



R & N Magazine

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

WINTER 2015 | VOL. 17, ISSUE 1



RECORD RIDERSHIP

OVER 19,000 RIDERS FOR SANTA CLAUS SPECIALS



TABLE OF CONTENTS



Keeping on Track.....	P. 2-3
Operations Highlights from 2014.....	P. 3-4
RBMN Provides Extra Service for Our Customers.....	P. 4
RBMN Calendars Available Now!	P. 4
Reading & Northern Helps Customers with Track Work.....	P. 5
Communications & Signal Department	P. 6-8
RBMN Makes Transition to Ship Xpress Software	P. 9-10
Safety — Everyone is Responsible	P. 10
Air Products Track & Clearance Project — FINALLY COMPLETE!.....	P. 11-12
Santa Claus Specials 2014.....	P. 13-14
The Journey to Pottsville	P. 15-16
RBMN Press Release	P. 16
Act 79: The Scrap Material Theft Prevention Act Amendment.....	P. 17
2014: Our Busiest Season to Date.....	P. 18
The Reading & Northern Railroad 2014 Holiday Party.....	P. 19-20
Virgina the Opossum: When Common is Special.....	P. 21-22
Employee Spotlight	P. 23
Welcome Aboard.....	P. 23
Happy Birthday!.....	P. 24
Ugly Sweater Party	P. 25
RBMN Anniversaries Acknowledged	P. 26

COVER PHOTO

ENGINEER AND CEO ANDY MULLER OF THE READING AND NORTHERN RAILROAD AT THE THROTTLE OF THE LABOR DAY 2014 STEAM RAILFAN SPECIAL AT DREHERSVILLE, PENNSYLVANIA. BY JIM SCHLEGEL.

EDITORS

JOLENE BUSER • FRANCES KARYCKI

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KEEPING ON TRACK

BY: WAYNE MICHEL, PRESIDENT

The year 2014 will go down as a critical year in the development of the future Reading & Northern. Many things go into building a long-term sustainable rail franchise. And sometimes it takes years for the efforts of the moment to show their benefits. Such is the case with many of our 2014 accomplishments.

This year we finally received the funding from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania that will enable us to break ground in 2015 on the long-planned Nesquehoning Bridge. We anticipate the Bridge will cost \$14 million when all is said and done and we are fortunate that Pennsylvania is going to assist us to the tune of ten million dollars in grant monies. We never would have accomplished this without the strong bipartisan support throughout all levels of state, local, and federal government. Although there are literally dozens to thank, we must pay special homage to two State Senators. Dave Argall, of Schuylkill County, has been a tireless supporter of this project since he entered the legislature. Joe Scarnati hails from a more western county but we are proud to call him a friend of our railroad and his support was crucial to getting this bridge project over the top.

When this Bridge is completed sometime in 2016, we will have the most efficient route from New England and eastern Canada to the port of Philadelphia and points south. We believe our partners at Norfolk Southern will see the benefit of using this facility.

Speaking of Norfolk Southern, NS announced its acquisition of the southern portion of Canadian Pacific's Delaware & Hudson Railroad. After reviewing the matter and talking with NS we came out in strong support of this acquisition. We believe it will strengthen NS and since NS is our Class 1 partner we believe we too will benefit. We know that NS will have a better route to New England and that market will open up more for our customers. An added benefit for RBMN and our customers is that NS provides for our customers to get haulage to the remaining D&H system near Schenectady, New York. Our customers can choose to route traffic via D&H to and from the CP system without restrictions thus providing our customers with competitive alternatives. The acquisition is likely to be approved by Memorial Day and benefits from the transaction should start

accruing to RBMN and our customers in the weeks that follow.

In order to keep our business flowing we have embarked on and finished a good number of track and signal projects. Wes Westenhoefer's article (see pp.11-12) details the exceptional work our team did on using monies provided to Air Products from a Pennsylvania Capital Budget grant to upgrade part of our Lehigh Mainline. As a result of our work, Track 2



THE CONDUCTOR.

between Crestwood and Solomon's Gap is now Class 3 welded rail, thus giving NS and CP the ability to pass their trackage rights trains. As noted in Wes' and Jon Barket's articles (see p.6 & p.11), there was also amazing work done by our MOW and Signal departments at the Dupont Interlocking near our Pittston Yard. These improvements will help our Class 1 tenants, which move more than 60,000 carloads a year over our Lehigh Main, keep their trains moving efficiently

which has long been a crucial objective of our owner/CEO Andy Muller.

Not all critical work is visible to the eye. This year we embarked on a changeover of our system to manage all of the traffic on our railroad. As Daren Geschwindt details (see p.9) we have been studying this issue for years and actually had come close to building our own software system for this purpose. In the end we chose to go with Ship Xpress to manage our business. That transition took place in November and it went smoothly. We believe this technology will make it easier for our customers to do shift requests and car tracing on the web. We also look forward to providing our crews with tablets so they can communicate with our systems in real time fashion. All in all we believe this change will improve our efficiency and reduce the chance for manual errors.

Our Operating department has also been busy taking care of our customers. As Tyler Glass explains (see p.4) we exceeded expectations by delivering close to 99% on-time performance for our scheduled railroad. What's more when service problems across the nation started to impact the delivery of cars to our customers, Reading & Northern stood up and provided FREE additional moves of so-called "hot cars" to our customers (See article on p.4). Providing extra service for customers is not an unusual occurrence at RBMN. We now regularly provide a number of customers with second daily shifts. All part of our effort to do job 1 – taking care of the customers.

Taking care of customers also means assisting them with their track issues. As Dan Gilchrist details (see p.5) we have been working with customers to repair/upgrade their sidetracks so as to ensure a smooth operation and save customers monies. We regularly offer to assist customers with their track inspections and/or trackwork as our busy MOW schedule permits. In the last sixty days our MOW crews went out and fixed sidings for three customers in order to make sure that safe operations could continue through the freeze-thaw cycle that is common to our region. As time permits we anticipate expanding this program in 2015.

Continued on page 3.

Continued from page 2.

And we also take care of future customers. This year we spent a good deal of time working to design an operating plan and signal modification to assist our friends at D&I Silica with the planning and permitting of their new facility at Tunkhannock. (see p.6 for discussion of signal work). We believe this facility will be up and running in the second quarter of 2015 and should result in a sizeable increase in our already strong Marcellus Shale frac sand business.

All of this attention to detail and to taking care of our customers pays off in both the long and near term. Despite losing over 1000 carloads of business as a result of a weaker coal export

market and the previously-mentioned service disruptions, we managed to increase overall carloads and revenue. Our record-breaking results were fueled by increased movements of coal in covered hoppers, coal through off-line facilities we helped develop over the last eighteen months, growth from facilities we had located in the last two years and aggressive marketing to increase market share with a number of our long-term customers. Our business development program is assigned the highest priority at RBMN and the results of our efforts continue to show dividends.

One area where our entrepreneurial spirit shows most clearly is our passenger business. As detailed in Matt Fisher's article (p.18), we

introduced a number of innovations in our passenger business this year. We ran more mini-trips in more communities, more Santa trips in more communities, and we introduced Bike Trains in the Lehigh Gorge. This year we were recognized by the travel web site Hopper.com as the number one excursion railroad in the country. The steps we have taken to broaden our offerings will make sure we stay number one for years to come.

All in all it was another very safe and successful year for the Reading & Northern. And thanks to the actions we have taken this year, I think it is abundantly clear that Reading & Northern will be keeping on track for years to come. ♦

Operations Highlights from 2014

BY: TYLER GLASS, EXECUTIVE VP OPERATIONS



Norfolk Southern train 13T is southbound on the newly refurbished track #2 at MP 169.5.

Wait, 2014 is over? So what did we do?

Our year started out with an absolutely brutal winter. We usually have one weather event a year that wreaks havoc one way or the other, but this year it was a few months of record breaking snow falls and below average temperatures that challenged operations. However, with the help of our Maintenance of Way (MOW) department we were able to get through the winter while still providing the usual top notch customer service.

In spring our newly acquired 4-axle locomotives, GP39RNs, was prepped for service. Our crews were genuinely thrilled to test them out and get acquainted with the newest additions. Later in the year we applied a new paint scheme to the locomotives and added the phrase "In Memory of Jeff Seidel" on each side of the four locomotives in this class. Early May we saw the reopening of our entire Pennsy Branch as the Maiden Creek Bridge was restored to service. Shortly thereafter we began customer service north of this location for the first time in many years.

As the year progressed RBMN heard of service challenges with the Class 1 carriers. These challenges stemmed from an unexpected growth in the business. Although initially we did not experience what others in the industry were, we eventually experienced the effects of service meltdowns. Shipments were delayed in the late summer, so we started operating special trains to expedite "vital" cars to customers. These special trains were received at our interchange points as soon as the cars were delivered by Norfolk Southern. This type of emergency service is just a part of doing business. It highlights our versatility and complements our commitment to great customer service.

We underwent a small facelift on our Lehigh Main this summer. It included the restoration of six miles of double track between Dupont and Seidel, welded rail on #2 track between Crestwood and Penobscot via crop and slide, along with the expansion of the interlocking at Dupont. All this work was accomplished by RBMN forces with a contractor installing ties and welding the rail.

Once the extensive tie work was completed, we started to operate dedicated ballast trains between Temple and Dupont. Trains were loaded Mondays at Temple, dumped along track #2 on Tuesdays, return for loading on Wednesdays at Temple, and dumping along #2 track again on Thursdays. This weekly cycle was repeated several times and pretty soon track #2 was surfaced between Dupont and Seidel. Track #1 also received the same activity with the ballast train to complete between Dupont and Laurel Run. By early September track #2 was open for all trains to use. This gave Canadian Pacific and Norfolk Southern, our trackage rights tenants, an additional point to pass trains on the Allentown to Binghamton, New York corridor. Our dispatchers would have to rethink how they have been operating trains on the Lehigh Main.

Along with the restoration of double track was the upgrade and expansion of the interlocking at Dupont. Prior to the expansion of the interlocking, RBMN trains only had the option to use #1 track between Dupont and Seidel for access to our Susquehanna Branch. With the addition of an equilateral switch we now have the option to use the double track between Dupont and Seidel which increases our operating flexibility.

Once again there was a high demand for our passenger business May through December.

During the months of October and December passenger operations ran excursion trains from at least two separate locations each day on weekends. For operations crews, this gives them a different perspective and adds variety for the gentlemen who otherwise spend their time serving freight customers.

We also saw changes in the management of the Operations Department. One of our managers moved on to another railroad which created an opening in the department. In early October, we welcomed Erik Yoder as Assistant Vice President Operations Planning. Erik has

spent his previous three years in the MOW Department which gave him with a good knowledge base regarding our system which helped tremendously with his new duties.

This year, as in 2013, we saw our average customer on time percentage at 99%. With well over 5,000 customer shifts per year this is no small feat. In order to provide the customer service at the expected levels, the Operations Department has crews working around the clock all year long. It never stops.

Of course every year I need to mention the people that make it all happen starting with

the conductors, dispatchers, and engineers (in alphabetical order). They consistently keep customer service at high levels and do it safely and efficiently. We also receive great support from the MOW department providing excellent track, the Engine House for keeping the engines running, and the Car Shop for maintaining equipment to work as intended. This allows operations to run efficiently as we continue to serve our customers and the environment. ♦

RBMN PROVIDES EXTRA SERVICE FOR OUR CUSTOMERS



The crew of the 801 backs into the siding at Omnova with 2 cars of plastic resin. Omnova is one of many customers who we ran special trains for, to place "Hot Cars" as soon as they arrived from the Norfolk Southern interchange.

BY: DAREN GESCHWINDT, AVP MERCHANDISE TRAFFIC

Recently, the railroad industry has been experiencing longer than usual transit times for rail shipments. Much of this is attributed to unprecedented increases in traffic volumes, which the railroad industry has not seen in several years. As a result, railroads, including our interchange partner Norfolk Southern Railroad, have been struggling to keep up with the increased car volume. Earlier in October NS sent a service advisory to inform their customers as well as their Shortline partners that extended transit times should be expected. We immediately notified our customers of the situation, and worked closely with customers to expedite shipments as best as possible. While we have seen some improvements in the transit time of rail cars, NS is still experiencing extended transit times on many shipments.

While our customer service team has always taken on the role of liaison between our

customers and the class 1 railroad, that role has become even more important over the past several weeks. We have been working diligently to monitor the status of all hot cars for customers, and to remain in contact with the Norfolk Southern Operations & Service Support Department to monitor the progress of these cars so that we can update our customers about their expected arrival.

There were more than a few times during recent NS service delays that several customers contacted us regarding "hot cars" that were enroute. Delayed arrival of these cars would have resulted in the shutdown of production lines at their facilities. To help to alleviate these delays, the Reading and Northern added additional weekend, early morning, and evening shifts. Most of our customers experiencing these delays are our plastics traffic, to which we have added three special

shifts for Tredegar and two special shifts for Pactiv, who both also require a Sunday crew. Others included Omnova, who received two special shifts, one of which was an evening on a non-service day; Sealy and AEP who both required early morning shifts, with AEP's service operating on a non-service day. We also provided Yuengling and Sterman Masser both with non-service day shifts.

The Reading and Northern understands the significance these service delays have on production for our customers. We appreciate all of our customers for their continued business and patience while we work through the service delays Norfolk Southern is experiencing at this time, and we strive to continue to provide exceptional customer service despite these delays. ♦



Reading Blue Mountain & Northern Railroad
♦ 2015 ♦

RBMN 2015 Calendars are now available for purchase!

Please call 610-562-2100 to place orders.

Calendars are \$8.00 including postage.

Reading & Northern Helps Customers with Track Work

BY: DAN GILCHRIST, EXECUTIVE VP MARKETING & SALE



A big part of running a railroad involves maintaining the track, so we have an experienced Maintenance of Way Department to keep our trains on track.

But a lot of our business is not on our tracks. It's on tracks owned by our customers, and our customers are responsible to maintain their tracks so they are safe for our operation.

Increasingly our customers are coming to us for assistance with track questions. Maybe they believe their track is in need of a checkup as part of safe operating practices. Sometimes our train crews point out an issue and our Traffic Department advises that the customer needs to do some repairs. Sometimes our MOW crews are working alongside the customer's track and they notice what appears to be an issue and we report that to the customer.

Whatever the case, the bottom line is that it is in our best interests to make sure that customers keep their tracks in safe operating condition.

Since our corporate goal is to keep the customer happy, we have regularly been willing to send out one of our inspectors to look at a customer siding and report on their findings. We do this at no charge to the customer and we provide a detailed written report. And we also provide our customers with a list of railroad contractors who we believe do a good job at a fair price.

Recently we have expanded our services at the request of customers.

For example this past spring, Yuengling Brewery received a proposal from a contractor and was concerned about the overall cost. Yuengling asked us to help assess the proposal for them and review the railroad specifications. We were able to work with the contractor and make some suggestions to the scope of work and helped bring down the cost for Yuengling.

More recently we were called by Quad Graphics in the Humboldt Industrial Park. While the Reading and Northern does not operate the railroad in the park yet, we are responsible for track maintenance and we will take over

operations by January 2017 at the latest. Quad Graphics knew their track needed some work but they did not know how much work actually needed to be done or how soon they needed to address it. Of particular concern was a road crossing which they thought might need to be replaced. Our folks came out to inspect and determined what repairs were necessary at this time and determined the road crossing would not need to be addressed for a couple more years.

Kimmel Coal is a large customer that had a sizeable track project to do. While some of the work could wait till next year, some work had to be done before winter. In this case we worked with Kimmel Coal to pay for our forces to come out for a couple of days and tune up the track well enough to ensure safe operation through the freeze thaw cycle and last into the spring when it can be more thoroughly addressed. Now both the customer and the railroad can be assured of the safest possible operation through the spring thaw.

Our favorite kind of track work is to refurbish old track and rebuild it to allow new business to start moving over it again. We recently reopened an old siding for Cambridge Lee Industries and put it back into service. The track had not been used for over many years and lied buried in silt. We were happy to get the new business started again and made arrangements to uncover the track and improve the drainage so it can be used safely and efficiently once again.

The primary purpose of our talented Maintenance of Way force is to keep our own tracks in top shape so we can maintain the highest levels of customer service possible. We are also using this talent as much as we can to help customers with their own track repairs. Time permitting we hope to be able to expand our track inspection or repair services for our customers over the years to come. Customers should please feel free to give us a call to see what assistance we can offer in this area. ♦



Improving the drainage at Cambridge Lee.

Crews begin track work at Cambridge Lee.



Newly acquired BT-2, Digger Derrick Bucket truck. Photo by Matt Collins.

Communications and Signal Department – 2014, A Year To Remember

BY: JONATHAN BARKET, AVP SIGNALS & COMMUNICATIONS

As I reflect on what has been accomplished over the past year, I am extremely proud to manage such a great department. The Communications and Signal Department has such dedicated and loyal employees that allow for some of the most major projects to be accomplished with very little issue. In 2014, we were able to complete numerous projects along with many others well on their way to completion.

Kicking off the new year this past January 2014, we worked with Norfolk Southern Railroad to assist in the removal of the old telegraph pole line between East Jim Thorpe and Lehighton which was located on the East Side of the RBMN. NS had used this pole line for their communications and had completed an upgrade, rendering the old pole line inactive. By cleaning up this unused pole line, it improved the look for both railroads, helping to make way for a cleaner environment.

In February, we were given the task to not only restore, but give functionality back to a signal that had been abandoned since the mid-1980s. The location is known as Pottsville Junction and the signal was part of the Automatic block signal system that helped control train movements from Pottsville to Reading and eventually Philadelphia. The system between Reading and Pottsville was removed from service in the mid-1980s due to the end of the passenger service to Pottsville. In five days, we were able to remove nearly one hundred year old signal, completely restore all components and a total rewire, as well as replace structural mounting components and reinstall the signal. Several days later, Pennsylvania Power & Light supplied power to the location and now the signal once again stands guard of this location reminding crews to proceed at restricted speed into and out of the town. For this project, we had a lot of help from Maintenance of Way to transport the signal to

the car shop, and from Tom Day for all welding work and re-fabrication.

March was a busy month for us as we completed a wide range of projects. In the beginning of the month, we were able to add an additional three miles of territory visible to the dispatcher, roughly between mile posts 99.5 and 102 on our Main Line. By doing so, it allows us to monitor rail conditions for potential issues such as broken rails or joints that would pull apart.

An aged crossing in Tamaqua received a face lift by replacing all wiring and relays inside the control case. Vine Street crossing installation dates back to the 1950s and was in need of an upgrade. We completed a brand new backboard and replaced nearly everything. New wiring and several relays allows this crossing to continue to stand guard allowing trains to pass and keeping the public safe.

Continued on page 7.



Pottsville Jct. Signal complete and working. Photo by Jonathan Barket.



Working with Norfolk Southern along RBMN Lehighton Branch to remove an inactive pole line. Photo by RBMN Signal Maintainer David Hutton.



Working alongside of car shop personnel, removing the nearly decade old signal at Pottsville Jct. for rehab work. Photo by Jonathan Barket.

Continued from page 6.

Later in the month of March, we were able to work with Maintenance of Way to clean up the right of way between Pittston and Mehoopany of all old signal equipment. This work not only improves the overall view of the railroad, but it allows for this equipment to be cleaned up, repaired, and ready for its next job somewhere along the railroad.

On the office end of things, we were able to upgrade our existing phone connections to a fiber line, improving service and at the same time cutting down on costs.

At the end of March, once again we worked with Maintenance of Way on the replacement of a two track crossing at Oak Street, MP 173.1 on our Lehigh line. At the same time the crossing was being replaced, we were able to move one of our gate mechanisms to put it back into spec with Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) requirements as well as allow for larger high and wide movements with Air Products.

Things did not slow down in April as we began

working on replacing antiquated lights in the town of White Haven with newer aluminum style lights. This provides better visibility for approaching motorists and at the same time making maintenance and cleaning easier and faster.

The week of April 21st, we worked closely with Maintenance of Way forces to replace the Water Company Crossing at MP 169.5 on our Lehigh line. As the project progressed, we were able to keep the signal system working by bonding the new rail strings as they were installed.

In June, we completed another upgrade at another Tamaqua Crossing, this time at Spruce Street. With the additional traffic that the Greenwood Branch has been receiving, we felt it was time to improve the warning time that vehicular traffic receives when a train occupies this crossing. We were able to upgrade the crossing so trains no longer need to slow down or stop when approaching. This allows for less delays for both the railroad and the general public and at the same time, creates a much safer environment.

Leading up to August, we had taken another piece of crossing equipment, a bungalow (structure that houses crossing equipment), and sent it through our car shop for welding and metal rehab. Once the metal work was complete, we fully insulated, painted, and outfitted the bungalow with new wiring, relays, and crossing control devices to update the protection at Main Street in Dupont, Pennsylvania. This upgrade was required for our Dupont Interlocking expansion to allow for the necessary warning times to approaching motorists of an approaching train. When Maintenance of Way started the replacement of the crossing, we were able to remove all the old equipment, replace all the cabling, and install our newly rebuilt Bungalow with the upgraded circuitry in four days' time.

Meanwhile, several other major projects were in the works. Dupont Interlocking located outside of Pittston was also receiving both a face lift and expansion. Two more switches were added and multiple other improvements were being done by Maintenance of Way to allow for train traffic to proceed at normal speeds down



Dave Hutton installing cable at Spruce St., Tamaqua, to enable better warning times to vehicular traffic of approaching trains. Photo by Matt Collins.



One and a half miles of additional signaled territory now visible by the dispatcher between MP 99.5 and MP 102. Photo by Jonathan Barket.



Cable Installation at Bridge St., Tunkhannock to allow for non-interruption of vehicular traffic while trains shift the new facility for D&I Silica. Photo by Matt Collins.



Crossing Indication signal installed and working at Bridge St., Tunkannock for new D&I Silica facility. Photo by Matt Collins.



Reinstallation of newly refurbished signal for Pottsville Jct. Maintainers Edward Kopeck and Matt Collins line up bolts to re-secure signal. Photo by Jonathan Barket.



Vine St., Tamaqua crossing receiving a new terminal board and relays. Maintainer Matt Collins begins to make final connections. Photo by Jonathan Barket.

either track. With these improvements, our department worked hard to install over 10,000 feet of cable, move a signal to a new location, replace two switch machines, and install two more switch machines on the new switches. On top of that, we also needed to rewire some of the interlocking and install a new power service and equipment to power our electric switch heaters to keep the switches free of ice and snow.

Coal Interlocking is coming along nicely with a repurposed cantilever from Schuylkill Haven as well as signals that were acquired from Norfolk Southern. Although this project is continuing, most of the major parts were installed in 2014. I look forward to elaborating on this subject in a future article.

We were also working on acquiring a piece of equipment to aid in our projects and emergency situations. A digger derrick truck with bucket attachments will allow us to be more self sufficient and not require the use of our highly demanded grapple truck. The truck will also allow us to install new poles,

maintain our aging pole line, aid in project installations, as well as help when an ice or similar storms wreak havoc on our power and communication lines. We will have the ability to get the railroad, communications, and signal system back in service in a reasonable amount of time. We were able to take delivery of this truck on November 29th. This is a great piece of equipment as it is the "Swiss Army Knife" of trucks and will greatly aid in the future projects that lie in store for the Signal Department.

As we wrap up a very exciting 2014, another project continues in Tunkannock, Pennsylvania. Working with D&I Silica, there are plans to install a large frac sand facility near the intersection of Route 6 and 11 at a busy railroad crossing named Bridge Street. To aid in the project's success, we were tasked to develop a failsafe system to allow the crossing to not activate when the facility receives a shift. A design was made, and with help from PennDOT and the Pennsylvania Utility Commission, the task of carrying out the design was able to move forward. This included installing roughly 5000 linear feet of

cable, multiple changes within the equipment housing, installation of twelve relays, six insulated joints, and a refurbished signal to display crossing status to approaching train crews. We also had to get cable across a river bridge, which included hanging over 330' of conduit that was installed using welded brackets to the bridge structure. This system will allow for safe operation at the crossing for both through trains as well as trains shifting the facility and at the same time minimizing vehicular traffic delays.

On top of all these projects, we still completed our required monthly testing at all signal and crossing locations as well as over 30 four year relay tests and over five, multi-day, ten year cable tests.

Our Communication and Signal Department here at the Reading and Northern Railroad has been and continues to be a hard working group that is dedicated to the railroad and takes pride in their work. ♦



Vine St. Tamaqua crossing rehab complete with new terminal board and relays. Photo by Matt Collins.



Two thirds of the signal department working on refurbishing Pottsville Jct. Signal. Left to right, Edward Kopeck, Darnell Young, Matt Collins, & David Hutton. Photo by Jonathan Barket.



RBMN MAKES TRANSITION TO SHIP XPRESS SOFTWARE

BY: DAREN GESCHWINDT, AVP MERCHANDISE TRAFFIC

One of the most important, but often unseen aspects of our company, is the database program that we use to keep track of all of the shipments that are on the railroad. For over twenty years we have used the GE Transportation database system (formerly RMI), and have been pleased with the program and its functionality. Over the past few years we were able to utilize many of its features to automate several of our processes and improve efficiency. The only downside was the annual cost associated with the program.

We are always looking for ways to improve our processes, while managing costs, and this was no different. Over two years ago we started looking at other options for our database management, and a small team was formed, which consisted of Mario Carannante, Tina Muller-Levan, Andrea Collier, Susan Ludwig, and myself. The team had the task of evaluating our options and making a recommendation to senior management.

One of the first options that we looked at was building our own database system to manage the cars on the railroad. Many of the class 1 railroads have done this, so we knew it could be done. The idea was that we would build a system that had all of the features that we liked from the RMI system, but not the extra features that we did not need. The team evaluated the costs associated with bringing in a staff of programmers to build the type of system that we would want. It was determined that, while this was possible, the cost of construction, and the ongoing costs associated with keeping it up to date would most likely outweigh any potential savings.

The next step was to evaluate other software options that were already on the market. The Railroad Management Software universe is a pretty small, and unique market, and it quickly became apparent that there were only three companies in the market with this specific type of software. We were already very familiar with the program that we were currently using, so we set up meetings with the other two companies to have them demonstrate their programs. While both demonstrations were good, it was clear that one of the products would work best for a railroad of our size. With that, the field was narrowed down to two companies, GE Transportation and Ship Xpress.

The team continued to evaluate the Ship

Xpress program to see how it compared to the program that we were currently using. Much to our surprise, the Ship Xpress program had been greatly improved since our last meeting with them nearly five years earlier. The new program now included many of the features and automation that we were looking for, as well as some other features that would be an improvement over the system that we were currently using. One such feature is its ability to build all of the financial aspects associated with a car into one step at the RWC level. This was something that required several steps in the old program. The program also was easier to navigate, and allowed users to search for cars much more easily. The most significant feature was the ability to have our train crews use electronic tablets to document when cars are moved on the railroad. These tablets would then update our database, and give both railroad staff and customers real time information regarding the movements of cars. This would replace the hand written documents that the train crews are currently turning in at the end of their day, and eliminate the time delay that currently exists between the crew placing a car and that information being reflected in the system. The Ship Xpress program and its features sounded great, and would even come with a cost saving vs the program that we were currently using. It almost seemed too good to be true.

While all of the features sounded great, we still wanted to talk to other railroads who were actually using the program to get their honest feedback. Many of these railroads had previously used the GE program prior to switching to Ship Xpress, and were familiar with both systems. In addition to talking to other railroads on the phone, Susan Ludwig also took the opportunity to meet with people when she attended the American Shortline and Regional Railroad Annual convention in San Diego in April. One such individual was Reilly McCarren, President of the Arkansas & Missouri Railroad, who took over an hour out of his busy schedule to meet with Susan and share his thoughts on the program. In the end, everyone who was using the Ship Xpress program gave it a very favorable review. It was this open and honest feedback from our railroad colleagues that played a significant factor in our decision making process.

In June the team gave our recommendation to senior management, and the decision was made to switch to Ship Xpress. Up to that point the whole process had been easy. It was all just hypothetical. Once it was decided that we would be switching, the reality began to set in that we were going to have a lot of hard work ahead of us in order to make sure that a transition of this magnitude would go smoothly.

Throughout the balance of the summer and fall we worked closely with Ship Xpress to prepare for the transition. One of the key components that needed to be addressed before the transition could begin was the integration of our weigh in motion scale. The scale is crucial for our coal trains, and needed to be able to weigh cars and then incorporate the weights into the waybills in the database. Ship Xpress spent over one month having programmers build the scale integration component. Once this was in place, the next steps were to set up all of the master tables and other back-end prep work to make sure the system would be ready to accept cars.

Getting everyone trained on the new system was one of the areas that required the greatest amount of time. Susan Ludwig and I flew to Jacksonville, Florida in late October to spend two days participating in in-depth training to learn the program. This was followed-up with three weeks of webinar training sessions for the balance of the Traffic Department staff and the dispatchers who would be using the system.

Several of our customers had been using the Shipper Connect web interface on the GE system to submit their shift information. In order to make sure that the transition went smoothly, we also needed to train all of those customers on the customer features in the new program. This training needed to be completed prior to transition day, so that customers would be able to seamlessly move to the new system for sending in shift requests and car releases when the new system would go live. A series of five webinars were scheduled for various days and times during the two weeks leading up to the transition, so that customers could log in to the session that was most convenient for their schedule.

With all of our preparation in place, the official transition took place on Friday November 14, 2014 and Saturday November 15, 2014. I would like to personally thank Susan Ludwig,

Stan Burczy, Chris Driesbach, Steve Werley, and Mike Sharadin who put in long hours on Friday, and worked through the weekend to ensure that the process went smoothly. Jonathan Barket in the Signal Department also worked into the evening on Friday to switch the scale communication process so that it would send the weight information into the new system. There was much to be done over the two day period. The Traffic Department staff audited all of the system files to make sure that everything was accurate, and began the process to bring over 2200 cars into the new database. This was a process that needed to be done manually for each car. On Saturday afternoon we went live with the new system and started interchanging trains with our connecting railroads and placing cars at customers. With the exception of some minor formatting issues, and adjustments to some of the automated reports, the transition went very smoothly and I could not have asked for anything better. As with any new program, there was a learning curve, and Susan and I provided additional guidance to the dispatchers and traffic staff as they started using the program for the first time.

The next few months will be an exciting time as we will continue to implement new items for both customers and the train crews. We will actively work with those customers who are not currently using the web interface, to get

all customers trained and set up with user IDs for the program. This will allow customers to submit all of their shift information electronically through the system, instead of submitting shift requests via faxes or emails. As we head into 2015 we will also be implementing the handheld tablets with the train crews which will allow them to move cars in real time on their tablet, and have it update in the system. On the Traffic Department side, we will be integrating our AEI tag reader at White Haven and automate the process for documenting the trackage rights trains that operate over our property. This is a process that has been documented manually for years. Lastly, we will be integrating our traffic and finance systems so that when a bill is created by the Traffic Department it will be inserted directly into the finance system, and eliminate the need for manual data entry in the Finance Department.

The past six months have been both stressful and exciting, and I expect the next six months to be equally exciting as we implement new features. ♦



Conductor Mike Kolbe holds an electronic tablet similar to the type that our crews will be using to document when they place cars at a customer's siding. The implementation of mobile tablets with our train crews will give customers access to real-time information for their railcar shipments.

Safety — Everyone is Responsible

BY: TYLER GLASS, EXECUTIVE VP OPERATIONS

Every so often I send out safety notices to our employees. The safety notices are a mix of things that pertain to recent incidents on our railroad and safety notices from other railroads that have experienced an unfortunate event. These notices explain what has occurred and what applicable rules or specific tasks Odeserve appropriate attention.

The safety notices I receive from other railroads are often tragic occurrences. Given that the job functions performed by the employees on other roads are typically very similar to everyday tasks performed by our employees, it makes us all think about how quickly things can happen.

Recently, at the request of our CEO, I began forwarding the safety notices to all employees regardless of their job at the railroad instead of just specific groups of employees. The idea is to keep everybody on their toes and keep safety in the forefront as we perform our duties.

When reviewing incidents on our railroad and those that occur on other railroads you will see that there are varying levels of experience for those involved. Some events are caused by just one lapse in judgment and other are a series of unusual events that lead to the incident.

As I recently stated in one of my safety notices, it is imperative that we do not become complacent on our railroad. Since it has been a long time since we had any major incidents, I do not want people to think something can never happen at our railroad. It can happen! Many of us who have been here since the early days of our railroad have our share of stories to tell and it was not always pretty. Thankfully, those days are long behind us but it is important to remember the lessons learned.

It is imperative that we all keep an eye on one another when we are out there doing our thing. Things can happen in a blink of an eye, and we are all in this together.

I'm closing this article with a poem that was passed on to me by a Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) inspector -

I Choose To Look The Other Way

I could have saved a life that day,
But I chose to look the other way.
It wasn't that I didn't care,
I had the time and I was there.

But I didn't want to seem a fool,
or argue over a safety rule.

I knew he'd done the job before,
If I called it wrong, he might be sore.
The chances didn't seem so bad.
I'd done the same, he knew I'd Had.

So I shook my head and walked on by,
He knew the risks as well as I.
He took the chance, I closed an eye.
And with that act I let him die.

I could have saved a life that day.
But I choose to look the other way,
Now every time I see his wife,
I'll know I should have saved his life.
That guilt is something I must bear,
But it isn't something you need to share.

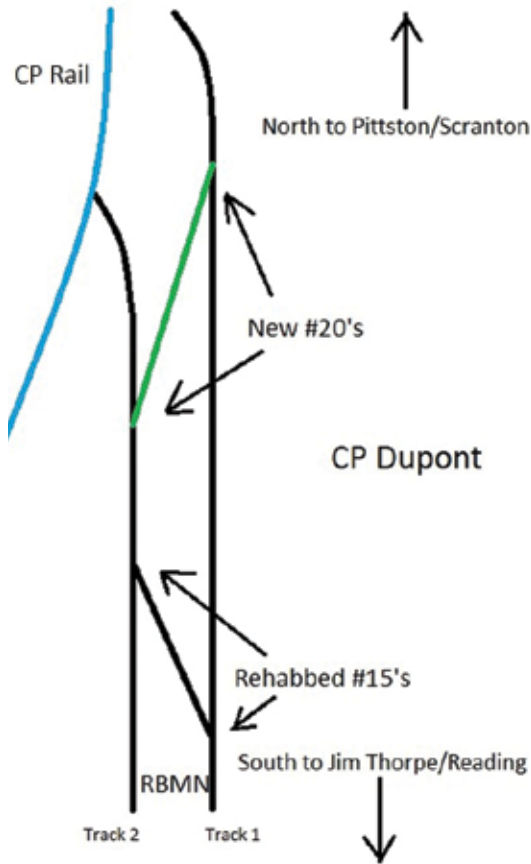
If you see a risk that others take,
That puts their health or life at stake,
The question asked, or thing to say,
Could help them live another day.

If you see a risk and walk away,
Then hope you never have to say,
I could have saved a life that day,
But choose to look the other way.

— Author Unknown

Air Products Track & Clearance Project – FINALLY COMPLETE

BY: WES WESTENHOEFER, VP MOW QUALITY CONTROL



Overhead drawing of CP Dupont, not to scale. Photo by Wesley Westenhofer..

In the summer edition newsletter, we discussed the progress on our largest undertaking this year in the MOW Department. Air Products & Chemicals Inc. was awarded a Rail Transportation Assistance Grant three years ago. After all of the paperwork and planning, we finally went to work on this project in 2014. I am pleased to report that we have recently completed the last phase of work. This was a complex project, with quite a scope of work and a very impressive result.

The scope of work included replacement of 10,000 ties, gaging 28,000 feet of track, surfacing thirteen miles of track, eliminated 760 joints in jointed rail, replacement of three mainline grade crossings (two of which are double track crossings) and last but not least, installation of two brand new #20 powered switches and rehabilitation of two existing #15 switches.

The impressive result is that we turned four miles of jointed rail into welded rail, re-tied and re-gaged seven high degree curves on our Mainline, improved train and driver safety at three heavily traveled grade crossings, turned six miles of 10mph class one railroad into 30mph class three railroad, and we installed a new interlocking which completely reconfigured and improved our ability to run trains between our Mainline, Canadian Pacific's Mainline, and our Susquehanna Branch.

This is certainly a milestone project for the track department. It was the largest undertaking by far when it comes to building new switches. The landscape at Dupont has changed completely as you can see in the pictures. Ninety-five percent of the track department employees put their skills to the test putting these switches together. Under the talented leadership of Duane Engle, our AVP – Maintenance of Way (aka Switch Artist), the guys put together a true masterpiece.

This is yet another showcase of what our team is capable of. Except for the tie, gage and joint elimination portions of this project, it was our forces who put this together. Additionally, we did this without letting the rest of our track system suffer. The most challenging piece of this puzzle was the interlocking work at Dupont. We could not have put this together if it not were for Duane Engle's artistic hand and dedication to this company. This project occurred almost two hours away from his home base of Port Clinton. He spent many nights away from his family to get this project finished right and finished on time and the company appreciates his dedication. I know Duane would agree that this work of art could not have accomplished if it were not for talented and skillful hands of the many men that helped him put this masterpiece together. You guys all did an awesome job! ♦



First of three switch timbers installed, facing north. Photo by Duane Engle.



Multiple switch timbers installed, facing north. Photo by Duane Engle.



First of two frogs installed, facing north. Photo by Duane Engle.



All timbers installed, facing north. Photo by Duane Engle.



Both frogs, switch points, guardrails, and closure rails installed and ballast dumped, facing north. Photo by Duane Engle.



South facing view of finished product. Photo by Duane Engle.



North facing view, ballast regulator providing final touches. Photo by Duane Engle.

Santa Claus Specials 2014

Santa Claus came to town to visit with children this year, and everyone was excited to see him!

The Reading and Northern Railroad would like to express the most sincere gratitude to all of the communities who were involved in organizing and running the Santa Claus Specials. We are very fortunate to have such cooperative neighbors along our railroad tracks through Schuylkill, Luzerne, Lackawanna, and Carbon Counties.

From Black Friday through December 21st, over 19,000 people took a ride on our trains through your communities spreading the Christmas spirit making this year our highest ridership on record in thirty years!

RBMN would like to thank Tamaqua, Tunkhannock, Pottsville, Schuylkill Haven, Minersville, Jim Thorpe, Port Clinton, White Haven,

Duryea, and Mountain Top for their continued assistance and enthusiasm.

Our company is so thankful to have such kind and appreciative riders in attendance on these trips. Throughout this season, we have not had one negative complaint about the trips through Facebook, email, or website. Our riders make our trips such a success, so we thank each and everyone one of you for visiting us this season.

Of course, these trips would also not be possible without such a dedicated staff. We thank all of our employees who make these trips possible for always putting in the extra effort to make sure they leave a wonderful impression on our riders.

We look forward to having you ride with us in 2015!





Santa received Christmas wishes from children and adults alike on the sold out Lehigh Gorge trains.



Santa Claus visiting children on the train in Jim Thorpe. Not only did riders view the winter beauty of the Lehigh Gorge, but also met with Santa and his helpers.



Santa Claus visited riders on Lehigh Gorge Scenic Railway in Jim Thorpe and Santa Claus Special trains throughout various communities on the Reading and Northern Railroad.



Seen in this photo is Santa, Mrs. Claus, and baby Claus on the Tunkhannock Santa Special trip





(Left to Right) Tom Palamar, City Administrator; Jim Muldowney, Mayor; Joe Devine, Councilman; Andrew Muller, Jr, CEO and Owner of Reading and Northern Railroad; and Dottie Botto, Councilwoman before the train departed from Pottsville to travel to Reading, PA.

The Journey to Pottsville

BY: TYLER GLASS, EXECUTIVE VP OPERATIONS

On July 27, 1981 Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA) operated the last Philadelphia to Pottsville passenger train thus ending over 140 years of passenger service rolling in and out of downtown Pottsville. A few short years later the track between Pottsville and the line at Mt. Carbon was removed by Conrail.

Fast forward to December 1990. Andrew Muller, Jr. purchased from Conrail what remained of their rail assets in Schuylkill County. This included the line that went through Mt. Carbon and terminated in Middleport. Among the many goals Andy Muller had with his new railroad was to restore rail service to downtown Pottsville. Although the tracks were gone, the 2000 feet of right of way, including the overhead Route 209 bridge, remained intact.

In 1992, RBMN and the City of Pottsville were engaged in talks to restore the tracks to the downtown area. 84 Lumber was a landowner adjacent to the old right of way and was a key component to the restoration of the line at that time. RBMN was relying on 84 Lumber to provide some of the seed money to restore the tracks.

By early 1993 Andy Muller made the first move in accomplishing the goal of returning passenger service to Pottsville. There was a derailment of several coal cars in the vicinity of the junction where the tracks went to downtown Pottsville. In order to minimize rerailling costs, Andy decided he would use a rail crane to reraill the cars. In order to do so, rail access alongside the cars was necessary so Andy decided to install a switch located at a point that would allow for future rail access to connect with RBMN's branch. The location of the switch would later be named Pottsville Jct.

Shortly thereafter, RBMN's enthusiasm waned

due to 84 Lumber's lack of support as they could not justify the costs for the occasional railcar.

Around 1996 Andy was walking the old right of way that lead to downtown Pottsville. During this walk he came upon the construction of a new Kentucky Fried Chicken which was being located just north of the Route 209 bridge. Andy had a conversation with Rick Bower, the owner of the KFC. Andy talked about rail access and asked that Mr. Bower preserve the right of way when constructing the parking lot. Mr. Bower complied with the request, which would be a gesture that aided in minimizing the costs with restoring the rail line.

The restoration of the rail to downtown was still on the agenda for the City of Pottsville and Mayor Terence Reiley was spearheading the initiative. Unfortunately, Mayor Terence Reiley passed away at a young age from leukemia before the concept became a reality.

Then in June 2000 the City of Pottsville received federal grants with the help of US Representative Timothy Holden which got the rail restoration underway. The rail restoration was a vital piece in the Union Station project. By that time, John Reiley, the father of Terence Reiley, was the mayor and would see all of the necessary steps through over the next decade.

The first 1200 feet of the rail line was finally restored in 2006, which brought the rail line to the Route 209 overhead bridge. Then in 2010 the remaining 600 feet were constructed to the Union Station. The rail line was now complete.

The new Union Station building was dedicated in June 2011. RBMN operated a private train to the event to commemorate this historic event. Although the tracks were now intact, RBMN's line between Cressona and Mount Carbon (about four miles) was not in suitable for

operating public passenger excursions.

When RBMN took over the rail operations in Schuylkill County from Conrail in 1990, in many cases, the infrastructure was found to be in deplorable condition. Finally in 2013 the four miles between Cressona and Mt. Carbon were given an extensive upgrade as a part of our track work on the Pottsville Branch between Port Clinton and Mt. Carbon. A total of 2300 ties were replaced and over 22,000 feet were surfaced on the four mile stretch. This work allowed the track speed to be raised from 10 MPH to 30 MPH.

Additionally, the old signal bridge in Mt. Carbon that used to span multiple tracks was restored. The signals above the main track were lit up for the first time in over thirty years.

This year we worked closely with Mayor James Muldowney and his staff to finally bring passenger trains into downtown Pottsville. Sunday, September 21 we operated our first excursion, an invitation only train that was chartered by Mayor Muldowney. This excursion operated from Pottsville to Reading and return. On the return trip the guests were treated to a tour of the RBMN headquarters at Port Clinton. RBMN would have a repeat trip on November 15.

Two days of Santa Claus trains were also operated on November 30 and December 21 with great success.

Pottsville is now back on the railroad map. It took over two decades and there were many fine folks that put in a lot of effort to see this project completed. Although there are a few mentioned in this article, there were many more that were also involved. We thank them all. ♦



(Left to Right) Therman Madeira, Jim Muldowney, Kevin Kennedy, and Andrew Muller, Jr. before loading the first train at the Union Station in Pottsville, Pennsylvania, on September 21, 2014.



Southbound QARG (Reading Turn) poses with two new four axle locomotives after making a pick up at Port Clinton at 18:45 on Wednesday, September 24. Left to right are Engineer John Smolczynski, Tyler Glass, Dispatcher Nathan Bissey and Conductor Kyle Sanders. Photo by Philip Banks.

"The Road of Anthracite"

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

GOVERNOR VISITS READING & NORTHERN RAILROAD

Port Clinton, PA, October 29, 2014 – On Monday, October 27, Governor Corbett visited the headquarters of the Reading and Northern Railroad in Port Clinton, PA.

During the hour long visit the governor was accompanied by Reading & Northern Railroad owner and CEO, Andy Muller, Jr. Muller began the visit by thanking the Governor for his administration's support of the railroad's ambitious plan to build a new railroad bridge across the Lehigh River near Nesquehoning. This \$14 million project has been in the works for over a decade. In August, the Commonwealth pledged \$10 million towards the cost of the bridge with the railroad putting up the rest of the money. When completed the bridge will offer the most direct and efficient route between Philadelphia and Northeast Pennsylvania and points beyond.

During the tour Muller described the process by which he built the railroad from a few miles to its current status as the largest privately owned railroad in Pennsylvania.

The tour included a visit to the dispatching center that controls train activities over the 320 mile railroad as well as the engine house where the 30+ locomotives are maintained and repaired. The tour ended with a visit to Mr. Muller's vintage private rail car, which is used for excursions along the railroad.

Reading & Northern is the largest privately owned railroad in the Commonwealth. It operates a 320-mile regional rail system in nine counties in eastern Pennsylvania and employs over 180 employees at the railroad and related businesses. In 2013 over 85,000 carloads moved over Reading & Northern railroad lines. ♦



Standing from left to right is Jon Hopcraft, Lt. Matthew Johnson, David Johnson, Adyson Johnson. Sitting from left to right is Senator David Argall, Governor Tom Corbett, Representative Tina Davis.

ACT 79: THE SCRAP MATERIAL THEFT PREVENTION ACT AMENDMENT

BY: LIEUTENANT MATTHEW JOHNSON, AVP COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

The Scrap Material Theft Prevention Act (SMTPA) was amended and Senate Bill 1077, now act 79 of 2014, and was signed into law on June 26, 2014. This new law will require scrap processors or recyclers to register with the state police and also adds railroad materials to the list of items that may only be sold to a scrap processor through a commercial entity. This act was the end result of ongoing support from the Reading and Northern Railroad along with Senator David Argall and State Representative Tina Davis.

The Reading and Northern Police Department is responsible for over 300 miles of track and thousands of acres of property stretching across eight counties. Theft of railroad materials has been a frequent problem. We receive calls from the general public and receive reports from many of our employees about missing railroad materials. We follow leads to many scrap processors looking for our missing materials, which consisted primarily of rail, anchors, spikes, plates, and joint bars. Railroad materials in particular are targets of theft due to their higher grade steel quality and to the increase in scrap prices.

Questioning scrap dealers was not always easy, as we often had a difficult time obtaining information from dealers as to why they

purchased railroad materials, and whom they purchased the materials from. When informed that an individual is not permitted to possess railroad materials, that only a representative from a railroad should be in possession of these metals, we received varying responses. Scrap dealers responded with answers ranging from they did not accept these items, to they did not see the items brought in, to not knowing they were railroad materials. Some even claimed to have had permission from a railroad to receive the materials, or that it was given to them by previous generations of family.

It was very difficult to investigate and prosecute these cases of scrap metal theft without the cooperation of the scrap metal yards. Our first approach was to educate scrap processors on what railroad materials were. We visited scrap processors throughout our coverage area and showed them photographs of various kinds of railroad materials that might be turned in by thieves. We asked them for their cooperation in obtaining information from individuals selling railroad materials to dealers, such as acquiring their name, driver's license and vehicle information. We received some cooperation from scrap processors, but not from all of them. We knew something more had to change, but we were unsure of what we could do.

Motivated to make effective changes to the current SMTPA laws regarding scrap yards and theft of railroad materials, I approached the Reading and Northern management team. I explained that adding railroad materials to the SMTPA act would prohibit scrap processors from accepting these materials. It was collectively agreed that handling scrap theft was a priority and the next steps were to move forward with elected officials to voice these concerns. Senator David Argall's office appointed Jon Hopcraft to assist in moving this amendment to SMTPA laws forward. Jon agreed that only railroads should be recycling railroad items, not individuals from the general public, and over the next two years Jon and I determined what the definition of railroad materials is to be. In late 2013, a clear definition was made and would be drafted into the proposed amendment.

After years of hard work, I am pleased to have been a part of having this bill signed into law, and I would like to thank all of those involved who dedicated their help into getting this done. This bill makes Pennsylvania one of the first states in the country to put this type of law into effect. We hope that this will lead to fewer thefts and safer railroading not only here at the Reading and Northern but for all railroads across the state. ♦

2014: OUR BUSIEST SEASON TO DATE

BY: MATT FISHER, PASSENGER MARKETING ADMINISTRATOR

The Lehigh Gorge Scenic Railway has been very busy in 2014. In addition to our regularly scheduled trips out of Jim Thorpe into the Lehigh Gorge State Park, we had several special excursions throughout the season. As we have for the past several years, the Lehigh Gorge also ran two Pennsylvania Dutch Treat Trains in 2014, and both were highly-successful. These trains run from Jim Thorpe to White Haven and back, and include a "Pennsylvania Dutch Treat" which consists of ring bologna, cheese, pickles, olives, pretzels, and shoofly pie as well as soft drinks.

On May 3, the Vosburg Flyer ran in conjunction with the Lackawanna and Wyoming Valley Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society. This trip ventured far and wide on the northern end of the Lehigh Division in the Wyoming Valley. We coordinated a train ride from White Haven to Jim Thorpe and return on May 17 for the second annual excursion sponsored by the White Haven Ambulance Association. The Tamaqua Historical Society sponsored Summerfest train rides on June 15 which we ran three trips that left Tamaqua and ran to New Ringgold and the Hometown High Bridge. On July 5, the Rotary Club of Mountain Top sponsored a trip from Mountain Top to Jim Thorpe and return. We visited the Number 9 Coal Mine this summer with an information table on the LGSRY. Al Keller sponsored the Anthracite Express on Labor Day with steam locomotive No. 425. This train operated from Port Clinton to Mahanoy City and took in the Hometown High Bridge on the return trip. On September 13, Al Keller also sponsored the Annville United Methodist Church Charter Train which ran from Port Clinton to Jim Thorpe and return.

The Lehigh Gorge Scenic Railway also ran our annual charity-sponsored excursion from Duryea to Jim Thorpe in September with steam

locomotive No. 425. This ride benefited Care and Concern Free Health Clinic, Greater Pittston YMCA, and the Pittston Memorial Library. The members of these three organizations are well-organized and highly coordinated, and the ride went smoothly, as always.

Also in September, we ran three trips for Schuylkill Haven Borough Day. This year was extra special, as the trains were pulled by our steam locomotive No. 425 to mark the 26th Annual Schuylkill Haven Borough Day. Steam locomotive No. 113 made an appearance at this event providing for some fantastic photo opportunities for festival-goers.

We reintroduced passenger service into Pottsville to Union Station on September 21 with an inaugural trip that was instantly sold out due to the interest of Pottsville Mayor James T. Muldowney and local dignitaries.

Continuing tradition, we operated Autumn Leaf Excursions from Port Clinton to Jim Thorpe and return in October in conjunction with the Jim Thorpe Fall Foliage Festival. There were six excursions this year. Four of these rides were pulled by diesel engines, and two were powered by steam locomotive No. 425. As we have for the past few years, the LGSRY also ran trips to the Hometown High Bridge from Jim Thorpe on weekends throughout October in addition to hourly trips into the Lehigh Gorge State Park.

We returned to Pottsville on November 15 with a trip that was offered to the general public. This train left Pottsville Union Station bound for North Reading. On the return trip, just as on the September 21 trip, riders were given a tour of the Port Clinton Reading and Northern Headquarters which lasted approximately one hour.

A major accomplishment for the Lehigh Gorge Scenic Railway in 2014 was our new partnership with Pocono Biking. There was much excitement

and desire by customers to ride the Bike Trains. Originally, there were only two weekends scheduled. Trains operated twice daily giving riders many options, including the chance to ride through the Lehigh Gorge into White Haven onboard the LGSRY, and then bike the return trip to Jim Thorpe. Due to the overwhelming popularity, Bike Trains were added throughout the year. All total, Bike Trains operated from Jim Thorpe to White Haven every month from June through November, with the exception of October.

Thanks to the hard work and support from the mechanical department, we had a fantastic year and ran equipment that is better than ever, which included a third open air car "The Spring Song." The success of the Lehigh Gorge Scenic Railway would not have been possible without the support and assistance of the crews in the car shop and engine facilities, the hard work and dedication of Passenger employees, and the continued support of the Operations Department and management.

Another key to this successful year was the Passenger management team. We saw Gerry Feissner and Lisa Matz take on more critical roles in the department. We welcomed Ray Zweizig and Steven Kolbe into the department this year. Also, thank you to every employee at the RBMN who has helped in our success this year. Passenger operation is great public outreach to communities and riders alike.

We are already well into planning our schedule for 2015, and we have some exciting additions for this 10th year of LGSRY operations, and 30th year of passenger operations on the RBMN. Keep an eye on our website (www.LGSRY.com) for the 2015 schedule. See you in spring! ♦



The autumn colors just starting to turn in the Lehigh Gorge in early October.



The Reading and Northern Fall Foliage Excursion train in the Lehigh Gorge on its first excursion for 2014 on October 4.



Fall colors beginning to turn in the Lehigh Gorge.



An early Fall Foliage Excursion train in the Lehigh Gorge.

The Reading & Northern Railroad 2014 Holiday Party

The Reading and Northern Railroad hosted their annual Holiday Party on December 13, 2014 at Best Western Genetti Inn & Suites in Hazleton, Pennsylvania. This December we were fortunate Old Man Winter did not put a damper on the festivities as last December, but instead allowed for enough snow fall to blanket the surrounding scenery and set the stage for a wonderful winter gathering. Party favors were in abundance, and anticipating New Years' resolutions, the newly formed Wellness Committee distributed pedometers to count steps on the dance floor, and in everyone's day to day. Guests enjoyed dinner, dancing, and a visit from Old Saint Nick for a chance to tell him all their Christmas wishes. Santa must have determined that RBMN employees were nice, and not naughty, and presented employees with a ten ounce bar of silver, courtesy of Muller enterprises. Another spectacular holiday party came to a close, and lifted our spirits in time for the upcoming holiday season.



L to R: Chris Peters, Jeff Knadler, Nate Mengel, Ryan Bausher, Jason Trainor, Kyle Sanders, John Smolczynski, Tony Weachock, Carter Jones, Mike Kohl.



Andrew Muller Jr, RBMN CEO and Owner, addressing the employees at the holiday party



From left to Right: Santa, Beverly Hess, and Andrew Muller, Jr pictured as Santa surprised all of the RBMN employees with a gift of a 10 ounce bar of silver



Susan and David Ludwig



Robert Hill, Frances Muller, Mother to Andrew Muller Jr., and Betty Clapper.



Jen Kraemer, Mike Sharadin, Jason Trainor, and Carrie Trainor as they danced the night away. Matt Johnson can be spotted in the background on the left hand side of this picture.



Left to Right back row: John Smolczynski, Ryan Bausher, Nate Mengel, Left to right front row: Kara Kunkel and Kyle Sanders enjoying the cocktail hour before the holiday dinner.



From left to right: William Frederickson, Tyler Glass, and Allen Keller.



Wayne Michel, RBMN President, addressing the holiday party attendees about the railroad business in 2014

Virginia the Opossum: When Common is Special

BY: PEGGY HENTZ, PRESIDENT/EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Jaw is fractured in three places.



Splint is applied.

It's been a wild winter for the staff of Red Creek Wildlife Center. We received our very first Snowy Owl this winter. It arrived from Harrisburg with a head injury, and received a great deal of fanfare from the media and birding groups. As of this writing, the snowy owl is well on its way to recovery.

We also had a looney day when seven common and red-throated loons arrived within a few short hours of each other. During an ice storm, these birds mistook roads for open waterways, crashed and stranded themselves. Six of these birds were successfully released the following day, and the Reading Eagle newspaper covered their story.

While our more unusual patients were receiving media attention, behind the scenes a very common critter was quietly recovering from extreme wounds. A Virginia Opossum had won the hearts of everyone who worked with her. Her survival is the result of a great deal of effort and care from the moment she was found.

She arrived on November 6th through a network of caring folks at the Reading and Northern Railroad. Beverly Hess dubbed the girl Virginia after her species name.

Her condition was poor. Having been struck by an automobile, she had numerous facial fractures, including her jaw, which was broken in three pieces. She also had a large, deep gash on her abdomen and weakness in her rear legs.

Most animals would not have survived such extreme injuries, but as I examined her, she had that resilience in her eyes that I've seen before with this species. If she had the will to try, so did I.

The largest impasse was securing the jaw so that it could heal. Since her critical condition would most likely not survive surgery, we had to creatively devise a splint that would secure the jaw, and allow for feeding. As a team, we designed the splint as it was being applied, adjusting as we worked. Once secured, the stabilization and pain meds appeared to give relief, for she relaxed and rested.

Virginia's daily critical-care included frequent handling for medications, hand feeding and wound care. She became quite gentle, and allowed us to use the tenderness needed to work around such painful and sensitive facial fractures.

The splint was removed three weeks later and we were very happy to see that she had movement of her tongue and jaw. Within one month, she could eat soft foods on her own. Her abdominal injury has completely healed and her legs are much stronger.

Only time will tell if Virginia will recover enough to be released. She has the determination to make it that far, but if not, she will always have a home at Red Creek. ♦



Wearing the splint.



Splint removal at three weeks.



One month later.

THE RESCUE

On November 5th, 2014, Kim and Rick Zerr were lifesavers for Virginia the opossum.

Kim noticed an injured animal in the middle of the road on her way home on a rainy, cold evening. Once home, Kim sent her husband, Rick, to check on the welfare of the animal.

The opossum had been hit, but the only noticeable injury was a little blood on its mouth.

While Rick was guiding the opossum off the road for safety, a large truck quickly approached the scene. Rick thought the driver would not see the animal and hit it once again. Much to his surprise, the driver saw the animal he slowed down making sure to go around the animal.

Rick was impressed by the concern shown by the driver as he suspected that the animal would not be noticed.

The next morning, Rick and Kim Zerr were on their way to a trip with Andrew Muller, CEO and owner of the Reading and Northern Railroad. On their way past the location of the opossum, Rick noticed it had moved back into the middle of the road. Rick and Kim recognized that it needed to be moved once again for safety.

Running late to the airport due to the rescue, they called Andy Muller to tell him of the animal. Andy Muller immediately advised how to reach Red Creek Wildlife to rescue the opossum and get it safely to their facility.

Red Creek was able to find and save the animal with the help of Kim and Rick Zerr. Virginia is alive and hopes to be able to be released into the wild once again!

Thank you Rick and Kim! ♦

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

BY: CRYSTAL ARNDT, HR ADMINISTRATOR



I am pleased to introduce this quarter's "Spotlight Employee," Jason Trainor. Jason came to work for RBMN in November of 2005 as a Conductor and is currently Assistant Vice President of Field Operations within our Operations department. Prior to working for RBMN, Jason was employed by Slusser Brother Construction Company.

Jason was born in Washington County, Maryland and raised in Chambersburg, Pennsylvania until 1989 when he moved to Drums, Pennsylvania. He still resides in Drums, Pennsylvania with his wife, Carrie, and their two rescue cats, Gizmo and Fivel. Gizmo was found along the Reading and Northern Railroad and Fivel's mother was rescued by a family friend who was pregnant with him at the time. Jason also has family in the New England states, Maryland, and West Virginia.

In his spare time, Jason likes to be outdoors hiking and biking. He also enjoys shooting pool, wine making, cooking (his friends will tell you how good of a cook he is), and spending time with the wife of course – (shopping)!

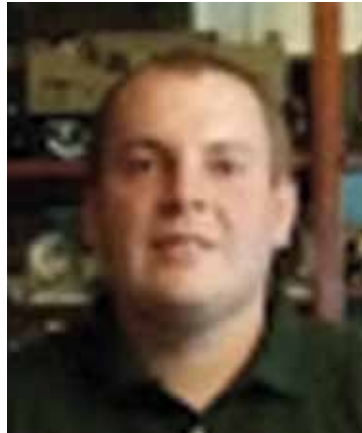
Jason would like to "thank the Muller family for everything they do for every person that has an opportunity to work for them." Congratulations to Jason!

As the "Spotlight Employee," Jason will receive a \$50.00 gift certificate to dine at a local restaurant.

WELCOME ABOARD NEW EMPLOYEES



Brock Krumanocker was recently hired as a Track Worker within our MOW department. He attended Kutztown Area High School and Harford Community College. Brock previously worked for Firestorm Restoration as a Technician.



Matthew Fisher was recently hired as Marketing Administrator within our Passenger department. He attended Lehigh Area High School, Lehigh Carbon Community College, Bloomsburg University and Wilkes University. Matthew has worked for Lehigh Gorge Scenic Railway as a Ticket Agent, Car Host, Narrator, and Conductor for 10 Years.



Andrew Sauppee was recently hired as an Industrial Locomotive Electrician within our Mechanical department. He attended Fleetwood Area High School and Pennsylvania College of Technology. Andrew previously worked for Pro Max Fence Systems as an Access Control Service Technician.



Scott Beshore was recently hired as a Mechanic within our Mechanical department. He previously worked for W.E. Yoder as a Mechanic.

Happy Birthday!

JAN. 1	LOUIS BUGNO	FEB. 18	BILL FREDERICKSON
JAN. 1	BRIAR STERN	FEB. 21	KENNETH MILLER
JAN. 2	DUSTIN BERNDT	FEB. 22	TYLER GLASS
JAN. 2	LARRY WELLER	FEB. 24	JONATHAN BARKET
JAN. 3	NICHOLAS ALBERSWERTH	FEB. 25	BRENDLE STUFFLET
JAN. 4	STANLEY BURCZY	FEB. 26	CAROL MULLER
JAN. 6	RYAN LAMM	FEB. 28	STEPHEN GILBERT
JAN. 10	GEORGE RINEER	FEB. 29	JOHN SMOLCZYNSKI
JAN. 15	KEVIN FRY	MAR. 1	MATTHEW FREDMONSKI
JAN. 16	DANIEL GILCHRIST	MAR. 2	STEVE BALTHASER
JAN. 17	DAVID LAPALLO	MAR. 2	RICHARD BERNHARDT
JAN. 27	MARIE KNADLER	MAR. 3	DAN PUKSAR
JAN. 28	JOHN WASSEL	MAR. 3	DARNELL YOUNG
JAN. 29	ANGELA POTTS	MAR. 3	JOSEPH ZIMMERMAN
JAN. 29	RAYMOND SCHWENK	MAR. 7	HEATHER MILLER
FEB. 3	ANDREA COLLER	MAR. 8	JAMES DANNER
FEB. 5	MICHAEL PAINTER	MAR. 10	HARRY MOORE
FEB. 9	JAMES COOK	MAR. 19	MARY CULP
FEB. 9	AMY MILLER	MAR. 20	NATHAN BISSEY
FEB. 11	KERI GALLAGHER	MAR. 20	MATTHEW MIZIKOSKI
FEB. 11	MICHAEL KOHL	MAR. 23	WALTER GREUSEL
FEB. 12	BENJAMIN COLE	MAR. 24	RYAN RUPPRECHT
FEB. 12	DUANE ZIMMERMAN	MAR. 29	ELIZABETH NEIFERT
FEB. 15	MATIA McKEEVER-MULLER	MAR. 30	KATHRYN WAGNER
FEB. 17	DAVID EVELY	MAR. 31	JOLENE BUSER

Ugly Sweater Party

at the Reading and Northern Headquarters



Left to Right: Renee Sheriff, Ben Balthaser, Susan Ludwig, Jolene Busher, Frances Karycki.

The Reading and Northern's annual holiday Ugly Sweater Party was held at our Port Clinton office headquarters this year, with quite the turnout of ugly threads! Employees adorned in their woolen wonders shared a pot luck lunch and exchanged Secret Santa presents to share in some holiday fun.



Back Row Left to Right: Susan Ludwig, Steve Werley, Ben Balthaser, Crystal Arndt, Diane Leiby, Denise Kacsur. Front Row: Renee Sheriff and Frances Karycki.

RBMN ANNIVERSARIES ACKNOWLEDGED

26 YEARS



Hire Date – October 1st, 1988
William Bubeck, Car Host/Conductor – LGSR

20 YEARS



Hire Date – October 10th, 1994
Philip Geschwindt, AVP of Acct. – Finance Dept.



Hire Date – October 12th, 1994
Stephen Gilbert, Engineer – Oper. Dept.

15 YEARS



Hire Date – October 18th, 1999
Ernest Henritz, Vehicle Mech. – Mech. Dept.

10 YEARS



Hire Date – October 1st, 2004
George Rineer, Car Host/Ticket Agent – LGSR



Hire Date – November 15th, 2004
Ryan Bausher, Steam Mech. – Mech. Dept.

5 YEARS



Hire Date – November 30th, 2009
Daniel Puskas, Sched. & Inv. Manager – Mech. Dept.

1 YEAR



Hire Date – December 2nd, 2013
Denise Kacsur, A/P Clerk – Finance Dept.

3 YEARS



Hire Date – October 3rd, 2011
Steven Werley, Coal Mgr
Traffic Dept.



Hire Date – October 12th, 2011
Susan Ludwig, Dir. of Cust. Service
Traffic Dept.



Hire Date – November 08th, 2011
Eugene Boyle, Conductor
Oper. Dept.



Hire Date – December 19th, 2011
Mario Carannante, IT Admin.

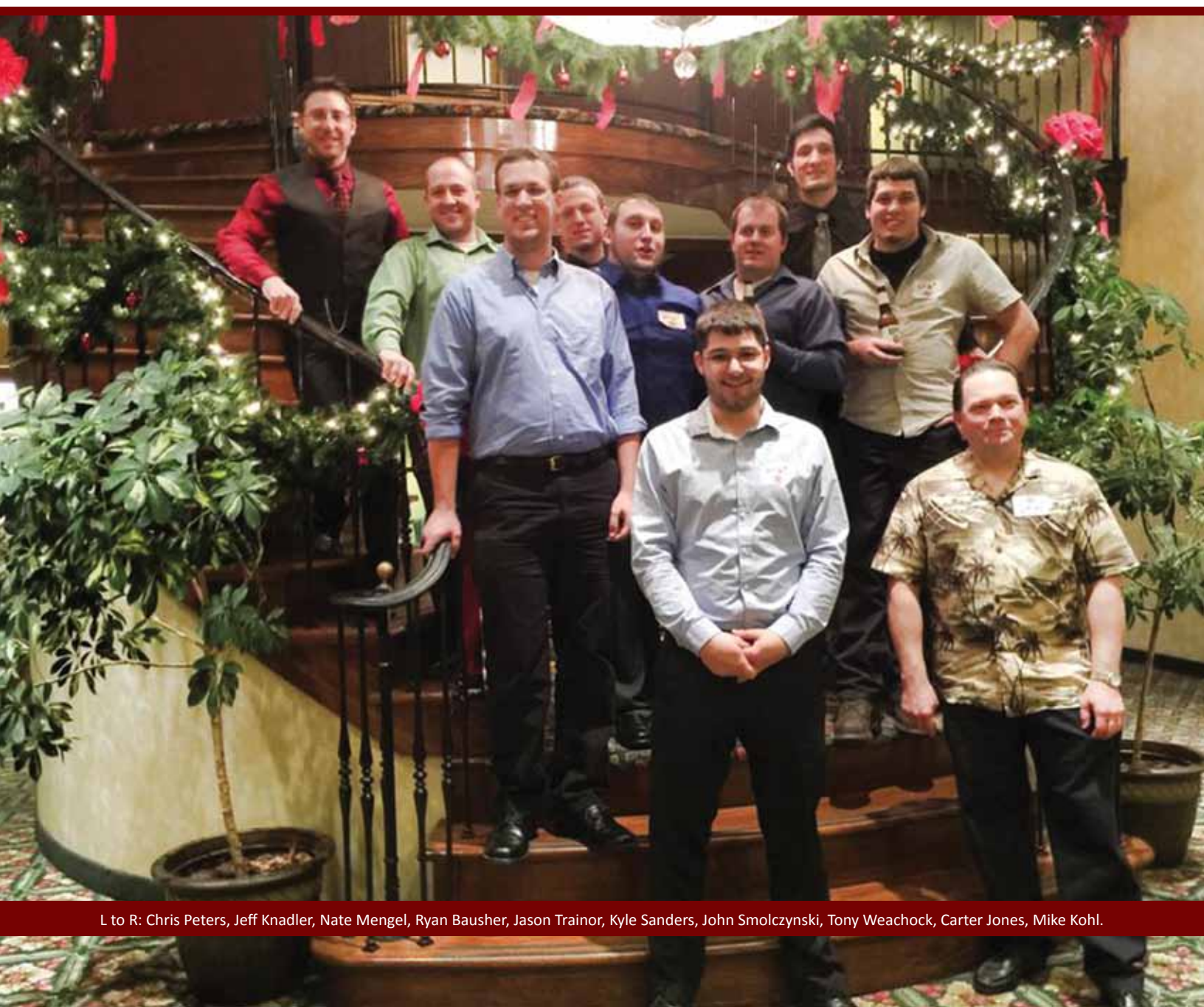


Hire Date – December 27th, 2011
Adam Stump, Mechanic
Mech. Dept.

**Reading Blue Mountain &
Northern Railroad Company**

PO Box 218

Port Clinton PA 19549



L to R: Chris Peters, Jeff Knadler, Nate Mengel, Ryan Bausher, Jason Trainor, Kyle Sanders, John Smolczynski, Tony Weachock, Carter Jones, Mike Kohl.