

# R & N Magazine

Official Magazine of the Employees and Customers of the Reading & Northern Railroad

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After a year of great achievement there is only one thing left to do...and that is to publicly thank all those responsible for our 2017 success.

First, I must start with our amazing employees. Never before in my almost 40-year career have I seen such a sustained period of hard work and accomplishment. Everywhere I look Reading & Northern employees were out and about doing a great job while maintaining a great attitude.

As I said to the 270+ employees and guests at our annual holiday party, all of us at the railroad owed a special debt to the Transportation Department this year given how they managed to work week in and week out to fill all the demands we threw at them.

-Thirty extra coal unit trains to move in four months. No problem.

-Shifting hundreds of empty tank cars to meet our customer's new requirements. No problems.

-Handling dozens of additional passenger train starts due to a huge uptick in our passenger business. No problem.

Whatever was needed was done. And it was done safely and with great spirit.

This year I went out and talked to most of our engineers and conductors in small groups while we were dealing with the heaviest sustained workload in our history. I went out to encourage them during this heavy work period, I left having been encouraged. I went out to thank them for their hard work and dedication, I left having been thanked for the work we did in finding new business, growing the company and sharing our success with good wages and great benefits.

I could not be prouder of the work done by our engineers, conductors, and dispatchers and I want to thank the Operations management team, Tyler Glass, Tom Cook, Jim Cerulli and Joe Matuella, for their efforts in keeping the trains moving.

Of course, the secret behind a successful railroad is that no group is an island. It takes an

entire company to achieve success. In the pages that follow you will read of the exceptional work done by our Passenger, MOW, Signals, Mechanical and Facilities departments and you will see pictures of some of their handiwork. Other departments are equally important, but less showy. Our Police and Real Estate department serve dual roles in both protecting our properties AND bringing in substantial revenues from leasing and inspection charges. Our Finance Department does a great job in purchasing additional assets at great prices as well as collecting all of the monies in a timely fashion and paying salaries and bills. Our HR Department keeps finding new people with the right attitude to join our team and it keeps working hard to make sure our compensation and benefits package is the best in the region.

That brings me to the Marketing and Customer Service roles. As all of our readers know, taking care of existing customers and finding new ones is near to my heart. And I am proud to lead the best commercial team in the railroad industry. Dan Gilchrist and I go back to Conrail days and we have been working together at the Reading & Northern since 2000. But over the last few years Dan and I have been able to bring in a great deal of top-line help. Dennis Shaffer, Rian Nemeroff, and Bill Clark each had very successful careers in the railroad industry and with rail customers. They each bring great industry expertise as well as keen insight into what it takes to land a customer and keep them happy. There is no doubt in my mind that without their efforts we would not have had the success we have had.

On the Customer Service side of the house I can state without equivocation that we now have the best Customer Service staff we have ever had. Susan Ludwig has put together a great staff and we have received more compliments from customers this year than ever before. We have made a greater effort to introduce our individual customer service representatives to their actual customer contacts so as to improve communication and we held two customer appreciation train trips in order to let our

customers see the railroad in operation and meet our team. In 2017 we also formalized the process of handling customer requests for special services. It seems as if more of our customers, who are almost all receivers, have run into material shortages this year. As the last leg of the journey RBMN is in a position to try to overcome whatever delays occurred elsewhere. As a team led by Daren Geschwindt we bend over backwards to accommodate the customer's request, usually at no additional cost, by modifying our train schedules. This takes extra time and lots of coordination, and we know it runs afoul of "precision railroading", but at Reading & Northern the customer comes first.

That provides a nice segue into acknowledging our appreciation for our customers, both freight and passenger excursion. We could not have smashed all our previous traffic and passenger records if not for the support of our customers. While it is true that we go the extra mile, literally, in order to serve our customers, it is also true that our customers have other options. Every time a customer chooses to ship via rail we appreciate it. That is why we continue to make investments to provide exceptional service. That is why we have upgraded our track and signal infrastructure to ensure efficient safe handling of their goods. That is why we invested in more locomotives and freight cars. And that is why we also invest in our staff resources. So, on behalf of all of the employees of the Reading & Northern and Lehigh Gorge, I say a sincere thank you to our freight customers and passenger visitors.

Closer to home it is important that I thank the spouses and families of all of our employees. I know that I could not do my job and devote the hours needed to run the railroad without the support and encouragement of my wife Ronda. And I know the support of our families makes it easier for all of our employees to do what it takes to make the RBMN and LGSR successful.

Continued on page 4.

## COVER PHOTO

THE CREW OF RBMN'S LOCOMOTIVE MECHANICAL DEPARTMENT POSE ON LOCOMOTIVE 5049 AFTER A WEEK OF JANUARY SNOW STORMS. STANDING ONBOARD ARE DAVE EVELY, JOSEPH ZIMMERMAN, SCOTT BESHORE, AND ADAM STUMP. IN FRONT OF THE LOCOMOTIVE ARE BENJAMIN MEISER, NATHANIEL BILLET-DIAZ, AND DUSTIN BERNDT, AVP MOTIVE POWER.

## EDITORS

JOLENE BUSHER • CRYSTAL ARNDT

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Continued from page 3.

So thank you to all of you who help us do our jobs by making life good at home.

Finally, none of the above would be possible or relevant if not for one man, our founder, CEO and visionary, Andy Muller, Jr. Anyone looking at the RBMN and LGSR in 2017 and remembering what Andy had when he started out railroading knows that our success is due to his vision and entrepreneurial brilliance. He took a railroad with crumbling infrastructure, limited staff, few customers, and no excursion service and he turned it, by force of his personality, into a regional railroad powerhouse and one of the premier tourist railroads in the nation.

Anyone taking a ride on the railroad will immediately see the results of his efforts. Our passenger guests can begin the day at one of our new passenger stations, Outer Station north of Reading or Schuylkill Haven. Once on board

they can sit in one of our beautifully restored passenger cars or the magnificent parlor car. The train will be pulled by either our restored 425 steam engine or one of our new diesels. Once they begin moving they will notice that the tracks are smooth and the travel is faster as a result of the signal and trackwork. Our engineers also notice how much faster they can travel as Andy spent the money to turn his vision of a high speed mainline railroad into reality.

Everywhere you look you can see the results of Andy making the investment to bring his dreams to reality. Our staff is both friendly and professional; the result of making sure we hire quality people and provide them with excellent compensation packages. Our railroad has expanded north to Mehoopany and the Humboldt Industrial Park. We have new customers all along our railroad, including what was once the farthest reaches of our

branchlines.

It is not magic that turns a dour wasteland of crumbling infrastructure into a vibrant, well-maintained thoroughfare of business. It is one man following his dream and devoting his energy and his fortune to make that dream a reality. That man is Andy Muller, Jr and I am proud to call him a friend and the best boss I have ever had.

It takes a lot of work from a lot of people to keep our railroad on track. And it is important to take time every year to thank all of those people. Our employees, our freight and passenger customers, our spouses and families, and our leader Andy Muller, these are the people responsible for our ongoing success. And thanks to all of them we will keep on track for years to come. ♦

# For Reading & Northern, A Coal-Fueled Record Year

WRITTEN BY: WILLIAM C. VANTUONO | EDITOR-IN-CHIEF: RAILWAY AGE



**Port Clinton, Pa.-based Class II railroad Reading & Northern (R&N) set a business record in 2017, handling 31,175 carloads—a 15% increase over 2016, and a cumulative 50% increase over the past five years. Anthracite coal traffic played an important role.**

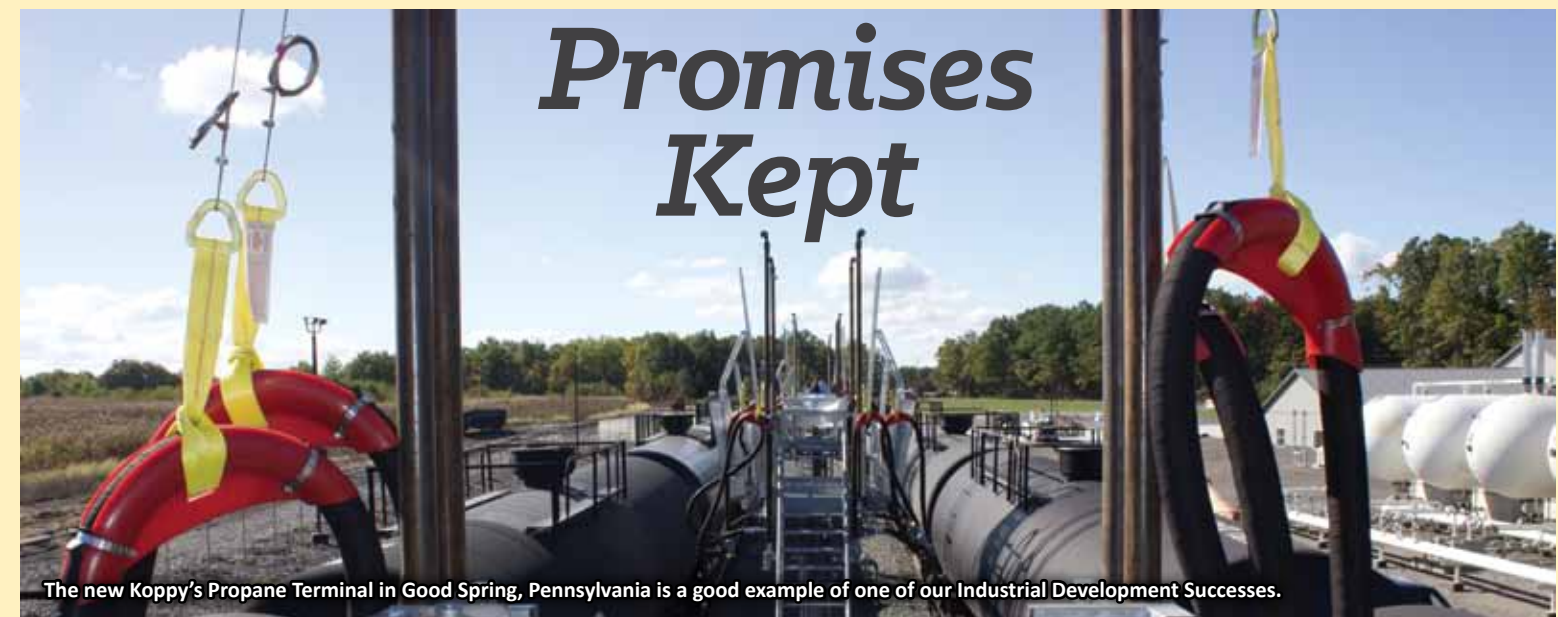
“This unprecedented growth came across all of the many commodity lanes handled by R&N,” the railroad said. “Our anthracite coal business was up more than 40%, so once again, R&N is ‘The Road of Anthracite.’ This explosive growth was fueled by a late-year announcement of a major sale of Pennsylvania anthracite to the Ukraine, replacing Russian coal. Following a July announcement of the deal at the White House, R&N was told to prepare to move more than 300,000 tons of anthracite by year end. We stepped up and managed to provide all the cars needed for the business and served as many as eight different origins as the entire anthracite community pulled together to fill this huge order. We are hopeful that this business will continue in 2018.”

Another significant development in the anthracite business was completion of seven years of work to connect Hazleton Hiller LLC’s Hazleton Shaft and its new state-of-the-art coal dryer to the R&N. That project was completed during the summer, and the process of shifting more than 100,000 tons of truck-delivered dried coal to rail began. By year end, R&N and Hazleton Hiller had shifted 40,000 tons of coal to rail for delivery to a Midwestern steel mill. To accomplish this, R&N purchased 121

hopper cars and a new conveyor to assist with the unloading at a transfer station in Indiana. “We expect to convert more of this truck traffic to rail in 2018,” R&N said.

There were other successes in 2017. Several ongoing industrial development projects reached fruition, adding hundreds of new cars of business. R&N’s transload facilities and warehouse attracted new customers and added more cars. The Forest Products group handled more than 10,000 carloads in 2017.

In order to handle this growth in business, R&N purchased additional freight cars and locomotives, added more employees, opened new facilities and invested in track and signal systems. “At year end, we had more employees, track, locomotives, freight cars, facilities and customers than at any point in our history,” said CEO/Owner Andy Muller, Jr. “2017 was the culmination of more than 25 years of investment and risk-taking. It is never my intention to rest on our success and to pocket our profits. My goal is to build the best railroad in the nation. And to do that we have to constantly invest in the railroad. Our investment decisions might not make sense to outsiders, but the proof of our strategy is apparent to anyone looking at our record of



The new Kopyy's Propane Terminal in Good Spring, Pennsylvania is a good example of one of our Industrial Development Successes.

BY: DENNIS SHAFFER, VP BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

2017 was a record breaking year for Reading and Northern. This achievement did not happen by accident. An important element of our success was the result of a lot of hard work by all employees to provide superior customer service. The email below from Kopyy's Propane is a good example of why we have been so successful.

In 2016 Kopyy's Propane opened a new terminal at Good Spring on our Tremont Branch. The Tremont Branch is normally served two to three days per week, however when Kopyy's made the decision to locate their facility at Good Spring we promised to provide additional service when necessary to keep them supplied with propane.

As we all know late December and early January was unusually cold and the demand for propane increased. We increased service on the Tremont Branch to keep propane cars flowing and on Sunday January 7 we ran a special trainload of propane to Good Spring. This allowed Kopyy's to keep their customers supplied with the much needed propane.

At the Reading and Northern customer service is not just a buzz word, it is a promise we keep.

To all at RBM&N,

*Kopyy's Propane wishes to express our gratitude to your team for your help in securing a Sunday shift to our Good Spring rail terminal this past weekend. The industry has never experienced a more trying time, and we have never seen a better sight than your big green engines pulling our much needed propane to the top of the summit on Sunday afternoon. This additional supply enabled Kopyy's Propane to better serve our many customers who desperately needed propane during the frigid weather. Other terminals were unable to place our rail cars in a timely manner, while your crew sprang into action and saved the day for us by enabling a Sunday shift. We are forever grateful to all involved.*

*I keep thinking back to almost 2 years ago... talking to Dennis, Wayne, & Andy. We were concerned about situations like this, knowing what negative experiences we've had in the past at other terminals. We wanted assurance that if a situation like this arose, RBM&N's team would do everything possible to help. And help your team did! Again, just a great big thank you to your entire team. Please pass along our gratitude to Wayne and Andy.*

*Randy, David, Kara, & Kristen*

*Kopyy's Propane*

constant growth and success.”

“R&N has a two-pronged formula for ongoing success,” said President Wayne Michel. “We take care of our employees with great pay, excellent benefits and profit sharing. The result is a 98% retention rate. And R&N takes care of its customers. Our goal is to provide our customers with service superior to any railroad or trucker. We offer guaranteed on-time delivery and meet it 99% of the time. We provide special service to customers who are in need of an expedited delivery. We have one of the best customer service and marketing teams in the industry.

And we keep our prices competitive.”

The future looks bright for R&N as it has more than 20 active industrial development projects in various stages of development. “Growth is built into the R&N DNA,” said Muller. “I expect our railroad to grow. Our superior service will help our customers grow and as they grow we will benefit. I expect our reputation to encourage more businesses to locate along our lines. We will always take care of our customers and our employees. That is the cornerstone of our success.”

Reading & Northern, a two-time Railway Age

Regional Railroad of the Year, is a privately held company serving more than 70 customers in nine eastern Pennsylvania counties (Berks, Bradford, Carbon, Columbia, Lackawanna, Luzerne, Northumberland, Schuylkill and Wyoming). It has expanded its operations over the past 20-plus years and has grown into one of the premier railroads in Pennsylvania. R&N operates freight services and steam- and diesel-powered excursion passenger services through its Lehigh Gorge Scenic Railway, owns almost 1,200 freight cars, and employs more than 200. ♦



# Marketing Year in Review 2017

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

As I write this article the first day back to work after New Years Day, I realize my first day at RBMN was this day in 2000.....almost exactly eighteen years ago. As such, I have written several "Year in Review" articles.

This year was a bit different for me with Rian Nemeroff focused on our Forest Products business and Bill Clark on our coal business. They both had great successes this year, which they will report on in other pages of this magazine.

My focus this year was on industrial development and the task of positioning Reading & Northern to become an interline carrier.

On the industrial development front we can never discuss our projects until they are publically announced. Nonetheless, I can say Dennis Shaffer and I had a very good year and at present we have twenty six projects in the pipeline. Those of you who have followed us for years know how long some of our projects take to reach fruition. In fact in our last issue Wayne and Bill Clark talked about the Hazleton Shaft project, which finally opened in 2017 and is a great success. But Wayne and I started that project back in 2010!

At least one of our industrial development projects, an example of our successful partnership with Penn's Northeast, should be announced soon. We joined Penn's Northeast in 2017 to take advantage of their great contacts and resources.

In terms of the twenty six projects they are all real with a good chance of success. While history tells us that at least a few of these will make it to fruition.....even if it takes a few more years or in some cases a lot more years to finally happen, others will fall by the wayside. The projects fit all categories. Some are pretty big and others pretty small. Some are new customers in new facilities and others are old customers expanding on current facilities. Some will utilize a transload operation to use rail without an actual rail siding of their own. Some are traditional manufacturing based operations and others are a new kind of service operation representing a new line of business for RBMN.

What is consistent about these projects is that most of them will require significant rail construction and other facilities improvements that will require RBMN to be creative and aggressive to help the project across the finish line. As I tell prospects all the time..."If we can do it safely we will do it.....if we cannot do it safely we will tell you that. We will never say we could do it but chose not to because it does not meet our specs." And to date we have always been able to make it work. Stay

tuned for more developments.

The other big change this year was RBMN became an interline settlement carrier. Basically Norfolk Southern let us know that we were too big a shortline with too much varied business to be treated like other smaller shortlines. So NS suggested we go interline, just like all of the big railroads like CSX, UP, and BNSF. And we agreed to do so.

The agreeing to do so was the easy part. The implementation has been a huge effort for RBMN and the different Class 1s. Although we have tried to make it easy for our customers, a number of them have also been impacted.

In its simplest terms going interline means RBMN is now an independent railroad. No other railroad can set prices to our customers or locations. That means every time someone wants to ship to or from a Reading & Northern customer/location the other railroads need to negotiate with Reading & Northern as to our rates.

Although the transition has had its bumps and although the process will cost us money in terms of transaction cost, the benefits to our customers are significant. Since Reading & Northern is close to our customers as well as many of the shippers who send materials to our customers, we are able to help influence the rail rates. That means we can work with the other railroads to ensure that we are pricing the rail services competitively. The result should be that our customers remain competitive and our business can grow.

We could not have accomplished this transition without the help of all of our Customer Service people, our Finance Department and our friends at Norfolk Southern and the other Class 1 railroads. A huge shoutout also goes to Daren Geschwindt who has been in charge of most of the administrative work. As for me, I have been busy working with Norfolk Southern and other large railroads making sure we have rates in place for all of the 30,000 plus carloads a year we handled. At year-end we are in good shape and I am confident that as the last old rates expire in the next few months we will complete a smooth transition. Looking to 2018 we are positioned well to continue taking good care of our existing customers to help them be successful and working aggressively to help new customers locate on RBMN to take advantage of the benefits of being located on the Reading and Northern Railroad.....such as running a scheduled railroad 99% on time, additional capacity on our trains, extra daily switches possible, lowest demurrage in the industry, and additional storage track available.

Here is to a successful 2018. ♦

# Coal Department 2017

BY: WILLIAM CLARK, SENIOR VP COAL

My first year at the Reading and Northern has been exciting! We have seen significant growth in our domestic and international business and have grown our fleet of rail cars to help meet the increased demands. 2017 has been a banner year for the Reading and Northern with the addition of a new online producer and the development of a rail-truck transfer center in Indiana that has allowed a major steel producer to shift from shipping coal by truck to rail.

Our export business, benefitting from a new contract to Ukraine with Xcoal and increases from our other exporters, showed a dramatic 50.6% increase over 2016. On the domestic side, the purchase of additional railcars and the development of a new rail loadout allowed this segment to notch a significant 37.2% increase. Finally, we secured a new shipper to the river that helped that market show an impressive 11.8% increase over 2016. In all, the coal business on Reading and Northern in 2017 was 40% over 2016!

Some of the notable achievements this past year:

1. Reading & Northern completed the construction of a rail spur serving a coal dryer operated by Hazleton Shaft. By providing the engineering and construction in-house and using company materials, RBMN was able to construct the spur at a fraction of the original cost and completed the project ahead of schedule and below budget.

Having access to rail has allowed Hazleton Shaft, and its partner in the dryer, Hiller Carbon, to ship dried coal from their state-of-the art dryer. Hazleton/Hiller diverted over 2,000 trucks to rail deliveries in 2017 and we expect to divert thousands of additional truckloads to rail deliveries in 2018.

2. Related to the new dryer at Hazleton Shaft, Wayne and I met with Hiller Carbon to discuss shifting the dryer's business from truck to rail. Hiller identified a large steel customer in Northern Indiana that was not able to receive coal by rail. RBMN jumped into action! We identified a transfer terminal on Norfolk Southern and arranged to find a local trucking company to deliver the coal to the steel mill on a just in time basis. When it was determined that capital was required to unload the coal Andy Muller stepped up again and purchased an unloading system for a facility located 600 miles from our railroad!

We began loading coal in August and have grown our market share from zero to 50%. This is expected to continue to grow until virtually 100% of anthracite moving to the facility will move in an RBMN covered hopper. A customer who shipped no Anthracite by rail in 2016 will grow to be our largest domestic receiver in 2018.

3. With demand for dried coal increasing thanks in part to the Hiller/Hazleton deal, Andy Muller decided to make an investment of approximately \$1.5 million to expand our fleet of covered hoppers. When I joined RBMN our fleet included 102 covered hoppers. As of the end of 2017 our covered hopper fleet more than doubled to 223.

4. In August one of our largest export customers, Xcoal, notified RBMN that it had secured a major move of export coal to a utility in Ukraine. The contract called for moving 350,000 tons of anthracite product from our railroad to Baltimore by the end of the year! Obviously this meant that Xcoal and Reading Anthracite, its local supply partner, wanted to load immediately! In typical RBMN fashion, our transportation group, coordinating with the coal unit, swung into action.

Reading and Northern stepped up to the challenge. At times we were coordinating the loading of trains at eight separate loadouts. Additionally, trains had to be interchanged to NS in a specific car order due to the use of different qualities of anthracite. The ability of our operations and Coal group to take on this challenge with no notice and to exceed the expectations of Xcoal is a testament to the professionalism and moxie inherent in RBMN.

2017 was in many respects a banner year, but we expect more in 2018. There are additional marketing projects in the pipeline that portend more market share improvement domestically. On the export front we are cautiously optimistic that our coal business will remain strong (and possibly grow!). This combined with continued growth with our new customers and continued economic growth in general point to another record year for "The Road of Anthracite".

None of this success would not have been possible without the help of a number of RBMN people who helped shepherd me through this exciting year. Mike Sharadin and Steve Werley who work with me in the Coal group were instrumental in keeping things running smoothly and handling all of the myriad customer issues that arose. Dan Gilchrist and Wayne, who laid the foundation for the Coal group's success, were constantly available for counsel and to share relevant history. And, of course, it all starts with Andy Muller because without his willingness to invest in our business and to take risks we could never have grown this business.

2017 was an exciting year, here's to an even better 2018 and beyond! ♦



The new RBMN conveyor is in place and ready for the first car to be unloaded at the transload facility.



Loader topping off a car that was part of Hazleton Shaft's first export shipment.



Rail cars are being loaded while a haul truck delivers more material to the load out.



A cut of newly acquired covered hoppers lined up for loading at Hazleton Hiller. Many RBMN departments played a role in purchasing these cars. The Mechanical Department did a thorough inspection prior to the acquisition, the Purchasing Department pulled the trigger on the sale, and the Facility Department repainted the cars once online. Great job by all!

New siding under construction at Seven D wholesalers in Scranton, Pennsylvania.



## Forest Products Review – 2017



What is inside? Could be wood pulp – hard or soft wood, linerboard, medium, oriented strand board, wood panel, recovered paper, directory paper, printing paper, cut sheet paper or even paper cup stock. And that is just the possibilities within Forest Products on the RBMN!

BY: RIAN J. NEMEROFF, VP FOREST PRODUCTS

In Forest Products we experienced both the agony of defeat and the thrill of victory in 2017! Good news first, we introduced a new Canadian wood pulp shipper AND a new paper shipper desiring the services of a RBMN-served paper converter. Total carloads for the Forest Products portfolio exceeded 10K carloads representing over half of the RBMN's general merchandise business! On the loss side was the closure of Office Depot's Distribution Center in Hazleton and the decision by a major manufacturer to discontinue making adhesive paper that was shipped to one of our customers.

Some of our "bad news" was just a matter of delay as when the 2017 installation of a new corrugator to make boxes was delayed to early 2018. Paperboard carload volumes were down at two RBMN-served destinations but since we serve four plants we ended up making up most of that volume elsewhere. The wood products business was up at our existing customers AND we had a full year with a new receiver in Scranton.

The bottom line is that we held steady in a year with a lot of Forest Products turmoil and we set the stage for even more business in 2018. In addition to the new corrugator we also expect to land a recovered paper shipper in 2018 and reloading inbound paperboard boxcars with old corrugated containers.

When people ask me why RBMN has attracted so many Forest Products customers I offer a few answers.

First, we offer the best rail service in the industry. In all my years I have never seen a company so committed to serving its customers. Not only do we offer a truly scheduled railroad that provides on-time delivery 99% of the time we also smooth out the bumps in the supply chain by offering special train service when required, often at no cost to our customers. You cannot imagine how happy a customer is when you tell them that

the car they have been waiting for days will be delivered within hours of our receiving it at interchange. In addition, our demurrage rates are among the lowest in the country. Demurrage is a fact of life, like visits to the dentist, but at RBMN we do not see it as a profit center and so we keep the costs low. This commitment to the customer makes RBMN an easy sell.

Second, RBMN offers access to two Class 1 railroads. While the great majority of our business moves with Norfolk Southern, Canadian Pacific has been able to offer competitive service for Canadian Forest Products materials coming to our region. As a result, our customers have options and options help them control costs as well as improve service.

Third, for any customer looking to locate on a railroad RBMN has the best industrial development team in the business. As our readers know from past articles, industrial development is near and dear to Wayne's heart since he ran Conrail's industrial development team twenty plus years ago. However, thanks to Andy Muller's aggressive entrepreneurial zest RBMN has turbocharged the process. I have never seen a company so aggressively work with customers to assist on sidings and connections. Thanks to Andy's investment strategies we are able to help customers connect to our railroad faster and cheaper than any of our competitors.

Fourth, we have sites available that are Plate F and 286K, the highest and heaviest cars that can be shipped anywhere in the continental US, to show prospective customers. We serve public warehouses and even have a specialty warehouse that the railroad owns and operates in Old Forge.

I welcome anyone interested in developing or expanding their Forest Products business to give me a call at 484-793-3783 or email me at [rnemeroff@readingnorthern.com](mailto:rnemeroff@readingnorthern.com) so that we can explore making you feel at home on the Reading & Northern. ♦

# Operations Year in Review

BY: TYLER GLASS, EXECUTIVE VP OPERATIONS

It was another banner year in Operations. Teamwork was the key when I think of 2017. With all of the extra business we were blessed with it took effort from everyone in the department to ensure everything was handled efficiently and on time. The year started out like any other, solid business with always something happening and a few new prospects on the horizon.

Early on we had some high and wide shipments from Air Products and a new, temporary customer that needed to be handled. High and wide shipments require extra management and some TLC when they are moved over new routes. The Air Products shipment was relatively straight forward, we have operated them for so many years and over the same route they had become second nature. However, the new business and route for other high and wide shipments required significantly more attention. Although clearance numbers looked good on paper there is always a need to double check in the field as the movement is traversing the railroad, sometimes we were talking about a couple of inches of clearance. Our MOW friends watched the movements at critical points just to ensure smooth sailing and I am happy to report all went as planned. The high point of this was passing two large high and wide shipments at Penobscot Yard in May, not an easy feat. Sadly, Air Products closed their Wilkes Barre plant and the movement of heat exchangers halted after many decades of operation.

Our storage business, just like last year, kept us quite busy all year long. There are many facets to this business and often times it comes in large clumps that need to be integrated into our day to day business needs. Our Maintenance of Way team finished some track construction at North Reading and Dauberville that gave us some added capacity and flexibility to make it all work.

Towards the middle of the year, our Hazleton operations evolved yet again. Back in 2016 we started our Humboldt operations and by early 2017 it was integrated into our normal day to day operations as if it had been there all along. In the latter half of this past year, we had to place additional focus on our operational strategies in the Hazleton area to ensure smooth and efficient operations. This extra attention was needed due to additional service needs and a significant increase in business to our new customer Hazleton Shaft.

Although our export business was looking solid for 2017, export coal ended up being the big story for Operations this year. We received a large contract for export coal that materialized and started moving much quicker than new business would normally begin. The export order for Ukraine would take some precision planning

to load, build and interchange the unit trains and it would mean the train crews needed to step it up and put forth a great effort to make it all work. All along we knew our team would make it work but it certainly was not an easy task.

To make all of our business work on the southern end of the system at Reading it would be critical that Norfolk Southern move the unit train business efficiently. I am happy to report that NS did a great job cycling trains in and out of North Reading. Their cooperation was crucial to make all of our coal unit train business work.

Our Communications and Signal Department finished a big signal project in mid September which signaled an additional twenty miles of railroad between Tamaqua and Port Clinton. This was a huge help in streamlining our operations, especially in the afternoons when we have several southbound trains operating within the same window of time. No longer did our crews have to rely on paper authority, now they could just move along according to wayside signal indications. This helped ease the workload for our dispatchers as well.

Our passenger business also saw a great leap in the number of trains operated this past year. The Reading Outer Station facility was opened in 2017 and as a result we now have regular passenger trains operating on the weekend from Reading to Jim Thorpe for six months out of the year.

So lets move on from the business and infrastructure end and let's talk about how the folks in our department responded to all of the exciting things that transpired throughout 2017. Our conductors, dispatchers and engineers stepped up to the plate and drove the ball out of the park when it came to the effort that was put forth by each and every one of them. I could not have asked for a better performance. I would like to thank all of them for a job well done in 2017. I was especially proud because we have added so many new employees and many of them responded well to their new job duties, even in the face of many long days and heavy workloads.

The planning and execution of all of the above was a management challenge, and as I said before it is like a game of chess. There are so many possible moves with so many moving pieces that it requires lots of thought and patience. And you cannot get too far ahead of yourself, sometimes you have to let a few moves play out before you can plan your next move. When it all comes together it can be fun, however there are some days when things didn't go as planned and you are just hopeful that the next day goes better. But as I write this I am happy to report that overall it went about as well as one could have hoped. ♦

## • Safety Year in Review •

BY: TOM COOK, VP SAFETY & TRANSPORTATION

The Reading and Northern had a great year for safety in 2017, and the stage is set for continued improvements in 2018. Reportable injuries per 200,000 man hours in 2017 decreased by 32% versus 2016, and we had two fewer total reportable injuries in 2017 versus 2016. This was accomplished with significantly more employees operating more trains carrying more traffic at a faster pace while our maintenance forces upgraded track and maintained more locomotives and cars than ever before and they did it safer than the year before.

One big challenge we faced was safely integrating our many new employees during this growth spurt. Most of our training is on the job training in the field. Our senior employees did a great job paying extra attention to the immediate safety of our new hires, by warning them of hazards. They didn't let the trainees get into situations that they couldn't handle or were not familiar with.

Operations improved new hire training by adding an additional instructor to the classroom portion of the new hire training. Having two instructors in the class allows us to do more hands on field training in a controlled environment during the first few classroom sessions. This increased practical experience in a very controlled environment gives them a stronger start when they begin their on the job training. Having two voices also takes considerable strain off an instructor who has to teach an eight hour class. Our DSLE John Smolczynski has done considerable work on the audio visual presentations, adding updated pictures and animations that help to keep the long eight hour days of classroom training interesting. He also is a gifted teacher who provides good comic relief to keep the class engaged. John will make a

big contribution to our training and rules class's in 2018 and years to come.

The many improvements made to the railroad also helped improve safety and attitude. Nothing improves morale like seeing the company you work for making continuous improvements to the property and growing the business. One of the most important improvements was the expansion of the signal system, which will continue in 2018. The MOW Department worked hard to upgrade speeds on the Main Line, M&S Branch and Scranton Branch. MOW did considerable tie work on the Pottsville and Minersville Branch's to keep our coal traffic moving safely. The Facilities Department built a new vehicle shop, which improved working conditions for our mechanics and freed up additional space for our locomotive shop to work more safely and efficiently.

Handling the surge in our coal traffic was a great challenge to all departments. Nothing unites a great team like a big challenge. The challenges and heavy work load we were faced with in 2017 stretched all of our people and departments to the limit. One thing about our culture that impresses me greatly is that our people stay safe because they don't want to get knocked out of the game and put extra burden on their teammates. I could sense from the comments and extra efforts that I witnessed from everyone in all departments on a daily basis that no one wanted to let the team down. You can see from the results that they didn't.

We have many things to be proud of at the railroad and we hope to continue the momentum into 2018. ♦



# Maintenance of Way's 2017 Accomplishments

BY: ERIK YODER, VP MAINTENANCE OF WAY



Another year has passed and 2018 has started before I even had the chance to take a breath from our 2017 season. Each year we have the wonderful opportunity to showcase all the accomplishments we achieved. I have been gathering all the data for these accomplishments since 2011. I have been writing the articles since 2013. It is very impressive to me that we continue to grow and do more each year. I ask myself, "How is it possible that we continue to get more and more done each year?" We are certainly adding staff, but most of the credit goes to the owner of this company.

Andy Muller, Jr. works tirelessly at making all departments and all the people that surround him better each day. This then flows down to the guys out in the field, who without them, none of the work we accomplish each year would be completed. Andy pushes the pace and we work at each item on the list.

Some of the following items are just a representation of all the work completed this year. I am most proud of the dedication and commitment to this company that the MOW workers have demonstrated. We have installed over 2,000 ties on our Main Line and branches with our own

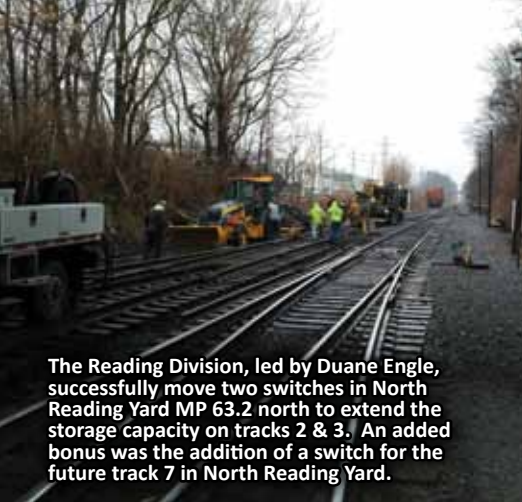
forces. We contracted out 7,800 ties on the M&S Branch, 5,600 ties on our Main Line, 600 ties in Humboldt, 850 ties on Pottsville Branch, and 1,600 ties on Jim Thorpe Branch. These ties are installed with 18-inch double shoulder plates as we increase the track standards and specifications of our maintenance of way department. The use of 18-inch plates aids in distributing the weight of the train across the ties and into the ballast to extend the life of the ties substantially longer than smaller tie plates.

Reading Blue Mountain and Northern has constructed over 1000 feet of new sidings. We have contracted out the construction of 10,000 feet of additional sidings. These sidings assist the Operations Department with more track space for classifying the freight for efficient movement of cars as well as aiding to the passion of Andy as his Passenger Department grows. We have added three additional tracks solely for passenger use and ease of operation. These are the Reading Outer Station platform track, the Reading Outer Station Multimodal Transload track, and the Schuylkill Haven Station Siding track.

*Continued on page 12.*

RBMN forces have laid out the 18 inch DS tie plates to install to address wide gauge along this curve at MP 80.4. The larger plates add life to the railroad ties.





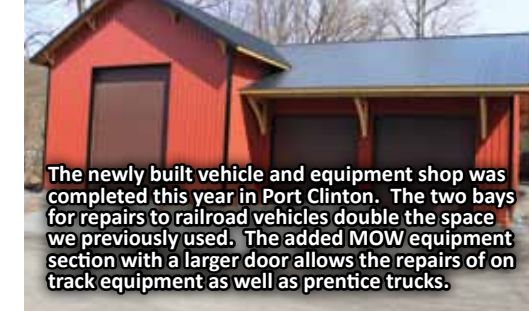
The Reading Division, led by Duane Engle, successfully move two switches in North Reading Yard MP 63.2 north to extend the storage capacity on tracks 2 & 3. An added bonus was the addition of a switch for the future track 7 in North Reading Yard.



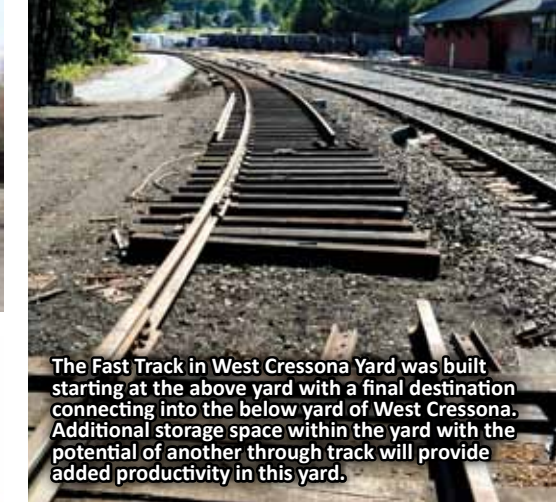
Ballast was recently dumped and plowed on the Main Line near MP 112 making the track ready for final surfacing. This is one of many locations this year the Tamper and regulator surfaced as they traveled the Reading and Northern Railroad.



Duane Engle is marking out switch timbers for replacement to rehabilitate one of the switches for repairs to railroad vehicles double the space we previously used. The added MOW/equipment section with a larger door allows the repairs of on track equipment as well as prentice trucks.



The newly built vehicle and equipment shop was completed this year in Port Clinton. The two bays for repairs to railroad vehicles double the space we previously used. The added MOW/equipment section with a larger door allows the repairs of on track equipment as well as prentice trucks.



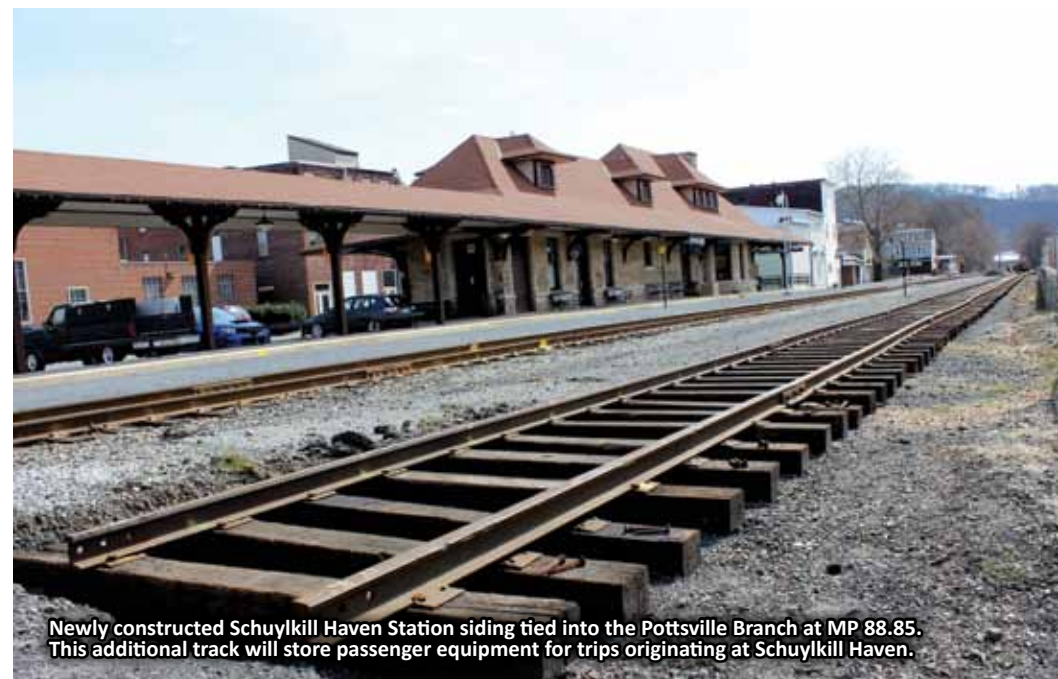
The Fast Track in West Cressona Yard was built starting at the above yard with a final destination connecting into the below yard of West Cressona. Additional storage space within the yard with the potential of another through track will provide added productivity in this yard.



Mario DeMarco is working on cleaning up old ties left in West Cressona Yard. This is also getting this area ready for a new track to be constructed in West Cressona Yard.



Track 2 between MP 95.3 and 96.9 received a face lift as the track was retied, surfaced, and restored as a through track for trains. This improvement allows the growing Operations Department the flexibility to move cars and store cars in Tamaqua Yard efficiently.



Newly constructed Schuylkill Haven Station siding tied into the Pottsville Branch at MP 88.85. This additional track will store passenger equipment for trips originating at Schuylkill Haven.



The Main Line along MP 119 was raised up out the mud and surfaced in addition to installing ditches on both sides of the rail with the installation of a new catch basin to keep water away from the railroad.



Shawn Himmelberger (backhoe) with Justin Hughes, Brandon Wagner, Jason Shupp, Matt Minnich, and Ben Cole are replacing timbers in Middle Yard switch MP 97.5. In the back of the picture is Dale Homm (backhoe) with Matt Sloskey working on the 2/3 switch.



Tracks 2 & 3 in North Reading Yard were extended to make more room for train sets. The installation of track 7 switch with a future addition of track 7 is needed to match the growth of RBMN.



Matt Minnich is using the rail saw to cut the rail that will be removed and replaced with new rail on the main line at MP 100.4



Matt Minnich and Jason Shupp stand next to the newly installed 18 inch bridge plates at MP 100.40 bridge. The high side rail was also replaced in conjunction with bigger plate installation.

*Continued from page 11.*

Five new switches have been constructed as well as numerous switches rehabilitated to handle the additional track construction. One section of switch rehabilitation completed this year was the restoration of the north end of the Riverside yard tracks 2 and 3 switches. This has tremendously assisted the Operations Department with efficiency. We also heavily invested in new rail this year. The purchase of 62,400 feet of new rail was laid along our right of way this summer. We are still in the process of installing all of the rail; however a lot of the rail is already installed on our Main Line. We are also in the process of purchasing additional rail

this year. Look to see our highlights next year for new rail installation. The past few years our focus has not only been to maintain our tracks, but improve all aspects of those tracks. We have aggressively retied tracks to raise the class of track to increase train speeds resulting in greater operational efficiency. Three different branches were recently improved to run trains at higher speeds. These branches are the M&S Branch, Humboldt Industrial Park, and Scranton Branch. We have assisted the Signal Department with the installation of a signaled mainline railroad where no signal system existed.

*Continued on page 14.*





Track construction completed in Jim Thorpe Yard to connect the old scale track RAR with the stub end of a yard track to make a longer run around. The new track is now named track 4.



Chris Nefos, John Walaitis, and Shawn Himmelberger working along the Main Line MP 100.4 installing anchors on the newly installed high side rail.



Contractor work replacing ties on the Main Line just south of MP 121. With the replacement of ties and installation of 18 inch double shoulder tie plates, this portion of track is in good shape for the increased traffic for years to come.



Matt Minnich is using the rail saw to cut the rail that will be removed and replaced with new rail on the main line at MP 100.4



Josh Rodney (front) and Ryan Rupprecht (back) installed anchors behind the new hydro spiker at MP 131 on Lehigh Main Line. New 141 RE rail was installed on the high side of the curve.



Dale Homm (Backhoe) with Dakota Reber are changing out ties on the Minersville Branch MP 0.3. After ties are installed, Ben Cole and JT Hughes with Cole Handling are installing plates and spiking the ties

*Continued from page 13.*

In our pursuit to not only maintain, but improve our tracks, we also saw the beginning of another important project. This year we saw the beginning of the Nesquehoning Bridge construction, a project long in the works here at RBMN. We are anxiously awaiting the completion of this project as it will join our Lehigh and Reading Divisions in a progressive move. We will no longer need to enter Jim Thorpe yard to run around trains to continue north to Scranton or south to North Reading Yard.

Our bridges have now become a focus for our Bridge Department. We have rehabilitated six bridges this year with a few more to go for 2018. This does

not cover the brand-new bridge being built as highlighted above.

Of course, our Mark IV was busy at work surfacing behind our tie work to finish tracks and raise speeds. Throughout the year our equipment surfaced over 369,000 feet. That is the equivalent to almost seventy miles of track.

Our 2017 was a great year and was the product of all our forces at RBMN working together to make this railroad the best it can be. I look forward to all we will accomplish in 2018. There are many more items I could list to showcase our hard work and dedication to our work, but the best way to see and experience our track is to ride our passenger trains. ♦



# Communication & Signals Year in Review

BY: JONATHAN BARKET, AVP COMMUNICATIONS & SIGNALS



First PNF train through the newly activated Tamaqua Interlocking on Sunday February 26th, 2017. Photo by Daren Geschwindt.



Maintainer Graham Hantz installing the signal heads for northbound moves out of Clint Interlocking.



Communications Manager Matt Collins and Signal Maintainer Brandon Cara finish installing signal heads at Equilateral Interlocking.



Communications Manager Matt Collins begins loading cable onto BT-2 to take to job site at Equilateral interlocking. Location was only accessible by rail, complicating installation.



Installing bungalow, cables, and foundations at Clint Interlocking, just north of the Port Clinton Headquarters.



Powered switch machine installation at Tamaqua days prior to cutover. Photo by Jonathan Barket.



Maintainers Graham Hantz and David Hutton discuss next steps during cutover testing for Tamaqua Interlocking on February 25th, 2017. Photo by Daren Geschwindt.

The year 2017 was definitely another year to remember in the Communications and Signal Department. As I reflect back I really had to think about our highlights as the year ended just as busy as it started. So what did we accomplish? As it turns out it was a tremendous amount of work.

In the first few weeks of the year we were finishing up the installation of Tamaqua Interlocking located in downtown Tamaqua, PA. This interlocking consists of only one powered switch (for the Greenwood Running Track), however very quickly became one of the most complicated locations on the system. Situated within five different road crossing approaches, it was necessary for all the crossings to talk to each other as well as communicate with the interlocking. This, in turn required over 20,000 feet of cable to be installed, multiple different crossing control boxes, along with special programming to make everything function safely and properly. Once all the crossing work was finished, we began heavily testing each crossing on February 1, 2017, utilizing a special train crew to be sure everything operated flawlessly. After making several slight modifications, all five crossings were ready to accept the interlocking. A couple of weeks later on February 25th, we were ready for the activation of the interlocking. This included a day-long cutover testing every possible scenario and to be sure everything was operating as designed. This not only included Tamaqua, but East Mahanoy Junction Interlocking as well, to prevent any operational concerns. This day turned into an unforgettable experience because as we were finalizing the cutover, a very powerful storm came through creating high winds, hail, and tornados to the north which in turn prompted multiple emergency calls to other locations.

Just after the Tamaqua Interlocking project was completed, another crossing was installed the following week. At Kovatch Ford in Nesquehoning, we installed a full crossing including gates and a prediction style crossing control system. This style of crossing control can identify train speeds and activate the crossing for a predetermined amount of time. Despite the cold temperatures, we were able to get this crossing in service by the end of the week. Several weeks later towards the end of April, a second

crossing was installed at Industrial Drive West, also in Nesquehoning. This crossing consisted of two tracks and flashers with a prediction train detection system. In roughly four days, this crossing was in service.

We had an opportunity to work with two companies that removed quite a few decommissioned signal related items. With many of the Class I railroads installing new equipment even if some of the signals are not that old. We traveled to their locations, hand-picked items we were interested in, made deals, and ended up refurbishing the equipment for future installations.

The next big project was to continue the expansion to the signal system along the Main Line on the Reading Division. The signal system extension from Tamaqua to Port Clinton, an additional twenty miles, was the next natural progression. The actual construction in the field started in the spring, but planning started several months prior. Signal locations had to be plotted and reviewed. Is there power nearby, or do we need to go with a solar solution? These are just some of the items that go into planning of a major project.

So we installed two interlockings, eight block signals and fifteen circuit controllers in a six month period. We were able to complete the project well before our self-imposed deadline of October 1 by several weeks.

We then turned our attention to something a little different. To assist with growing traffic and to help with streamlining railcar movement data, we have installed three additional Automatic Equipment Identification systems, or AEI for short, on our system. One is located outside our North Reading Yard near Cross Keys Road and the other two are located just outside our Pittston Yard, one on the Susquehanna Branch and one on the Scranton Branch. These items assist train crews and customer service to give better reporting of railcar locations. Each railcar has an AEI tag and through our ShipXpress traffic system, each cars location can be monitored and updated as it passes each scanner.

Just after installing the additional signal system on the Reading Division,

we moved our operation north and upgraded an additional three miles to include CTC signaled territory on our Lehigh Division. On our Susquehanna Branch, we installed Pitt Interlocking, located at Pittston Yard which enabled a fully functioning signal system between Pittston and Dupont. Again, adding many different safety features, this heavily used section of railroad allows better streamlining of train control and eliminates additional paperwork required by our Operations Department. Finally as 2017 drew to a close, we began the process to add an additional six miles of signaled territory on the Lehigh Main Line in the Lehigh Gorge, connecting Independence interlocking to Coal Interlocking near Jim Thorpe. This will once again add more safety, security, and efficiency in this location by adding broken rail protection and gapped switch indications. Additionally it will allow for better control of train traffic and eliminate paper track occupancy forms. As I am writing this article, we are looking forward to bringing this location online in the next several weeks.

I would like to point out that the construction projects are a great opportunity for our folks in the Signal Department. At the end of the day you can physically see the fruits of our labor. Please understand that most days are filled with standard signal tests that are just making sure equipment is functioning properly and looking at read outs on meters. And many times that is one person out there on their own. The construction projects are great team building projects. And in the case of the signaled railroad expansions these types of projects are really appreciated by others in the company as it streamlines many processes in their day to day jobs.

I am extremely proud of the accomplishments of our team over the past year. We have installed a great deal of infrastructure and it took the dedication of the whole team to get it done. It wasn't always easy and fun, but the end products were well worth the efforts.

Outlook of 2018 seems to be equally busy with many additional projects on the horizon – stay tuned! ♦



# 2017 Steam Department Review

BY: STEVE ALLEN BALTHASER, VP FACILITIES



This season marked the eighth operating year for the 425 since the 2007 rebuild. The locomotive accumulated over 1800 miles and ran flawlessly throughout the year. The highlight of the season was a railfan special where the RBMN 425 ran solo with no diesel assistance. No major repairs were needed to the locomotive this year as it continues to be very reliable at ninety years old.

The 2102 project continues to chug along with fabricating and installing custom made parts. This past month has seen flexible staybolt sleeves installed on the wrapper sheet, and installation of the new lower right side sheet in the firebox. The left side sheet is ready to be removed and will be replaced in early 2018.

The shop's latest project has been rebuilding trucks for our 1920's era DL&W coaches. This includes machining new pins, bushings, hangers and any other parts needing repair. All of these parts have to be custom made in house as replacements are unavailable. The steam shop has received two new machines to aid in the rebuild and maintenance of these locomotives and coaches. A twenty inch swing by ten foot bed Lodge & Shipley 15hp lathe and a Kearney & Trecker sixteen inch by five foot 15hp Vertical Mill were added to the shop this fall. This is the first time we have been able to fabricate almost all of the parts needed in house. We look forward to the 2018 operating season and increasing the progress on the 2102 with these new tools. ♦

425 done for the season in Steam shop getting ready for 2018.



Truck of RBMN 309 being rebuilt for 2018 passenger season.



Stay bolts application on the 2102.



Kjel Benner, Boiler Maker, working on front fire sheet on the 2102.



Front view of the recently completed Outer Station.



Pulling up to the Outer Station.

## Facilities

BY: STEVE ALLEN BALTHASER, VP FACILITIES

The year 2017 began by working on two major projects that were all ready started in 2016, a new Vehicle Shop in Port Clinton and an Outer Station in Muhlenberg Township. These two projects were top priority for the long term maintenance of the vehicle fleet and the ever growing Passenger Department wanting to offer new rail trips.

The Vehicle Shop had been erected in 2016 and was now ready for total completion. In addition to two service bays for vehicles, the building was also built with a complete service bay for Maintenance of Way equipment including a pit. This modern building allows MOW equipment repairs to be done indoors, work that previously had to be done outside. Also this was to be our first building to have heat in the floor, adhering to our policy of being environmentally conscious, while giving our personnel the best work conditions.

Reading Outer Station, the other big project, would carry on throughout the entire year. The strip mall, which previously was on this site, had been demolished in fall of 2016. All utilities, grading, and site prep started as early as weather permitted in the spring. A two story tower replicating the Pennsylvania Railroad "J" Tower was built next to a newly laid siding. The project was incorporating a Victorian Era structural design that would also comply with modern practices.

The "tower" has two modern restrooms on the first floor and an operations room on the second. The appearance of every detail reminds one of the 19th century styles. Even the platform for the station carries the theme, by using street lighting of the same time period. To tie it all together, a staircase from tower to platform was built from an old Reading Railroad station picture.

Along with these projects, the tower at Tamaqua was remodeled, the Pittston MOW building addition was started, the Signal Department warehouse was insulated and lighting installed, and many repairs and upgrades too numerous mention were also completed. Looking to 2018 Facilities is working to finish the Steam Shop addition, which will include a pit and a machine shop area. The Pittston MOW addition will be finished and possibly another "tower" is to be built there. Also on the horizon, and not to forget the ever expanding vision for the Reading Outer Station, a second staircase is planned and the demolition of the existing restaurant on the site to enlarge the parking area starts in early spring.

So stay in touch with the RBMN website, as there is always something new happening! ♦



View from the tracks.



Platform stairs.



The gorgeous interior of the Outer Station.



Finished tile in the woman's restroom.



Completed view of the women's restroom.



Completed view of the men's restroom.





Two RBMN box cars waiting to go through the Car Shop for routine maintenance.



A freshly painted RBMN covered hopper (previously AEX).



Our new HRV-22 service truck.

# Car Shop

BY: STEVE ALLEN BALTHASER, VP FACILITIES

With the purchase of an additional one hundred covered hopper cars and increased coal and general freight business, 2017 proved to be a busy year. To the credit of the Finance Department, the covered hoppers were staggered so the shop could keep pace with their arrival. This allowed the men to still maintain a healthy scheduling of all our other responsibilities.

The newly purchased covered hoppers were thoroughly inspected upon arrival and air tested to insure reliability. They were then painted and re-stenciled with the RBMN road mark and car number. The final process was to apply tags which allows the car's identity to be read electronically as it moves throughout the railroads of North America. Once completed these cars will serve our customers well into the future.

The shop also inspected and repaired a fleet of cars coming off lease for the winter of open top hoppers readying them for their next assignment. Several RBMN boxcars in service were repainted with many more going through the shop for doors, hoses, and anything needed to keep them in great shape. All this was done while maintaining our normal duties in the shop and throughout the RBMN system.

As 2017 came to a close, the Car Shop looked forward to the new service truck being outfitted to our specific needs. We now have two similar trucks available for field repairs, greatly affecting our flexibility with our responding to our customer's railcar issues at their facilities. Because of a great team, the right equipment, and a company philosophy that people should enjoy what they do, 2018 looks to be another banner year. ♦



A line of loaded RBMN box cars at Taylor Yard.



The 2532 sits at idle waiting to start its trip.

# Locomotive Mechanical Department

BY: DUSTIN BERNDT, AVP MOTIVE POWER

When I started to think about writing a 2017 year in review article, I immediately began to reflect on what a busy and productive year it was in the RBMN locomotive mechanical department. It certainly was our busiest year ever as our fleet continues to grow and improve.

Therefore, with the increase in daily train traffic and a locomotive fleet fast approaching forty units, it became apparent we needed more personnel coverage for a larger portion of the day. With that in mind, I created a modified second shift to supply coverage into the early evening hours, so we were available for any attention locomotives needed while passing through Port Clinton daily. This was in addition to our daily work and our routine Saturday morning servicing we do to the many locations throughout the railroad while most all locomotives are normally idle for the day.

Next, after some late 2016 planning we were able to begin an important project started immediately in 2017. We started working to get most locomotives installed with either an alerter system in switching locomotives or an event recorder/alerter systems in road locomotives. This was a complicated process requiring many changes within the electrical and air brake systems. This program is still in continuation with expectations to have all units equipped within a few months. Installing these electronics adds another fail-safe measure to all locomotives within the fleet while our trains operate twenty four hours a day.

In the beginning of 2017, we were in the midst of a massive overhaul to the second of two GP39 locomotives we purchased in mid-2016 to raise our ownership of this model to six locomotives. This particular locomotive, which became the 2534, had our fingerprints all over it as it turned out to be a close to ten month project to get this engine within RBMN standards. Also, in the beginning of 2017 we were continuing to put in service our previously purchased ex-NS MP15 locomotives. We purchased four of these locomotives in August of 2016 and had two of them in active service by the end of 2016. With the great condition these four units were in, and some additional loading and cab improvements done by RBMN mechanical, it was a great asset to have them join our fleet quickly. We then added two more F7 locomotives to our roster in mid-April and one more RDC that we hope to add to our passenger functions in 2018. The F7 locomotives have been placed in storage as they will require some upgrades and changes to their mechanical systems to make them function as more modern locomotives. Lastly, in August of 2017, we made one more purchase of three GP38-2 locomotives at another NS locomotive auction I attended with Tyler Glass in Roanoke, Virginia. After receiving the engines in mid-September, we worked hard to get these quality locomotives in service quickly. At the end of 2017, after some extensive prime mover work and repairs to the first unit, we had one locomotive in active service and the second is nearing completion as this article is being published. We are very happy with the additions of all these recent purchases and expect these locomotives to provide years of reliable service while we continue to add additional upgrades to them as time allows.

As you can see, we have been very involved in very extensive work to purchased locomotives in 2016 and 2017 and we do all this work while keeping our regular thirty plus locomotives in active service with routine inspections and preventive maintenance to them as well!

In closing, as we begin 2018, there will be many more projects and locomotive upgrades completed with the excellent group of six electricians and mechanics that we will tackle with great efficiency and pride. We will all work hard to make all the locomotives function flawlessly and are as reliable as possible to keep our trains running on time and deliver products to our customers with the great service they expect! Tune in for 2018 to see what projects the Locomotive Mechanical Department will be involved in next! ♦

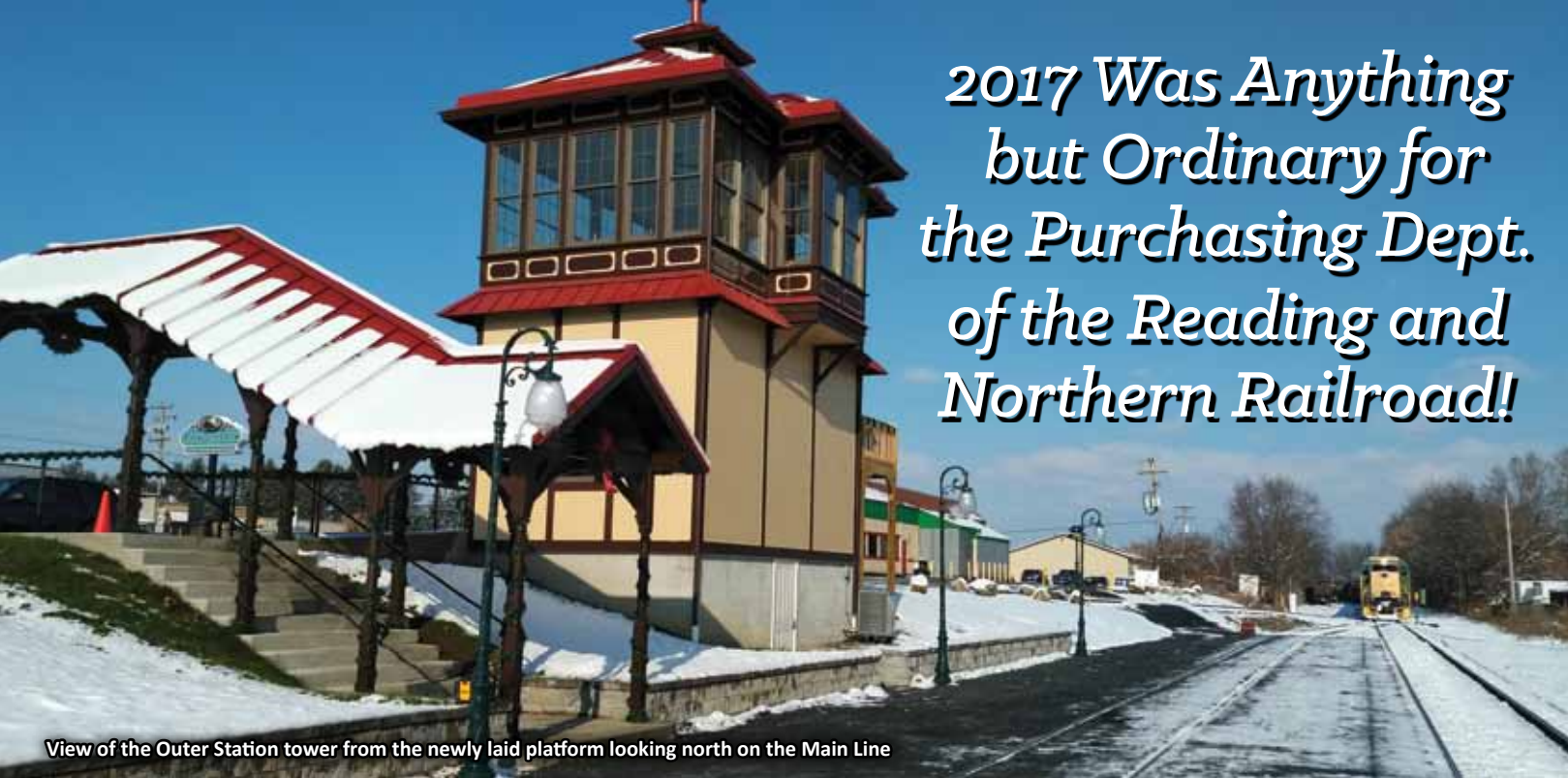


Locomotive 2011 waiting to be pulled out of the shop for its first test run.



The 3056 over "the pit" for a 92 day inspection.





## 2017 Was Anything but Ordinary for the Purchasing Dept. of the Reading and Northern Railroad!

View of the Outer Station tower from the newly laid platform looking north on the Main Line

BY: ANDREA COLLER, VP FINANCE

As you may already know, the Reading and Northern Railroad is one of the most innovative and forward thinking short lines of its time! We are always looking for ways to advance, improve, and enhance every aspect of the Railroad. One of the greatest things for Katie Bonner, our Director of Purchasing is the ability to be a part of essentially every endeavor that the Reading and Northern Railroad or one of its sister companies takes on. Being the only employee in our Purchasing Department, she often has to get creative in order to accommodate the high demands and deadlines that tend to accompany such a successful railroad.

This year, in addition to procuring the standard track materials, signal equipment, locomotive parts, railcars and locomotives, our Purchasing Department kept busy ensuring we had what was needed for the completion of our RDC restoration, vehicle shop construction, and other various larger projects. Two of these projects took place at Moon Lake Ranch in Nebraska and were orchestrated by Therman Madeira, our Executive VP Special Projects. Katie worked closely in assisting Therman to procure supplies needed to complete twenty seven miles of fencing to keep the bison herd in, as well as the construction of a horse barn, which

is the new home to eight of their equine friends!

One of the most noted achievements of 2017 was the phase I completion of our new Reading Outer Station! Purchasing collaborated with both our Facilities and Maintenance of Way Departments to secure all of the supplies and contractors needed for this new station to be up and running in time for our first official trip to Jim Thorpe in May. There were many facets to completing the Reading Outer Station; design and construction of the buildings, track construction, parking lot construction, establishing a menu for the dining car, and advertising our Railroad Passenger trips to name just a few. It was no small feat to have the new construction appear as though you just stepped back in time, however we believe that goal has been accomplished. You should check it out for yourself! For more information about Reading Outer Station, visit our website: [www.rbnrr-passenger.com](http://www.rbnrr-passenger.com).

Looking back, 2017 turned out to be quite a success; this wouldn't have been possible without the support and dedication of the entire Finance Department. I would like to say 'Thank You' to everyone and look forward to having another great year in 2018! ♦



Justin Levan, Christina Muller-Levan, and Marvin Lantz, foreman for Owl Creek Construction, in front of the Western Horse Barn at Moon Lake Ranch Fall of 2017.

# Reading & Northern Right of Way Protection Program

BY: MATTHEW A. JOHNSON, ASSET MANAGEMENT & COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

The Reading & Northern's Real Estate Department and Police force serve to protect the railroad's property and right of way (ROW) to ensure safe operations for our train crews and maintain readily available property for commercial opportunities.

What is a "right of way" and what does a ROW need protection from? The Pennsylvania Crimes Code defines a ROW as "the track or road bed owned, leased or operated by a railroad carrier, which is located on either side of its tracks." The property within a ROW is where our trains operate, MOW crews work within the ROW to maintain track, and our marketing team seeks to connect adjacent industrial properties to our ROW and tracks.

Trains cannot run efficiently, crews cannot work safely, and marketing opportunities cannot come to fruition when our ROW is encroached by anything from fences, sheds, debris, swimming pools, and sometimes, even entire buildings. The Real Estate team's ROW Protection Program seeks to eliminate encroachment and trespass by restoring the ROW, and educating our neighbors on what is railroad property and what is deemed illegal activity within our ROW.

In 2017 the Real Estate Department focused on protecting our ROW and property from encroachment and trespass. Sometimes the trespass is inadvertent. For example, since we own a 325 mile route structure it is not uncommon for people adjacent to our tracks to assume they can build right next to the track. They do not understand that our ownership might, and often does, run from a minimum of 15 feet from both sides of the track upwards to 200 feet on both sides of the track.

As you can imagine this has caused problems over the years. This is especially true because our predecessor railroads usually ignored these encroachments. As a result we have had houses and buildings constructed on our property.

One thing about railroads is our property rights are not extinguished by lack of use. There is no such thing as "adverse possession" of railroad property. That means even if someone has built on our property twenty years ago and that building was never challenged that person still has no right to occupy our property.

Over the last couple of years we have focused on cleaning up these issues. To do so we need to start with a good survey to determine what we actually own. When most of our property was conveyed to us by Conrail and others we received what are known in the industry as railroad valuation maps. Most of our railroad valuation maps are very old and it is sometimes hard to determine exact property lines. So in 2017 we had professional surveys done for seven separate locations. These surveys have helped us better understand our own property lines and with that understanding we can have better communication with our neighbors as to where our respective property begins and ends.

Using the surveys as a foundation we can then discuss the possibility for trespassers to enter into lease agreements. If we cannot reach agreement with trespassers we use the surveys to assist us in seeking to eject trespassers from our property. Although the legal process is neither swift nor cheap we are committed to protecting our property.

Thankfully we have generally been able to reach agreements to lease our properties and these agreements protect our interests. We were able to enter into twenty five new lease agreements in 2017. These agreements were with customers, utilities, private property owners, and local communities.

Greatly aiding our effort is the fact that we have worked hard to maintain open lines of communication with local counties, townships, and boroughs along the railroad. For example, we have fostered a growing relationship with the community of Tamaqua. As a result we worked together on crossing upgrades, ROW patrols and participation in civic charities. A similar relationship exists with Muhlenberg Township as the Township was instrumental in helping get the new Reading Outer Station off the ground and we were a Premiere Sponsor of the township's annual Riverfest at Jim Dietrich Park in August.

Educating and working with communities is one part of a successful ROW protection campaign. The Real Estate team relies on the eyes and ears of RBMN crews in the field as well, which is why we devote time during annual Rules Class to teach crews to recognize signs of encroachment and illegal activity. Our



Leona Rega, Coordinator of the Tamaqua Community Art Center accepting a pledge of \$10,000.00 from Matthew A. Johnson, VP Asset Management on behalf of the Reading & Northern Railroad.

internal network of Operations, MOW, and Track Inspectors team members have done an excellent job in reporting incidents on railroad property. Quick and detailed reports are why I am proud to say RBMN Police have seen fewer arrests this year. This included fewer ATV, trespassing, and vandalism incidents. We are also aided in this regard by the hiring of another full-time Police Officer. At the end of the day the reason we spend so much time as a company keeping our ROW free of encroachments and trespassers is because we want to keep our railroad safe for our employees and the public. We work hard to minimize problems by policing our property and adding appropriate signage throughout our properties. We have posted "RBMN Private Property" and "No Trespassing" signs all over the railroad in a further effort to keep everyone safe.

In addition, many communities and the Commonwealth work with us in keeping the ROW safe. One of the best programs is PennDOT's Section 130 Program, which is dedicated to railroad crossing safety upgrades. Public railroad crossings are a critical first line of defense for safe operations because it is at these crossing that the railroad and highway users intersect. Through this PennDOT program we recently secured funding to upgrade five public crossings with new gates, flashers, and/or crossing surfaces. The first project is scheduled for spring 2018.

Together with communities and the entire RBMN team, the Real Estate team will continue our hard work and dedication in 2018. Our goals are to see all of the railroad property under protection to maintain safe operations and safe communities. ♦





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SEARCH

HOME SANTA CLAUDE SPECIALS OUR TRAINS FAQ JIM THORPE ATTRACTIONS



Reading Blue Mountain & Northern Railroad  
- Passenger Department -  
610-562-2102

*"The Road of Anthracite"*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

# Reading Outer Stations Heralds Record-Breaking Ridership

## IT Year in Review

BY: MARIO CARANNANATE, DIRECTOR OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

The Information Technology (IT) Department brought new technologies and devices in 2017 to the Reading & Northern to keep the railroad up to speed. For our crews in the field, we implemented new rugged tablets for the crews. We upgraded from consumer-grade tablets to a more commercial solution with manufacture warranties, making repairs for broken devices much quicker.

Across all departments, we also switched cell carriers moving away from AT&T to Verizon. By doing so we were able to procure all new phones for the company at an extremely good price. Additionally, we made many changes and upgrades to the servers that support the day to day operations of the RBMN. As the company grows, more and more devices are connecting and syncing data continuously due to the growth. New networking equipment has been installed to speed up the delivery of information and gain insight into how much data the company transfers daily to properly adjust service requirements.

To accommodate our expanding passenger business, we've rolled out an update to the LGSR website early in the year which has made navigating the site easier. This year there is more work to be done on the website as we slowly plan to implement on-line ticket sales which should free up phone calls and stream line the ticket purchasing process. The website for rbmnr-passenger also went live this year for trips originating out of outer station. For passenger excursion dates and tickets, you can visit [www.rbmnr-passenger.com](http://www.rbmnr-passenger.com).



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HOME REGULAR SCHEDULE SPECIAL EVENTS FAQ5 OUR TRAINS HISTORY LINKS

*"Trains return to Jim Thorpe on February 17 and 18 for Winterfest."*

### Port Clinton, PA – January 5, 2018

Another successful year in the books and for Port Clinton-based Reading & Northern Railroad it is the record books.

Almost 120,000 people rode on the Reading and Northern and Lehigh Gorge Scenic Railway passenger rail offerings in 2017. This is approximately a 15% increase from last year's record-breaking year when Reading & Northern broke the 100,000 passenger mark for the second time running.

Much of this growth was created by the opening of the brand new Reading Outer Station in Muhlenberg Township north of Reading, PA. The grounds includes a Victorian-era switch tender's tower complete with clean restrooms, and overhung steps from the expanded parking lot to the newly created passenger loading platform. Also, on site is a new electronic information sign next to a steam locomotive water tower.

Completed in 2017 this new facility served as a gateway to the Reading & Northern passenger offerings. Long active in providing passenger excursion services through its Lehigh Gorge Scenic Railway in Jim Thorpe, Reading & Northern expanded into Berks County with the Reading Outer Station.

From Memorial Day through November, Reading & Northern used its Rail Diesel Cars (RDCs) to take passengers for a comfortable ride along its mainline route from Reading Outer Station. The RDC consist has sliding-windows, a snack counter, and 132 seats making it a convenient and comfortable ride for our guests. It was no surprise that people clamored to take these trains and consequently every train was sold out during this historical first endeavor in 2017!

In October, Reading & Northern shifted the starting location for its famous Fall Foliage specials from Port Clinton to Reading Outer Station. The resulting change brought hundreds of new visitors from Berks, Lebanon, and Lancaster Counties. As a result, extra trains were added and almost 6,000 visitors rode these trains. Approximately 1,200 more people requested tickets for this popular excursion and had to be turned away.

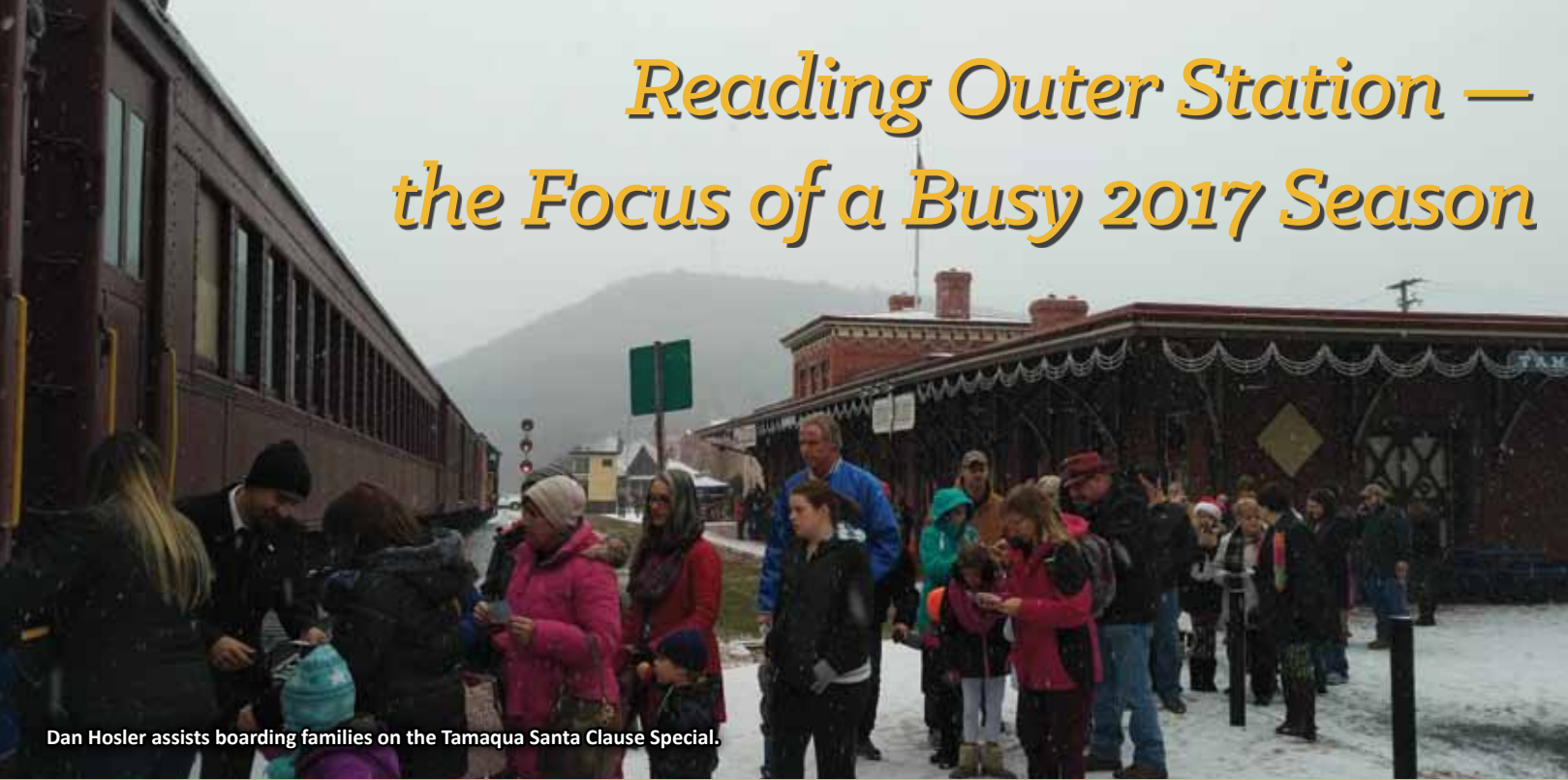
Reading Outer Station continued to break records this winter as over 3,500 people, mostly children, rode on Reading & Northern's famous Santa Trains. Tunkhannock, Schuylkill Haven, Minersville, Tamaqua, and Jim Thorpe also saw Santa Trains running in order to bring joy to thousands.

In Jim Thorpe, our successful Lehigh Gorge Scenic Railway operation including the Hometown High Bridge trains and Bike Trains handling nearly 100,000 people in 2017- a 20% growth in ridership.

The opening of Reading Outer Station launched another chapter in the history of Reading & Northern's passenger operation. 2018 will offer more rides and new equipment so we invite all of our friends to follow developments on our websites [www.rbmnr-passenger.com](http://www.rbmnr-passenger.com) and [www.lgsry.com](http://www.lgsry.com).



# Reading Outer Station — the Focus of a Busy 2017 Season



Dan Hosler assists boarding families on the Tamaqua Santa Clause Special.

BY: MATT FISHER, PASSENGER GENERAL MANAGER

It seems that every year the Passenger Department has at least one, if not two or more, major projects to complete. In past years we introduced Bike Trains, or expanded schedules in Jim Thorpe, or new Santa Claus trains in a half dozen communities. More recently in 2015 we added Winterfest trains, Easter trains, and purchased the Schuylkill Haven train station. In 2016 the Rail Diesel Cars returned for several trips during the summer and the Passenger Department made the move from Port Clinton to Schuylkill Haven.

For 2017 the main objective was the new Reading Outer Station located just north of Reading in Muhlenberg Township.

This Station has been a huge success, much greater than we imagined. Every Reading Outer Station RDC trip from Memorial Day through November sold out! Even as service began we were still working on the Station. The platform and loading areas were completed just before the busy fall season. The new tower also stands tall and will eventually host restrooms for the general public with storage and a crew office.

In October, approximately 6,000 Fall Foliage Excursion tickets were sold with most passengers originating at the new Outer Station. Passengers had the choice of coach seating, Pullman car seating inside individual rooms, or First-Class Parlor car seating. Ticket prices ranged from \$39 per seat to \$250 per seat. On some days, our staff received over 400 phone calls. With our new Outer Station facility we had increased ridership from not only Berks County, but also Lebanon and Lancaster counties. Thousands more tickets could have been sold if we had more capacity.

By late November, a Santa Claus train schedule was finalized for Reading Outer Station. For the first time in generations, families in Berks County could take a local train ride and have a special visit from Santa Claus, Mrs. Claus, and Acorn the reindeer. Winter characters including a snowman and polar bear waved to the passengers on the trains. Children received candy canes and lollipops while passengers listened to Christmas music and in many cases sang along to many classic songs. The Santa trains brought joy to thousands in Reading, Tunkhannock, Schuylkill Haven, Minersville, Tamaqua, and Jim Thorpe.

The Lehigh Gorge Scenic Railway in Jim Thorpe continues to flourish. There was a twenty percent increase in ridership on LGSR trains in 2017. The Hometown High Bridge trains and Bike Trains also continue to be popular. In total, nearly 100,000 people rode the LGSR. This does not

include the nearly 10,000 additional guests brought to Jim Thorpe by Reading and Northern passenger trains.

In total, there were nearly 120,000 people who rode our rails in 2017, a double-digit increase over the record-breaking year of 2016!

What projects does 2018 hold? First, there will be equipment improvements and additions. Next, the work on steam locomotive number 2102 will continue (see related article on the steam shop on p.18). More trains will be scheduled from Reading Outer Station, including Baseball trains to Schuylkill Haven and additional opportunities to ride to Jim Thorpe.

And we will add days for passengers to ride on the Lehigh Gorge Scenic Railway in Jim Thorpe. Winterfest Trains will return on Presidents' Day Weekend this February, Easter Trains in mid-March, and the regular season will start early on the first full weekend of April. In June, trains will be added on Thursdays to make a Thursday through Sunday Schedule. July, August, and now October will see daily train excursions. September, November, and December will include Friday trips with weekend schedules.

Look for more information throughout 2018 on our websites [www.rbmnrr-passenger.com](http://www.rbmnrr-passenger.com) and [www.lgsry.com](http://www.lgsry.com).

And thanks to all of our visitors for making us a success. We can't wait to see you again. ♦



Our success is due to the passenger staff. Pictured from left to right at Schuylkill Haven is Larry Fisher, Rich Bernhardt, Justin Mengel, Bill Bubeck, Dawn Bubeck, Darrell Matz, Lisa Matz, Dave Hafer, Steven Kolbe, Cal Gerhard, and Tim Haefner.

# Happy Birthday!

FEB. 3..... ANDREA COLLER	FEB. 28..... STEPHEN GILBERT	MAR. 29..... BRANDON WAGNER
FEB. 5..... MICHAEL PAINTER	FEB. 29..... JOHN SMOLCZYNSKI, JR.	MAR. 29..... COLTON MULLER-LEVAN
FEB. 6..... LIAM MARSH	MAR. 1..... MATTHEW FREDMONSKI	MAR. 31..... JOLENE BUSER
FEB. 7..... JOHN SMOLCZYNSKI, SR.	MAR. 2..... STEVE BALTHASER	APR. 2..... ERIC THOMPSON
FEB. 8..... JAMES CERULLI	MAR. 3..... DANIEL PUKSAR	APR. 3..... DAREN GESCHWINDT
FEB. 9..... JAMES COOK	MAR. 3..... DARNELL YOUNG	APR. 5..... ADAM STUMP
FEB. 9..... AMY MILLER	MAR. 3..... JOSEPH ZIMMERMAN	APR. 6..... CRYSTAL ARNDT
FEB. 11..... MICHAEL KOHL	MAR. 8..... JAMES DANNER	APR. 8..... JOHN WALAITIS
FEB. 12..... BENJAMIN COLE	MAR. 12..... BEAU BUECHLE	APR. 11..... LEO DAVIS
FEB. 12..... DUANE ZIMMERMAN	MAR. 15..... ROBERT KEMPES	APR. 12..... AARON CASSEL
FEB. 17..... DAVID EVELY	MAR. 19..... MARY CULP	APR. 14..... GENE BUECHLE
FEB. 17..... MARGARET SMITH	MAR. 20..... NATHAN BISSEY	APR. 15..... AARON SNYDER
FEB. 18..... BILL FREDERICKSON	MAR. 20..... MATTHEW MIZIKOSKI	APR. 16..... JEFFREY BAVITZ
FEB. 21..... KENNETH MILLER	MAR. 22..... RICHARD BERNHARDT	APR. 18..... EDWARD PHILBIN
FEB. 22..... TYLER GLASS	MAR. 23..... WALTER GREUSEL	APR. 19..... AARON MULLER
FEB. 24..... JONATHAN BARKET	MAR. 24..... RYAN RUPPRECHT	APR. 28..... MARK CANTAFIO
FEB. 25..... DANIEL HOSLER	MAR. 24..... REESE MULLER-LEVAN	APR. 30..... EDWARD KOPECK, III
FEB. 25..... BRENDLE STUFFLET, JR.	MAR. 27..... WILLIAM KEIM	
FEB. 26..... CAROL MULLER	MAR. 29..... ELIZABETH NEIFERT	



# WELCOME ABOARD

## NEW EMPLOYEES



**Ryan Trexler**

Ryan Trexler was recently hired as a Conductor within our Operations Department. He attended Northern Lehigh High School and Shippensburg University. Prior to working at RBMN, Ryan was a Warehouse Manager at Interior Workplace Solutions.



**Kevin Schaffer**

Kevin Schaffer was recently hired as a Conductor within our Operations Department. He attended Berwick Area High School and Fox Valley Technical School. Prior to working at RBMN, Kevin was a Truck Driver at J.B. Hunt.



**Samuel Wills**

Samuel Wills was recently hired as a Conductor within our Operations Department. He attended Aleithia High School. Prior to working at RBMN, Samuel worked for Honey Brook Custom Carpentry.

# Congratulations!

## ON YOUR NEW ARRIVALS!



Big brother Grayson and baby Charlee!

Jason Shupp, MOW Track Worker, and Keri McArdle welcomed baby Charlee Marguerite on January 6, 2018! Charlee weighed 7 pounds, 10.4 ounces, and was 19"3/4.

**Welcome Charlee Marguerite!**

# EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

*Congratulations Kyle!*

BY: CRYSTAL ARNDT, HR ADMINISTRATOR



I am pleased to introduce this quarter's "Spotlight Employee" Kyle Sanders.

Kyle is currently an Engineer within our Operations Department. Prior to working at RBMN, Kyle did seasonal work for his uncle, who owns a masonry business.

Kyle was born and raised in Fleetwood, Pennsylvania, and graduated from Fleetwood High School. He was attending Reading Area Community College when he was offered a position at RBMN.

Kyle and his wonderful girlfriend Tara share two kittens that are eight months old. Kyle and Tara like to watch movies together, travel to amusement parks (mostly to ride roller coasters), and go for a walk or hike. Personally, Kyle likes to watch documentaries about history and historical events.

Kyle said, "I would like to thank my coworkers who...most of the time (jokingly)....make my job easier and more enjoyable."

As the "Spotlight Employee," Kyle is eligible to receive a \$50 gift certificate to dine at a local restaurant of his choice. ♦

Ryan, MOW Track Worker, and Adrianna Rupprecht welcomed baby boy Nathaniel Ryan Rupprecht on October 11, 2017! Nathaniel Ryan weighed eight pounds, two ounces, and was twenty and a half inches long!

**Welcome Nathaniel Ryan!**



Newborn baby Nathaniel Ryan Rupprecht!





Mr. & Mrs. Claus (John and Nancy Walaitis) spreading Christmas cheer aboard the LGSR in December, 2017.



Matt Minnich is using the rail saw to cut the rail that will be removed and replaced with new rail on the main line at MP 100.4



Ben Cole is happy as the gang gets ready early in the morning at MP 100.4 to change out old rail with new rail. Duane Engle in the back explaining the plan for the gang to Eric Thompson.



Dustin Berndt (Chief Mechanical Officer) working on an SD40-2 at Port Clinton. Photo by Daren Geschwindt.



MOW gang doing some extensive switch work at the north end of Riverside Yard on Friday, December 1, 2017. Alex Scubelek is in the back hoe and from left to right are Russ Monroe, Mark Cantafio and Nick Alberswerth.



Matt Collins is working on installing an AEI tag reader along the Susquehanna Branch on a beautiful October day.



PNRB crew, Chris Bost and Mike Kolbe, make their way through the snow to board the 803 on Tuesday 1-16-18. Photo by Daren Geschwindt.



# Rehabilitation Center for Bats Opens in Berks County

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



Dawn Bubeck, Bill Bubeck, Lisa Matz, Darrel Matz, and Rich Bernhardt enjoying breakfast before the Tunkhannock Santa Train excursions in December, 2017. Photo by John Walaitis.



Aaron Cassel makes repairs to the switch point at the north end of Pulpit Rock siding, in Port Clinton. Photo by Daren Geschwindt.

Steph Stronsick has always wanted to help wildlife. She remembers, as a child, that tri-color pipistrelles roosted each year at her grandparent's home. It was there she first witnessed the compassion of caring for the welfare of animals. When baby pipistrelles would fall from the roost, her grandmother would climb up to the barn rafters and gently return them to the colony.

In 2005, Steph moved to California where she began volunteering for Project Wildlife, a wildlife rehabilitation center that receives over twelve thousand animals each year. She started by helping with raising songbirds, shorebirds, and eventually raptors. Project Wildlife, however, did not rehab bats. Bats were sent to other rehabilitators, including Dick Wilkins, whom Steph describes as "one of the founding fathers of wildlife rehabilitation."

It was Mr. Wilkins who encouraged Steph to learn bat rehab, and became her mentor. He was one of the few bat rehabbers in the country at that time, and his particular style of rehabilitating bats greatly influenced how Steph cares for the bats in her care. Steph developed the "Bat Team" at Project Wildlife, a group of bat rehabilitators who would care for the bats in their homes until they were ready for release. The Bat Team remains an active part of Project Wildlife's rehabilitation program today.

In 2008, Steph studied at the Bat World Sanctuary in Texas on a scholarship. She returned to Pennsylvania a year later, intent on opening a bat rehabilitation center in her home state.

She began volunteering at the AARK Wildlife Rehabilitation Center in Bucks County in 2011, and soon was rehabilitating bats in her home under the AARK as a sub-permittee. Steph quickly became part of the rehabilitation network in Pennsylvania, and rehabbers from all over the state, including Red Creek, sought her advice and guidance on rehabbing bats. Her reputation as a bat expert became well known, even beyond the state, and Steph often found herself consulting with rehabilitators via FaceTime and Skype as far away as Canada and Australia. She even consulted on a case in Tanzania about a fruit bat with a fractured wing. She began helping with local bat surveys conducted by the PA Game Commission, US Fish and Wildlife, and Bat Conservation Management.

Following her dream, Steph applied for her own rehabilitation permit, but that goal would meet several roadblocks testing her patience and

determination. Part of the application process is securing zoning approval for the location of a wildlife facility. The township where she lived in Lehigh County denied her the zoning variance preventing her from moving forward. Steph relocated to Rockland Township, outside of Mertztown in Berks County in 2015, where the zoning regulations would not interfere with her passion.

Once settled in Berks County, she again applied to the Pennsylvania Game Commission for a rehabilitation permit. She received veterinary sponsorships, as well as sponsorships from the Red Creek Wildlife Center and the AARK. Everything seems to be in place until Steph took the state exams for a rehabilitation permit. Although knowledgeable about bat rehabilitation, Pennsylvania's mammal exam encompasses all species of mammals in the state. She failed her first attempt at the test.

Not to be discouraged, Steph contacted Red Creek and asked for help. We gave her access to all of our online classes at [www.wildlifeedu.com](http://www.wildlifeedu.com). After completing those courses, Steph came to Red Creek several times for tutoring and hands-on instruction with a variety of species. After six months of intense study, Steph passed the state mammal test. Steph and I became close friends in the process, and I respect this woman's commitment to wildlife.

The PA Bat Rescue was founded as a non-profit corporation in 2017, and Steph is currently working on applying for 501c3 approval. The rescue sees approximately two-hundred bats each year.

So what's in the future for Steph? She would like to eventually have a separate facility outside of her home for rehabilitating bats. Steph also wants to help others learn bat rescue throughout Pennsylvania and is a frequent presenter at wildlife rehabilitation conferences. She loves public speaking and has already begun public educational outreach to help people understand and appreciate bats.

Steph is currently working in textiles at Knoll Incorporated to support the rescue. She lives with her fiancé Eric Morlock, her Staffordshire terrier "Misty MooMoo," and many rescued reptiles.

For more information, visit the rescue's website at [www.pabatrescue.org](http://www.pabatrescue.org).



Steph examining a big brown bat.



Nursing a bat.



# Reading & Northern's Family Recipes

Jolene Busher, Real Estate Office Manager and Records Archivist, shares her recipe for Buffalo Chicken Sliders. Enjoy!

## Buffalo Chicken Sliders

### Ingredients

- 3 boneless, skinless chicken breasts
- 1 Ranch dressing packet
- ¼ 16 oz. bottle Frank's Red Hot – Original
- 2 tablespoons butter
- blue cheese dressing
- lettuce
- buns

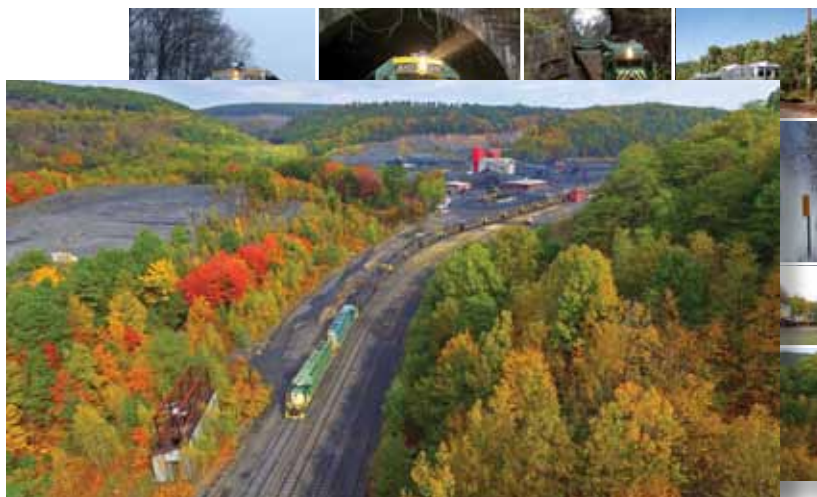
### Directions

1. In a crockpot, drizzle a little of the Frank's Red Hot to coat the bottom of the pot.
2. Place chicken breasts in pot.
3. Sprinkle Ranch dressing packet over the chicken.
4. Pour remainder of Frank's Red Hot over chicken (eyeball it, you can always add more later for desired flavor, but you want enough for the chicken to cook in and not dry out).
5. Cook on low for 8 hours, or high for 6.
6. When chicken is cooked, shred the chicken, stir in butter, optional - add more Frank's Red Hot (to desired taste).
7. Serve on buns with lettuce and blue cheese dressing.

We would like to encourage everyone to send us their favorite family recipes to [sfidler@readingnorthern.com](mailto:sfidler@readingnorthern.com).

## 2018 Reading & Northern Calendars Are Here!

Our long awaited, 2018 Calendars have arrived! Calendars can be purchased at our corporate headquarters in Port Clinton, Pennsylvania, located at 1 Railroad Blvd., Port Clinton, Pennsylvania 19549. Mail orders are also accepted, please send payment of \$12.00 per calendar, and your return mailing address to PO Box 218, Port Clinton, Pennsylvania 19549, c/o Jolene Busher.



*Reading Blue Mountain & Northern Railroad*  
◆ 2018 ◆

For any questions regarding calendar purchases, please call 610-562-2100.

# RBMN ANNIVERSARIES ACKNOWLEDGED

### 10 YEARS



January 21st, 2008  
Steve Balthaser  
VP of Facilities - RBMN



October 13th, 2008  
Peter Collins  
Chief Inspector/Technician  
RJM



October 17th, 2008  
Nicholas Riccio  
Director of Maintenance  
RJM



December 1st, 2008  
Louis Bugno  
Car Host/Narrator - LGSR



December 1st, 2008  
Matthew Stabinger  
A&P Mechanic - RJM

### 5 YEARS



January 7th, 2013  
Chris Goetz  
Project Manager - RBMN



January 7th, 2013  
Zachary Simpson  
RE Inspector - RBMN



December 2nd, 2013  
Denise Kacsur  
AP Manager - RBMN

### 3 YEARS



October 16th, 2015  
Charles Trusdell  
Passenger Engineer  
RBMN

### 1 YEAR



January 25th, 2017  
Jessica Melochick  
Director of MOW - RBMN



# Red Creek Wildlife Center 2017 Year in Review

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



Field research.



Fishing debris tangled on heron beak.

Red Creek Wildlife Center's mission is three-fold: "To offer a second chance to distressed Pennsylvania wildlife through rescue and rehabilitation, public education, and by providing training for wildlife rehabilitators."

Each year our patient intakes increase, and 2017 was no exception. We received 3100 animals of 154 species. Not all animals come to us in a condition where they can be saved. For those animals, we can offer them the gift of "the other release," the release from suffering and pain. 2450 animals arrived in a condition where rehabilitation could be attempted. Of those, we saved 1774, a 72% success rate.

Many of the animals we help never get to Red Creek's door. We often can help an animal by teaching the person who found it about normal baby animal behavior, such as when someone sees a fawn and thinks it has been abandoned. In these cases, we offer reintroduction instructions such as how to return babies to their mother and repair bird and bunny nests.

Other animals may only need a little assistance and release such as the case this past fall where a blue heron was entangled in fishing line for over a week at Blue Marsh. Wildlife officials unsuccessfully attempted to capture the flighted heron, and the bird's plight became local news which alerted us. Volunteer Mike Witman and I caught the heron the next day, removed the debris, and examined the bird for problems. Since it was in excellent condition, it was released immediately. Because of that incident, the PA Game Commission invited Red Creek to present a wildlife capture class to their officers. These cases are not reflected in our wildlife statistics. One year, we kept records of each contact and determined that only 13% of the emergency calls we received resulted in an animal needing to be rescued and rehabilitated. From that, we can estimate that over 20,000 animals were assisted this year by our center.

Successfully preventing the kidnapping of baby wildlife is one of our primary goals, and the expertise of the person taking those calls makes a huge difference. Fourteen of Red Creek interns and volunteers completed our online emergency phone skills course in 2017, aiding us in answering the hundreds of calls received each day in the spring and summer baby season.

Having reliable staff trained in caring for the animals is the backbone of any wildlife center. Greg Nason and Kat Hummel, who became licensed for wildlife rehabilitation in 2016, both earned certification in rehabilitating threatened and endangered species in 2017.

Red Creek now has a college internship program that attracted eleven students this past summer. Each student completes 200 hours of animal care and eight hours of class time in three months. Of the students who complete the program, we offer two candidates a second year paid internship where they learn to supervise the center and the first year interns. This year Jordan Oakill and Allison Rusinko earned the second level internship. After completion, Allison became a full-time staff member at our center, concentrating on public education as well as animal care. She is currently studying to take the state wildlife rehabilitation test to become licensed in wildlife rehabilitation.

At Red Creek, we believe that public education is an essential part of saving our wildlife, the environment and the planet for future generations. In 2017, Allison and I conducted fifty one public programs that were attended by about 10,000 people.

Red Creek also published three books in 2017. Two of these are children's books, "Zoey Finds a Bunny Nest" and "Zoey Finds

a Fawn," fun stories about a girl and her dog that learn about these animals after discovering a baby. Each book contains a parent section on what to do if you find a bunny nest or a fawn. Red Creek's first book, "Rescuing Wildlife, a Guide to Injured and Orphaned Animals" was published by Stackpole Books in 2009. This year, we regained publishing rights and independently published the second edition to this popular book. All three books are available at our center and can be ordered in paperback or Kindle at Amazon.com.

The third part of Red Creek's mission extends our ability to help animals who are too far away for us to treat. We believe wildlife rehabilitation is a valuable service that should be available to everyone, so Red Creek is teaching others to become wildlife rehabilitators through classes, seminars and online training, expanding this service to new areas in Pennsylvania and nationally.

In 2017, 125 students enrolled in 257 online courses through our

school website at [www.WildlifeEDU.com](http://www.WildlifeEDU.com). This has doubled from the previous year when we had sixty nine students enrolled in 102 online courses.

Staff and volunteers attended wildlife rehabilitation conferences in Pennsylvania, New York, Maryland, and Virginia, presenting nineteen hours of training, as well as promoting our online training classes to others. We also benefitted from the conferences by attending classes where we expanded our knowledge and updated our skills to better care for the animals we receive.

As you can see, 2017 has been a banner year for Red Creek! We owe many thanks to Andy Muller and the Reading and Northern Railroad for making this possible. 2018 will mark ten years that we have received your continued support. Because of you, we are growing and helping more animals each year. ♦



Heron capture.



# Wellness Corner

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## Aromatherapy and Essential Oils

Aromatherapy and Essential Oils, one of today's growing trends, provokes many questions about its connection to the improvement of our health and quality of life. Aromatherapy is defined as therapeutic. It's used as a way to relax reducing stress, infections, depression, and insomnia.

Essential oils come from plants such as flowers, herbs, and trees. These oils are concentrated liquid that come from those types of plants. They are used to improve our physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual well-being. Essential oils work by sending chemical messages through the nose during inhalation to the parts of the brain which affect our moods and emotions. These oils can be inhaled directly or applied to the skin through massage, lotions or bath salts.

Aromatherapy and essential oils became increasingly popular in the twentieth century as alternatives to medicine. According to research, essential oils could be the new antibiotic to combat drug resistant superbugs, such as MRSA. Pure essential oils are free of aromatic hydrocarbons which are known to be linked to cancer. These oils are being used as a treatment for cancer patients to manage the symptoms of cancer side effects such as nausea and vomiting caused by chemotherapy. One hundred different varieties of essential oils are now being used for the treatment of medical aromatherapy.

<https://www.cancer.gov/about-cancer/treatment/cam/patient/aromatherapy-pdq>

<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2010/03/100330210942.htm>

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/consumer-health/expert-answers/aromatherapy/faq-20058566>

<https://www.livescience.com/52080-essential-oils-science-health-effects.html>

## 101 On Essential Oils

Essential oils have been in existence since human civilization. They are the volatile compounds found in plants such as stems, roots, seeds, bark, rinds, etc. We all experience essential oils on a day to day basis. For example, when you cut into an orange, the aroma you smell from the rind is an essential oil compound. Essential oils are collected through various methods, the most popular method is steam distillation. Steam distillation is when the steam vaporizes the plant and will then go through the condensation and collection process. Another common method is known as cold pressing.

The volatile compounds in essential oils have amazing healing properties for the human body. Humans have been using essential oils for thousands of years. Oils may be new to some of us because we have not been exposed to them. The pharmaceutical industry has been in existence for about 200 years, and this is the type of medicine we are used to. We essentially have strayed from our botanical roots to synthetic chemicals.

The difference between oils and pharmaceuticals is as simple as the difference between natural and chemical. Oils are found in nature whereas pharmaceuticals are not, pharmaceuticals are manmade and therefore can be patented and sold for a big profit. These drugs often come with a lot of side effects because our bodies see them as foreign substances and want to reject them. Oils are familiar and easy on our bodily systems which accepts them as lifelong friends to help heal and restore without nasty side effects.

The Romans, Greeks, and Egyptians used essential oils for their healing, beautifying, and aromatic properties. Frankincense and Myrrh were given to the Christ Child as a sacred gift. At one point, Frankincense was more valuable than gold because people valued their health more than materialistic items. Frankincense, for example, has powerful healing properties as it is anti-cancer, anti-tumor, and anti-inflammatory.

## Some of the most commonly used oils are...

**Peppermint:** great for digestion, upset stomach, energy, and pain.

**Lemon:** cleansing, detoxification, and degreaser.

**Lavender:** anti-histamine (allergies), sedative (great for sleep and anxiety), and burns.

**Frankincense:** anti-cancer, anti-inflammatory, pain, stress, cellular health.

**Oregano:** anti-viral, anti-fungal, great for cold and flu.

**Melaleuca (aka tea tree oil):** good for skin (acne, cuts and sores), anti-fungal (toe nail and athletes foot).

Oils are used aromatically, topically, and internally. It is important to choose a company you trust. Some essential oils on the market can have synthetic chemicals and fillers in them. I suggest using CTPG (certified therapeutic grade) oils. The company I love and trust the most is DoTerra, they disclose where they source their oils as well as their testing and distillation processes. DoTerra works with farms in the native regions where the oil is grown and provide them with fair wages supporting a global economy.

**For more information about essential oils feel free to contact me at [aborg588@gmail.com](mailto:aborg588@gmail.com). I would love to help you learn more about the power of oils and how they can help heal and restore while reducing your toxic load.**

### Hair & Skin

#### Good For:

- ◆ Dandruff
- ◆ Dry Scalp
- ◆ Hair Strength & Shine
- ◆ Stressed, Dry, Cracked Skin
- ◆ Irritated Bites
- ◆ Oily & Acne-Prone Skin

### Allergies Cold & Flu

#### Good For:

- ◆ Bronchitis
- ◆ Cough
- ◆ Sore Throat
- ◆ Nausea & Diarrhea
- ◆ Asthma
- ◆ Reducing Fevers
- ◆ Swollen Glands
- ◆ Cold Sweats

### Muscle & Joint Pain

#### Good For:

- ◆ Inflammation
- ◆ Sprains
- ◆ Tight Muscles
- ◆ Weak & Achy Muscles
- ◆ Menstrual Problems
- ◆ Arthritis
- ◆ Carpel Tunnel
- ◆ Fibromyalgia

### Mental & Health

#### Good For:

- ◆ Anxiety & Stress
- ◆ Depression
- ◆ Insomnia & Sleep Aid
- ◆ Dementia & Memory Recall
- ◆ ADD & ADHD
- ◆ Digestive Problems
- ◆ Immune Support
- ◆ Heart & Lung Issues

### Antibacterial & Antibiotic

#### Good For:

- ◆ Disinfecting Your Home
- ◆ Fighting Bacteria for Infections
- ◆ Cuts, Burns, & Sores
- ◆ Oral Infections
- ◆ Ear Aches
- ◆ Sinus & Respiratory Infections

Lavender Juniper  
Basil Rosemary  
Frankincense  
Cypress Tea Tree  
Lemon Grass  
Cedarwood  
Peppermint

Oregano Lemon  
Eucalyptus  
Lavender  
Rosemary  
Peppermint  
Tea Tree  
Chamomile

Thyme Cypress  
Chamomile  
Tea Tree  
Lemongrass  
Lavender  
Peppermint  
Eucalyptus

Bergamot Thyme  
Frankincense  
Peppermint  
Balance  
Chamomile  
Ylang Ylang  
Lavender

Plague Defense  
Cinnamon  
Clove  
Basil  
Peppermint  
Lavender



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View of the Outer Station tower from the newly laid platform looking north on the Reading & Northern Main Line.  
For excursions out of Outer Station visit our website [www.rbmnr-passenger.com](http://www.rbmnr-passenger.com).