

R & N Magazine

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

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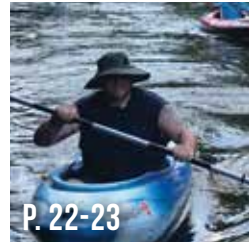
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Newly painted SD50-2 5018 ready for fast freight service!

There is nothing like a pandemic to prove the necessity of good customer service.

Over the last few months my wife and I have had to depend on home deliveries for all of our necessities and purchases. It seems a day does not pass without a FedEx, UPS or USPS truck making it up our steep driveway. We also see an increasing number of vans and cars making deliveries, especially of our groceries. And sometimes the delivery trucks are returning to pick up the wrong item they delivered.

The fact is the system seems to be breaking down with the increasing demands made on it by more and more people relying on deliveries. And, if you have even tried to speak to a customer service person for these companies during the pandemic, good luck. You know that they must be inundated with complaints. I have grown very tired of their canned music or repeated messages about their services.

In our experience many deliveries go awry. It seems we get the wrong item, the wrong number of items, the wrong color, or somebody else's delivery, as often as the companies get it right. We are constantly calling merchants or putting items in dispute. It almost, almost, makes Comcast customer service look good.

With all this happening I marvel at how well Reading and Northern is holding up with our customer service.

For as long as I have known Andy Muller, over thirty years, he has been singularly focused on taking care of his customers. He repeats it to staff all the time and prints it on checks.

The fact is Reading & Northern SELLS customer service. RBMN is the only railroad I know that guarantees a two hour service window. And each service window is NEGOTIATED directly with the customer. RBMN is the only railroad I know that works with customers to provide double switches and extra weekend switches. RBMN is the only railroad I know that does

NOT seek to make money off of demurrage; our demurrage rates are among the lowest in the nation, if not the lowest.

Of course, talk is cheap. It's results that matter. And we have the results! Year after year our on-time percentage is 99% even with storms, derailments and delays caused by other customers. Year after year our traffic grows. Year after year our customers express high satisfaction with our service.

Accomplishing this consistently takes leadership from the top and MONEY. As noted above, Andy is committed to great customer service. His philosophy permeates the company. We do not hire or retain people who are not committed to taking care of our customers.

And Andy proves his commitment by spending money to ensure quality service. He keeps buying more locomotives, (see Dusty's article on page 7), he keeps upgrading tracks and sidings, (See Chris' article on pages 8-13), he keeps improving our communications and signal program, (see Tyler's article about our new dispatch center on pages 18-19), and he keeps adding to our staff. As noted in the following pages we just hired Eric Peters, former NS Division Superintendent Harrisburg Division, to be our new VP - Transportation. And as noted in Susan's article, we just hired an additional person in our Customer Service department.

The fact is we SELL SERVICE! That is what a railroad has to offer. So when Dan, Bill and Rian go out for a site visit with a prospect, they are selling our service. Whether that be our train service, our Customer Service staff that works tirelessly to address any customer problems, or our willingness to invest in railcars, track or even offsite conveyors, RBMN is selling service to make it easier for our customers to choose rail.

At the Reading & Northern we know our customers and prospective customers have options. And we know we have to work hard every day to earn their business and their trust. And we do work hard every day. It is that hard work by over 200+ talented and loyal employees that enables us to keep on track. ♦

COVER PHOTO

RBMN NRFF conductor Caleb Fetterolf walks towards the switch at RIVER as the 425 shoves the final passenger train of the day back to Jim Thorpe after making its return earlier that morning. Photo credit Darryl Rule.

EDITORS

JOLENE BUSER • TAYLOR HAAPT • SABINE FIDLER

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RBMN Customer Service

Always Working to Achieve Results

BY: SUSAN LUDWIG, VP CUSTOMER SERVICE



Customer Service Team (left to right) – Steve Werley; Susan Ludwig; Michele Daub; Leanne Moser; Lori Chinchar; Jennifer Woodeshick

As we all navigate through 2020, we have learned how important great customer service really is. From more online ordering, to less face to face interactions, we have all come to appreciate the people that assist us at the businesses we patronize. Everyone is expecting great customer service to handle any issues that arise while they are conducting their business.

The Customer Service Team at the Reading and Northern Railroad has always worked to achieve results for our customers with the best service possible. We currently have a team of five Customer Service Managers to handle your individual business needs. Steve Werley has nine years of experience handling mostly our coal customers. He is also handling several General Merchandise customers and is active in entering our ISS rates and the entire rating process. Lori Chinchar is the Director of Customer Service, who in this role is my direct back up and handles reporting, General Merchandise customers, and is well versed in the ISS rating process and entering rates. Lori has been with our team for the last four years. Michele Daub has been with us for three years,

Michele takes care of coal with Steve as well as several General Merchandise customers and our Ransom Transload facility. Jennifer Woodeshick is approaching her second anniversary with our group and handles General Merchandise and the Penobscot and West Hazleton transload facilities. The newest member of our team is Leanne Moser, she joined us at the beginning of September. Leanne will handle General Merchandise and reporting.

We work very closely with the Operations team to be able to assist you with special requests and we take pride in our two- hour customer service windows. Our windows are achieved 99% of the time to assist with your flow of rail cars. As always, I am also available to assist with any issues or questions you may have. We have a team very dedicated to taking care of our customers and have built lasting relationships with many of you. We only succeed if our customers are happy and well taken care of, and that will always be our ongoing goal. ♦

"The Road of Anthracite" FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Reading and Northern Railroad Announces the Appointment of Eric Peters as Vice President Transportation and Safety

Port Clinton, PA – September 28, 2020

Reading and Northern Railroad announces the appointment of Eric Peters as Vice President Transportation and Safety. He will succeed Thomas Cook who will retire later this year. Peters will report to Tyler Glass, Executive Vice President-Operations.

Peters joins Reading and Northern from Norfolk Southern Railway, which he joined as a Management Trainee after college. During his 14 years at NS, Peters rose through the ranks ultimately reaching the position of Division Superintendent of the Harrisburg Division earlier this year. Reading & Northern's interchanges with NS all take place within the Harrisburg Division, giving Peters a good perspective of the Reading & Northern operation and business.

"When we began looking for Tom Cook's

replacement as he contemplated retirement we had no idea we would have so many exceptional candidates for the job. In choosing Eric, we were tremendously impressed with his operational knowledge and knowledge of our operating territory, but more importantly his leadership background. For Eric to rise to the Division Superintendent position at his relatively young age speaks volumes on his abilities and how NS management saw him. We believe Eric will do a great job running our daily train operations and he will further cement the excellent working relationship we have with NS." said Wayne Michel, RBMN President.

Peters graduated Magna Cum Laude from Clemson University and has a B.S. in Business Management with Transportation and Logistics emphasis. He and his wife Pooja, who grew up in the Lehigh Valley,

will be making their home with their two children in the region.

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 400 miles of track. Reading and Northern operates both freight services and steam and diesel-powered excursion passenger services, owns almost 1,300 freight cars, and employs over 280 dedicated employees. Reading & Northern has repeatedly been honored as one of the premier railroads in the nation. ♦

Interview with the New VP of Transportation & Safety: Eric Peters

BY: WAYNE A. MICHEL, PRESIDENT

On September 28th we announced the hiring of Eric Peters, formerly at Norfolk Southern, to be our new VP - Transportation/Safety. (See press release on page 4.) Eric is replacing Tom Cook, who after 5 years of great service to RBMN, decided to retire from a railroad career that included success at Conrail and CSX. We wish Tom the best and are grateful that he will remain with us through 2020.

Over the last few months Tyler interviewed many candidates. We can honestly say that there were a number of exceptional candidates for the job. In Eric we found a proven leader who had risen quickly at NS. Finding a person with experience at NS, and knowledge of our service territory, was always considered a plus. In Eric we found someone who ticked off all of those marks and was also humble, professional and smart. Tyler and I both interviewed him numerous times and he also met with Tina Muller-Levan, our VP-Administration and part-owner of RBMN.

We are delighted to have Eric join our team and I sat down with him for a virtual interview so we could introduce him to our employees, customers and friends.

Wayne: Eric, welcome aboard.

Eric: Thank you very much. I am excited to be joining the Reading & Northern and hope to be part of the team for decades to come.

Wayne: We share that hope. As you know this interview is for our quarterly Newsmagazine. We thought this would be a good way to introduce you to everyone at the RBMN as well as our customers and friends who you will undoubtedly come in contact with. So to get started tell us a bit about the young Eric Peters.

Eric: I grew up in a small town in central Indiana (Shelbyville). As a Hoosier, I dreamed to play basketball at Indiana University and then the NBA. However, I stopped growing when I reached 5'6" so I focused on tennis instead. I started working at 12 doing yard work in town until I got a job at the local service station. I then got into heavy machinery when I began working summers at a local gravel pit. After graduating High School, I left for Clemson University in South Carolina.

Wayne: I know Shelbyville as I sold the Shelbyville line when I managed the Conrail line sale program. And I know something about the passion Hoosiers have for basketball. My law school roommate was from Indiana and had played for his high school team. He too lost his position as a point guard once he went to college and found out he wasn't tall enough for college level sports. So when you went to Clemson what made you think about railroading and ultimately a career at Norfolk Southern?

Eric: At Clemson I majored in Business Management and did an emphasis on Transportation/Logistics. In my transportation classes I discovered that the railroad industry was thriving, unlike my previous belief that it was dead. The railroad intrigued me and I applied to Norfolk Southern. I choose NS over several other offers due to the excitement described in field management (the recruiter didn't lie, there sure is never a dull moment).



Wayne: I know how your NS career took you to becoming Division Superintendent in the Harrisburg Division. But how did you make it that high level position?

Eric: After graduating I joined NS in 2006 as a Management Trainee on the Piedmont Division based in Greenville, SC. My first marked up position was Assistant Trainmaster in Gainesville, GA. I then moved to Allentown, PA as the Road Trainmaster with a territory spanning to Croxton, NJ and all the branch lines in the area. This position was where I first learned of RBMN. After Allentown I went to Pittsburgh as Trainmaster from Conway to Altoona (including the Horseshoe Curve). That was a short/long year before I went into a development position reporting directly to then COO Mark Manion working on special projects and capital/expense budgeting. My last duty was dissolving my job to save money during the CP takeover fight.

After that job was eliminated I landed in Memphis, TN as Terminal Superintendent focused on gateway interchange and intermodal. After some lobbying to get back closer to my wife's home, I moved back to Allentown as Terminal Superintendent to manage a hump yard. After an unexpected retirement in Harrisburg, I was given the position as Superintendent of Terminals in Harrisburg over the consolidated yards (Enola, Harrisburg, Rutherford).

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This is where my path crossed with Mike Farrell who has been brought into NS to develop the NS Precision Scheduled Railroading program (PSR). Our task was to "clean sheet" Enola and made it a successful example of the clean sheeting principles. My reward for that project was a moving truck to Birmingham, AL to assist in improving the performance at Norris Yard. Once that was completed I became Director of Transportation Services, a new position Mike Farrell created when he was named Sr. Vice President and the Transportation Department underwent a major re-org. During that time I assisted in opening Chattanooga Yard back up as a hump yard and closing the hump at Sheffield Yard. The following year I was named Division Superintendent of the Alabama Division. I was moved back up to Harrisburg as Division Superintendent earlier this year.

Wayne: That's a very impressive career. You got to work closely with Mark Mannion when he was COO and Mike Farrell when he was rolling out PSR at NS. And now you decided to join RBMN. Why Reading & Northern?

Eric: Ever since my first time working for the railroad in PA, I gained respect for the RBMN. My interactions with RBMN proved to me it was a well managed railroad focused on growing. It was well known in the area that the employees were well respected for the value they added to the company. For all the hiring I have done at NS in PA, I never recall a RBMN employee coming to a

session. RBMN is consistently recognized in the industry for their achievements. As PSR continues to be the buzz on the Class I's, I see even more value in regional lines filling the void by providing last mile service to existing customers while growing new business. I see a place where I can spend the next 30+ years helping provide superior service to allow existing customers to grow and gain new ones. The RBMN is more than just a business that lives quarter to quarter. With the strategic vision of Andy, you and your leadership team, the foundation is set that will enable Reading Northern to thrive long-term. And I want to be part of that team and that growth.

Wayne: We have no doubt that you will be part of that growth. One of the things about Reading & Northern that Andy has always stressed, and that I so admire, is that family and individual well-being come first. So tell us about your family and your interests.

Eric: I am married with 2 children. My wife Pooja grew up in the Lehigh Valley. My son Ethan is 4 and my daughter Priya is 2. I have a pitbull that has been on the RR journey since Gainesville, GA (almost 13yrs ago). I have always been into motorcycles, but spend a majority of my free time with the family hiking and riding bikes. We enjoy the many rails to trails and the Appalachian trail.

Wayne: Well, from all of our Reading & Northern family to you, Pooja and the kids welcome to the Reading & Northern. We look forward to a very long relationship. ♦

Safety

BY: TOM COOK, VP SAFETY & TRANSPORTATION

This may be my last article as Eric Peters began transitioning into my role in late September. I will help him transition, and I will most likely retire at the end of the year. My five and a half years in this role have been memorable, and I would like to reflect on that.

We have gone through explosive growth, nearly doubling the traffic, number of employees, and trains per day since 2015. Despite this growth, the frequency index of reportable injuries per 200,000-man hours has decreased every year but one since 2015, and we are currently slightly ahead of last year as I write this.

I will have fond memories of working with the Reading and Northern employees. They are a pleasure to work with. I have held leadership roles at 6 different locations in my 36 years in the railroad industry. I can honestly say that our employees are harder working, have better attitudes and truly love what they do more so than any place I have been. That is because our company hires good people and treats them well. The rigid and harsh discipline required on some other railroads is not used much here because most attitudes are so good that most mistakes, when they do happen, are treated as honest mistakes.

Our biggest safety challenge has been that our employees are so fixated on getting the job done that they tend to overexert themselves. They work at a fast pace and often fail to consider the hazards involved or fail to pay attention to their ergonomic position. We have improved somewhat in this area, but we still have more room to improve. Please remember to not rush, pay attention to your surroundings and body position, and take the time to consider hazards involved when conditions change rapidly or when under pressure.

I would like to think that my biggest contribution to this railroad is reinforcing that we do not have to rush and take shortcuts. We are now big enough and successful enough that we can take the time to follow the rules and do our jobs properly. This view is supported from the top on down.

I have also tried hard to improve our employees understanding of the operating and safety rules to enhance the professionalism of our talented employees. I am confident that John Smolczynski and Eric will continue that improvement.

I am very proud of the management team in operations. They are as strong as any team I have worked with and have a promising future. Our present operations leadership team, except for Tyler, was brought on board after my arrival. Jim Cerulli was promoted out of our department last year. Joe Matuella has a great analytical mind and has capably filled his shoes in operations planning. John Smolczynski, our DLSE, is an excellent coach, rules instructor and communicator. Our Chief Dispatcher Kyle Sanders has a great tactical mind for the movement of cars and trains. Our operations administrator Todd Aber is new to the industry and brings high level leadership skills to our team. Our young managers should learn a lot from Todd. I have learned a lot from all of them and from Tyler, and I hope they learned a little from me.

I am convinced that this team will continue to make the safe choice when faced with an employee concern about safety, when they are faced with pressure to overlook safety for speed or production, or are tempted to authorize a short cut for a temporary convenience. They know that long term gain from taking the safe course is worth short-term inconvenience. ♦

Locomotive Update

BY: DUSTIN BERNDT, VP MOTIVE POWER



Newly painted SD50-2 5018 ready for fast freight service!

As we approach early fall I began to reflect on how the year has passed me by in the Engine House. However, I am also thinking about upcoming projects we are looking to complete before the year is out. So often when a project is completed we move on to the next without realizing how many accomplishments accumulate in recent months.

First, I would like to update on the summer projects we were working on. Locomotive 2015, a fairly recent acquisition from Norfolk Southern, was successfully placed into service after we completed all of our upgrades. After working out some of the cobwebs, this locomotive did not disappoint as it has already given us daily reliable service.

We also recently purchased a few more locomotives since the summer compliments of the Norfolk Southern auctions. We were fortunate to get another collection of locomotives that includes two more SD40-2 units and one more GP38-2 locomotive. These locomotives will be the additions to the current roster, with the SD40s becoming the 3059 and the 3060. We will also follow the consecutive number pattern with the GP38-2 becoming the 2017. We started to work on the 3059 in early August by upgrading the engine, changing the crankshaft bearings and doing many other miscellaneous repairs. While everything else was going well with this unit, we performed a few electrical running tests which indicated to us that the main generator was shorted. We immediately worked hard to get the old generator disconnected so we could prepare to replace this unit in the last week of September. I am looking forward to report on the completion of this locomotive and placing it in service before the next issue.

On the pretty side of the mechanical end, locomotive 5018 received new paint. The paint scheme was a departure from our traditional colors as we were looking to do something that stands out for our Fast Freight locomotives.

At the end of October, we will also welcome the addition of our locomotive wheel truing machine. There have been many meetings and behind the scenes work to get this project off the ground. Many departments have been busy with this project throughout the summer and when we get it operational this fall, we will instantaneously put it to good use. With the wheel machine, a product of Simmons Machine Tool Corporation, we will be able to handle the

wheel cuttings on a six-axle locomotive in an 8 hour shift. We will also have the capability to complete wheel work to many other types of rolling stock on the railroad. Traditionally we used the services of Norfolk Southern for this, however at the end of 2019 they decided to no longer offer the service to other railroads. RBMN will offer this service to other railroads if they so choose.

Lastly, as always the Steam Shop has busy at work with the 2102 repairs and assembly of the steam locomotive. They have been working diligently to rebuild the air pumps to make them operational and ready for installation on the engine. The cab has also moved into the shop for structural upgrades before mounting it on the engine. We are hoping to get a fire in the firebox soon! The 425 has also been hard at work in the month of September pulling the LGSR trains on consecutive weekends. These were very successful trips and it was good to see the engine get out and stretch its legs with more reliable service in 2020.

As we enter into the latter part of the year we look forward to continuing with these projects and even completion on a few of them. As we do complete them, I will always be looking towards the next items to repair or to bring more locomotives out of storage in need of our quality work. I am constantly amazed at the types of and the amounts of projects we now handle as routine. We have come a long way in my 20 years at the railroad. ♦



The beginning stages of construction of the wheel truing building with the cement pit in the background.



Falling into Place

BY: CHRIS GOETZ, VP MAINTENANCE OF WAY

In the MOW Department, there are many moving pieces that require a great deal of strategic planning and coordination. Things do not simply “fall into place” and as another summer wraps up, anyone can see that MOW had another successful busy season. From rehab to new construction, there were several projects underway from our North Reading Yard all the way north to the Susquehanna Branch. MOW was involved in multiple tie projects and repairs as well as new construction projects to include a major rehab in Temple Yard, our newly built second main line track from Muller to Kerns and a new switch and siding for IRIS in Humboldt Industrial Park.

Rehabilitation Projects — This summer MOW worked on multiple branches on both the Lehigh and Reading Divisions to replace ties, rail, and signage. One of the more daunting tasks included the rehab of the Temple Yard and an accompanying portion of the Pennsy Branch. Our tie gang installed over 860 ties while another gang replaced over 80 timbers for 8 different switches throughout the yard. These upgrades brought a declining yard back to life and restored its capabilities to stage cars for our new customer Crossroad's Beverage well as for our MOW ballast and cleanup consists. The rehabilitation to our yard now gives us the ability to load all 17 of our ballast cars in the same day maximizing resources and efficiency across departments. This year to date we have dumped over 7,000 tons of ballast that spans our Main Line from Reading to Hamburg to help surface tracks, increase speeds, and sustain the life of railroad ties.

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Duane Zimmerman loading scrap rail with the Prentice truck into a scrap gon at on the Main Line at MP 73.6.



Enos Bleiler profile grinding a distressed joint on the Main Line at MP 93.3.



Dakota Reber and Brock Krumanocker working at the turntable lead track swing.



Larry Weller working on an M&S Branch Bridge in Gordon, PA.



MOW employees Matt Nestor, Rebecca Engle, Brandon Kalbach, Alex Zimmerman, Duane Engle cleaning out the gauge before setting a new rail in at the Green Mt Rd crossing in Humboldt Industrial Park.



Rebecca Engle driving down a spike in North Reading Yard.



Tyler Acker, Boyd Lenich and Alex Zimmerman repairing the track in Tamaqua Yard.



Matt Mizikoski in Tamper IV raising McAlpine Street Crossing Susquehanna Branch.



Matt McGinnis operating rail heater to distress at Lehigh ML MP 138.5.



Larry Weller profile grinding a joint on newly-installed rail plug at C&S ML MP 116.8.



Aaron Cassel and backhoe operator Dale Homm clearing out area just north of the turntable.

Continued from page 9.

New Construction Projects — The Reading & Northern Railroad's MOW Department is involved in multiple construction projects that range from small to large scale all in an effort to better serve customers. During the summer a double track of 5,500 feet, (RDG Main Line Track #1) was completed and put into service. This track construction included building an additional crossover at Kerns to connect existing track (formerly named Pulpit SDG). Then, an electronic #20 switch was constructed to tie into the signal system at Muller. Last, multiple passes with our surfacing equipment were made from Muller (ML MP 75.85) to Kerns (ML MP 77). The new crossover and switch both took strategic planning and extensive coordination of resources and personnel. The totality of this project was no small feat

for a shortline railroad, and it was done without any outside funding. This right of way transformed into a Class 1-type double track. Now, Operations can utilize the double track for increased traffic volumes, passing unit trains, and limiting interruptions to both passenger and freight services.

While spike mauls were in full swing during the above-mentioned Track #1 construction, MOW was also busy changing out rails and building a new switch at yet another new customer facility in the Humboldt Industrial Park.

Continued on page 12.



Mario DeMarco loading rail onto flat cars at ML MP 66.5. Duane Engle, Cody Henn observing.



Alex Scubelek Jr., Ron Collins, Larry Weller, Matt Nestor, Brendle Stufflet and Ben Cole doing tie work on the main line just north of Jim Thorpe.



Brandon Kalbach, Matt Nestor, Ben Cole, Dennis Rosohac, Brandon Wagner and Brendle Stuffed laying out plates at a rail change.



Dennis Rosohac reviewing the day's work rehabbing Miller's Xing, RDG ML MP 82.3.



Alex Zimmerman last day as a summer hire—MOW appreciates all of the hard work!



Dennis Rosohac, Brendle Stuffed and Mario DeMarco rehabbing JTY ready track and Station SDG rehabs.



Rail loaded on RBMN's newly refurbished flat cars.



Josh Rodney, Russ Monroe, Matt McGinnis, Marc Aigeldinger, Alex Scubelek Jr doing tie work at Main Line MP 125.9.



Ametek SDG rehab Forman Matt Minnich, Matt Nestor, Dennis Rosohac, Larry Weller nipping up a timber.



West Cressona RAR tie and gauging work with Dale Homm (backhoe) Larry Weller and Alex Zimmerman.



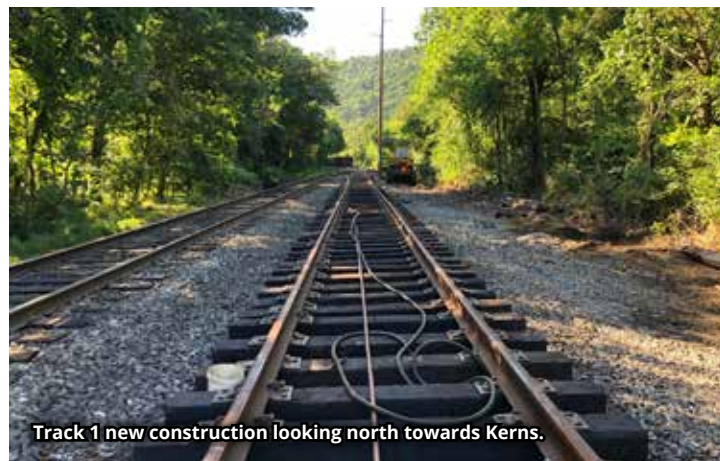
An operator's point of view from within RBMN's spiker machine.



Operator Alex Sr. Scubelek putting in ties at Susquehanna Branch MP 0.88 McAlpine Street last week of work.



Shawn Himmelberger pulling ties for rehab at Jim Thorpe Station.



Track 1 new construction looking north towards Kerns.

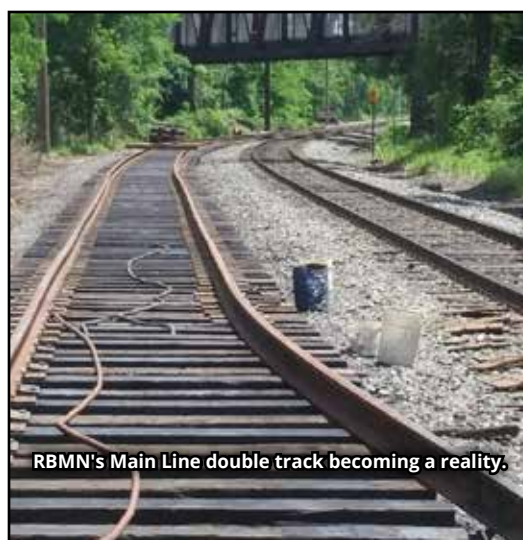


James Alba and Marc Aigeldinger making a rail cut to destress rail at Main Line MP 171.

Continued from page 10.

To be capable of serving IRIS USA, RBMN needed to build a double siding to their new building located between Commerce Drive and the Humboldt Main Line. MOW determined that the lighter rail on the Main Line that would lead to the switch needed to be upgraded to a heavier rail. The rails were changed, and ties replaced which secured a solid preface to the main switch. The sidings required a #10 switch built directly off the Main Line that lead to another #10 switch to accommodate both tracks needed for the customer. The switch construction required considerable coordination between Gray Construction, project managers John Dailey and Shannon Bones, hired by IRIS and RBMN, project managers Chris Goetz, VP of MOW and Duane Engle, Senior Division Leader of MOW, to ensure the final design will effectively service the customer without hindering site development. Each siding is projected to be around 1200 feet long.

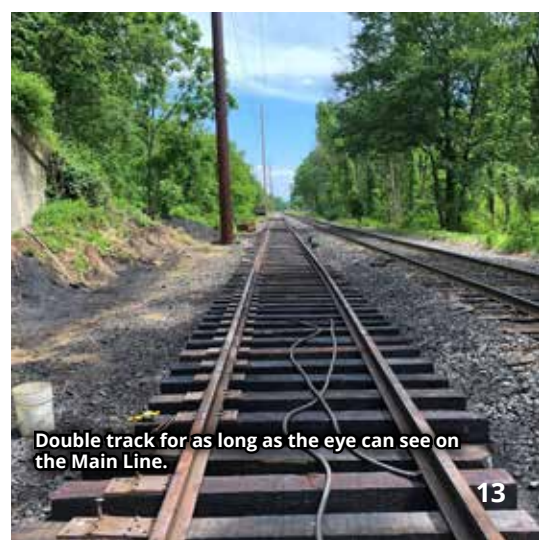
Maintaining the railroad and right-of-way is a year-round job that requires a lot of dedicated, hardworking individuals. While MOW work remains steady, some seasons are busier than others. Typically, the busiest season comprises of the mild-weather months of late spring, summer and early fall when projects like Temple Yard rehab, Track #1 construction, and the IRIS switch construction are completed. MOW takes advantage of the longer daylight hours and warmer temperatures to ramp up rehabilitation and construction projects that improve rail service. As the leaves begin to change color, MOW will transition to new rehab and construction projects while wrapping up the major construction project for the new customer at IRIS. Seasons and specific assignments change but the objective remains the same—keep our tracks in condition to provide the best possible customer service and deliver on what we promise. ♦



RBMN's Main Line double track becoming a reality.



Construction continuing the Main Line double track project.



Double track for as long as the eye can see on the Main Line.

75 Years of 2102

BY: CAROLINE MCROBBIE & MATT FISHER, PASSENGER GENERAL MANAGER



Special Note: Caroline McRobbie is a history teacher at a local high school who took on a several-day internship over the summer with the Passenger Department. She learned railroad history during her internship, focusing on the last 40 years. Caroline plans to teach a local history lesson incorporating the railroad to her students this year. Thank you, Caroline!

The Reading Company class T-1 Northern 2102 is nearing its reintroduction into service after years of work at the Reading & Northern steam shop. The 2102 is one of four T-1 class locomotives to exist today, along with the 2100, 2101, and 2124. The restoration of the 2102 has taken four years and more recently, Reading & Northern workers and contractors have been working five to six days a week in order to get the locomotive ready for the rails.

The 2102 was officially released by the Reading Company on October 9, 1945. The Reading Company built thirty T-1 Northern locomotives from 1945 to 1947 at the Reading Company's main locomotive shop in Reading, situated on North 6th Street along the Reading yards. The Reading Company was able to use boilers and fire boxes from class I-10 Consolidations.

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Here is a side shot of the 2102 being reassembled in the Port Clinton Steam Shop. Early August of 2020.

Continued from page 15.

The Reading Company's T-1 class engines had the capability of pulling 150-car freight trains. However, by the late 1940s, the Reading Company found diesel engines to be more cost effective, so the T-1s were mostly used for extra moves and during peak traffic periods. The final years of the T-1s were spent leading freights and used as pushers out of Shamokin, St. Clair, Tamaqua, and Gordon, Pennsylvania.

The Reading Company announced their "Iron Horse Ramble" excursion program in 1959. After having retained five T-1 engines in 1957, four of them were picked for use in the program due to their mechanical condition, including the 2102. The 2102 was used for these Iron Horse Rambles starting in 1962 and until 1964 when the program ceased due to high locomotive repair costs and track deterioration. The final run on October 17, 1964 included the 2102 and 2100 as they ran double headed. Most public recognition of the 2102 is due to its inclusion in the Rambles excursion program. As a freight locomotive, this engine was largely out of the public eye and therefore, was obscure to most; the use of the 2102 for passenger excursions allowed it to gain public notoriety.

After the conclusion of the Iron Horse Ramble excursion program, the 2102 operated under many sponsors until 1985 when the Reading Company Technical and Historical Society brought the 2102 engine back to Reading and sponsored four excursions to mark the 40th anniversary of the introduction of the Reading 2100 steam engines. The four excursions ran the weekends of September 14 and September 21; two ran to Harrisburg, one ran to Philadelphia and Valley Forge, and one ran up the Lehigh River to Jim Thorpe. It was while the 2102 engine was in Reading that Andy Muller, Jr. offered to purchase the engine from its then owner for the Blue Mountain and

Reading Railroad.

After its purchase, the 2102 was used for excursions on the Temple to South Hamburg line of the Blue Mountain and Reading (what would become the Pennsy Branch of the Reading & Northern Railroad). Before the Reading & Northern ceased to use the 2102 for passenger excursions it even ran on former Reading Company rails after the Reading & Northern's Reading Cluster purchase in 1990.

Once the locomotive was taken out of service it has remained in Port Clinton headquarters since 1998 to be displayed in the then new steam locomotive shop. Restorations on the 2102 officially began on January 7, 2016 when the tender was split from the locomotive, but work was not publicly announced until January 21, 2016. As the restoration gained momentum in the early months of 2020, updates were shared on Facebook regularly in addition to website updates and restoration videos.

The T-1 Northern 2102 celebrated its 75th anniversary this fall, commemorating the engine's outshop date of October 9, 1945. Bringing a Reading made engine back to the area can be a rarity in modern times, so the opportunity to bring the 2102 back to Berks County allows the journey of this engine to come full circle. As the T-1 2102 engine comes back onto the rails of the Reading Blue Mountain & Northern Railroad passenger lines, it is hard not to imagine what the original builders would say if they could see the engine restored to its former glory; to see it once again rumble through the scenic Pennsylvania countryside with a force that still leaves people in awe today. Everyone at the Reading Blue Mountain & Northern Railroad is eager to share this rare historic locomotive with train enthusiasts, local tourists, and adventure seekers alike. ♦

Jeff Strong

BY: KYLE BARRELL, AVP HUMAN RESOURCES

Railroaders are a tight-knit group of people and are dedicated to keeping each other safe and the trains moving. If you talk to railroaders, many of them will describe their relationship with one another as a "brotherhood". This was clearly evident when long-time Engineer and Conductor, Jeff Knadler, notified his colleagues that he was diagnosed with cancer back in May 2020. His fellow Engineers, Conductors, Signal Maintainers and others across RBMN, wanted to help him in any way they could. His sister, Marie Knadler, helped convey the message to all RBMN employees and upon receiving this news, employees and owners sprang into action. Fellow Engineer and Conductor, Chris Peters, spearheaded a fundraising effort by designing t-shirts with a "Jeff Strong" theme accompanied by an appropriate railroading picture on the back. This was a great idea, and it was taken to another level by Chairman and CEO, Andy Muller, by offering to buy all railroad employees a t-shirt with all proceeds going to Jeff and his family. This kind gesture by the RBMN leader turned into an outpouring of monetary donations and employees donating paid time off to Jeff to allow him to get paid at 100% for the many days he was out of work. In total, 142 t-shirts were ordered and 65 days of paid time off were donated to Jeff from the company and fellow employees. This was an

incredible response by RBMN employees during a challenging time.

Jeff has been in good spirits, still resting, and recovering and is eagerly awaiting the ok to continue his railroading career with RBMN. In speaking with some seasoned RBMN employees, they couldn't say enough about Jeff, his work ethic, professionalism, and overall being a genuinely good guy:

"I've gained a lot of knowledge from Jeff and he's been one of the most influential people in helping me learn." - Kyle Sanders, Chief Dispatcher and RBMN employee since November, 2010.

"Jeff is no nonsense, very professional, and most of all he's missed." - Nate Bissey, 2nd shift Dispatcher and RBMN employee since August 1999.

"He's been one of my go-to guys for a long time." - Tyler Glass, Executive VP of Operations and RBMN employee since December 1990.

As you can see, the respect and admiration for Jeff Knadler runs deeply across the organization. He's played a critical role in peoples' careers, been a role model employee, and is a kind-hearted individual. We wish Jeff nothing but the best during his recovery and look forward to his return. ♦

Congratulations on your promotion!



Congratulations Charles "Chip" Allen on your promotion to locomotive engineer.



Congratulations Justin Chickilly on your promotion to locomotive engineer.



Congratulations Ryan Trexler on your promotion to locomotive engineer.

The New Dispatch System

BY: TYLER GLASS, EXECUTIVE VP OPERATIONS



Aaron Schlosser works the final first shift with the old system on Monday August 3. He will make the transfer by phone to Jon Barket and Nate Bissey for the second shift dispatcher that will begin using the new system.

On Monday, August 3 we changed the location of our dispatcher's office for the first time in twenty four years. The road that led to the change started two years ago when we decided that our dispatching computer system was in desperate need of a change. Our system at that time was twenty two years old and was well beyond its useful life. We were constantly trying to nurse the old system along which was not an easy thing to do as our tracks and signal systems expanded greatly since the system was designed in the nineties.

So back up to 2018. Jon Barket and I had several meetings with Wayne Michel to discuss why we needed to change our system. Wayne agreed and then we started looking around at options.

As exciting as dispatching systems may sound there really aren't that many vendors that have a product to suit our needs. Jon Barket reached out to four different vendors. Some of the rough quotes were quite high and were nonstarters. However one system, manufactured by Rail Operations, seemed to be one of the best fits for our railroad. Rail Operations is a smaller company started by Charles Minor. Charles was one of the original programmers for the aged system that was currently in use at the time. He had a good understanding of our railroad and how the operations were conducted.

We discussed options and a game plan a couple of times. Also as a part of the proposal to replace the system would be to move the dispatcher office to a different office at our Port Clinton campus. Since our offices were constructed in 1996 the dispatchers' was located upstairs in the middle of our customer service office. When RBMN was a much smaller company with far fewer people this worked well. As we grew and our methods for communication evolved it was apparent that it was no longer optimal for the dispatcher to be located in the center of our customer service office. Moving the dispatcher would free up some valuable office space for our customer service

folks and would allow the dispatcher better concentration on the more active railroad. Also planning for a move would allow us to start from scratch and design a center more suited for our current needs and we could make a fresh cutover once the new room and system were ready to go.

Once Wayne was satisfied that we did our homework he advised us to meet with Andy to discuss the proposal. Andy signed off on the proposal and away we went.

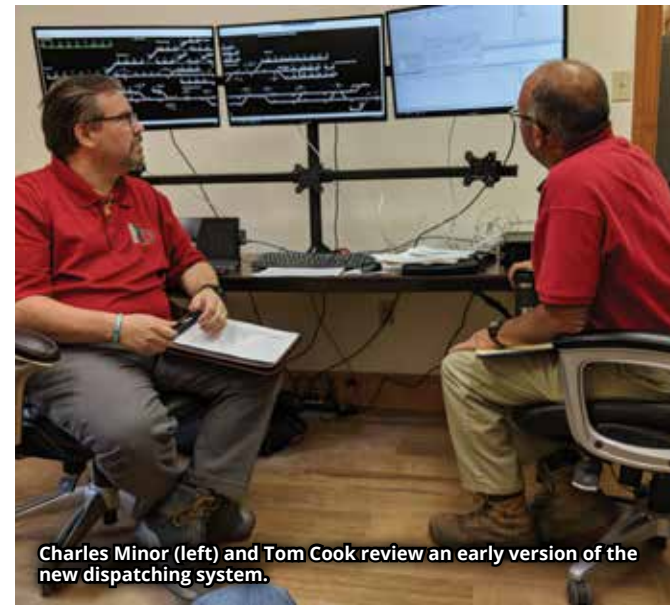
The room we picked on the lower floor of the annex had been an operations and signal department office in its previous life.

Steve Balthaser and his facilities team did an excellent job transforming the office into a room capable of handling two dispatchers and the chief dispatcher. Two identical work spaces were created for dispatchers. We decided to wire two desks simultaneously in case we ever needed to have two dispatchers working at a time. It was easier to prepare for growth while we were constructing the office.

The operations and C&S teams met multiple times with Charles Minor to understand his system and to better understand what our preferences were as he built the system. Due to the nature of the job, each dispatching system must be custom programmed and built for the operations it manages. RBMN is no different. A custom display had to be developed to accommodate the many different tracks and signal systems. In addition, we were also phasing out most of our paper usage by converting most of it to electronic versions. Tom Cook, Kyle Sanders, John Smolczynski and Joe Matuella did a great job coordinating on the Operations side to get what we needed. Many different obstacles were overcome and the initial program began to come to life. Dispatchers Nate Bissey, Aaron Schlosser, Leo Davis, Eric Slekovac, Sam Wills and Caleb Fetterolf all had their opportunity to try the new system and provide feedback during the building process.



Ken "Zing" Palubinsky handled much of the woodwork while Randy Reeber (not pictured) handled the floor installation. Both gentlemen are artists that work in our Facilities Dept.



Charles Minor (left) and Tom Cook review an early version of the new dispatching system.

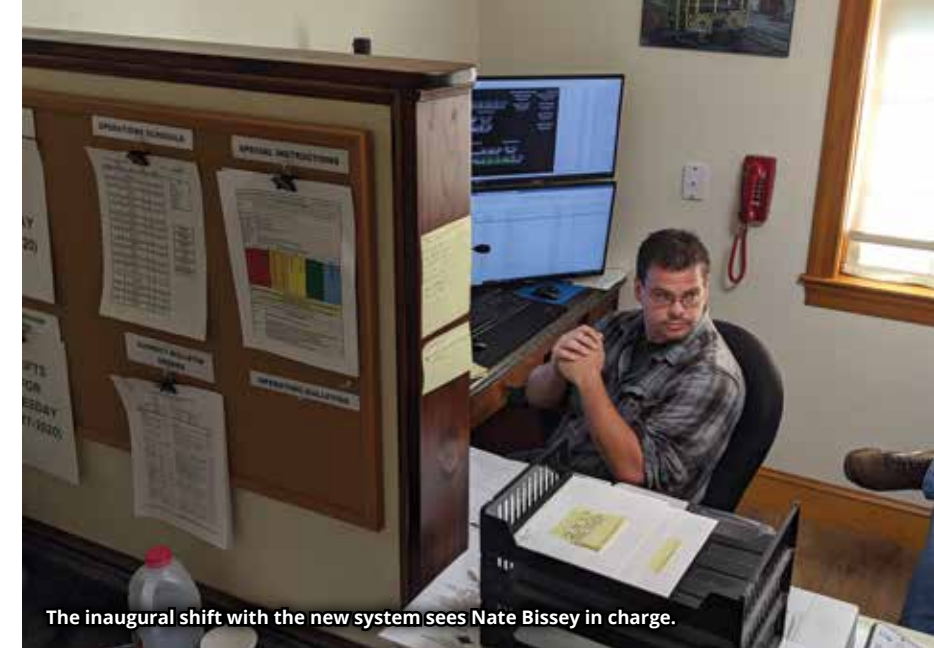
Signal Department had their work cut out for them. When the decision was made to relocate the dispatcher, this allowed C&S crews to completely redesign the backbone for the new dispatching center. A brand new server room with state of the art equipment was installed, allowing multiple levels of redundancy. Backup power was also added to prevent our new dispatching center from going down during emergency situations. All computers and equipment were built in such a way to allow for updates without interrupting the dispatcher. At the same time, we worked with our internet service provider to upgrade our communications. During the final cutover, C&S department, along with Rail Operations, overcame many different situations from communications to programming while at the same time keeping trains moving with little to no downtime.

Throughout the month of July Jon began to feel comfortable with everything falling in place and said we should be ready by the beginning of August. And so Saturday August 1 and Sunday August 2 the C&S personnel were busy working throughout our system to verify the new system was communicating with our remote locations.

On August 3, in between the first and second shift dispatchers the cutover from the old system to the new system was made. Nearly everything went as planned and the new system was in charge. The C&S team could breathe a little easier.

A day later the C&S folks began emptying the old office. The customer service team now had an unusual amount of silence in their workspace, it didn't take long to adapt.

Thanks to all involved in the monstrous achievement! ♦



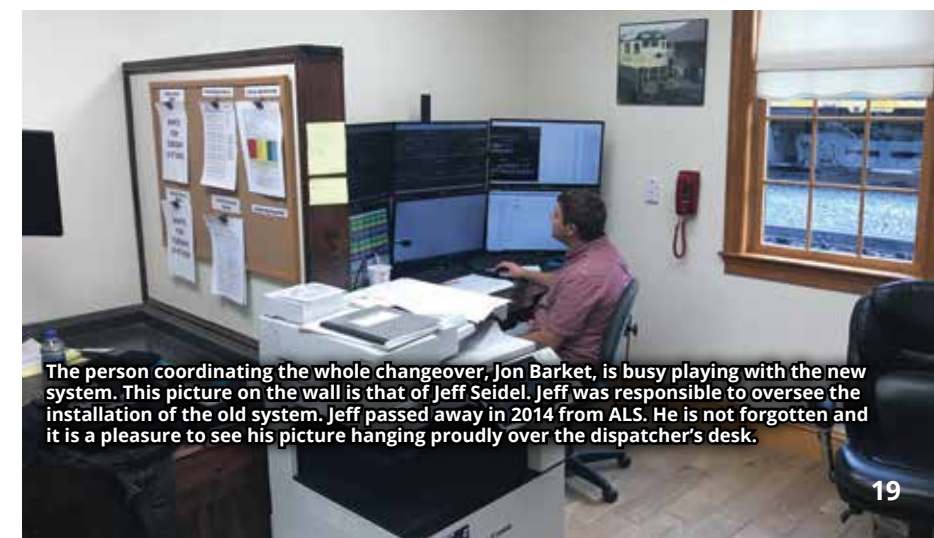
The inaugural shift with the new system sees Nate Bissey in charge.



Matt Collins is busy working on the new support systems. Matt and Jon Barket certainly encountered some stressful days leading up to the transition. However, Matt always appeared cool as a cucumber.



Our overnight, long time dispatcher Leo Davis works his last shift in the old dispatcher office. Photo by John Smolczynski Jr.



The person coordinating the whole changeover, Jon Barket, is busy playing with the new system. This picture on the wall is that of Jeff Seidel. Jeff was responsible to oversee the installation of the old system. Jeff passed away in 2014 from ALS. He is not forgotten and it is a pleasure to see his picture hanging proudly over the dispatcher's desk.

2020 Passenger Season Update

BY: MATT FISHER, PASSENGER GENERAL MANAGER

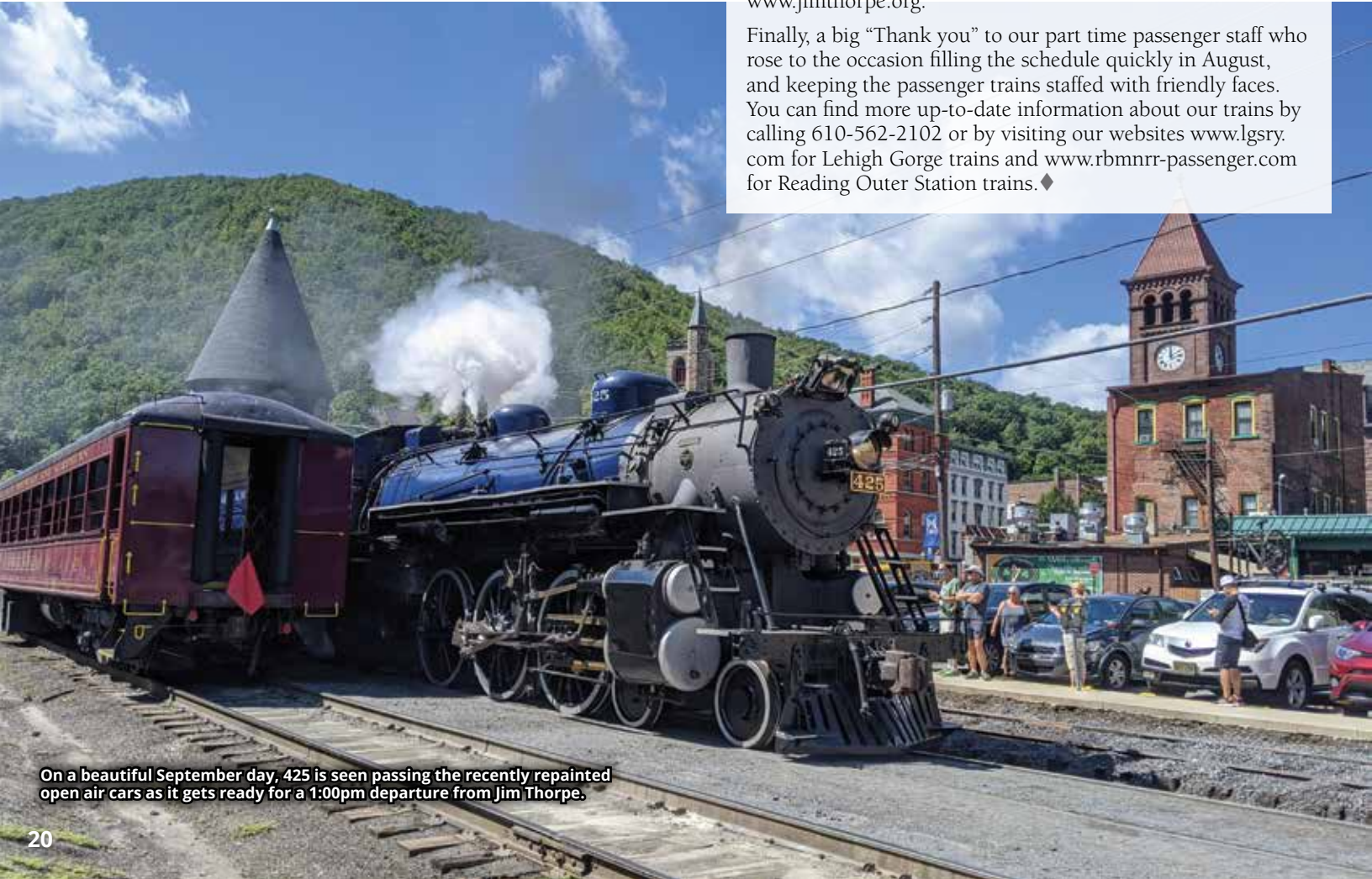


Stan Nestor, Bill Solomon, Colin Gipe, and John Rizzo are pictured in White Haven after detrainning the marathon runners. The White Haven Library, a former Lehigh Valley steam locomotive shop, is seen in the background.

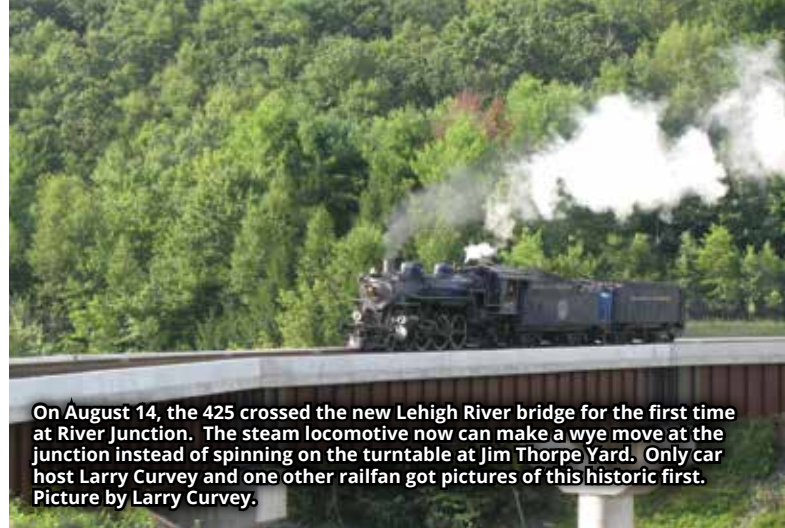
Since Lehigh Gorge trains began operating on August 14, the ridership has been very strong. Originally, trains were to only operate into the gorge on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays. However, the first weekend of service powered by steam locomotive 425 was so successful, Mr. Muller decided with the passenger department management to run trains daily through November 8. This turned out to be very beneficial. Since August, the 425 steam locomotive ran several dates, the passenger department broke several ridership records, and many families found something to do on a day trip.

Fall Foliage RDC (Rail Diesel Car) train excursions were added from Reading Outer Station to Jim Thorpe with stops at Port Clinton and Tamaqua on October weekends. We also are offering three additional Ride and Dine trains from Reading Outer Station to Tamaqua. The Ride and Dine trains include a buffet style dinner at La Dolce Casa. Passengers board at Reading Outer Station in the afternoon, then detrain on the brand new platform in front of the Tamaqua train station and walk about one block to Broad Street to eat at the restaurant. One Ride and Dine is schedule in October, November, and December. Also, the Lehigh Gorge trains in Jim Thorpe will have additional coaches during the October season. This year's theme is "Fall in Love with Jim Thorpe!" coined by the local tourist groups. More information can be found at www.jimthorpe.org.

Finally, a big "Thank you" to our part time passenger staff who rose to the occasion filling the schedule quickly in August, and keeping the passenger trains staffed with friendly faces. You can find more up-to-date information about our trains by calling 610-562-2102 or by visiting our websites www.lgsry.com for Lehigh Gorge trains and www.rbmnr-passenger.com for Reading Outer Station trains. ♦



On a beautiful September day, 425 is seen passing the recently repainted open air cars as it gets ready for a 1:00pm departure from Jim Thorpe.



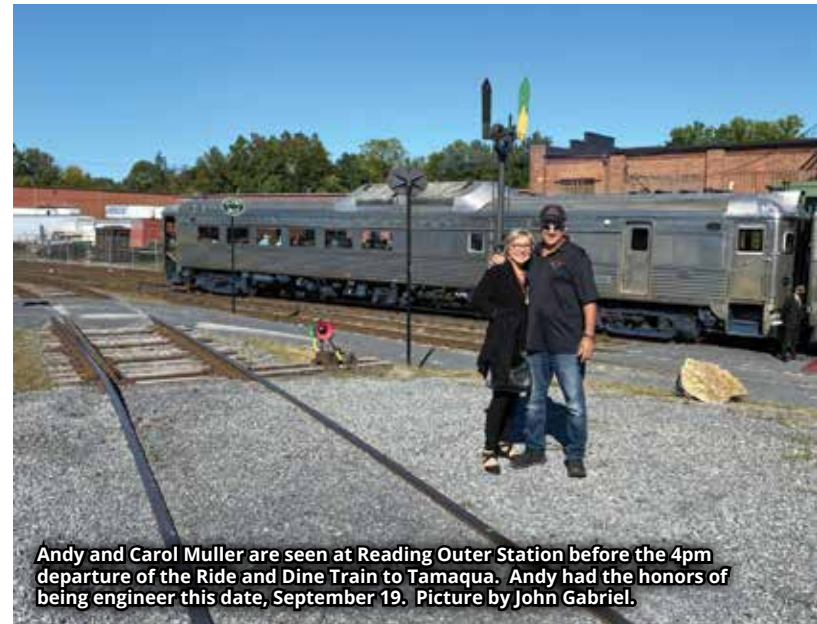
On August 14, the 425 crossed the new Lehigh River bridge for the first time at River Junction. The steam locomotive now can make a wye move at the junction instead of spinning on the turntable at Jim Thorpe Yard. Only car host Larry Curvey and one other railfan got pictures of this historic first. Picture by Larry Curvey.



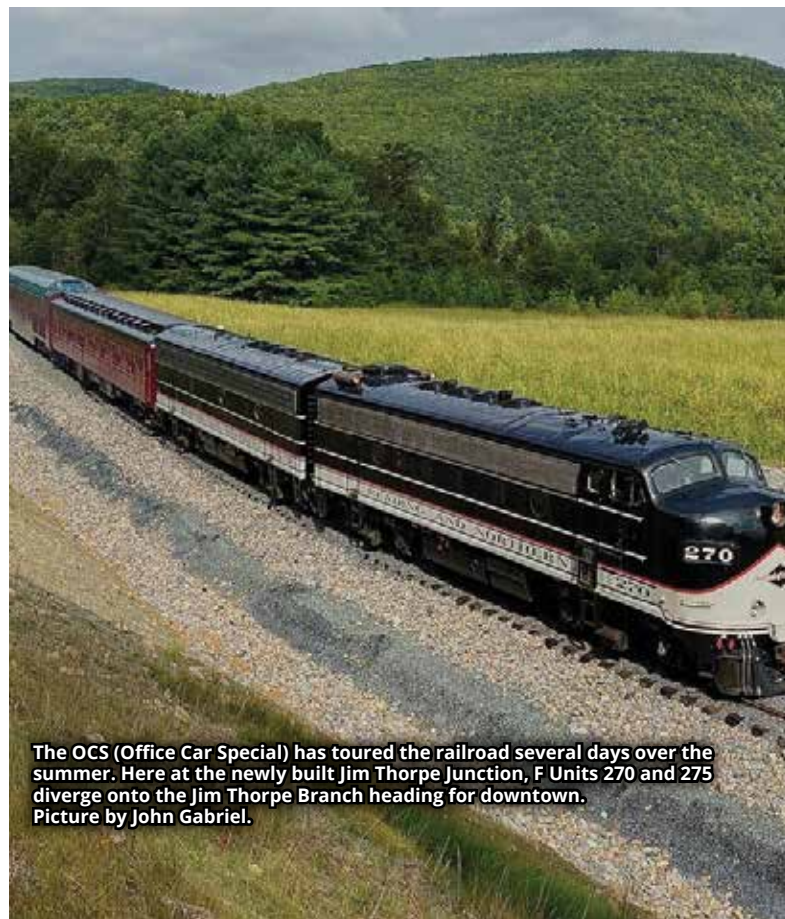
Recently painted 5018 was on display for passengers to see on the Lehigh Gorge trips out of downtown Jim Thorpe. Pictured here is a night shot of 5018 by D.J. Wolf.



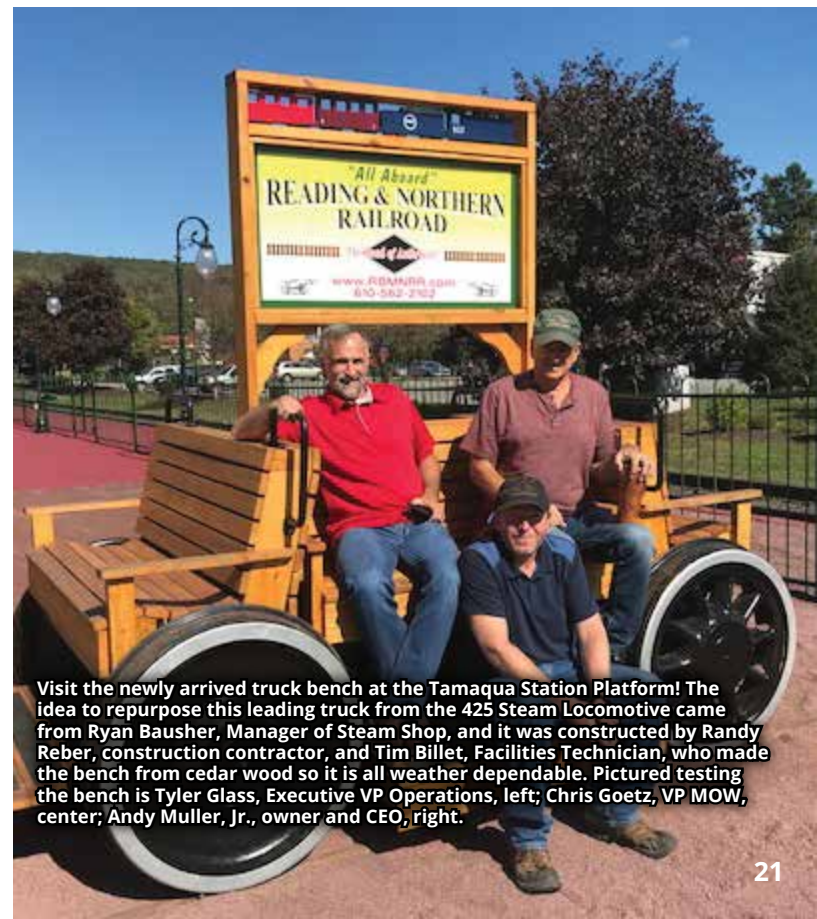
The first every Marathon Train sponsored by Runegades took place on the early morning of September 27. This train departed Jim Thorpe and left runners off at both Penn Haven and White Haven to race back to Jim Thorpe. Pictured here are runners passing under the train just south of White Haven. These runners are partaking in a full marathon and are being supported by several family members and friends who took the train round trip.



Andy and Carol Muller are seen at Reading Outer Station before the 4pm departure of the Ride and Dine Train to Tamaqua. Andy had the honors of being engineer this date, September 19. Picture by John Gabriel.



The OCS (Office Car Special) has toured the railroad several days over the summer. Here at the newly built Jim Thorpe Junction, F Units 270 and 275 diverge onto the Jim Thorpe Branch heading for downtown. Picture by John Gabriel.



Visit the newly arrived truck bench at the Tamaqua Station Platform! The idea to repurpose this leading truck from the 425 Steam Locomotive came from Ryan Bausher, Manager of Steam Shop, and it was constructed by Randy Reber, construction contractor, and Tim Billet, Facilities Technician, who made the bench from cedar wood so it is all weather dependable. Pictured testing the bench is Tyler Glass, Executive VP Operations, left; Chris Goetz, VP MOW, center; Andy Muller, Jr., owner and CEO, right.

Wellness Committee

BY: SHANNON ANDERSON, HR DIRECTOR



Pottsville Branch Paddlers enjoying the morning on the Schuylkill River.

The 2nd Annual Pottsville Branch Paddle led by the Wellness Committee took place this summer for a fun-filled day on the Schuylkill River. This event invites RBMN employees, their family members, and friends to join the Wellness Committee for a morning of kayaking along the Schuylkill River starting at the Auburn Trail head, stopping for lunch at the chutes, and ending in Port Clinton.

There are various events the Wellness Committee holds throughout the year, and the Pottsville Branch Paddle is one that exemplifies teamwork. While we have a lot of fun coordinating this type of event, the top priority is ensuring everyone's safety from the moment the kayakers launch. Having first-time kayakers as participants, kayaks were borrowed and transported from other kayak owners. Additionally, transportation was coordinated in detail to ensure all participants who started at the Auburn Trail head would end up with their vehicles in Port Clinton. The Wellness Committee assured everyone was equipped with a properly sized kayak, life vest, whistle, paddle, and familiarity with what to expect. First-time participant, Kyle Barrell stated, "I think we should do this maybe twice each summer. I think you guys did a great job organizing and executing this event and it was greatly appreciated."

Team Leaders, Tony Weachock, Jessica Melochick, and Ben Cole led a group of twenty-two kayakers ensuring the participants were safe with the conditions and challenges along the river. They launched from the Auburn trail head in the morning and headed to the chutes for lunch where they met up with coordinators, Liam Marsh, Shannon Anderson, Sabine Fidler, and Francesca Bartolucci. The coordinators brought lunch to the kayakers which was donated by Around the Family Table in Leesport. While the kayakers were traveling from the chutes to Port Clinton, the coordinators transported participants' vehicles from the Auburn launch site to Port Clinton. When all kayakers arrived in Port Clinton, their vehicles were ready for them alleviating the need to get a ride back to Auburn after a long morning of kayaking. First time kayaker Meg Pursel said, "I loved it. Thanks

again for organizing this and to all who lent out their kayaks!"

Second annual Pottsville Branch Paddle team leader, Jessica Melochick stated, "I really enjoyed seeing all the newcomers this year, both seasoned and brand-new paddlers. Everyone was willing to help out in some way, shape or form, to ensure that all had a fantastic and enjoyable time." The Wellness Committee plans to continue to hold this event on an annual basis.

Our final Bike N' Hike meet up, a route taking employees and their families twelve miles along Hamburg and Port, took place Sunday, September 27, 2020. Despite some rain and a wet trail, four employees joined other nature lovers to welcome Autumn and to enjoy the sights and smells of the Bartram trail. Even though there are no more meet ups scheduled for 2020, groups can still gather at the trail head to take advantage of the many days left in the season perfect for outdoor activity.

Wellness Committee members Mary Culp and Tiffany Howell suggested after work workouts in July. Their idea now provides Workout Wednesdays to employees on the second Wednesday of each month. Workouts offered have included Yoga, country line dancing, and streamed workouts.

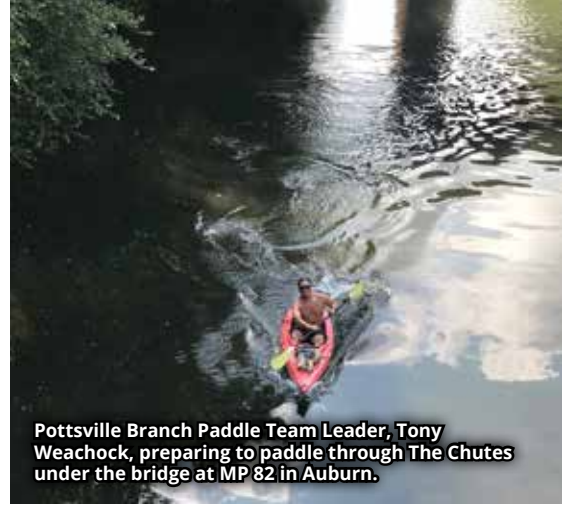
The Wellness Committee is planning their first fall planting event to supplement their Spring Time Grow Time event. The goal is to have Pennsylvania native plants that bloom spring, summer, and fall at the Port Clinton entrance.

The Committee recently teamed up with the companies' health insurance provider to implement a walking challenge tracker that will give employees incentives and keep them motivated to get their steps in.

Lastly, a day trip to Washington, D.C. is currently being planned for spring of 2021 for employees and their families to join the Wellness Committee for an enjoyable day walking the city. ♦



Pottsville Branch Paddlers on the Schuylkill River. Pictured left to right back row (Chad Master, Joyce Zaffuto, Kelley Barrell, Jennifer Sharadin, Michael Sharadin, Aaron Snyder, Bretz Fetterolf, Ben Cole, Dave Evelyn, Tony Weachock, Christina Chicu, Toni Ruch). Front row left to right (Callan Barrell, Kyle Barrell, Deanna Johnson, Jessica Melochick, Meg Pursel, and Sabine Fidler).



Pottsville Branch Paddle Team Leader, Tony Weachock, preparing to paddle through The Chutes under the bridge at MP 82 in Auburn.



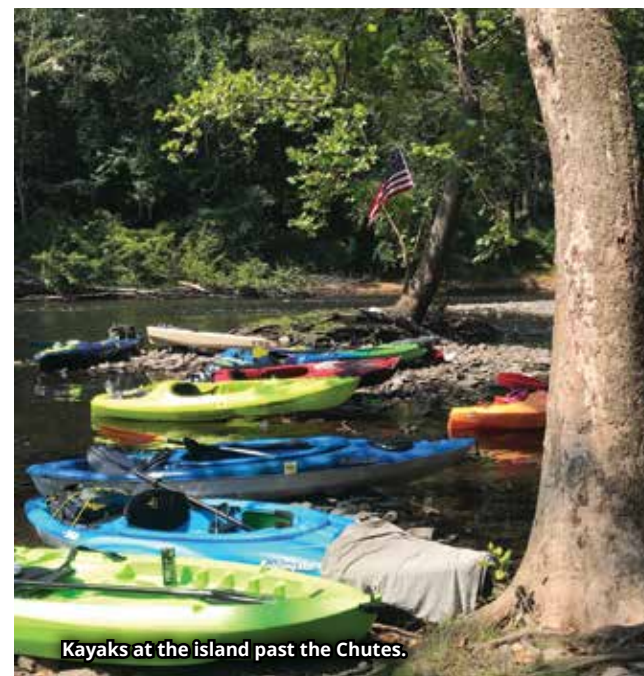
Pictured left to right Callan Barrell and Kyle Barrell enjoying fishing in the Schuylkill River while Toni Ruch, Meg Pursel, and Sabine Fidler enjoy lunch break.



Francesca Bartolucci and Liam Marsh at MP 82 on the Pottsville Branch.



Jennifer Sharadin passing through The Chutes at MP 82 on the Pottsville Branch in Auburn.



Kayaks at the island past the Chutes.



Aaron Snyder approaching Port Clinton with Elliot Johnson, Jennifer Sharadin, Chad Master, Deanna Johnson, Caileigh Master, and Kaden Master following.



Newest member of the Wellness Committee, Bretz Fetterolf approaching Port Clinton after enjoying his first Pottsville Branch Paddle.



Kelley Barrell and Callan Barrell passing under the bridge at MP 82 on the Pottsville Branch in Auburn.



Dave Evelyn and Bretz Fetterolf starting a small fire for the Pottsville Branch Paddlers to enjoy.



Pottsville Branch Paddlers emptying their kayaks and getting ready to enjoy lunch.



A special thank you to Wellness Committee members Jessica Melochick, Sabine Fidler, Lynn Engle, Meg Pursel, and Mary Culp (not pictured), for maintaining the flowers they planted earlier this year.



Christina Muller-Levan handles the 425 as the locomotive handles the runaround move at Old Penn Haven.



Dale Homm is moving some earth for a mini signal project at the Equilateral Interlocking at South Tamaqua.



Chris Goetz (foreground) and Andy Muller wave as the NRFF speeds past a few miles south of Tamaqua on a toasty August day. The friendly wave from the locomotive is being extended from Eric Slekovac.



Upgraded signals at Stephenson St. in Duryea. Don Matter (foreground left) is holding some guide ropes while Ryan Rhody (sitting on boom truck) raises the cantilever into position. Ed Kopeck is on the ladder providing some guidance. In the background police officer Connor Hedrick is directing traffic.



Joe Brown works on a piece of MOW equipment. Joe is one of the finest problem solvers on the railroad.



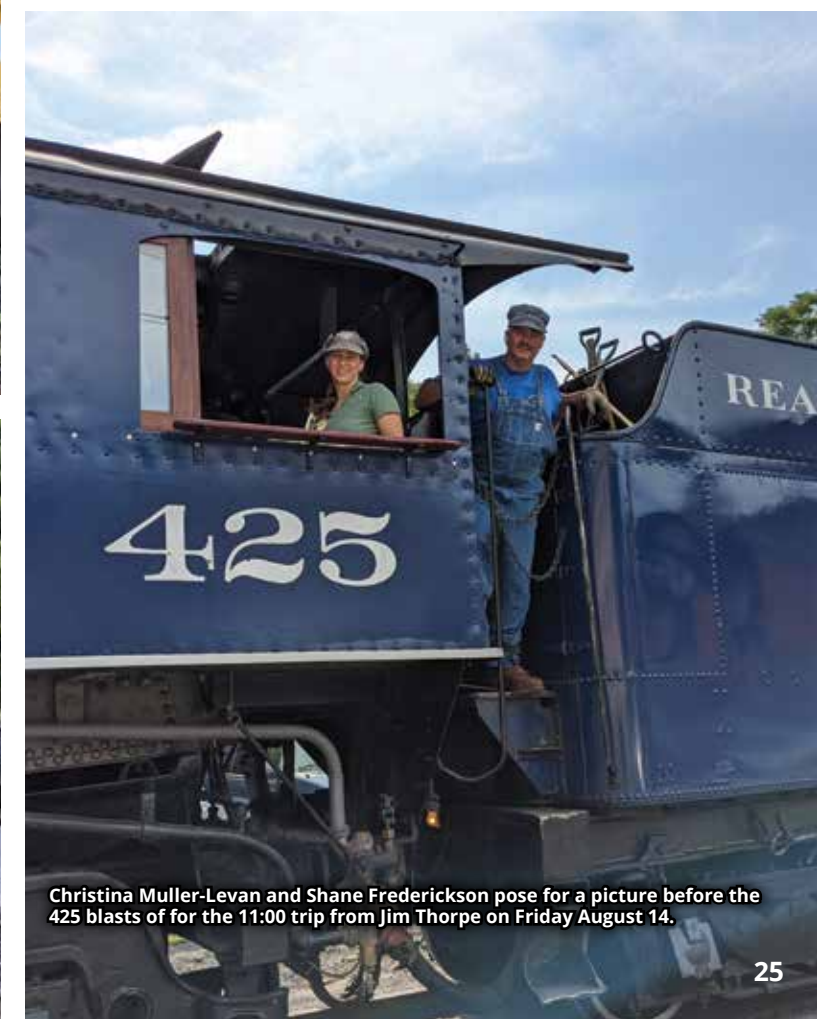
Jolene Buser is busy selecting pictures for this very magazine.



Steven Kolbe shines up the side of locomotive 2013 which is being used extensively in the passenger operation.



Duane Zimmerman is shown loading a gondola at Port Clinton. Duane is always on the move and can be seen at many locations in one day.



Christina Muller-Levan and Shane Frederickson pose for a picture before the 425 blasts off for the 11:00 trip from Jim Thorpe on Friday August 14.

RBMN Anniversaries

20 YEARS



August 14, 2000
Dustin Berndt
VP - Motive Power - Mechanical



August 28, 2020
Andrew Davis
Conductor - Operations



October 17, 2000
Ronald Papiercavich
Engineer - Operations

15 YEARS



September 12, 2005
Joseph Zimmerman - Cl.1
Locomotive Electrician - Mech.

5 YEARS



August 25, 2015
William Clark
Sr. VP - Coal Marketing



September 30, 2015
Raymond Chipka
Forklift Operator - Transload



October 8, 2015
Larry Fisher
Car Host - Passenger

3 YEARS



August 10, 2017
Tyler Geschwindt
Car Host/Mascot/Conductor - Passenger



September 11, 2017
Lynn Engle
Administrative Assistant - MOW



October 3, 2017
Michele Daub
Customer Service Mgr. - Cust. Serv.



October 23, 2017
Ryan Trexler
Engineer/Conductor - Operations

1 YEAR



Aug. 7, 2019
Corey Hamm
Thermite
Welder Trainee - MOW



Aug. 12, 2019
Marc Aigeldinger
Thermite
Welder Trainee - MOW



Sept. 9, 2019
Jeffrey Rhodes
A&P Mechanic
& Pilot - RJC & Maintenance



Sept. 10, 2019
Carson Shappell
Conductor - Operations



Sept. 14, 2019
Stan Nestor
Car Host - Passenger



Sept. 25, 2019
Michael Friday
Class 1
Mechanic - Mechanical



Oct. 7, 2019
Charles Trusdell, III
Apprentice - Mech.



Oct. 14, 2019
Amanda Collins
West MOW
Administrator



Oct. 22, 2019
Steven Bachmann
Line Service
Tech. - RJC

Red Creek Wildlife Creating a Flock of Black Vultures

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

Vultures are scavengers and a valuable member of the ecosystem. Acting as the “Garbage Collectors of the Bird World,” they eat rotting carrion, helping to keep the environment disease-free. They are well adapted to tackle this distasteful task with a featherless head, which helps keep the face clean, and strong gastric acids that completely digest even the most contaminated meal.

Vultures prefer to nest in caves. Such a nest location not only helps keep out predators but it also helps keep these intelligent and curious chicks from wandering away from the nest. A well-chosen nest site will keep the chicks contained until they are old enough to fly out of the cave.

Vulture nests can also be found in barns and silos, as well as vacant warehouses and factories. To a vulture, an abandoned building with missing and broken windows is a perfect cavern-like nest location. While natural nest sites go mostly undiscovered, nests located in man-made structures are occasionally disturbed, and the nestling's lives are disrupted. Such was the case of five baby Black Vultures that ended up at Red Creek this past year.

In early May, we received two hatchling Black Vultures found in a building that was being demolished in Birdsboro. Vultures imprint on their parents quickly and can easily become tame. Only a few days old, we had to be very careful that these two bonded with an adult black vulture, not to humans.

We introduced them to Zazu, Red Creek's non-releasable Black Vulture. Zazu is an education bird that occasionally visits schools to teach children about vultures. She has also served as a foster mom for baby vultures in past years. She immediately began protecting and caring for these new arrivals.

Our next concern was that the vultures needed a bonded family once released into the wild. One or two chicks raised in a rehabilitation setting might not be accepted into a wild flock. These highly social birds need a family structure already formed at the time of release. Raising vultures in groups of four or more is necessary to them thriving in the wild. The larger the number of the sibling-flock, the better their chance of maintaining that flock once released. We alerted the other rehabilitators in our state, and it was decided that all the baby black vultures rescued would come to Red Creek.

One single nestling joined our two in early summer. It had been found in Spring Township abandoned and alone, starving and covered in parasites. This nestling needed more intensive care due to its poor condition. Once it had recovered and gained weight, it was united with the other two.

In July, two more nestlings were transferred to us from another rehabilitation center. Also victims of a building demolition, they had lost their home in Mechanicsburg. These two arrived in healthy condition and were immediately introduced to their new family. We now had a group of five that had a good chance of remaining together as a family flock.

Caring for the vultures was relatively easy for the rest of the summer. We provided them with decaying food each day so that they would recognize their wild diet and kept handling to a minimum to keep them wild. As they grew their appearance changed from their rust-colored down covering to the black glossy feathers that give them their name. The Black Vultures began flying by the end of summer and were placed in a large flight cage to provide them with room to exercise.

Releasing the vultures had to be planned carefully. Most times, when birds are released, they bolt from their carrier and fly away. We were worried that if these birds flew when released, they might become separated and lose each other. We needed to release them in an area where they would stay together while slowly expanding and exploring their environment. A stable food source would help keep them together as they learned about their new world of freedom.

I reached out to our local game warden, Jason Macunas, who agreed to help by releasing the birds at a game land's deer pit, a discreet location where road-killed deer are deposited.

Jason released the birds on a beautiful late September day. Accompanying him were his two sons, one of whom is a Red Creek volunteer. Later that day, I received a video of the release along with a text that said, “the release went well, and the vultures began eating right away... and they stayed together,” a happy ending for this young vulture flock. ♦



May, 2020 Black Vulture hatchling.



May, 2020 Black Vulture hatchlings.



Growing Black Vulture hatchlings.



Maturing Black Vulture hatchlings.



Release of the rescued Black Vulture hatchlings.

WELCOME ABOARD *New Employees!*



Karl Laubenstein

Karl Laubenstein was recently hired as the Vice President of Coal Marketing and Sales. He attended Schuylkill Haven Area School District, Temple University, and Penn College of Technology. Prior to working at RBMNR, Karl was a Sales Manager for Atlantic Carbon Group, Inc. for four years. Karl is a certified vocational education teacher. Karl completed the Multiple Sclerosis 150-mile bicycle ride benefit ride twice.



Margaret Knadler

Margaret Knadler was recently hired as a Car Host within our Passenger Department. She attended Tamaqua Area School District. Margaret is currently a bus aide for Kistler Transportation for the past eleven years. Margaret has worked for Tamaqua Area School bus transportation for twenty one years. She enjoys history and helping children with disabilities. Margaret's son, Jeff, and daughter, Marie, also work at the Reading and Northern Railroad.



Colin Gipe

Colin Gipe was recently hired as Mascot and Car Host within our Passenger Department. He attended Blue Mountain High School. Prior to working at RBMNR, Colin worked at Redner's Warehouse Markets for two years. Colin is an Eagle Scout and helped with Wreaths Across America.



Joshua Antosh

Joshua Antosh was recently hired as a Trackman within our Maintenance of Way Department. He attended Crestwood High School. Prior to working at RBMNR, Joshua was Lead Machine Operator at Wyman Gordon for thirteen years.



Jerry Binder, Jr.

Jerry Binder, Jr. was recently hired as a Foreman within our Car Shop. He attended Northampton High School. Prior to working at RBMNR, Jerry was a Mechanical Supervisor for Norfolk Southern for thirteen years. Jerry enjoys four wheeling, hiking, and working on trucks.



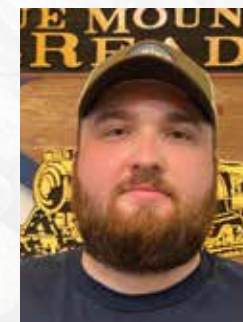
Spencer Buckingham

Spencer Buckingham was recently hired as a Car Host within our Passenger Department. He attended Pottsville Area High School and Schuylkill Technology Center. Prior to working at RBMNR, Spencer was a fry cook and dishwasher for Friedensburg Country Restaurant for two years. Spencer is a boy scout and hopes to have his Eagle Scout Award by the end of the year.



James Wolf

James Wolf was recently hired as a Steam Engine Watchman within our Passenger Department. He attended Bethlehem Catholic and Lincoln Tech. James has been involved with steam at RBMNR since 2015. In addition, he DJ'd to a crowd of almost 10,000 people at Ultra Music Fest in Miami.



Dallas Humphreys

Dallas Humphreys was recently hired as a Conductor within our Operations Department. He attended Stonewall Jackson Senior High School. Prior to working at RBMNR, Dallas was a Locomotive Engineer and Conductor with Norfolk Southern for eight years.



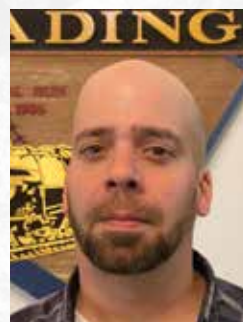
John Shucavage

John Shucavage was recently hired as a Conductor within our Operations Department. He attended Tamaqua Area Senior High School. Prior to working at RBMNR, John was an Apprentice at Rarick's Inc. for 2 years. John enjoys playing guitar and performed on live television for the American Cancer Society Telethon in April 2018.



Jeanette Cullins

Jeanette Cullins was recently hired as a Car Host within our Passenger Department. She attended Lampeter-Strasburg High School and California State University. Prior to working at RBMNR, Jeanette worked at AAA for 2 years in travel support. Jeanette was a flight attendant for several years and loves all kinds of transportation. Jeanette shares that her family had an excellent train set which her dad set up every Christmas while she was growing up, and the Reading and Northern trains remind her of that.



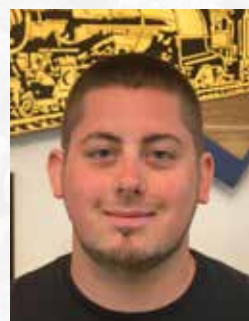
Thomas Moraski

Thomas Moraski was recently hired as a Conductor within our Passenger Department. He attended Octorara Area High School and Shippensburg University. Prior to working at RBMNR, Thomas was an Engineer for at Norfolk Southern for fifteen years. Thomas added that he spent two and a half months under water in a submarine.



Kasey Zimmerman

Kasey Zimmerman was recently hired as a Line Service Technician at the Reading Jet Center. She attended Pine Grove Area High School. In addition to her role as Line Service Technician, Kasey is an Aircraft Mechanic for the Pennsylvania Air National Guard.



Dylan Soltis

Dylan Soltis was recently hired as a Conductor within our Operations Department. He attended Pleasant Valley School District. Prior to working at RBMNR, Dylan was a Conductor at Norfolk Southern for six years.



Leanne Moser

Leanne Moser was recently hired as a Customer Service Manager within our Traffic Department. She attended Hamburg Area High School and Shippensburg University. Prior to working at RBMNR, Leanne worked at Pet Supplies Plus as a Shift Supervisor. Leanne loves to bake on her days off and play board games with her friends and family.



Eric Peters

Eric Peters was recently hired as VP of Transportation and Safety. He attended Shelbyville High School in Indiana and Clemson University. Prior to working at RBMNR, Eric was Superintendent of Terminals at Norfolk Southern for fourteen years. See more on page 5, Interview with New VP of Transportation & Safety.



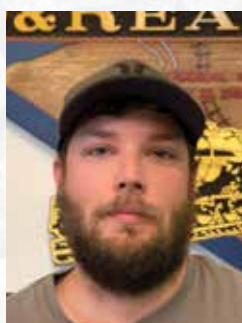
David Hladky

David Hladky was recently hired as an A & P Mechanic at the Reading Jet Center. He attended St. James High School. Prior to working at RJC, David was Director of Maintenance and a Pilot at Reading Air Charter for twenty years. David restored antique auto gyro aircraft and an Aeronca Champ which he currently owns and flies.



William Buckingham, Jr.

William Buckingham, Jr. was recently hired as a Truck Driver within the Transload Department. He attended Pottstown Senior High School and Schuylkill Technology Center. Prior to working at RBMNR, William was a truck driver for Wegman's Distribution Center for almost two years. William enjoys camping and fishing in his spare time.



Greg Zelinsky

Greg Zelinsky was recently hired as a Locomotive Mechanic within our Mechanical Department. He attended Pine Grove Area School District. Prior to working at RBMNR, Greg was a Laborer at Norfolk Southern for ten years.



Bryan Meade

Bryan Meade was recently hired as a Mascot within our Passenger Department. He attends Schuylkill Haven High School.



Jorge Ubilluz

Jorge Ubilluz was recently hired as a Line Service Technician at the Reading Jet Center. He attended San Jose Manta High School, Vaught College, and Eloy Alfaro in Ecuador. Jorge studied at the Academy of Aviation in New York and Reading Air in Reading. Jorge has his Private Pilot License (PPL), and Commercial Pilot License (CPL), with a Multi-Engine Land (MEL) rating. He is a Certified Flight Instructor (CFI), and Certified Flight Instrument Instructor (CFII). Prior to working at RJC, Jorge was a Ground Traffic Controller at JFK International Airport in New York for five years, and a Carpenter for Carpenter Technology for three years.

Congratulations!

ON YOUR NEW ARRIVAL

CONGRATULATIONS to Tim, Facilities Technician, and Rachel Billet who became the proud parents of Lennon Timothy Billet on Monday, August 10, 2020 at 8:16 AM. He weighed in at 9 lbs. 5 ozs. and was 21 inches long. Welcome to our railroad family, Lennon.



♥ Rescued, Adopted, Loved ♥

Meet Bear! He is the newest addition to the Mark Harris Family. Mark is a Carman within our Mechanical Department. Bear was adopted from the Ruth Steinert SPCA in Pine Grove.

Stanley Burczy

Retirement Announcement

BY: SHANNON ANDERSON, HR DIRECTOR



The Reading and Northern Railroad announces the retirement of Stanley Burczy from the Mechanical Department. After more than sixteen years of devoted service, Stanley retired in July 2020. Stanley joined the Reading and Northern Railroad on June 28, 2004, when we were a much smaller organization. Stanley began his career with RBMNR as a Customer Service Manager in the Traffic Department and worked in multiple departments. He also worked in our Passenger Department as a Car Host and Ticket Agent.

Stanley's career with Reading and Northern Railroad has been one of dedication and service. In 2015, Stan had an interest in the Mechanical Department and saw himself retiring from the car shop. Stan took on jobs in the Mechanical Department that far surpassed what his initial skill set allowed, learning how to MIG weld, cut steel with various pieces of equipment, prep cars, and learn to air brake. At the time the Car Shop workload consisted of 60% air brake cars, Stan did an incredible job of keeping up with demand. Stan utilized his customer service knowledge and developed a chart to maintain flow sheets, car data, and inspection logs. Stan rose to the position of Car Inspector, Air Mechanic, and finished his career as a Carman within the Car Shop.

Stanley was always willing to help everyone and was dedicated to the railroad. He was always friendly and respectful to everyone. He had a love of music and was an avid fan of college basketball, mostly Duke.

We asked Stanley what he will miss the most about Reading and Northern, and his reply was "the people. They become family." Stan has an unmistakable laugh that will be greatly missed by his peers.

Stanley is spending some well-deserved time camping throughout the country with his spouse, Margaret. We wish Mr. and Mrs. Burczy the best as they enjoy Stanley's retirement together.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

NOV. 2..... MARGARET KNADLER	NOV. 24.....LORI CHINCHAR	DEC. 30..... RUSSELL SCIANNA, JR.
NOV. 5.....JEFFREY KNADLER	NOV. 25.....CARTER JONES	DEC. 30..... KASEY ZIMMERMAN
NOV. 5..... JAMES WOLF	NOV. 27..... DAVID BALDWIN	JAN. 1.....LOUIS BUGNO
NOV. 6.....MARIO CARANNANTE	NOV. 28.....DOMINIC DEEBLE	JAN. 1.....BRIAR STERN
NOV. 9.....BRIAN BARNES	DEC. 2..... STEVEN WERLEY	JAN. 2..... DUSTIN BERNDT
NOV. 9.....JUSTIN CHICKILLY	DEC. 3.....CODY HENN	JAN. 3.....NICHOLAS ALBERSWERTH
NOV. 9.....MATTHEW MCGINNIS	DEC. 5.....JUSTIN HUGHES	JAN. 4..... MICHAEL BOYLE
NOV. 9.....RODGER MESZAROS	DEC. 5..... AARON AIDELDINGER	JAN. 5..... JOSEPH GRAMLICH
NOV. 10.....DAVID KITTNER	DEC. 8.....STEVEN BACHMANN	JAN. 6.....RYAN LAMM
NOV. 12.....JOSHUA ANTOSH	DEC. 11..... LARRY YODER	JAN. 11.....DAVID HLADKY
NOV. 15.....AUSTIN CORY	DEC. 12..... DAVID HAFER	JAN. 12..... RONALD DELUCA
NOV. 16.....EVAN GETZEY	DEC. 12..... SUSAN LUDWIG	JAN. 15..... KEVIN FRY
NOV. 17.....LARRY CURVEY	DEC. 13.....THOMAS FENERTY	JAN. 16..... DANIEL GILCHRIST
NOV. 18.....JEFFREY BRUNNER	DEC. 14.....JEFFREY RHODES	JAN. 17..... DAVID LAPALLO
NOV. 20.....RIAN NEMEROFF	DEC. 16..... RYAN BAUSHER	JAN. 21.....SABINE FIDLER
NOV. 20.....JOHN RIZZO	DEC. 16..... DONALD MATTER	JAN. 22.....MICHAEL CAPRON
NOV. 20.....JASON WINWOOD	DEC. 17..... CALVIN GERHARD	JAN. 27.....MARIE KNADLER
NOV. 21.....MICHAEL EVANGELISTA	DEC. 17.....JAMES SOMERS	JAN. 28.....JACK WASSEL
NOV. 21.....MICHAEL FRIDAY	DEC. 19.....ANDREW DAVIS	JAN. 29.....ANGELA POTTS
NOV. 21.....MATTHEW STABINGER	DEC. 19.....JOSHUA LAUGHLIN	JAN. 29.....RAYMOND SCHWENK
NOV. 21.....KARONY BORGER	DEC. 20.....JACK HURLEY	JAN. 30..... DENISE YOUPA
NOV. 23.....RONALD PAPIERCAVICH	DEC. 20.....LAURA LESAGONICZ	
NOV. 23.....MARGARET PURSEL	DEC. 29.....YASHA SIDDIQI	

Reading & Northern's Family Recipes

Buffalo Chicken Dip

Meg Pursel, Receptionist, says, "this Buffalo Chicken Dip makes a great appetizer and is easy to have the ingredients on hand for those last-minute party invites. I use a small crockpot and double or triple the recipe depending on the size of the function. Be careful not to buy the "Hot Buffalo". It never turns out as well. The measurements are vague because it's so easy to add more buffalo sauce or ranch dressing to make it as spicy or mild as you like."

Ingredients

- 2 cans chicken (shredded or chunk)
- 1 bar cream cheese
- ½ cup shredded cheese (cheddar or colby mix)
- Frank's Buffalo sauce
- Ranch Dressing

Directions

- 1.) I usually cover the chicken in enough buffalo sauce to make it red/orange, then mix ranch dressing until creamy (maybe ½ cup of each).
- 2.) Add cream cheese & shredded cheese.
- 3.) Microwave or place in Crock-Pot.
- 4.) Add buffalo sauce and ranch dressing to taste.

Tips: Double for parties, cut recipe in half for quick snack, serve with tortilla chips and/or veggies.

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

Wellness Corner

BY: SABINE FIDLER, HR ASSISTANT

Stress Management

"Stress, in addition to being itself, was also the cause of itself, and the result of itself."

~Janos Hugo "Hans" Selye, Pioneering Hungarian-Canadian endocrinologist

Stress is the body's visceral reaction to life's physical and psychological demands. In small doses, stress keeps us on our toes and can be quite motivating. An alarm system within our brains protects us from what we perceive as threats. Hormones are released when our brains send a threat alert causing heart rate and blood pressure to increase allowing us to manage the threat through what the Mayo Clinic describes as a "fight or flight" response. Once the threat disappears, your body is designed to go back to its normal, calm state. For many of us, however, those alarm systems work overtime reacting to life's obstacles. Allowing your body to remain on high alert can lead to serious health problems, reduced quality of life, and damaged relationships. Understanding the importance of managing stress, identifying stressors, recognizing unhealthy coping mechanisms, and incorporating/developing stress management techniques will provide you with emotional and physical resilience to withstand life's challenges.

Stress reduces your capability to reason clearly, react to daily challenges, and to enjoy life to the fullest not to mention its impact on physical and emotional health. Although it may seem at times that there are not enough minutes in a day to juggle daily demands, you have more regulatory power over stress than you realize. Developing personally unique stress management strategies resets our individual alarm system which ultimately allows us to "snap back" more easily from stressful episodes.

In an article written for brainline.org, Robinson et al. suggest identifying stressors as the first step to stress management. Although most stressors are obvious, some are more subtle. Stressors and the impact they present will persist unless you personally accept responsibility for the part you have allowed to cause and maintain them. How are your coping strategies working for you? Are they effective or not? Unfortunately, most people utilize coping strategies which temporarily reduce stress but complicate the stressful situation long term. Unhealthy coping strategies may include:

- Taking out your stress on others (verbal or physical abuse).
- Sleeping too often.
- Withdrawing from activities with friends and family.
- Excessive drinking or smoking.
- Self-medicating for relaxation. Prolonged use can lead to dependency.
- Procrastinating.
- Over-scheduling your day to avoid confronting problems.
- Overating or not eating at all.

If you find that your current coping mechanisms do not effectively support your mental and physical health, it is time to find healthier options. Many healthy options are available, however, all of them require some type of change. You can either change the situation or your reaction to the situation. Robinson et al. recommend focusing on the four A's when deciding which change will ultimately allow you more calmness and focus. They also suggest maintaining a "stress journal" to identify patterns causing stress-related situations and the impact of personal stress management strategies used to address them.

1.) Changing the Situation

Avoid the stressor: Say "no" more frequently, evade people who stress you out, take responsibility and control your environment, avoid issues that "push your buttons", cut back and prioritize your to-do list.

Alter the stressor: Communicate your feelings instead of "bottling them up", be receptive to behavior change and agree to compromise, deal with your problems as they arise and develop a more assertive, proactive approach to preventing turmoil.

2.) Change your Reaction

Adapt to the stressor: Try to view stressful situations from a positive vantage point, view "the forest rather than the trees" by examining a stressful picture in a larger context. If its importance is minimally important and not worth the aggravation, let it go. Channel your focus and energy on more important things.

Accept the stressor: Focus on situations that are controllable instead of those that are beyond your control which refers to people as well as situations. View stressful situations as an opportunity for personal improvement and growth. Accept that your personal poor choices may have led to the situation, ponder them, and learn from your faults. Share your feelings with a close friend or consult a counsellor. Learn to forgive, release negative energy, and move forward.

Ultimately, the key to reducing stress is to prevent it. Since taking care of yourself should be a necessity, schedule time for relaxation and fun. Associate with people who provide positive influences in your life. Participate in activities every day that bring you joy. Maintain a sense of humor and take the opportunity to laugh at yourself. The phrase, "laughter is the best medicine" makes sense. Afterall, laughter reduces anxiety and allows your body to fight stress.

Finally, do not procrastinate until stress undermines your relationships, physical well-being, or quality of life. Begin applying stress management techniques immediately. Stress will not vanish from your life and, more importantly, stress management needs to be continual. Being vigilant about what causes your stressful situations and practicing effective ways to problem solve and unwind will enable you to react appropriately to the bad effects of stress and increase your ability to tackle and survive stressful challenges.



For more information, visit:

<https://www.helpguide.org/articles/stress/stress-management.htm>

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/stress-management/basics/stress-basics/hlv-20049495>

<https://www.brainline.org/article/stress-management-how-reduce-prevent-and-cope-stress>

<https://www.stress.org/management-tips>

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

BY: SHANNON ANDERSON, HR SPECIALIST

Congratulations Connor!



I am pleased to introduce the Fall 2020 "Spotlight Employee", Connor Hedrick. Connor has been employed with RBMN since September of 2018 and is currently a Patrolman. Prior to working at RBMN, Connor worked for the Pittston City Police Department.

Connor was born in Scranton, Pennsylvania, and graduated from Western Wayne School District.

Connor and his wife, Brieanna, have four children – Griffin-ten years old, Olivia-five years old, Aiden-four years old, and Abigail-two years old. The Hedricks also have a female German Shepherd rescue, Rylee, who came from the Dessin Animal Shelter.

In Connor's spare time, he enjoys cooking big meals for his family, going to his kids' sporting events, and target shooting.

Connor was recognized by Sergeant Ryan Parks who says, "Connor is doing an excellent job as an officer here and has been a great addition and asset since starting with us back in September 2018. He has a great work ethic and is eager to assist in what is needed to get the job done safely and effectively. He is always ready to lend a helping hand. He is eager in continuing to learn the railroad and does a fantastic job with policing and protecting the railroad. He can always be counted on when duty calls. He is a great co-worker and a good family man who enjoys spending time with his family outside of work. For his great work ethic and dedication, he was nominated as a spotlight employee."

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

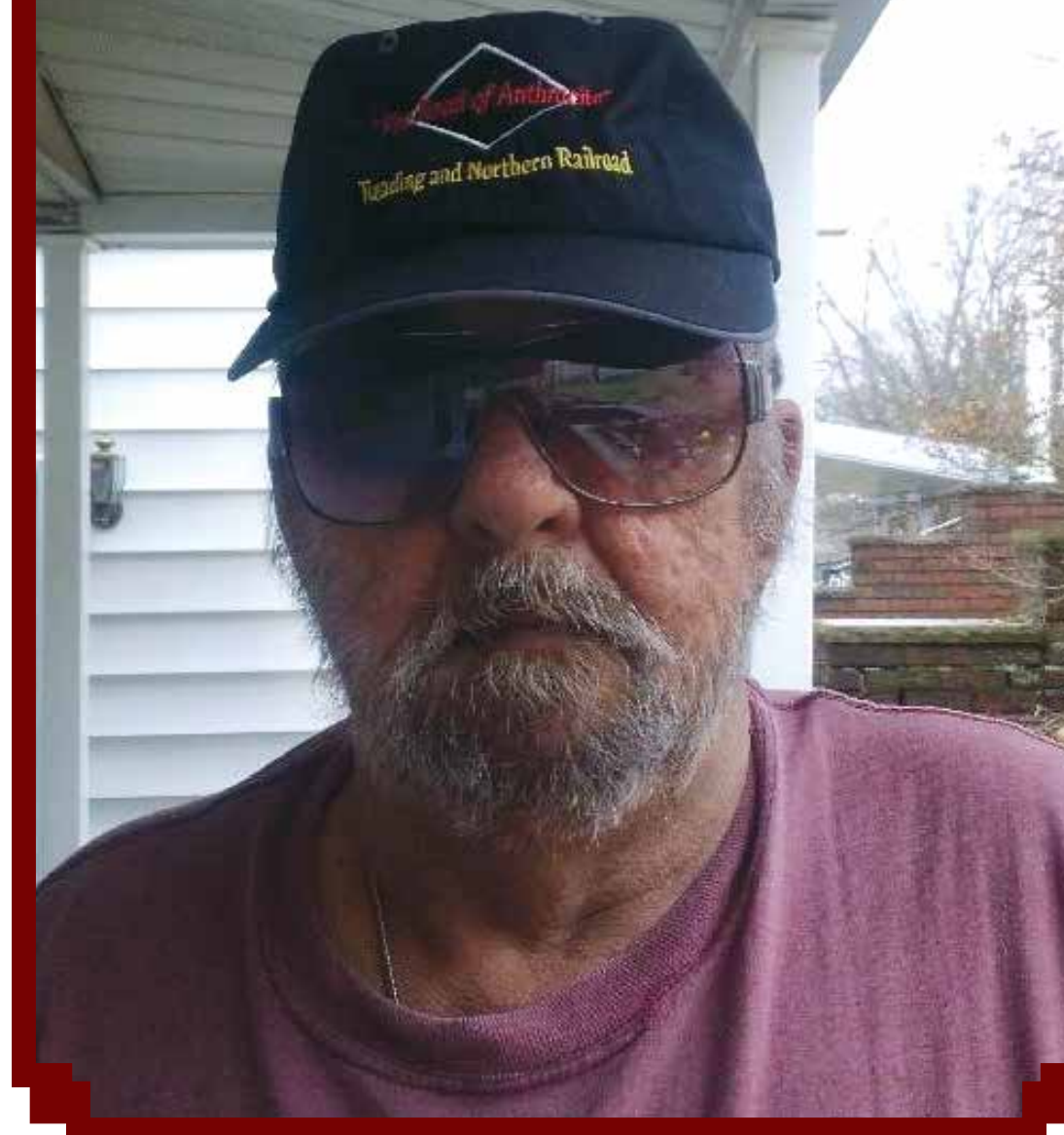
As the "Spotlight Employee", Connor received a \$100 gift certificate to dine at his favorite restaurant, Lizza's Mezzo Mezzo. ♦



Carl "Bimbo" & Debbie Schwenk Pay It Forward

On Saturday, August 1st, Carl "Bimbo" Schwenk and his wife Debbie, both private contractors at the railroad, used their stimulus check to provide 308 free subs from Jean's Place to Cressona residents and members of the public. Carl and Debbie wanted to pay forward their stimulus check, hoping to help people smile. The first event was such a success that they decided to hand out an additional 309 subs on Saturday October 3rd.

In Memoriam



Earlier this summer in July, the Reading & Northern lost one of our earliest family members, Dave Kroznuski.

Dave more recently worked as a Real Estate Inspector within the Real Estate Department, but he had been employed with the Reading & Northern since 1990. Dave was one of our first Real Estate Inspectors, and came to the railroad having already worked for Conrail on a rail gang.

Dave worked much of his career at the Reading & Northern in the Maintenance of Way Department and the Real Estate Department. He was a part of countless track improvement projects, new customer siding installations, and annual summer and winter track maintenances. Dave was a part of the team that survived the Blizzard of '93 that devastated our rail system. Dave was known as one of our "bulldogs" who fiercely protected our right of way on real estate inspections, and we could always trust that our infrastructure was safe under his watch.

Jack Wassel, a Real Estate Inspector who also worked in the Maintenance of Way Department, worked many years alongside Dave. Of Dave, Jack recalled, "the first time I met Dave it was in 1994 when I came to the Reading & Northern Railroad. We were having a meeting about marking ties and Duane Engle said to him (Dave), would you like to say anything? Dave said, 'if you see anybody working that needs help, stop and help them.' Dave gained a lot of respect from that statement. One thing a lot of people didn't know was that he had a big heart and would help anybody that needed it. I am fortunate that I was part of his life and the good times we had together."

Dave had been recently nominated as our "Employee Spotlight" in the R&N Magazine's 2020 Winter Issue, Vol. 22, Issue 1. In his spotlight feature, Dave told us that he "took a chance coming to the Blue Mountain & Reading from Conrail, and it's a decision I don't regret." We hope Dave knew how grateful we at the Reading & Northern are that he did take that chance, and we hope his family knows Dave is dearly missed by all of his team members.

**Reading Blue Mountain &
Northern Railroad Company**

PO Box 218

Port Clinton PA 19549



The newly painted "Fast Freight" 5018 passing through RBMN Headquarters in Port Clinton, PA in the end of summer. Photo credit Phillip Banks.