

# R&N Magazine

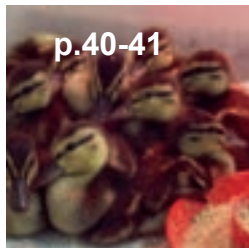
*Official Magazine of the Employees and Customers of the Reading & Northern Railroad*

SUMMER 2021 | VOL. 23 ISSUE 3



**RBMN Acquires Carbon County Rail Line**

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## COVER PHOTO

RBMN diesel locomotive 2013 (left) and steam locomotive 425 (right) at the Jim Thorpe passenger terminal on a hazy summer afternoon. Locomotive 2013 is waiting to depart the station for a passenger trip into the Lehigh Gorge.

## EDITORS

JOLENE BUSER - TAYLOR HAUPT - SABINE FIDLER

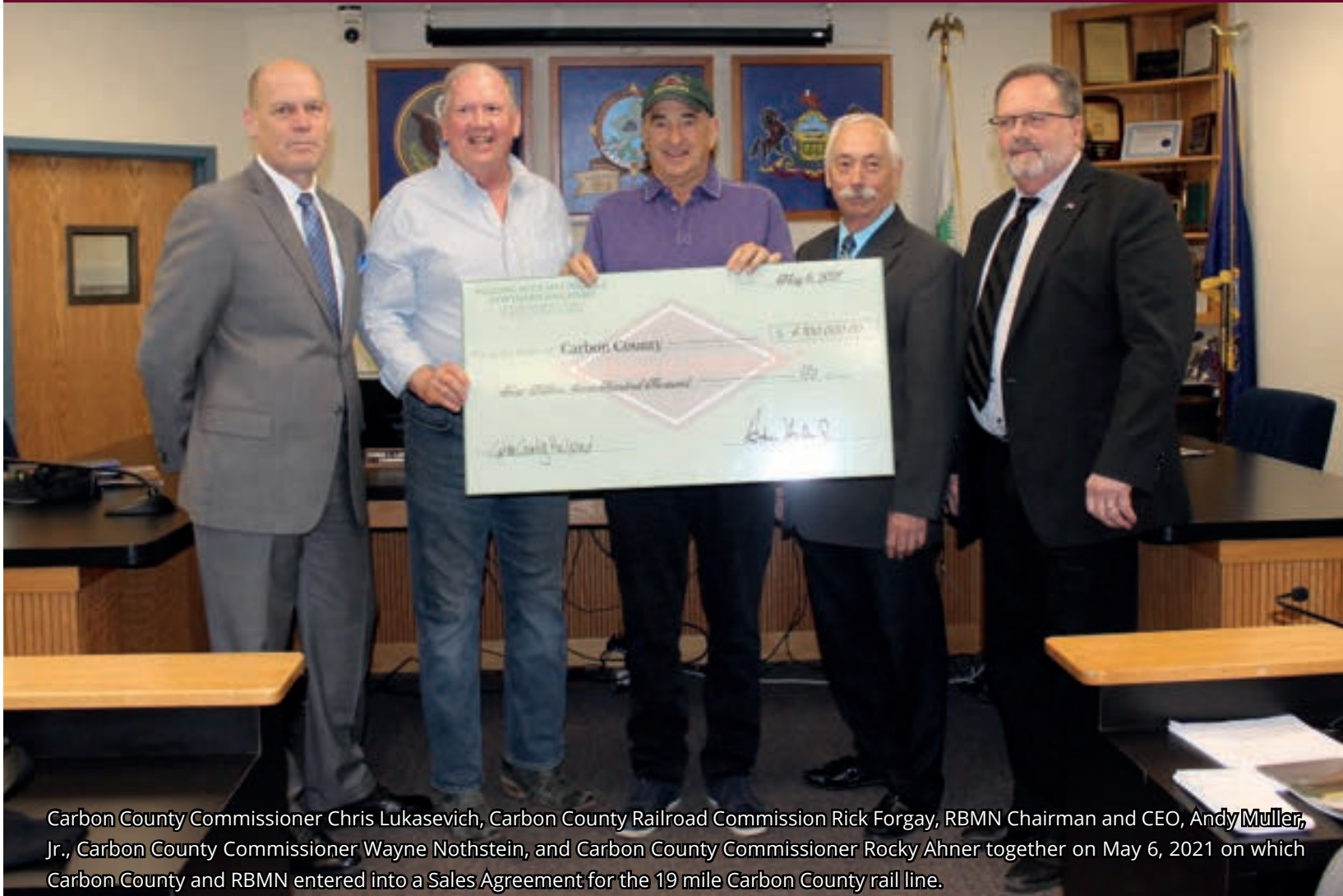
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# KEEPING ON TRACK

BY: WAYNE A. MICHEL, PRESIDENT



Carbon County Commissioner Chris Lukasevich, Carbon County Railroad Commission Rick Forgay, RBMN Chairman and CEO, Andy Muller, Jr., Carbon County Commissioner Wayne Nothstein, and Carbon County Commissioner Rocky Ahner together on May 6, 2021 on which Carbon County and RBMN entered into a Sales Agreement for the 19 mile Carbon County rail line.

I was reading one of the industry news magazines recently as I took a break from finalizing details for our acquisition of the Carbon County lines. (See press release p.5) It was an article about leadership in the railroad industry. And although many of the names of individuals were new, I noticed that they all came from the usual suspects; Class 1 railroads, Shortline holding companies, large suppliers; the type of companies that make up the readership and advertisers for these magazines.

I also noticed who was missing from this list, an entrepreneur.

There was a time when the railroad industry, especially the Shortline industry, celebrated the entrepreneurs. These were the men and women who took risks. They pushed past the norms. They rejected the tried and true formulas of how to run their business. These were leaders who understood first and foremost you had to take care of your customers. A close second was taking care of your employees.

I am proud to work for Andy Muller, Jr., a true entrepreneur who is still blazing trails and if he isn't recognized as an industry leader it is because the railroad industry still does a poor job of taking care of its customers and employees.

I have known Andy Muller for over thirty years going back to when I was running the Conrail line sale and abandonment program. Before taking over the Conrail line sale program, I was an attorney at the Interstate Commerce Commission, predecessor to today's STB. In the early 1980's Congress passed the Staggers Act and special Conrail legislation (NERSA) in an effort to restore the industry to solvency. As an ICC attorney I helped draft the regulations and rulemakings to implement the policies. One result of those regulations was the creation of hundreds of new Shortlines.

By the time I joined Conrail in late 1985, it had a robust line sale program. In taking over that program, I got to meet dozens of prospective buyers including county governments, local shippers and entrepreneurs. Along the way I met many impressive entrepreneurs, but I can honestly say Andy Muller was special even among that group.

Andy had the combination of passion and common touch that was refreshing. He did not talk like an MBA graduate. He did not bring lawyers to our meetings. He did not beat around the bushes. He was direct and, since I was equally direct, we found it easy to do business. In choosing

to sell Conrail's 130 mile Reading Cluster, one of the most significant Conrail line sales because of its size and the fact that it represented a potentially profitable origin market for Conrail, I rejected efforts by local government and shippers to be the buyer. I thought it important that the railroad be in private hands and not under the control of government bureaucrats or one of the many competing anthracite producers.

Five years later, Conrail and I were so pleased with what Andy accomplished that we asked him to be one of the handful of shortlines initiated into our Conrail Express program. And we decided to sell him the entire Lehigh Line from Allentown to Sayre, PA, although only sale of the middle portion was completed before CSX and NS agreed to split up Conrail.

Working with Andy for the last 22 years has only reinforced my opinion. The man has a laser focus on taking care of his customers. He is why we have the lowest demurrage rate in the industry, guaranteed five day a week service, and double switches and weekend service. He is always looking to make it easier for our customers to do business with the railroads. And he is also always looking to bring the benefits of rail to customers not physically connected to the railroad. That is why we now own (or invest in off-line facilities) a large warehouse, trucking company and numerous transload sites on RBMN as well as other railroads.

You can see his focus on customers in looking at the size of our marketing and customer service departments. We have 7 marketing Vice Presidents, and four of them have Class 1/Shortline marketing experience or customer experience. And we have 5 additional people handle nothing but customer service questions.

All of this passion, focus on customers, and attention to detail, pays dividends. Our business continues to grow. Every year, including in COVID-impacted 2020, our traffic has grown. And thanks to ancillary revenues generated from our warehouse and related businesses, our revenues are growing even faster.

I thought of what we have been able to do over the last 20 years as we closed on the purchase of the 19 mile line owned by Carbon County. This line is a critical part of our mainline as it connects our Reading and Lehigh divisions. Andy Muller had spent over 20 years trying to acquire the line and he finally was able to find a group of County Commissioners willing to sell the property and do what was right for its citizens.

The actions by the Carbon County Commissioners stands in stark contrast to the refusal of countless public figures in Lackawanna and Monroe Counties who own PNRRA and have refused to put the operation of their railroad out to bid, let alone consider a sale. And the same could be said of the leaders in Luzerne County and the Counties that make up the SEDA COG Joint Rail Authority (JRA). For reasons that remain totally unclear, the elected officials in this region of Pennsylvania cling to this outmoded socialist way of doing business while trumpeting their belief in free enterprise. For over thirty years these rail authorities have REFUSED to consider any efforts to privatize their lines and for the most part even refused to put their contract operations out for bid.

It cannot be because it has been good for the County's citizens. These railroads return not a dime to the taxpayers. The operators have gotten very rich. In the case of the railroads in northeastern PA those operators are not even from Pennsylvania! The operators pay a small amount to the rail authorities and the rail authorities waste the money on lawyers and consultants. The operators make political contributions to County

Commissioners and other influential local officials, but taxpayers get not a dime. The operators make limited investments in the communities, usually under intense pressure, and hire as few people as possible. And what limited business success these railroads enjoy has usually been because the County itself makes inducements to industries to locate on their properties, instead of those of privately owned railroads like the RBMN.

Being the true entrepreneur he is, Andy has fought against these County-owned railroads for years. (See his editorial from 2006 on p. 7). For years Andy and I tried to convince the politicians to privatize. For years we tried to persuade the Authorities to put the properties up for bid. And even when one authority, JRA, did put the operation out for bid its consultants and lawyers screwed the process up so badly that they have had years of litigation.

A good part of that litigation was brought by RBMN. We remain convinced that the process was corrupt in both the case of JRA and PNRRA. And more significantly we believe that these rail authorities violate Pennsylvania law by unfairly competing against privately-owned railroads. Unfortunately, our legal actions have failed because the Commonwealth Court does not understand the way railroads compete and they misused a standard developed for water and sewer authorities. (See guest column by our attorney Larry Moran on p.8). Ultimately, the legislature will need to clean up this blight on Pennsylvania communities. I find it unbelievable that twenty years after Pennsylvania sold all of its owned rail lines and 35+ years since the Federal government sold Conrail, we still have backward Counties in our region clinging to ownership so a few men and women on their boards, who know next to nothing about railroading or even business, can play at being rail barons.

If you are not already convinced that the free enterprise system is superior to government ownership of freight railroads just look at one fact, the comparison of carloads on JRA lines vs RBMN since 2014 when we started our effort to get JRA to privatize its railroads.

	2014	2019	2020 (COVID year)
JRA's operator	26,091	21,636	20,053
RBMN	24,370	34,116	34,168

This trend would be even more severe if we went back to 2010 when JRA's operator handled over 32,000 carloads compared to RBMN's 22,000+. Over the last decade, JRA's business declined by almost 12,000 carloads while RBMN's business increased by 12,000 carloads!

I acknowledge that part of the reason for our traffic growth is that we purchased the Humboldt Industrial Park. Although we think that purchase was an example of the entrepreneurial benefits of private ownership, the willingness to put up money and take risks, it is true that that purchase did give RBMN 4,000 additional carloads. However, the remaining 8,000 carloads are all organically grown.

I point out these facts not to criticize JRA's Operator; they did nothing wrong. In fact, I have known them for thirty years and they are solid operators and marketeers. The problem is that implicit in government ownership is a loss of incentive for an operator to take risks to develop business. It takes time and money to land a big customer. We know. We work very hard at industrial development. We work very hard at transloading and warehousing. We have invested millions of dollars and thousands of hours of staff time to make our railroad grow. I doubt we

transloading and warehousing. We have invested millions of dollars and thousands of hours of staff time to make our railroad grow. I doubt we would have made those investments if we knew that every five years our contract would be put out for bid and some third party might end up benefitting from our hard work.

The stark reality is government ownership of freight railroads no longer makes sense.

What does make sense is letting the free market thrive. What does make sense is inviting entrepreneurs in to grow the freight business for the benefit of the customers, the employees and the communities.

Entrepreneurs like Andy Muller invest, they take risk, they listen to their customers, and they take care of their employees. And that is why Andy Muller is a true leader of the railroad industry. And that is why RBMN is keeping on track.



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

**Port Clinton, PA – June 24, 2021**

Today Andy Muller realizes a thirty plus year dream by acquiring the 19 mile line of railroad owned by Carbon County.

In December of 1990 Muller acquired 130 miles known as the Reading Cluster from Conrail and began the process of putting together the pieces of the regional railroad powerhouse known as the Reading Blue Mountain and Northern Railroad, or RBMN.

After many additional acquisitions Muller owned one of the largest privately owned railroads in the country. But, as the map below shows, he still did not own the 19 mile segment that RBMN used via trackage rights to connect its Reading and Lehigh Divisions.

Today he does own that segment and he has made real his dream of owning a continuous main line railroad between Reading and Scranton, a route never before owned by any railroad.

Muller pursued his dream with a passion and focus. In 1996 he acquired Conrail's Lehigh Line. In 1997 he acquired trackage rights over Carbon County's line in order to connect his two properties. In 2002 he acquired rights to operate freight trains over the Nesquehoning Bridge from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. He restored the bridge to working order and built connections at M&H Junction, now called Independence on RBMN, to ensure RBMN could run between Reading and Scranton without running over Norfolk Southern. And in 2020 he completed construction of the \$14 million new railroad bridge over the Lehigh River allowing a more efficient direct route between Reading and Scranton.

All that was left to complete his dream was to acquire the Carbon County owned railroad. Muller had made many purchase offers over the years, but he had been unable to reach an agreement with the County. And since the RBMN had trackage rights for freight and passenger excursion service there was no urgency to acquire the line.

However, with the new bridge in place Muller now had a main line railroad capable of handling 30 mph trains with a 19 mile center of poor quality rail. Muller realized he now needed to own that railroad in order to make the multi-million dollar investment to upgrade the track so it was consistent with the rest of his main line.

For the last eighteen months Muller and RBMN President Wayne Michel negotiated directly with the Carbon County Commissioners, Chairman Wayne Nothstein and new Commissioners Rocky Ahner and Chris Lukasevich. From the beginning of the negotiations it was clear that Nothstein along with the new Commissioners were looking for a way to make a deal that worked for both the County and the RBMN. An agreement in principle was reached in the Fall and the deal was announced on May 6, 2021. And now that all necessary government approvals have been received the parties have consummated the deal.

RBMN is paying a total of \$4.7 million dollars to acquire this property.

As part of the acquisition, RBMN has agreed to keep in place the lease with the current freight operator of the line, the C&S Railroad. C&S will continue to provide freight service to the three local customers on the railroad. RBMN will continue to use the line for overhead

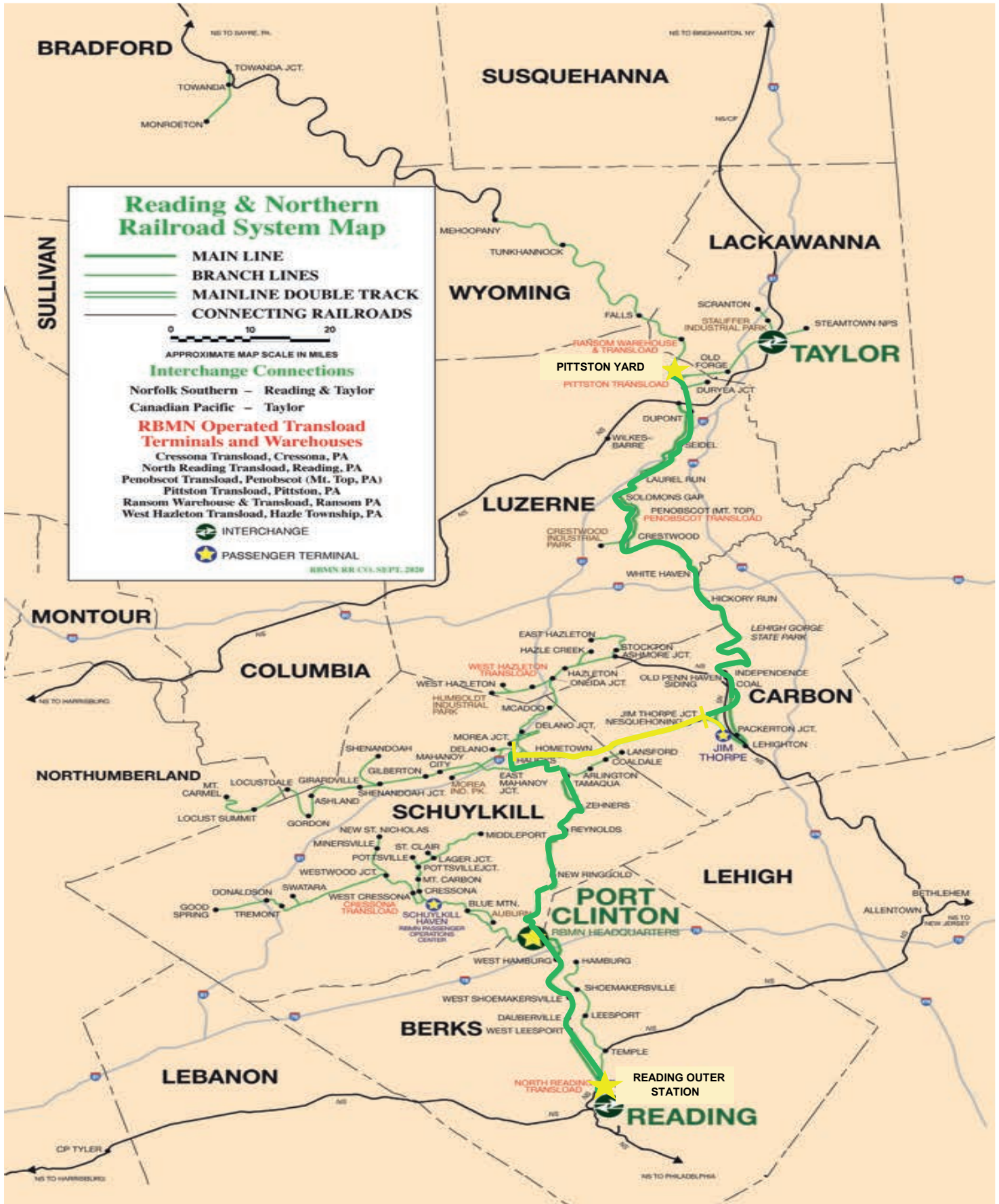
freight traffic and its very popular passenger excursion trains.

In celebrating the acquisition Muller said, "I am very grateful for the cooperation of all of the County Commissioners. We have been fortunate to have strong support from all the elected officials in Carbon County and many of them helped us in our efforts to connect our Reading and Lehigh Divisions. My dream has long been to bring high quality freight and passenger rail service to the region and nothing epitomizes that more than the creation of a high speed rail line between Reading and Scranton. We are now able to help businesses expand, communities attract new business, and tourism grow even faster in Jim Thorpe and the region. This is a great day for the Reading & Northern, our nearly 300 employees and the entire 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 over 34,000 carloads of freight and 140,000 excursion train riders over 400 miles of track. Reading and Northern operates both freight services and steam and diesel-powered excursion passenger services, owns almost 1,400 freight cars, and employs nearly 300 dedicated employees. Reading & Northern has repeatedly been honored as one of the premier railroads in the nation including being named Regional Railroad of the Year in 2020 by Railway Age Magazine.



## RBMN Mainline—Reading to Pittston



# Unlevel Playing Field

**Commentary by Andrew M. Muller, Jr., Chairman and CEO**

*Originally published in R&N Magazine, June 2006*

In the aftermath of the Flood of 2006, while we were adding up our costs of dealing with the storm, we received another blow. This blow came in the form of an email from PennDOT announcing that all of our regional shortline competitors would be eligible for FEMA assistance, but not the Reading & Northern.

The reason our competitors are eligible for FEMA assistance is that they are county-owned railroads. It appears that government-owned entities are eligible for up to 75 per cent of the repair cost, with the State kicking in another 22 per cent to 25 per cent. Basically, these county-owned railroads can recover all of their repair cost.

The reason RBMN knows about this program is because we manage the operations and maintenance programs for the C&S Railroad, which is owned by Carbon County. Since the C&S constitutes part of our mainline, we are, of course, grateful for any assistance the county receives for flooding repair. But the fact remains that we apparently are NOT eligible for FEMA assistance damage on the other 98 per cent of our railroad that is privately owned.

By contrast, let's look at our regional competitors. The Delaware Lackawanna operates over tracks owned by Lackawanna and Monroe County. The Luzerne and Susquehanna operates over tracks owned by Luzerne County. And the North Shore Railroads operate over a variety of tracks owned by SEDA-COG. Flood repairs on these railroads are apparently covered by FEMA.

This FEMA funding situation is only the most recent example of the unfair state of affairs that RBMN faces every day. RBMN has no problem competing with other railroads on a level playing field. We will match our service against anyone. However, these county-owned railroads have so many advantages that it makes the competition difficult. The operators on these county-owned railroads never had to raise the funds to purchase their property nor to rehabilitate and maintain them. Environmental and liability risks that are fully on RBMN are shared when there is a county-owned railroad. To make matters worse, our competitors have the entire county industrial development infrastructure working on their behalf to build business on their railroads. Even when RBMN has tracks in the same counties, we continually get little assistance, because the county would prefer that industries locate on the county-owned railroad.

I understand the reasons for the creation of county-owned railroads. Clearly there was a time when such ownership was

the only alternative to abandonment. And these counties deserve credit for having the foresight to acquire and nurture these properties.

But, times have changed. These railroads are economically viable and in some cases they could be sold for millions of dollars; dollars that could go to taxpayers in financially starved counties. Yet these counties will not sell these lines; even after receiving offers of millions of dollars.

I do not know why the counties insist on holding on to these railroads. Perhaps it is the patronage jobs that come with a county-owned railroad. Maybe the counties just fear change and have decided to opt with the status quo. Whatever the rationale, however, it does not make sense in our America.

In America, we believe in free enterprise and a level playing for competitors. Governments should not own businesses that compete with privately-owned businesses. It's perhaps okay for a state to own all of the liquor stores as Pennsylvania does. It is perhaps okay for the federal government to own the only national rail passenger network. But it is definitely not okay for a county to own a freight railroad when a privately-owned competitor is a few miles away.

Think how absurd it would be if you had spent your hard-earned money to be a local business, like a gas station, only to find that the county opened a gas station down the street. And the county gave the contract to operate the gas station to someone who did not have to purchase the property or buy the franchise. And your competitor didn't have to pay property taxes. And your competitor did not have to pay for government-mandated safety or environmental improvements. And your competitor did not have to pay for adding new gas pumps. And the county aided your competitor by getting him new customers, etc. Obviously it would be an untenable situation.

The flood of 2006 taught us many lessons. It served as a wake-up call about our fragile environment and it taught us about emergency preparedness. But its aftermath has reminded us of one important fact – government should not compete with private enterprise. We need a level playing field. It is time for the counties in our region to remember this is the United States of America not the Union of Socialist Pennsylvania counties. It is time for these counties to sell their freight railroads and allow true competition in Pennsylvania.

# A REVIEW OF LAW IMPACTING RBMN PRIVATIZATION LAWSUITS

By: Lawrence J. Moran, Esq.

In recent years, RBMN filed state court lawsuits seeking relief in the form of declaratory judgments that two separate municipal railroad authorities are violating the anticompetition provision of Pennsylvania's Municipal Authorities Act ("MAA"). The MAA contains a clearly worded anticompetitive provision limiting competition with private enterprise:

"The purpose and intent of this chapter being to benefit the people of the Commonwealth by, among other things, increasing their commerce, health, safety and prosperity and not to unnecessarily burden or interfere with existing business by the establishment of competitive enterprises, none of the powers granted by this chapter shall be exercised in the construction, financing, improvement, maintenance, extension or operation of any project or projects . . . which in whole or in part shall duplicate or compete with existing enterprises serving substantially the same purposes." 53 Pa.C.S. § 5607(b)(2).

Thus, the same law that provides for the creation of municipal authorities plainly declares that such authorities are prohibited from (1) establishing competitive enterprises that burden or interfere with existing private businesses, and from (2) constructing, financing, improving, maintaining, or extending the operation of any project or projects. On its face, the language of the MAA's limiting statute is very favorable to RBMN's privatization argument. Unfortunately, however, RBMN's argument is constrained by decisions of Pennsylvania appellate courts that have interpreted 53 Pa.C.S. § 5607(b)(2) in the context of municipal water and sewer authorities and municipal passenger transit authorities.

Although the prior caselaw is factually distinguishable because railroad freight operations are entirely unlike water, sewer and passenger transit services, those prior cases have made the state of the law in Pennsylvania murky at best and entirely more favorable to municipal authorities at worst. While RBMN correctly argues its privatization cases present questions of first impression because, prior to its declaratory judgment lawsuits, no Pennsylvania court has applied the MAA limiting law to railroad operations, the courts have instead analyzed RBMN's claims under the rules that were announced in certain water, sewer, and passenger transit authority cases. Those cases, for instance, focused on and created a concept of "service area," thereby allowing municipal authorities to compete with private enterprises based on a geographical standard and analysis. Although the words "service area" do not appear in the MAA's limiting provision, this aspect of 53 Pa.C.S. § 5607(b)(2) has become common law in Pennsylvania and it has created an additional hurdle for private businesses to overcome, before the powers of a municipal authority could be curtailed.

More recently, in *RBMN v JRA*, the Commonwealth Court reasoned that the parties to that case do not serve "substantially the same purpose" because the municipal authority does not operate its own rail lines. In so holding, the Court has interpreted the term "serving substantially the same purpose" very broadly such that the anticompetitive provision of the MAA is effectively eliminated. Now, in addition to overcoming the "service area" standard, a private business seeking to enforce the MAA's limiting provision must also prove its operations are substantially similar to those of the municipal authority. Since the JRA was able to overcome the "substantially similar" standard simply by arguing it leases its rail lines to a private operator, there is little hope that any private business could ever be "substantially similar" to a municipal authority, such that the limiting provision would prohibit its existence or expansion.

As a result of the difficult legal terrain created by court interpretations of 53 Pa.C.S. § 5607(b)(2), RBMN chose not to further pursue its remedies through litigation. At this time it is up to the Pennsylvania Legislature to revise the MAA so that it clearly states that anticompetitive actions by County-owned rail authorities will not be found acceptable.



# CARBON COUNTY LINE ACQUISITION

BY: JOLENE F. BUSH, AVP REAL ESTATE



Carbon County Commissioner Chris Lukasevich, Carbon County Railroad Commission Rick Forgay, RBMN Chairman and CEO, Andy Muller, Jr., Carbon County Commissioner Wayne Nothstein, and Carbon County Commissioner Rocky Ahner together on May 6, 2021 on which Carbon County and RBMN entered into a Sales Agreement for the 19 mile Carbon County rail line.

The Reading & Northern Railroad recently acquired a 19 mile rail line through Schuylkill and Carbon Counties when the Reading & Northern closed with Carbon County on June 24, 2021. Following entering into a Sales Agreement for the rail line on May 6, Reading & Northern and Carbon County finalized the \$4.7 million sale.

While the Reading & Northern Railroad has had trackage rights over this line as means to connect our Lehigh and Reading Divisions, the Reading & Northern was never an owner of this rail line. Previously the Nesquehoning Valley Railroad, this 19 mile line begins on our Reading Division at Haucks, the junction of our Reading Mainline and Hazleton Line, and passes through various townships in Schuylkill and Carbon counties to where it terminates at Packerton Junction. Passengers on this line will recall the stunning views from the Hometown Highbridge, a trestle bridge over 1,000 feet long and 168 feet high, in the Schuylkill County portion of this line. Traveling through Nesquehoning and into downtown Jim Thorpe in Carbon County, this line also carries passengers to and from the Jim Thorpe tourist destination.

This rail line was previously the Nesquehoning Valley Railroad, which was incorporated in 1861 with the Lehigh Coal & Navigation Company (LC&N) being the majority shareholder of the Railroad. LC&N leased the Nesquehoning Valley Railroad to the Central Railroad of New Jersey for over one hundred years. This rail line went through a series of acquisitions until it was eventually sold to Carbon County by Conrail in 1981. This acquisition to Carbon County was purchased through the Carbon County Railroad Commission, who secured federal grants through Lansford Borough Council for industrial development opportunities. Carbon County awarded the Carbon & Schuylkill Railroad as operator of the line in 1990.

In R&N Magazine's Spring 2020 volume 22, issue 2, we celebrated the completion of the Nesquehoning Bridge Phase II on February

4, 2020. This bridge's completion heralded the end of a nearly twenty five year initiative to not only efficiently connect our Lehigh and Reading Divisions, but also to create a progressive move that provided faster and cost-effective operations. Through the restoration of one bridge over the Lehigh River, and the construction of a second bridge over the river, Andy Muller, Jr. and the Reading & Northern had efficiently connected our Lehigh and Reading Divisions.

With two divisions physically connected, Andy Muller, Jr.'s focus turned to gaining actual ownership of the property. While the rail line owned by Carbon County allowed the Reading & Northern connection through trackage rights, Andy aspired to own a continuous mainline. Over the course of the past year and a half, Andy, along with Reading & Northern President, Wayne Michel, negotiated the sale of the 19 mile line with the Carbon County Commissioners, Wayne Nothstein, Chairman, Rocky Ahner, and Chris Lukasevich. Part of Andy's intention to own a continuous mainline, and part of what was negotiated for the sale of the line, was Reading & Northern's plans to perform extensive track upgrades. The rail line owned by the County was in need of track improvements that would match the quality rail on our Reading and Lehigh Divisions. On May 6, 2021, the Reading & Northern and Carbon County announced they had entered into a Sales Agreement.

For a consideration of \$4.7 million, the Reading & Northern purchased the rail line on June 24. Part of this consideration included \$1.7 million in track improvements and crossing upgrades. While the Reading & Northern now owns this line, the Carbon & Schuylkill Railroad will stay in place as operator of the line to continue freight operations to customers served on this line.

Purchase of the line allows RBMN to begin the much needed upgrading of the track. When done, the result will be improved freight and passenger service that will benefit the entire region.

# PUTTING AN END TO THE GREAT DIVIDE

BY: TYLER GLASS, EVP OPERATIONS

NRFF heading south along Greenwood Lake near Hometown, PA on the recently acquired Carbon County Rail Line.

Photo Credit: Chris Starns

Taking ownership of the 19 mile Carbon County railroad line will finally give the RBMN an opportunity to upgrade the line. Over the last three decades our Operations Department has slowly phased the C&S operation into our own.

This line has changed drastically since the early 1990s. The C&S Railroad was an independent railroad run by Betsy Ahner and Jim Zurn, they operated the Carbon County line. RBMN had always had a great relationship with them over the years. The railroad was a safe 10 MPH operation and there were very few freight trains operating on any given week. C&S had an interchange with Conrail, then Norfolk Southern, at Packerton Jct. which is located near Lehigh. In addition to the small amount of freight activity, Railtours operated passenger excursion trains out of Jim Thorpe station as well.

RBMN began operating regular trains on the C&S in June 1993. Once a week RBMN would load a culm train at a supplier on our system and then deliver the train to Panther Creek Partners, which is located in the middle of the 19 mile line. The next day a C&S train crew would handle the unloading of the train.

In August 1996 RBMN bought the middle Lehigh Line segment from Conrail and the C&S line would play a critical link between RBMN's two separated divisions. That same month RBMN had secured trackage rights over the C&S in order to move equipment between the two divisions, this played a critical role in the future of the line. Shortly thereafter RBMN began dispatching the line.

Andy Muller had a vision that would give the line a whole different purpose, but that would have to wait several years to come to fruition.

Over the next few years RBMN would use the C&S line as a connection while continuing to operate the weekly culm train on the line. RBMN also started operating some excursion trains of our own to Jim Thorpe in the Fall.

Then in the early 2000s it appeared that the landscape was going to change drastically, and in a good way.

The restoration of an existing bridge on DCNR property in 2003 was the first phase of Andy Muller's vision for a direct link between his two railroad divisions. Now RBMN was one step closer to a main line between Reading and Scranton. Later that same year Andy Muller would become a part owner.

The year 2004 was a turning point for the rail line. Jim Zurn, President of C&S, and Andy determined it would be more efficient for the customers if RBMN provided the actual service under contract to C&S. RBMN proceeded to change the interchange from Packerton Jct. to Reading where RBMN already had an efficient interchange with NS. This meant much more interchange frequency and therefore better service for the freight customers on the line.

Lehigh Gorge Scenic Railway was formed and in Spring 2005 we started operating passenger trains out of Jim Thorpe station, replacing the Railtours operation. The regular excursions would use the newly restored bridge to give the riders a scenic ride into the Lehigh Gorge.

In just a few years the railroad had evolved from a branch line with a few trains per week to a very active and integrated part of the RBMN system.

RBMN would start to bridge more freight traffic between the two divisions and the passenger excursion business became stronger each season. Throughout the years of RBMN's contract operation of the C&S, the infrastructure was improved to get speeds up to 30 MPH in many locations.

Then in 2017 construction began on a new bridge over the Lehigh River that would be the final piece in Andy Muller's vision of having a progressive main line between Reading and Scranton.

February 2020 RBMN would start using the new bridge to operate a six day per week train between Reading and Pittston. Now this once sleepy railroad had a mainline road train operating over it!

This increased traffic had also meant the railroad would need some additional maintenance. Andy kept doing his best to keep the railroad safe but really wanted to give this line the work it needed to sustain long term traffic projections and meet RBMN standards for mainline trackage.

Andy and Wayne Michel held multiple discussions with the Carbon County Commissioners over the years as Andy had expressed interest in purchasing the railroad. In late 2020 those negotiations paid off as Carbon County agreed to sell the line to the RBMN. Finally, on June 24, 2021, the sale was completed. Now Andy's dreams could be fully realized.

No time was wasted and new welded rail is being installed on a portion of the line. MOW forces have their work cut out for them as the goal is to get the speed on portions of the line up to as much as 40 MPH.

The Communication and Signal Department is developing plans for interlockings and a signal system that will cover the entire main line portion. This system will enhance safety and efficiency of our operations.

The transformation of the line over the next year or so will be a sight to behold. When the work is done the former County owned branch line will be a main line railroad and a crucial link in the entire northeastern Pennsylvania rail network.



# Making the Lehigh & Reading Connection Great Again

BY: CHRIS GOETZ, VP MAINTENANCE OF WAY

Over the last few years, the Maintenance of Way Department (MOW) has poured its heart and soul into the Reading and Northern Main Line. This line is nearly 117 miles long and runs from our interchange point with Norfolk Southern in North Reading Yard, "Belt" (MP 61.7), to the Pitt Junction in our Pittston Yard (MP 178.64). In this time, we have installed over 21,000 ties and 25,000' of new rail on the Main Line. With the tie and rail work comes our spec of changing all our tie plates from small single shoulder plates, once used when cars were thousands of pounds lighter, to heavier 18" plates that can accommodate the heavier loads that run on today's rail. To help provide better support to our track, we have dumped over 12,000 tons of ballast and surfaced 120 miles using our Mark IV Tamper and two Ballast Regulators. The task ahead will be no different for our newly purchased 19 miles of track we recently acquired from Carbon County as we look to bring this section of track up to the standard we hold for main line.

Eager to get to work, MOW anxiously waited for updates as negotiations began for the sale of the line. As everything started to come together so did our plans for the track. One could say we even received our Christmas gift early this year as our 96,000' of rail we purchased was delivered on December 24th. Throughout the winter our MOW leadership team worked together to decide where to best utilize the 96,000' of rail. As our Sr. Division Leader, Duane Engle, walked the C&S line and it was quickly agreed that a bulk of the newly acquired rail, 70,000', would be dedicated to the portion of track that runs from our control point "Haucks" (MP 105.29) in Barnesville, PA to our Jim Thorpe Jct (MP 120.94). The plan was simple as we looked to eliminate the 100 lbs sections of rail and replace with heavier 136 lb. A lot of this rail was over 100 years old and with today's heavier trains running, along with our weekly passenger excursions, this section of track was ready for an upgrade. To better support our new 136 lb rail, we are planning to change a total of 12,000 ties (approx. 800 ties per mile) and with the heavy 18" plates this will provide a better ride for all. As we look to complete this daunting task by the end of summer, the overall work is far from complete. Next, plans are to dump 20,000 to 30,000 tons of ballast from our specialty ballast car fleet to support all the work we have done. After the ballast is dumped in the center of the gauge, our surfacing crew will provide the finishing touches. This process includes utilizing our ballast regulator to push the newly dumped ballast from the center of the gauge towards the base of the rail. Once complete, the Mark IV Tamper will then run a graph to determine lift and alignment needed to achieve proper elevation, drainage, and speed for curves. Lastly, the ballast regulator will come through for one final pass brooming off all the excess stone for that final look of perfection that we strive for at RBMN.

We hope to complete most of this work by the end of 2021 and once done a true linking between our main lines will be complete. The signature piece of this connection being our newly constructed Nesquehoning Bridge

*Continued on page 13*

Freshly dumped with ballast and surfaced at ML MP 117.





Real Estate and MOW joining forces to rehab the approaches to the Ametek switch.



Tom Wilkinson unloading rail at ML MP 120 with PT1.



Josh Antosh, Derrick Keener and Dave Kittner prepping to remove and install new rail at ML MP 114.4.



Dennis Rosohac operating the HS-4 at ML MP 114.8.



Rain or shine - MOW forces ensure the tracks are safe and maintained for train traffic.



Corey Hamm performing a thermite weld at ML MP 116.8.



12 Dennis Rosohac cutting rail with a rail saw at ML MP 116.8.



PT operator loading rail into gondola at ML MP 113.5.



Continued from page 11

that was officially placed in service on February 4, 2020. As mentioned in previous articles, this bridge allows train traffic to run from Reading to Pittston uninterrupted. Instead of two separate trains operating between those two points and Jim Thorpe Yard, we now have one road train that operates a turn between Reading and Pittston yards. As the large railroads have introduced "precision railroading", RBMN has implemented our own ways we can be more efficient.

All of the work done to make this 19 mile section of track great again and all the work planned over the next few months wouldn't be possible without the continuous efforts between multiple departments and the hard-working men and women here at the Reading and Northern Maintenance of Way Department.



Ron Collins and Silas Bausher pulling spikes at ML MP 114 to replace rail.



MOW observing deer safely cross the railroad tracks at ML MP 114.



Chris Garcia and Corey Hamm installing new bars at ML MP 115.1.



Rebecca Engle measuring new rail as it is being unloading at Haucks.



Real Estate and MOW joining forces to rehab the approaches to the Ametek switch.



Alex Scubelek replacing ties between MP 119.5 to 120.1.





Backhoe operator Dale Homm and Enos Bleiler working together to install new ties at ML MP 116.8.



Dave Kittner inspecting greaser product



Brandon Kalbach and summer help Tyler Lewis tighten bolts at ML MP 119.5.



MOW crew applying anchors to newly installed rail at ML MP 114.1.



Chris Garcia and contractor Track Solutions replacing ties at ML MP 116.8.



Storm clean-up crew cuts and clears trees from Mainline tracks.





on at MLMP 121.09.



Storm clean-up crew cuts and clears trees from Mainline tracks.



alled



MOW is not only committed to maintaining the railroad, but also the surrounding rivers/streams. Seen maintaining this river is Corey Hamm.





# Customers on the C&S

By: Susan Ludwig, Vice President Marketing & Customer Service

With the exciting news of the Reading & Northern acquiring the 19 miles of rail line in Carbon County, we wanted to spotlight the long-time customers we serve on this part of the railroad. We began serving these customers in 2004. RBMN serves these customers two days a week on a normal schedule, with extra shifts available if the customer's needs require the additional service.

Starting east to west the first customer we serve on this part of the railroad is Reynolds Consumer Products at Mainline Mile Post 108.75 in Hometown, Schuylkill County. Reynolds Consumer Products is a market-leading consumer branded and private label products company with a presence in 95% of households across the United States. They produce and sell branded and store-brand products across three broad categories: cooking products, waste storage products, and tableware. "We (Reynolds) want to take this time to thank RBMN for their continued excellent service & great partnership over the years." Joe Berezwick, Resin Scheduler, Reynolds.

Ametek / Westchester Plastics in Nesquehoning is the nation's leading independent toll compounder of engineering resins, alloys, blends, reactive modifiers, and other thermoplastic materials. Westchester Plastics opened in New York and relocated to Nesquehoning in Carbon County in 1975. They are located at Mainline Mile Post 116.6 on the railroad.

Versum Materials is located at Mainline Mile Post 105.95 in Tamaqua, Schuylkill County. Versum is a part of the electronics business of Merck KGaA, Darmstadt Germany. They use chemicals and gases for semiconductor fabrication. Versum serves the major segments of the industry with a unique combination of product offerings, experience, and commitment.

It has been our pleasure to serve these customers. RBMN is excited to be a part of the success of these businesses for many years to come.

# Getting the Green Signal

By: Jonathan Barket, VP of Communications and Signals

With the announcement of the acquisition of the Carbon County rail line, the Reading and Northern Signal Department was tasked to begin engineering a signal system extension. This addition will connect the Reading Division and Lehigh Division systems allowing for a nearly seamless, state of the art signal system between Reading and Pittston. Not only adding to the efficiency of the network, this signal system will also add safety to both the railroad and general public for years to come.

This signal system extension has started with the installation of three additional interlockings to allow for remotely controlled and monitored switches at the new Nesquehoning Bridge connection from our dispatch center. These three locations will be at River, Jim Thorpe Junction, and Nesquehoning Junction. This update will allow for harmonious train movements in and out of Jim Thorpe, as well as operating either north or south on our main line over the new bridge. Cables, foundations, and nearly all wiring has been completed and we are hopeful to get these new locations on line late 2021.

In order to connect the new interlockings to the existing Reading Division signal system at Haucks nearly fifteen miles away, multiple automatic block signals, circuit controllers, electric locks, and possibly another powered switch or two will need to be installed. These locations are currently being identified, designed, and engineered. In the meantime, we are working closely with our Maintenance of Way forces to identify replacement rail locations and begin the tedious task of bonding each rail to make them electrically sound. In addition of signals along this portion of railroad, the C&S Department also recently installed a dragging equipment detector just outside the town of Nesquehoning to inspect every passing train for any defects.

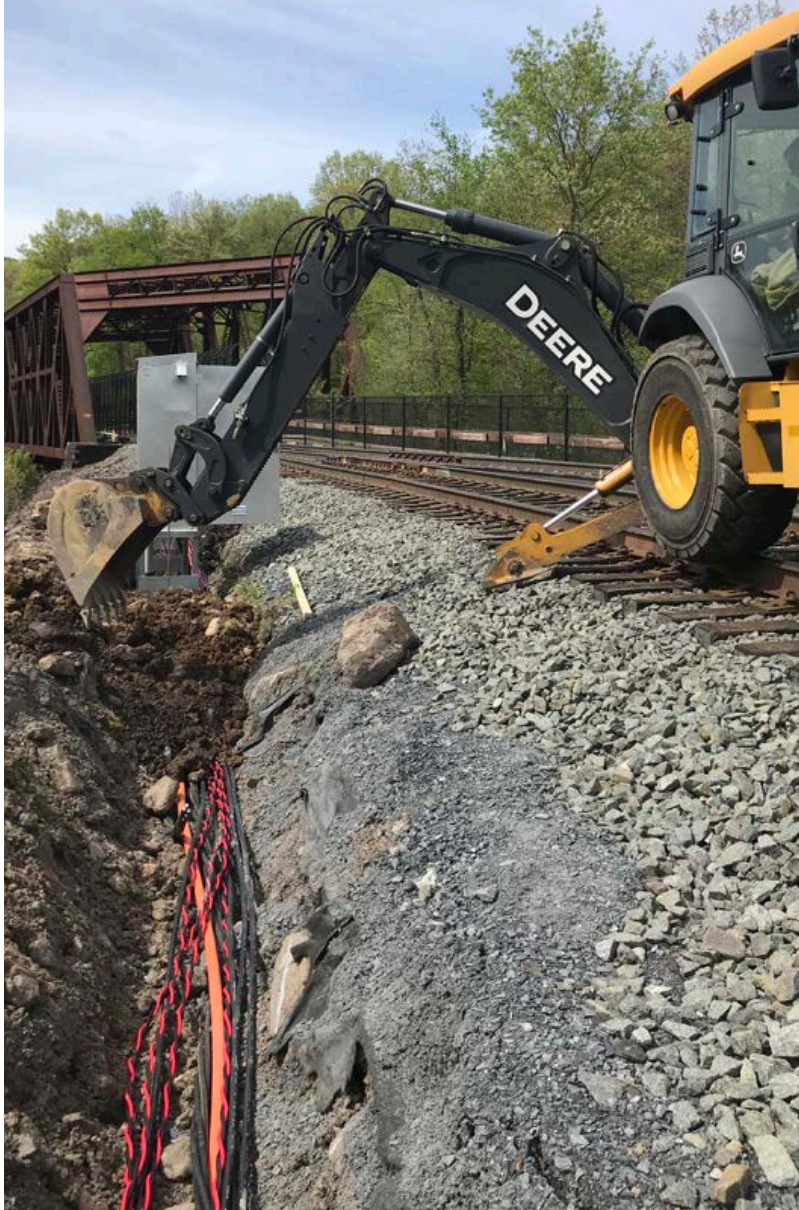
Once these signal projects come on line, the Reading and Northern Railroad will have over one hundred fifteen mile fully signaled Main Line with the exception of the Port Clinton complex. Port Clinton is also being engineered and built with a hopeful completion sometime in 2022. Stay tuned for more updates and green signals.



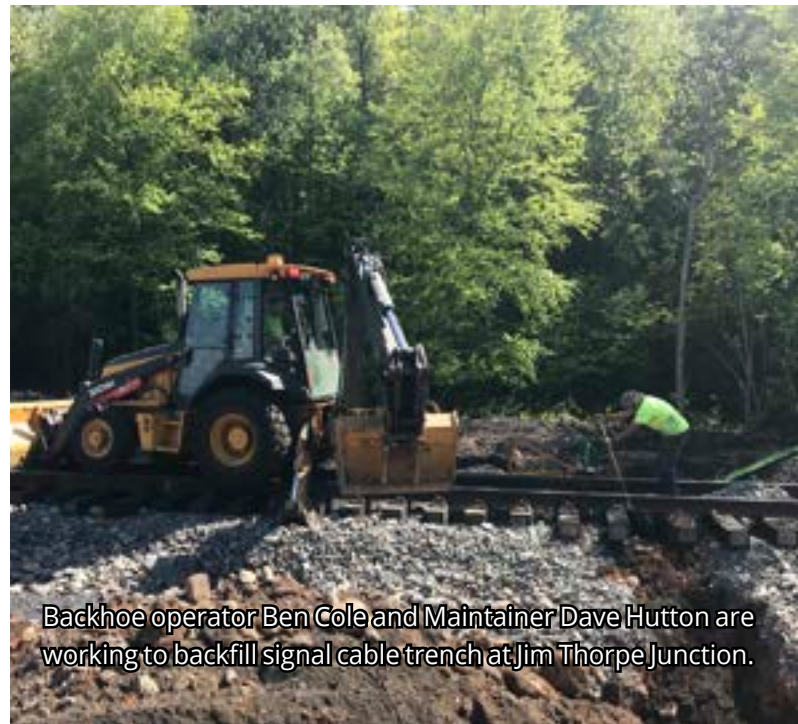
(From Left to Right) Maintainers Aaron Schweibinz, Zach Baker, Backhoe operator Shawn Mudd Himmelberger, and Ryan Rhody are preparing to pull several runs of signal cable from the proposed northbound bracket mast location to the cases at River Interlocking.



Backhoe operator Shawn Mudd Himmelberger is beginning to backfill the River Interlocking cases.



(From Left to Right) Maintainers Ryan Rhody and Aaron Schweibinz are preparing the foundations legs for one of two River Interlocking cases, while Zach Baker prepares the second set of foundation legs to be installed next.



Backhoe operator Ben Cole and Maintainer Dave Hutton are working to backfill signal cable trench at Jim Thorpe Junction.

(From Left to Right) Maintainers Aaron Schweibinz, Dave Hutton, Zach Baker, and backhoe operator Shawn Mudd Himmelberger (Not Visible) setting the southbound foundation at Jim Thorpe Junction.



Maintainer Ryan Rhody and Zach Baker cleaning up straps after installing the final case at River Interlocking.





# Carbon County Line Ownership-Positive Impact on Passenger Operations

By: Matt Fisher, General Manager - Passenger Department



MOW Tamper seen working in the siding at Jim Thorpe Station. The MOW team does a great job working around scheduled passenger trains during track upgrades.

A 19 mile portion of the Reading and Northern's mainline, previously owned by Carbon County, was purchased by the Reading and Northern Railroad in June of this year. This greatly impacts the Passenger Department at the Reading and Northern. The majority of passenger operations can be found at Jim Thorpe. Jim Thorpe Station is located on this recently purchase portion of rail line, and was not out-right owned by the Reading and Northern. Instead, through trackage rights with the operator of the County line, the C&S Railroad, the Reading and Northern was able to run passenger trains over the section of railroad from the Jim Thorpe area to Haucks Junction, just north of Barnesville, a distance of 19 miles. Of those 19 miles, the Lehigh Gorge operations traverse nearly two miles until it gets onto the Reading and Northern Mainline, formerly the Lehigh Line, purchased from Conrail by R&N in the mid-1990s.

Over 100,000 people ride the Lehigh Gorge trips annually. In 2021, LGSR trains have run daily since early April and will continue to run daily through early November. In October alone, eight round trip trains will travel over this newly purchased portion into the Lehigh Gorge State park on weekends. That means the train will come in and out of town 16 times per day.

Passenger trains from Reading Outer Station also run over this portion of our mainline. Train schedules currently

are two hours and fifteen minutes from Reading to Jim Thorpe including brief five minute long stops at Port Clinton Station and Tamaqua Station. Purchasing this portion of our mainline gives the incentive to spend money upgrading the railroad. New signals, dispatcher controlled switches, cross ties, stone, and rail are being placed onto the 19 mile section of this line. Mr. Muller is looking to decrease the time from Reading to Jim Thorpe (60 miles in one direction) to under two hours by train. This will be an amazing accomplishment.

Less time on the train will allow more time for our guests to enjoy downtown Jim Thorpe. This will be a great benefit to the restaurants, shops, and other attractions in town. When people purchase tickets to ride the train to Jim Thorpe from Reading for the first time, many think there will not be enough to do in Jim Thorpe to keep them busy during the layover. Once those customers return to the train for the southbound trip back to Schuylkill and Berks Counties, they comment about how there is so much to do and that they will definitely return to Jim Thorpe.

A special thanks goes out to the Carbon County Commissioners, all three commissioners voted to sell this portion of the railroad to Reading and Northern. The Passenger Department with its 60 plus employees, takes great pride in running top-notch operations, and will continue to do so for years to come in Carbon County.



# Locust Summit Transload Terminal Opens for Business

By: James Cerulli, VP Industrial Development



Looking North from the coal storage area, a CAT 988F loader can be seen loading coal into RBMN rail cars.

Over the last twenty years, Reading & Northern Railroad has invested tens of millions of dollars into the handling of Pennsylvania anthracite by rail. Much of it has gone into freight cars and today we own over 1300 + freight cars of different types to handle the varied anthracite coal business. We have also invested in facilities on and off our railroad. We helped establish Fairless Hills as an export terminal and we helped MolDok in Pittsburgh so it could increase its movement of anthracite into barges. We have invested in various transload facilities around the country to assist steel mills in their use of Pennsylvania anthracite. And, of course, we have invested in facilities on our own railroad including our weigh-in-motion scale at North Reading.

In July of this year, we celebrated the opening of our newest facility, an anthracite coal terminal and transload facility built to assist off-line coal shippers that wanted to move their product by rail.

As with most industrial development projects it takes time to move from the idea to the reality. In this case RBMN began planning the construction of this new transload facility almost three years ago. There were already similar facilities on our railroad, but none were well-located to serve the non-rail served mines located in Western Schuylkill and Eastern Northumberland Counties.

We looked at several different sites before choosing Locust Summit, which is on our Mahanoy & Shamokin branch line.

Locust Summit was the site of a former Reading Company rail yard. Sitting on the west end of our railroad and with plenty of level land, the site was perfectly suited for this development. Locust Summit was also close to the mines and sources of coal we were looking to bring onto our system for shipments via rail.

With the help of many departments including Real-Estate, Operations, Marketing and Maintenance of Way, planning for the facility came together quickly and smoothly. Throughout 2019 and early 2020, surveys of the site were completed, concept drawings were drawn up and approved and engineered plans were put together. After some delays resulting from the global pandemic, RBMN began construction of its new facility in the Fall of 2020.

RBMN contractors and track forces began the process of clearing trees on the South/West side of the property, leveling ground and constructing a half mile long 20-foot-wide haul road to the site. As part of the site work, RBMN track crews also removed and relocated an approximately 1500-foot section of the mainline further to the North/East to gain additional space for the facility. By late fall the initial site work was completed and the nearly 90,000 square foot terminal was ready for pavement. On a blustery mid-December day, RBMN pavement contractors began work on paving the massive facility. Using a significant amount of manpower and machinery, the contractor was able to complete the paving work in just a few days. The work was completed just in time as just 2 days later the area

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Andy Muller, Chris Goetz, Duane Engle and Jim Cerulli are discussing pre-construction plans for the future Locust Summit Terminal. Photo looking South.

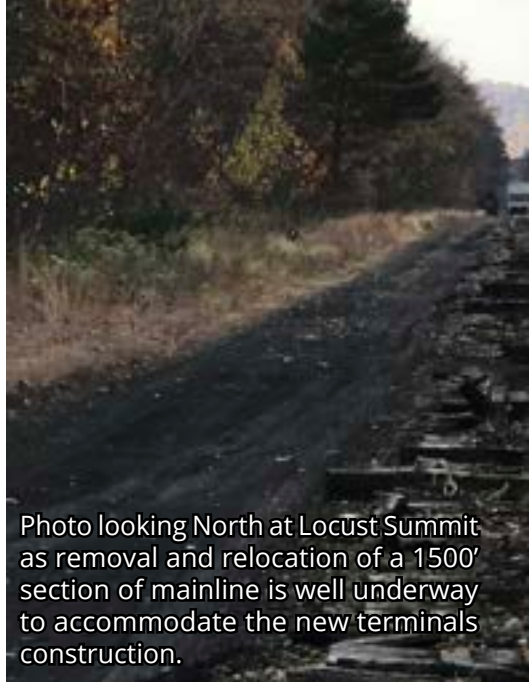


Photo looking North at Locust Summit as removal and relocation of a 1500' section of mainline is well underway to accommodate the new terminals construction.



Photo looking South as RBMN contractors install and compact over 6" of stone to create a solid base for pavement.



RBMN contractors and equipment hard at work removing trees/brush and beginning the process of backfilling and leveling ground at the Locust Summit site.

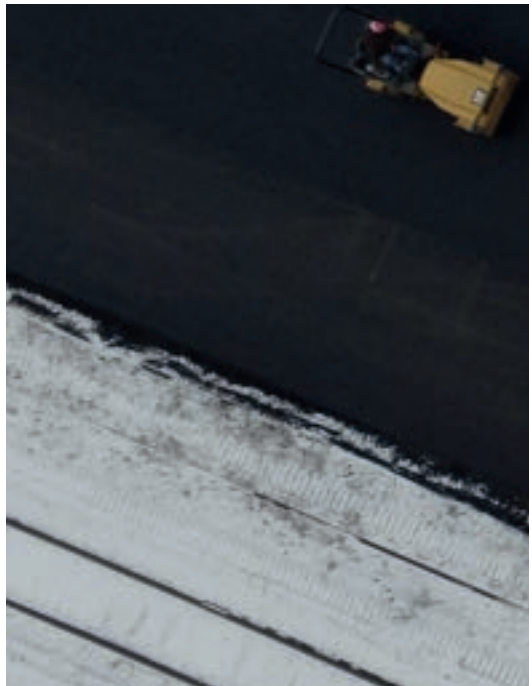






Photo looking North at Locust Summit after contractors completed leveling the nearly 90,000 sf transload area.

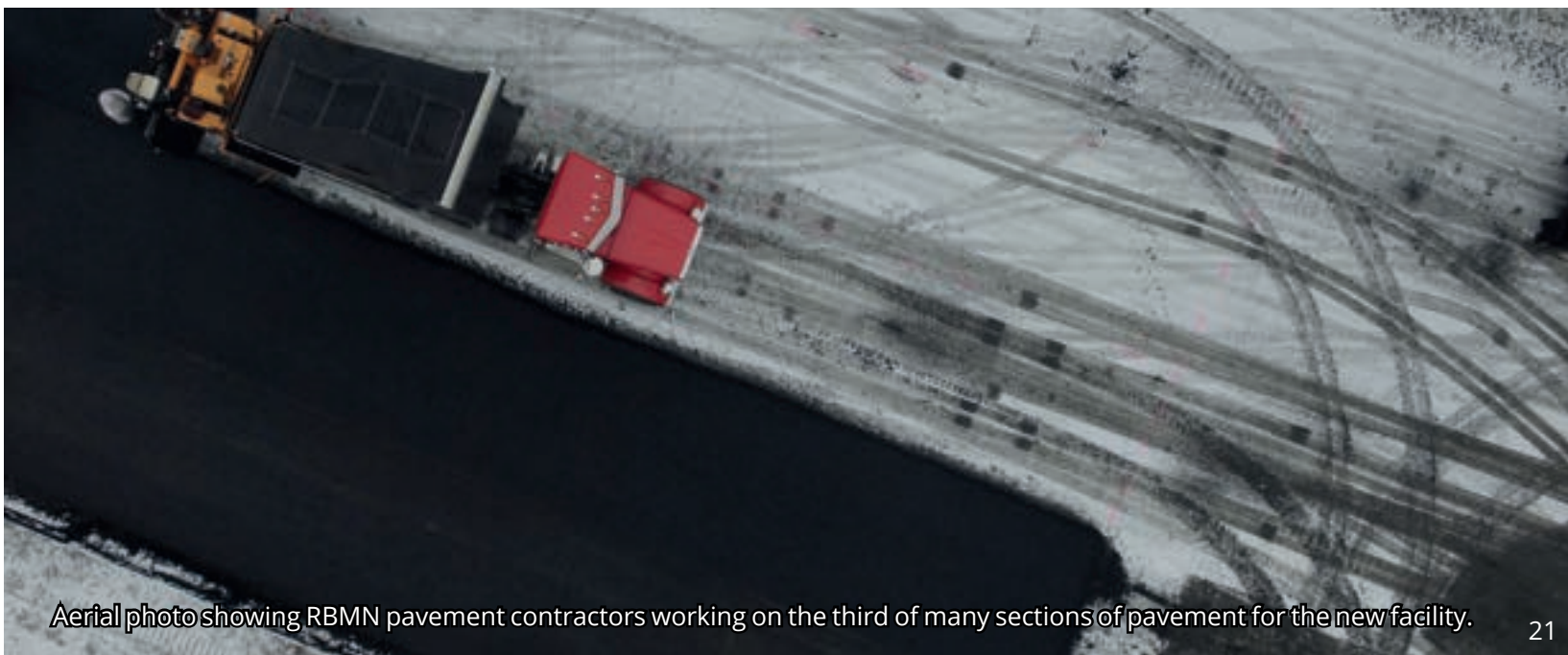
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as just 2 days later the area was blanketed in over a foot of snow, essentially shutting down construction for the season.

By completing the lion share of the site work and paving during the 2020 construction season, it set us up well to ensure our new facility would be ready for operations in 2021. When spring rolled around, RBMN contractors and crews continued to put the final touches on the haul road and new terminal. The RBMN signal department moved a crossing signal and telephone pole to create a more efficient entrance to the haul road. RBMN rail contractors and track crews also worked to rehabilitate the loading track for the facility, including the reconstruction of nearly 1100' of track with heavier rail and new ties.

All the hard work and planning finally came together when the first coal shipments arrived by truck at our facility on the morning of Friday July 9th, 2021. The first rail loading occurred just a few days later, on the morning of Thursday July 15th, 2021. Because of this new facility, non-rail served mines will now have access to RBMN and all the coal resources Andy Muller has invested in; including our large fleet of rail cars, on and offline coal transload terminals and a staff of marketing professionals who are adept at building new markets for our various coal shippers.

So many people from our railroad were involved in this project and the results speak for themselves. This terminal will provide an excellent rail friendly outlet for hundreds of thousands of tons of Pennsylvania Anthracite for years to come. I can say with certainty that this truly was a team effort, and everyone should be proud of what we have been able to accomplish. Afterall, we are the Road of Anthracite.



Aerial photo showing RBMN pavement contractors working on the third of many sections of pavement for the new facility.

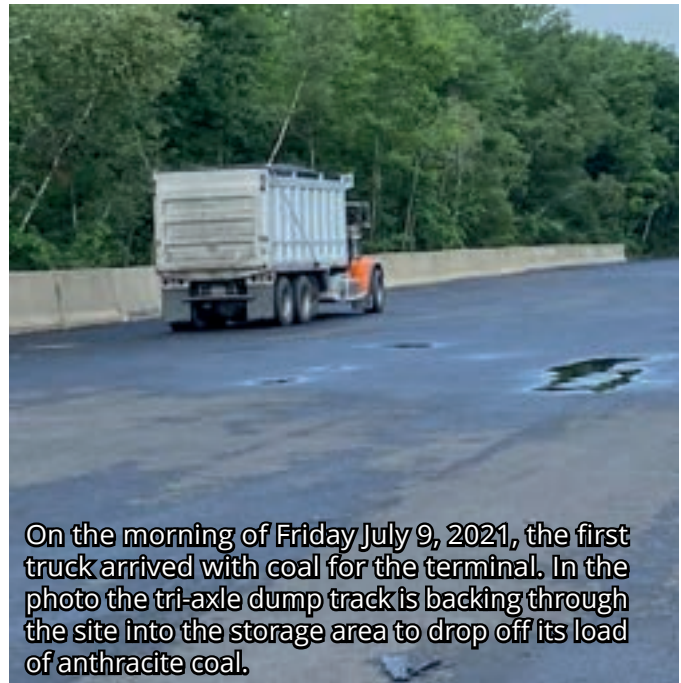




With a light coating of snow already on the ground, pavement contractors can be seen working on rolling the last of the freshly installed blacktop at Locust Summit.



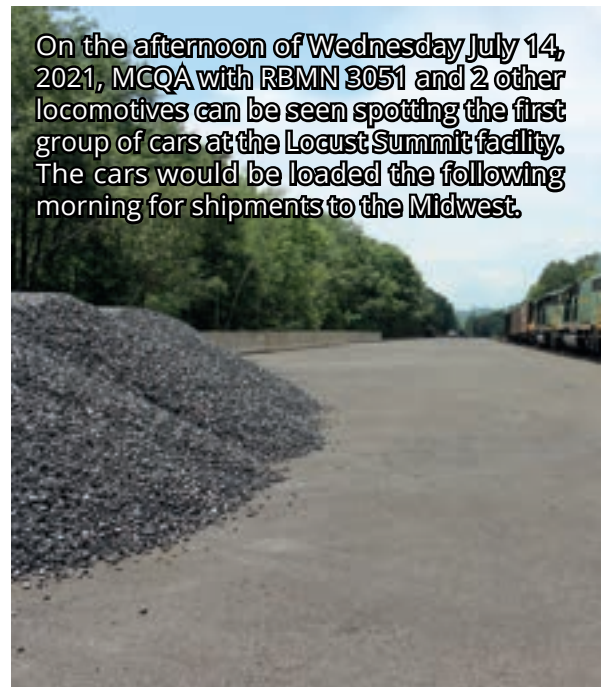
As part of the development of the Locust Summit Terminal, RBMN contractors and track crews rebuilt nearly 1100' of track with heavier rail and new ties for the loading track. This photo is looking North at the newly re-constructed Locust Summit Transload track.



On the morning of Friday July 9, 2021, the first truck arrived with coal for the terminal. In the photo the tri-axle dump truck is backing through the site into the storage area to drop off its load of anthracite coal.

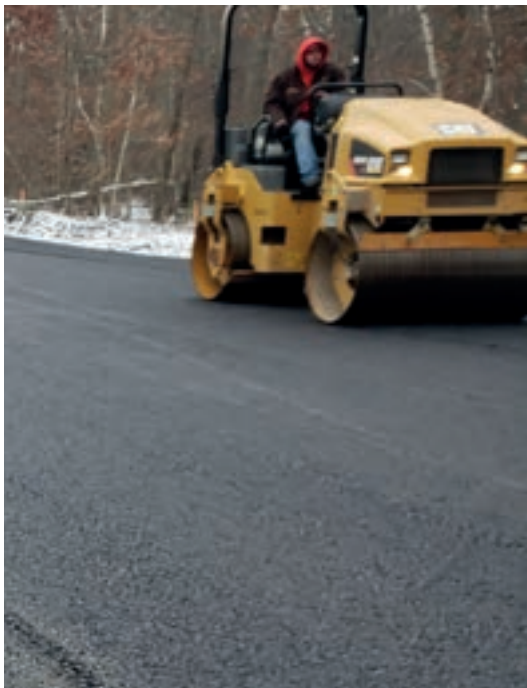


A coal truck can be seen dumping 20 tons of anthracite coal into the new storage area at the Locust Summit Terminal. The storage area will be capable of handling thousands of tons of coal for rail loadings.

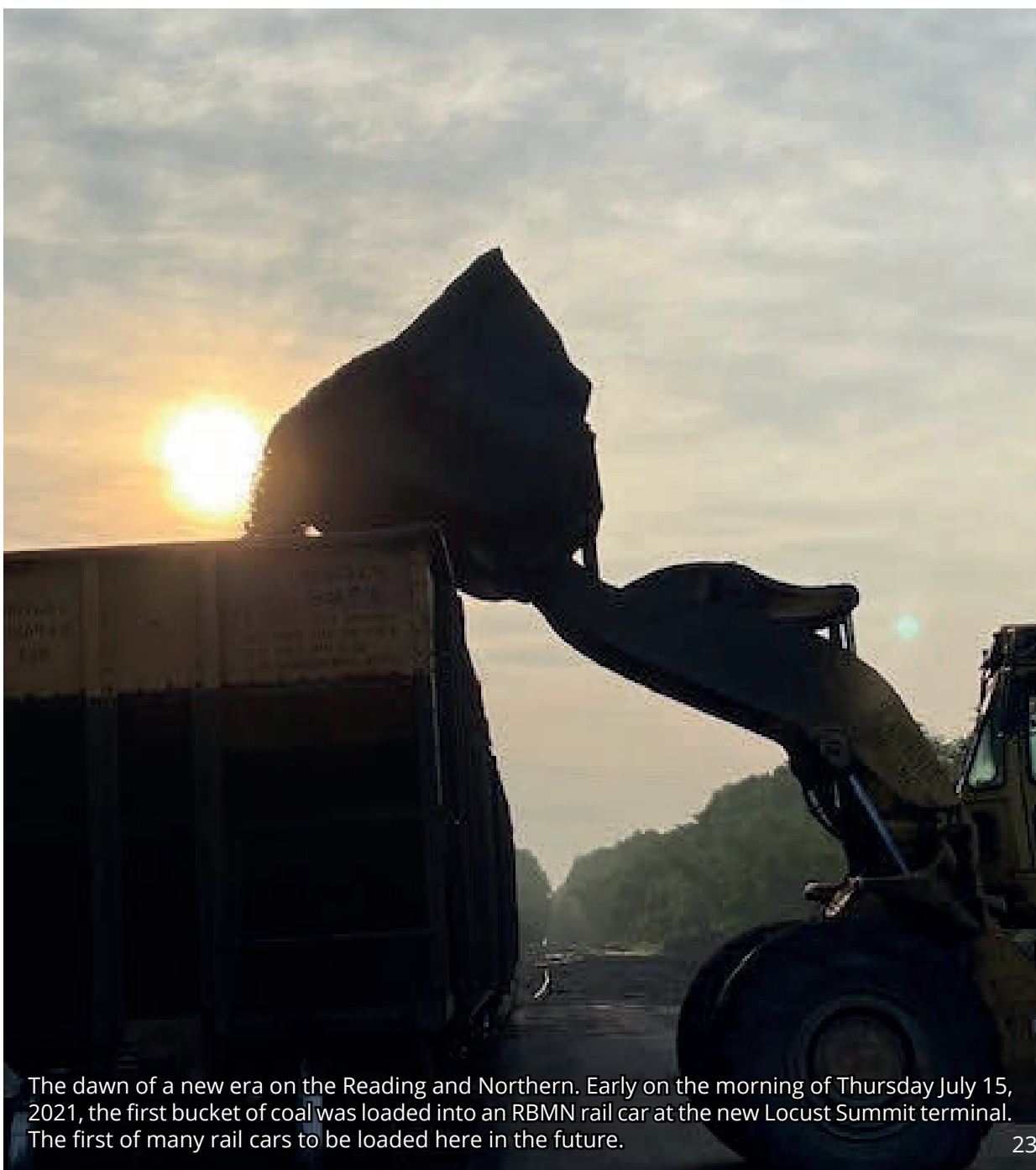


On the afternoon of Wednesday July 14, 2021, MCQA with RBMN 3051 and 2 other locomotives can be seen spotting the first group of cars at the Locust Summit facility. The cars would be loaded the following morning for shipments to the Midwest.





Aerial photo looking South as paving of the terminal continued at Locust Summit.



The dawn of a new era on the Reading and Northern. Early on the morning of Thursday July 15, 2021, the first bucket of coal was loaded into an RBMN rail car at the new Locust Summit terminal. The first of many rail cars to be loaded here in the future.



# On The Cutting Edge

*By: Tyler Glass, EVP Operations*

In April of this year, RBMN completed installation of a Simmons Stanray Underfloor Wheel Truing Machine. This machine enhances the efficiency of our railroad and provides a product that is second to none. In fact, we are going to offer services to other railroads.

This process took two years to complete and many fine folks in our organization were helpful in getting the job done. And, by the way, we needed to build a substantial structure to house the machine.

So what is a wheel true machine and what does it do? The Simmons underfloor wheel lathe is a computer assisted machine that reprofiles worn wheels. The machine reprofiles the wheel by milling off fine layers of metal to contour the wheels and give them a like new finish. This is especially important on costly locomotive wheels where, with regular "truing" the life of locomotive wheels can easily be extended by a few years.

Locomotive wheels become worn in many ways, such as hollowness in tread due to high mileage, and also by wearing the wheel flanges thin by traveling through many curves on the railroad. When this wheel wear reaches a certain point of wear, it is then time to cut the wheel back to original specifications. When this time comes, we move the locomotive to the wheel machine's dedicated building for a wheel truing. When the wheel is completed after milling, it renews the wheelset to a new profile once again while only sacrificing wheel tread thickness to accomplish this. Bringing the wheel back to a new profile status accomplishes many perks, such as better locomotive traction, a better locomotive cab ride and tracking on the rails to also reduce wear to the rails themselves.

The wheel machine also adds a huge benefit to locomotive maintenance and downtime. In the past, we either sent locomotives away for a couple weeks for wheel work or wheelsets would need to be changed out due to needing to be reprofiled. Sometimes it would take an entire day just to change out one truck. We then would need to ship wheels to an outside source to perform the work for us, wait for the work completion, then reinstall in a locomotive. The Simmons machine turns these long practices into an efficient operation of cutting wheel sets while installed in the locomotive needing minor disassembly and cutting a six-axle locomotive from beginning to completion in an 8 hour shift!

View looking south showing location of future building.



View looking south showing completed building.



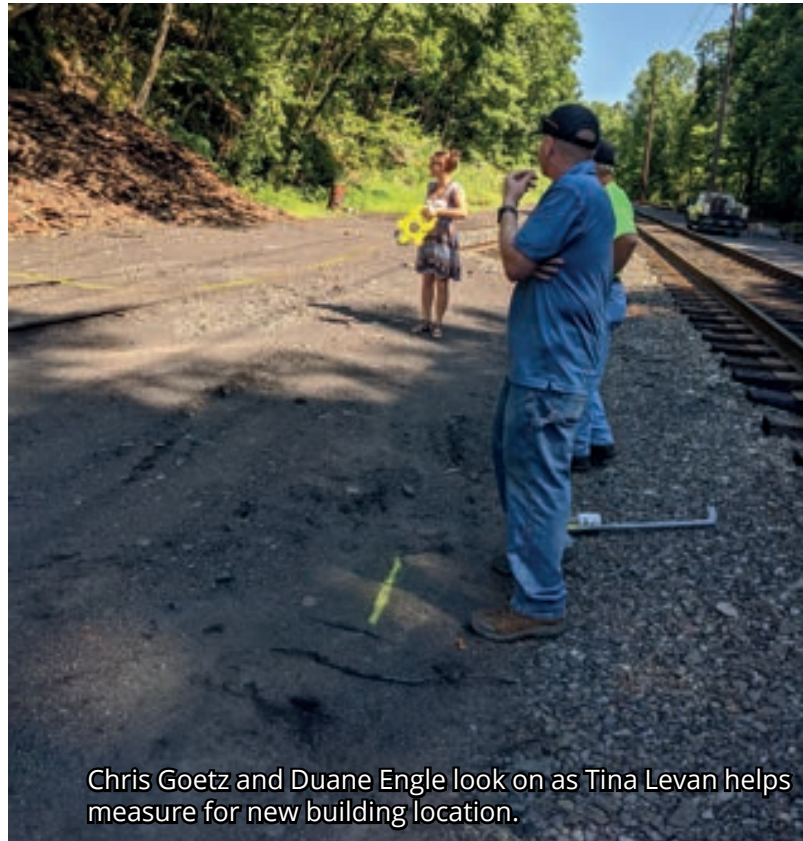
View looking north showing location of future building.



View looking north showing completed building.







Chris Goetz and Duane Engle look on as Tina Levan helps measure for new building location.

Since 2006, RBMN had been using Norfolk Southern's Thoroughbred Mechanical Services to perform the wheel work for us when we felt all of the axles needed work. They used their facilities at Enola with a very similar Simmons machine, so we had a background with the machine.

As our locomotive fleet grew larger, so did our demand to cut the wheels. We also realized that we could use the same machine to cut passenger and freight car wheels. Andy Muller, Dustin Berndt and I had been discussing the need for a machine. Dustin had learned of a used machine in Utah, but there were more questions than answers with that machine. After researching machines all indicators pointed to the Simmons Machine Tool Company in Albany, NY. Simmons appeared to be the industry standard for the machine we were looking for to handle cutting all of our rolling stock.

Dustin contacted the Simmons personnel in April 2019. There was a long process of negotiations and understanding of what we needed to do on our end to make this happen. With a hefty price tag and different options on where such a machine would be housed, this project was slow moving.

However, in December 2019 Norfolk Southern helped us speed up the process as it announced effective January 1, 2020 they would no longer be performing work for other railroads. Katie Bonner in Purchasing did some final negotiating, then we made a commitment to Simmons and promptly issued a purchase order.

We needed a new building to house the machine as our other facilities were at capacity. So the next dilemma was where to place another building on our railroad. We already are a bit tight for space in Port Clinton, but after many meetings we eventually picked a spot just north of our steam shop. Steve Gilbert was extremely helpful in designing some layout concepts.

Once a location was picked then began the process of building a concrete pit that suspends the machine below floor level. Dustin and Steve "Chut" Balthaser worked closely together with the Simmons

personnel to ensure we built a pit to the exact specs needed. Randy Reber, a highly skilled tradesman, was in charge of the concrete work. Ken Palubinski, Ray Schwenk and Tim Billet provided a great deal of assistance to Randy. I think Randy had doubted that he could get the pit to such exact measurements, but nobody else ever had reservations that Randy could get the job done. Randy was extremely relieved when the Simmons representatives stopped by to take measurements on the pit. They just wanted to ensure that when the machine arrived it would fit in perfectly, and they gave Randy the thumbs up.

Concurrent with the building of the pit the structure and track were built.

A local contractor was used to construct the building. Of course, Andy always insists we blend in some classy building features reminiscent of railroad days of yesteryear. When completed the classic look blended with cutting edge machinery and lighting is something to behold.

Duane Engle and Chris Goetz did a fantastic job ensuring the track infrastructure was in place where and when it needed to be.

Bill Keim worked closely with Randy Reber and our electrical contractor on many of the heating and electrical fixtures.

Finally on April 19, 2021, we accepted delivery of the machine. We had used the services of a local rigging company that had the specialized machinery needed to assist with the install. Dustin was glad when that day was over as it took lots of coordination with contractors and our personnel to get the job done. But there was still a few weeks of work to do to get the machine up and running.

Bretz Fetterolf did an amazing job of fabricating all of the metal steps and scaffolding that wrapped around the machine and in the pit. Everything was made from plans prior to the arrival of the machine. Once the machine was installed all of the metalwork was installed like a puzzle.

Walt Fluhr, a Simmons employee, was assigned to be on site for a few weeks to oversee installation and train our employees on the machine. Joseph Zimmerman, Steven Kolbe, Ben Meiser and Kevin Boyko worked closely with Walt during the process of machine assembly and test running. Walt commented that he really enjoyed the relaxed work atmosphere as he is used to being at a large railroad facility or working in a foreign country.

Benjamin Meiser and Kevin Boyko learned how to become machine operators and are responsible to teach others as we move forward.

Finally on May 5, 2021, locomotive 5019 was placed over the machine just before 11:00. The machine was in service! For the next week Andy was a fixture in the new shop to watch our newest investment do its thing.

One final touch in the building's interior. Therman Madeira and Meg Pursel worked closely with our painting group to give the floor a finely painted finish.

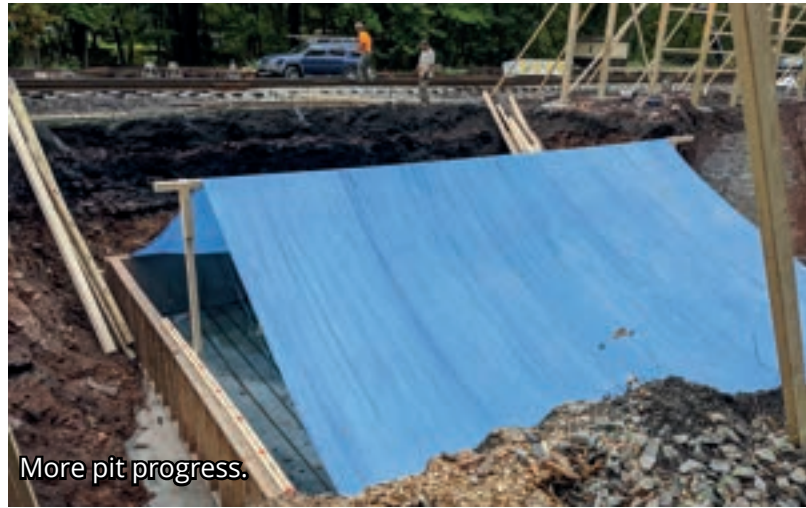
RBMN is excited to offer wheel true services to other railroads. See our advertisement on page 51.

Well over \$1 Million has been spent on the machine and the building. There was also a lot of time invested from many people to see this endeavor through. It is one of those projects after it is completed you wonder how we survived without this machine. On to the next project.





Construction begins August 2020 with the excavating for the pit.



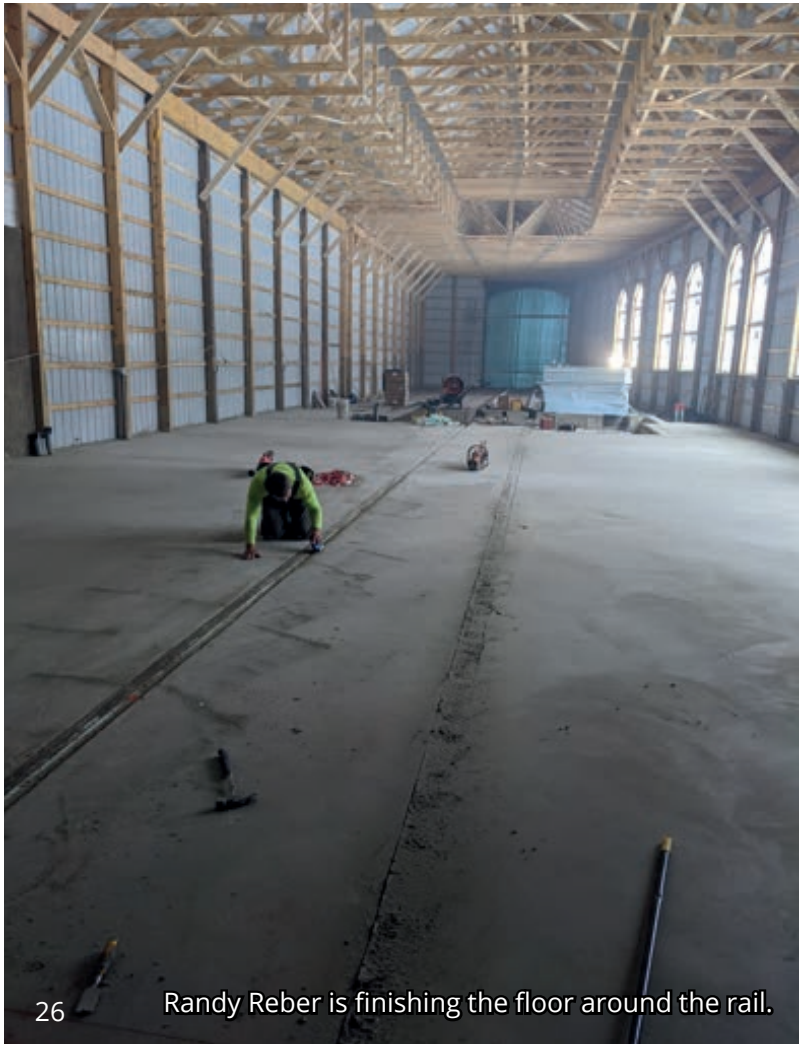
More pit progress.



September 2020 the building construction begins.



Another construction view.



Randy Reber is finishing the floor around the rail.



The rigging company is getting the tri-lifter in position to get the wheel true machine in place.





Tri-lifter getting C-frame in place.



C-frame awaiting the placement of the top section.



Tri-lifter getting C-frame in place.



Placing the C-frame in the pit.



Top section being lowered into place.





Kyle Sanders (left), Andy Muller (center) and Dustin Berndt watching as the first locomotive comes in for wheel service.



First wheel in the process of being cut.



Barry Shollenberger (left) and Dan Spatz are busy painting the north end of the shop floor.



Bill Keim works on the boiler for the floor heat system.



Bretz Fetterolf cleaning up welds on pit railings.





Andy Muller (left) talks to Ray Schwenk (in pit) about their progress.



Ben Meiser (left) and Kevin Boyko watching the spot for the first axle.



Ben Meiser setting up the computer to make a cut.




Northbound view looking at freshly painted pit and floor.



# Safety Always: *Investing in Safe Operations*

By: Eric Peters, VP Transportation & Safety



Work underway at Jim Thorpe Junction in preparation for power switch and signal.

Andy Muller continues to invest heavily with capital to enhance and maintain a safe and efficient railroad. This year marks the purchase of the Carbon County-owned railroad. Before the ink was dry, projects to improve the infrastructure were underway. New rail began being laid immediately to solidify a safe corridor connecting Lehigh and Reading Divisions. Plans are in place to continue replacing rail, ties, dumping ballast and signaling the line. This line will be brought up to RBMN mainline standards for safety and speed.

RBMN's commitment to safety doesn't begin or end with our new purchase. All departments have been working tirelessly across the system to make improvements. The Signal Department has been making large strides to increase the amount of interlockings, power switches, yard lights and dragging equipment detectors. These are great investments to reduce employee exposure while improving efficiency. Pulpit interlocking and the power switches at Port Clinton were completed earlier this year with the River, Jim Thorpe Junction and Nesquehoning Junction under construction.

The investments in the wheel true, car shop and restoration shop all have safety and ergonomics in mind. Impressive railings were made in house for the wheel true machine. The car shop extension will allow for better access of all sides and top of the cars for repair. The new restoration shop will provide our painters a safe consistent environment to complete all the fantastic restoration of our equipment.

Everywhere you turn on the Reading and Northern you see projects underway that will provide sustainable value for the company and a safer work environment for all employees.



# READING AND NORTHERN PURCHASES ADDITIONAL PASSENGER EQUIPMENT

By: Matt Fisher, General Manager – Passenger Department



The Reading and Northern has purchased eleven passenger coaches of various types of seating. A passenger coach auction occurred over the first half of 2021 in Colorado. Many of the coaches have an amazing history, previously running on famous trains including the “City of New Orleans”, the “Crescent”, and the “Twentieth Century Limited”. There are several types of seating: coach, dome, parlor, open air, and lounge. The eleven cars purchased to this time include the following:

Former Railroad	Old Number	Reading & Northern New Number
San Luis and Rio Grande	59	5
San Luis and Rio Grande	3378	6
San Luis and Rio Grande	3305	7
San Luis and Rio Grande	1056	20
San Luis and Rio Grande	2904	450
San Luis and Rio Grande	1066	451
San Luis and Rio Grande	1067	452
San Luis and Rio Grande	1068	453
San Luis and Rio Grande	1125	1125
San Luis and Rio Grande	1062	1165
San Luis and Rio Grande	448	1166

The Reading and Northern has renumbered the majority of the equipment to better fit into the current numbering system of the Passenger Department. Some of these coaches are unlike any the Reading and Northern has ever owned over 36 years in the passenger business.

RBMN 5 is a full length dome car. It will be right at home since RBMN 4 “The Lehigh Gorge Explorer” is from the same series of dome cars built for the Milwaukee in the 1950s. Number 5 had significant work on both wheels and trucks in last few years. It has a great set up of both tables and comfortable chairs on the top level.

RBMN 6 is a lounge observation car fit to throw parties or relax and lounge, as the name says. This car has a great interior with air conditioning. Number 6 will be a great addition to all day excursions on the Reading and Northern.



*Continued from page 31*

RBMN 6 is a lounge observation car fit to throw parties or relax and lounge, as the name says. This car has a great interior with air conditioning. Number 6 will be a great addition to all day excursions on the Reading and Northern.

RBMN 7 is a club lounge observation, formerly known as the "Mardi Gras", the name says it all, great for parties and group functions. This car was built by Pullman in 1916, then converted and upgraded for the Illinois Central premier train from Chicago to New Orleans "The City of New Orleans" in 1947. It has a great streamlined décor. It also has a generator to power itself and other cars on the train, and functioning air conditioning.

RBMN cars 20, 451, 452, and 453 have Southern Railway history. RBMN 451, 452, and 453 are heavyweight coaches that have seating capacity of 40 to over 60 people per car, depending on the seating arrangement. Very comfortable interior with seats that can turn direction. This is critical so that the train does not need to be turned or wye'd on a return trip, preventing people from riding backwards. Car 20 was originally a standard coach, but was converted to an open air car originally named "Lookout Mountain". Look out for a Reading and Northern-Passenger Facebook contest to rename this car. The Reading and Northern is looking to make this one of the first cars to be put into service on the Lehigh Gorge operations once it gets to Pennsylvania.

Number 450 was of great interest to the Reading and Northern as early as two years ago. This is also a heavyweight coach, however, it has a newer generator that is capable of powering an entire train. This will be a great addition, allowing trains to no longer waste space with placing a 480 volt head end power car on most excursion trains.

RBMN 1125 is formerly the "Ellerslie", this is a full sleeper car. The interior bedrooms are in great shape. The Reading and Northern looks forward to accessorizing this car with Pullman era items.

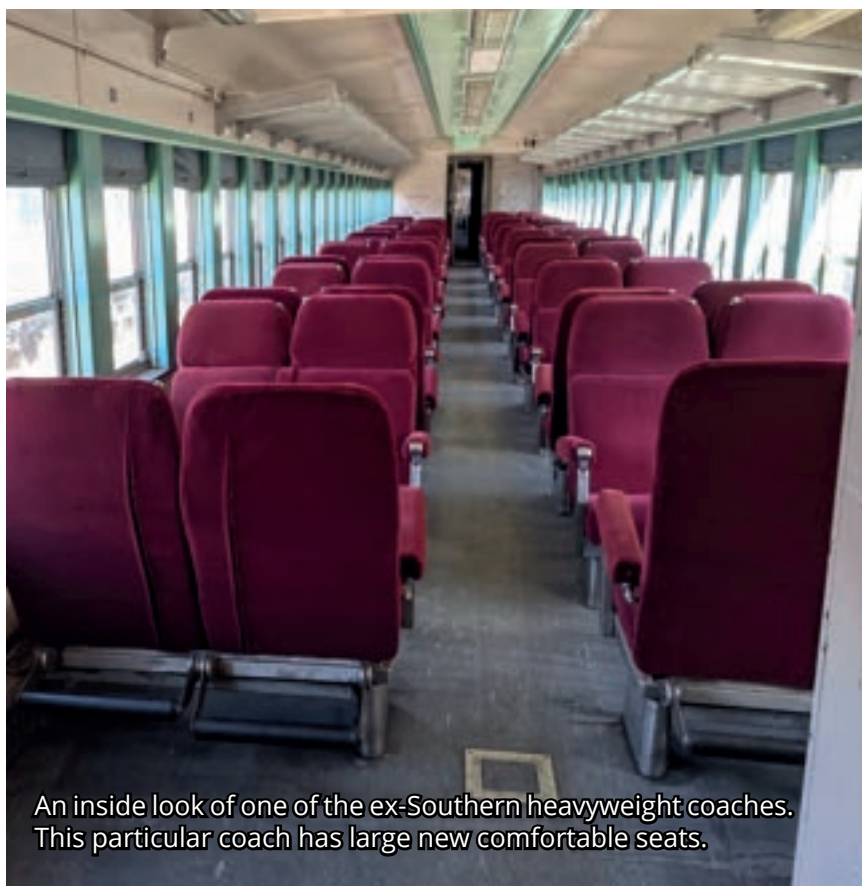
Car 1165 has a lot of versatility. The car has new carpeting, however no chairs or tables are fixed to the floor. This car can be used for many different functions and will be a good partner to dining car 1166.

Finally, RBMN Car 1166 might have the most recognizable history. The car has former New York Central, "Twentieth Century Limited" heritage. This series car was used in the 1959 movie "North By Northwest", in the famous scene where Cary Grant's character meets Eva Marie Saint's character for the first time. The kitchen on this car is totally ready to serve its first meal on the Reading and Northern, and the railroad is looking to restore the dining area back to the look of the car from this famous Alfred Hitchcock movie.

More information about the equipment moves from Colorado to Pennsylvania will be given on our Facebook pages. Many of these cars will be accessible to the general public for years to come. Passenger ridership records continue to be broken through spring and early summer of 2021. All eleven cars will make a great addition to our expanding operations for years to come.



Pictured from left to right: Craig Lutz, Andy Muller, Jr, Matt Fisher, Rick Zerr (King Fish) seated in newly acquired RBMN 7 at Alamosa, Colorado. Picture taken by Tyler Glass.



An inside look of one of the ex-Southern heavyweight coaches. This particular coach has large new comfortable seats.



# FROM BLIGHT TO BUSTLE:

*Tamaqua Train Station has official opening after period of disrepair*

BY: Justin Carlucci, jcarlucci@tnonline.com

Lehigh Times-News - Originally Printed June 29, 2021



Andy Muller and local officials celebrate at the train station in Tamaqua. (Justin Carlucci/Times-News).

A ribbon cutting was held on top of the newly completed Tamaqua Train Station passenger platform in downtown Tamaqua Monday morning.

Local officials, borough council and chamber members were on site to give thanks to Andy Muller, president and owner of Reading and Blue Mountain Northern Railroad, for his dedication and contributions throughout the project.

“Most of us can remember when this was a symbol of blight in the community, not a symbol of pride. The walls were caving in, the windows and doors were boarded up and the roof leaked,” said state Sen. David Argall, R-Schuylkill.

“But people came together - and we saved the station by working together. Brick by brick, window by window, door by door. Since the restaurants have been open again, since 2004, this has been a very busy place. It only happened because people came together.”

The partnership between the borough council and railroad began in 2019, said Brian Connelly, council vice president.

“We had heard for years - the big bad railroad - nobody can work with the railroad. We said, look, we have a new generation in here. Why not? Let’s have these conversations, so we started having these conversations,” Connelly added.

“And we sat down, drew it out, and we said how could we get it done? It was no nonsense, let’s just do it. Here it is, and it’s just fantastic.”

The platform, finished earlier this year, extends up to the main tracks for easy access on and off. The railroad installed Victorian-style gooseneck lamps, benches and vintage railroad signs.

“We were limited in what we could do because of the unsuitable conditions of the train platform,” Connelly read from the plaque which was gifted to Muller. “We found not only a partner who shared our concerns, but a vision to the project that would exceed anything that the borough thought we could do in our hometown.”

Not only was the platform masterfully done, Muller decided to give back to the community. The railroad donated back Tamaqua borough’s portion of the money it originally put up to make the project possible.

“You outdid yourself,” Connelly read from the plaque. “When you declared that our 20% share of the project was considered payment in full, that was even better yet.”

The money was directly distributed to help local first responders.

“When you were able to basically release the money back to the borough, the borough turned around on your behalf, and gave it to the fire departments. Not once, but twice, during the pandemic,” said Connelly. “That replaced so much funding that was lost. We

truly appreciate that. You don’t see that (happen) much at all, if any.”

Muller reminisced about the transformation of the train station.

“It’s hard to believe what this looked like when we bought the railroad. ... This was nothing but coal dirt through here,” Muller said.

“It’s unbelievable to imagine what this looked like. The station was burned and every time it rained, the water came off the mountain and would come down to the middle of town and wash coal dirt into the street. It’s hard to imagine, we’ve really come a long way.”

Connelly was happy to see over 1,200 passengers who rode the rails during Summerfest a few weekends ago.

“Now that the platform has been built, we’ve already seen benefits of community, despite the difficulties of the pandemic. From ride dines and speeder cars stopping on a regular basis to Jim Thorpe, we know that people are coming to our community because they share your love and passion for trains.”



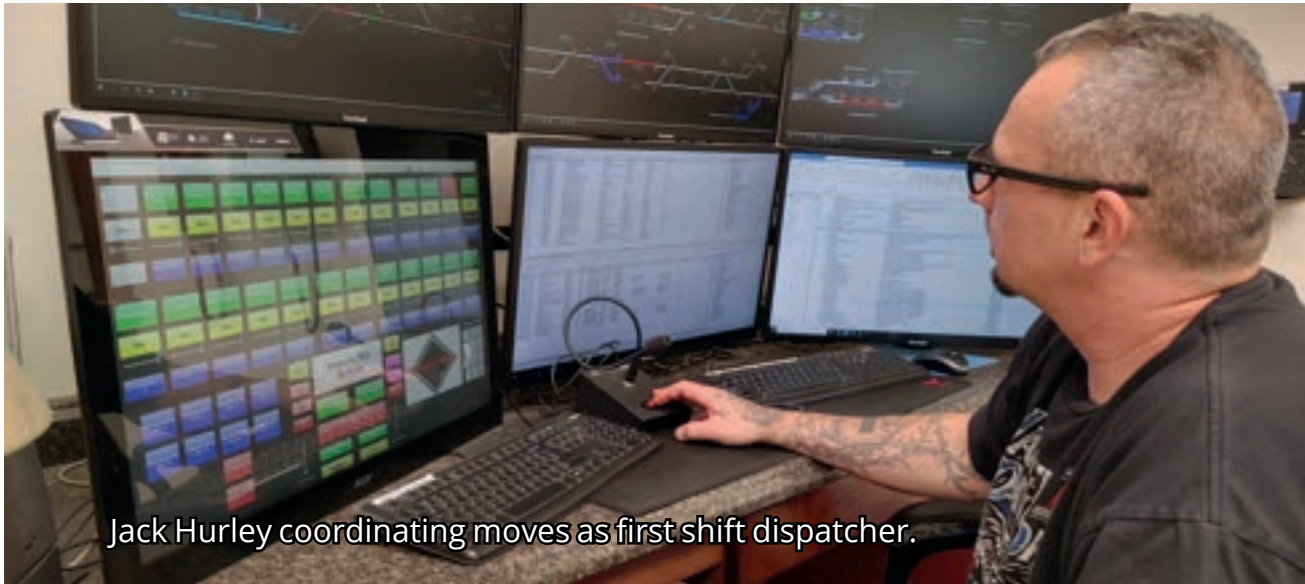
Andy Muller and local officials celebrate at the train station in Tamaqua. (Justin Carlucci/Times-News).



# RBMN AT WORK



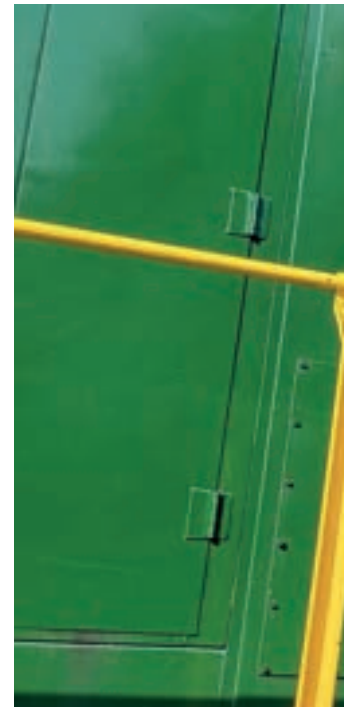
Jeff Knadler lines up the next move at Nesquehoning Jct. while working as a Switch Tender during a busy passenger weekend. This is one of the next locations to receive a power switch.



Jack Hurley coordinating moves as first shift dispatcher.



QASD engineer, Nate Mengel, ready to deliver empties to our coal customers.







Conductor David Lapallo is seen in Scranton switching out empty cars from a customer.



Justin Chickilly and Jim Cook finishing a busy day on the QAMC.



LGSR Conductor Ryan Frederickson and Engineer Michael Kolbe pose for a quick photo at Jim Thorpe before they begin their day.





Conductor Nick Suruski switching shop hoppers cars out of his unit train at Pulpit Interlocking (Port Clinton) and after he makes his moves, will continue to Minersville.



Engineer Chuck Trusdell timing the leakage for their air brake test before beginning their day on the LGSR at Jim Thorpe.



VP of Transportation and Safety Eric Peters takes a minute to talk safety with C&S Maintainers Ryan Rhody and Aaron Schweibinz while they are installing a switch machine at River.





on). The 86 car train was just picked up from North Reading



Darrin Keip and Anthony DeBellis having a job briefing about the next move with the Work Train.



Engineer Ron Papiercavich running train PISB-10 in Scranton.



Conductor Danny Boyle making sure his track check is accurate while building train QAJT at Middle Yard, Tamaqua.



# 30 MORE YEARS!

By: Erica Lutz, Air Concierge

The 30th Annual WWII Weekend at the Mid-Atlantic Air Museum took place June 4 through June 6, 2021. Over 1,700 WWII military and civilian re-enactors were present along with numerous military vehicles. WWII Veteran special guests were also present to meet, speak with, and collect autographs. It is one of the largest WWII shows in the country. Some of the aircraft present were Fifi - B-29 Superfortress; Yankee Lady - B-17G Flying Fortress; Panchito - B-25J Mitchell, Yankee Warrior - B-25D Mitchell, a replica Nakajima B5N2, Take off Time - B-25J Mitchell; Tinker Belle - C-46 Commando; Hairless Joe - C-47D Skytrain; and many others. Jerry Cross & Tony Pequeno, Maintenance Technicians on "Hairless Joe", love coming to this airshow for the piston engine planes and the re-enactments.

Throughout the weekend you could visit many different exhibits, stages, trucks, presentations all put together for this incredible show. The Base Club stage at the Home Front was one of the many locations with shows and talents displayed, such as "America's Sweethearts" who sing and swing. You could hear Frank Cubillo, a retired USMC Colonel present "Frank Sings Frank", a compilation of Frank Sinatra. Or listen to The Forecast Quarters, a men's a cappella barbershop quartet. Additionally, you could watch a "live" radio broadcast drama by Spirit of the Airways Players. Friday and Saturday night you could swing and tap in the main hangar to "Let's Dance" big band and "Swing Fever". The bands always draw large crowds and are quite a good time! Along with the



Jimmy Page, Flight crew with "Fifi".



WWII Encampment.



"Yankee Lady", a Boeing B-17G.



RJC Line Service fueling "Yankee Lady".



Jerry Cross & Tony Pequeno, Maintenance crew with "Hairless Joe".



great entertainment came even better food. Food trucks lined the ramp with soft pretzels, root beer floats, ice cream, funnel cakes, crab cake sandwiches, smoked meats and so much more! There is so much to do over the 3-day span, the schedules and coordination made by the Mid-Atlantic Air Museum is resounding.

Saturday and Sunday featured vehicle and military re-enactor units. Guests were able to view the collections and displays of authentic vehicles, gear, and weapons in the seven encampments. Afternoon airshows were also a crowd pleaser including all types of famous WWII aircrafts. One could also fulfill a bucket-list ride on "Yankee Lady", the legendary Boeing B-17G Flying Fortress, "Panchito", the North American B-25J Mitchell or "Red Nose" the North American P-51D Mustang. MAAM's rare P-61B "Black Widow" was also on the ramp for display. It is currently in the restoration phase in hopes to be the only Black Widow in the air in the future.

Reading Jet Center Staff has always helped fuel the aircrafts during the Air Show itself, re-enactments, and rides for civilians, this year with our new location, we got to be an even bigger part of the involvement. We were able to discuss with pilots, re-enactors, workers, volunteers, and general public in a whole night light. Being based on the North Ramp side of the field, Reading Jet Center has more of a connection to the time, effort, and overall labor being put into each and every single aircraft. The stories and details these wonderful men and women are able to provide are humbling and astonishing. Thank you to all who came out to support Mid-Atlantic Air Museum. It is always an honor to be a part of this wonderful show. We look forward to seeing everyone again next year!

## *Reading Jet Maintenance Employee receives prestigious award!*

By: Erica Lutz, Air Concierge

On July 7, 2021, Robert "Bob" Harak received the Charles Taylor Master Mechanic Award. It is the most prestigious award the FAA issues, which recognizes the lifetime accomplishment of senior mechanics who completed 50 years or more of service. William Vanartsdalen & Lee Abt from FAA presented Bob with his plaque & pin. There was a small luncheon after the award presentation to celebrate Bob's huge accomplishment. Present & past colleagues joined in celebrating Bob on this very special day. Congratulations Bob and thank you for all you do!



Bob & Kathy Harak reminiscing with Lee & Bill.



Bob receiving award from Lee Abt.



From left to right – Nick Riccio, Kathy Harak, Bob Harak, Tina Muller-Levan.



# Red Creek Wildlife

Peggy Hentz, President/Executive Director of Red Creek Wildlife

Mallard duck family.

Mallard and wood ducks rarely nest near the waterway where they live. The female will choose a secluded, private area up to a mile away to nest. Once she chooses the exact spot, she deposits a single egg. Each day she returns to deposit another single egg. During this laying cycle, she may remain nearby and watch the nest or return to the river or pond where she lives. She also returns several times each day to rotate and check the eggs. This behavior continues until she has completed laying the entire clutch. Only then will she sit on the eggs and begin incubation, which is called “brooding.”

Embryo development remains suspended until the onset of incubation which begins when the eggs reach about 100 degrees. This synchronous hatching is how a duck can lay an egg each day, but the ducklings will all hatch together on the same day. The chicks don't begin to grow until mom warms the eggs.

During this time, Red Creek receives calls from concerned homeowners who suddenly found a brooding duck. Most are worried about the mother duck's welfare since she won't leave the nest to eat or drink, and they want to help. We spend time educating callers on the biology of the duck nest, what they can expect to happen, and the dangers that may exist.

Occasionally, we receive entire nests of eggs because something happened to the mother. These are hatched in incubators and raised at Red Creek for release when the ducklings are old enough to care for themselves.

After about four weeks of brooding, hatching begins. Within twenty-four hours, the new family sets out on a dangerous trek to the body of water the mother duck calls home. Led by mom, the parade of ducklings traverse fields, forests, and back yards, crossing parking lots and roadways. If things go smoothly, the family reaches the water, and the ducklings begin learning the life lessons of being a duck.

Sometimes things don't go smoothly for a family on the move, and that's when Red Creek capture and transport volunteers Bonnie Bohnenblust and Barbara Miller step in. Bonnie rescues wildlife in the Reading and Berks County area, while Barbara covers Allentown and Lehigh County.

Besides the dangers of crossing roadways, swimming pools and sewer grates are common dangers that trap baby ducks. Frequently the mother duck is still present, frantically calling to the babies that are trapped.

Bonnie and Barbara each rescue about 150 ducklings each year from storm drains. Often, the mother can be captured, and babies and mom can be transported to a nearby water source and released together. If the mother eludes capture, she will often follow the person carrying the box containing her chirping babies. They are then walked to the nearest water source and reunited there.

One of our biggest challenges is when a duck nests inside closed courtyards like those often found at hospitals, schools, and nursing homes. These courtyards are surrounded by four walls, and the

Mallard ducks.





ducklings cannot leave. Although residents and staff often enjoy seeing the duck family, their extended presence soon overwhelms the courtyard's micro-environment. The growing ducklings will quickly eat any natural vegetation available and run out of food. Even if supplied with food and water, their droppings contaminate the small area making it unhealthy for the ducks and unusable to humans. They are also quickly discovered by hawks, who prey on the trapped ducklings.

Removing a family of ducks from a courtyard takes planning, patience, and a lot of luck. Much depends on the temperament of the mother. If she is easily caught, the family can be relocated together. If she flies away and abandons the situation, the babies are brought to our center.

One mother duck at a rural elder care home was so cooperative that she allowed me to lead her into the building and through the corridors, followed by her babies. Residents at the facility stood in the hallways holding up blankets to ensure that the duck family stayed on our chosen path to the exit door. A similar scenario occurred at an elementary school with children's faces peering over the blankets in wonderment as they helped free the duck family from the courtyard playground.

Tower health in West Reading has several courtyards that attract numerous mother ducks. After several years of repeated evacuations, the ducks now recognize Bonnie. One mother immediately flies away on Bonnie's arrival and eludes every attempt at capture, leaving us to raise the babies. A second mother, however, has figured it out and flies to the nearby stream at the Reading Museum and waits for Bonnie to arrive with her babies.

About 120 ducklings are freed from courtyards each year. About 70% of the ducklings are successfully reunited with their mothers.

While rescues like these usually involve ducks, one Canada goose family presented Barbara with a dangerous situation by nesting on a rooftop in Exton. The flat roof was fifteen feet above the ground and was surrounded by a two-and-a-half-foot wall extending above the



Bonnie Bohnenblust releasing mallards.

roof. Trying to catch the babies on the rooftop was risky, so Barbara devised a ramp system allowing the hatchling goslings to walk up over the wall and down toward the ground.

As both goose parents called from below, two babies braved the ramp system and were safely reunited with the parents. Four remained on the roof and refused to try. Apparently becoming concerned for the welfare of the two on the ground, the parents took those two and walked to a nearby stream, and swam away. Barbara was left with no other choice but to risk catching the remaining goslings on the roof.

After successfully containing the babies, Barbara began searching for the parents. Finally, her patience was rewarded when 45 minutes later, she saw the two parents swimming with the two chicks.

She removed one chick from the box, and it immediately began peeping loudly. The call attracted the gander, which approached Barbara aggressively, obviously demanding she turn over the babies. She released the four chicks and backed away. The gander gathered them together and herded toward the water. They swam away together, a reunited family.

What do we do if we encounter a duck family? It depends on the situation.

Nesting mothers don't need any help except protection from dogs and curious people. They don't need supplemental food because their bodies have prepared by storing up fat that will carry them through the brooding period. However, supplying a bowl of fresh water on very hot days will help.

You can free baby ducks that are trapped in swimming pools, backyard ponds, and fountains by supplying an escape ramp. Lean a lounge chair, raft, or board into the water's edge. Gently encourage the mother toward the ramp, and the babies will follow her.

Although it is normal for many animal mothers to leave their babies for short periods to go foraging, this doesn't happen with ducks and geese. Therefore, when a baby duck or goose is found alone, it is in serious trouble and needs to be rescued. At Red Creek, an abandoned baby can join a new family and have a chance at a normal life in the wild.





# Wellness Corner

By Sabine Fidler, HR Assistant and Meghan Faust, Receptionist

## A Laughing Matter

This editorial is dedicated to our HR office mates, Kyle Barrell and Jack McCoy, who leave us in stitches every day.

"It's important to make a distinction between humor and laughter. Humor is an evoked response to storytelling and shifting expectations. Laughter is a social signal among humans. It's like a punctuation mark."

~ Carl Marci, MD – Assistant Professor of Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School and the Director of Social Neuroscience in the Psychotherapy Research Program at Massachusetts General Hospital

According to an article posted by the University of West Alabama, not only do we smile and laugh when we are content or happy, but we do both for other reasons, as well. As it turns out, people smile to appear approachable or to be polite and we may even laugh out of fear or embarrassment. Learning to keep stress at bay through happiness and joy, in turn causing us to smile or laugh, is not only beneficial to our health but also our personal and professional lives.

Laughter is a natural medicine. It can improve your immune system, boost your heart health, help you lose weight, and bolster relationships. Essentially, a good sense of humor can not only help you live happier but also live longer.

Physical health benefits:

- Stimulates your organs: When you laugh, your lungs, heart, and muscles are stimulated and take in more oxygen-rich air.
- Relax your muscles: Stress typically causes your body to tense up. Laughing relaxes the muscles for up to 45 minutes.
- Improves cardiac health: Your heart rate increases every time you laugh, which can improve vascular function and therefore, decrease the risk of heart attacks.
- Boosts immune system: When you become stressed, your negative thoughts can manifest into chemical reactions that cause your body to decrease your immunity. Laughing gives you a positive mindset that releases infection-fighting antibodies.
- Lowers blood pressure: Stress causes your blood pressure to rise. A good laugh releases endorphins that counteract the negative effects of stress and lower your blood pressure.
- Helps with weight loss: Weight gain can be a nasty side effect of chronic stress. Laughing reduces the stress hormone that causes you to gain weight and just fifteen minutes of laughing per day can burn 10-40 calories, totaling one to four pounds every year.

Mental health benefits:

- Provides distraction: Laughter can provide your brain with a much-needed break from a heavy workload or deadline that must be met.
- Improve your mood: Laughing can diffuse depression or anger and give you a sense of well-being.
- Reduces stress hormones: The "stress hormone," cortisol, circulates throughout our body when we feel overwhelmed and stressed. Laughter can decrease these levels by increasing your intake of oxygen.
- Increases endorphins: Laughing increases the number of "happy hormones" that are released in your body, making you feel happier and more able to fight off stress.

Social health benefits:

- Cultivates positivity: Smiling shows people that you are approachable, and your positivity will likely be reflected, helping to form relationships.



- Strengthens relationships: When we laugh with a group, we end up creating stronger relationships, social support, and a lasting bond. It is also a great way to heal from disagreements.
- Boosts productivity: Happiness is also closely correlated to our productivity at work. The happier we are, the better we perform our jobs and receive better reviews and faster promotions.

Sometimes it can be hard to find the humor in an otherwise stressful world. Consider trying some of these recommendations from the University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences:

1. If you are on social media, follow a funny meme account. Funny memes go viral because they make us laugh and put us in a good mood.
2. Start a Pinterest board and fill it with things that make you smile, like quotes or funny pictures. Next time you see something that makes you laugh, pin it to your board to look at it when you feel stressed.
3. Spending time with a pet is always a good source of entertainment. If you don't have a pet, offer to pet-sit for a friend or volunteer at an animal shelter.
4. Listen to a funny podcast on your way to work to start your day with a good laugh.
5. Try laughter yoga. This is a new take on yoga from India that promotes the use of intentional laughter exercises. Take a class by yourself or bring a friend whenever you feel stressed. To find a laughter yoga studio near you, visit [www.laughteryoga.org](http://www.laughteryoga.org).
6. Laugh at yourself. This is a learned habit, but it is also one of the best ways you can add laughter to your life. Next time you do something that would normally upset you, try to find the positive.
7. Alter your environment. Fill your workspace with things that make you smile, like a picture of a great vacation or a funny daily calendar.
8. There is nothing better than laughing with people. Invite friends or family over for a game night to play games like charades, Pictionary, or Apple to Apples (or Cards Against Humanity depending on the crowd).
9. In need of a quick laugh? Search YouTube for anything from hilarious animals to your favorite TV show.
10. Make an effort to hang out with the funniest people you know. We tend to be influenced by the people with which we surround ourselves.

Whether you are forcing a smile or finding joy in some of the activities above, trying to incorporate more laughter into your life will reduce excess stress and boost your mood. Only have a few minutes in your busy schedule, try watching a funny video online. Want a carefree date night or fun night out with some friends, try hitting up a comedy club to tickle your funny bone.

*"Laughter is, and will always be, the best form of therapy."*

~ Dau Voire – social media influencer

## **For more information, visit:**

<https://www.usa.edu/blog/how-laughter-can-relieve-stress/>

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/stress-management/in-depth/stress-relief/art-20044456>

<https://online.uwa.edu/news/benefits-of-smiling-and-laughter/>

<https://laughteryoga.org/finder/find-club/>



# WELCOME ABOARD



## Silas Bausher

Silas Bausher was recently hired as a Part Time Seasonal Trackman within our Maintenance of Way Department. He attended Hamburg Area School District and Penn State University. Silas worked at Hamburg High in the IT Department prior to working at RBMN.



## Angel Brazdzionis

Angel Brazdzionis was recently hired as a Police Officer within our Police Department. He attended East Strouds North High School and Northampton Community College. Prior to working at RBMN, Angel was a Patrol Officer with the Newport Township Police Department for seven months.



## Meghan Faust

Meghan Faust was recently hired as a Part Time Receptionist within our Human Resources Department. She attended Blue Mountain High School and Kutztown University. Prior to working at RBMN, Meghan was an Assistant and Receptionist at Downtime Salon and Spa for nine years. Meghan loves being outdoors as much as possible with her son who was born on Christmas Day. She and her husband have been together for eighteen years but married four. Meghan says she has travelled to over 40 states but has only been out of the U.S. twice.



## Jeremy Green

Jeremy Green was recently hired as a Trackman within our Maintenance of Way Department. He attended Jim Thorpe School District. Prior to working at RBMN, Jeremy worked in the MOW Department at Norfolk Southern for eleven years.



## Shelley Hall

Shelley Hall was recently hired as a Steam and Passenger Technician within our Mechanical Department. She attended Colonel Richardson High School and Chesapeake College. Prior to working at RBMN, Shelley was a Welder for the Strasburg Railroad for six years. Shelley volunteers at four steam shows (two in Maryland and two in PA). She also loves classic movies.



## Tyler Lewis

Tyler Lewis was recently hired as a Seasonal Trackman within our Maintenance of Way Department. He attended Carbon Career and Technical Institute. Prior to working at RBMN, Tyler was an H and B Operator at Serta Simmons Bedding for six months.



## Joseph Malson

Joseph Malson was recently hired as a Seasonal Trackman within our Maintenance of Way Department. He attended Belvidere High School and Kutztown University. Prior to working at RBMN, Joseph was a Receiver at Lowes for a year and a half.



## Lucas Reichard

Lucas Reichard was recently hired as a Conductor within our Operations Department. He attended Salisbury Township High School and Bloomsburg University. Prior to working at RBMN, Lucas was a Construction Laborer with James A. Reichard Inc. for two years. Lucas loves to fish and golf in his spare time.



## Mark Schmehl

Mark Schmehl was recently hired as a Line Service Technician with the Reading Jet Center. He attended Schuylkill Valley and Upper Bucks County Aviation/Schmidt Training Center. Prior to working at RJC, Mark was a Courier Driver for St. Joseph's Hospital (Penn State Health) for two years. Mark is a Desert Storm Veteran and an amateur photographer.



# ARD *New Employees!*



## **Richard Butterworth**

Richard Butterworth was recently hired as a Part Time Steam Hostler/Fireman within our Mechanical Department. He attended Bishop Kenrick High School in Norristown, PA. Richard has been a Locomotive Engineer with NJ Transit for 25 years.



## **Ronda Chivinski**

Ronda Chivinski was recently hired as a Car Host within our Passenger Department. She attended Pottsville Area High School. Prior to working at RBMN, Ronda worked at Mangat Family Dentistry in the front office.



## **Nathan Fioravanti**

Nathan Fioravanti was recently hired as a Line Service Technician with the Reading Jet Center. He attended Muhlenberg High School. Prior to working at RJC, Nathan was a Line Service Technician for Reading Air Charter for four months. Nathan says he ran cross country in high school and was a member of a backstage crew manager his senior year.



## **Abram Kemmerer**

Abram Kemmerer was recently hired as a Trackman within our Maintenance of Way Department. Prior to working at RBMN, he was an Iron Worker at The Kemmerer Group, Inc. for six years.



## **Derrick Keener**

Derrick Keener was recently hired as a Trackman within our Maintenance of Way Department.



## **Jack McCoy**

Jack McCoy was recently hired as a Human Resource Administrator/Benefits Specialist within our Human Resources Department. He attended Penn Manor High School and Harrisburg Area Community College. Prior to working at RBMNRR, Jack was a Disbursements and Human Resources Coordinator at the PA College of Art and Design for three and a half years.



## **James Raffa**

James Raffa was recently hired as the Vice President of Market Development at RBMN. He attended Schuylkill Haven High School and Penn State University. Prior to working at RBMN, James worked at Lehigh Railway for 15 years.



## **Timothy Seyfert**

Timothy Seyfert was recently hired as a Line Service Technician with the Reading Jet Center. He attended Hamburg Area School District, Temple University, Reading Area Community College Fire Training Center. Prior to working at RJC, Tim worked at East Penn Manufacturing in the Health and Safety Department for six months. Tim has been a volunteer firefighter and EMT for 23 years.



## **Brooke Zellner**

Brooke Zellner was recently hired as a Car Host within our Passenger Department. She attended Tamaqua Area High School and the University of Rhode Island. Prior to working at RBMN, Brooke was a Lifeguard at Palmerton Memorial Park. Brooke was able to save two people during her tenure as a lifeguard.



# *Congratulations Leo Davis on your Retirement!*

Leo Davis retired on May 1, 2021 after a career that started way back when Ronald Reagan was President.

Leo began his career in November 1988 when he was hired on as a car host in the Passenger Department on the Blue Mountain and Reading Railroad. Leo then became full time for the Reading and Northern in 1992. Leo worked for another company full time for a few years in the mid 1990's, but remained on as a car host throughout that time.

Leo rejoined full time in November 1999 as a conductor. Then in 2000 Leo started working in the locomotive shop as an electrician. From 2004-2006 Dustin Berndt and Leo were in charge of the locomotive shop. In September 2006 Leo would make his final move on the railroad into the position of train dispatcher where he remained until his retirement.

Leo would become a fixture on third shift for almost 15 years and finally decided earlier this year that the time was right to retire.

We wish Leo all the best for his retirement. Leo's good attitude and kind heart will be missed by those with whom he worked with.



Leo Davis training on the new dispatch system in August 2020.



Leo Davis (left) pictured on his first day on the railroad.



# Congratulations!

ON YOUR NEW ARRIVAL



Congratulations go out to Joseph Zimmerman, Locomotive Electrician, and his wife, Amy, on the birth of their daughter, Ivy Lavina, on March 22, 2021. Ivy weighed 6 lbs. and was 20 ¼" long. Welcome to the Reading and Northern family, Ivy!

Congratulations to Chris Peters, Engineer/Dispatcher, and his wife, Laura, on the birth of their son, Bennett James, on April 22, 2021, at Lehigh Valley Hospital, Muhlenberg. Bennett weighed 7 lbs., 5.3 ozs. and was 19" long. Bennett's big sister, Brinley Jade, loves her little brother. Welcome to the RBMN family!



Congratulations go out to Darrin Keip, Engineer, and his wife, Desirea, on the birth of their son, Walker Easton, on May 11, 2021. Walker weighed 7 lbs. and was 20' long. Walker just became a member of the Reading and Northern family!



# EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

By: Sabine Fidler, HR Assistant

We are pleased to announce the Summer 2021 "Spotlight Employee", Darnell Young. Darnell has been employed with RBMN since 2011 and is currently a Signal Maintainer within our Signals and Communications Department. Prior to working at RBMN, Darnell worked at SAPA (currently Hydro) for a total of ten years in various departments. He also worked at Norfolk Southern for a brief period and managed two Ford dealerships prior to working at NS.

Darnell grew up in Mt. Holly, NJ, and graduated from Burlington County Vo-Tech, now Burlington County Institute of Technology in 1986.

Darnell has three sons. Aaron, soon to be 35 years old, who lives and works in New Jersey; Zavier, 24 years old, who lives in Virginia and works in DC; his youngest, Zakai, soon to be 20 years old, lives with Darnell and works and studies auto mechanics. Darnell's girlfriend, Crissy Engle, loves living life the way he does.

In his spare time, Darnell enjoys riding motorcycles, hanging out with friends, attending many diverse types of events, and visiting his kids and family as often as possible. He also enjoys happy hour at different venues, taking small trips on weekends, working on cars and bikes, watching action and thriller movies, and working on their house. Darnell says, "every day I try to celebrate being on this side of the dirt. Being in my 50s, I still take care of myself, have fun every chance I get, and stay close to my kids although they're grown. Always looking for a new adventure and staying positive."



Darnell was recognized by Jonathan Barket, Vice President of Communications and Signals who says, "Darnell Young joined the Signal Department in 2011 and in his ten years developed critical institutional knowledge. Darnell helps train new C&S team members on the inner workings of our department and how we interact with other departments. He tries his best to keep everything running smoothly while maintaining a smile."

## RBMN Sponsors Pet Adoption Weekend

By Jack McCoy-Human Resources Administrator/Benefits Specialist

Andy and the Muller family are extremely dedicated towards the care and proper treatment of all animals domestic and wild. Among the various charitable organizations supported by RBMN, the Animal Rescue League of Berks County remains at the top of the list. Twice a year, the Reading and Northern Railroad sponsors pet adoption weekends at the ARL. This year June 25th-27th marked the first of two sponsored weekends in 2021. We are proud to say that RBMN connected 79 deserving animals with proud new owners.

The weekend was hot and the hopeful adopters were patient as they waited outside due to the ARL's continued Covid 19 precautionary measures. Attendees registered online and were called into the facility once it was their turn to meet with an adoption counselor. We witnessed people discussing what type of animal they were targeting, some went shopping, many cooled off in their air-conditioned vehicles, and a few even slept on the steps of the ARL to pass the time.

Volunteering for these events is a very rewarding experience. You just can't help smiling each time you see someone take home a newly adopted pet to become a part of their family. Our 2021 Fall ARL pet adoption weekend is scheduled for November 12th - 14th.



# HAPPY BIRTHDAY

AUG. 1.....MICHAEL BISCHAK	AUG. 27.....JIM MIZNER	OCT. 5.....JEREMY GREEN
AUG. 1.....MATTHEW MINNICH	AUG. 30.....JAMIE SOLOMON	OCT. 6.....JEANETTE CULLINS
AUG. 4.....SAMUEL TRIPP	SEPT. 2.....MATTHEW NESTOR	OCT. 6.....JAMES DONLEY
AUG. 5.....TIMOTHY SEYFERT	SEPT. 3.....LEANNE MOSER	OCT. 7.....TINA MULLER-LEVAN
AUG. 7.....LYNN ENGLE	SEPT. 4.....COREY HAMM	OCT. 8.....ZACHARY BAKER
AUG. 8.....MATTHEW FISHER	SEPT. 5.....KIM REED	OCT. 9.....DAWN-MARIE BUBECK
AUG. 8.....CHRISTOPHER GARCIA	SEPT. 8.....DIANE LEIBY	OCT. 10.....PHILIP GESCHWINDT
AUG. 8.....ABRAM KEMMERER	SEPT. 9.....ANGEL BRAZDZIONIS	OCT. 10.....NICK RICCIO
AUG. 8.....JAMES RAFFA	SEPT. 9.....BRAD HANDLING	OCT. 11.....CHRISTINA ADAM
AUG. 8.....MICHAEL KOLBE	SEPT. 9.....SPENCER HOCKMAN	OCT. 11.....NICHOLAS SURUSKIE
AUG. 10.....LARRY FISHER	SEPT. 10.....NATHANIEL BILLET-DIAZ	OCT. 12.....RONDA CHIVINSKI
AUG. 11.....WILLIAM CLARK	SEPT. 11.....TIFFANY HOWELL	OCT. 13.....JOHN BROWN
AUG. 11.....BEVERLY HESS	SEPT. 11.....ZACHARY HUNTER	OCT. 13.....MATTHEW JOHNSON
AUG. 12...WILLIAM BUCKINGHAM, JR.	SEPT. 11.....THOMAS STEMKO	OCT. 14.....SHAWN BILLINGS
AUG. 13.....SHANE FREDERICKSON	SEPT. 12.....WAYNE MICHEL	OCT. 14.....CHAD FREDERICKSON
AUG. 13.....ANDY MULLER	SEPT. 12.....MARCUS SEARS	OCT. 14.....JENNIFER FREDERICKSON
AUG. 13.....RAY ZWEIZIG	SEPT. 16.....RUSSELLE MONROE	OCT. 18.....JASON READING
AUG. 14.....DUANE ENGLE	SEPT. 19.....CHUCK CARL	OCT. 19.....THERMAN MADEIRA
AUG. 14.....ERIK OSTROSKIE	SEPT. 19.....EVAN KERR	OCT. 22.....ALBERT SEILER
AUG. 16.....SPENCER BUCKINGHAM	SEPT. 19.....ERIC SLEKOVAC	OCT. 25.....ALVIN RINEER
AUG. 17.....RYAN TREXLER	SEPT. 22.....JUSTIN FETTEROLF	OCT. 26.....KEVIN McARDLE
AUG. 18...RONALD COLLINS-WEST, II	SEPT. 22.....RYAN FREDERICKSON	OCT. 28.....TRAVIS PREVOST
AUG. 19.....CHRIS GOETZ	SEPT. 24.....JEFFREY JONES	OCT. 28.....JOHN SHUCAVAGE
AUG. 21.....JUSTIN MENGEL	SEPT. 26.....THOMAS SKRUTSKI	OCT. 30.....RAYMOND CHIPPA
AUG. 23.....DAVID JOHNSON	SEPT. 29.....TYLER ACKER	OCT. 30.....JOHN HARTMAN
AUG. 24.....CALEB FETTEROLF	SEPT. 30.....BRIAN VAN BLARGAN	OCT. 30.....BENJAMIN LEONTI
AUG. 25.....RYAN PARKS	OCT. 3.....DARREN SPARE	OCT. 30.....WILLIAM RIEGLE
AUG. 26.....KYLE BARRELL	OCT. 4.....SCOTT BESHORE	OCT. 30.....LUKE WEIGHT

## Reading & Northern's Family Recipes

### Tomato-Corn Salsa

Eating light on hot summer days is a must for Meg Faust, Receptionist. This recipe is one she has used for family get-togethers and backyard barbeques. It is simple, light, and uses in-season vegetables.

#### Ingredients:

2 cups frozen corn, thawed & drained  
1 ½ lbs. tomatoes, seeded & chopped  
½ small red onion, finely chopped  
6 Tbsp. fresh chopped cilantro  
2 jalapeno chilies, seeded & minced  
1 Tbsp. balsamic vinegar

#### Directions:

1.) Mix all ingredients in a medium bowl to blend.  
2.) Season with salt and pepper to taste.  
3.) Serve with tortilla chips.  
Note: For an even fresher take, use locally grown corn and shave it off the cob in place of the frozen corn.

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



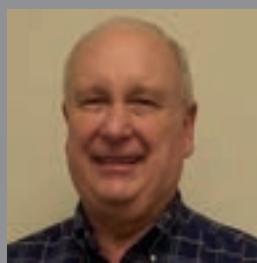
# RBMN Anniversaries

## 35 YEARS



May 1, 1986  
Chris Bost  
Engineer - Operations

## 30 YEARS



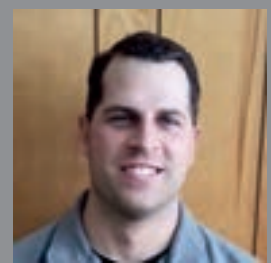
May 3, 1991  
Darrell Matz  
Car Host/Narrator/Conductor/  
Trade Show Info - Passenger

## 20 YEARS



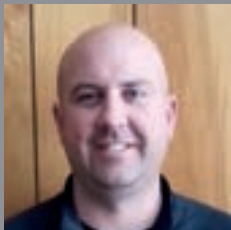
July 9, 2001  
Dave Kittner  
Trackman - MOW

## 15 YEARS

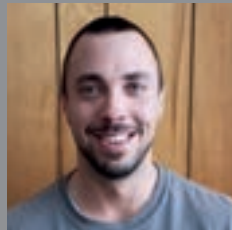


June 5, 2006  
Ryan Rupprecht  
Machine Operator - MOW

## 10 YEARS



June 20, 2011  
Shawn Slusser  
Lehigh Division  
Leader - MOW

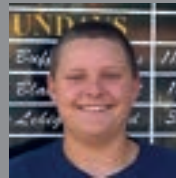


July 5, 2011  
Matthew Minnich  
Asst. Reading Division  
Leader - MOW

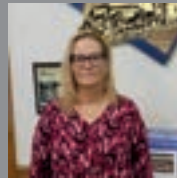
## 5 YEARS



May 16, 2016  
Liam Marsh  
Manager - Transload  
Logistics



June 25, 2016  
Ryan Frederickson  
Conductor - Passenger

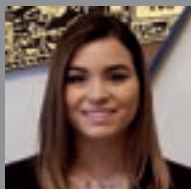


June 30, 2016  
Sabine Fidler  
HR Assistant -  
Human Resources

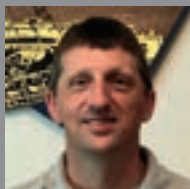


July 5, 2016  
Lori Chinchar  
Director - Customer  
Service

## 3 YEARS



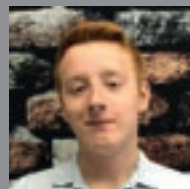
May 13, 2018  
Sierra Wanamaker  
Car Host/Hospitality Assistant/  
Ticket Agent - Passenger



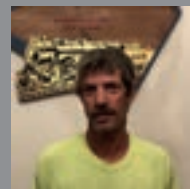
May 17, 2018  
Kevin McArdle  
Car Host - Passenger



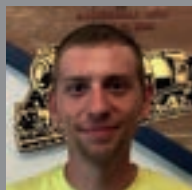
May 20, 2018  
Jennifer Frederickson  
Mascot - Passenger



May 21, 2018  
Boyd Lenich  
Seasonal Trackman -  
MOW



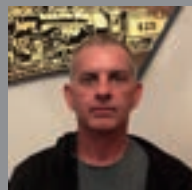
May 21, 2018  
Chuck Carl  
Machine Operator -  
MOW



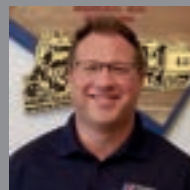
May 21, 2018  
Justin Fetterolf  
Assistant Foreman - MOW



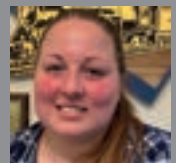
May 26, 2018  
Kim Reed  
Receptionist - Passenger



June 6, 2018  
Dennis Rosohac  
Machine Operator  
- MOW



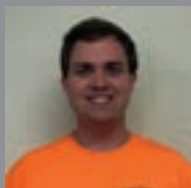
June 26, 2018  
Jason Winwood  
Assistant Vice President - MOW



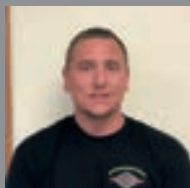
May 26, 2020  
Jess Moran  
Mechanical Administrator  
- Mechanical



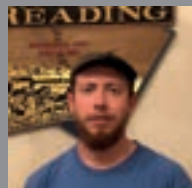
July 7, 2020  
Karl Laubenstine  
Vice President, Coal  
Marketing and Sales



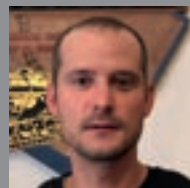
June 27, 2018  
Charles Allen  
Engineer/Conductor -  
Operations



June 27, 2018  
Erik Ostroskie  
Conductor - Operations



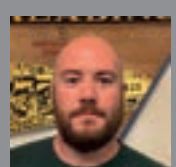
June 27, 2018  
Samuel Hollock  
Conductor - Operations



July 13, 2018  
Joseph Brown  
Manager, Rail Equipment  
- Mechanical



July 16, 2018  
Anthony DeBellis  
Conductor - Operations



July 27, 2020  
Jerry Binder, Jr.  
Car Shop Foreman -  
Mechanical



# READING & NORTHERN RAILROAD

THE ONLY LOCATION SERVING NORTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA

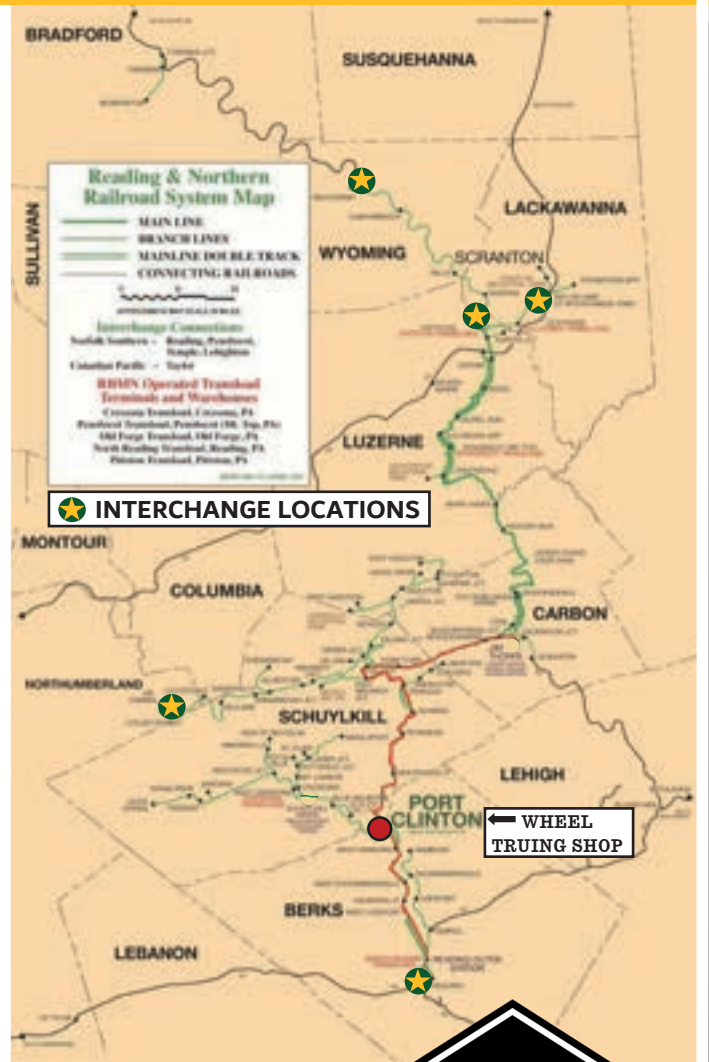
# WHEEL TRUING Service



## WHEEL CUTTING FOR LOCOMOTIVES



Wheel Truing Service Charge: \$600/per axle



- **RBMN Transportation Charge**
- Mehoopany/Taylor/Pittston Interchange: \$2000/locomotive
- Mt. Carmel Interchange: \$1500/locomotive
- Reading Interchange: \$1000/locomotive
- RBMN will complete a tow inspection at origin prior to any movements to RBMN's wheel shop.



"The Road of Anthracite"

www.RBMNRR.com • 610.562.2100



**Reading Blue Mountain &  
Northern Railroad Company**

**PO Box 218  
Port Clinton PA 19549**



On the afternoon of Wednesday July 14, 2021, MCQA with RBMN 3051 and 2 other locomotives can be seen spotting the first group of cars at the Locust Summit facility. The cars would be loaded the following morning for shipments to the Midwest.