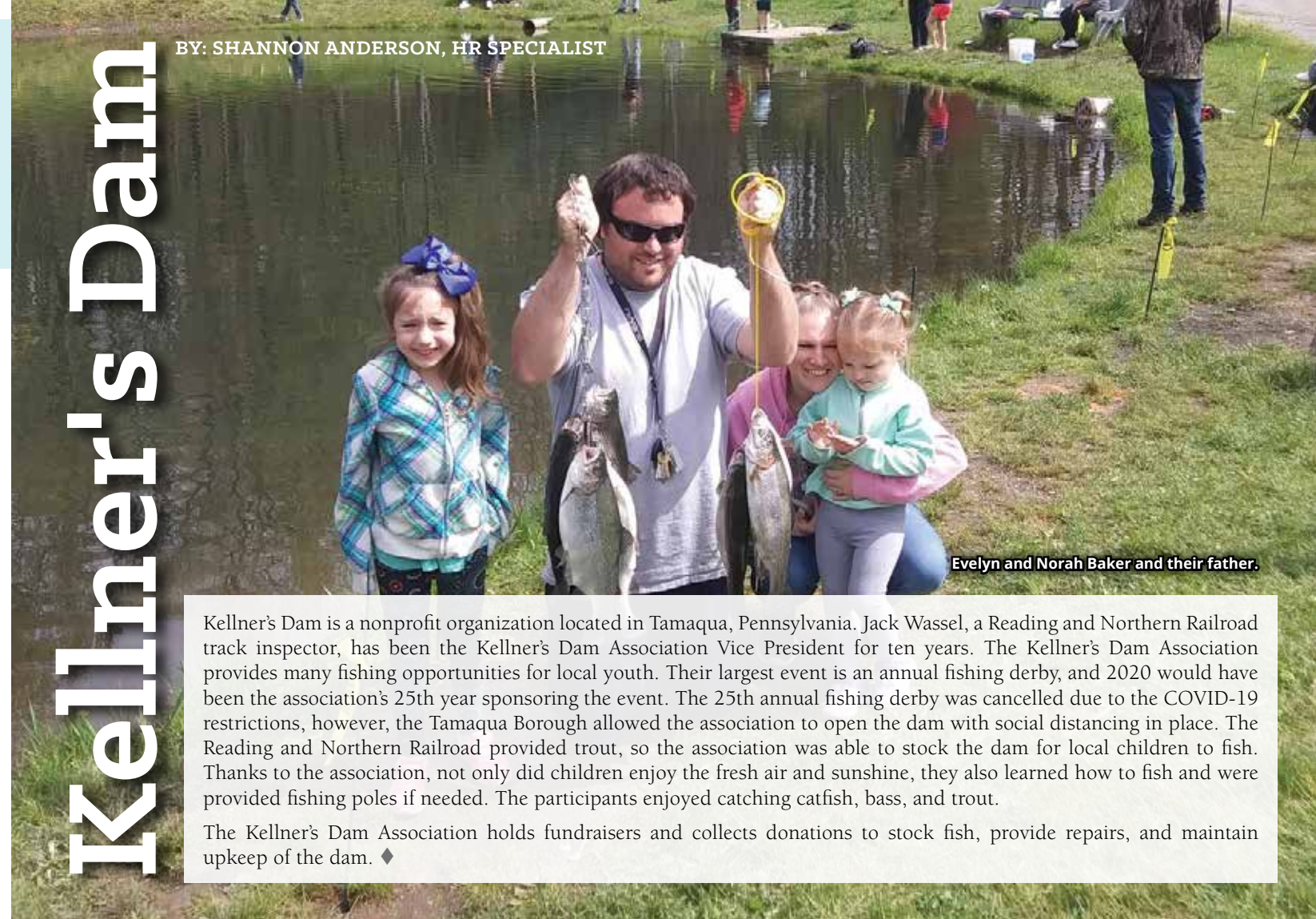
By Autumn, all of our baby animals will have weaned, and many will have been released. Our last hand feeding for the year usually happens by mid-October and is met with a feeling of relief and accomplishment. I am sure those feelings will be doubled as well.

Eleven years ago, I sat across the table from Andy Muller, who said, "with the Railroad's backing, Red Creek will be successful!" I have always remembered that statement as being comforting and promising.

As the years have passed, one baby season melds into the memory of all of the others, but I believe the year 2020 will be remembered differently. For many, it will be a year recognized as life-changing, traumatic, and challenging. But I think I will remember it as a promise kept. For if the year 2020 can be likened to the perfect storm, it is Andy Muller and the Reading and Northern Railroad that helped Red Creek to build a sturdy boat that weathered that storm and rode the waves well. ♦

BY: SHANNON ANDERSON, HR SPECIALIST

Kellner's Dam



Evelyn and Norah Baker and their father.

Kellner's Dam is a nonprofit organization located in Tamaqua, Pennsylvania. Jack Wassel, a Reading and Northern Railroad track inspector, has been the Kellner's Dam Association Vice President for ten years. The Kellner's Dam Association provides many fishing opportunities for local youth. Their largest event is an annual fishing derby, and 2020 would have been the association's 25th year sponsoring the event. The 25th annual fishing derby was cancelled due to the COVID-19 restrictions, however, the Tamaqua Borough allowed the association to open the dam with social distancing in place. The Reading and Northern Railroad provided trout, so the association was able to stock the dam for local children to fish. Thanks to the association, not only did children enjoy the fresh air and sunshine, they also learned how to fish and were provided fishing poles if needed. The participants enjoyed catching catfish, bass, and trout.

The Kellner's Dam Association holds fundraisers and collects donations to stock fish, provide repairs, and maintain upkeep of the dam. ♦



Lucas Szumigraj.



Maddie Kurtz and Mackenzie Estramera.



Dave Master and son Dawson Master.



Aaliyah Watkins, Kayla Watkins, Loryah Watkins, Elijah Watkins, Urijah Watkins and Sincere Watkins.

RBMN Anniversaries

35 YEARS



May 1, 1985
Shane Frederickson
Engineer - Operations

25 YEARS



March 20, 1995
Kenneth Miller
Car Host - Passenger

20 YEARS



July 31, 2000
Elizabeth Neifert
Accounts Receivable Manager

15 YEARS



April 8, 2005
Walter Greusel
Line Service Tech. - RJC



April 8, 2005
Robert Harak
Technician - RJM



April 18, 2005
Michael Evangelista
Car Host



April 18, 2005
Matthew Fisher
GM of Passenger



March 1, 2005
Larry Yoder
Chief Pilot

10 YEARS



March 15, 2010
Michael Voorhees
Conductor - Op.



March 22, 2010
Curtis Cibello
Engineer - Op.



March 22, 2010
Carter Jones
Engineer - Op.



March 22, 2010
Eric Slekovac
Eng./Dispatcher - Op.



March 29, 2010
Mario DeMarco
Mach. Op.
Class I - MOW



March 29, 2010
Bradley Handling
Transload Op Mgr



March 29, 2010
Brendle Stufflet
Sr. Mach. Op.
Class II - MOW

5 YEARS



April 6, 2015
Thomas Cook
VP Transportation & Safety



April 23, 2015
John Smolzynski, Sr.
Car Host - Passenger



April 23, 2015
Nancy Walaitis
Car Host/Narrator -
Passenger



May 18, 2015
Darrin Keip
Engineer - Operations



July 14, 2015
Russelle Monroe
Manager of Special Projects



July 20, 2015
James Cerulli
VP Coal Marketing



July 27, 2015
Dominic Deeble
Conductor - Operations



July 27, 2015
James Donley
Conductor - Operations



July 27, 2015
Ian McKeown
Engineer - Operations



July 27, 2015
Darren Spare
Conductor - Operations

3 YEARS



March 23, 2017
Charles Burnett
Car Host - Passenger



March 23, 2017
Robert Kempes
Car Host - Passenger



April 5, 2017
Michael Boyle
Util. Tech. - Eng. House



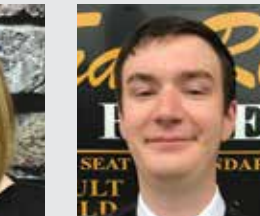
April 5, 2017
William Keim
HVAC Technician



May 15, 2017
Michael Gigliotti
Conductor - Op.



June 5, 2017
Marie Knadler
Ad. Specialist Passenger



June 18, 2017
Justin Mengel
Car Host - Passenger

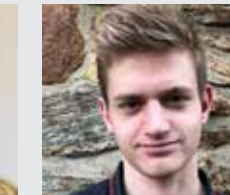
1 YEAR



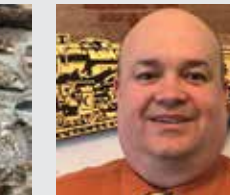
February 1, 2019
Thomas Skrustski
Conductor - Operations



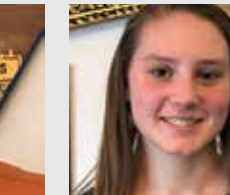
February 4, 2019
Laura Lesagonicz
AVP Bus.Dev. - RJC



March 14, 2019
Adam Boak
Car Host - Passenger



March 14, 2019
James Garraway, III
Car Host - Passenger



March 14, 2019
Ally McGinley
Car Host - Passenger



April 5, 2019
Kaitlyn Helbert
Accounts Receivable Asst.



April 23, 2019
Ryan Lake
Trackman - MOW



May 20, 2019
Tiffany Howell
Asst. Cust. Serv. Specialist
- Passenger



June 3, 2019
Austin Cory
Trackman - MOW



June 10, 2019
James Alba
Trackman - MOW



June 17, 2019
Tyler Acker
Trackman - MOW



July 8, 2019
Erica Knight
Air Concierge - RJC

Wellness Committee

The Wellness Committee planned to start off 2020 with a year full of fun, second-annual events for employees and their families. Due to COVID 19, however, events were abruptly ended. It was disappointing not being able to hold the 2nd annual Spring Time-Grow Time event, but the Committee put its focus on what they could do. They resumed their meetings in June; and in under two weeks, the committee planned and implemented spring planting for the Port Clinton area. Team leaders, Meg Pursel and Lynn Engle, quickly came up with a plan to plant flowers in the raised flower beds by the entrance under the Reading Blue Mountain and Northern Railroad sign and in the shaded, raised flower bed by the main entrance. The flowers purchased by RBMN helped support a local family-owned nursery. The committee

picked up sticks and leaves covering the coal garden and put the river rock back in place. Last year's Spring Time-Grow Time event brought plants along the main entrance to the railroad. This year a bee balm, donated by Tony Weachock, was planted to replace one which did not survive the winter. The committee continues to maintain the level of care needed for the plants and is looking forward to more planting at next year's Spring Time-Grow Time event.

Bike N' Hike meet ups to bike or hike twelve miles along Hamburg and Port Clinton resumed for employees and their families. As we look at future events for the summer and fall; we are planning a 2nd Annual Pottsville Branch Paddle, additional Bike N' Hike meet ups, and will begin hosting workout events for employees. ♦



Phillip Geschwindt, Sharon Geschwindt, Daren Geschwindt, and Connor Geschwindt catching up with the group along the Bartram Trail.



Meg Pursel, Sabine Fidler, and Lynn Engle enjoying the evening while gardening to beautify Port Clinton's main entrance.



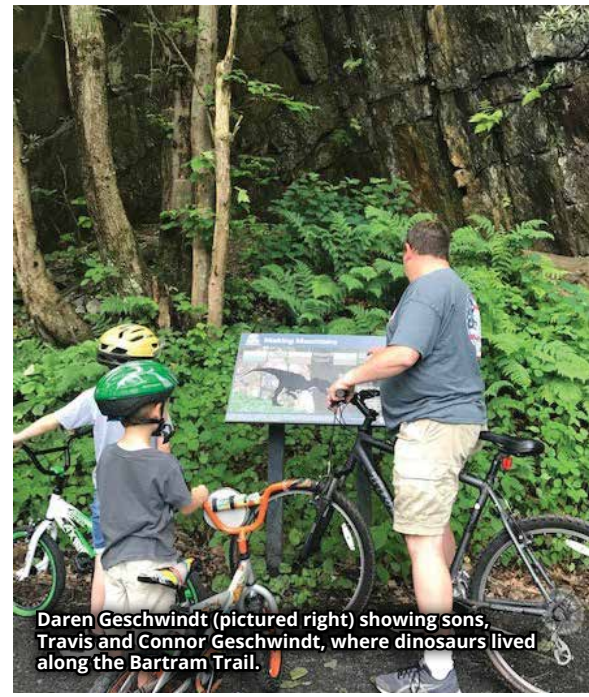
Philip Geschwindt, Travis Geschwindt, Connor Geschwindt, and Daren Geschwindt at the 3 1/2 mile marker on the Bartram Trail.



Sabine Fidler and Shannon Anderson continuing their 12-mile bike ride.



Meg Pursel and Lynn Engle, planting event team leaders, enjoying their time planting the newly-purchased flowers for the garden beds.



Daren Geschwindt (pictured right) showing sons, Travis and Connor Geschwindt, where dinosaurs lived along the Bartram Trail.



Sabine Fidler having fun planting the new flowers in the pots and garden bed.



Rebecca Engle clearing the entrance after the planting was finished.



Dave Fidler was hard at work to make sure the bee balm, donated by Tony Weachock, would thrive in its new home alongside the Port Clinton main entrance.



Dave Fidler, Lynn Engle, Rebecca Engle, Duane Engle, Sabine Fidler, and Meg Pursel displaying the newly-planted flowers thanks to their teamwork.

WELCOME ABOARD

NEW EMPLOYEES



Todd Aber

Todd Aber was recently hired as a Manager of Operations Administration with the Reading Blue Mountain and Northern Railroad. Todd attended Penn Hills Sr. High in Pittsburgh and University of Pittsburgh. Todd is retired from the Pennsylvania State Police after serving twenty-five years as a Trooper Vehicle Fraud Coordinator. Fun fact: Todd enjoys traveling, the Outer Banks, hiking and mountain biking.



Jack Hurley

Jack Hurley was recently hired as a Dispatcher with the Reading Blue Mountain and Northern Railroad. Jack attended Central Dauphin High School and Harrisburg Area Community College. Prior to working at RBMNR, Jack was a Conductor, Engineer, and Dispatcher for Norfolk Southern for thirteen years.



Jessica "Jess" Moran

Jessica "Jess" Moran was recently hired as a Mechanical Administrator with the Reading Blue Mountain and Northern Railroad. Jessica attended Hamburg Area High School and Berks Career and Technology Center. Prior to working at RBMNR, Jessica was a Maintenance Helper for East Penn Manufacturing for seven years.



Joshua Rehrig

Joshua Rehrig was recently hired as a Conductor with the Reading Blue Mountain and Northern Railroad. Joshua attended Upper Perkiomen High School and Penn State University. Prior to working at RBMNR, Joshua was a Conductor for Norfolk Southern for two years. Fun fact: Joshua had family members who worked for RBMNR.



Robert Shaulis

Robert Shaulis, Jr. was recently hired as an Aircraft Mechanic with Reading Jet Maintenance. Robert attended Conrad Weiser High School and Kutztown University. Prior to working at RJM, Robert was a loader for Dollar General Distributor Center for six months. Robert got his start in aviation in the Army fixing Apache attack helicopters.



Jeffrey Brunner

Jeffrey Brunner was recently hired as a Line Service Technician with the Reading Jet Center. Jeff attended Oley Valley High School and Welder Technical Training Institute. Prior to working at RJC, Jeff was an Acid Leveler Capper for East Penn Manufacturing for almost thirty years.



Donald "Donnie" Matter

Donald "Donnie" Matter was recently hired as a Signal Maintainer with the Reading Blue Mountain and Northern Railroad. Donnie attended Williams Valley High School, Pennsylvania College of Technology, and Advanced Technology Institute. Prior to working at RBMNR, Donnie was a Signal Maintainer for Norfolk Southern for two years.



Margaret "Meg" Pursel

Margaret "Meg" Pursel was recently hired as a Receptionist with the Reading Blue Mountain and Northern Railroad. Margaret attended Lehigh Carbon Community College. Meg also works for Rosell Trailer Sales as an Office Manager and has been with the company for over twenty years. Fun fact: Meg is a horse enthusiast and competitor in western events.



Casey Rex

Casey Rex was recently hired as a Real Estate Inspector with the Reading Blue Mountain and Northern Railroad. Casey attended Tamaqua High School. Prior to working at RBMNR, Casey was a contractor for our Real Estate department.



Samuel Tripp

Samuel Tripp was recently hired as a Conductor with the Reading Blue Mountain and Northern Railroad. Samuel attended North Warren Regional High School and Rider University. Prior to working at RBMNR, Samuel worked for Camp Orchard Hill for six years.

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

BY: SHANNON ANDERSON, HR SPECIALIST

Congratulations Michele!



Spring

I am pleased to introduce the Spring 2020 "Spotlight Employee", Michele Daub. Michele has been employed with RBMN since October of 2017 and is currently a Customer Service Manager. Prior to working at RBMN, Michele worked at Quality Stone Veneer.

Michele was born and raised in Pine Grove, Pennsylvania, and graduated from Pine Grove High School.

Michele and her husband, Frank, have one son – Chad Daub. They have two dogs Jozie and Abby, both beagle rescues, and a cat named Whiskers.

In Michele's spare time, she enjoys spending time with family, watching movies, reading, and traveling.

Michele was recognized by Susan Ludwig, VP Customer Service. Susan said, "Michele is always willing to help anyone with anything she can. She asks for more work when she is caught up in addition to being very hardworking and loyal." Susan gets many comments on Michele's work ethic from other departments.

Thank you, Michele, for your loyalty and dedication to RBMN.

As the "Spotlight Employee", Michele received a \$100 gift certificate to dine at her favorite restaurant, Logan's Roadhouse. ♦

Congratulations Michael!



Summer

I am pleased to introduce the Summer 2020 "Spotlight Employee", Michael Kolbe. Michael has been employed with RBMN since July of 1996 and is currently an Engineer. The railroad was one of Michael's first jobs where he started as a part-time custodian and offered a full-time freight conductor position when he turned 18. Michael thanks to all of his past and present railroad veterans who helped him get his career started.

Michael was born in Reading and raised in Schuylkill Haven and Orwigsburg. He graduated from Schuylkill Haven in 1998.

Michael and his wife, Sarah, will be married for twelve years this August and have one daughter, Olivia, who is eight years old. They have a pet goldfish named Gill.

In Michael's spare time, he enjoys walking, rail trails, and visiting local professional sports venues and roots for the Philadelphia sports teams and their minor league affiliates. Michael also enjoys learning about local rail transportation history, acquiring books, maps and models that relate to the area.

Michael was recognized by Tyler Glass, Executive VP of Operations. Tyler said, "Michael has been a valuable member of our team for over 22 years and has been a great mentor for the newer employees."

Thank you, Michael, for your dedication and value to RBMN.

As the "Spotlight Employee", Michael received a \$100 gift certificate to dine at his favorite restaurant. ♦

Congratulations!

ON YOUR NEW ARRIVAL



Laura (AVP, Business Development at Reading Jet Center) and Chris Lesagonic welcomed twins to their family, Audrey Quinn (held by Laura) and Cheyenne Rey (held by Chris), on April 14, 2020. Cheyenne weighed 4.69 pounds and was 18.11 inches long. Audrey weighed 4.20 pounds and was 17.72 inches long.



Travis (Engineer) and Jan Prevost welcomed Evelyn May on June 19, 2020. She weighed 6.13 pounds and was 20 inches long.



Matt (MOW Machine Operator) and Karen McGinnis welcomed Lacie Kennedy on April 9, 2020. She weighed 8 pounds and 14.3 ounces and was 19 inches long.



Nate (Engineer) and Lauren Mengel welcomed their second son Hudson on May 16, 2020. He weighed 8 pounds and 9 ounces and was 21 inches long.



Darrin (Engineer) and Desirea Keip welcomed Hunter Ethan on July 20, 2019. Unfortunately, we somehow missed having Hunter in our magazine when he was newborn, but we're glad to see his handsome blue eyes here.



Kevin (Conductor) and Amanda Schaffer welcomed a third son, Cayden James on March 9, 2020. Cayden weighed 7 lbs. 6 oz. and was 19.5 inches long. Congratulations to the whole Schaffer family including older brothers Christopher (age 7) and Charlie (age 4).

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

AUG. 1.....MICHAEL BISCHAK	AUG. 30.....JAMIE SOLOMON	OCT. 6.....JAMES DONLEY
AUG. 1.....MATTHEW MINNICH	SEPT. 2.....MATTHEW NESTOR	OCT. 7.....TINA MULLER-LEVAN
AUG. 4.....SAMUEL TRIPP	SEPT. 4.....COREY HAMM	OCT. 8.....ZACHARY BAKER
AUG. 7.....LYNN ENGLE	SEPT. 5.....KIM REED	OCT. 9.....DAWN-MARIE BUBUCK
AUG. 8.....MATTHEW FISHER	SEPT. 8.....DIANE LEIBY	OCT. 10.....PHILIP GESCHWINDT
AUG. 8.....MICHAEL KOLBE	SEPT. 9.....BRAD HANDLING	OCT. 10.....NICK RICCIO
AUG. 10.....LARRY FISHER	SEPT. 9.....SPENCER HOCKMAN	OCT. 10.....JOSH RODNEY
AUG. 11.....WILLIAM CLARK	SEPT. 10.....NATHANIEL BILLET-DIAZ	OCT. 11.....NICHOLAS SURUSKIE
AUG. 11.....BEVERLY HESS	SEPT. 11.....TIFFANY HOWELL	OCT. 13.....JOHN BROWN
AUG. 13.....SHANE FREDERICKSON	SEPT. 11.....THOMAS STEMKO	OCT. 13.....MATTHEW JOHNSON
AUG. 13.....ANDY MULLER, JR.	SEPT. 12.....WAYNE MICHEL	OCT. 14.....SHAWN BILLINGS
AUG. 13.....RAY ZWEIZIG	SEPT. 12.....MARCUS SEARS	OCT. 14.....CHAD FREDERICKSON
AUG. 14.....RONALD COLLINS-WEST II	SEPT. 16.....RUSSELLE MONROE	OCT. 14.....JENNIFER FREDERICKSON
AUG. 14.....DUANE ENGLE	SEPT. 19.....CHUCK CARL	OCT. 15.....RODNEY BARRELL
AUG. 14.....ERIK OSTROSKIE	SEPT. 19.....EVAN KERR	OCT. 18.....JASON READING
AUG. 15.....MATTHEW SLOSKEY	SEPT. 19.....ERIC SLEKOVAC	OCT. 19.....THERMAN MADEIRA
AUG. 17.....RYAN TREXLER	SEPT. 22.....JUSTIN FETTEROLF	OCT. 22.....ALBERT SEILER
AUG. 19.....CHRIS GOETZ	SEPT. 22.....RYAN FREDERICKSON	OCT. 25.....ALVIN RINEER
AUG. 21.....JUSTIN MENGEL	SEPT. 24.....JEFFREY JONES	OCT. 26.....KEVIN MCARDLE
AUG. 23.....DAVID JOHNSON	SEPT. 26.....THOMAS SKRUTSKI	OCT. 27.....SHANNON ANDERSON
AUG. 24.....CALEB FETTEROLF	SEPT. 29.....TYLER ACKER	OCT. 28.....TRAVIS PREVOST
AUG. 25.....RYAN PARKS	SEPT. 29.....BROCK KRUMANOCKER	OCT. 30.....RAYMOND CHIPPA
AUG. 26.....KYLE BARRELL	OCT. 3.....DARREN SPARE	OCT. 30.....JOHN HARTMAN
AUG. 27.....JIM MIZNER	OCT. 4.....SCOTT BESHORE	OCT. 30.....BENJAMIN LEONTI
AUG. 30.....JESSICA MELOCHICK	OCT. 5.....MARA MERCADO	OCT. 30.....WILLIAM RIEGLE

Reading & Northern's Family Recipes

Elderberry Syrup

Sabine Fidler, HR Assistant, shares a recipe given to her by a "fellow oiler". She says, "Eating cleanly and staying healthy is important to my family. This recipe is easy to make and it an integral part of our daily wellness routine."

Ingredients

- 1 cup elderberries (dried or fresh)
- 1-1½ cups raw honey
- 4 cups water
- 7 drops copaiba
- 3 drops thieves
- 3 drops orange
- 3 drops lemon
- 2 drops lime
- 1 drop franincense
- 1 drop nutmeg
- 1 drop cinnamon bark

Directions

- 1.) Add 1 cup elderberries to 4 cups boiling water.
- 2.) Allow to simmer on the stove for 45 minutes or until the liquid has been reduced by about half.
- 3.) Remove water from the stove and cool for approximately 30 minutes, but leave it warm enough to melt the honey but not so hot that it destroys the properties of the honey and essential oils.
- 4.) Strain through a fine mesh strainer then stir in the honey.
- 5.) Add the 8 essential oils.
- 6.) Pour into an empty glass bottle and enjoy! Refrigerate for 3 months.

Notes

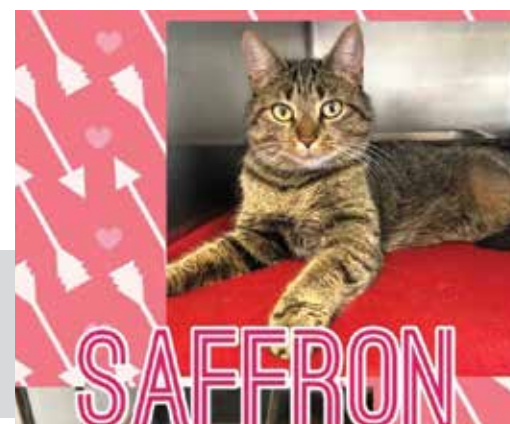
- Use 1 teaspoon a day for adults, ½ teaspoon for children
- You can make this syrup with only the first ingredients if you prefer not to add essential oils.
- The oils that I add are Young Living essential oils which have immunity, anti-inflammatory, and antioxidant properties. They are the best essential oils you can buy, because they are pure and carry the "seed to seal" promise.
- When I use dried elderberries, I only use organic elderberries.
- When using fresh berries, do not eat them raw. Cook them first!

♥ Rescued, Adopted, Loved ♥



Ryan Trexler, RBMN Conductor, and spouse Ashley recently adopted Buzz, a 9-week old retriever mix. Buzz loves to play outside and eat all of his food. He is adjusting well to his new home!

Del Saylor, and spouse Dick recently adopted Saffron, a 4-year old tabby cat. She's a lovable rescue enjoying her furever home and has given the Saylor's so much joy.



We would like to encourage everyone to send us their favorite family recipes to sfidler@readingnorthern.com.

Wellness Corner

BY: SABINE FIDLER, HR ASSISTANT

Boosting Your Immune System

During the current, ongoing battle against COVID 19, daily hygiene habits such as handwashing and avoiding sickly individuals are crucial. Health experts recommend boosting your immune system to give you a healthy advantage. Probiotics, diet, supplements, sleep, and the use of essential oils all impact our state of wellness.

Probiotics have become increasingly popular as people develop awareness of the connection between gut health and a strong immune system. Did you know that 9 out of 10 cells in our body are microbes such as fungi, viruses, and bacteria? This interesting fact means that only 10% of the cells in our body are actual human cells. This interaction of microbes and human cells, our microbiome, reaps systemic benefits when it is in optimal balance and working order. Benefits are not limited to digestion but include brain activity, immune function, reduced systemic inflammation, skin health, and energy in addition to many others. Review Scout's health editor suggests including a quality, daily probiotic to help maintain these broader benefits and keep them in tip-top shape. Inspect the probiotic's label prior to purchase. Some probiotics include additives such as binders and fillers which may be detrimental to your health.

Understanding what to look for and what to avoid is critical. Research and user feedback have resulted in the differentiation between high-quality and generic probiotics. Criteria to contemplate when deciding which probiotic meets your needs includes:

- Search for a probiotic that contains a minimum of twelve unique strains for optimal microbiome balance..
- Because a microbiome encompasses trillions of bacteria, it is important that a probiotic be strong enough. Probiotic potency is measured in CFUs, therefore, a formula containing at least 50,000 CFUs is preferred.
- Since a high-quality probiotic is important, avoid those that do not list substrains. The nonexistence of a substrain list most likely indicates a low-quality or ineffective strain formula.

"Eating the rainbow" is not just another catchy idiom. This expression refers to ingesting nutrients from a variety of colorful foods for an optimal immune system boost. Exceptions to the "rainbow" rule are alliums, such as cauliflower, garlic, onions, and turnips, which contain an anti-inflammatory sulfuric compound that is naturally detoxifying. You'll get "the best bang for your buck" if you choose organically grown produce. Organic produce is grown without harmful chemicals or pesticides. Pesticides are additives that clearly negate any benefit from "eating the rainbow".

Immunity supplements have become popular since the beginning of the year, thanks to COVID 19. Proper nutrition enables the immune system to fight harmful pathogens more effectively. Interestingly, 76 percent of supplements which were selected for testing had failed. Consumer Health's in-house research criteria encompasses verification of supplemental ingredients for immunity purposes on the basis of natural purity, superior quality, and clinical validation. In addition, customer surveys were administered and labels of top brands were tested for accuracy. Finally, brands that provide "hassle free, 90 to 365 days money back are the ones you can trust." Consumer Health suggests the right immunity supplement contain vitamin C, elderberry extract, zinc, turmeric extract, acidophilus probiotics, and made from Non-GMO ingredients.

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports that there is increasing science-based evidence that sleep has compelling effects on immune function. "1. Sleep loss reduces natural killer (NK) cell activity, which increases the risk for cancer and viral infections. 2. Sleep loss generates production of inflammatory cytokines, which increases the risk for cardiovascular and metabolic disorders. 3. Sleep loss reduces the production of antibodies, which increases the risk of infections." Simply stated, sleep deprivation can affect various areas of the immune system which can result in a wide range of disorders. Loss of sleep is positively related to an increased susceptibility for infection.

Essential oils have become very popular. An article written December 2019 in the U.S. National Library of Medicine/ National Institutes of Health, Peterfalvi et al. describes essential oils (EOs) as "highly concentrated, aromatic volatile oils of plant origin with numerous chemical constituents that are extracted by steam distillation, hydrodiffusion, or pressure." Aromatherapy utilizes EOs in the prevention and treatment of disorders via application orally, topical administration, by massage, or inhalation. Ginger and eucalyptus have shown to promote immune balance and enhancement attributes. Peterfalvi et. Al. suggests that future research be directed on a more limited assortment of EOs demonstrating "potential immune function enhancing effects" presenting increased credible scientific testimony" since "studies examining the effects of EOs on the immune systems on healthy human subjects are scarce, not to mention the investigation of effects in different medical conditions."

For more information, visit:

<https://www.aarp.org/health/healthy-living/info-2020/boosting-immune-response.html>

<https://www.reviewscout.org/top-5-probiotics-b/>

<https://www.aarp.org/health/healthy-living/info-2020/superfood-recipes-for-winter.html>

<https://consumershealth.org/immunity-supplements-guide/>

<https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/work-hour-training-for-nurses/longhours/mod2/05.html>

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6943609/>

**Reading Blue Mountain &
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Engineer Rich Bernhardt pulling into Tamaqua Station for the first Ride and Dine on Saturday, June 27, 2020.