

R & N Magazine

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

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Letter to the Editor

Dear Mr. Muller: 11/20/2020
 I have never heard anyone refer to you as anything but Andy but, as we have never met, it feels uncomfortable.
 First of all, as an occasional visitor to Port Clinton and Jim Thorpe, I want to thank you for the incredible access you allow railfans to the Reading and Northern as well as for everything you do to preserve the important history of the area, the men and women, the railroads and the industrial heritage of the area. Every visit to RBMN and every interaction with your employees has been amazing. As a US History teacher in New York City I can say, without a doubt, that I learn something new on each visit as well. To whatever extent I am able, I bring my experiences back to my students. Perhaps one day when the world returns to normal, we can arrange some type of field trip. In the past I've also been fortunate enough to have run a program in conjunction with the New York and Atlantic Railroad. I have also been up to ride the Lehigh Gorge Scenic Railroad with my niece and nephew and I can't wait to bring a group up that way next summer.
 That being said, the reason for my letter is an interaction with one of your employees, Larry, the fireman of the 425. Last weekend I traveled to Jim Thorpe for the opportunity to ride behind and experience the 425 steam locomotive. Unfortunately, due to factors beyond my control, my companion and I were not able to make it in time for the final trip of the day (on the final steam weekend). What we received instead was an experience far beyond what a ride behind 425 would have given me. Discouraged at having missed the train, we spent the afternoon touring the park and the town. After dinner at Molly Maguire's and well after dark, we returned to my car which was parked across from the

425. We had our chance encounter with Larry as we got to my car. Larry had just finished checking the boiler and water, commented about the cold evening, and inquired about the temperature. In the ensuing two hours, Larry gave us an education money can't buy... anything we wanted to know about the 425, the T-1, RBMN stories, old railroad stories, local history, geography... it was an amazing experience. What struck me the most was the absolute pride Larry has in working for your railroad. Larry talked of the RBMN as though you were all family and proudly shared wonderful stories. And yes, even stories about you out working on the railroad. Nobody talks about their boss like that anymore. When the conversation turned to railfanning and I grumbled about evil Norfolk Southern (guardians of far more history than yourself that they keep off limits and away from the public--shameful), Larry shared a funny story and the same sentiment. He made us feel family. We came to Jim Thorpe to see a restored steam engine... we met Larry and left with much, much more.
 At risk of getting long winded, I'll close here by saying, again, thank you for the wonderful experiences RBMN has given me in the past as well as those adventures yet to come. You have amazing people working for you and clearly RBMN is an amazing company to be a part of. Not many companies can make those claims anymore and as a member of the public, its wonderful to see, hear and be part of.
 Finally, I had an idea for a photo contest that would be great for you to use as inexpensive marketing (and fill your yearly calendar). If interested, I'll happily share more.
 All the best for a wonderful, safe Thanksgiving.
 Gene Papetti


KEEPING ON TRACK

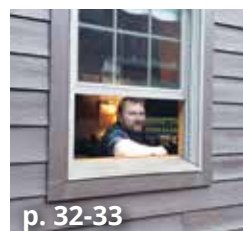
BY: WAYNE A. MICHEL, PRESIDENT



February 4, 2021 marks the one year anniversary of the first train that ran over the newly constructed Nesquehoning Bridge. The first train was personally run by Andy Muller, Jr

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COVER PHOTO
 Bill Buckingham uses the MH-1 to unload steel coils out of gondolas at West Hazleton. The coils are then trucked on Reading Railroad Transfer trucks to the customer.

EDITORS
 JOLENE BUSHER • TAYLOR HAUPT • SABINE FIDLER
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Wow. 2020 was quite a year. While the world will clearly remember the Covid-19 pandemic, those of us at the Reading & Northern will remember that the railroad had a very good year.

The year had an amazing start with the completion of the Nesquehoning Bridge. This massive \$14 million project, made possible with assistance from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and \$4 million of RBMN money, was completed on time and on budget. The first train moved over the Bridge on February 4, 2020 with Andy Muller at the engine. This project was a labor of love for Andy and he willed it to completion over the course of 20+ years. The Bridge has led to major improvements in our operation and will benefit the railroad, our customers, and the region for decades to come. For our efforts in building this Bridge, RBMN was recognized for a record-breaking fourth time as Regional Railroad of the Year by Railway Age.

Our plans to celebrate the completion of the Bridge with a ribbon-cutting ceremony were put on hold as the virus began to heavily impact the region and the nation in March. RBMN adjusted quickly to the virus. From the outset we knew as a freight railroad we would be an essential industry and exempt from any local or state regulations. Nonetheless, we set out to be smart. We made sure anyone with symptoms stayed home and made sure they knew they would get paid. We made sure people social distanced as best they could. We made sure people canceled face to face meetings and going to conferences, even before the conferences were canceled and our customers ceased direct meetings.

Our focus was on keeping our operation fluid. And at the beginning, our focus was on helping other industries. When the coal industry was initially shut down in Pennsylvania, we contacted our friends in the legislature and explained that anthracite was not like other coal. The anthracite producers were quickly exempted from the Governor's order.

What followed over the next 9+ months was truly amazing. Despite the virus and the recession that resulted from it, Reading & Northern had another record-breaking year. Our carload traffic was up slightly and our gross revenues were up almost 4% due to traffic mix and an effort to increase weights in our coal cars.

These results are simply stunning. Nationally railroads were down 7.4%.

Norfolk Southern, our principal connection and the Class 1 railroad that serves our region was down 11.9%.

Why did RBMN do so well? There are a number of reasons for our success.

For starters, we remained laser-focused on taking care of our customers during the pandemic. Our customers each faced unique challenges. We made sure delivery of the raw materials to our on-line manufacturers was one issue they did not have to worry about. Not only did we again meet our goal of on-time delivery 99% of the time, we also took care of demands for extra switches and extra service. Basically, we decided as a company that we would do whatever it took to keep our customers running smoothly.

Part of that effort was reflected in our transload and warehouse business. As Daren details in his article, see p. 8, the demand for storage of wood pulp became so overwhelming that we could not keep up with it at our new Ransom warehouse. To make sure our customers had the storage they needed, RBMN went ahead and leased our former warehouse space at Old Forge. Thus, we had two warehouses running simultaneously with boxcars coming in and going out and trucks as well. We also invested in making sure our West Hazleton transload facility was able to handle increased demand. For our efforts in growing our transload and warehouse business we were recognized with the Shortline Marketing award by the American Shortline and Regional Railroad Association.

We also had new business come on-line. As Dan Gilchrist notes in his article on p.6, we had two new plastics receivers come on line. Crossroads Beverage opened a new facility near Reading and IRIS USA completed a multi-year project by opening their massive new manufacturing facility in Humboldt.

One customer heavily impacted by the virus was Procter & Gamble's massive facility at Mehoopany. With unprecedented consumer demand for toilet tissue and paper towels as people were forced to work from home for months at a time, P&G worked its facility around the clock. As a result, the demand for wood pulp from its many sources was very high. RBMN made sure P&G got the service it needed, day in and day out. Even when we had severe weather challenges in December as referenced in Rian Nemeroff's take on "The Night Before Christmas" on p. 23. RBMN rose to the challenge.

Continued on page 4.

Continued from page 3.

One exciting development that augurs well for our future is the continued growth of Pennsylvania anthracite shipments to domestic steel mills. Bill Clark has been instrumental in opening up these markets. To do so has required off-line investment by RBMN as the steel mills receive the material, dried anthracite, by truck. Bill worked with Norfolk Southern, transloaders and truckers to set up a logistical approach to getting this important carbon to the steel mills. See Bill's article on p. 7. And, to assist Bill with the growing coal business, we hired industry veteran Karl Laubenstein as our VP – Coal Marketing.

While all of this was going on commercially, the rest of the railroad functioned smoothly. I am so proud of the efforts of Tyler Glass who oversaw the day to day functioning of the railroad. You can read his article as well as interesting tales of our efforts on the C&S (communication and signal) front from Jon Barket, the Mechanical department from Dusty Berndt and the Car Shop from Dan Puksar. I think you will be impressed by all the work done by these departments that not only took care of our customers in 2020 but laid the foundation for success in years to come. As we started the year finishing a massive track project, it is fitting to mention the heroic efforts of the MOW, maintenance of way, department. Read Chris Goetz's article on p.16-21 to get an idea of all that the MOW team and our outside contractors did in 2020. And I can tell you they already have an ambitious agenda for 2021.

Of course, during a pandemic we expected our passenger business to take

a hit. We were shut down until June 27th, but as laid out in Matt Fisher's article on p. 25, when we opened for business we had a banner year. 91,000 passengers during a shortened season. And we operated with social distancing! And we were able to resume business in Jim Thorpe thanks to the efforts of our friends in the legislature who passed a bill making it clear that our excursion trains were not an amusement and not subject to the efforts of some to force us to charge our customers an amusement tax.

All in all, it was an amazingly productive and successful year for the railroad. As other companies retrenched, Andy Muller INVESTED in the company. We hired more people including a superb VP – Transportation, Eric Peters, who joined us after serving as Norfolk Southern's Harrisburg Division Superintendent. We purchased 143 freight cars to assist us in growing our coal business. We purchased 17 engines from Norfolk Southern to ensure our ability to grow our company. To maintain and upgrade our railroad we completed the Nesquehoning Bridge, and purchased a rail train and 34,000 ties. We took efforts to upgrade our internal customer service systems, as outlined by Susan Ludwig, and our Dispatch Center, as detailed in Jon Barket's article. And we continued to invest in our passenger program, including the opening of our new Tamaqua train station.

The common thread in all of this is Andy Muller. Andy's entrepreneurial zeal and his loyalty to our employees meant that no one worried about their hours, pay or benefits and it meant that longterm investments were made even during the economic downturn. It is this vision and the hardwork of 300 men and women that assures Reading & Northern is keeping on track. ♦

"The Road of Anthracite"

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Continued from page 4.

As a result, we were able to remain open throughout the pandemic and we were able to not only survive, but to thrive. We handled more cars and earned more revenue all while staying safe. I am committed to our employees and our communities and I will continue to invest money into the railroad so we

can continue to grow for years to come." said Andy Muller, Jr.

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

Reading & Northern Establishes New Rail-Truck Transload Facility

Port Clinton, PA – November 2, 2020

Reading and Northern (RBMN) is pleased to announce the first cars have been unloaded at our newest rail-truck transload at NorthStar/BlueScope (NSBS), Delta, Ohio. NSBS operates one of the most efficient, lowest cost, hot steel electric arc steel mills in North America. NSBS is in the midst of expanding production at their Delta, Ohio mill and was interested in improving delivery of Anthracite coal from Pennsylvania.

Our efforts cap a multi-year effort to convert shipments of Anthracite from truck to rail. In early 2018, Reading and Northern began working with NSBS to establish a transfer center adjacent to its' mill in Delta, Ohio. RBMN supplied unloading equipment, secured dedicated pneumatic trucks and negotiated with one of NSBS's suppliers to locate a site to unload rail cars and load trucks. RBMN also purchased additional covered hoppers

required to meet the supply needs for the steel mill. RBMN's ability to bring together trucking and transloading services, make investments in rail cars and unloading equipment made it easy for NSBS to convert 100% of their Anthracite business from truck direct to rail-truck. With RBMN Customer Service managing shipments and providing all stakeholders with daily pipeline reports, RBMN provides NSBS service levels that are far superior to trucking. We are delighted Delta, OH transload center join our family of transfer centers in; Virginia, Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Missouri, and South Carolina that have helped RBMN shippers of Anthracite reach their customers by rail; reducing logistics costs and improving service to steel mills located throughout the United States.

We would like to thank our partners; Norfolk Southern Railroad, Indiana and Ohio Railway, Ag Trucking and Metal X. Their efforts made this new

business possible. 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 1,300 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. ♦

"The Road of Anthracite"

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Reading & Northern Continues to Grow Even During the Pandemic

Port Clinton, PA – January 8, 2021

Despite the economic slowdown caused by Covid-19, Reading & Northern Railroad (R&N) had another banner year breaking previous records for carloadings and freight revenue.

Although rail traffic in North American fell 7.4% and our principal connection, Norfolk Southern, had a drop off of 11.9%, R&N managed a slight increase in carloadings. R&N ended the year hauling over 34,000 carloads. Revenues were also up almost four percent. The increase in revenues resulted in shifts in traffic mix and increasing the tonnage moved in RBMN's fleet of coal cars.

Our coal business increased as measured in tonnage moved and revenues. Although our export business was down in part due to foreign exchange rates, which made Russian anthracite cheaper, our strategy of developing rail-truck facilities throughout the Midwest and southeast to handle anthracite for steel mills led to increased business. We expect that business to increase significantly in 2021 as additional steel-making capacity comes on line.

Another area of growth was R&N's transloading and warehouse business. 2020 brought with it a demand for warehousing raw materials, as a result of the Covid pandemic. This resulted in a 54% increase in carloads moving to our owned and operated

Ransom warehouse. 2020 was also the first full year of operation for our steel coil transload at West Hazleton. By handing the steel coils through our transload, the customer has been able to streamline their supply chain while taking nearly 700 trucks off the highways.

Two significant industrial development projects were completed in 2020. Iris USA is now up and running in the Humboldt Industrial Park and Crossroads Beverage outside of Reading began new rail service last June. Both are expected to continue ramping up production and their inbound plastics by rail over the course of 2021. R&N is currently working with other prospects to begin construction on plants that will need rail service in years to come.

Although R&N shut down its passenger train service during the height of the pandemic, it resumed service June 27th with Covid protocols. We added more cars to the trains so people could social distance. R&N also canceled all of its full day train rides and focused on operations from Jim Thorpe. Even with these restrictions and with the cancelation of the Fall Foliage festival in Jim Thorpe, R&N had an excellent year. Over 91,000 people came out to ride the trains, which continued into the Christmas season. R&N is hopeful that it will be able to proceed with a full slate of passenger offerings in 2021.

The continuation of growth year after year at R&N reflects the hard work and dedication of nearly 300 men and women. As R&N continues to grow it continues to add and promote its employees. In 2020 R&N continued to add people to its ranks to help manage the freight business, including a new VP Transportation, a former Norfolk Southern Harrisburg Division Superintendent, and a VP Coal Marketing, who came from the local anthracite industry.

In addition to investing in its employees, R&N also heavily invested in capital assets in 2020. Under the direction of entrepreneurial owner/CEO, Andy Muller, Jr., R&N purchased 143 rail cars for anthracite coal service, 17 locomotives from NS, a welded rail train and over 34,000 ties.

Most impressively, R&N completed its investment in its Nesquehoning Bridge project, which opened for business on February 4th. R&N spent over \$4 million of its own capital to build this critical link in the northeastern rail system.

"2020 was a difficult year for many. I am proud of the way the men and women of Reading & Northern responded to the situation. We stayed focused on serving our customers. And we stayed focused on keeping ourselves and our co-workers safe.

Continued on page 5.

Reading & Northern Welcomes New Customer to Railroad

Port Clinton, PA – October 29, 2020

The Reading and Northern Railroad (RBMN) is very pleased to announce that the first rail cars have been delivered to IRIS USA, our newest customer in the Humboldt Industrial Park in Hazleton PA. IRIS manufactures a large array of plastic organizational products and containers for home and office throughout the world. They are headquartered in Sendai, Japan and this is their first location on the East Coast of America.

This milestone caps the efforts that began for the RBMN in March of 2017 when we first learned of the potential new location of this large international producer of plastics products. Reading and Northern worked with CAN DO, Penn's Northeast, and others to help IRIS locate and choose the Humboldt site. The Governor's Action Team, Hazle Township,

Hazleton School board and Luzerne County also assisted with vital tax incentives through the LERTA program.

An important element of the final site selection was the RBMN's ability to build the necessary railroad track infrastructure on time and on budget. Reading and Northern also offers a dedicated customer service group and provides a scheduled delivery service within a two hour service window. Reading and Northern Railroad is nationally recognized for its efforts in customer service and is the only five time winner of Railway Age Magazine's "Regional Railroad of the Year" in recognition of its new business development successes.

We are delighted to have IRIS USA on board and we welcome them to the family of Reading and Northern Customers.

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Yearend Review 2020

BY: DANIEL R. GILCHRIST, EVP MARKETING & SALES

After 41 years on the railroad, you would think you have about seen it all but then along comes the Corona Virus pandemic of 2020.

Despite the pandemic and the resulting hardships for many of our customers as well as the economy, we proved resilient once again. Taking care of customers and helping new customers get located on the RBMN railroad is what we do, and we did it again in 2020.

It is always exciting to be able to begin rail service to new customers who locate onto the railroad. This year we had two who completed their infrastructure in 2020 and began to receive rail cars. Crossroads Beverage started rail deliveries in June, and we placed our first cars for IRIS in October.

Crossroads Beverage bottles water in many different size bottles or containers and distributes to major retailers throughout the region. They bring in plastics to make their own bottles on site.

IRIS manufactures a large array of plastic organizational products and containers for home and office throughout the world. They are headquartered in Sendai Japan and this is their first location on the East Coast of America.

Both of these customers had to overcome additional challenges to opening or expanding operations this year. The Corona virus impacted schedules, deliveries, and construction. We are very happy to have both new customers, and we welcome them to the RBMN.

We are also happy to report that another new potential customer has announced plans to set up a major manufacturing facility on RBMN. Ball Canning is planning to locate at the old IDC site in Pittston and we hope to be active in assisting with this customer's start up during 2021.

One of the big advantages we have at RBMN is that our traffic base is quite diverse. That advantage was made clear again this year as some of our customers had to face declines in their business because of the Pandemic's impact while others saw demand for their business actually increase. PF Nonwovens is one of those customers whose business has grown as they make products for the medical field such as personal protective gear. They recently announced that they are expanding their production line next year and have asked us to assist with an expansion of the rail unloading spots to help accommodate this. We will be working on that later this year.

And of course, we always have a few other longer term development projects that we are working on. It might take a few years for some of these to work out and some may not be successful at all but based on our history we can expect at least a few of these to become successful new customers for the RBMN.

Taking care of customers and helping new customers get located on the RBMN is what we do, and we will do it again in 2021! ♦

Forest Products Year-in-Review

BY: RIAN NEMEROFF, VP FOREST PRODUCTS

Twenty Twenty is a year most of us will not soon forget. The Covid-19 virus pandemic tanked the US economy and virtually shut-down parts of the world. Economists note that the United States entered a recession in February and the economy contracted 31.7% in the second quarter alone, exceeding the worst of the Great Depression. The US GDP for full year 2020 looks to be a decline of 3.5%. Unemployment went as high as 14.7% in April. And how did we respond at the RBMN?

First, the railroad was deemed an essential business from the start – good news there. Ultimately, all of our customers also received that designation but, not from the start.

Second, Forest Products as reported by the North American railroads through the AAR declined 5.30% in 2020 versus 2019. By contrast, the RBMN clocked in down 2.58%. Our slight decline was attributable to the lingering effect of distressed lumber and panel deliveries plus one packaging customer that did not get sufficient paper from its supplying mills.

Even though car loadings were slightly down our revenue was up approximately 3%. And once again. Forest Products generated the most carloads of any segment of the entire railroad.

What went really right for RBMN in Forest Products is our diversification. We participate in good markets with a strong wood pulp franchise, the raw material used to make sanitary tissue products. And the insatiable customer demand for toilet paper and paper towels rocketed upwards and still is not fully satisfied, particularly in consumer paper towel availability from many retail outlets.

We also have an enviable paperboard portfolio that the railroads refer to as pulpboard. Paperboard is the raw material used to make corrugated boxes. As we all know consumer demand for home delivery of goods went through the roof during the pandemic, and demand for "shipping boxes" coming from our rail-served sheet and box plants followed suit. We enjoyed our first full year with CSC Pennsylvania, LLC in Hazleton, PA cranking out a specialized board for a new customer base. We delighted in International Paper (IP) becoming the managing partner of Freedom Corrugating and shifting the supply to IP origins by rail. Even with wood shipments down, we welcomed two new customers, SR Sloan that has already doubled our modest expectations, and Canadian Wood Products.

I look forward to seeing many customers again in 2021. I miss the interaction and talking shop about supply chain with many of you. I await the return of in-person conferences because the virtual conference format just isn't the same. Till we meet again, stay safe and be prosperous. ♦



CSC Pennsylvania, LLC siding, built by RBMN forces, in Humboldt Industrial Park that experienced a full year of carloads in 2020.



Carload of Building Products; wallboard destined to a RBMN wood products company.



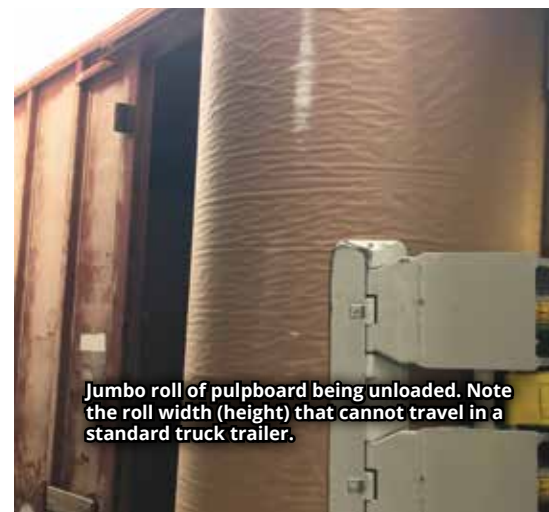
Building changed hands and is now used by Progressive Converting, a printing paper convertor and RBMN customer in Humboldt Industrial Park.



Imported wood pulp by break bulk ship for furtherance by railcars to RBMN customers. This is a raw material used to make sanitary tissue products.



Best practices of railcar doorway loading with rolls elevated to ease the unloading with zero defects.



Jumbo roll of pulpboard being unloaded. Note the roll width (height) that cannot travel in a standard truck trailer.

2020 Coal Business Recap

BY: BILL CLARK, SENIOR VP COAL MARKETING

"It was the best of times; it was the worst of times"; a quote from "A Tale of Two Cities" (Charles Dickens) highlights how Covid-19 has impacted the coal business on RBMN. With apologies to Mr. Dickens; let us examine "The worst of times and the best of times".

The worst of times;

Export coal – The impact of the virus on our export business was significant. Russian Anthracite was severely impacted by lower economic activity in the EU. The resulting excess supply and reduced value of the Ruble caused world prices to decline. Because of these impacts, our shipments thru the Port of Baltimore ceased.

Domestic shipments to the Southeast – Shipments of Anthracite to the steel industry represent close to 40% of the total coal market at RBMN. When US auto manufacturers decided to idle their plants, Nucor (the largest receiver in the Southeast) opted to shutter their largest mills in the Southeast. This caused RBMN shipments to the Southeast to decline by 16%.

River traffic – Our shipments to the river were also impacted by the virus. Since much of this traffic goes to the Southeast, the same factors affecting our rail shipments hurt this business as well. Shipments to the Ohio River we down over 11% compared to 2019.

The best of times;

Export coal – Partially offsetting our loss of export business thru Baltimore was new shipments to South Africa. We secured a new move to a large European industrial user of Anthracite who was concerned about an over reliance on Russian coal. We believe these new customers will continue to buy Anthracite from the US and that when the export market returns, RBMN will see increased export shipments.

Domestic shipments to the Southeast – In the 3rd quarter of 2019, RBMN began shipments thru a rail-truck terminal in South Carolina. The continued growth in this market segment helped ameliorate carload losses to the steel industry.

Domestic shipments to the Midwest – A bright spot in 2020 continue to be shipments to the Midwest. In 2016, RBMN shipments to the Midwest represented 3.5% of our total coal market. In 2020, the Midwest now represents 25% of our total shipments (16.5% higher than 2019). The ability of RBMN to continue to increase rail market share is a testament to Andy Mullers' willingness to invest, our superior operations, and the unsurpassed work our customer service team has done over the past 5 years.

Average tons per car – In 2019 we began a program to increase the average weight. So far in 2020 we are averaging 3.4% higher than 2019. This means RBMN needs 3.4% fewer cars to handle the same tonnage. This will be critical as our business continues to increase and our need to purchase cars goes up as well.

So where does this all leave us? What does 2021 look like? How about beyond?

All good questions; for 2020 our tonnage and revenue increased. Our traffic mix continues to evolve to higher value destinations (locations where RBMN has investment and/or where we handle logistics beyond moving rail cars from point A to point B).

In 2020 Andy Muller continued his investment in Anthracite; purchasing 134 rail cars, constructing a new loadout on RBMN (the first in many years), and purchasing handling equipment for new destination distribution centers. These investments will expand our on-line shippers, increase rail capacity, and allow RBMN served mines to reach new customers.

Andy continues to invest in our greatest resource; people. In 2020 we were fortunate to hire Karl Laubenstine as VP Coal Marketing & Sales. Karl brings a deep understanding of the Anthracite market and has a great deal of sales experience with many of the customers who use Anthracite. Karl will be of immense help as RBMN continues to expand our coal market.

The impact of RBMN investment in destination distribution centers has been profound. In 2016, none of our coal moved thru a destination rail-truck distribution center. Last year, this market segment had grown to represent 27.5% of rail shipments; we expect to see continued growth in this area.

There is reason for optimism for 2021; we have successfully opened new rail-truck transfer centers in Florida, Illinois, Ohio, and South Carolina. Shipments to these destinations have just begun. We should see full-year impacts from this new business in 2021. We will open an on-line loadout in 2021; allowing a large non-rail served mine to begin loading rail on RBMN. We continue to work on longer-term growth opportunities and expect to see additional new business in 2021.

The market for Anthracite continues to grow; new EAF production and conversion of older steel mills to Anthracite offer opportunities for RBMN. Investment from Andy Muller, pipeline management from RBMN customer service, best in class operations, and creative marketing by people like Karl have positioned RBMN for continued growth. We expect continued growth going forward. For the road of Anthracite, the best is indeed yet to come! ♦

2020 Transload Year in Review



Bill Buckingham uses the MH-1 to unload steel coils out of gondolas at West Hazleton. The coils are then trucked on Reading Railroad Transfer trucks to the customer.

BY: DAREN GESCHWINDT, VP DISTRIBUTION SERVICES

2020 proved to be a very busy year for the Transload Department. The transload Dept is a relatively small department. At the start of 2020 the department consisted of only 3 employees, Ray Chippa, Albert Seiler, and Brad Handling. As a result of our new business opportunities, we also added Liam Marsh and Bill Buckingham this year. I would like to personally thank each of them for all of their hard work and dedication throughout this very busy year.

As we started 2020, we knew that one of the longtime suppliers of wood pulp to P&G would be converting their South Carolina mill to produce brown paper instead of white wood pulp. This meant that at the end of the year they would no longer be producing wood pulp to supply to P&G. While this was unfortunate news, it also brought with it a need for them to stockpile wood pulp in our warehouse, in order for them to supply P&G once their production ceased in September. We were happy to work with this customer, but needed to finalize the details.

And then Covid happened. Almost overnight we were being inundated with calls from customers looking for space to store wood pulp. The fear of border closures, and customers not being able to have a steady supply of their raw material, drove the demand to bring in raw material and store it.

As we worked through the process it quickly became apparent that there was more demand than available warehouse space. In order to handle all of the business we would need to again lease space at the Old Forge warehouse. In a short amount of time, we were able to secure commitments from the customers and work with our friends at Unimac to lease the additional warehouse space.

The combination of these factors made for a very busy year at Ransom and Old Forge, and we closed the year with a 54% increase in carloads vs. our 2019 total.

Another bright spot in 2020 was the continuation of the steel coil business at West Hazleton. 2020 was the first full year for the West Hazleton operation. Despite a Covid related slowdown in the second quarter, the coil business finished the year strong, resulting in nearly 200 carloads of new business. The steel coil business was also the first business for our new trucking operation, which hauled 661 truckloads of steel coils this year. By offering trucking services to deliver the coils, we were able to offer a complete transportation solution.

In the fourth quarter of 2020 we also began handling lumber for a new customer at our Cressona Transload. This new business is expected to add another 50 carloads to the transload volume.

Another bright spot occurred in April when the ASLRRRA awarded us their 2020 Shortline Marketing Award for the development of our Ransom and West Hazleton transload operations. This was a wonderful honor to be recognized by our peers in the industry.

As we move into 2021, we are working with another new customer to bring rolls of paper into our Ransom warehouse, for distribution to its customers. After being unloaded at the Ransom warehouse, the paper will move on Reading Railroad Transfer trucks for delivery to the customer.

We are also working with another wood pulp supplier to bring in wood pulp from a new origin to supply P&G. This new origin will replace the business that was lost at the end of 2020 as a result of the South Carolina mill conversion. The new material will all flow through the Ransom warehouse, which will mean even more car loads going into the warehouse in 2021.

This new business, combined with our ongoing business, stand to make 2021 another exciting year. ♦



Ray Chippa loads a boxcar with bales of wood pulp at the Ransom Warehouse.

Customer Service 2020 It's a Wrap!

BY: SUSAN LUDWIG, VP CUSTOMER SERVICE

2020 had many lows for a lot of people and businesses, but at the Reading and Northern, we had many highs that still gave us a 2020 that we can be proud of. The Customer Service team pushed through challenges and met all expectations that were put on them.

We switched to a new railroad and revenue management system at the end of 2019 and had a lot to learn in 2020 and the whole team worked very hard to get everything up and running smoothly for the railroad and our customers. In the first few months of going thru the learning curve of the new system, we were all hit with the reality of the Covid pandemic and how we were going to switch to remote working for the first time.

We learned a lot about virtual meetings, not only with our internal teams,

but with Customers as well. We missed the in-person Customer meetings but wanted to make sure we had those phone and virtual meetings to stay in touch with what our customers needed. The whole Customer Service team had to learn virtually, like a lot of school students did, to be able to learn to master our new railroad systems. With Microsoft Teams we had virtual meetings 2 times a day to keep everyone on task and make sure everyone stayed in touch.

As we close out 2020, we are stronger and know that whatever 2021 may have in store for us, which of course we all hope is a better year for all, that my team will meet the challenges and be there for our customers. I would like to thank my team, Lori Chinchar, Steve Werley, Michele Daub, Jennifer Woodshick and Leanne Moser for all their hard work and dedication. ♦

Operations

BY: TYLER GLASS, EVP OPERATIONS

December 26th, 2020 facing North and South in the Riverside section of Pittston Yard. Riverside, on average, holds 350 cars, so seeing completely devoid of cars is an eerie sight.

Well 2020 is finally behind us and looking back over the last year it almost seems to be several years of information due to the way the year progressed. All things considered, it was another successful and exciting year. The fine folks in our department met every challenge and overcame every obstacle that came our way; there was no shortage of either.

The year started off with the completion of the new Nesquehoning Bridge. This connection changed the way we handled our traffic between our Reading and Lehigh Divisions. Historically, it required two trains to transfer cross-division traffic at Jim Thorpe. Thanks to the new bridge, we are now able to operate one roundtrip train between Reading and Scranton. The expanded NRFF operation launched in early February and has provided us all the efficiencies that we anticipated and some that we did not. In its eleven months of operation, the NRFF operation has been and will continue to be honed and refined to further maximize efficiency.

Enter Covid-19. The Coronavirus situation created many challenges for the Operations Team and, as usual, our dedicated conductors, engineers, and dispatchers rallied together and rose to the occasion. Railroad operations needed to continue to operate at the same level that our customers expect from us; there is no "easy does it" or "working remotely" for railroaders. Amid this, a wonderful railcar storage opportunity came to light that required many resources and high attentiveness to successfully accomplish.

Given the uncertainty of the times, the railroad maintained an air of confidence throughout it all. Our employees had steady work and Andy Muller continued to purchase locomotives and invest in our track infrastructure. Despite, or perhaps in spite, of the perceived craziness of the outside world, it felt more like business as usual at the RBMN.

In early August, our new Dispatching Center was placed in service. This was a combined effort from multiple departments. Our Facilities team did nice work in renovating the office and building the new dispatching desks. The Signals Department did a stellar job ensuring that all the computer hardware, software and signal system were installed, tested, and placed in service safely and timely.

The year ended more tumultuously than it began. While the Coronavirus was resurging, a record snowfall presented operational hurdles to overcome, and heavy rainfall a week later threatened to cause potential flooding along the Susquehanna River. On the night of Christmas Eve and into Christmas Day, several of our teammates answered the call and left their homes and families to do what needed to be done. These dedicated crews worked through the night evacuating cars potentially in harm's way to higher ground and staging cars and locomotive at P&G to ensure vital service could be provided on their next service day.

We ended 2020 with another 99% on time arrival rate for our freight customer obligations. Throughout the year we had many special shift requests that required special service in terms of extra crew or added demands on our existing crews. All this work was performed in the spirit of saying "yes" when a customer desperately needs something or in response to ever changing business needs. Our dedicated and well-trained personnel go out of their way to ensure that the customer's needs are met daily. It is not always an easy task as weather and other unforeseen factors can complicate our operation.

Our Maintenance of Way Department has done their best to support us throughout the year. In addition to keeping up with and maintaining our infrastructure, our MOW Department constructed new track between Port Clinton and Hamburg resulting in two miles of mainline double track which allows us more flexibility in our operation.

It is also important to note that there are many other departments that work together with us daily to make it all happen. The Engine House continues to function on a high level to keep our ever-growing fleet of locomotives working as intended. The Engine House personnel do an excellent job communicating with the Operations Team to ensure that any issues that may arise with a locomotive are properly diagnosed and promptly repaired to maintain maximum locomotive uptime.

The Communications and Signals Department also continued to install more signaled railroad. They turned dark territory into signaled territory between Mohrsville and Muller (Located in West Hamburg). A derail was changed from hand operation to power operation at Equilateral interlocking. They also upgraded the protection of several grade crossings around the system. They are doing a fantastic job!

Our employee development was certainly off the charts this year. We promoted 7 conductors to locomotive engineers, 2 employees to dispatchers, and trained three passenger conductors. At the beginning of the year, Joe Matuella was promoted to AVP Operations. Shortly after, Todd Aber joined us as our Manager of Operations Administration. Eric Peters joined us as VP Transportation and Safety in September to replace Tom Cook who was set to retire by the end of the year. Tom worked his last day on December 31st.

I would like to thank Tom for his service and dedication to the RBMN while he was here. I would also like to thank every conductor, engineer, and dispatcher; it took all of us to get through this difficult year. Let's see what 2021 has in store for us. ♦

Safety

BY: ERIC PETERS,
VP SAFETY &
TRANSPORTATION

SAFETY ALWAYS. This slogan greets all employees and guest to Port Clinton and can be seen on our locomotives. What does it mean to you?

To me it is a great way to sum up the safety culture at the Reading and Northern. Reading and Northern is not in the safety business, but ALWAYS conducts its business safely. I am a new member to the Reading and Northern Team and have been impressed by all Departments for not only being so welcoming, but for the way they conduct business to be efficient and safe. I have always been a firm believer that efficiency and safety are not mutually exclusive. Companies spend billions of dollars on programs and consultants to improve safety and culture but continue to fall short of their goals. The key ingredient for success is caring. Caring about what you do and how you do it. That is what I have found on the Reading and Northern Team. Everyone cares about completing their tasks to positively impact service, their own personal safety and the safety of teammates in all departments. You can't buy safety but having a culture where you protect your co-workers the same way you would protect your own family ensures everyone on the team goes home each day the same way they came to work.

There is always room to improve and one injury is too many. That one injury has far reaching impacts for the individual, their family and their teammates. The leading cause of injuries in the company for 2020 was situational awareness. Being aware of your surroundings and of your own body position has led to aches and pains on the railroad. As railroaders working in an environment that rapidly and constantly changes, we are challenged to adapt and be prepared for anything.

I truly believe no one comes to work expecting to get hurt, but not everyone does all they can to prevent themselves from getting hurt. Do not allow yourself to be a statistic in 2021! ♦



Locomotive 3059 fully assembled and ready for painting while parked on the RBMN turntable.

The Locomotive Shop had a very busy and productive year. A total of 8 units were added to our active fleet in 2020. We purchased 16 locomotives throughout the year and this made 2020 our largest locomotive acquisition year in the history of the company! The 16 purchases consisted of five quality GP38-2 locomotives and 11- SD40-2 workhorses to bring our diesel engine fleet to a total of 58 units. We did all this additional work with maintaining our busy fleet of existing locomotives throughout the year.

We have added the pair of beloved F-units, 270 and 275 that were used exclusively on OCS trains and in regular passenger service throughout the latter part of the year. They performed well while having some additional upgrades done to them such as MU'ing the dynamic brake signal to trailing units from the 270 and making the HEP generator compatible to our passenger trains.

We added three more GP38-2 locomotives to service; all these units were purchased in February. With minor amounts of work needed, the 2013, 2014 and the 2015 turned out to be very reliable assets. We also finally completed the needed work to the ex-CSX SD50-2 locomotives we acquired in 2019. Locomotive 5021 entered into service in early 2020 and quickly became a workhorse since it is such a quality locomotive. The 5018 required a lot more work. We spent a good amount of time to get the engine block, trucks and undercarriage cleaned up with also doing our normal cab upgrades, body and so much other miscellaneous work. Currently, we are working some bugs out of this unit yet as it's in the shop for inspection as I write this article. Lastly, as promised from the fall article, I am happy to say we got the 3059 completed from replacing all of the rotating equipment and entered into active service. This locomotive was quick to impress with its spacious previously upgraded cab and reliability. We are currently preparing to paint this locomotive in RBMN colors. In late fall, the RBMN painting crew finished another quality paint job to the 5019. This was another Fast Freight schemed design with some tweaks along

the way from the original 5018. The finished product looks very impressive and I look forward to seeing more of this artwork in the future and the completed look of the 3059.

The Locomotive Shop is also looking forward to another addition in early 2021. We are eagerly looking to welcome the Simmons Wheel Truing machine to our facility, and with anyone who visited Port Clinton recently will notice with a glance to the right is the construction of the impressive building to house the machine. The wheel truing machine will be a wonderful asset to the repairs and cost saving measures to our most all of our rolling stock in wheel maintenance, and the facility will be dedicated to wheel maintenance and storage. With all the hard work and construction by Steve Balthasar and his team, we are certain to get many years of quality on site wheel service done in this shop.

Finally, the Steam Shop has made huge strides in 2020 with the restoration of steam locomotive 2102. As mentioned in the summer, the team had a successful hydro boiler test this year and they have continued to repair and add components to the engine throughout the year. The boiler has reached completion this past fall and the boiler check valve that needed to be made from scratch has also been reapplied. The cab is currently taking on repairs and some rehabilitation work before it is installed on the engine. Late in the year, there has also been a large focus on cleaning out the 2102's tender and making many body and rust repairs to make it functional once again while also making some needed repairs to the wiring on the tender. All this quality work will lead to a successful return of the 2102 after many years in storage, and it will be an exciting time to be in Port Clinton when it makes its first appearance!

With many more locomotives now on the roster, we will be looking to prosper even more in 2021 by completing many more projects and upgrades to existing units. So keep a close eye on the mechanical department at the Reading & Northern Railroad for future updates! ♦

Locomotive Shop

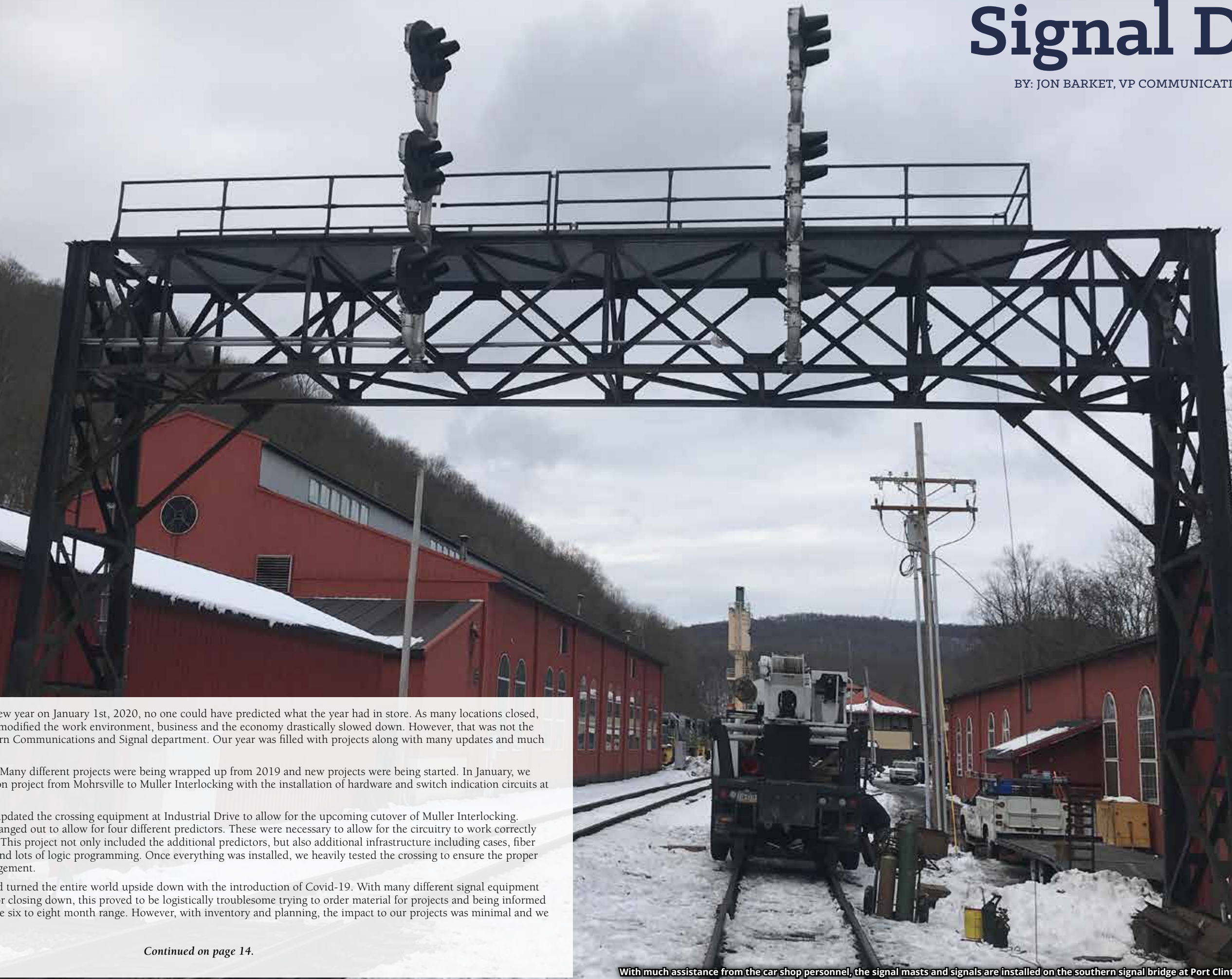
BY: DUSTY BERNDT, VP MOTIVE POWER



Locomotive 5019 with the completed cosmetic work in the updated "Fast Freight" scheme.

Signal Dept.

BY: JON BARKET, VP COMMUNICATION & SIGNALS



As everyone was kicking off the new year on January 1st, 2020, no one could have predicted what the year had in store. As many locations closed, suspended operations, or heavily modified the work environment, business and the economy drastically slowed down. However, that was not the case with the Reading and Northern Communications and Signal department. Our year was filled with projects along with many updates and much progress.

2020 started off as a normal year. Many different projects were being wrapped up from 2019 and new projects were being started. In January, we continued with the signal extension project from Mohrsville to Muller Interlocking with the installation of hardware and switch indication circuits at West Hamburg.

February was a busy month. We updated the crossing equipment at Industrial Drive to allow for the upcoming cutover of Muller Interlocking. The old crossing predictor was changed out to allow for four different predictors. These were necessary to allow for the circuitry to work correctly for the new interlocking location. This project not only included the additional predictors, but also additional infrastructure including cases, fiber and communication equipment, and lots of logic programming. Once everything was installed, we heavily tested the crossing to ensure the proper operation with the complex arrangement.

The month of March roared in and turned the entire world upside down with the introduction of Covid-19. With many different signal equipment suppliers suspending operations or closing down, this proved to be logistically troublesome trying to order material for projects and being informed of extended lead times pushing the six to eight month range. However, with inventory and planning, the impact to our projects was minimal and we were able to forge ahead.

Continued on page 14.

With much assistance from the car shop personnel, the signal masts and signals are installed on the southern signal bridge at Port Clinton.

Car Shop Year in Review

BY: DAN PUKSAR, AVP MECHANICAL

The car shop had a busy, and productive year in 2020. With Stan Burczy retiring in June the car shop had to shift some guys around to fill the gaps. Our 2nd shift foreman came to 1st shift to take over the inventory, and purchasing. With the move we were in search of a capable, and skilled foreman to lead the 2nd shift and keep the car shop forging ahead. We found what we needed with Jerry Binder. Jerry is from Norfolk Southern with 12 years of car repair experience under his belt. We could not be more pleased Jerry decided to bring his skills, and expertise to Reading and Northern.

This past year the car shop has begun upgrading the shop to match our manpower capabilities. A 130 ft. x 40 ft. addition has been added to the South end of the shop. With this addition the car shop will be able to hold an additional 2 cars and thus can now repair 5 cars at once. With our growing fleet of cars, we acquired 134 cars made up of 65 aluminum rapid discharge cars and open top hoppers, we need the additional space and manpower. Although the expansion is not yet finished, our Facilities Department will be completing the pit in the next few months

We also provided additional training for the car shop crew. Three of our guys headed to Pittsburgh to get air brake mechanic certifications this year. They passed with flying colors and were informed they were the best crew that the trainer has had through the shop. The entire shop also had much needed training on how to repair our fleet of Rapid discharge cars. The class was led by Ricki Carile from Trinity Rail who did a fantastic job to answer all of our questions.

Meanwhile in the Vehicle shop we added six more vehicles to our fleet, pushing our total fleet to roughly eighty cars/trucks. These vehicles are maintained and repaired by two excellent mechanics, Ernie Henritzky and Nate Billet. These men ensure our fleet stays in good condition.

Last, but certainly not least, I would like to speak about the equipment shop and the strides Joe Brown and the team have made in that department. Although the main focus of this department is repairing/maintaining MOW rail equipment, we also do a lot of work for the Transload Department. Whether we are working on the MOW Tamper or repairing the tractor trailers for Transload, each job is done meticulously and with great pride. This year was by far the best year we saw with repairs and maintenance on equipment. With guidance from the team, operators are giving much needed feedback, with this feedback we are able to keep the machines operating with minimal downtime. Each day Joe Brown, Jeff Sunday, and Mike Friday put forth their best efforts to keep all departments needs met and completed in a timely manner.

In closing each of these departments had a great but challenging year. Covid-19 was a challenge not only for families at home but for our departments. Social distancing, working from home, and shut downs, forced everyone to get creative as parts became harder to get. Lead times went from days to weeks, from weeks to months, and sometimes parts were not available at all. With that being said each of these departments stepped outside the box and rose above to get things accomplished. I couldn't be more proud of what we, as an entire mechanical team were able to accomplish during a difficult year. I have no doubt that 2021 will be nothing short of another exciting year for us! ♦



Signal Maintainers Ryan Rhody and Donald Matter install the powered switch machine at Muller interlocking.



Signal Maintainers Aaron Schweibinz, Donald Matter, and Ryan Rhody finish off final connections at Muller Interlocking.



Signal case being installed at the southern signal bridge at Port Clinton.



Completed crossing at Premium fines with gates and flashers.



Completed installed powered derail at Equilateral Interlocking. This was installed along side of the crossing installation at Premium Fines.



Signal Maintainers Ryan Rhody and David Hutton installing conduit, communications, and power cables at Port Clinton for the upcoming Port Clinton interlocking.

Continued from page 13.

The ex-Conrail main line of RBMN is mostly single track between Tamaqua and Reading. This tends to cause a bottle neck for traffic needing to traverse the main line in different directions. By adding a new interlocking and a little over a mile of track, we were able to reinstall a small section of the Reading Company's busy double track network between Reading and Tamaqua. This additional infrastructure will allow meeting and passing of trains and greatly adds to the efficiency of our railroad. This new interlocking would be called Muller. Muller interlocking was wrapping up and in April we made the final connections. After reprogramming the dispatching console, we were able to energize the new interlocking adding over seven additional miles to the signaled territory. This interlocking has a #20 switch allowing the dispatcher to route any train down either the newly built track one, or track two to Port Clinton. This location is vital to the operations allowing main line trains to pass at this location in an otherwise single track territory.

Continuing into the month of May, again we were working closely with MOW on the much needed replacement of Stephenson Street crossing on the Scranton branch. This crossing dated back to Lackawanna Railroad days and was fully replaced with state of the art electronics, communication to our central office, a cantilever, and new gate mechanisms. We also updated the crossing to allow for faster train speeds as the Scranton Branch is receiving a full make over. Continuing with the Stephenson Street project, we also replaced all the aged electronics at Marcy Street to allow both

crossings to work together and also communicate back to our central office. These communication links increase the safety for the crossing. If there are any issues or the crossing is being worked on, it will communicate these issues directly to our dispatcher.

After years of work and several months of preparation, we were able to relocate the dispatcher to a new office with a new state of the art dispatching system. This system replaced a very aged, 25 year old system. Working closely with operations, we were able to slowly cut over each interlocking verifying all controls and indications between the office and the field. Cutover began with prep work on Friday July 31st and the new system was fully in service on Monday August 3rd. This new system helps streamline all aspects of the dispatching job and eliminates nearly all paper documentation. This was truly a massive project that came together beautifully.

With the ever changing landscape at the Reading and Northern, multiple new tracks were being constructed in Tamaqua yard. This resulted in moving several telephone poles that provides support for lighting in the yard for the nighttime operations. Again, working with MOW, we were able to identify the locations of these new tracks and the required locations for these poles. Providing lighting to yard areas greatly helps with nighttime operations and provides extra safety to the crews during switching operations.

Due to the increased traffic with both freight and passenger, it was determined to install a crossing at Premium Fines coal company in South

Tamaqua. However, this provided some challenges for the installation with Equilateral Interlocking just to the north, along with double track north of the interlocking. After the design process was completed, we began to order the material and install necessary equipment at the interlocking location including three predictors, fiber and communication equipment. The interlocking software had to be changed in order to accept the new crossing information. In December, the crossing was installed and linked up to the interlocking and placed in service adding safety along our main line.

In addition to all the existing projects that we are working on, we are actively working to install many new dragging equipment detectors throughout the railroad. These detectors will alert the train crew if there is anything dragging or hanging down. These devices add a great deal of safety and helps notify crews of problems before any major or catastrophic event. Towards the end of 2020, we installed 2 additional draggers on the railroad; MP 127 and MP 134. There are additional plans for several more of these devices in 2021.

And to close out the new year, we were able to install signals on the southern signal bridge at Port Clinton. This is the first time this bridge carried signals while on RBMN property. The signal bridge was originally installed elsewhere by the Reading Company. It was then dismantled, purchased by Mr. Muller, and installed at Port Clinton. This is the start of the massive interlocking that will be at Port Clinton.

Although 2020 proved to be a very different year, the RBMN C&S Department pulled through and was just as busy as ever. I want to personally thank all our highly dedicated signal maintainers for jobs well done; Darnell Young, Edward Kopeck, Zackary Baker, Ryan Rhody, David Hutton, Donald Matter, and Aaron Schweibinz. I also want to thank my AVP Communications and Signals Matthew Collins. 2021 is here and will bring many exciting projects and clear signals. Stay tuned. ♦

2020 *A Year for the Ages in Maintenance of Way*

BY: CHRIS GOETZ, VP MAINTENANCE OF WAY

At the commencement of a year's end, many people think about the last year, list New Year's resolutions and look forward to new challenges. Each year that MOW writes a "year in review article" it feels like another record-breaking year of accomplishments. In 2020 MOW finished a multi-decade state project (the Nesquehoning Bridge Phase II), several new customer sidings, construction of over an additional mile of mainline track, many track extensions and rehabbed yard tracks, and large-scale tie projects. We consistently strive to outdo ourselves, pushing the envelope. This in turn helps other departments provide the best customer service possible and the company continues to deliver on our promise of the best.

The beginning of 2020 started with a race to complete the connection of tracks that would run over the newly constructed Nesquehoning Bridge, enabling non-stop train service from Reading, PA to Pittston, PA. MOW took an all hands on deck approach and crews from both the Reading and Lehigh Divisions worked to complete this massive undertaking. The existing Main Line had to be severed, reconstructed, and connected into a new switch while the new track over the bridge was being constructed. These tracks needed to connect under the pressure of time and winter elements without compromising quality. This accomplishment was a golden spike in the decades-long state project and anyone can see the pure joy in owner and CEO, Andy Muller Jr's demeanor as he stood proudly watching the first train traverse onto the bridge dumping ballast over the newly constructed track.

During the late winter months, MOW took advantage of an unseasonably mild winter. The lack of snow facilitated a busy season of changing out rail in the Port Clinton Car Shop, changing rail along the Main Line in Tamaqua, rehabilitating Crestwood and MK Sidings, constructing the switch at Muller Interlocking, prepping for Crossroad's Beverage siding, extending the southern portion of Track #5 in North Reading Yard, and building the Jim Thorpe Track Extension that runs from newly constructed Jim Thorpe Junction to Nesquehoning Junction.

Continued on page 18.



MOW VP Chris Goetz and MOW Director Jess Melochick meeting with JD Eckman and Track Solutions on propose track swing at Nesquehoning.



Duane Engle & Corey Hamm inspecting JT JCT Switch work.



Mario DeMarco, Ron Collins and Shawn Himmelberger rehabbing timbers at Temple Ramp Switch.



Larry Weller, Brandon Kalbach, Shawn Himmelberger, Justin Fetterolf, Matt Nestor, Chris Nefos at WWX rail change.



Rehabbing Stephenson St Crossing in May - gang includes Nick Alberswerth, James Alba, Matt Mizikoski, Ryan Lake, Marc Aigeldinger, Ryan Rupprecht, Matt McGinnis, Josh Rodney, Russ Monroe.



Shawn Himmelberger, Brendle Stufflet & Dale Homm loading rail at ML MP 75.



Ballast dumping crew Darrin Keip, Justin Fetterolf, Chuck Carl, Brock Krumanocker and Rebecca Engle on break at ML MP 88.



RIVER switch retaining wall built by Nick Alberswerth, Josh Antosh, Marc Aigeldinger, Shawn Slusser and Alex Scubelek Jr.



MOW new hire Josh Antosh working at ML MP 125.3 fitting right in with the gang.



Russ Monroe, James Alba, Josh Rodney, Alex Scubelek Jr (backhoe) installing timbers at PITT JCT #2 XO.



Matt Mizikoski in Tamper IV surfacing McAlpine Street Crossing on the Susquehanna Branch.



Staging plates for rail change at ML MP 84.6 - gang includes Brandon Kalbach, Matt Nestor, Ben Cole, Dennis Rosohac, Brandon Wagner and Brendle Stufflet.



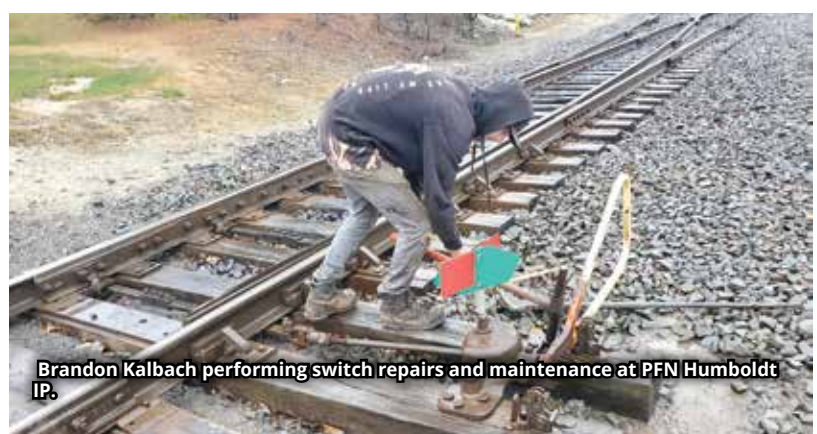
MOW new hire Chris Garcia ensuring that the newly installed Switch Lined and Locked sign is installed to spec in MY.



Ryan Rupprecht working with Matt McGinnis on Lehigh ML 131.2 plug rail installation with the rail drill.



Taking a quick break for a picture after re-railing - Josh Rehrig, Charles Carl, Mark Harris, John Byassee, Tom Stemko, Enos Bleiler, Dennis Rosohac and Rebecca Engle



Brandon Kalbach performing switch repairs and maintenance at PFN Humboldt IP.



Chris Garcia, Brandon Kalbach, Ben Cole, and Dennis Rosohac installing a switch point for the new PN TT Lead.

Continued from page 17.
As the season changed, MOW was full speed ahead working on spring projects. These included constructing the Crossroad's Beverage siding and switch, building a new switch in Tamaqua (#6 Fast Track), constructing the Kerns cross over switch on the Reading Main Line, rehabbing Stephenson and Marcy Streets on the Scranton Branch, starting a large tie and rail replacement at McAlpine Street (now Lehigh ML). All these projects were going on while Track #1, over a one-mile-long track parallel to the Reading Main Line #2 was being constructed. The surfacing gang started a very busy season of ballast dumping, tamping, and regulating while MOW forces continued to maintain the railroad.

Spring gave way to summer and as the temps increased, so did the MOW projects. Fully immersed in completing the Mainline Track #1 and its connection to the Kerns cross over was a high point of yet another progressive move of the RBMN RR. This double track allows for trains (including passenger) to run on Track 1, while freight can continue unhindered movements on Track 2. During this timeframe, MOW worked closely with PennDOT to raise the tracks and re-pave McAlpine and Phoenix Streets on the (now Lehigh Mainline). Some forces were hard at work changing out rails, building two new switches and constructing the double sidings to serve IRIS USA in the Humboldt Industrial Park. Other MOW gangs were busy rehabbing the passenger track and loading platform at Jim Thorpe Station. This aesthetic improvement also lengthened the loading area. Still other gangs were busy rehabbing Ametek Crossings, rehabbing ties on the Lehigh Mainline, the Pennsy Branch and Temple Yard and extending Stone siding in Port Clinton. All the while, additional forces were destressing previously installed rails, dumping around 2100 tons of ballast on various new construction projects, Mainline tracks, and surfacing these areas. Our surfacing gang surfaced approximately 117 miles of track during the 2020 season, some of which is showcased in our Reading Mainline tracks from Reading to Port Clinton.

As the leaves and seasons changed again, so did MOW. Projects were completed, new projects started, and even new faces were seen around the RR. MOW welcomed new hires Josh Antosh, Chris Garcia, Rebecca Engle and Tyler Acker, all of whom brought enthusiastic smiles and dedicated hard work to the department. The newly constructed IRIS sidings took a lot of coordination with building developers and MOW leadership.

Continued on page 20.



Dennis Rosohac cutting rail for the switch movement to PN TT Lead Ben Cole, Shawn Himmelberger, Duane Engle.



The 425 makes its way back home after completion of the newly built turntable lead track.



MOW working late to repair rail break in Tamaqua.



Alex Scubelek Jr found turtle in the gauge. He relocated to safe location.



Surfacing at IRIS SDG.



Matt Minnich and Aaron Cassel at MY switch repairs.



Josh Rodney prepping ties for Matt McGinnis and tie inserter at Scranton Branch.



Dennis Rosohac operating Tamper IV at new PN TT Lead Switch.



PT1 loaded with scrap ties M&S RT MP 128 in preparation of Locust Summit project.



MOW AVP Jason Winwood & summer hire Alex Zimmerman.



Buck Mountain Tunnel repairs - Dale Homm in backhoe, Dennis Rosohac, Ron Collins, Matt Nestor, and Chris Garcia.



Tyler Acker and Justin Hughes hand-tamping at ML MP 65.4.



Shawn Himmelberger & Matt Sloskey at Kerns XO.

Continued from page 19.

These sidings were completed on October 26 and the first service to the customer was October 28, 2020. While IRIS was being completed, a lot of activity was going on in Tamaqua Yard. The new Track #6 construction was being completed while another track was being constructed with a new switch layout for a future new run-a-round track. The old Tamaqua run-around was severed and set up to connect into the newly constructed Track #6. Meanwhile, Tamaqua Track #3 area was graded in preparation to extend the track and its storage capabilities as well. Gangs were also hard at work in two very far a part areas. The Lehigh Division was busy performing tie rehabs on the Lehigh Mainline between MP 125 and 128 and then started a major tie rehab on the Scranton Branch that started at Bloom and continues all the way to Minooka. The Reading Division was divided between three main locations: tie rehab on the C&S Mainline, Locust Summit Yard rehab, and another challenging project in Port Clinton Yard for our very own wheel truing machine.

The Locust Summit Yard rehab required MOW to shift tracks from the Mahanoy & Shamokin Running Track mainline over to Track #2. MOW had to rehab Track #2 to withstand mainline traffic.

The future Wheel Truing Building located in Port Clinton Yard required a rather large shift in the current infrastructure around the Steam Shop. MOW Leaders Chris Goetz (VP), Duane Engle (Senior Division Leader), Matt Minnich (Division Foreman) worked closely with owner & CEO Andy Muller Jr to devise a plan. This plan included ripping out the old Port Clinton Turn Table Lead tracks, constructing a new switch on the Main Line, severing the Main Line to remove the old switch and shift it over while building the new Turn Table Lead siding tracks. This endeavor took a lot of planning, coordination, and hard work to accomplish. Trees had to be cut, areas needed backfilled and graded, and construction was continuously going on for the Wheel Truing building and pits. In a very congested area, MOW pushed through rain, mud, and time constraints to accomplish another marvel of track ingenuity.

As anyone can see, MOW was very hard at work in the year 2020 and nothing slowed us down. We faced the usual weather-related and track repair hurdles and this year worked diligently amidst a global pandemic. Our department showed exemplary teamwork and commitment to ensure that every obstacle that came our way was mitigated with the main objectives in mind. We are here to do a job and do it well against all odds. As we close the door on another year of monumental accomplishments, we do not wonder about how we got here; rather, we look to the future and anticipate new challenges. MOW is not just maintenance of way; it is maintenance of the way of the future. We adapt, overcome, and keep on building. ♦



Corey Hamm profile grinding in Buck Mountain Tunnel during rail repairs.



Russ Monroe cutting rail for Pitt Passenger Switch.



Matt Sloskey, Ron Collins & Boyd Lenich plating at ML Kerns XO.



Andy Muller Jr. happy to be on the Nesquehoning Bridge after completion.



First train on Nesquehoning Bridge.



Matt Nestor & Larry Weller thermite welding at Muller Interlocking.

R&N Real Estate & Police Year in Review

BY: MATTHEW JOHNSON, VP ASSET MANAGEMENT

Reading & Northern Real Estate

Despite the unprecedented challenges in 2020, the Real Estate Department of the Reading & Northern Railroad had a successful year improving our system's infrastructure and growing our department.

At the end of 2019, the Real Estate team included four full time real estate inspectors. Over the course of 2020, our inspector team grew to six full time inspectors. However, in July, our senior inspector, Dave Kroznuski, passed away. He has been sorely missed and is fondly remembered by our team. Our newest additions to the inspection team, Aaron Synder, Steve Gilbert, and Casey Rex all came to us having had railroad experience in other departments or as a real estate subcontractor. Our seasoned inspectors, Jack Wassel, Phil Schaeffer, and Ron Deluca effectively trained Aaron, Steve, and Casey on the multifaceted job duties of real estate inspectors. Our inspector team was well positioned in 2020 to take on a variety of safety improvements and interdepartmental upgrades.

And our inspectors were busy! Over the course of 2020 the inspector team assisted the Maintenance of Way Department with various sign installations throughout the railroad including new milepost signage and yard limit signage. Cast iron signs were also installed at the newly platformed Tamaqua Station. The inspector team has also been assisting real estate and customer service with installing End of Maintenance signage at customer sidetrack facilities. In 2020 ten End of Maintenance signs were installed with plans to continue installations in Spring 2021. All of these installations were in addition to their regularly scheduled job duties on public utility and State project inspections.

The inspector team was also busy assisting in a publicly funded safety program which included installations of Yield Signs at public crossings that do not have gates and/or flashers. At the time of this article, all of the public crossings on our Reading Division have had Yield Signs installed. Next, our inspectors will begin installing Yield Signs on our Lehigh Division. This was a part of a State funded safety program, as was the completion of signal and surface safety upgrades at the Stephenson Street crossing in Duryea Borough on our Scranton Branch. These safety upgrades were funded by State Section 130 monies, and this work was completed by our Maintenance of Way and Signal Departments over the summer. In addition to improving the safety at these public crossings, real estate has also worked with our Maintenance of Way Department in eliminating several unused private crossings. Private crossings are inherently a safety concern, and we are always welcome to the opportunity to eliminate unnecessary private crossings.

The Real Estate Department is eager for the prospects 2021 has to offer. We are looking forward to assisting in more public safety improvements and interdepartmental initiatives that continue to enhance the Reading & Northern system. ♦

Reading & Northern Police Department

The year 2020 started as most other years for the R&N Police Dept. That quickly changed by the end of winter with the Covid-19 pandemic. From the onset of the pandemic we were affected by the court system closures which included court hearings being continued, not being able to turn in citations, as well as performing patrols in police vehicles without doubling up, using masks and protective gear during interactions, and issuing more warnings instead of citations due to these closures.

Many police departments that we work with were cutting back on interactions such as traffic stops, fingerprinting processes, house calls, and trying to handle most calls over the phone without dispatching an officer. For us however the opposite happened as calls and trespassing reports increased. We attributed this increase of activity to the public experiencing more free time as schools and business closed their doors. Many people turned to outside recreational activities that were still permitted during the spring lockdown which included hiking, fishing, kayaking, hunting, biking, and ATV/dirt bike riding to name a few. All of these activities affected us as our rail lines navigate throughout many locations where these activities occur.

The worst offenders of outdoor trespassing are the ATV and dirt bike riding activities. This year we saw more people than ever riding ATV/UTV and dirt bikes in Pennsylvania. There are only limited places to ride these types of vehicles but that does not stop many people from riding them where they have no legal authority to. While the DCNR has added miles of trails to its existing trails to respond to increased demands for riding opportunities, many people still turn to riding in privately owned coal mining properties throughout the coal region where much of our rail line and properties run through. Factor in that Reading Anthracite opened over 20,000 acres to ride on and it created a substantial increase in these off-road vehicles riding through areas surrounding our properties. We had many encounters with local and out of state trespassing offenders which enabled us to educate those that we apprehended on the PA laws regarding owning and operating these recreational vehicles. So while we were hoping to see less trespassing on the railroad this past year, we unfortunately saw an increase in activity due to the increase of outdoor recreational activities. Overall, we had about a 20% increase in citations and criminal charges from the previous year. We filed over 160 traffic and non-traffic citations, over 20 criminal complaints, and issued many written and verbal warnings.

Rounding out the end of the year we focused on continued patrols in our high problem areas for trespassing and worked with the Real Estate and MOW Departments for assistance in placing no trespassing signs, adding ties, barricades, and ditches at various locations to help stop trespassing.

To conclude this trying year, I want to say all of our officers did a commendable job handling the effects of the pandemic and the increased trespassing. Our focus heading into the new year will be to continue to work in close relationship with the departments here at the railroad as well as our fellow officers from surrounding agencies that help play a vital role in keeping our crews, tracks, properties, facilities, and equipment safe. ♦

Pittston Flood Risk Response

BY: RIAN NEMEROFF, VP FOREST PRODUCTS



December 26, 2020 the YJPI1 crew bringing cars back into Pittston Yard. The YJPI2 crew assisted to provide extra tractive effort.

Twas the night before Christmas, when all through the railroad, Not a creature was stirring – WAIT – that is Not how it went for us during Christmas 2020. Instead, weather newscasters and the National Weather Service were predicting flooding along the Susquehanna River. Our railroad from Pittston Yard north to Mehoopany runs adjacent to the river so arrangements needed to be made. RBMN crews worked tirelessly to make sure no customers were impacted and no cars were in harm's way. Two extra crews were called to make sure potentially impacted cars and locomotives were moved to higher ground. Work continued into the night so there were no long winters nap for the adult railroaders while the children were perhaps snug in their beds.

This task was further complicated by the Norfolk Southern's (NS) earlier embargo effective on December 17th and 18th curtailing new shipments destined to their New York and Pennsylvania destinations, including RBMN's interchange with NS at Taylor, PA. Binghamton, NY, the NS gateway to PA, reported 40-plus inches of snow that needed to be cleared to get that Yard operational. NS lifted the embargo expeditiously but the recovery was not quick, exasperating the need for the rail cars of raw material that had already shipped including Procter & Gamble's wood pulp, Mariotti's wood products, and Reynold's polyester pellets. Bottleneck's occurred at Saratoga Springs and Mohawk Yard in New York State that required constant communications between RBMN, NS and Canadian Pacific (CP) among the Customer Service, Operations, and Commercial departments. That is not to mention the communications with customers, both the shippers and receivers.

By December 26th our railroad was back to normal. Extra crews were called to make sure all customers were served including an extra crew at Mehoopany to guarantee service to P&G's massive mill that is busy cranking out Bounty towels and Charmin bath tissue, not to mention Pampers and Luvs baby diapers.

The conclusion is that you need More than a Flood on a Holiday to curtail the operations of the RBMN! We did what had to be done to protect our customers' businesses as we do day-in and day-out, 365 days per year! ♦



December 26, 2020 the crews of the YJPI1 and YJPI2 take a break from the recovery effort to pose for a picture on the nose of RBMN 2012. From Left to Right: Conductor Dylan Soltis, Conductor Erik Ostroskie, Engineer Ed Philbin, Engineer Aaron Aigeldinger.



Operations management team poses for a photo just prior to Tom's retirement. Left to right are John Smolczynski, Tyler Glass, Kyle Sanders, Tom Cook, Todd Aber, Eric Peters & Joe Matuella.



Car Host, Stan Nestor, detrain passengers from the Open Air cars in Jim Thorpe.



Santa and his elves pose on diesel engine 5019 between trips in Jim Thorpe.



Ticket Agent, Sierra Wanamaker, poses with Lehigh George in August 2020.



Winter Characters posing by the train with the Jim Thorpe Station in the background.

Despite the many challenges that 2020 brought us, the passenger department pressed on and had many successes thanks to the flexibility of our dedicated staff.

During the time we could not run the passenger excursions, the employees stayed busy renovating, repairing, and repainting many of the cars. The time off from train operations allowed us to complete these and many other smaller projects that there had not been time for before. The open air cars 9, 10, and 11 all received mechanical updates and a new paint scheme to match the rest of the fleet along with new murals on the interiors. Cars 1, 2, and 214 were repainted to match the open air cars. Three cabooses, including two used in passenger service, were painted a bright red color. Also, several locomotives were painted including the 2013, 5018, and 5019. Each diesel locomotive was placed on display in downtown Jim Thorpe at various times throughout the year.

The train station platform in Tamaqua was completed which allowed passengers to safely board at the Tamaqua station for the first time in years. The project began in February and was completed by September. We have since run many passenger trains with stops in Tamaqua to pick up passengers.

Our biggest hit this year was the first-ever Ride & Dine Trains, which took



Passenger Department 2020 Year in Review

BY: MATT FISHER, PASSENGER GENERAL MANAGER

The crew posing together after the final train ride of 2020 on December 30th in Jim Thorpe (left to right Matt Fisher, Mary Ann Culp, Ally McGinley, Eric Quimby, Bimbo (Carl) Schwenk, Carla Wingle, Deb Schwenk, Dawn Bubeck, Jenn Cullins, Colin Gipe, Jo Evans, Bill Bubeck, Bill Solomon, Jim Garraway, Ryan Frederickson).



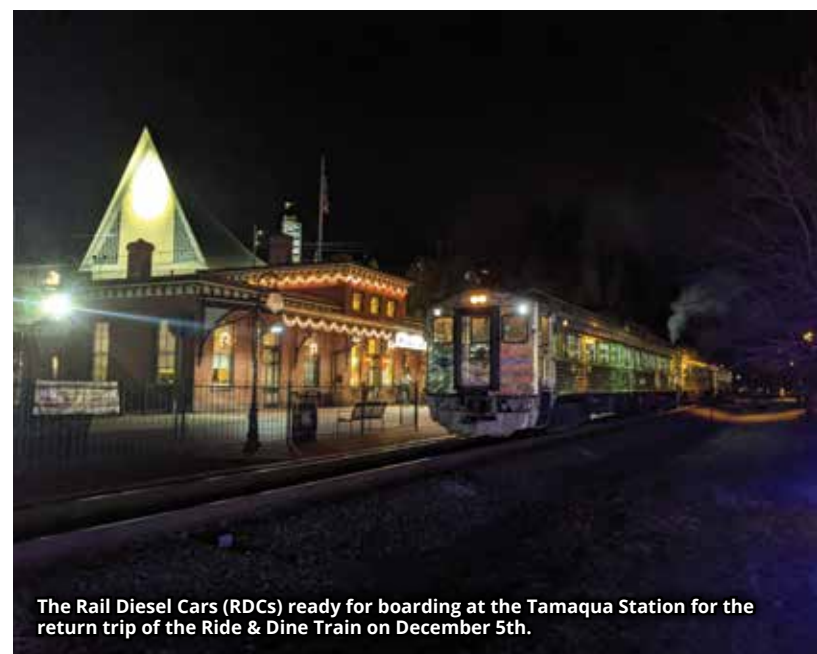
Santa waves to passengers as they return to the Reading Outer Station at sunset after the final trip.

passengers from the Reading Outer Station on a 70 minute trip to the newly completed platform at Tamaqua. From there, passengers walked one block to La Dolce Casa restaurant to enjoy dinner. We ran one of these trips once per month June through December. It was such a success that all the trips sold out. The passenger department is looking forward to running these trips again in 2021.

Trains began running in Jim Thorpe on August 14. At first, the schedule was only Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays. However, with a visit from Mr. Muller on the first weekend of trips, it was determined that the demand warranted daily passenger service. We ran daily through November 8 and then Fridays through Sundays for the remainder of 2020.

From August through early November the passenger department broke ridership and revenue records week after week. Trains had added capacity for people to distance themselves while riding the train. This even required management to add extra coaches and even extra train sections on occasion to accommodate the large number of passengers. Despite the condensed season, we had over 91,000 people ride our trains in total.

Originally, we decided to cancel all-day excursions, but decided to run the Rail Diesel Car (RDC) trains from Reading to Jim Thorpe for the months of October and November. Also, we were able to run the newly purchased F Units for their



The Rail Diesel Cars (RDCs) ready for boarding at the Tamaqua Station for the return trip of the Ride & Dine Train on December 5th.

first public trips on October 31 and November 14. The train consist included the dome car, Pullman car, and standard coaches. We were able to utilize the new platform in Tamaqua and added it as a boarding location in addition to our usual Reading Outer Station and Port Clinton Station stops. Even though many of our trips were planned and announced last minute, we still had great turn out.

Santa Claus trains were the biggest draw at Jim Thorpe in late November and December. Reading Outer Station also had four sets of weekend Santa trips with the F Units running the train at the festive station grounds. 2020 was the third year that Reading Outer Station was decorated by the railroad for the holiday season, and it is quickly becoming a holiday tradition to visit in Berks County.

Considering that steam locomotive 425 ran several weekends in Jim Thorpe from August through November, much progress was also made on steam locomotive 2102 at our Port Clinton steam shop. The biggest anticipation in the passenger department is the return of 2102 in 2021!

More information, including 2021 schedules, can be found at www.rbmnr-passenger.com or www.lgsry.com. Due to frequently posting information, the passenger department's social media presence has continued to grow in 2020. We can be found at Reading and Northern Railroad - Passenger Department or Lehigh Gorge Scenic Railway on Facebook. ♦

Tom Cook Retirement

BY: TYLER GLASS, EXECUTIVE VP OPERATIONS

It is with mixed feelings that we announce the retirement of Tom Cook, VP Transportation and Safety, after five and a half years with the RBMN.

Tom started his railroad career in 1984 with Conrail in Philadelphia. Tom would work in various marketing and operations roles for Conrail until 1999 when he joined CSX. Tom's last position was Assistant Superintendent at CSX's Curtis Bay coal pier. Tom left CSX in early 2015 under an early voluntary retirement package.

After a few short months in retirement Tom realized he still had a lot of gas left in the tank. He applied for an opening and started in the middle of 2015.

Tom brought his 30+ years of experience to our railroad and immediately made an impact. It was Tom's safety experience and passion that was recognized and respected by his peers. Tom was instrumental in helping guide multiple departments in the right direction. Tom was also heavily involved in the planning and start up of our service to CANDO's Humboldt Industrial Park on January 1, 2016.

I asked Tom before he left what he thought of the RBMN. He said that he believes we have the best people, they love what they do and they are passionate about it. He also said he was amazed at our customer service: the power of doing whatever the customer needs and that every customer counts.

We will all miss Tom's enthusiasm and his drive for success. When Tom was focused on something it was best to stay out of his way.

Most of all, we will miss his smile and infectious laugh.

Best wishes to Tom in his retirement! ♦

Congratulations!

ON YOUR NEW ARRIVAL



We want to congratulate John Smolczynski, Jr., Manager of Safety & Development, and his wife, Serena on the arrival of their second son, Tanner Reid on Friday, November 6, 2020 at 11:01 pm. Tanner was 9 lbs., 2 oz. and was 21 1/2" long. Tanner just became another member of the Reading & Northern family.



Congratulations go out to Matthew Minnich, Maintenance of Way Foreman, and his fiancé, Lauren on the birth of their daughter, Rylee Rayne, on Monday, December 7, 2020 at 3:51 am. She weighed 6 lbs. and was 20" long. We at Reading and Northern would like to give a big welcome to Rylee!



Fall Foliage Trip Cut Short but Still Quite Memorable

BY: JANIS MCGOWAN, SOUTH SCHUYLKILL NEWS CORRESPONDENT

The following article was originally published on Thursday, October 29, 2020 for the South Schuylkill News. This article is republished for the R&N Magazine with permission from the South Schuylkill News.

A few weeks ago, my husband and I signed up for the Reading Blue Mountain and Northern Railroad Fall Foliage trip to Jim Thorpe. Not having been on a train in the United States since 1968, I was excited to take a trip back in time and enjoy the colorful scenery throughout Schuylkill and Carbon counties.

Boarding the train at Port Clinton station, it felt just like I remembered. The no-frills passenger cars with the reversible seats were filled with train enthusiasts, families, and a surprising number of 20-somethings.

At 9:30, the train promptly pulled out of the station. The ride was smooth, with just a gently swaying of the cars as we traveled through the small villages and coal towns dotting the landscape. Fall Foliage was not in its full regalia this early in October, but the ride still offered some stunning views of clear streams, glistening lakes and wide, open fields.

Forty minutes later we arrived at the beautifully renovated Tamaqua Railroad Station to pick up passengers traveling to Jim Thorpe. About 100 yards from the station, the train stopped. We watched as the engineer and conductors disembarked and started pulling out cellphones.

"This doesn't look good," I whispered to my husband.

After another 30 minutes we were informed that there was a problem with the air brakes and a diesel engine was being brought up from Port Clinton to pull the train back home to Reading. An audible groan came from the passengers, along with the wailing of impatient babies and younger children who had tired of sitting for almost an hour without moving.

There would be no continuation on to Jim Thorpe. There would be no Mauch Chunk museum tour, no Olde Jail tour, no shopping on the historically quaint streets and no lunch at Molly Maguire's Pub.

But to give credit where credit is due, the railroad was more than accommodating to the passengers. A call was made to La Dolce Casa, a local Italian restaurant around the corner from the station, and a free buffet was quickly set up for the passengers. We were told the trip would be refunded in full and that anyone needing Uber or transportation services would be compensated.

As many of the passengers trekked around the corner to the buffet, my husband and I opted for the Tamaqua Station Restaurant directly in front of the train. The restaurant, located in the old train station built in 1874, has been lovingly restored and houses an excellent restaurant owned by the former owners of Madeline's, a popular eating spot in Orwigsburg.

Lingering over dessert, we enjoyed a crisp fall day, watching the locals and tourists meander around the station.

To our surprise, when we requested the check, we were informed that the railroad paid for it. Any passenger from the ill-fated train who chose to eat at the Station Restaurant got their meal for free.

After our two-hour lay over, we got ready to board the train back to Port Clinton. Turning our seats in the reverse direction, we settled in for the quick trip. Despite the disappointment in not getting to Jim Thorpe, it was a pleasant day spent in Tamaqua. The passengers were well-fed, content, and I heard not a single complaint.

Thank you, Reading Blue Mountain and Northern Railroad, for a lovely afternoon and for demonstrating what customer service is all about. ♦



Pennsylvania native plants and seeds grown by Joshua Butz with JKS Homestead for the Wellness Committee fall planting project.



Jessica Melochick (pictured front), and Ben Cole (back left), Kyle Barrell, and Enos Bleiler trenching along the driveway to place the edging.



Wellness Committee members and team leader Lynn Engle, with Rebecca Engle and Sabine Fidler watering the cardboard for compost as part of the lasagna gardening technique.

Wellness Committee

Continues Pennsylvania Native Plant Garden in Port Clinton

BY: SHANNON ANDERSON, HR DIRECTOR & JESSICA MELOCHICK, MOW DIRECTOR

Planting seeds is one of the most basic principles of hope. As Audrey Hepburn once said, “To plant a garden, is to believe in tomorrow.” For many, the year 2020 needed to bring hope and beauty. That is exactly what the RBMN Wellness Committee had in mind during this fall’s native plant garden expansion project at the Railroad’s main entrance in Port Clinton. As an avid gardener, one of our members, Jessica Melochick, the fall planting committee team lead, decided to consult with Joshua Butz of JKS Homestead about how to incorporate more native plants along our Port Clinton driveway. Joshua had been introduced to Jessica by a mutual friend as a resource for locally grown PA native plants that were needed for a native pollinator garden that Jessica was building on her property. The goal for the Wellness Committee is to have all species as Pennsylvania native plants that are aesthetically pleasing and would require as little disruption to the current ecosystem as possible.

Joshua has been an outdoor and wildlife enthusiast since his parents introduced him to various conservancies at a young age. Through volunteer work, Joshua met many influential people who helped shape his vision of connecting communities through gardening. The name “JKS Homestead” incorporates his name along with the names of his fiancée and daughters, who have also helped influence and inspire him. One of their daughters, Shayla, has Downs Syndrome and thrives from the connections that she makes with the community. Through her love for all, Shayla has continued to inspire the family to give back. JKS Homestead helps with gardens and projects to replace invasive, non-native plant and tree species. Learning of Joshua’s involvement in the community and passion for sharing intellectual capital, led Jessica to present the idea of working with him to the Wellness Committee. Jessica, Lynn Engle, and Sabine Fidler met with Joshua Butz to look at the proposed planting area and determined how many plants would be needed in addition to taking Joshua’s recommendations to the committee for consideration. After thorough review, a cost analysis, and a plan in place, the committee decided to proceed with the fall planting event.

This decision provided an opportunity for all of us to learn and give back. Joshua has passed along what he, too, has learned, “...a lot about the real connection everything on this plant has. The soil feeds the plants, plants feed the insects, insects feed the birds, etc.” The impact of native plantings is something that can be enjoyed by both the ecosystem and those of us who enjoy watching wildlife flourish.

With Joshua’s recommendation, the Wellness Committee utilized the lasagna technique and planted over 200 seeds and plants along fifty feet on each side of the entrance. The plants provided by Joshua include Milkweed, Cup plant, Sunchoke, Purple Coneflower, Asters, Wild Senna, Blazing Star, and Brown-Eyed Susans. Jessica drew a diagram where all the plants need to go to be symmetric with each side of the entrance. Additionally, she coordinated an organic mulch delivery from Keystone Landscape to help the plants thrive in their new environment. Lynn Engle, committee member and team leader for gardening, along with a trailer full of supplies with the assistance of committee members, Duane Engle and Rebecca Engle. In addition to garden tools, they brought a four-wheeler with a trailer hitched to it and buckets to fill with water. Duane and Rebecca made multiple trips to the river and filled the buckets so the volunteers could water the ground, the mulch, and the plants utilizing watering cans.

The lasagna technique requires enough cardboard to cover the area with a 4-5” overlap where the sheets meet so weeds can’t find a way to rise to the top. The Committee collected enough cardboard to cover the area, and first watered the entire area thoroughly which helps the decomposition process. With the assistance of Maintenance of Way Machine Operator, Enos Bleiler, and Sr. Machine Operator, Ben Cole, a trench was dug and edging along the driveway was placed. The entire team of volunteers assisted with laying the cardboard, mulching the entire area, then watering it again in preparation for the plants to be placed. Utilizing Jessica’s plan and matching the plants to their new home, the committee members placed white planter markers in the ground, then cut an “X” in the cardboard for the plants to be placed while participants followed with a plant auger to make a hole under the cardboard in which to place plants. Sabine brought her green thumb and a tray of hoagies for lunch courtesy of the Railroad.

The plants will take one to three years to grow. During this time the Wellness Committee will continue to maintain the area in hopes their lasagna technique was effective with minimal to no weeds blossoming through the cracks. The committee plans to repeat this event in the spring to cover an additional 50 feet on each side of the main entrance until both sides are complete. With the help of JKS Homestead, the Wellness Committee planted seeds of hope for a more beautiful tomorrow. ♦



Jessica Melochick identifying plants and placement while Wellness Committee members and volunteers, Enos Bleiler, Duane Engle, Ben Cole, Rebecca Engle, and Kyle Barrell enjoy a cool morning of planting.



Sabine Fidler and Enos Bleiler mulching the track side of the Port Clinton main entrance with a total of five cubic yards of mulch being placed.



Rebecca Engle and Duane Engle making a trip to the river to fill the buckets with water for the plants.



The edging and mulch are complete on one side of the Port Clinton main entrance in preparation for a Pennsylvania native garden.



Enos Bleiler, Ben Cole, and Sabine Fidler on the last stretch of mulching.



Enos Bleiler, knowing we were short volunteers, surprised the Wellness Committee by showing up to lend a helping hand and he made a tremendous difference.



The final result of this fall's native plant garden expansion project at the Railroad's main entrance in Port Clinton.



Rebecca Engle watering the cardboard as part of the lasagna technique.



Wellness Committee members, Sabine Fidler and Rebecca Engle placing the plants in their spots to be planted.



Wellness Committee fall planting team leaders, Jessica Melochick and Lynn Engle place the plants in their spots to be planted.



Pictured left to right: Jessica Melochick, Duane Engle, and Enos Bleiler making final touches to the native garden prior to lunch.



Rebecca Engle, and Duane Engle taking the plants out of their pots and making enough room for them to be planted under the mulch and cardboard.



Pennsylvania native cup plant waiting for water to get rooted and thrive in its new environment.

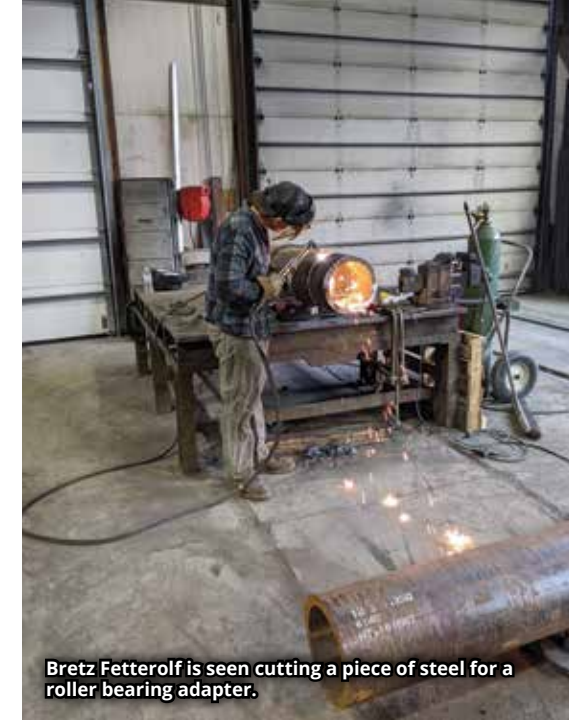
RBMN AT WORK



Andy Muller poses on the Nesquehoning Bridge with his consist. RBMN had recently purchased nine SD40-2 locomotives from Norfolk Southern. The locomotives were delivered to RBMN at Reading and were taken to Jim Thorpe for storage. The power for the train that day was, as you may guess, two SD40-2s. The train is complete with a caboose on the rear.



Jim Cook flashes a smile while switching cars at Mt. Carmel with Gene Boyle



Bretz Fetterolf is seen cutting a piece of steel for a roller bearing adapter.



Gene Boyle is switching at Mt. Carmel on a cold, snowy December day.



Benjamin Leonti is moving a wheel set around the car shop for a wheel changeout.



Ed Moul is on the point of a passenger train as they head back into Jim Thorpe.



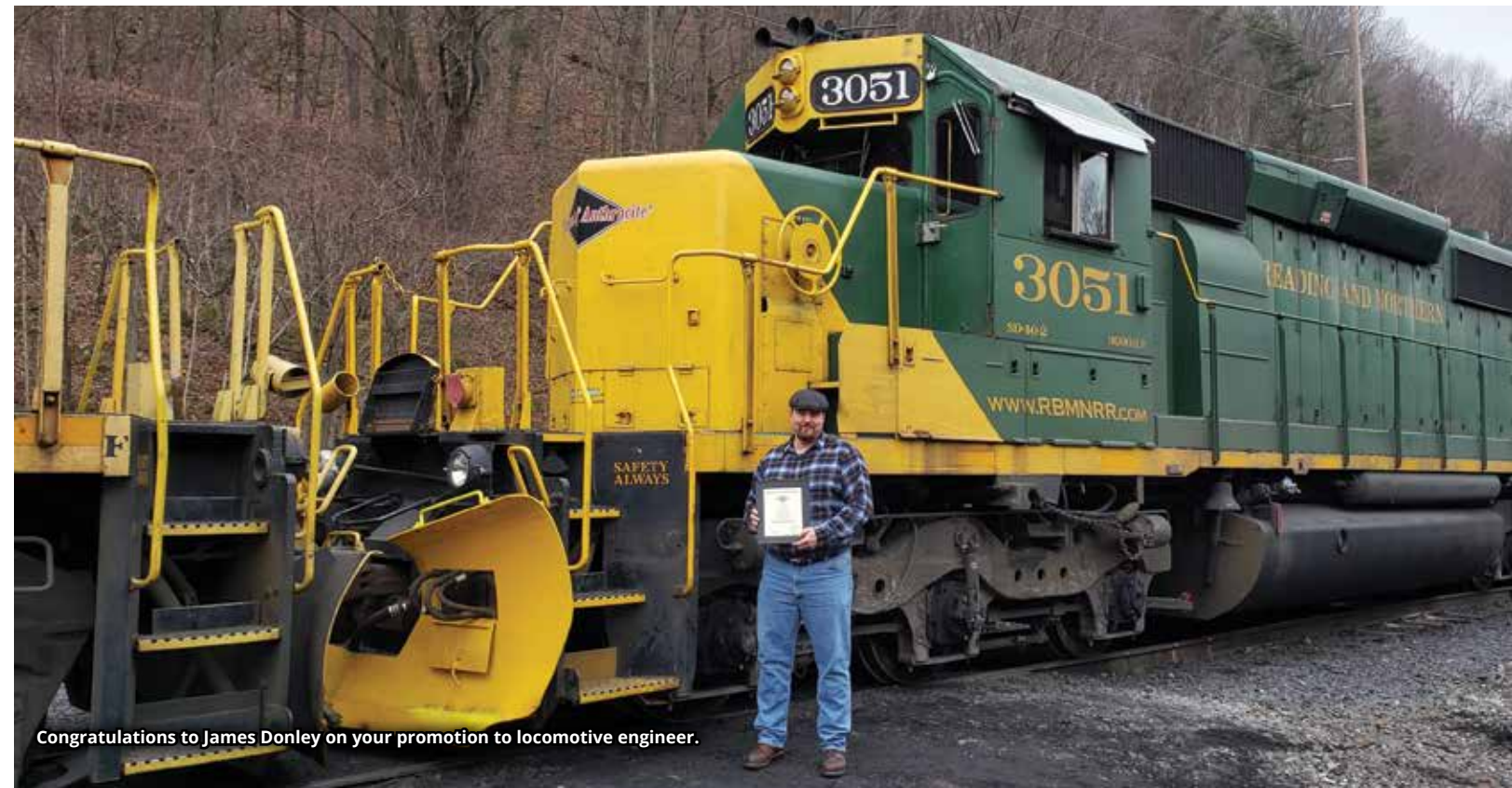
Tom Skrutski performs a brake test for the NRFF at Pittston Yard.



Josh Rehrig, 2nd shift dispatcher, is peeking out the window of the new dispatcher's office.



John Smolczynski flashes a quick smile while operating the Budd Car in Mohrsville.



Congratulations to James Donley on your promotion to locomotive engineer.

RBMN Anniversaries

30 YEARS



December 11, 1990
Tyler Glass
EVP Operations

20 YEARS



November 27, 2000
James Cook
Engineer & Dispatcher - Op.

15 YEARS



November 28, 2005
Edward Philbin
Engineer - Operations

10 YEARS



November 9, 2010
Kyle Sanders
Engineer & Chief Dispatcher - Op

5 YEARS



November 16, 2015
Charles Trusdell
Engineer - Operations



January 18, 2016
Benjamin Meiser
Locomotive Electrician - Mech.



January 25, 2016
Joseph Matuella
AVP Operations



January 25, 2016
Ronald DeLuca
Inspector - Real Estate

3 YEARS



January 22, 2018
Richard Schaeffer
Information Technology Assistant



January 29, 2018
Matthew McGinnis
Machine Operator Trainee

1 YEAR



Nov. 7, 2019
Jeffrey Jones
MaScot - Passenger



Nov. 18, 2019
Nathan White
Handyman/ Painter - Mech.



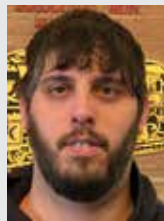
Nov. 21, 2019
Shawn Billings
Conductor - Operations



Nov. 21, 2019
Hunter Richardson
Engineer & Conductor - Op.



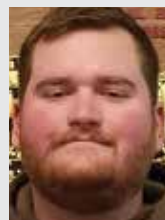
Nov. 25, 2019
Rodney Barrel
Steam Mechanic - Mechanical



Nov. 25, 2019
Mark Harris, Jr.
Carman - Mechanical



Nov. 25, 2019
Devin Oswald
Carman - Mechanical



Dec. 2, 2019
Ryan Rhody
Signal Maintainer - Signals



Dec. 9, 2019
Benjamin Leonti
Car Shop Supervisor - Mechanical



Jan. 13, 2020
Evan Kerr
Conductor - Operations



Jan. 27, 2020
Todd Aber
Mgr. Op. Admin. - Operations



Jan. 27, 2020
Margaret Pursel
Receptionist - Administration

Red Creek Wildlife A "Can Do" Spirit

BY: ALISON RUSINKO, WILDLIFE REHABILITATOR

Late one night in June, we received a call about an injured fox in Lititz. A slight movement had caught a woman's attention as she drove by. She turned around and found a tiny fox curled up on the side of the road. The woman had brought animals to Red Creek before and had our number saved in her phone. She was relieved that her call was answered so late at night.

In Pennsylvania, foxes are classified as Rabies Vector Species (RVS). Careful handling is required to ensure that no person is bitten or scratched or comes in contact with the animal's saliva. Usually, we would tell the individual to put a box over the animal to avoid contact, but she had no box, no gloves, and no blanket. What she did have was a "can do" spirit. She carefully wrapped the fox in her sweatshirt and drove the fox to Red Creek in the middle of the night.

An exam revealed that this young fox, approximately three months old, had suffered a severe concussion, a large laceration on his front leg, and a fractured pelvis. Each of these injuries is treatable, but for one tiny animal to have all three was dire. He was given fluids, antibiotics, and pain medication. Still, even with this support, his chances of surviving the night were grim.

As staff arrived the next morning, they were greeted with the yipping cries of the young kit. It appeared that this little fox had the same "can do" attitude as his rescuer. He was bright, alert, and very hungry. Though he could not walk because of his pelvic injury, he continued to try and sit up and move around. His cage was padded with thick blankets to prevent him from injuring himself further, and we prepared a care plan which included long-term cage rest.

The idea of cage rest didn't sit well with this kit, who insisted on acting like a normal young fox. He would roll in his blankets and play fight with his stuffed toys. He was also a bottomless pit of hunger and ate everything offered to him with great gusto. After two weeks, his wounds had healed, and his head injury left no lingering neurological signs. He had not yet gained the full function of his back legs, but that would take more time.

By the fourth week, he was walking normally, and we moved him outdoors. Throughout the summer, he continued to grow and was often seen running and climbing inside his large enclosure. We were worried that the extra care he received during his first month of rehabilitation would make him too tame to be released, but he soon started hiding whenever he noticed anyone near. The only time he wasn't shy was during feeding time. His appetite never abated, and he ate everything immediately that we offered.

By late September, it was time for him to leave us. This fragile kit that no one thought would live through its first night had grown into a beautiful adult fox with a thick red coat. He was agile and strong and now capable of caring for himself in the wild.

Away from any populated areas and far from roads, Kaley and I hiked into the mountains to a suitable place for him to live. After getting caught in several thorn bushes and falling into a creek, we finally arrived at a nice open area that was the perfect habitat for him. The habitat provided plenty of food sources and places for him to find shelter.

At first, the fox was hesitant to leave the carrier, but that "can do" attitude kicked in again. He crept out slowly and assessed his surroundings. He lifted his head and walked steadily through the tall grass to the edge of the forest. He stopped and looked back for only a moment, then disappeared into a thicket.

The year 2020 was tough on everyone, and the staff at Red Creek Wildlife Center were hit hard with an overwhelming amount of patients, as well as the lack of volunteers and interns to help assist. It was both physically and mentally tasking for the staff, but this little fox's "can do" spirit inspired us all to keep going and reminded us to enjoy the time spent, even when it's hard. ♦



Young fox rehabilitating at Red Creek Wildlife.



Young fox rehabilitating at Red Creek Wildlife.



Rescued fox continues to recover at Red Creek Wildlife.



Rescued fox ready for re entry into the wild.

WELCOME ABOARD *New Employees!*



Aaron Schweibinz

Aaron Schweibinz was recently hired as a Signal Maintainer within our Signals and Communications Department. He attended Palmerton Area High School and Thaddeus Stevens College of Technology. Prior to working at RBMNR, Aaron was an Insulator for Air Products for two months. Aaron is a HUGE Eagles fan.



Christopher Garcia

Christopher Garcia was recently hired as a Trackman within our Maintenance of Way Department. He attended Lehigh Area School District, Johnson and Wales University, and Lehigh Carbon Community College. Prior to working at RBMNR, Christopher was a Laborer with Track Solutions for ten months. Christopher loves baseball, Penn State football, and being outdoors.



Kevin Bokyo

Kevin Bokyo was recently hired as a Passenger Mechanic within our Mechanical Department. He attended Northampton High School and Bethlehem Vo-Tech. Prior to working at RBMNR, Kevin was a Carman at Norfolk Southern for three years. Kevin likes muscle cars, the outdoors, and camping. He has a 1969 Z-28 Camaro and a 1969 Dodge Dart Swinger.



Mike Patton

Michael Patton was recently hired as a Line Service Technician at the Reading Jet Center. He attended Reading High School. Michael has been a volunteer fire fighter with Muhlenberg Township Fire and Rescue for 56 years. He is married and has one son. In his spare time, Michael enjoys camping, hiking, and target shooting.



Samuel Williams

Samuel Williams was recently hired as a Passenger Mechanic within our Mechanical Department. He attended Sun Valley High School and WyoTech. Prior to working at RBMNR, Samuel was a Carman with Norfolk Southern for five years.



Zach Warren

Zachary Warren was recently hired as a Line Service Technician at the Reading Jet Center. He attended Fleetwood Area High School and Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University. Prior to working at RJC, Zachary was a Line Service Technician at Quest Diagnostics for two years. Zachary is a private pilot and is in the process of earning his instrument rating. Zachary enjoys music, plays the drums, piano, and guitar.



Zachary Hunter

Zachary Hunter was recently hired as a Locomotive Mechanic within our Mechanical Department. He attended Lehigh Area High School and WTTI. Prior to working at RBMNR, Zachary was a Carman at Norfolk Southern for ten years. Zachary enjoys the outdoors in his free time and spending time hiking with his family.

Pets, People, Poverty, & the Pandemic: How You Can Help

BY: JENNIFER BRETON, MARKETING DIRECTOR OF ANIMAL RESCUE LEAGUE OF BERKS COUNTY

When was the last time you thought of an animal as poor? Probably never, right? But what if we shared with you that the ASPCA estimates that more than 4.2 million pets are expected to enter poverty as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic? Unfortunately, that's nearly a 21% increase over pre-Covid figures, creating a potential crisis as pet owners across the country are forced into impossible situations where they can no longer care for their beloved pets as federal stimulus ends, unemployment benefits exhaust and eviction moratoriums expire.

Here at the Animal Rescue League of Berks County, we know that this crisis seems unavoidable and so insurmountable that nothing can be done to help, but by taking steps now to prepare to meet the challenges in the days ahead, we can work together to do our part to keep pets together with their families. Here are some highlights of our initiatives:

1. We're stockpiling crates, food, litter and supplies to create "pet care packages" to assist families in need.
2. We're reaching out to motels and hotels with restrictive pet policies and asking if they'd consider allowing guests and their pets with an approved "pet care package." Further, we'd cover reasonable pet fees for guests at hotels or motels if approved.
3. We're strengthening our relationships with human service organizations so that we can be a resource for those in need before their situations become emergent.
4. We're working with local veterinarians to provide low-cost (or free) services that we can't provide here at the shelter.
5. We're tapping the talent and resources of our staff to work in innovative and new ways with the public to help people with behavior problems (such as barking, litter box avoidance, aggression, etc.) that prevent them from staying in pet-friendly housing.
6. We're setting up relationships with boarding facilities to help us with shelter pet overflow or emergency housing in case we max out of space in our own facility.
7. And, most importantly, we're asking our community for help. We simply cannot do this work alone.

During this extraordinary time, community members can give so much by giving a little space in their home (even a spare bathroom will do!) by becoming a foster. Fostering allows us to increase our impact well beyond the limitations of our physical shelter space by expanding our capacity to care and comfort vulnerable pets as they await adoption or reunification with their families. Volunteer fosters keep and care for pets for as little or as long as they wish at absolutely no cost to them. Whether opening their home to a pet who's been temporarily separated from his family as they search for pet-friendly housing, or providing a comfortable space to a pet who simply isn't thriving in the shelter environment, fosters provide an invaluable service not only to the ARL, but also to the community. It's a simple and easy way to do something seemingly so small, yet so significant, for so many pets in need.

And, since our work is not funded through federal, state or county funding, we always welcome donations to aid in our efforts to help during these unprecedented times. Your dollars help us fill gaps in funding and put it towards our greatest needs, while supplies, such as new or like-new crates, food or other items, can always be donated to pets in need.

While a Covid vaccine has given us so much hope to return to "normal" later this year, we must not forget those pets and their people who will struggle well beyond the day the last injection is given.

To inquire about foster opportunities with the Animal Rescue League of Berks County or how you can help, please visit our website at www.berksarl.org/foster, email foster@berksarl.org or call 610-373-8830. Thank you! ♦



Gail Orosz with her foster kitten, Andi. Gail has fostered nearly 200 animals for the Animal Rescue League for over 3 years.



Andrea Foronda getting smooches from foster kitten, Stoltzfus.



Daryl Martin pictured with Richard the dog. Daryl's girlfriend, Madi Bickleman, fosters dogs for the Animal Rescue League as often as she can.



Joy Polignano's nephew, Alden pictured with foster kitten, Pippa.



Marissa Broome with the Titanic crew, Jack, Molly and Rose.



Joy Polignano with foster kittens Millie and Mable.



Lauren Reinhart, a woman who fosters some of the Animal Rescue League's most challenging kittens, such as bottle babies, is a tremendous asset to the organization.



Joy Polignano's nephew, Arlo pictured with foster kitten, Pippa.



♥ Rescued, Adopted, Loved ♥

Meet Oliver. Tiffany Howell, Customer Service Specialist within our Passenger Department, and husband, Jordan, recently adopted Oliver from Ruth Steinert Memorial SPCA.

RBMN Sponsors "Adoption Weekend" at Berks ARL

BY: KYLE BARRELL, AVP HUMAN RESOURCES



Sr. Facilities Technician, Raymond Schwenk, and son, Raymond Schwenk volunteering at the Animal Rescue League of Berks County on behalf of the Reading and Northern Railroad.

Over the 30-year existence of RBMN, Andy and his family have shown generosity and support for many things and people, but one thing that has been penciled-in numerous times each year is the adoption weekends sponsored by RBMN at the Berks County Animal Rescue League.

The most recent one took place November 13th-15th of 2020. The current pandemic posed a unique challenge to all involved finding new homes for these deserving animals. No one was allowed in the building unless they were looking at an animal, and everyone needed to wait outside until their applications were reviewed and a text from a staff member or volunteer was received.

As we arrived with lunch for the staff and food, treats, blankets, and all sorts of other "goodies" for the animals, the brisk November breeze made its presence known. Even before we arrived, the line of hopeful adopters had already begun to form outside. The list of animals to be adopted wasn't as lengthy as in previous sponsorship weekends, which was great news, and the people in line filling out applications were eager to see who might be a good fit for their home. This time, the list consisted of kittens, cats, dogs, rodents, and a pig named Spaghetti. Some of these were "first timers" on the list of types of adoptable animals.

Many people came to the ARL with a laser focus on a specific animal that was advertised online, and they left with that animal. Others decided to choose when they got to see and interact with each animal. When the weekend was over and the numbers were tallied, RBMN helped 67 deserving animals find new homes.

The outpouring of appreciation from the community who came to adopt was stronger than ever. We received many compliments from people saying, "Thank you for your generosity" and "I wouldn't have been able to adopt if you didn't help." Being part of adoption weekend is always a great way to interact with the public, help the animals and the ARL, and show that RBMN is making a difference in many facets of the local community. ♦

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

FEB. 3.....ANDREA COLLER	MARCH 2.....STEVE BALTHASAR	APRIL 2.....SAMUEL HOLLOCK
FEB. 5.....MICHAEL PAINTER	MARCH 3.....DAN PUKSAR	APRIL 3.....DAREN GESCHWINDT
FEB. 6.....LIAM MARSH	MARCH 3.....DARNELL YOUNG	APRIL 3.....DEVIN OSWALD
FEB. 7.....JOHN SMOLCZYNSKI, SR.	MARCH 3.....JOSEPH ZIMMERMAN	APRIL 5.....ADAM C. STUMP
FEB. 8.....MARC AIGELDINGER	MARCH 8.....JAMES DANNER	APRIL 7.....JARED COLLER
FEB. 8.....JAMES CERULLI	MARCH 14.....JAMES GARRAWAY	APRIL 11.....LEO DAVIS
FEB. 9.....JAMES COOK	MARCH 14.....EDWARD MOUL	APRIL 12.....AARON CASSEL
FEB. 9.....AMY MILLER	MARCH 15.....ROBERT KEMPES	APRIL 12.....ANTHONY DEBELLIS
FEB. 11.....MICHAEL KOHL	MARCH 17.....TODD ABER	APRIL 14.....KARL LAUBENSTINE
FEB. 12.....BENJAMIN COLE	MARCH 18.....MARK HARRIS, JR.	APRIL 14.....DYLAN SOLTIS
FEB. 13.....PHILLIP SCHAEFFER	MARCH 19.....MARY CULP	APRIL 15.....JOSEPH BROWN
FEB. 17.....DAVID EVELY	MARCH 20.....NATHAN BISSEY	APRIL 15.....AARON SNYDER
FEB. 19.....TIMOTHY BILLET	MARCH 20.....MATTHEW MIZIKOSKI	APRIL 15.....JENNIFER WOODSHICK
FEB. 19.....RICHARD SCHAEFFER, II	MARCH 22.....RICHARD BERNHARDT	APRIL 16.....JEFFREY BAVITZ
FEB. 21.....KENNETH MILLER	MARCH 23.....WALTER GREUSEL	APRIL 16.....CARSON SHAPPELL
FEB. 22.....CHARLES (CHIP) ALLEN	MARCH 24.....ENOS BLEILER	APRIL 18.....EDWARD PHILBIN
FEB. 22.....TYLER GLASS	MARCH 24.....RYAN RUPPRECHT	APRIL 19.....AARON MULLER
FEB. 24.....JOHNATHAN BARKET	MARCH 27.....WILLIAM KEIM	APRIL 20.....BOYD LENICH
FEB. 26.....TAYLOR HAUPT	MARCH 29.....KAITLYN HELBERT	APRIL 21.....GREGORY ZELINSKY
FEB. 28.....STEPHEN GILBERT	MARCH 29.....ELIZABETH NEIFERT	APRIL 25.....ADAM BOAK
FEB. 29.....JOHN SMOLCZYNSKI	MARCH 29.....BRANDON WAGNER	APRIL 30.....EDWARD J. KOPECK, III
MARCH 1.....MATTHEW FREDMONSKI	MARCH 31.....JOLENE BUSER	

Reading & Northern's Family Recipes

Corn Casserole

Mary Culp, Reservation Specialist within RBMN's Passenger Department, shares a recipe she had gotten from someone at a potluck about fifteen years ago. She says, "It is so easy to make, and I take it to holiday functions every year."

Ingredients

- 1 can creamed corn
- 1 can corn, drained
- 1 stick butter, melted
- 1 egg, slightly beaten
- 1 cup sour cream
- 1 cup cheddar cheese, grated
- 1 box Jiffy corn muffin mix

Directions

- 1.) Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
- 2.) Mix everything together in a large bowl except cheddar cheese.
- 3.) Pour into a 9"x12" pan or other baking dish & top with cheddar cheese.
- 4.) Bake for one hour, uncovered.

Tips: You can add jalapeños or other peppers for some heat.

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

Wellness Corner

BY: SABINE FIDLER, HR ASSISTANT

Equine Therapy

"Animals know that the ultimate point of life is to enjoy it."

~Samuel Butler

Early records indicate that animal assisted therapy began in the 17th century. Today, Equine Therapy provides children with special needs, troubled teens, veterans, and the elderly of all ages and varying life challenges the physical, mental, emotional, and social support needed for optimal quality of life. Depending on an individual's unique needs, various types of equine therapy are available – each requiring specific therapist certifications.

Animal assisted therapy emerged in ancient Greece in the 17th century. The Greeks used animals to treat people with low self-esteem, neurological disorders, and gout. Early 18th century records from York, England, indicate that large and small animals served as socialization tools to enhance the morale of hospital and mentally ill patients who frequently roamed facilities. During the 19th century, Dr. Boris Levinson was the first person to use animal therapy... accidentally. Interestingly, he left a difficult child with a dog unattended and eventually noticed "communication" between them. Also, during this time period, therapy dogs were introduced to prisons, mental institutions, and nursing homes. Horse therapy became notable during this century when Liz Hartel of Denmark won the silver medal in the 1952 Olympics for Dressage – an equestrian sport described as the highest level of horse training in which athletic ability and willingness to perform are synched with a skilled rider's minimal assistance. Liz won her silver medal even though she was paralyzed by polio which makes her accomplishment even more impressive.

The Avenues of Schuylkill County, a human services organization, states that "The warmth and motion of the horse relaxes spastic muscles and mobilizes stiff joints. The horse's rhythmic walk is similar to man's and is beneficial to those who are unable to walk on their own." Cognitive behavior therapists have found that horses, much like dogs, exhibit socially accepting personalities which promote participation in therapeutic sessions. Riders are able to enjoy their time feeling safe, free from the criticism of others, and free from the anxieties that accompany abandonment and rejection.

Horses and Horizons Therapeutic Learning Center of Schuylkill County, PA, uses "a country setting to provide a multi-sensory experience which cannot be duplicated in a traditional clinic setting." Physical benefits include flexibility, coordination, balance, posture, reduced muscle spasticity, and improved speech. Mental benefits include increased attention span, concentration, patience, motivation, and cause/effect. Emotional benefits include self-confidence, self-image, increased independence, emotional bonding with horse and staff, learned appropriate interactions and behavior. Benefits of horsemanship include 3-dimensional movement, problem solving skills and task analysis applications, enhanced sensory processing, and improved social skills.

Equine therapy is considered a type of rehabilitation. This type of animal therapy is fairly new and has become increasingly sought after as a form of therapy. Job descriptions for equine therapist are similar to those of rehabilitation and psychotherapists. Certifications and licensures vary by state. Local therapeutic riding centers near Berks County Pennsylvania include:

- 1.) Horses & Horizons in New Ringgold
- 2.) The Avenues in Friedensburg
- 3.) Schuylkill County Therapeutic Riding Program (Long Run Stables) in Friedensburg
- 4.) Triangle Therapeutic Riding Center in Reinholds
- 5.) Graceful Acres in Halifax

With increasing success of and demand for equine therapy programs, Chase Senior of WNEP TV in an article published March 2019, reports that riding centers are looking for volunteers to assist therapists and care for the animals entrusted to their care.

For more information, visit:

<https://www.horsesandhorizons.org/>

<https://www.wnep.com/article/news/local/schuylkill-county/therapeutic-horse-riding-program-needs-volunteers/523-91e23a20-cbe2-497d-83a1-770e77ff6b71>

<http://www.avenuesofpa.org/adultservices/therapeuticridingprog.html>

<https://www.equestriantherapy.com/types-of-equine-therapy/>

<https://www.pathintl.org/resources-education/resources/eaat/198-learn-about-therapeutic-riding>

<https://www.cecth.org/certification.html>

Triangle Therapeutic Riding (triangletr.org)

<https://www.verywellhealth.com/what-is-an-equine-therapist-3227129>



Reading Jet Center Larry Yoder Retirement

On November 4, 2020 Mr. Larry Yoder completed his last flight. Larry has been flying since 1966, logging over 16,000 hours. Upon landing, Larry was cheered on by his family at Reading Jet Center & Reading Jet Maintenance. Terry Sroka and Zackary Tempesco were also on sight in a fire truck, sirens blazing. It was a perfect day to honor such a wonderful man. We also celebrated Larry's retirement on New Year's Eve at the Jet Center. Old buddy, old pal, old lifelong friend we will miss you greatly!



EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

BY: SHANNON ANDERSON, HR SPECIALIST

Congratulations Matthew!

I am pleased to introduce the Winter 2021 "Spotlight Employee", Matthew McGinnis. Matt has been employed with RBMN since January of 2018 and is currently a Machine Operator Trainee. Prior to working at RBMN, Matt was a warehouse manager at Jack Williams Tire.

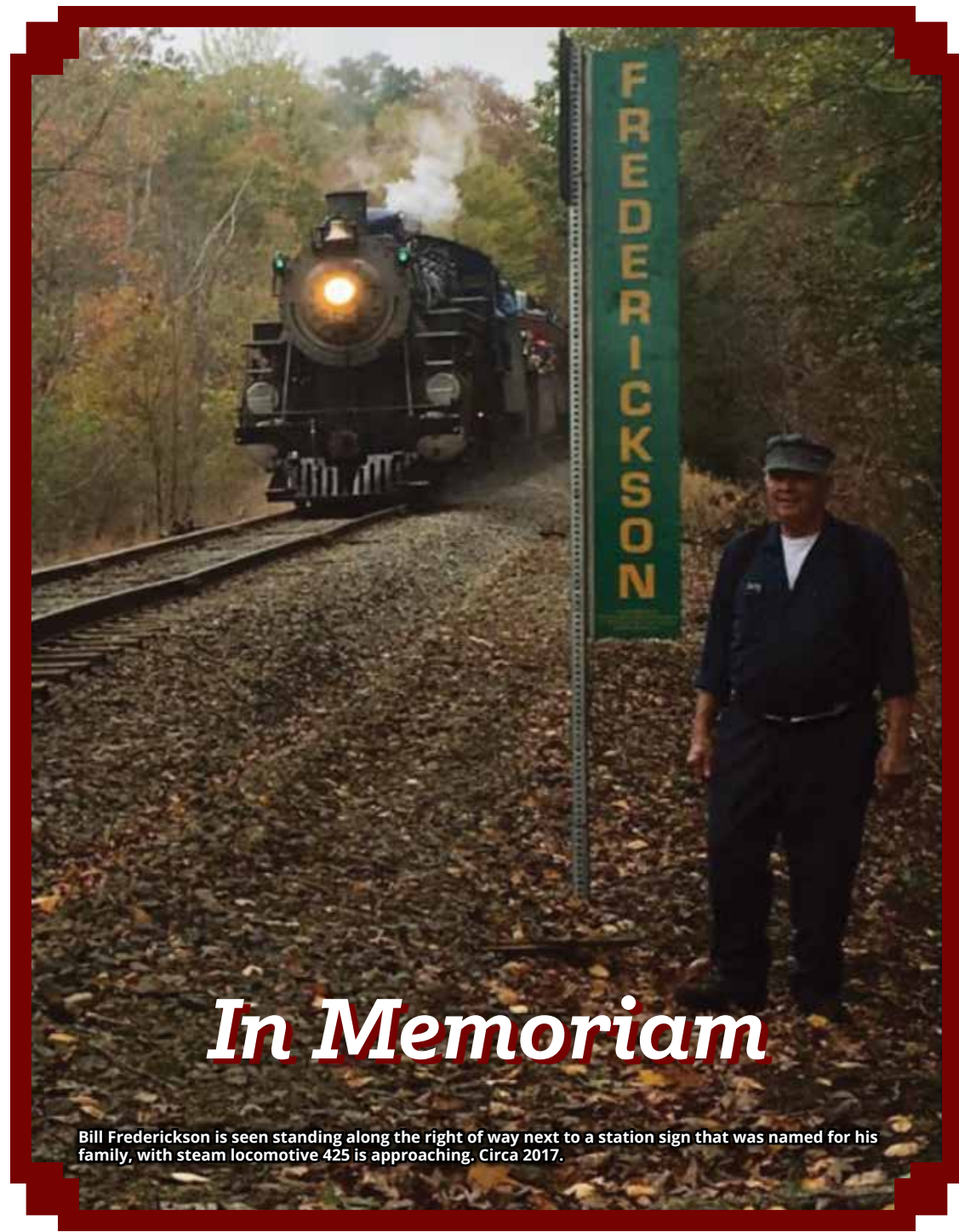
Matt has been in Mountain Top all of his life and graduated from Crestwood High School in 2002.

Matt and his wife, Karen, have three children - Lyndsay, Karlee, and Lacie. Matt enjoys spending his spare time with his family and friends.

Matt was recognized by Jason Winwood, Assistant Vice President of Maintenance of Way who says, "Since joining Maintenance of Way in the spring of 2018, Matt has come to work every day with a positive attitude and willingness to learn. Any time I see Matt in the field he has a smile on his face and positive vibe that is infectious with the guys around him. He has been a tremendous asset to our Penobscot office since joining RBMN. Recently Matt was promoted to a Class 1 Operator Trainee as he completed his training in the Mark IV tamper. He is now 1 of 3 people in Maintenance of Way that can run our most sophisticated and demanding pieces of equipment."

Thank you, Matt, for your positive attitude and contribution to the Railroad.

As the "Spotlight Employee", Matt received a \$100 gift certificate to dine at his favorite restaurant, Powerhouse Eatery in White Haven. ♦



In Memoriam

Bill Frederickson is seen standing along the right of way next to a station sign that was named for his family, with steam locomotive 425 is approaching. Circa 2017.

Reading and Northern lost another great employee in December. William "Bill" Frederickson passed away on December 8, 2020.

Bill was the lead mechanic in our steam locomotive shop where he had been mainly focused on getting the 2102 back in service after nearly 30 years on the sideline.

Bill worked off and on for the railroad since the 1980s but had been employed full time since 2006. Bill's steam career started about 1985 and he worked at Wanamaker, Kempton and Southern, Railtours and Steamtown in addition to the RBMN. Bill was well known and respected by many in the circle of steam locomotives.

Bill and his wife, Jean, have three sons; Shawn, Shane and Chad. All three work at the railroad in addition to two grandchildren who also work at the railroad, Ryan and Jennifer Frederickson. His legacy will live on through these fine folks.

Bill's passing will leave a huge void in our operation, however he left all of us some great memories to reflect on.

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



The crew posing together after the final train ride of 2020 on December 30th in Jim Thorpe (left to right Matt Fisher, Mary Ann Culp, Ally McGinley, Eric Quimby, Bimbo (Carl) Schwenk, Carla Wingle, Deb Schwenk, Dawn Bubeck, Jenn Cullins, Colin Gipe, Jo Evans, Bill Bubeck, Bill Solomon, Jim Garraway, Ryan Frederickson).