

R & N Magazine

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

SPRING 2019 | VOL. 21, ISSUE 2



Congratulations Dutch Tubman on Your Retirement!

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Recently TRAINS magazine published a very good story on the Reading & Northern Railroad. We asked them for permission to reprint the article by Scott A. Hartley in its entirety. They graciously gave us permission and so the story follows.

As a result, we have limited the amount of other news stories in this R&N Magazine issue.

Please enjoy, and a very special thank you to the staff at TRAINS!

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COVER PHOTO

Charles "Dutch" Tubman is seen posing at the front of the RDC 9168. On Monday 3-25-19 the RBMN ran a special train to honor Dutch's retirement from Norfolk Southern.

EDITORS

JOLENE BUSHER • SABINE FIDLER

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KEEPING ON TRACK



BY: WAYNE A. MICHEL, PRESIDENT

On March 25th Reading & Northern hosted a special train trip to thank Dutch Tubman for his years of service.

What's interesting about that trip is that Dutch is not a RBMN employee. He has been a long-standing Norfolk Southern employee and RBMN wanted to honor him and thank him on his retirement.

I have had the privilege of working with Dutch for almost twenty years. Shortly after I joined RBMN in the summer of 1999 I began working with the NS Shortline group and Dutch. He was always professional and helpful as we transitioned from Conrail to NS.

Our relationship really flowered when Dutch moved to the NS Coal Business Group (CBG). Given the importance to us of our coal business, it is critical that we have a close working relationship with the CBG. Dutch became our primary point of contact. Over the years he proved to be a strong advocate for anthracite and helped us to work with NS to grow the anthracite business. As we worked to transition from Consolidated's pier in Baltimore to Kinder Morgan at Fairless, Dutch was there. As we worked to penetrate the steel market, Dutch was there. As we worked to acquire additional coal cars, Dutch was there. As we worked to build direct access into Hazleton Shaft, Dutch was there.

The fact is that Dutch has smoothed the way for well over a decade.

Dutch's tenure is a reflection of our overall relationship with NS over the last two decades. As I reflect on that relationship it reminds me of a sibling relationship. When NS acquired Conrail in June of 1999, RBMN had been in existence for less than ten years; RBMN was clearly the

much younger brother. Not surprisingly, the relationship between a mature company and a ten year old is very much like an older brother with a kid brother. But today RBMN is closing in on 30 years old.

Look what we have done over the last twenty years.

In 1999 we handled 20,000 cars, this year we will handle 35,000 carloads.

In 1999 we employed 27 full-time freight employees today we have almost 200.

Over the last twenty years our revenues, employee count, locomotives, have all increased substantially. For example, in 1999 we employed less than 50 full-time employees today we have almost 200, and in 1999 we had 15 locomotives, today we have close to 50.

In 1999 our marketing department was 1 person with no railroad experience. Today we have four (including myself) experienced professionals with over 130 years collectively of railroad experience as well as younger blood who have grown up with RBMN.

And over those twenty years NS has taken steps that changed our relationship. Twenty years ago NS was our only Class 1 relationship. Now thanks to the NS acquisition of the D&H some years ago our customers have a second Class 1 connection to Canadian Pacific. Twenty years ago we went from being a Conrail Express Shortline to being a NS Handling line. Today, after NS encouraged us to make the move, we are an interline carrier.

So it is not surprising that our relationship with NS has changed. We are no longer the kid brother. Now we are both adults. And as adult siblings do from time to time we have our differences of opinion. What mature relationship

doesn't. But along the way we have been benefited by friendships and support by many at NS, like Dutch. But Dutch represents the tip of the iceberg.

Over the years we have benefited from great support from local NS Operations. Whether it be Joe Taverna at Reading or the superb Division Superintendents we have had the privilege of working with like Jerry Hall, Ben Fennell, Patrick Whitehead and David Gooden; they have been there to work together to move the traffic safely and efficiently.

Throughout our history we have had allies in NS marketing. It was the CBG that assisted us in getting Hazleton Shaft, now Atlantic Coal, connected to our railroad. And the result of that decision has been to divert hundreds of thousands of tons of coal from truck to rail benefiting both of our railroads. NS has helped us with dozens of covered hoppers to handle the surge in coal business going to domestic steel mills. NS worked with us to expand the TBT network to handle the surge in dried coal going to steel mills. And NS has helped us when we have sought to expand our locomotive and freight car fleets by selling us good equipment.

Even at the beginning of our relationship NS made key decisions to work with us. Almost twenty years ago NS chose our Lehigh Line route when it looked for a better north south route for its trains. And when P&G Mehoopany considered shifting its raw material traffic to truck, NS worked with RBMN to find a rail solution that not only kept that business on rail but grew it.

Continued on page 4.

Continued from page 3.

While it is true that much of our NS success has been with the CBG that is not surprising. We are, after all, "the Road of Anthracite" and it would make sense that coal is the cornerstone of our commercial relationship with NS, as it was with Conrail.

Also we have operated in an interline manner for the coal business with NS since day 1. All of this has led to a remarkably close relationship with CBG over the years.

Which, of course, brings us back to Dutch. He has been our advocate in Roanoke, and now Norfolk.

As he said on our train trip, he worked for the win-win relationship and both of our companies have benefited. As he departs NS he leaves us in good hands. Joining him on his retirement trip were Clark Reed, Blair Priest, An Pham and Will Honbarrier of the Coal Group, Ron Lee of the Transload Group and Amanda Rice. As we said goodbye to an old friend we surely welcomed new ones.

In the years to come we are certain to welcome more new friends at NS. With his bold move to Atlanta and shift to precision scheduled railroading, CEO Jim Squires is moving NS forward. As the Atlanta move takes place over the next couple of years more

of our old friends will retire only to be replaced by new faces. And RBMN too will see a changing of our senior staff over the years to come as some head to retirement as Dennis Shaffer did last year.

Whoever it is at NS or RBMN the fact remains that we need to work together. As Dan Mazur once told me while looking at a map of northeast Pennsylvania and our 340-mile system, RBMN goes everywhere NS wants to be. A strong working relationship is good for both of us and it is good for our companies.

Working together with NS will ensure that RBMN keeps on track for years to come. ♦

"The Road of Anthracite" FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

RBMN Promotes Two to Vice President

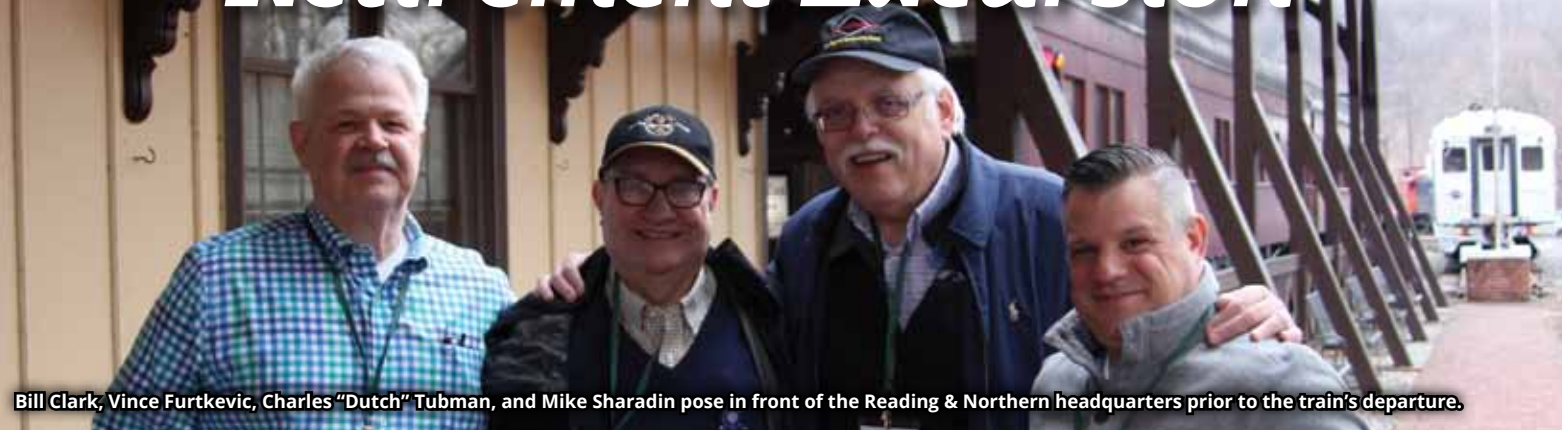


Dustin Berndt, Vice President of Motive Power



Daren Geschwindt, Vice President - Distribution Services

Dutch Tubman Retirement Excursion



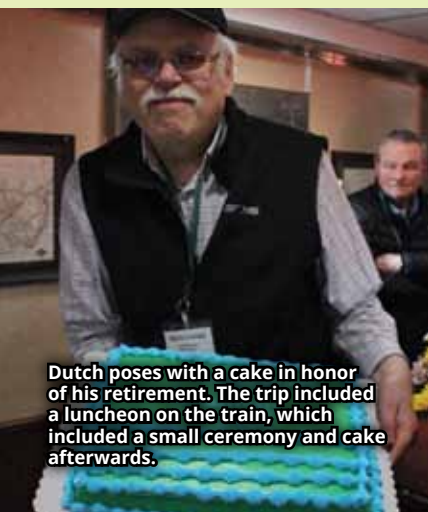
Bill Clark, Vince Furtkevic, Charles "Dutch" Tubman, and Mike Sharadin pose in front of the Reading & Northern headquarters prior to the train's departure.



Dutch Tubman and his wife Pam, peer out the front windshield of the train as it heads north on the RBMN Mainline. John Smolczynski, Jr. is at the controls of the RDC in the background.



At North Reading yard the train stopped so that passengers could see the new developments at the RBMN's Outer Station. Andy Muller, Jr. is seen here explaining the work that went into the development of the Outer Station property, as Mike Sharadin, RBMN AVP-Equipment & Facilities, and Clark Reed, Norfolk Southern Director of Coal Marketing, look on from the front row.



Dutch poses with a cake in honor of his retirement. The trip included a luncheon on the train, which included a small ceremony and cake afterwards.



An Pham, Norfolk Southern Market Manager, and Vince Furtkevic, President of Associated Commodity Services, discuss the anthracite coal business in the comfort of the RBMN's RDC cars.

On a cool, overcast Monday, March 25th the Reading and Northern hosted an excursion train to celebrate the retirement of Dutch Tubman. A train of self propelled "RDC" (Rail Diesel Cars) departed Port Clinton taking a large group of anthracite shippers, Norfolk Southern coal marketing team, and RBMN management on a scenic trip. The train departed RBMN offices at Port Clinton heading north along our Main Line until we turned onto the High Bridge spanning the Little Schuylkill River where everyone enjoyed lunch on the train. After lunch the trip continued to the RBMN-NS interchange at Reading then returned to Port Clinton.

Joining major anthracite shippers from RBMN were Andy Muller, Chairman; Wayne Michel, President; Tyler Glass, Executive VP Operations; Dan Gilchrist, Rian Nemeroff and Bill Clark, VPs of Marketing; and AVP Marketing Mike Sharadin. NS Coal Marketing was well represented as well; newly installed directors, Clark Reed and Blair Priest were joined by market managers Amanda Rice, Will Honbarrier and An Pham who is now responsible for anthracite marketing at NS. After sharing a wonderful trip with friends new and old; we celebrated Dutch's career over dinner at a small Italian restaurant.

Dutch Tubman represents the best of the NS-RBMN partnership. Working together, NS and RBMN have grown anthracite shipments by well over 60% since 2017. The programs Dutch helped initiate will continue to pay dividends to NS, RBMN and the anthracite industry. We will miss Dutch and wish him God speed as he and his wife enjoy a well deserved rest. Best wishes Dutch! ♦

Port Clinton, PA – April 1, 2019

Reading & Northern announces the promotions of Daren Geschwindt to Vice President Distribution Services and Dustin Berndt to Vice President of Motive Power.

Dustin Berndt joined the Reading & Northern (RBMN) in 2000, when he started working in the locomotive shop. In 2012 Dustin was named Assistant Vice President Motive Power in recognition of his hard work and dedication to improving RBMN's locomotive fleet. During his tenure in the locomotive shop, Dustin has seen the Reading & Northern's locomotive fleet grow from fifteen engines when he was hired in 2000 to the forty plus locomotives his shop now manages on a daily basis. Along with the engine house crew of seven mechanics and two electricians, Dustin ensures the safety and efficiency of the locomotive fleet through scheduled inspections and routine maintenance in addition to identifying new locomotives for purchase as well as mechanical upgrades to the Reading & Northern's fleet.

Dustin was born and raised in Oley, Pennsylvania, and graduated from Oley Valley High School, and the Berks Career and Technology Center in Oley. Dustin is married to Denise Berndt, and he has two sons, Dylan and Devin. Dustin is interested in how locomotives and aircraft operate and he likes being involved with and attending his son's sports activities.

Dustin reports to Executive Vice President of Operations Tyler Glass.

Daren Geschwindt started working at the Reading & Northern twenty-five years ago in 1994 when he was hired as an Assistant Traffic Clerk. During his

career Daren worked on the Transportation side of the railroad working as a dispatcher and a conductor from 1996 through to 2001. In 2001 he also received his engineer license and was promoted to Manager of Operating Rules and Safety. Two years later he was named Director of Operations Compliance and then in 2009 he became Assistant Vice President of Operations Planning.

In 2012 Daren returned to the commercial side of the company when he was appointed Assistant Vice President Customer Service Operations. In 2016 he was asked to take on a number of special assignments including the transition to becoming an interline railroad and managing the transload operations as Assistant Vice President Merchandise Traffic. In that capacity Daren also was point on the acquisition and restoration of service to RBMN's new Ransom Warehouse as well as trucking operations for the company.

In his new position as Vice President Distribution Services, Daren will be managing the Reading & Northern's transload operations, including the warehouse as well as overseeing the operations of the Reading Railroad Transfer, LLC.

Daren graduated from Hamburg Area High School in 1994 and is married to Ann Geschwindt, and has three sons, Tyler, Travis, and Connor. Daren's interests include railroad history, genealogy, transportation and nature photography, and attending his children's sporting and school events.

Daren reports to RBMN President, Wayne Michel.

In announcing their recent promotions, Michel said, "It is always a pleasure to promote home-grown

talent. Dustin and Daren have been with us for the better part of the last two decades. They have both shown tremendous growth. Dustin proved himself both a master mechanic and an excellent supervisor. As our locomotive fleet grew, Dustin grew with it. Now we have close to fifty locomotives and we have a superb leader in Dustin.

Daren is an example of our efforts at cross-training. Daren has moved back and forth over his career between the commercial and transportation sides of the company. That varied experience makes him an invaluable part of our company's future. His recent efforts in managing our warehouse and transload business have shown he is capable of taking on great challenges and succeeding.

With Daren and Dustin as our two most recent examples of RBMN-trained and developed management we know we are on the right track for a great future.."

Reading & Northern Railroad, with its corporate headquarters in Port Clinton, is a privately held railroad company serving over 70 customers in nine eastern Pennsylvania counties (Berks, Bradford, Carbon, Columbia, Lackawanna, Luzerne, Northumberland, Schuylkill and Wyoming). It has expanded its operations over the last 30+ years and now handles well over 30,000 carloads of freight and 120,000 excursion train riders over 340 miles of track. Reading and Northern operates both freight services and steam and diesel-powered excursion passenger services, owns almost 1,300 freight cars, and employs over 200 dedicated employees. Reading & Northern has repeatedly been honored as one of the premier railroads in the nation. ♦

Reading & Northern engineer John Hartman waves from the cab as the North Reading Fast Freight approaches the CTC home signal at Tamaqua, Pa., on Oct. 24, 2018.

SHORT LINES SPECIAL

FAST FREIGHTS, CTC, AND COAL

Reading & Northern is not your typical regional railroad

Story and photos by Scott A. Hartley

A Reading & Northern coal train is loaded at Ebervale, Pa., early on a September 2015 morning. The railroad moves more than 8,000 carloads of anthracite annually.

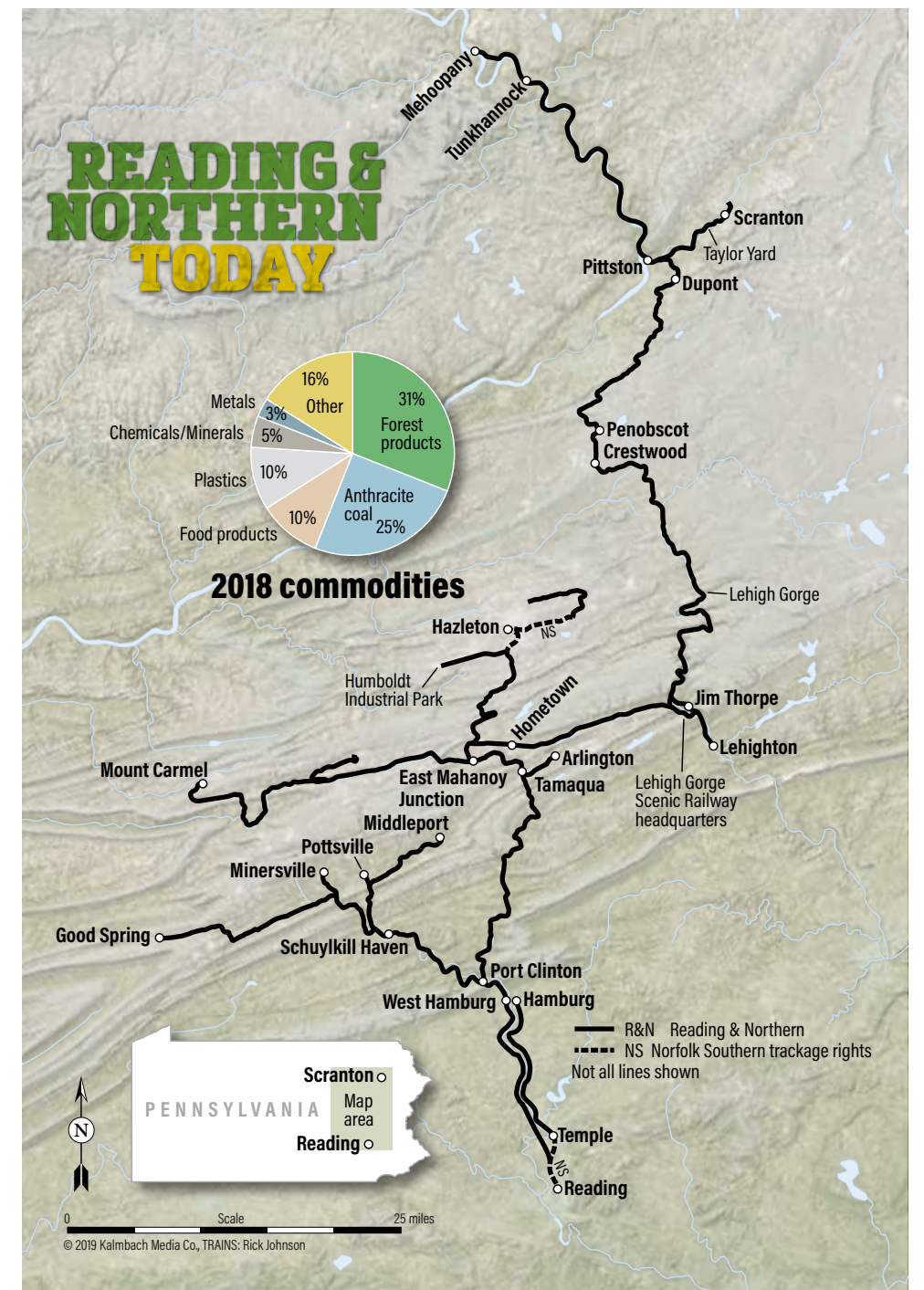


Blue Mountain & Reading Railroad was selected as the designated operator of a state-owned, 13-mile former Pennsylvania Railroad route north of Reading. He later operated three other publicly owned branches. By that time, deregulation of the U.S. railroad industry permitted the recently privatized and profitable Conrail to begin selling off unneeded secondary lines. Muller saw opportunities in places where Conrail did not. In two major transactions, Muller's new Reading Blue Mountain & Northern Railroad (no comma; reporting marks RBMN, and commonly marketed as Reading & Northern) purchased 120 miles of mostly ex-Reading tracks in 1990, adding 98 miles of mostly ex-Lehigh Valley lines in 1996. The properties included one-time main lines, but those routes never were included in Conrail's long-term plans. More trackage was acquired over the years, permitting a direct connection between what R&N calls the Reading Division and the Lehigh Division. Acquisitions also included tracks once owned by Lehigh & New England, Central of New Jersey, Delaware, Lackawanna & Western; and Erie. All of these railroads suffered when anthracite's importance for heating and industrial use declined. At the time of Muller's purchases, some of his lines served just anthracite customers, and for many years hard coal provided the majority of Reading & Northern's business.

Wayne Michel is a former Conrail official and Interstate Commerce Commission attorney who joined the railroad in 1999 and became president in 2005. He and Muller have supplemented R&N's managers with people from other railroads who "know how to grow the business," Michel says. R&N has departments responsible for coal, forest products, and transload and warehouse services. With continuing marketing efforts, the railroad's freight business has grown: Anthracite is still important, but it now makes up one quarter of R&N's carloads. The railroad moved 32,140 cars in 2018.

Asked about the three-car train, Muller is philosophical. "We run every day," he says. "We're going to run a scheduled railroad." But with words not heard often from a present-day railroad executive, he adds, "Okay, so we won't make money today. But we will make plenty of money over the long term. You've got to remember ... I don't answer to stockholders. So I have a totally long-term perspective on this." He views the Reading-to-Scranton route to be a good opportunity. "We're trying to build the business."

CTC is a source of pride for Muller. "How many short lines have CTC?" he asks. He hopes to have most of the railroad's 115-mile Main Line, an official timetable designation that extends from



North Reading to Dupont interlocking (south of Scranton), dispatched with CTC late this year. Interestingly, the former Lehigh Valley portion of the route had CTC when R&N acquired it from Conrail in 1996, and Muller chose to keep it operational. R&N signal department staff designed the CTC system that is now being installed on 44 miles that once had been an important Reading route. The railroad is using signal masts and heads that Norfolk Southern had replaced on some of its former Reading lines. Muller

"I DON'T ANSWER TO STOCKHOLDERS. SO I HAVE A TOTALLY LONG-TERM PERSPECTIVE ON THIS."
— OWNER AND CEO ANDREW M. MULLER JR.

purchased necessary electronics via eBay. "We're running so many trains," Muller says. Installation of continuous welded rail has allowed trains to run at higher speeds. When track segments saw only a couple of train movements a day, the dispatcher's job was comparatively simple. The addition of the Fast Freights has made some parts of the Main Line especially busy. "We follow one train after another. CTC makes the dispatcher's job much easier," according to Muller. "There is a peace of mind. When you see those signals, you

Engineers Steve Gilbert and Eric Slekovac report for duty at 10:15 a.m. on an October day at the Reading & Northern's North Reading, Pa., yard. During the next 9 hours, they will be responsible for the operation of the

North Reading Fast Freight (symbol NRFF), one of four tightly scheduled freight runs on the 330-mile eastern Pennsylvania regional. They will run north to the town of Jim Thorpe and back, a total of 121 miles, forwarding cars to and from customers in the Scranton/Wilkes-Barre area. Throughout the day, and every day, the on-time status of the Fast Freights are closely monitored by the train dispatcher, railroad officials, and even owner and CEO Andrew M. Muller Jr.

Gilbert is starting and inspecting the North Reading Fast Freight's two SD40-2s, while Slekovac, who will serve as the conductor this day, is reviewing the paperwork for their train. When both men are ready, they move the two locomotives into R&N's North Reading Yard, where a switching crew is breaking up the long train of cars that they had brought up from Norfolk Southern's yard in Reading. That crew already had conducted inspections and brake tests of the Fast Freight's cars, making it easier to leave on schedule.

Today, the train has just three cars — a

bulkhead flat of lumber and two insulated boxcars. But customers on the north end of the railroad are waiting for them.

The train is on the move at 11:10 a.m. Gilbert and Slekovac both look at their watches. Each man has a copy of the schedule for this train and will consult it throughout the day. The train passes what seems like an endless string of Reading &

Northern hoppers, all filled with anthracite, ready for interchange to Norfolk Southern for forwarding to domestic and international customers.

The train loses a few minutes waiting to pass through work zones where employees are installing signals for an expanding centralized traffic control system.

READING & NORTHERN TODAY

"I guess we were doing precision scheduled railroading years ago," Muller says when asked about his railroad's fast freights and new centralized traffic control on the main line. "Didn't trains always run on schedules? We are following tradition." He is quick to give credit to the railroaders who make it a success: "When you give

them a job that has things to accomplish, they love it."

But it's really about customer service. In 2015, Reading & Northern President Wayne A. Michel asked the marketing and sales team to meet with all of the railroad's customers, establishing a scheduled time that each customer could expect to receive its cars. The railroad promised delivery or pickup within 2 hours of the scheduled time window. Muller says that R&N has met those expectations 98 percent of the time. In order to get the cars to the local freights that deliver them to customers, scheduled mainline freight trains were established in 2016. In 2019, these trains are the North Reading Fast Freight; the Pittston Fast Freight (Pittston Yard near Wilkes-Barre to Jim Thorpe and return); the Tamaqua Fast Freight (Tamaqua to the Norfolk Southern interchange in Reading and return); and the West Hazleton Fast Freight (Humboldt Industrial Park, near Hazleton, to North Reading and return). Add numerous local freights and yard jobs, and the railroad typically runs 18 trains each day.

Andy Muller's path to owning and running a regional railroad has been anything but conventional. An eastern Pennsylvania native, Muller worked as a public school teacher and later as a dealer in precious metals. His success in the latter pursuit provided him with the resources to enter the railroad business in 1983, when his



Andrew M. Muller Jr.



Humboldt Industrial Park at West Hazleton, Pa., with 7 miles of track, provides 4,500 carloads to the R&N annually. Train WHHB-1 passes the crew office on Oct. 26, 2018.

know there is no train ahead and you have no broken rail." He says that the new system will be compatible with possible future installation of positive train control.

FAST FREIGHT ROLLS ON

As the North Reading Fast Freight rolls past the railroad's shops and general offices at Port Clinton, Pa., train dispatcher Kyle Sanders carefully watches the train from his second-floor bay window. Like most of R&N's dispatchers, Sanders also is a certified locomotive engineer. He has run the Fast Freights and is well aware of the territory and the challenges that the crew faces.

North of Port Clinton, the Fast Freight approaches its first CTC signal. The three-light signal heads read green over red. "Clear," both enginemen say in unison. Slekovac confirms the signal status over the radio. With the train now in CTC territory, Sanders is able to track the train and its timekeeping on the video screen at his desk.

At Carbon, the Fast Freight enters the C&S Railroad, a former Jersey Central line that serves as the R&N's link between Haucks and Jim Thorpe. In a few minutes the short train tiptoes across 1,000-foot-long Hometown Viaduct, 168 feet over the Little Schuylkill River. We still are in coal country, and remnants of long-abandoned anthracite hauler Lehigh & New England are visible on the hillsides.

READING & NORTHERN MOTIVE POWER

Numbers	Quantity	Model
250-251	2	EMD F7
425	1	Baldwin 4-6-2 (steam)
800-801	2	EMD SW8
802-803	2	EMD SW8m
1540-1543	4	EMD MP15DC
1546, 1548	2	EMD SW1500
2000	1	EMD SD38
2003-2004	2	EMD SD38AC
2010-2012	3	GP38-2
2102	1	Reading 4-8-4 (steam)
2530-2535	6	EMD GP30u
3050-3058	9	EMD SD40-2
5014, 5017-5022, 5033, 5049	9	EMD SD50
9166	1	Budd RDC-3
9167-9168	2	Budd RDC-1

The train has stayed on schedule and arrives at Nesquehoning Junction, just outside Jim Thorpe, 2 minutes ahead of schedule. But a radio call advises the crew that the Lehigh Gorge Scenic Railway passenger train will run ahead to bring riders back to Jim Thorpe. Below on the river, contractors are installing pilings for a new \$14-million rail bridge that will enable Reading & Northern trains to move between the Reading and Lehigh divisions without reversing directions. The railroad is contributing \$4 million to match a state grant to complete this long-awaited project. Muller hopes the bridge will open in September 2019.

The Fast Freight follows the passenger train as far as Jim Thorpe yard, makes quick

work setting out its three cars, and then shuffles the 18 cars waiting to return south. The nighttime Pittston Fast Freight will pick up the three cars to bring them north. With the completion of the new bridge and opening of a new passing siding, North Reading and Pittston trains will be scheduled to allow a meet and train-swap before each crew returns to its home terminal.

THE NEW ROAD OF ANTHRACITE

As Class I railroads watch the downward spiral of coal traffic, Pennsylvania anthracite remains a bright spot in Reading & Northern's ledgers. A century ago, the Delaware, Lackawanna & Western called itself the Road of Anthracite, but R&N could claim that title today.

The lower-sulfur hard coal makes up just a tiny percentage of the coal mined around the globe. Today, the anthracite industry promotes the fuel as clean-burning. In recent years, anthracite has received renewed interest for secondary heating in homes, and is used in the processing of beet sugar. Michel says that anthracite is seeing its real growth in the steel industry.

Most North American anthracite is found in eastern Pennsylvania, along Reading & Northern lines. In 2018, R&N moved 800,000 tons of anthracite — enough to fill 8,103 hopper cars. Coal companies are mining some untapped seams and also are using modern techniques to gather coal at older mines. The railroad serves 12 loading sites. New facilities now dry and process coal before shipment. The anthracite leaves the



Orange markings are carried on hoppers assigned to carry coal en route to Rio Tinto Iron & Titanium in Sorel, Quebec.

property aboard R&N's fleet of 1,000 open-top cars and 300 covered hoppers, en route to customers across North America. A lot of it makes the short rail moves via Norfolk Southern to ports at Fairless Hills, Pa., and Baltimore for export. A longtime recipient of Pennsylvania anthracite is Rio Tinto Iron & Titanium. That coal moves to the port in hoppers carrying orange "Rio Tinto Coal Service" emblems, and continues to Sorel, Quebec, on ships. More Pennsylvania anthracite sails to European customers.

PASSENGER SERVICE

Passenger trains always have been a big part of Muller's railroad world. Steam-powered excursions charging down his original 13-mile line in the mid-1980s quickly drew attention to his new freight railroad. Even as Reading & Northern expanded and its freight business grew, it continued to run regular excursions. Passenger trains served the dual purposes of being a community goodwill gesture while promoting the freight operation, Muller explains. In recent years, he says it actually has become profitable.

Location has everything to do with it. In 2005, Muller established the Lehigh Gorge Scenic Railway to operate passenger trains on R&N routes out of Jim Thorpe, a major tourist destination. Through most of the year, visitors are able to ride Lehigh Gorge Scenic trains out of the old Jersey Central station. Jim Thorpe's popularity makes reaching there by automobile a frustrating experience, as local roads clog up on weekends. Seeing opportunity, Muller began running passenger trains from outlying areas directly into downtown Jim Thorpe. The railroad opened its new Reading Outer Station, north of the city of Reading, in 2017, offering free parking and weekend train rides to Jim Thorpe between May and November. A pair of Budd RDCs usually covers these assignments, carrying 132 people on each trip. During fall foliage, longer locomotive-hauled consists work



The North Reading Fast Freight eases past a crew installing CTC signals at Leesport, Pa., on Oct. 25, 2018. The railroad plans to have CTC operating over the length of its Main Line this year.

the Reading trains, and the RDCs are shifted to run out of Pottsville or Schuylkill Haven to Jim Thorpe. R&N and Lehigh Gorge trains carried 120,000 passengers in 2018. Muller also is a certified locomotive engineer. If you ride one of the fall foliage trains, don't be surprised to see the railroad's owner at the throttle.

What about those steam locomotives that Muller showcased three decades ago? Baldwin-built 4-6-2 No. 425 sees regular service on some of the fall foliage schedules, and on other specials during the year. The pride of the steam fleet, homebuilt Reading Co. 4-8-4 No. 2102, awaits its return to service after 28 years of inactivity. The small crew at the railroad's steam shop at Port Clinton works on the big Northern-

type most days. Muller says he would like to have it on the road this year.

LOCOMOTIVES AND PEOPLE

Muller's railroads have always looked to the used locomotive market. The law of supply and demand results in widely varying prices for secondhand power, depending on the overall needs of the industry at any given time. Muller tries to buy low — even when he doesn't need additional power. One of his first buys came in 1984, when he purchased 24 former Santa Fe CF7 road-switchers. The new BM&R had no need for that many locomotives, but Muller anticipated that the growing number of new Class I railroad spin-off short lines would. Before long, Muller's CF7s — built by Santa Fe from

retired EMD F units — had become common on numerous Northeastern short lines.

BM&R power was a mix of secondhand EMD switchers and some of the CF7s. The new Reading Blue Mountain & Northern briefly relied on a collection of older General Electric road-switchers before transitioning to an all-EMD fleet. Some early oddities, including an ex-Southern Pacific SD45 and a pair of former Conrail SD45-2s, came and went. More conventional locomotives make up the heart of today's roster. Fleet veterans include nine SD40-2s and five SD50s, all from Union Pacific, as well as a trio of SD38s. Other four-motor units include six ex-Santa Fe GP30u units, which the railroad calls GP39RNs. In 2016 and 2017, four MP15DCs and three GP38-2s joined the roster, all from Norfolk Southern. The high noses on the Geeps are being chopped by Reading & Northern's shop forces. Four CSX SD50-2s were acquired in 2018. With the exception of two GP30u locomotives painted Lehigh Valley Cornell Red, all of R&N's diesels wear the green-and-yellow colors of the former Reading.

Reading & Northern has 250 employees, including part-time workers on



No. 2012, one of three once-high-nose GP38-2s purchased from Norfolk Southern, shows off its cut-down nose for better visibility.

the passenger trains. Operations employees include 50 engineers and conductors, 40 in maintenance of way, six in the signal department, and 20 in mechanical. Most employees are local residents. "We hire for attitude," Muller says. Dedication to customer service is a priority. Many of R&N's employees have seniority dating back to the earliest days of the railroad. But with growing business, the company always is hiring, according to Muller.

GROWING THE BUSINESS

There is much more to the Reading & Northern than its Main Line. Branches diverge in multiple directions. Many were

built during the peak of the anthracite era, and they still produce coal for the railroad to haul. But many other businesses now can be found along the way. Some of the railroad's bigger customers are at outer ends of lines. International Paper operates a corrugated-box plant at Mount Carmel; a large Procter & Gamble facility at Mehoopany receives raw materials for its Bounty, Charmin, Pampers, and Luvs products; Yuengling's brewery receives materials at St. Clair; and Koppy's runs a new propane distribution facility at Good Spring. An interesting service occurs at Cressona, Pa.: R&N uses its own boxcars to move material from a storage yard to make just-in-time deliveries to a facility less than a mile away. "We can beat truck rates with that," Muller says.

The Reading & Northern is Eastern mountain railroading at its best, with several steep grades. The line to Good Spring has a maximum grade of 2.9 percent.

The railroad's car counts jumped in 2016 when it took over service at the Humboldt Industrial Park near Hazleton, Pa. The park, owned by regional development authority Greater Hazleton CAN DO, is built on 3,000 acres, some of which once were used for coal mining. It has more than 7 miles of rail lines, serving a growing number of customers. Reading & Northern purchased the park's rail assets in 2012 and replaced Norfolk Southern in serving customers at the beginning of

2016. "Reading Blue Mountain & Northern Railroad has become a great partner in promoting economic development in Greater Hazleton since the first day they took over service," says CAN DO president and CEO Kevin O'Donnell.

A switch crew works the park six days a week, joined by a second job on certain days. At 4:20 p.m. each day, the West Hazleton Fast Freight (symbol WHFF) departs the park with all outbound cars and heads south through Tamaqua and Port Clinton to North Reading. Another Fast Freight will forward those cars to Norfolk Southern's yard in Reading, and also bring Humboldt-bound cars back to North Reading.

NS is R&N's primary interchange partner, making connections at Reading, Taylor, Penobscot (Mountain Top), Lehigh, and Temple. NS also operates one through train in each direction on trackage rights over R&N's Lehigh Division. Canadian Pacific's interchange (with cars moving in Norfolk Southern trains) is at Taylor Yard near Scranton. An increasing amount of NS interchange is made at Reading. Muller calls it "directional routing." He said that some cars were taking longer routes within Pennsylvania, often via Allentown, to reach R&N trackage. "Every move I make is for the benefit of the railroad and the customer. Directional routing will give better rates to the customer."

As Andy Muller's railroads celebrate



Reading & Northern 4-6-2 No. 425 rests between excursions in the railroad's steam shop at Port Clinton, Pa. To the right is R&N's former Reading 4-8-4 No. 2102 undergoing restoration.

their 36th birthday, we can expect the company's freight trains to continue carrying a wide and growing assortment of traffic.

HEADING HOME

The North Reading Fast Freight is on the move out of Jim Thorpe just 4 minutes behind schedule, but that time will be made up. Second-shift dispatcher Nathan Bissey is overseeing trains now, and he instructs the crew to set off all 18 cars at Tamaqua

Lower Yard. The Tamaqua Fast Freight will take those cars to Reading that evening. After squeezing the cars into the compact yard, the train is now light engines for the remainder of the trip home. After meeting two other trains, Gilbert and Slekovac are back in North Reading, signing off duty as darkness falls. Tomorrow's crew assignment list already has been posted, so both men already know where and when they work the following day. **I**

GP39RN — a railroad-specific designation — No. 2531 and two SD40-2s lead the southbound North Reading Fast Freight past a farm at Molino, Pa., in October 2018.



Staying Focused in the MOW

BY: CHRIS GOETZ, VP MAINTENANCE OF WAY

Throughout the year Maintenance of Way (MOW) faces many challenges and as a department, we are constantly keeping up with whatever Mother Nature brings our way. This winter's focus was no exception, with its almost record-breaking cold temperatures.

After an exhausting winter of shoveling snow, chipping ice, blowing snow from switches, clearing downed trees and fixing rail breaks, MOW is looking forward to warmer temps and whatever Mother Nature next brings to the Railroad.

Another big focus for the MOW Department this winter, was replacing worn-out rail. To tackle projects of this caliber, especially in the winter time, we have invested in a rail heater that gives the ability to change out rail year-round. Our crews proved that they could defy the odds and replaced entire sections of track in the rain, sleet and snow. While these were not ideal conditions, MOW forces gathered their strength,

muster and resolve to complete some of the most challenging obstacles they have yet faced in adverse conditions. With the purchase of a rail heater, MOW will see in an increase in rail installations for new switches and track. This will have an exponential effect on RBMN RR as multiple departments will benefit from more storage space. This winter alone, we have built thousands of track feet in the Humboldt Industrial Park in Hazelton, extended multiple tracks at our largest yard in North Reading, and have changed out rail in several locations throughout our Main Line.

Our forces are constantly pulled in multiple directions to maintain our current track as well as continue to be excited to build for the future. At the end of each day, the big picture is the RBMN RR running smoothly and on time. If you take the time to focus in on the many moving pieces, MOW will be found not only on the frontlines, but behind the scenes enduring whatever it takes to keep on track. ♦



Always learning on the Reading and Northern (From Left to Right John Brown, Ryan Rupprecht, Ben Cole, Matt Minnich, Eva Melochick, Matt Nestor, Dan Puksar, Jason Winwood, Racine Rep).



Shawn Himmelberger (Backhoe) works with Curt Williams as they replace ties and spike up rail.



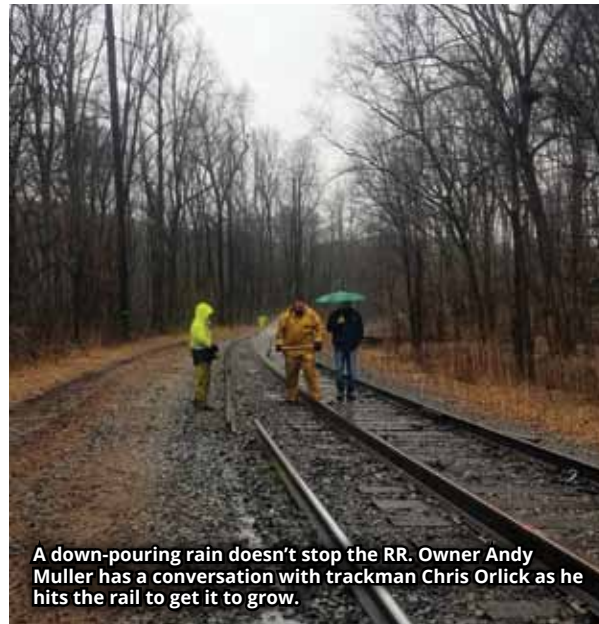
Aaron Cassel maintaining a switch by welding the point on the Main Line.



Switch building at our new County Line Siding Track (From Left to Right Justin Fetteroff, Justin Hughes, Dennis Roshac, Matt Minnich).



Chris Orlick, Brock Krumanocker, Curt Williams, Matt Sloskey, Justin Hughes, Backhoes Shawn Himmelburger, Brendle Stufflet



A down-pouring rain doesn't stop the RR. Owner Andy Muller has a conversation with trackman Chris Orlick as he hits the rail to get it to grow.



Our very first Spring Switch located in Jim Thorpe. This will allow the train to operate in one direction without having to throw the switch.



Using the vibrator on the front of the rail heater helps the rail slide and getting caught on plates (Matt Sloskey).



Distressing our rail with our rail heater (Matt Sloskey).



Backhoes are used to reposition rail in place to be changed (Brendle Stufflet).



No weather is too much for us on Training Day (From Left to Right Rep from Racine Rail Saws, Josh Rodney).

MOW 2019 and Beyond

BY: JASON WINWOOD, AVP MAINTENANCE OF WAY

A lot of the articles you read about the RBMNRR speak of the tremendous growth we have experienced over the past few years and that growth has led to a dramatic increase in train activity on our railroad. To accommodate for the growth in train traffic, our Maintenance of Way Department has undergone major changes over the past few months to better position ourselves for 2019 and beyond. The first major change came in November when Chris Goetz was promoted to the VP of Maintenance of Way Department. Chris was previously the AVP of Real Estate and brings over six years of experience with RBMN where he was responsible for the railroad's right of way, overseeing the railroad's inspector team and working directly with numerous outside contractors and agencies. Previous to working with the railroad, Chris managed his own construction company and brings strong leadership qualities to the Maintenance of Way Department.

Next, to provide better structure to a department that now has forty three people in it, we promoted some of our most seasoned and accomplished MOW workers to Foreman roles to lead our gangs out in the field. This will help improve communication within our department, project management, and keeping our trackman safe.

Duane Engle has become the Sr. Division Leader of our Reading Division. Duane has over twenty six years of invaluable railroad experience and is a living encyclopedia when it comes to switch and

track structure knowledge. He will have with him the newly appointed Foreman Matt Minnich, Chris Nefos, and John Brown reporting to him.

Jason Witner was promoted to Lehigh Division Leader and has been with RBMN MOW for fourteen years. His six years of experience as a Track Inspector has given him vital insight into the Lehigh Division's track condition and needs. Shawn Slusser will be reporting to Jason and will help manage the Lehigh division's maintenance needs.

Ben Cole is now our Manager of Bridges and will be responsible for making sure the bridges that our trains traverse over are safe, secure and capable of handling our train activity. Ben brings nine years of experience to this role and has had an active role in our bridge repairs during his tenure as both a Trackman and Foreman with RBMNRR.

We have also moved Nick Alberswerth to our Manager of Vegetation Role where he will oversee our 1100 acres of our railway, rail yards, and right of way. Nick has been very active with the weed and brush spray programs since joining RBMN in 2014. Previous to that he worked as a Vegetation Manager with DBI.

MOW is very excited for what is in store in 2019 and for a department that constantly deals with change, the one constant will always be Maintenance of Way's ability to make sure our trains move safely down the track. ♦



Replacing rail on our Minersville Track (Larry Weller, Curt Williams, Chris Orlick).



An overview of ties to be delivered to RBMN for a tie project in Spring.



Pittston gang planning out repairs after a small derailment ripped up the tracks.



Fixing a broken rail on our Main Line at Broad St. Tamaqua (From Left to Right Cody Henn, Larry Weller, Curt Williams, Matt Nestor, Chris Orlick, Mario DeMarco).



Some of the rock that collapsed in the tunnel (From Left to Right John Walaitis, Larry Weller).



Building track to load up our new ballast regulator (From Left to Right Brandon Wagner, Dennis Roshac, Charles Carl, John Brown, Duane Zimmerman).



Replacing track ties inside the new Ransom Transload (From Left to Right Ryan Davis, Alex Scubelek).



Removing debris from the Buck Mountain Tunnel from a small wall collapse (Shawn Himmelburger).



Installing 18" plates with the new rail (From Left to Right Shawn Himmelburger (Backhoe), Curt Williams, Brock Krumanocker, Chris Orlick).



Pulling spikes, plugging and gauging curves (From Left to Right Curt Williams, Larry Weller, Chris Orlick).



Trackmen changing old plates to Victor plates with e-clips on a bridge in Pittston (From Left to Right Jason Winwood, John Walaitis along with other crew members from our Pittston and Penobsco).



Our newly acquired ballast regulator.



Crews are constantly clearing ice from the rail in our tunnels. If the ice builds up too high, a train could derail.

Safety Article Spring 2019

BY: TOM COOK, VP SAFETY & TRANSPORTATION



Left to right; Michele Daub, Steve Werley, Aaron Snyder and Lori Chinchar.

Customer Service is Not Just a Department, It's an Attitude

BY: SUSAN LUDWIG, VP CUSTOMER SERVICE



Susan Ludwig and Jennifer Woodeshick review customer pipelines.

Our faces may have changed over the years in the Customer Service Department, but one thing that never changes is our dedication to our customers. We have a terrific group of people who care about their customers and making sure we help them with their business needs.

Aaron Snyder has been recently promoted to Director of Customer Service. He works with the Marketing Department to make sure all the rates are entered into our system. He is also my direct back up and assists the department in my absence. Aaron is also able to handle the back up for all the General Merchandise customers.

A few months ago, the Coal Department was integrated into our team and we now operate as one Customer Service Department. Steve Werley in the past worked strictly as a Coal Customer Service Manager but has started taking care of General Merchandise Customers and is becoming familiar with all aspects of that business.

Lori Chinchar has taken on rating of our traffic in our ISS system and that has become a big part of her daily responsibilities. She also handles many General Merchandise customers on a daily basis, as well as being back up for our Transload Operations.

Our main representative for our Transload Operations is Michele Daub. She handles the majority of the transload activity which is inbound and outbound rail and truck reloading. She recently was trained in the coal operation and now helps Steve with the daily operation of the coal traffic, while still keeping her hands in some General Merchandise traffic.

The newest addition to our team is Jennifer Woodeshick. She joined us in December 2018 and has jumped right in doing a great job. She handles our daily pipelines, Customer Service for General Merchandise as well as one of our transload locations.

Our team takes every situation and tries to look at it as if we were the customer. We want to help our customers be successful which in turn helps the RBMN be successful. Keeping our customers happy is our priority every day and we are lucky to work for a company that is behind us when we work to achieve this goal. We really do have an "attitude", a customer service attitude. ♦

I recently attended a business roundtable discussion about a safety initiative attended by safety professionals from many local manufactures. One of those manufactures was very proud of their safety program and went out of their way to talk about their safety culture which is recognized as best practice within their multinational corporation. Not everything they described fit our culture at Reading and Northern. But as I listened to the discussion, one thing really impressed me, and that was safety leadership demonstrated at all levels in their organization, not just at the top.

Safety leadership at all levels is a hallmark of a strong safety culture. You don't need to be a safety manager, manager, or appointed to a safety committee to be a safety leader on the Reading and Northern. My challenge is to develop most, if not all, of our 200 employees into safety leaders. Please take a look at some of the activities that they talked about and hopefully you will seize similar opportunities to demonstrate safety leadership in your day to day activities.

One of the activities they described was hazard identification and elimination. When a safety leader is aware of a safety hazard, they should eliminate it immediately on the spot if able to do so. That is the most effective and desirable outcome. Examples are spreading salt if walkways or stairs being used are icing up or removing a tripping hazard or restoring the walking conditions when completing a maintenance activity. If you can't immediately fix the condition, fill out a track condition report. If the condition is not covered by a track condition report, report the defect to your supervisor or manager.

We work in an outdoor environment with more hazards than we can possibly eliminate given our resources. Not every reported hazard can or

will be addressed. Nonetheless, we all occasionally come across hazards that obviously need immediate or priority attention. When you recognize these, please talk to your manager, and let me know as well so I can assist with the follow up on critical items.

Safety process improvement activities were described. Process improvement is the activity that offers the greatest rewards. It takes many forms. If you see a coworker taking an unnecessary risk without proper protective equipment or doing a job in an unsafe way, please step up and talk to them about it. We all make mistakes and can fall into bad habits. Your action in making your teammates aware of unsafe actions or habits could prevent an injury or save their life. Equally important is positive recognition. Recognizing and thanking coworkers for taking the safe course of action or making a safe decision helps reinforce those actions in a virtuous circle.

We all have encountered a process that could be done safer if done differently. Examples are workers requesting a tool or machine or piece of personal protective equipment that would improve safety and efficiency. Another example is re-engineering the work to be done at a different location or in a different way that eliminates the hazard entirely. Please don't hesitate to give your ideas to your manager and I would always welcome your sharing these ideas with me so I can help with follow up. Not every process can be changed, but the ability to communicate these ideas openly to management is critical to safety improvement.

It is very satisfying to take a leadership role in safety, and you should be very proud if you initiate meaningful changes. Please share your concerns or ideas with me and also any success stories you have had. I'll look to recognize some of your success stories in future articles. ♦



Upcoming Events in Passenger Department



Steam locomotive 425 seen departing Jim Thorpe on the return northbound trip to Penobscot Yard. This Mountain Top Rotary trip will occur on July 6, 2019.

BY: MATT FISHER, PASSENGER GENERAL MANAGER

The Passenger Department continues to grow. Lehigh Gorge Scenic Railway trains ran for Winterfest during the third weekend of February. The train was so popular, that over 1,000 guest rode each day-numbers that compare to October. Then, trains ran regularly on weekends in Jim Thorpe from February through Easter. The town saw a big increase in visitors in part to the extended winter and early spring train ride schedule.

Regularly scheduled LGSR trains departing Jim Thorpe will continue in May and run through December. Fridays are becoming ever more popular, so this year we will run trains every Friday in May. In June, July, August, trains will run daily. After Labor Day, September trains will run Friday, Saturday, and Sunday before the busy fall foliage season.

The White Haven Bike Trains return May 4 and run one weekend a month through the season. You can bring your own bike or rent from our partner, Pocono Biking. For those who don't want to ride a bike for 25 miles, ride the Bike Train in both directions to see the entire Lehigh Gorge State Park with plenty of river views on both sides of the train journey. For more information concerning our Jim Thorpe trains, please visit at www.lgsry.com or call 570-325-8485.

On the Reading and Northern side of passenger operations, RDC (Rail Diesel Car) train trips will also visit Jim Thorpe from Reading Outer Station located in Muhlenberg

Township off Bellevue Avenue and Route 61. Every one of these weekend trains sold out from Memorial Day through November last season. We continue to offer a cash refreshment area on the RDCs along with windows in the coach that open and shut. Air conditioning is also found on the RDC trains. The train will depart Reading Outer Station with a stop at Port Clinton for additional passengers before ending up in Jim Thorpe. While in Jim Thorpe, people will enjoy many of the shops, restaurants, and attractions. Visit the Reading and Northern website at www.readingnorthern.com, click on the passenger tab for more information and to purchase tickets on available dates. You can also call 610-562-2102 for tickets and information.

Also, we are happy to partner with non-profit organizations and run special event trips throughout the year. The Lehigh Valley Chapter of the National Rail Historians Society/Railroad Historians group will run a very special photo train ride with the RDCs named the "Three River Valley Flyer" on May 18. This train will operate from Port Clinton and run towards Pittston and Ransom with a focus on photo runbys on the Lehigh Division. Tickets for this train sold out quickly. A donation will be made to this group from ticket sales to further railroad historic preservation.

Finally, the Mountain Top Rotary Club will sponsor a steam train ride from Mountain Top

to Jim Thorpe with steam locomotive 425. This trip is July 6, with tickets still available. Donations from this trip go to several community projects in Luzerne County.

Please consider joining us for one of our regularly scheduled LGSR trips or spend the whole day riding the Reading and Northern RDC trains to Jim Thorpe. Continue to look for updates to special event train rides by calling or visiting our websites or Facebook. ♦



Ryan and Shane Frederickson in front of 425 before Mountain Top Rotary steam trip.

Congratulations!

ON YOUR NEW ARRIVAL



Congratulations to Jeremy, Muller Rare Coins; E-Commerce Department, and Jordan Atwell on the arrival of their newborn son, Elias Douglas! He was born on Monday, March 18 at 6:35 PM. He is a healthy boy that weighed 9 pounds, 7 ounces and was 22" long. We'd like to send out our best wishes to the Atwell family!

RBMN Follows the New Eaglets Spotted in Hamburg, PA

Photos submitted by Lynne Engle, MOW Administrative Assistant.



Feeding time.



March 30th - Our first glimpse of a new eaglet.



Looking for the other parent to return.



Tammy Debkowski, Finance Assistant, and Tyler Glass, Executive VP of Operations, ready to assist families and the ARL staff.

RBMN Making a Difference in the Local Animal Community

BY: KYLE BARRELL, HUMAN RESOURCES DIRECTOR

One day, an old man was walking along a beach that was littered with thousands of starfish that had been washed ashore by the high tide. As he walked he came upon a young boy who was eagerly throwing the starfish back into the ocean, one by one.

Puzzled, the man looked at the boy and asked what he was doing. Without looking up from his task, the boy simply replied, "I'm saving these starfish, Sir."

The old man chuckled aloud, "Son, there are thousands of starfish and only one of you. What difference can you make?"

The boy picked up a starfish, gently tossed it into the water and turning to the man, said, "I made a difference to that one!"

We've all heard this story and it rings true each and every time the Reading and Northern Railroad is so generous to sponsor the "Free Adoption Weekends" at the Animal Rescue League of Berks County. According to aspc.org, an estimated 6.5 million animals enter shelters in the U.S. each year. The number of deserving animals the railroad has sponsored (135 total animals between November and February events) may seem small in proportion to the overall number of animals in shelters, but it has meant the world to the animals we have connected with their new families.

During the most recent adoption weekend on February 15th – 17th, the total number of animals joining a new family was 53- 33 cats, 8 kittens and 12 dogs. This was a lower number of adoptions than our event in November due to time of year, weather and many animals being fostered and adopted out over the holidays. Typically, the ARL will see an influx of animals in the beginning of Spring due to many baby animals being born and families maybe realizing that the animal they fostered or adopted, is too much work and responsibility or isn't necessarily for them.

With that being said, each and every animal that is fostered or adopted, positively impacts the ARL, the family, and most importantly, the animal. A lot goes into choosing the right animal and the railroad's generosity allows families to take that final step in opening their doors to a new, four-legged family member.

Again, this time, we had some RBMN employees spending some time assisting families and staff at the ARL. Sabine Fidler, Human Resources Assistant, and her niece, Gabi, and nephew, Alex, volunteered on Saturday, and it was very evident, very quickly that the families coming to the ARL, were on a mission. "The anticipation on the visitors' faces was palpable as it was apparent, they were hoping to find a new family member," quipped Sabine.

Tom Hubric, Executive Director, and his staff are kind-hearted, passionate individuals who take the time to match families and the perfect pet through understanding the families' needs, wants and experience with caring for an animal. The entire experience of being part of an adoption weekend at the Animal Rescue League is a rewarding experience and truly does make a world of difference to each animal that is taken into their new home. ♦



Sabine Fidler (orange shirt), HR Assistant, and her niece, Gabi, and nephew, Alex, having some fun during our ARL event.



Meet Bowie!

Mike Gigliotti, a Reading and Northern Conductor, and his family recently adopted Bowie. Bowie is a handsome seven-year old Manx cat adopted from the Carbon County Friends of Animals Shelter. He is a sweet little guy who loves head scratches, naps, and his favorite cat treats. He's snuggly, clumsy and payfull. Bowie has made the purrrrrfect little addition to the family and will certainly be spoiled for the rest of his 9 lives!

Happy Birthday!

MAY 1..... SHAWN FREDERICKSON	JUNE 3..... CURTIS CIBELLO	JULY 14..... DALE HOMM
MAY 2..... TONY WEACHOCK	JUNE 4..... TRISHA VANDYKE	JULY 15..... MICHAEL GIGLIOTTI
MAY 6..... JOANNE EVANS	JUNE 5..... ERIC QUIMBY	JULY 15..... DANIEL RAWLEIGH
MAY 7..... JOSEPH BURKE	JUNE 7..... TIMOTHY BARNES	JULY 15..... DAKOTA REBER
MAY 8..... ANTHONY VERBYLA	JUNE 8..... ALEX MAURY	JULY 15..... MICHAEL SHARADIN
MAY 9..... EUGENE BOYLE	JUNE 10..... PETER COLLINS	JULY 17..... MATTHEW COLLINS
MAY 9..... GORDON CLARK	JUNE 18..... DENISE KACSUR	JULY 18..... BENJAMIN BALTHASER
MAY 9..... DENNIS ROSOHAC	JUNE 23..... MICHELE DAUB	JULY 18..... THOMAS COOK
MAY 11..... DEANNA JOHNSON	JUNE 27..... CHRISTOPHER PETERS	JULY 20..... DARRELL MATZ
MAY 11..... AARON SCHLOSSER	JUNE 28..... IAN KCKEOWN	JULY 20..... NATHAN MENGEL
MAY 12..... MICHAEL HOFFA	JUNE 30..... JASON WITNER	JULY 20..... SAMUEL WILLS
MAY 16..... ALLY MCGINLEY	JULY 1..... JEREMY ATWELL	JULY 21..... TAMMY DEBKOWSKI
MAY 17..... RHONDA BUECHLE	JULY 1..... JOHN BYASSEE	JULY 22..... TYLER BERGER
MAY 21..... CHARLES TRUSDELL	JULY 3..... WILLIAM BUBECK	JULY 23..... CHRISTOPHER BOST
MAY 24..... LISA MATZ	JULY 4..... BENJAMIN MEISER	JULY 24..... AARON MULLER, JR.
MAY 25..... SCOTT BLOZOUSKY	JULY 5..... TYLER GESCHWINDT	JULY 24..... DAVID HUTTON
MAY 26..... MARIO DEMARCO	JULY 5..... CHRISTOPHER NEFOS	JULY 25..... STEVEN KOLBE
MAY 27..... CHARLES BURNETT	JULY 6..... JOHN DUBICK	JULY 25..... KYLE SANDERS
MAY 28..... SIERRA WANAMAKER	JULY 6..... CONNOR HEDRICK	JULY 28..... FRANKLIN DAUB
MAY 29..... MICHAEL GRUBER	JULY 7..... GRAHAM HANTZ	JULY 28..... MICHAEL VOORHEES
MAY 29..... JEFFREY SONDAY	JULY 8..... ERNEST HENRITZY	JULY 30..... DARRIN KEIP
MAY 31..... KATIE BONNER	JULY 10..... JOSHUA YOUPA	JULY 30..... ZACHARY SIMPSON
JUNE 2..... BRANDON KALBACH	JULY 11..... JOSEPH MATUELLA	JULY 31..... SHAWN SLUSSER
JUNE 2..... WILLIAM SOLOMON	JULY 14..... MICHAEL BAILEY	

Red Creek Wildlife

A Hoot of A Time on 78

BY: ALLISON RUSINKO, REHABILITATION ASSISTANT OF RED CREEK WILDLIFE



Release of the great horned owl.



Great horned owl.

As wildlife rehabilitators, we rarely get the opportunity to see the whole story of the animals that come in for rehabilitation. A successful rescue, rehabilitation, and release often involves many people. Usually, it is a member of the public that rescues an animal and brings it to our center. That person is the one who witnessed the situation the animal was in and the danger it has faced firsthand. The rehabilitator cares for the animal, but might not be present for the release.

As Red Creek's newest rehabilitation assistant, I have been present for each part of the process with various animals, but never experienced all of the stages with a single patient. This past winter I experienced the full rehabilitation process for the first time. I saw this animal in a horrifying situation, assisted with its capture, cared for it, and eventually released it. This is the story of the Great Horned Owl found on Interstate 78.

Sunday afternoon, January 6th we received a call from the Hamburg State Police stating that a large owl was reported on Route 78 by mile marker 30. Peggy asked if I would come and help retrieve this owl. Without hesitation I said "yes," and within minutes we were on our way to meet an officer at the Hamburg exit.

We searched the road as the mile markers ticked by, 25, 26, 27, and suddenly we saw the owl. It was not only in a different location than where it was reported but also on one of the busiest parts of 78. The owl was right next to the median by the exit to get onto route 61 near Cabelas. We pulled over onto the shoulder, and Peggy called the officer who was to meet us.

My adrenaline was pumping as we waited. Tractor trailers and cars sped by so fast that it shook our vehicle, and their tires passed only inches from the owl. The owl was in grave danger of being hit again, and I knew we would also be at risk of being struck. This was my first rescue with Peggy who assured me that the officer would make the situation safer.

A few minutes later we were standing at the exit, and Peggy and the officer agreed on a plan. The officer began backing his vehicle along the highway shoulder, lights flashing. Peggy explained that he was going to do a rolling stop. Driving in reverse about one mile, he would pull out and drive slowly, blocking the traffic behind him. This would give us about thirty to sixty seconds to capture the owl after the last car in front of the officer had passed.

The wind was so harsh that water came to my eyes as we carried the nets and stationed ourselves across from the owl. As we watched the traffic, we discussed our approach. When the last truck passed, we ran. I came up behind along the median, and Peggy headed straight across the highway towards the owl. With quick reflexes, Peggy scooped him up, and we ran back across the road before the traffic reached us. By the time the officer returned, we were placing the owl in a dark carrier in the back of our vehicle. With a sigh of relief, the rescue was completed, and it was one of the most amazing experiences I have ever had.

The exam at Red Creek revealed a concussion and minor injuries to the eyes. This started the next phase of his life: the rehabilitation. He received medication to help with pain and swelling, and he was active within a few hours. Each day we saw improvement, and soon he began acting like a typical, aggressive owl. A week later he was placed in a flight enclosure where he could regain his strength. It took him less than a minute to start flying. It was incredible to see the change from the injured bird we picked up only a few days earlier. He remained in the flight enclosure for two weeks as we waited for the weather to cooperate for release.

Because January is breeding season for Great Horned Owls, we wanted to release him back to his home territory. Peggy reached out to the Reading Blue Mountain and Northern Railroad to help locate a safe release site nearby. Matt Johnson, VP Asset Management & Community Relations, met us and took us to the release site the baseball field in Port Clinton.

After letting the owl relax for a few seconds, Peggy gave me the honor of releasing our patient. After having him for a little over three weeks, it was time for him to go. I slowly opened the carrier, and he did not hesitate to fly towards the setting sun before perching in a distant pine tree. The release was a success.

Rescuing, Rehabilitating and Releasing is the full circle that comes with wildlife rehabilitation. This was an amazing and emotional story that will definitely stay with me for the rest of my life. ♦

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

Congratulations Kevin!

BY: SHANNON ANDERSON, HR SPECIALIST



I am pleased to introduce this quarter's "Spotlight Employee", Kevin Fry. Kevin has worked for the Reading Jet Center since 2009 as a Line Service Technician. Prior to working at RJC, Kevin worked at Signature Custom Cabinetry in Ephrata.

Kevin was born and raised in Lancaster in a small town of Manheim, Pennsylvania and graduated from Manheim Central High School.

Kevin and his wife, Michele, have two children. Their oldest daughter Lilly (age thirteen) loves field hockey and swimming and their youngest daughter, Adeline (age ten) loves soccer, swimming and hiking.

In his spare time, Kevin enjoys making things out of wood, fixing things, hiking and working in the back yard.

Kevin was recognized by his supervisor, Gordy Clark, for being a "dedicated and committed professional who consistently exceeds the standards of the Reading Jet Center. His actions are constantly lauded from our customer feedback. His professionalism, energetic personality and impeccable safety record is a direct reflection upon himself and the Reading Jet Center."

Thank you, Kevin, for your commitment and dedication to the Reading Jet Center.

As the "Spotlight Employee," they will receive a \$100 gift certificate to dine at a local restaurant. ♦

Reading & Northern's Family Recipes

Venison Pot Roast

Erik Yoder, AVP Real Estate, shares a recipe he says is a Yoder family favorite. He states, "it hits the spot on days when you want a nice meal after a busy event. Start it up in the morning and allow the house to fill with the smell of a great lunch or dinner meal. You can easily serve it with corn (any other veggies), mashed potatoes or baked potatoes, and gravy."

Ingredients

- 1 boneless venison shoulder roast or other cut of meat
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 14 ½-16oz chicken broth
- ½ cup soy sauce
- 1 large onion, sliced
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- ½ teaspoon ground ginger

Directions

In a dutch oven, brown roast in oil; add the rest of the ingredients. Cover and simmer for four hours or until meat is tender.

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



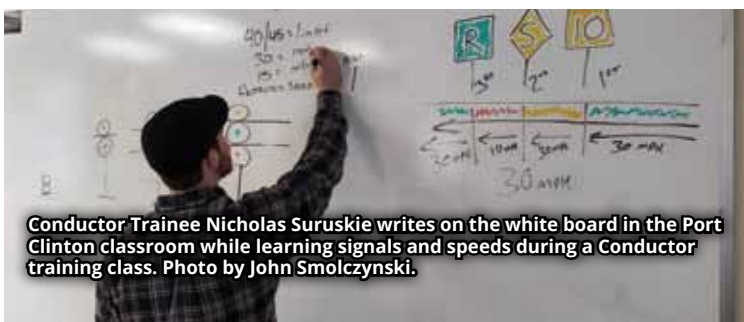
Andy Muller and Matt Fisher pose for a photo after watching crews move a loaded crude oil train into storage on the recently constructed "Fast Track" at West Cressona Yard.



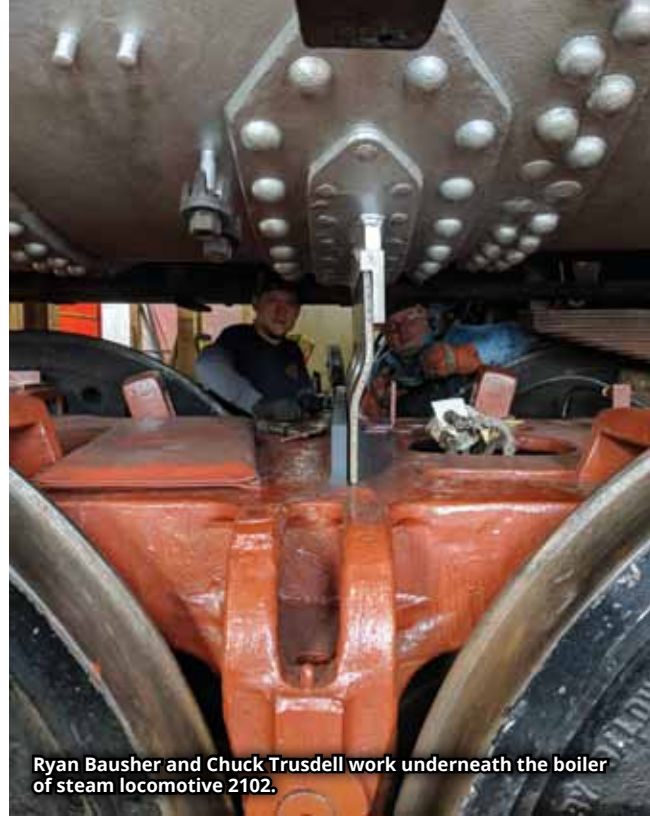
Conductor Erik Ostroskie directs Engineer Dave Lapallo in for a coupling while building the PISB train for the day's customer work at Scranton.



The 2019 Locomotive Engineer class is inside the Port Clinton Engine House with Dustin Berndt (VP of Motive Power) going over the air compressor on an SD40-2. Of the class from left to right is Caleb Fetterolf, Aaron Aigeldinger, Tony Weachock and Eli Wilson. Photo by John Smolczynski.



Conductor Trainee Nicholas Suruskie writes on the white board in the Port Clinton classroom while learning signals and speeds during a Conductor training class. Photo by John Smolczynski.



Ryan Bausher and Chuck Trusdell work underneath the boiler of steam locomotive 2102.



Engineer Mike "Breezy" Bischak stops for a quick photo while inspecting his locomotives for the day on a beautiful Spring morning at Pittston yard.



Conductor Mike "Manny" Voorhees counts down the PISB crew as they pull their train by the Pittston Engine Track switch to make a double with the YJPI crew.



Conductor Thomas Skrutski and Engineer Ron Papiercavich pose at Pittston Junction after making up train PIFF6 for departure later that evening. Photo by John Smolczynski.



While pulling the YJPI train past the Pittston Yard office, Engineer Travis Prevost can be seen at the helm of RBMN 2010.



Engineer Steve Gilbert (in cab) and Conductor Sam Hollock pause for a quick photo just after spotting a railcar for a customer.



Conductor Stephen Perrette (on ground) is guiding Engineer John Hartman as they couple cars at North Reading Yard.



Daren Geschwindt, Wayne Michel and Jim Cerulli are discussing some potential track layouts at Humboldt Industrial Park on a breezy Spring afternoon.

WELCOME ABOARD

NEW EMPLOYEES



Scott Blozousky

Scott Blozousky was recently hired as a Signal Maintainer with the Reading Blue Mountain and Northern Railroad. He attended Mahanoy Area High School and Thaddeus Stevens College of Technology. Prior to working at RBMNR, Scott was an I&C Technician.



Adam Boak

Adam Boak was recently hired as a Car Host with the Lehigh Gorge Scenic Railway. He attended Moravian Academy.



Bretz Fetterolf

Bretz Fetterolf was recently hired as a Locomotive Mechanic and Inventory Manager with the Reading Blue Mountain and Northern Railroad. He attended North Schuylkill High School and Triangle Tech. Prior to working at RBMNR, Bretz was a welder.



Jim Garraway

Jim Garraway was recently hired as a Car Host with the Lehigh Gorge Scenic Railway. He attended Pottsville Area High School, Lock Haven University and Kutztown University. He is currently the Assistant Director of Admissions at Kutztown University. Jim also volunteers with Project 113 in Minersville and has, for over ten years.



Taylor Haupt

Taylor Haupt was recently hired as an Office Assistant with the Reading Blue Mountain and Northern Railroad. She is currently attending Blue Mountain High School.



Kaitlyn Helbert

Kaitlyn Helbert was recently hired as an Accounts Receivable Assistant with the Reading Blue Mountain and Northern Railroad. She attended Kutztown University.



Laura Lesagonicz

Laura Lesagonicz was recently hired as a Customer Service Representative with the Reading Jet Center. She attended Boyertown Area High School and Bloomsburg University.



Ally McGinley

Ally McGinley was recently hired as a Car Host with the Lehigh Gorge Scenic Railway. She attended Lehigh Area High School and Lehigh Carbon Community College.



Nicholas "Nick" Suruskie

Nicholas "Nick" Suruskie was recently hired as a Conductor with the Reading Blue Mountain and Northern Railroad. He attended Exeter Township Senior High School and Penn State-Berks Campus. Prior to working at RBMNR, Nick was a General Maintainer for EnerSys for four years.



Thomas Skrutski

Thomas Skrutski was recently hired as a Conductor with the Reading Blue Mountain and Northern Railroad. He attended Holy Cross High School in Dunmore and Marywood University in Scranton. Prior to working at RBMNR, Thomas was a Conductor for Delaware-Lackawanna Railroad for a year.

RBMN ANNIVERSARIES ACKNOWLEDGED

25 YEARS



March 9, 1994
Daren Geschwindt
VP of Distribution Services

10 YEARS



March 16, 2009
Katie Bonner
Director of Purchasing

15 YEARS



March 15, 2004
Anthony Verbyla
Engineer

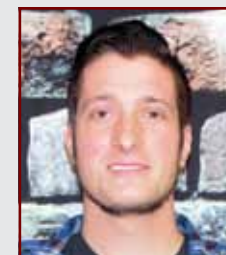


April 25, 2009
Briar Stern
Facilities Technician

5 YEARS



March 3, 2014
Raymond Zweizig
Mgr. Passenger Services



March 3, 2014
Tony Weachock
Conductor



March 3, 2014
Alvin Rineer
Engineer

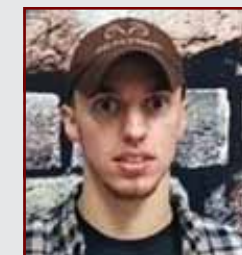
3 YEARS



March 14, 2016
Rian Nemeroff
VP Forest Products



March 15, 2016
John Byassee
Carman



April 18, 2016
Aaron Aigeldinger
Conductor

1 YEAR



February 5, 2018
Franklin Daub
Mechanic



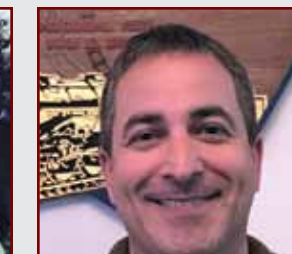
February 21, 2018
Justin Chickilly
Conductor



February 21, 2018
Shannon Anderson
HR Specialist



March 12, 2018
Timothy Billet
Facilities Technician



April 4, 2018
Kyle Barrell
HR Director

Wellness Corner

BY: SABINE FIDLER, RECEPTIONIST/HR ASSISTANT

Lyme Disease

In 2017, the Center for Disease Control (CDC) acquired 42,743 cases of Lyme disease and estimates approximately 300,000 reported cases annually. Tick-borne diseases have increased significantly over the past ten years and are predicted to increase again this year. Lyme disease is transmitted via the bite of infected black-legged ticks which are most commonly found in heavily wooded or grassy areas. In the United States, Lyme disease is caused by two types of bacteria - *Borrelia burgdoferi* and *Borrelia mayonii*.

For disease transmission to occur, a tick must be attached for at least 36 – 48 hours. An engorged or swollen tick indicates disease transmission has most likely occurred. The CDC identifies early signs, late signs, and less prevalent signs and symptoms of Lyme disease.

Early signs and symptoms, generally occurring three to thirty days after being bitten, include:

- Joint & muscle aches, swollen lymph nodes, headaches, fever, tiredness, and chills
- Rash (Erythema migrans - EM)
 - Manifests in approximately 70-80% of the people infected
 - Materializes at the site of the tick bite in an average of seven days
 - Gradual expansion of Em up to twelve inches or more in diameter
 - Rarely painful or itchy but may feel warm
 - Appears anywhere on the body



Later signs and symptoms, generally occurring up to months after being bitten, include:

- EM rashes appearing on other areas of the body
- Extreme pain and swelling in the knees and other large joints
- Stiffness in the neck and severe headaches
- Tendon, muscle, joint, and bone pain occurring sporadically
- Lyme carditis or irregular heartbeat
- Periodic shortness of breath or dizziness
- Inflammation of the spinal cord and brain
- Nerve pain including tingling in the hands or feet, or numbness
- Short-term memory difficulties

Less common signs and symptoms of Lyme disease according to the Mayo Clinic include:

- Inflammation of the eye
- Extreme fatigue
- Hepatitis or inflammation of the liver

Diagnosing Lyme disease can be difficult since its signs and symptoms frequently occur in other conditions. Alarmingly, ticks which spread Lyme disease may also transmit other maladies. Lab tests are generally used to identify or dismiss

the presence of antibodies of the bacteria. These labs are most reliable when the body has had time to develop antibodies; typically a few weeks after infection. According to the Mayo Clinic and the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), diagnosis and treatment of Lyme disease encompasses, but is not limited to, the following:

Diagnosis

- A test most frequently used to detect Lyme disease, the ELISA test, detects antibodies to the *Borrelia burgdoferi* bacteria. Because this assessment may not be positive during the early stage of Lyme disease and may also provide false-positive results, it is not used as the primary source of diagnosis.
- Should the ELISA test indicate a positive result, the Wester Blot test is usually administered to validate the diagnosis.

Treatment

- The typical treatment for Lyme disease in its early stage is oral antibiotics which are usually taken for 10-14 days.
- Once the disease involves the nervous system, physicians may suggest administration of antibiotics intravenously for 14-28 days. Although effective, intravenous antibiotics may cause side effects.
- Alternative treatments for Lyme disease have been sought by individuals with Lyme disease or those who believe they have the disease. These alternative treatments have either not been tests or have not been scientifically proven to be effective and may be harmful or deadly. The Mayo Clinic recommends that individuals considering alternative treatments consult with their physician first.

Simple precautions can reduce your risk of contracting Lyme disease.

- Cover exposed skin areas when walking through wooded and grassy areas.
- Choose repellent products which contain at least a 20% concentration of DEET. When applying repellent to clothing, choose products with permethrin or purchase clothing that has been pretreated.
- Be diligent about tick-proofing your yard by mowing your lawn on a regular basis and clearing debris where ticks tend to congregate.
- Ticks that carry Lyme disease are no bigger than the head of a pin so be vigilant about searching for them on your skin, clothing, and pets after outdoor activities. Ticks can stay on your skin for hours before attaching themselves so showering immediately after outdoor activities to eliminate unattached ticks.
- There is no immunity to Lyme disease. You can contract the disease more than once.
- As soon as possible, remove the tick by grasping it by the head or mouth gently with tweezers while pulling steadily and cautiously. Eliminate the tick by flushing it or dousing with alcohol. Wipe bite area with an antiseptic.

Despite the increase in tick-borne diseases over the past ten years, self-education, diligent tick detection, and prevention practices will reduce infestation in and around the home and infection of loved ones.



For more information, visit:

<https://www.cdc.gov/lyme/index.html>

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/lyme-disease/symptoms-causes/syc-20374651>

<https://www.niaid.nih.gov/diseases-conditions/lyme-disease-diagnostics-research>

<http://www.thebaynet.com/articles/0417/warm-winter-leads-to-earlier-tick-season.html>

<https://extension.umaine.edu/ticks/>

<https://www.healthhype.com/lyme-disease-borrelia-burgdorferi-infection.html>

**Reading Blue Mountain &
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PO Box 218
Port Clinton PA 19549



Our most recent class of student engineers pose in front of RDC 9168 on Thursday 3-14-19. The group had just reviewed how to operate the RDC's. Pictured here are (L to R): Eli Wilson, John Smolczynski Jr. (instructor), Aaron Aigeldinger, Tony Weachock, and Caleb Fetterolf.