

R&N Magazine

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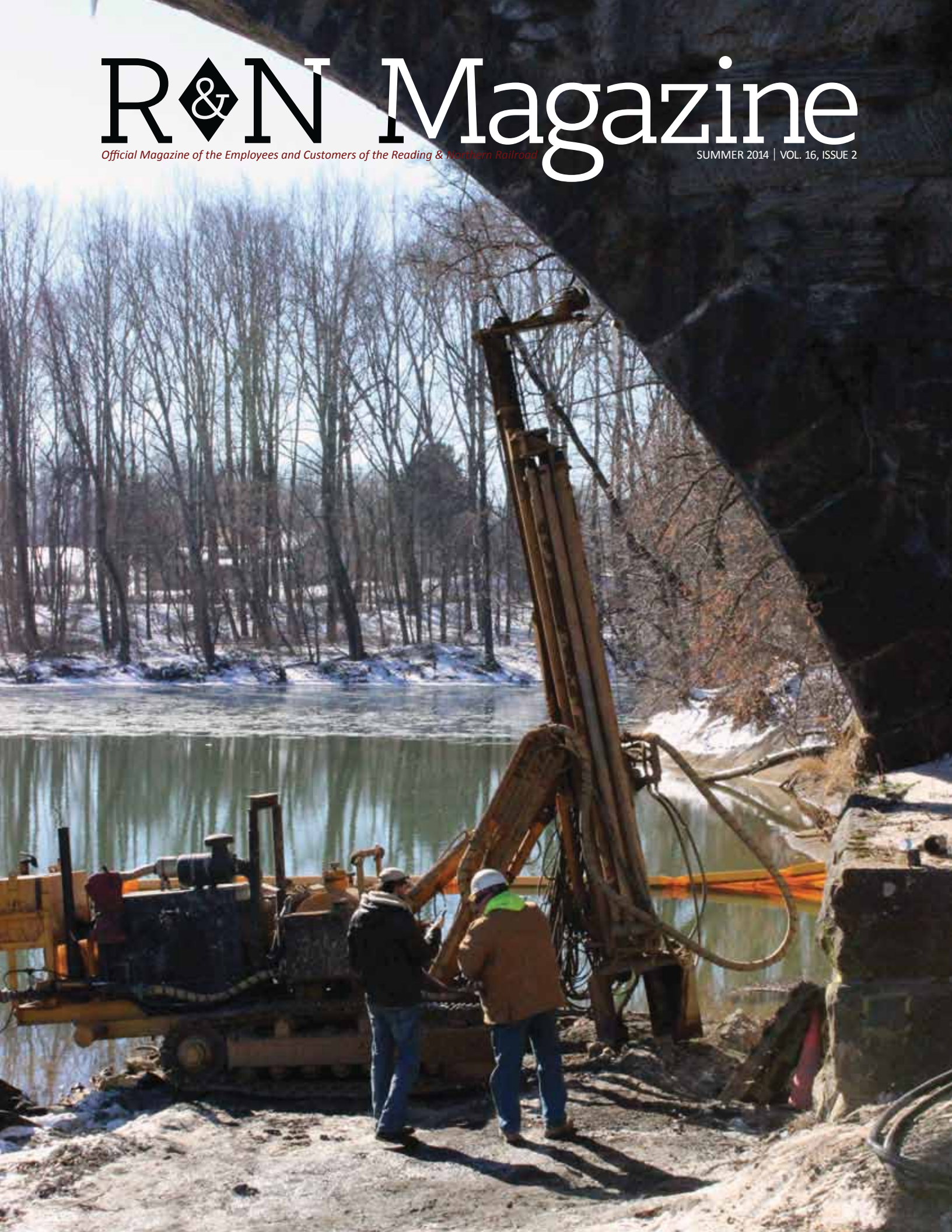


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COVER PHOTO

JUSTIN LEVAN DISCUSSING THE REPAIRS OF THE MAIDEN CREEK BRIDGE ON SITE DURING THE START OF THE REPAIR PROJECT.
 READ FURTHER ABOUT THE REPAIR EFFORTS ON PAGE 7-9.

“SOLID BUSINESS STRATEGY IS NOT ANCHORED IN A SUIT. OR A TIE. IT COMES FROM THE GUT. CORPORATE CULTURE CAN’T BE
 DICTATED. IT COMES FROM THE SOUL. A GREAT COMPANY COMES FROM THE HEART.”

-EQUITY GROUP INVESTMENTS

EDITORS

JOLENE BUSHER • FRANCES KARYCKI • FRANCES MULLER

KEEPING ON TRACK

BY: WAYNE MICHEL, PRESIDENT

This issue is dedicated to the Maintenance of Way (MOW) department. At first I thought that appropriate as so much of our MOW work is done in the summer. I almost thought of dedicating the issue to the boys of summer like the old Don Henley song. But the truth is our MOW gangs work year round. There is no downtime in MOW and no rest for the weary. The trailing articles and pictures give a great idea of the productivity and professionalism of our MOW Department. I hope you enjoy all the articles and pictures.

I was particularly taken by Wes Westenhofer's account of the changes he has seen in the company over the last seventeen years. It reminded me that June 2014 marked a huge anniversary for me, and many other people. Fifteen years ago Conrail was split between NS and CSX. Many of us who were the last ones standing said goodbye on that date to a job and company we loved. Some of us were fortunate to have opportunities to go on and make new careers. But I have a feeling that few, if any, were as fortunate as me. After a short hiatus I ended up joining Andy Muller and the RBMN.

And when I look back at my fifteen years at RBMN I find the company has both stayed the same and changed dramatically. We have stayed the same because Andy Muller has provided consistent leadership over the years. He has instilled an entrepreneurial spirit in the company as well as an underlying love of railroading. He has made sure employees are treated as family and customers are treasured. We do business differently than other companies. Our willingness to take risks, make investments outside the norm, push the envelope on industrial development – all of these traits come from our CEO and Owner.

With his strong support and encouragement the company has grown significantly over the years. We have been transformed from a coal-oriented shortline to a modern, diverse railroad powerhouse. We have developed a national reputation as evidenced by our recognition twice as Regional Railroad of the Year and twice as winner of the Shortline Association marketing award. These awards do not come by accident. They are the result of hard work,

innovation, reasoned risk-taking, and putting the customer first.

As a result of our efforts our business is much stronger, more diverse, and more profitable. Fifteen years ago our business was overwhelmingly coal traffic and overhead volume to Proctor & Gamble, and two shortlines, the Delaware Lackawanna and Luzerne & Susquehanna. In the past fifteen years our traffic profile has changed radically. Anthracite coal is now a little over twenty percent of our total business. Today our largest customers are P&G, now a RBMN direct-served customer, Gallo Wine via Kane Warehouse, and D&I Silica, our partner in Marcellus Shale traffic. We also now have two transload facilities that we developed within the last eighteen months.

Coal is still very important to RBMN as four of our top ten customers are anthracite shippers. Anyone who follows our company is familiar with the extraordinary lengths we have gone to in order to retain and grow the coal business. We have invested many millions of dollars into our coal fleet as well as into off-line coal facilities. Coal will always be important to us. It is our heritage. And we are "The Road of Anthracite."

Fifteen years ago our passenger operations were a few excursion trips. Now our Lehigh Gorge Scenic Railway handles over 50,000 visitors a year.

Fifteen years ago the only way we connected our Lehigh and Reading Divisions was via an inefficient route controlled by first Conrail and then Norfolk Southern. We have since rebuilt the old Nesquehoning Bridge and added substantial track in order to give ourselves our own route independent of Norfolk Southern.

Fifteen years ago we were dealing with a Class 1 railroad we hardly knew in Norfolk Southern. Today we have developed a true partnership with NS and we work closely with them every day to maintain and grow our business. And we also enjoy NS as a customer since they became a trackage rights tenant over our Lehigh Mainline within the last fifteen years.

Not surprisingly, our Management Team has been entirely changed over the past fifteen years. I became President and we have hired a great many people from other railroads to join our team (Dan Gilchrist, Dennis Shaffer and Brian O'Neal) as well as promoted a number of people who have been associated with the company for years (Tyler Glass, Wes Westenhofer, Tina Muller-Levan, Justin Levan, Andrea Collier and Steve Balthaser). And we have doubled our overall workforce and are now heading for 140 full-time employees.

As much as things have changed over the last fifteen years I think the next fifteen years may see even greater changes. The greatest of those involves Hazleton.

Come January 1, 2017 we will be serving the premier industrial park in the entire region, the sprawling Humboldt Industrial Park owned by CAN DO. This massive facility, which keeps expanding, already is generating over 4500 carloads a year on its seven miles of track. And when we offer our customer-oriented service with guaranteed schedules, low demurrage fees, and extra switching we believe this traffic will boom.

"No matter what happens I am confident that we will continue to grow and succeed."

Continued on page 3.

Continued from page 2.

Today we are working with our friends at Norfolk Southern to arrange for a smooth transition. We are both committed to making sure the transfer goes off without a hitch. And NS knows we are committed to growing its carloadings and revenue.

There are other expansion opportunities that we are currently pursuing. Our legal fight continues with the Pennsylvania Northeast Regional Railroad Authority. PNRRA owns the railroad to the east of our operation in the Scranton area that runs down to the Delaware Water Gap. For reasons unknown the PNRRA leadership has decided it would rather spend tens of thousands of dollars on a legal fight rather than put their operating contract up for bid as required by the Pennsylvania Municipal Authorities Act. We believe we will be able to win any legitimate bidding contest and offer

a superior service to the customers while providing a better return to PNRRA and the counties that own the railroad. This extension is a natural fit for our railroad and will return to us the thousands of railcars we hauled in overhead service from 1996 to 2001.

To the west of us there is the multi-County SEDA COG Joint Rail Authority. The JRA has decided to put up for bid the operation of the five railroad lines it owns. And we are seriously considering making a bid to operate those lines, one of which directly connects with our railroad near Mt. Carmel.

No matter how these Authority situations play out, it is clear that Reading & Northern will be expanding in a significant way over the next couple of years. And we believe it likely that we will also be building a new Nesquehoning Bridge in the near future. This Bridge would allow us to have a progressive

route connecting our Lehigh and Reading Divisions. It would also allow us to offer that option to Norfolk Southern for trackage rights trains. We think it can also play a role in the future movement of crude oil trains destined for refineries in the Philadelphia area.

No matter what happens I am confident that we will continue to grow and succeed. Andy's spirit, drive, and creativity is part of the very DNA of the railroad. It shows up in how we treat our employees and our customers. It shows up on our aggressive investment in assets. It shows up in our attention to detail when purchasing items large and small. It shows up in our care of the 425 and our entire passenger program.

And perhaps it shows up most of all with the attention we give to our track. It is that attention to detail and passion for railroading that keeps us all on track. ♦

THE REAL ZEAL BEHIND RAILROAD MAINTENANCE

BY: MISCHA WANKE-LIBMAN, EDITOR RAILWAY TRACK AND STRUCTURES



Bridge No. 130.90 deck replacement on mainline MP 130.9 north of Jim Thorpe, PA.

While Reading & Northern may be smaller in size to other railroads, its employees are never short on enthusiasm, dedication and passion when it comes to maintaining its assets.

Success on a small railroad can be attributed to many things, such as good planning, growing traffic volumes and even a little bit of luck. In the case of the Reading & Northern Railroad (R&N), based in Port Clinton, Pa., prosperity comes as a result of all those things, plus a healthy dose of passion and pride in the work being performed.

Chief Executive Officer Andy Muller is an ardent believer in well-maintained track. In 2013, the railroad had what it calls its most productive maintenance year to date. R&N spent \$8.7 million of its own capital, no federal or state funds, on its 320 miles, which breaks down to just more than \$27,000 per track mile on engineering-related activities.

Erik Yoder, assistant vice president of maintenance of way, wrote in the railroad's winter edition of its R&N Magazine, "Our track forces are hard at work each and every day. It shows in how clean our railroad looks and the satisfaction we have in a job well done."

R&N's 32-man track department had a very busy 2013, beginning with the installation of more than 35,000 cross-ties on the Lehigh and Reading mainline. Yoder wrote that

approximately 13,000 ties were installed between North Reading Yard to just south of Webster; the Pottsville Branch received 2,000 ties and the Lehigh mainline between Independence to just south of Seidel received the remaining 20,000 ties.

The railroad also eliminated 175 joints on its Lehigh and Reading Divisions to prepare for the use of an 88-stone grinding train on those same divisions to re-profile the rail head in order to prolong rail life, ride quality and overall track maintenance.

R&N performed 12 grade-crossing rehabilitations, four of which were complete replacements and eight that needed either the approaches repaved or new timbers installed and, in a few cases, both. Some of the railroad's bridges also underwent revamping with fresh paint, new no trespassing signs and milepost signs and repairs made to any bridge timber surface defects.

In addition to the work described above, R&N's Smoothie Gang, a team of tamping and ballast maintenance experts, provided the final polish to many of the railroad's projects.

"This special gang is our Mark IV and ballast regulator team. They are responsible for applying the finishing touches to any project we complete on the railroad. They are a vital part of every full crossing rehabilitation



Curve on our mainline MP 135.3 where we replaced 712 ties, gaged, and surfaced it in 2013.

[and] provide the proper elevation, level and grooming of the railroad,” wrote Yoder. “Every time you see a railroad bed that has no stone on the railroad ties, stone in between each tie or stone gently sloping down away from the ties is all due to the work of the Smoothie Gang. This last step is the moment when we can all look at the railroad and have a great deal of satisfaction.”

With all the work that R&N has taken on in the past year, the big question is where does it get the money? The short answer is the railroad’s owner and CEO Andy Muller, but he explains the Railroad Track Maintenance Tax Credit, better known as 45G, is critical to the R&N maintenance work and its importance cannot be overestimated.

“The truth is not really told on the success of the small railroads. There are starting to be more and more successful small railroads. However, in many cases, they are not making a profit in the real world and if they were forced to pay for their own maintenance and they were never allowed to defer maintenance, I don’t know how many would really be profitable out of the 550 [existing small railroads],” said Muller.

“There’s really only two ways to stay in business if you’re a small railroad: One, is getting help from the state and, two, is defer maintenance and, of course, many [smaller railroads] defer maintenance. Here at the Reading and Northern, I love track, but we deferred maintenance for many years because I wasn’t making money. In 2010, we started making a real profit and what really, really pushed us over the top was the 45G credits. There is absolutely no way, even a successful company like mine, could maintain the railroad without these credits,” explained Muller.

Talk in Washington, D.C., does exist that the 45G tax credit could become retroactive if

it is passed as part of an extenders package, but Muller isn’t holding his breath, “I don’t make decisions based on the actions of the government. I don’t sit home at night and worry if the 45G tax credit will be passed. I have to do what I have to do. You have to understand, we do nothing with budgets, I just happen to love maintenance-of-way.”

While finding funds isn’t a barrier to the success of the maintenance department, Wesley Westenhoefer, vice president MOW quality control, does point out the obstacles the railroad must contend with.

“Our biggest challenge of late is not having a long enough construction season to accomplish what we would like to accomplish. When you have a CEO whose passion is beautiful track and he has his wallet open, it is hard to keep up,” said Westenhoefer.

Westenhoefer also points to the R&N’s terrain, which poses challenges that many other railroads do not have, such as heavy grades and many eight degree and higher curves.

“It is a constant battle to maintain proper gauge, uniform spirals and correct elevation in many of our curves. In addition, we have six tunnels and 146 bridges to maintain, as well,” said Westenhoefer. “But, we’ve been doing really good, we’ve been keeping up with it.”

He explains that five years ago, Muller implemented a no slow order rule for the railroad. According to Westenhoefer, any slow order must be removed within 24 hours and, if crews are unable to achieve this, they must have written approval from Muller and the railroad’s executive vice president of operations, as well as a very good reason as to why the slow order must remain active.

Too keep up with that kind of high standard, the people you work with is also an important

factor of success. R&N handles all maintenance work in house with the exception of major tie projects (1,000-plus ties), rail replacement projects and tunnel work.

“We have a very intense hiring procedure at our company. We receive hundreds of applications a year and are very critical of who we bring in for an interview. Many times, we will interview a potential candidate twice before hiring them,” said Westenhoefer. “We hire smart people who don’t necessarily need to have safety ‘beat’ into them. The safety of our employees is always our top priority and focus. We put a lot of time and energy into our training program for our new employees, as well as recurrent training for our veterans. Our MOW team takes pride in what they do and are always vigilant on going home in the same condition they arrived on a day-to-day basis.”

Staying vigilant in safety and in its dedication to work enabled the railroad to reduce the number of derailments by almost 50 percent from 2012 to 2013.

According to Yoder, maintenance crews are always quick to respond to whatever the need may be from clearing trees from across the tracks following a storm to waking up at 2 a.m. in winter because a temperature drop resulted in a broken rail that need to be repaired immediately to keeping R&N’s switches free of debris or snow, inspecting tracks to catch problems before trains do and many other tasks.

Yoder wrote, “Keeping the trains moving with tireless motivation is what makes this department the best. They are the reason we can again [call 2013] our ‘most productive’ maintenance year on record.” ♦

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Work underway on the Tamaqua Tunnel MP 100 on the south portal to gain additional car clearance.



Work underway on the three new switches being installed at the Port Clinton headquarters MP 78.4.



Recently rehabilitated switch at MP 75.2 as part of the Mainline switches getting a face lift this work season.



Curves recently gauged at MP 83.5 as part of the 10,000 feet of gauging to be completed this summer on the Reading Mainline between MP 81 – 90.



MP 87 on the Reading Mainline recently gauged to 56 1/2 inches after the 2013 tie work.

2014 WORK SEASON

BY: ERIK YODER, AVP MAINTENANCE OF WAY

With the snowy winter behind us, the MOW crews are trading in snow shovels and snow blowers for power units and track tools. It looks to be a very busy work season. We are aggressively lining up our projects and are on pace to have another very productive year.

I must admit that as I look at the schedule of projects this year, it seems I may need to start the annual winter article for the most productive maintenance year on record. Three years running and we continue to do it bigger and better than the previous year. I am amazed each year at the work we accomplish.

We have accomplished a great deal of work already. We have rehabilitated the Maiden Creek Bridge, MP 65.2 on Pennsy branch, for train traffic. One of the many crossings scheduled for work this year, the Oak Street crossing MP 173.1 in Pittston, was completed in the middle of April. MOW crews have installed 2 switches in Port Clinton yard and continue to work on the 10,000 feet of Reading Mainline gauging. Recently 5,600 joints were tightened across the Reading Mainline, between MP 105.8 – 121.2, and the entire Jim Thorpe Branch using a contractor. A total of six new crossings were installed, five in Jim Thorpe Yard and one on the Saint Clair Running Track in Pottsville due to bridge construction. Another double track crossing was completed on Lehigh Mainline MP 169.2. In addition to all these projects, the MOW crews have consistently kept up with any downed trees during storms, various track problems reported by train crews, and kept up with all other maintenance needs on the railroad.

Currently, we are working on improving the clearance in the Tamaqua Tunnel MP 100 on the Reading Mainline, as well as using another contractor to install ties on the Tremont branch between MP 16 - 12. Since clean up on our right of way is as important as construction or repair work, the work area around the Maiden Creek Bridge is in the final clean up stage. We continued the contractor tightening joints on the Reading Mainline to the Lehigh Mainline on track two between MP 169.2 – 175.5. Switches are also getting a face lift across the railroad as we are working on rehabilitation switch work. We are also in process of building track four in North Reading Yard.

Looking forward to the rest of the work season, we will be continuing to work on the Air Products Rail Transportation Assistance Program grant. This project was awarded by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to be

completed by the end of this year. This project includes the installation of 10,000 ties, 28,000 feet of gauging, replacement of five crossings (two double track), the elimination of over 850 joints via crop and slide, repairing the liner and improving clearances in the White Haven and Rockport Tunnels, rehabilitation of four switches in Dupont, and surfacing double track between MP 175.5 – 164.1. We have hired a contractor to install the ties, gauging, and joint elimination. The rest of this work will be done by RBMN forces.

In addition to the Air Products project we will be scheduling the M&S Branch Rail Freight Assistance Program grant. Included within this project is the installation of 3678 ties, 12,000 feet of gauging, and 8026 feet of new rail, along with surfacing the branch between MP 103.6 – 108. This entire project will be completed by a contractor. This allows MOW forces to focus on the remaining projects for the 2014 season.

As if this was not enough work, our crews will continue to gauge on the Reading Mainline, rehabilitate switches on both Lehigh and Reading Divisions, and will continue work with another contractor on installing the remainder of 10,000 ties on our branch lines. We still have some remaining road crossings that we will rehabilitate as well as any other projects that present themselves.

That is quite a daunting task. Our work season is underway and we still are looking for what else may be on the agenda. Why do we keep looking for work when our plate is full? Passion. We enjoy what we do as a maintenance department.

We continually look to improve and maintain our track in the best way possible. It translates into passion for track. Our CEO, Andy Muller, is passionate about track work. It becomes infectious to hear him talk about track projects he wants to complete. This passion flows into our MOW workers. It is proven each year as we strive to build more track, repair more tracks, and install more switches, as well as overall general track maintenance.

We are excited and anxious for the 2014 work season to conclude to see if, in fact, we have the most productive year again. I know that we will have a very productive year. At year's end, our list of accomplishments will testify to the hard work of the MOW department as well as give us a chance to rest up for next year. ♦

OAK STREET CROSSING REPLACEMENT

BY: JUSTIN LEVAN, VP MAINTENANCE OF WAY

Oak Street crossing is located on our Lehigh Mainline at milepost 173.1. Oak Street is heavily traveled by trucks in Pittston Township which has caused significant wear on the crossing. After several patches and a few visits to the crossing, it was decided that the crossing would need to be replaced as part of the Air Products project that was being completed this summer.

To begin the replacement the Reading, Blue Mountain, and Northern Railroad had to get a road closure and detour plan which was created and approved by the State. Detour signage was also obtained and displayed to accommodate the two week road closure. Materials used for this project were 150 grade ties, 82 10' ties, 124 14" tie plates, 161 18" tie plates, 320 feet of new 136 RE head hardened rail, 249 feet of 136 LVH rail, 90 feet of concrete panels, 10 kegs of spikes, and 150 tons of ballast to complete the crossing replacement on both tracks. This also included paving the road approaches into the crossing as well as the four foot section of pavement between both crossings. Additionally, RBMN identified a portion of road outside the crossing work that contained a visible hump in the road causing road traffic to run roughly into and over the crossing. RBMN went above the scope of work to eliminate this hump to make a smooth transition over the crossings. The double crossing was raised and both tracks were set on the same plane so there was no hump in the middle of the road crossing. The approaches on the existing road were also repaved farther back on both sides to create a smoother transition coming up to and exiting the crossing. The old rubber panel crossing was also replaced with concrete panels.

The start of replacing the crossing required us to change out bad ties north and south of the crossing, and then install five 10' ties just north and south of the concrete panels. This makes the crossing approaches solid and keeps the track from "pumping" up and down as trains traverse the road crossing. The next step was to remove the old crossing panels, in this case old rubber panels, old ties, and the rail that existed. Once these materials were removed, we were able to dig out any fouled ballast and put down a new base of stone. A roller was used to compact the subsurface of the crossing base to lay the foundation for the new ties and track. This firm base is vital to the long life of the crossing.

At this point, conduits and drain pipes are laid in before the new ten foot ties are laid at the 18" offset centers. The railroad is then surfaced with our Mark IV tamper. This is done over multiple passes and uses ballast in between the passes to make sure the railroad elevation is perfect for the curve and matches the road approaches. Along with the Mark IV tamper, our ballast regulator runs across the track to plow and broom all the ballast to make sure the concrete panels lay solid against the ties. Once the ties and rail are installed and perfectly surfaced, the concrete panels are ready to be installed.

After the railroad is back in place and leveled, the concrete panels are set in place. This requires setting the lag holes in position with the 10' ties underneath to make sure the panels are securely attached to the track beneath it. The ties are predrilled for the screw lags to secure the panels. Once all the panels are set, the paving can begin. This is the final step to finish installing the crossing.

It usually takes a week to do a single crossing, however, Oak Street took two weeks due to the double crossing at this location. Confounding the project's completion was the fact that the track went back in service at the end of each day for trains to run at night, and it creates long days for the Maintenance of Way crews. Despite these factors, completion of this crossing replacement is proof of how our MOW workers' dedication and pride in their work is essential in successfully completing a project. Time and time again they finish projects with exceptional results, and we are as proud of their work as they are. ♦



Milepost 173.1, the newly completed Oak St. Crossing.



Here, the guys are digging out the old crossing and rolling it to compact the base layer for the new crossing.



Reading and Northern gangs were all working on the crossing to get it done by the deadline of April 15th. Here, they installed new rails and spiked up the ties.

Maiden Creek Bridge



A view of the Maiden Creek Bridge located in Ontelauntee Township, Pennsylvania. Photo by: Roxanne Richardson

Rehabilitation Project

BY: JUSTIN LEVAN, VP MAINTENANCE OF WAY



The Maiden Creek Bridge is a historic stone arch bridge located on Reading, Blue Mountain, and Northern Railroad's Pennsy branch at milepost 65.41. It is a double arch bridge that is 15 feet wide, 40 feet high, 250 feet long, and was built between 1885 and 1886. We recently performed a lot of rehabilitation work to put it back in service. While the bridge was out of service, there was no way to access the ten miles of track between the bridge and the end of the line at Hamburg, Pennsylvania.

The bridge was out of service because the north end of the bridge had sunk about twenty inches on the east side of the foundation. For years, water was slowly eroding the ground under the foundation causing the bridge to settle. This was an ongoing problem that was worked on in 2000 and 2007, and we needed to address it again to save the bridge.

Continued on page 9



The bridge crew used a man lift to get up to the arch and hand pump grout into the cracks and point the stones while MOW was raising and lining the track up top.

Continued from page 8.

In an effort to find a permanent fix, RBMN authorized exploratory drilling in September of 2013. This was done under the supervision of John Walaitis (RBMN AVP – Bridges and Structures) and Mike Miluski (Compaction Grouting Services). They drilled nine holes totaling 674 linear feet and found several deep voids. At the same time, we had Al Roman and Fred Wolf, two professional engineers that the railroad had worked with in the past, look at the bridge. Everyone agreed that the course of action would be to lay concrete under the bridge to stop water erosion and to create a solid foundation for the bridge.

Before we could start working we needed an emergency permit from the Department of Environmental Protection. A turbidity curtain was put in the creek as the permit required. This is used to impede water flow and prevent any concrete sediment from spreading if it got into the creek. The permit also required the water to be monitored by testing the pH every fifteen minutes. If the pH exceeded 8.5, work would need to stop until the pH came back down. This never became a problem, with our highest pH reading only being 8.3.

After securing the emergency permit, the project was completed in several phases. The first phase was stabilizing the bridge by pumping concrete under the footprint of the bridge structure. The second phase involved using compaction grouting to stop capillary action so that the concrete did not stop, and to raise the bridge by pumping a special grout underneath the north abutment using high pressure. In the third phase we needed to stabilize the arch structures with steel bracing or threaded rod if it was needed, and pointing cracks in the stone work.

Setbacks along the way ranged from heavy rainfalls that destroyed our turbidity curtain setup and having to reinstall it, to snow and extreme cold

that prevented the concrete plant from staying open, to equipment failures that required us to acquire a sixty day extension for our permit from DEP. Even with those setbacks we drilled eighteen holes under the bridge and pumped 920 cubic yards of concrete from Berks Products under the bridge footprint. Despite these setbacks, the first phase was successful in stabilizing the bridge and raising it five inches.

The second phase consisted of compaction grouting and we did not experience quite as many delays. We pumped 129 cubic yards of a special grout under the structure and successfully raised the bridge over 5.5 inches higher. This brought the total raise up to 10 and 11/16 inches.

Finally, we drilled holes in some of the stones that had cracked and used threaded rod to help strengthen and support them. We were then able to start pointing the cracks, and used a hand pump to pump grout into the cracks to fill any voids that might have opened up after raising the bridge. With that done, all that remained was to perform the point work in the old mortar joints that had cracked.

With the bridge now sound and stable, we were able to perform track work on top of the bridge while the masonry work was being finished. We realigned the track since the track had moved to the east when the bridge settled. We also had to jack it up and tamp it to get rid of the low spot at the end of the bridge.

On May 2nd, the bridge was opened up for train traffic and our C.E.O. Andy Muller Jr. ran the first train safely over the bridge.

The Reading, Blue Mountain, and Northern Railroad would like to sincerely thank all the men who worked on and helped with this project. It was a big job, and with everyone's help it turned out great. With the bridge back in service now, we can continue to grow business on the Penny branch. ♦



The men worked in freezing temperatures and snow to solidify the area under the structure. Here, they are drilling holes and pumping concrete under the abutment to make a strong base.

Air Products Clearance and Track Project

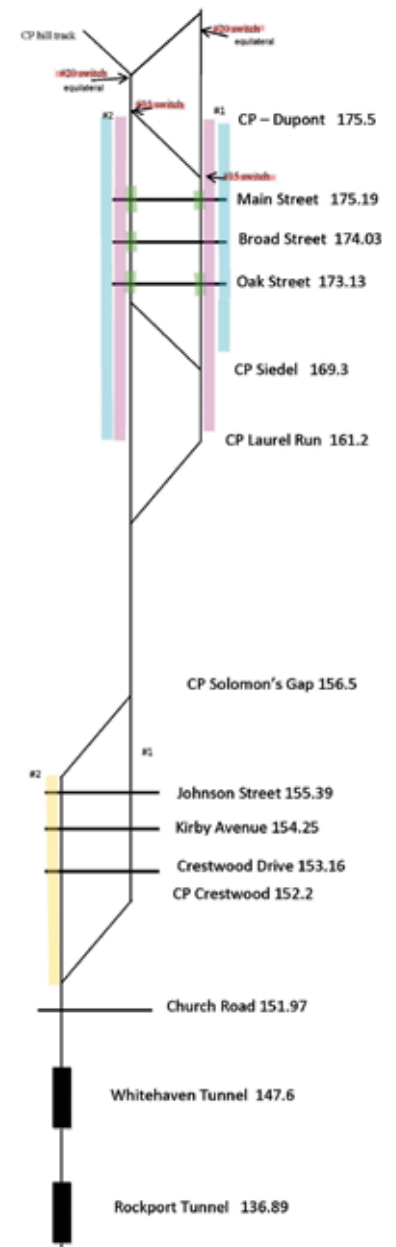
BY: ERIK YODER, AVP MAINTENANCE OF WAY

A major project underway this season is the Air Products Clearance and Track Project. Air Products was awarded an Rail Transportation Assistance Program grant from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to address clearances in tunnels and track condition along RBMN's Lehigh Line. The work for this project is being completed by both a contractor and RBMN maintenance employees. The work is extensive and some portions are completed, and the rest will be completed this year. The project has many different parts to complete. RBMN has completed one of three road crossings as part of this project. Oak Street crossing at MP 173.1 is completed. Main Street crossing at MP 175.2 and Broad Street crossings at MP 174.03 remain, and are on schuled to be completed in the middle of the summer. Both Oak Street and Main Street are double crossings, making each crossing twice the work. Oak Street has new concrete panels and Main Street will receive the same facelift. Part of the clearance portion of this project involves two tunnels. The White Haven Tunnel at MP 147.6 and the Rockport Tunnel at MP 136.9. Both of these tunnels have been inspected to address areas of close clearance. As a part of this tunnel work, sections of the tunnel liners will be replaced. One of the biggest threats to a tunnel is water. Tunnel liners keep the water from freezing inside the tunnel during the winter which could come in contact with passing trains or cars. Keeping water away from the tracks inside the tunnel also maintains the track structure to keep trains riding the path through the tunnel.

The remaining two pieces of work that RBMN maintenance gangs will be completing this year a part of the Air Products grant are the surfacing of both tracks one and two between MP 164.1 – 175.5. This spans between CP – Dupont and CP – Laurel Run. This is another job for Tamper 1. The last item that RBMN will complete is the rehabilitation of Dupont Interlocking. We will be rehabilitating three current switches in the track and adding in a fourth switch.

In June our contractor will begin to get ready for the replacement of 10,000 ties, 28,000 feet of gauging, and the elimination of 850 joints starting at MP 175.5 – 164.1. Once this tie work and gauging is completed, work will resume on track one between MP 175.5 – 168. Occurring simultaneously will be the elimination of 850 joints via crop and slide. This process of joint elimination is fascinating to watch as a stake body truck will unhouse the massive welding head that will heat the rails, then using hydraulic cylinders push the rail heads together to fuse them into one rail. The excess rail is cut off with this same unit to leave two pieces of rail as one. Some touch up grinding and the rail head, while still warm, is smooth on the head of the rail.

As mentioned above, once all of this work is completed, the Tamper 1 will be busy to add the final touches to the completion of this project. While the work involved in this project is extensive, we are excited to see the project completed on the railroad. We also look to the next project we can complete to keep our trains running. ♦



The overhead map of the railroad and the scope of the project work between MP 136 and MP 175.5.

Scope of Work:

- 1.) **Crossing Rehab**
 - a.) Main Street Dupont #1 & #2 Track
 - b.) Broad Street Dupont #2 Track
 - c.) Oak Street Pittston #1 & #2 Track
- 2.) **Surface**
 - a.) #1 Track between MP 175.5 - 164.10
 - b.) #2 Track between MP 175.5 - 164.10
- 3.) **Switches**
 - a.) (2) #20 switches at Dupont
 - b.) (2) #15 switches at Dupont
- 4.) **Ties Installation**
 - a.) 7,500 ties between MP 175.5 & 164.1 #2 Track
 - b.) 2,500 ties between MP 175.5 to 168 #1 Track
- 5.) **Gauging**
 - a.) 19,000 feet between MP 175.5 & 164.1 #2 Track
 - b.) 9,000 feet between MP 175.5 to 168 #1 Track
- 6.) **Joint Elimination**
 - a.) 850 joints via crop and weld between 156.5 & 152.2 #2 Track
- 7.) **Tunnel Work**
 - a.) Whitehaven Tunnel (Reline Interior) 147.6
 - b.) Rockport Tunnel (Reline Interior) 136.89

Aerial photo of the existing Dupont Interlocking. The track to the left is Canadian Pacific. The center of the photo is the connection track with CP as well as the crossover on RBMN. To the north of this crossover, a new switch will be installed.





The Mahanoy Branch will be getting new ties along this portion of track at MP 105.9 just south of the Buck Mountain Tunnel.



Mahanoy & Shamokin Branch Rehabilitation

BY: ERIK YODER, AVP MAINTENANCE OF WAY

A major project scheduled for this year is the rehabilitation of the M&S Branch. RBMN was recently awarded an Rail Freight Assistance Program from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to rehabilitate the M&S Branch. This is phase one of a three phase plan. The first phase will focus on the southeast portion of the M&S Branch between MP 103.6 and MP 108. The project runs between just west of Barnesville to just east of Mahanoy City.

Part of this project is track work through the Buck Mountain Tunnel. We will be replacing the worn rail in the tunnel with brand new rail. The rail will be continuous welded rail strings installed through the tunnel. Also a part of the plan is the replacement of ties within the tunnel.

We have been busy working on the details of the project. One major aspect of this project is selecting a contractor to do the work. The project has been advertised for bid and we are anticipating starting this project later this summer.

The project includes installing 3678 new ties and 8026 feet of new rail. All of the new rail will be placed in the Buck Mountain Tunnel and the ties will be spread across the 4.4 miles of track. Once the contractor has completed the tie work and rail replacement, RBMN will bring in the Tamper 1 to put the final surface on the work area. As in all projects, the Tamper 1 places the final touch on all track projects.

As with all rehabilitation projects, we are excited to see the final product. Taking a portion of track running 10 MPH due to defects and returning it back to 30 MPH is quite an accomplishment. I find tremendous satisfaction in looking at 'before' pictures of an area of track that has been recently rehabilitated.

Beyond just the surface of nicely rehabilitated track, this transfers into trains being able to operate more efficiently and effectively for our customers. It is rewarding to have a job in which the end product can be appreciated from many different aspects. From the beauty of solid, well maintained track to the beauty of efficient operation over the track, it all leads back to passion for good work.

As outlined in the different MOW articles, passion is something the MOW Department displays in each job we do. This passion starts from the CEO and is magnified in the field as MOW crews complete project after project. ♦

The Buck Mountain Tunnel south portal at MP 106 getting new shoes this summer with new ties and new rail through the tunnel.

TAMPER 1

RBMN MARK IV PRODUCTION TAMPER

BY: ERIK YODER, AVP MAINTENANCE OF WAY

Tamper 1 is back. After a long winter we took delivery of a refurbished Mark IV in March. It felt like a long awaited Christmas present. Just prior to delivery, the MOW office was abuzz with anticipation to see the Tamper 1. We could not be more satisfied with this machine. Not only does it look like a new machine, but the past few months have demonstrated it works like a new machine.

So why all the fuss about a single track machine? What is it about a Mark IV production tamper that has our department talking? It is the last piece of equipment to touch the track to finish a job. It is also vital in the success of a crossing replacement.

The Tamper 1 is capable of a variety of processes. All of these processes are involved in surfacing the railroad track. It has the capability to raise, line, and tamp the track using a sophisticated computer graphing program. Once the tamper arrives on site it will travel along the work location and graph the height of the rail head along the entire graph, as well as trace the line of the track, and calculate the current condition of the curve. The computer will display the curve on a computer screen outlining the rail profile, the curvature in the track, and elevation in the track. The operator can then make any adjustments to program the machine to fix the track.

The machine goes into work mode and the raising, lining, and tamping of the track begins. Raising the track is vital to keep the curves on the railroad in good shape. The tamper can check for proper elevation around the curve and correct any low/high spots in the curve. Raising a track can also aid in lifting the rail and ties out of fouled ballast to keep the railroad high and dry. Lining the track eliminates any kinks or twists in the track. This allows the train to ride properly on the head of the rail. Tamping the track will secure the ties in the ballast and resist any movement of the track caused by rail heating or cooling. All of this translates to a smooth ride in a train and extended life of the rail. Before this computerized machine was able to travel over a curve and graph the characteristics of the curve, it was all done by hand - a process that is extremely labor intensive and slow.

Tamper 1 can surface approximately one mile each day, and is the final step in finishing a project. It is vital for the tamper to tamp the track, making it secure for train use, and also makes the track look beautiful. Tamper 1 is not alone in the final step of securing a track. It runs in tandem with the ballast regulator. The ballast regulator can plow ballast to give the shoulder a nice slope. It also brooms the ties and rail to clean up any loose stones on top of ties or on the base of the rail.

Without these two machines, the railroad would not look or ride as it does today. They are vital to the maintenance of the track. Keeping the trains on track to serve customers has the Tamper 1 busy all season long. After a cold winter's wait, we are happy to see the Tamper 1 back in action. ♦



Our former Mark IV Tamper heading out for the rebuild process.



Our newly received Mark IV Production/Switch Tamper parked for the evening on the Caboose track at Port Clinton Headquarters.



Mark IV Tamper returned to service and ready for work.



Awaiting orders at Reading, Blue Mountain, and Northern Headquarters at Port Clinton.



Maintenance gangs installing 1 of the many temporary crossing for bridge work this summer. This crossing is on the Saint Clair RT MP 0.2. From left to right John Brown, Duane Zimmerman, Matt Minnich, Larry Weller, Duane Engle

— MAINTENANCE OF WAY —

FROM A SALES AND MARKETING PERSPECTIVE

BY: DAN GILCHRIST

We cannot achieve effective sales and marketing if we do not have the facilities in place to provide the kind of service we are known for. Virtually every project we work on requires involving the Maintenance of Way Department. This is pretty obvious when we are talking about new track construction for new business development, but MOW is also very involved with our daily efforts to take care of our current customers. Some of our customers are familiar with railroad track and are comfortable dealing with rail contractors when their sidings need to be tuned up. Many other customers are not as familiar and have asked us to let them pay us to take care of any track issues on their sidings. We have actually tried this on a few occasions, but the truth is our forces are usually just too busy doing our own track work and special projects to take on this kind of additional work. What we will do is come take a look at their track and let them know what they might expect to see in a proposal from a rail contractor. Other times, we can review a proposed scope of work from a contractor for a customer to confirm that we think it addresses the necessary track repairs appropriately for their siding.

New business development is the most visible area from a sales and marketing perspective to which Maintenance of Way becomes involved. Extending track four in North Reading in preparation for the growing need to hold unit trains of crude oil is the latest example. Crude oil by rail is potentially a huge market for RBMN. Customers need the ability to hold unit trains of crude oil until they can be moved to refineries in the Philadelphia area and we may be well positioned to help. We have plenty of space to get started now, but we think we may need additional room in 2015.

Reopening of the Pennsy Branch was another exciting development this spring that depended on MOW. After being closed for several years, the Maiden Creek Bridge has been repaired and is open for business. Details on this project are located in Justin's article, but as soon as MOW completed the bridge and track work we delivered our first cars across the bridge to Gromark. I am happy to say that Gromark was just

as happy as RBMN to have direct service resumed to their facility. We also welcomed a new customer back onto the railroad this year with the resumption of service to Cambridge Lee Industries. Before we could resume this business our MOW forces had to tie and gauge our railroad up to their siding and then helped get their track ready for deliveries. Once again, we cannot help customers with their transportation needs until MOW gets the needed track in place.

Last year MOW rebuilt our Cressona Yard and upgraded Penobscot Yard to handle inbound aluminum for transloading, storage, and local delivery. This very successful project to refurbish two old rail yards was a highlight for our business growth last year and was the reason we won the American Shortline and Regional Railroad Association's "Shortline Marketing Award" for 2014.

Looking forward to later this year we hope to kick off another exciting new business development project in Tunkhannock, Pennsylvania. D&I has been a good customer of ours for years in Pittston and they are looking to expand their sand business to a new terminal in Tunkhannock. Final design is about done and necessary permits and approvals are underway. When the time comes, MOW will be called upon to get the required switch and tracks installed to begin the latest chapter for RBMN in the growing Marcellus Shale Market. This will be a state of the art sand terminal and cement our customer's position deep into the heart of Marcellus Shale. Again, we cannot do much to help until MOW gets the necessary track infrastructure in place.

No matter what we come up with from a sales and marketing perspective we have to have the MOW group make it happen for us. If we do not have the track infrastructure in place to do what we need then we do not have anything to offer. Let's not forget that many times this work has to be done at night or in the rain, or snow, or other adverse conditions. I like to think we do some good things at this railroad, but it all starts with the MOW group and the track infrastructure they take care of. ♦

‘Operating Together’

THE OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE OF WAY DEPARTMENTS

BY: TYLER GLASS, EXECUTIVE VP OPERATIONS

There have been many articles written about various track projects on our railroad. Many of those projects have resulted in efficiency upgrades through infrastructure additions and track improvements that allowed us to increase track speeds. I thought for this newsletter I could write a different kind of article to discuss the relationship between Reading and Northern Railroad Operations and Maintenance of Way.

Operations takes pride in the excellent customer service we provide, but we rarely discuss how we take care of internal customers. So let me just give you a little peek into the working relationship between the Operations and MOW Departments that ensures that we provide each other with what is needed to keep our tracks in fine shape and operate a scheduled railroad.

Track projects can vary greatly in size and complexity, therefore it is necessary for the two departments to be in constant communication to ensure we are on the same page. For example, if a track outage is needed for a project, that outage needs to be defined well in advance so that we have adequate time to work with our customers to adjust their delivery times or to notify our trackage right tenants that

work needs to be performed. This coordination can be accomplished in a variety of ways that range from simple email request for smaller projects, to a series of meetings that take place over the course of weeks or months for larger projects.

Operations is also responsible for the transportation of track materials in railcars, because of which, we have processes in place with our Traffic Department that treat the MOW Department like every other customer the railroad services. The process begins with the MOW Department submitting a formal request to the Traffic Department. From there, the Traffic Department coordinates the request with the Operations Department to establish the routing plan for the materials, crew assignments, and the generation of a work order document that all result in our internal customers getting treated as importantly as our other customers.

Operations also provides work trains to assist MOW with the work they have planned. Work trains are often used to disperse track materials or to spread the ballast on an area that will be raised, lined, and surfaced. We also provide work trains to move cars off tracks so that work such as weed spraying or the surfacing of adjacent track can be

properly done. The movement of work trains is a time sensitive issue, requiring coordination of projects to be planned out down to the minute, especially when third parties, such as crane services or municipalities, are involved.

On top of all of the planned maintenance and construction projects the MOW Department is involved in, they always seem to be faced with unforeseen issues as well. A recent example of unscheduled work would be something we experienced earlier this year, Mother Nature's relentless cold winter weather. As you can imagine, it takes careful coordination to keep the railroad operating, with little to no warning of extreme weather situations, and each department had to be on their toes. Without a strong working relationship, it could not have been done.

In return, MOW does an excellent job taking care of train crew track condition reports. Whether it's a brush concern, hard to operate switches or rough riding track, MOW is on top of it making sure we receive the support we need.

Operations and MOW are in constant communication. It may get loud sometimes, but that does not mean we aren't having fun. ♦



As mentioned in the previous newsmagazine RBMN was chosen to receive a marketing award from the American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association for our efforts in establishing transload and storage terminals at Cressona, PA and Mountain Top, PA. Friday, April 25 Tyler Glass accepted the award on behalf of the RBMN at ASLRRRA's annual convention in San Diego, CA. Shown in the photograph from left to right: Richard Timmons, President, ASLRRRA Alan Hardy, Pacific Region VP, ASLRRRA Tyler Glass, Carl Belke, Eastern Region VP, ASLRRRA



Loram Rail Grinder passing through the Penobscot Area on the Lehigh Main in February of 2008.

Maintenance of Way Evolution

BY: WESLEY WESTENHOEFER, VP MAINTENANCE OF WAY – QUALITY CONTROL

It is hard to believe that I have been working for this company for over seventeen years. I am proud to have been a part of this railroad for such a long time. And with that perspective I can see how much change has occurred to the Maintenance of Way (MOW) Department and the assets we maintain.

The most important asset in the MOW Department is the employees. We have a very high retention rate, thanks to good pay, good benefits, job security, and a safe work environment. From the top down, we focus on attracting good people and most importantly, we focus on keeping them. For starters, the number of employees in the track department has increased 100% since 2001 growing from fourteen full-time employees to currently twenty-eight full-time employees. As testimony to the growth of the department, we just announced that we are hiring an additional two more full-time track department employees bringing our 2014 total to thirty people. We have a very experienced group of men who consistently step up to the plate to get the job done. In the snow, rain, ice, whatever the obstacle may be, our team works extremely hard and does what it takes. They also know how to have fun, which always makes a “job” not so much a “job.”

Before writing this article, I went back and read all of the past MOW articles to refresh my memory on the events that took place in prior years. I found it humorous that most of the MOW articles which focused on year end accomplishments had the words “best year ever” in the first paragraph. Talk about a broken record. There are times when we did not exceed the number of ties replaced than the prior year, but that’s not always a bad news story. When you can finish a year with a small number of ties replaced without deferring maintenance, it means your railroad is in decent shape. Anytime we do a project, our goal is to always “finish” the track we are working on. “Finish” means not having to come back to work on that line or location for at least five years.

My MOW career really began in early 2001 when I finished college and started working full-time. During the four years prior to that, I worked in the Finance Department, starting with clerical work then working in purchasing and state projects. During the summers and on weekends, I worked in the Track Department as a laborer. My first taste of track work came in 1998 when we were constructing a small yard at the former Techneglas facility south of Pittston. In 1999 through 2000, I was working in Penobscot Yard helping to build thousands of feet of yard tracks. Penobscot Yard now serves as our Lehigh Interchange point with Norfolk Southern as well as our serving yard for a few local customers.

Many people think that the work the MOW Department performs is simply maintenance and repair to the tracks. Things would be much easier if that were correct. Truth is, we are responsible for much more than just building and fixing track. Within our 320 mile system, we also maintain 210 bridges. These are railroad bridges carrying our tracks over top of roads, streams, and rivers. We inspect each one annually and perform repairs as needed. Over the years, we have performed numerous major bridge projects. In 2003, we completely re-decked and laid new track over the Nesquehoning and Coalport Bridges in Jim Thorpe connecting our Reading Division to our Lehigh Division. This was a project many years in the making. It is a project I will never forget as it is the first time I managed a major bridge project.

We also have six tunnels throughout our system. During the summer months of 2001, we addressed some stability issues inside the north end of the Vosburg Tunnel located at the northern end of our Susquehanna Branch. This was a very important project, as any service disruptions to our largest customer, Proctor & Gamble, located north of the tunnel, would not have been good for business. We performed a much more in depth and larger scaled stabilizing project inside



the north end of the Buck Mountain Tunnel, located on the southern end of our Mahanoy & Shamokin Branch. It is common practice for us to perform this work with our own people and equipment. In this case, we saved at least \$100k between these two tunnels. We had obtained quotes from a few contractors to do the work and were able to do it for a fraction of what they wanted. Saving money in this manner is always beneficial because those dollars go straight to the bottom line un-taxed and without expenses.

In addition to tunnels and bridges, we also install, replace, and maintain vehicular grade crossings. We are responsible for maintaining just over 160 grade crossings scattered throughout our territory. We also have seventy-four private grade crossings which are not open to the public but are in place for use by the business or landowner using them. These crossings are governed by an agreement, which places the maintenance responsibility on the user. I came across an article I put together in late 2005 titled "The Year of the Crossings." During that year, we partnered with PennDOT and replaced seventeen crossings throughout Berks and Schuylkill Counties. PennDOT contributed roughly 30% towards the total cost as well as provided us with full vehicular detours during each one's replacement. The traveling public may not be aware of the amount of work and money that goes into these automobile and train intersections, however, in today's numbers, a standard two lane concrete crossing replacement project totals up to just a tad over \$70,000 - not a cheap undertaking. Between May of 2013 and July of 2014, we will have installed, replaced, or re-surfaced a total of twenty crossings making this another "Year of the Crossings." During the course of my career, I have been involved in the replacement of 65 of our 241 total grade crossings on our railroad.

Over the years, I have witnessed and been a part of a multitude of changes and company milestones. Many of them related to our infrastructure as well as the department. In 2002, we had a banner year related to new switch installations. In just ten short months, we installed a total of twenty new switches throughout the railroad. Anytime you are installing a new switch, there is a good news story behind it. Installing a new switch, regardless of the location, more than likely means the railroad is experiencing growth in some form or another. Whether it's a new switch located in a yard to gain access to additional track space, or a switch located on the mainline connecting a new customer, there almost always is

a return on investment for this work. In August of 2003, we hit a major milestone when Mr. Muller purchased the "Reading Cluster" in 1990 by installing our 100th switch. With a current total of almost 420 switches on our system, this was huge for us and has changed the operation and the layout of our railroad substantially!

Another part of our track infrastructure that is very labor and capital intensive is our rail. The price of steel has increased substantially since 2004, which is when we purchased and installed seven miles (both rails) of new rail on our Lehigh Main. The total cost for this project came in at almost \$1.5 million. If we were to do the same project today, the total cost would exceed \$4 million. Talk about change! Given the rise in costs to replace rail, we have taken steps to preserve the life of our existing rail for as long as possible. To date, we have hired Loram to bring in a rail grinding train three times (2008, 2009 and 2013) on our heavily used Lehigh Main. This "train" uses a total of eighty-eight grinding stones and with a computerized work system, it grinds the head of the rail re-contouring it back to its original state as best it can. The end result is having the slight crown on the top of the rail where the train's wheels contact the rail providing a much smoother ride and prolonging the life of the rail. In addition to grinding, we have also strategically placed fifteen wayside rail lubricators at \$6,000 each along the mainline which distribute grease onto both the rail and the flange ways of the train wheels which decreased the amount of friction between the wheel and the head of the rail. In keeping with our entrepreneurial spirit, we took advantage of the rising steel prices. In six short weeks, we cleaned up our yards and right of way by loading ten carloads (1,000 tons) of scrap steel and rail then sold it when the market was almost at its peak.

Another notable change in the department has been with our equipment and trucks. On December 29th, 2004 we took delivery of a brand new Knox Kershaw KBR 875 ballast regulator. This unit was added to our fleet to work with our Mark IV Tamper, which was purchased new in 1997. The intent was to replace our 1976 Kershaw Model 26-2 ballast regulator, however, there is still some life left in that machine and we do use it on occasion. In 2007, we purchased a new Sterling hireall prentice truck which has paid for itself many times and is a vital piece of our fleet.

Continued on page 17



Track gang in process of replacing the Rt. 940 grade crossing in White Haven, September 2009 and their finished product.

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A few months ago, we purchased a new Mark IV tamper to replace our 1997 model. Finally, for proof that our department has experienced significant growth and change is the fact that we only had ONE hirail truck for MOW use in 1990, today we have seventeen.

In our department's history, we have also experienced some unfortunate events. Mother Nature has shown its ugly side a few times over the years. Most notably, we had a major flood in June 2006 as a result of Hurricane Ivan. Although we were not as impacted as many of the surrounding railroads, we were hit hard and much of our railroad was impacted in one form or another. The worst of it occurred just south of our Vosburg Tunnel in Mehoopany and just south of our White Haven Tunnel north of White Haven. I have never seen anything like it in my life. Twenty-four hours prior to this event we had solid track. After the storm I was able to walk upright underneath our track with my head just touching the bottom of the ties. What amazed me about this experience was how we came together as a team and in very short time, had trains running again. Many of us slept very little for the three days it took us to get things put back together. We worked through the night taking short naps in the trucks. True testimony that our guys will do whatever it takes to fix "their" railroad.

Unfortunately, there is not enough space or time to illustrate just how much change has occurred in both the MOW department and the infrastructure we maintain. We have gone through some growing pains as would any company that

has experienced the growth we have in such a short amount of time. Change is not always easy to deal with. The key is to be able to accept it, adapt to it, and it will more often than not, prove to be for the best. The change and growth we experienced in the Track Department was not free. As I pointed out, track work and track materials are very expensive. Millions of dollars were invested. In the last seventeen years, I would estimate we have spent over \$85 million on our infrastructure to create the railroad we have. In addition, our customers have added or rehabilitated their track spending in excess of \$10 million. I have said this in many articles over the years - our CEO has an intense passion for track and it can be challenging to keep up with him at times. He constantly has his finger on the pulse of this department and he puts his money where his mouth is. That being the case, there is no arguing for performing sub-standard work.

The department has not always operated as it does today. In the beginning, money was tight, derailments were frequent, and traffic levels uncertain. I have heard enough stories from the 1990s to know that the company experienced some significant hardships. It was not a case of "if" a derailment was going to occur that day, it was "how many" and "where." Out of necessity we have evolved. Charles Darwin hit the nail on the head with his quote, "it is not the strongest or the most intelligent who will survive but those who can best manage change." Nobody is perfect, but I think we did a pretty darn good job managing change and will continue to do so for many years to come. ♦



Photo of Mark IV Tamper and Ballast Regulator with Fresh Paint at Port Clinton Yard in 2008.

NEW ADDITIONS TO THE READING AND NORTHERN FAMILY!

This spring we were thrilled to welcome a few new members to the Reading and Northern Railroad family!



William Patrick Scianna, the newly arrived son of Michelle and Russell Scianna, Jr., was born on Wednesday, May 7, 2014 at 4:04 pm, weighing 7 pounds and 9 ounces, and stretching to 21 inches! It looks like William is ready to follow in his father's footsteps as a conductor on the Lehigh Gorge Scenic Railway!

Kenzlee Marie Witner, the daughter of Deanna Clark and our Maintenance of Way's Jason Witner, was born on Thursday, March 13, 2014, weighing 6 pounds and 8 ounces, and stretching to 20 inches! Kenzlee looks so pretty in pink!



2014 RBMN'S ANNUAL PICNIC AT KNOEBEL'S

BY: BEVERLY HESS, DIRECTOR OF EMPLOYEE RELATIONS

Just a friendly reminder that our company picnic at Knoebels Amusement Resort is on **Saturday, July 19, 2014**. Registration for ride tickets and lunch tickets starts at **10:30 AM – 12:30 PM** in Pavilion "O." Lunch will be served also in Pavilion "O" at **1:00 PM**. Park opens at **11:00 AM** and closes at **10:00 PM**.

BEWARE OF THE SUMMER SPIKE

BY: BRIAN O'NEAL, VP TRANSPORTATION AND SAFETY

Each year the railroad industry experiences a phenomenon, typically in the months of May – August, commonly referred to as “Summer Spike.” As the name infers, there is an increase in the frequency rate of which injuries occur during the warmer months, as compared to the rest of the year. This, to some, may not make sense since longer summer days improve visibility and limits the hours spent working in the dark, in addition to the ground being clear of the snow and icy conditions. However, if you take a closer look at what occurs during these months, the “summer spike” will begin to make more sense.

First of all, the higher temperatures and the increased exposure to direct sun light raises the risk of heat related medical conditions, such as dehydration and heat exhaustion. These same warmer temperatures also bring out other environmental hazards, such as poison ivy, snakes, and stinging insects. The good news, however, is that most of these things, with a little planning and situational awareness, can be avoided by consuming plenty of fluids, wearing lite colored clothing, applying sun block, paying closer attention to your surroundings, and avoiding higher risk areas, such as areas with high grass, as much as possible.

While the weather and the environment play a significant role in the increase in injuries and incidents, it is the more intangible factors that cause the most problems. Often times our frame of mind changes during this time of year and we become distracted from the task at hand. We start to think more about what we will be doing away from work, than what has to be done at that exact moment. Whether it is a family vacation that we are trying to get an early start on or the growing list of yard work at home, the temptation to rush and cut corners begins to appear more and more like a justifiable options.

Additionally, experience has shown that the better the conditions are, the more likely people are to let their guard down. Think about the last time you drove through a snow storm, I bet that you were sitting on the edge of your seat with your eyes open and all of your attention focused on the road in front of you. Now think about how that varies from how you drive on a bright summer day. Most people are more likely to look down to adjust the radio, carry on conversations with their passengers or simply look around to enjoy the scenery. All of these things, that on the surface seem to be minor events, cause thousands of traffic accidents

each year. The same thing happens to those of us that work at the railroad. In the winter when we are walking across an icy surface we slow our pace, take shorter steps, and look at the ground below us with each step. However, when the weather is nicer we walk faster, pick our heads up to look around or we try to multi-task by walking and reading our switching instructions at the same time. These actions make us more susceptible to being a victim of a tripping hazard. We get lured into a false sense of security, thinking that the warmer weather has removed all of the obvious hazards, such as snow and ice, and we begin to work under the assumption that anything else that could harm us will be so noticeable that we won't be able to miss it.

In the end, there is no reason that summer shouldn't be the safest time of the year to work. After all, it is true we do not have Mother Nature fighting against us on a daily basis and overall working conditions are the most conducive to safety during this time. However, the key is to remain vigilant and to not take all of this for granted. So plan your day, prepare for the rising temperatures, and if you feel yourself beginning to rush, take a moment to refocus and let's beat the spike. ♦

CORRECTION



In last issue's magazine a photograph was mis-labeled and we would like to correct that:

Page 30 (Back inside cover): The picture of the turtle with its head craned out is really a bog turtle, not a box turtle, as labeled.

It's interesting to note the bog turtle is the smallest species of turtle on North America, and native only to the eastern United States. Their habitat is often on the edge of woods, preferably with a high water table year-

round. Because they spend a great deal of time during the day basking in sunlight until warm (after which they begin their search for food), it's important for their area to have an open canopy.

Bog turtles are omnivorous, eating aquatic plants, seeds, earthworms, snails, slugs, insects, and other invertebrates, which are generally the most important food item.

The bog turtle is distinguishable from any other species of turtle by the distinctively

colored blotch on its neck, usually a bright yellow, orange or red color.

Though a host of different animals, including snapping turtles, certain snakes, foxes, dogs and skunks prey upon bog turtles, it is the loss or alteration of wetlands through development, pollution, and invasive species that are the greatest threats to the bog turtle, having been federally listed as a threatened species in 1997. ♦



Sharing a few laughs, pictured from left to right are Matt Liptak, Katie Bonner, Mario and Tammy Carannante, and Susan Ludwig.



Striking a pose on the dance floor, pictured from left to right are Tracy Gehris, Darnell Young, Ron Gehris, Frances Karycki, and Steve Werley.

The Reading & Northern's Spring Soiree 2014

The winter blues can't stop the Reading & Northern from having a good time! When our annual holiday celebration was cancelled in December due to a severe snowstorm, we decided to postpone our celebrations until April and welcome the start of spring!

On April 5th at the Holiday Inn Conference Center in Breinigsville, Pennsylvania, the Reading and Northern Railroad, as well as the Reading Jet Center and Muller Rare Coins, got together for dinner and to let loose on the dance floor!

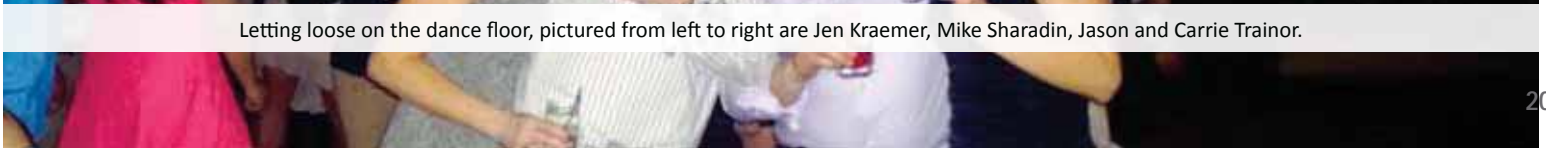
The 'Spring Soiree' was a great opportunity for everyone to relax together over dinner and share a few stories, and laughs, on a Saturday night! We are all looking forward to getting together at the next company celebration!



Relaxing over dinner together, pictured left to right are Jen and Bill Riegler, Shane and Lisa Frederickson, Shanna Cook, Lisa Harvey, Chad Frederickson, and Jim Cook.



Letting loose on the dance floor, pictured from left to right are Jen Kraemer, Mike Sharadin, Jason and Carrie Trainor.



CELEBRATING LABOR DAY

AT THE READING & NORTHERN RAILROAD



Dennis "Butch" Reppert conducting in spring 1990.
From the Corporate Archives of the Reading & Northern Railroad.

BY: JOLENE BUSHER, RECORDS ARCHIVIST

The Labor Day holiday weekend has over time in the United States come to signal the end of summer, door buster sales at your favorite retail stores, and that last chance to barbeque on the grill before the onset of fall. In fact, most choose to use the last extended weekend of the summer to do anything, but labor! And while you are encouraged to kick back and relax this Labor Day, this does not necessarily mean we should forget what we are celebrating as we soak in those last days of summer.

This article does not intend to be a lesson in history, but rather, a reminder to reflect on how we have advanced as a society, a company, and also how each of us has contributed to the growth and success of American industry and the Reading and Northern Railroad.

Labor Day became a federal holiday in 1894, in an effort to help make peace with the recently settled Pullman Strike of 1894, when the grievances of factory workers of the Pullman Palace Car Company lead to a deadly strike that ended only after federal intervention. In the early days of the nation's observance of Labor Day, parades, community festivals, and special speakers were used as a platform to push the labor movement forward, vouching for reforms in federally enforced safety regulations and ending child labor in factories and coal mines.

Perhaps because we finally live in a society that recognizes the importance of worker's rights, the use of Labor Day as a champion for the labor movement is no longer as essential. Instead, Labor Day today should serve as an opportunity to take pride in the accomplishments of the workforces that move industry forward in our own communities. The Reading and Northern Railroad can use Labor Day as a reflection on the tremendous growth from a 13 mile railroad, to a railroad that now spans over 300 miles and 9 counties in Pennsylvania. And everyone a part of the Reading and Northern team can use Labor Day to celebrate their work and accomplishments as we all contribute to the continued growth of the railroad. To moving carloads of coal, to performing track and signal maintenance, to crunching numbers, to inspecting construction projects, to managing schedules, to running engines, to car maintenance, to customer and passenger relations, and to helping each other along the way, all of our labors move the railroad forward. So when we are enjoying the final days of summer this Labor Day, take pride in your own accomplishments and labors over the past year. And as we celebrate the end of another summer, take an opportunity to celebrate where we've been, and where we're going!



Raymond "Corky" Adams in June 1986. From the Corporate Archives of the Reading & Northern Railroad.



Shane Frederickson, Mike Tillger, and Charlie Kachel aboard one of the Blue Mountain & Reading's steam locomotives. Circa 1986-1990. From the Corporate Archives of the Reading & Northern Railroad.



Farewell and Best Wishes!

Wednesday, June 25 was the last working day Laura Kennedy, Director Of Passenger. Laura has decided to make a career change and has taken a position with another local company.

Laura started working for the Lehigh Gorge Scenic Railway in May 2007 as a car host. In March 2008 she was elevated to her most recent position as Director of Passenger. One of her main duties was to oversee the operations at the LGSR in downtown Jim Thorpe. During her tenure as Director of Passenger, she worked earnestly with many local communities and organizations, planning and running fund raising train excursions.

Laura played a most integral part in the passenger team helping the department evolve into a more versatile and technologically run operation all the while maintaining the décor and appearance of 20th Century railroading.

Laura will be missed and we wish her the best of luck in her new endeavors.



Side view of RBMN 3814 with the new hard cover attached. The hard cover was added when the car was in Canada, and replaces the tarps that were previously used on these cars. A car that is equipped with one of the single-use tarps is visible on the left side of the photo.

RAILROAD MODIFIES GONDOLAS TO MEET CUSTOMER'S NEEDS

BY: DAREN GESCHWINDT, AVP MERCHANDISE TRAFFIC

Recently we were able to work with World Resources in Pottsville, Pennsylvania to help improve their railcar fleet and their process for shipping material.

For many years, World Resources had a dedicated fleet of gondolas, supplied by Canadian Pacific, which they used to ship materials between their facility in Pennsylvania and to points in Canada. While this arrangement was suitable for many years, as time went on, the condition of the cars deteriorated and CP did not have other cars available to put into this service. Ultimately, it became necessary for them to look at alternative railcar options.

It was at this point that the RBMN stepped in and offered a solution, since we had gondolas that fit their needs. Upon inspection, World Resources found our cars to be in much better condition than the cars that they had previously been using, and in October we agreed to put ten cars into this service.

These cars also met another one of World Resources' needs. The gondolas were in such good condition, that despite being several years old, the top cords were relatively straight. Previously, World Resources covered every car with a tarp prior to shipment. The problem with this was that the tarps could only be used once and had to be disposed of once the car was unloaded. Since the top cords of our cars were straight, it allowed for the potential of equipping the cars with permanent hard covers, instead of continuing to use tarps. World Resources worked with the receiver

and identified hard covers that would work. The only problem was that the cars were a few inches too wide in the center of the car.

Upon receiving the specs for the hard covers, our car shop was able to develop a plan to modify the width of the cars. By modifying the width, it would allow the hard covers to fit and eliminated the need to tarp the cars. In March, we began cycling cars through our car shop as they returned from Canada. The shop forces pulled the car sides inward and removed brackets from the top cord, which made it possible to use the hard covers. Best of all, we were able to do this at no additional cost to World Resources.

Since these modifications, the cars have been loaded and shipped with the tarps one last time. Upon arrival in Canada, the cars are being unloaded and equipped with the hard covers.

With the hard covers in place, it not only eliminates the need for World Resources to apply tarps, but it also eliminates the need for the receiver to dispose of them. Therefore, elimination of the tarps is not only cost effective, but is also environmentally friendly.

This is just another example of RBMN going the extra mile to find solutions for our customers.



End view of the RBMN 3814 with the new hard cover attached. The RBMN car shop modified these cars to accommodate the use of the hard covers, and eliminate the need for single-use tarps.

RBMN ANNIVERSARIES ACKNOWLEDGED

25 YEARS



Hire Date – December 8th, 1988
Robert Dash; Car Host-LGSR



Hire Date – April 1st, 1989
Lisa Matz; Car Host/Ticket Agent-LGSR

15 YEARS



Hire Date – April 12th, 1999
Robert Harak; Aviation Mechanic - RJM



Hire Date – May 3rd, 2004
David Evely; Mechanic



Hire Date – June 28th, 2004
Stanley Burczyk; Customer Service Mgr.

10 YEARS

5 YEARS



Hire Date – May 4th, 2009
Matthew Mizikoski; MOW Welder



Hire Date – May 26th, 2009
Benjamin Cole; MOW Supervisor

3 YEARS



Hire Date – April 18th, 2011
Darnell Young; Signal Maintainer



Hire Date – June 8th, 2011
Crystal Arndt; HR Administrator

1 YEAR



Hire Date – June 5th, 2013
Jolene Busher; Records Archivist



Hire Date – June 20th, 2011
Shawn Slusser; Machine Operator Class 3



The Lehigh Gorge Scenic Railway train sits at the Jim Thorpe Train Station before departing for the 11:00am train on Memorial Day, 2014.

PASSENGER

BY: LAURA KENNEDY, DIRECTOR OF PASSENGER

2014 is the tenth season of the Lehigh Gorge Scenic Railway and the twenty-ninth year running passenger excursions.

The Lehigh Gorge Scenic Railway kicked off its season on May 3rd by running a railfan photo-freight excursion throughout the northern parts of Reading & Northern territory including a very rare ride through the Vosburg Tunnel. This train proved to be a lucrative fundraiser for the Lackawanna and Wyoming Valley Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society, with whom the LGSR partnered to make this popular ride possible. Everyone, including the Reading & Northern staff on board, enjoyed themselves, and we have received a lot of positive feedback about this rare-mileage train ride.

On May 17th, the LGSR operated a fundraiser train ride from White Haven to Jim Thorpe and back to raise funds for the relatively new White Haven Ambulance Association and the White Haven Library. The weather that Saturday could not have been better, and everyone enjoyed their time in Jim Thorpe where the town was celebrating its namesake athlete's birthday with ceremonies, entertainment, and vendors throughout the town.

The Lehigh Gorge Scenic Railway kicked off its regular season in Jim Thorpe on May 24th this year for Memorial Day Weekend. The rain held off on Saturday, and it proved to be a solid opening weekend for the LGSR. The railway will now be running at 11:00 am, 1:00 pm, and 3:00 pm on weekends and holidays through December 23rd. Like last year, from Fourth of July Weekend through Labor Day weekend, we will be open on Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays with trains departing the station at 11:00 am, 1:00 pm, 3:00 pm, and 4:30 pm.

During the month of October, the LGSR will run seven trips a day on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays in Jim Thorpe. These trips run every hour, on the hour with the first one at 10:00 am and the last one departing the Jim Thorpe station at 4:00 pm. We will also run two trains to the Hometown High Bridge from the Jim Thorpe Train Station on Saturdays

and Sundays during October; these trains leave at 10:30 am and 1:20 pm.

Just like the last few years, we scheduled two Pennsylvania Dutch Treat Trains for May 31st and September 6th. These very popular rides leave Jim Thorpe at 4:30 pm, go through the gorge to White Haven, and return to Jim Thorpe by 7:00 pm. On board the train, passengers enjoy a snack of ring bologna, cheese, pickles, olives, pretzels, shoofly pie, and assorted beverages.

Other special LGSR trips in 2014 are as follows: On June 15th, we ran one-hour rides from the Tamaqua Train Station for the town's Summerfest. The 11:00 am train took passengers south to New Ringgold and back to Tamaqua. The 1:00 pm and 3:00 pm rides traveled to the Hometown High Bridge and back to the station. On July 5th, we ran an excursion with Steam Locomotive No. 425 from the Mountain Top Area to Jim Thorpe as a fundraiser for the Mountain Top Rotary. The Lehigh Gorge Scenic Railway will also be running a fundraiser steam excursion from Port Clinton to Jim Thorpe and return on September 13th for the Annville United Methodist Church. We will also continue the tradition of running mini trips for Schuylkill Haven Borough Day on September 27th. We are planning to run another Duryea to Jim Thorpe excursion on September 28th. As in the past, this ride will be coordinated with the Pittston Memorial Library, the Greater Pittston YMCA, and Care and Concern Free Health Clinic as a fundraiser excursion for the three organizations.

As always, we will be running our annual Autumn Leaf Excursions from Port Clinton to Jim Thorpe in October. Our Autumn Leaf Excursions will be on Saturday, October 4th (Diesel), Saturday, October 11th and Sunday, 12th (Steam), and Saturday, October 18th (Diesel).

For tickets or information about any of the above mentioned trips, please call the Lehigh Gorge Scenic Railway at 570-325-8485. Our schedule, prices, and details about all our train rides can be found on our website at <http://www.lgsry.com>. We can also be found on Facebook at www.facebook.com/LehighGorgeScenicRailway. ♦



Car Hosts Eric Quimby (left) and Mike Evangelista (right) help passengers board onto the open air car, Summer Wind, on the morning of Memorial Day, 2014.

The Lehigh Gorge Scenic Railway was excited to partner with Pocono Biking for the first time to offer Bike Trains on June 7th and 8th. Passengers and their bikes boarded the train at the Jim Thorpe train station for 10:30 am and 2:30 pm departures on both days. They then rode the train through the gorge to White Haven where passengers detrained and rode their bicycles back down through the gorge. This unique trip offered two different perspectives of the gorge for passengers. We have learned that only one or two other places in the entire country offer a similar experience, and we are looking forward to possibly offering this type of ride a couple times per year in the future.



EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

SUMMER 2014

BY: CRYSTAL ARNDT, HR ADMINISTRATOR



I am pleased to introduce this quarter's "Spotlight Employee" - Jeffrey Knadler. Jeff came to work for RBMN in July of 2007 as a Conductor within our Operations Department and was promoted to Engineer in May of 2012. Prior to working for RBMN, Jeff was employed as a Landscaper with Tamaqua Lawn Care.

Jeff was born and raised in Tamaqua, Pennsylvania, and graduated from Tamaqua Area High School and the Schuylkill Technology Center in 2007 where he studied Automotive Technology.

In his spare time, Jeff enjoys photography and studying railroad history. He also likes to spend time mountain biking, walking, and on other outdoor activities. Congratulations to Jeff!

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



Manufacturers & Employers Excellence Award

Dan Gilchrist and Presenters - Looking left to right; Front :Gary Hess; Schuylkill County Commissioner , Daniel Gilchrist; Executive VP of Marketing-RBMN, Christine Verdier; from the office of Senator Argall and Darlene J. Robbins; President-MAEA Back: Frank Zukas; of SEDCO, Dennis Gabel; Chairman of the Board-MAEA, George Halcovage; Schuylkill County Commissioner, Mike McCord; from the office of Representative Goodman and Dave Reppert; Secretary of the Board-MAEA

The Reading and Northern Railroad was honored this spring at the annual Manufacturers and Employers Excellence Awards Dinner in Orwigsburg, Pennsylvania. The railroad was awarded the 2014 Employers Excellence Award for Process Improvement and Product Innovation. The Reading and Northern was singled out for major investments in process improvement and product innovation, including a refurbished Mark IV Tamper for resurfacing the railroad.

Also noted was our substantial investment in additional open top hopper railcars and boxcars to support traffic growth, as well as significant upgrades in Information Technology. As well as the Excellence Award, the Reading and Northern was presented with a Certificate of Special Recognition from Senator Patrick Toomey, and a Proclamation of Congratulations from the Pennsylvania State Senate and Senator Dave Argall. In addition, a citation from the Pennsylvania House of Representatives, and recognition from the Board of Schuylkill County Commissioners and the Pennsylvania Manufacturers Association was received.

Our thanks go to the Northeast Pennsylvania Manufacturers & Employers Association for this prestigious honor and the much appreciated recognition from so many important organizations in Pennsylvania. ♦

HEALTH CARE CHANGES

BY: CHRISTINA MULLER-LEVAN, VP ADMINISTRATION

On March 23, 2010 the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA), also referred to as Obama-Care, was passed. Until now, there has been little impact to the group health insurance plan at Reading Blue Mountain and Northern Railroad. With the July 2014 renewal, this will change.

If our current provider were to calculate the 2014-2015 rates without the required PPACA changes, the renewal increase would have been 12.41%. However, due to new PPACA taxes (in the amount of \$57,579.00) and required benefit plan adjustments, the initial RBMN renewal increase is 21.16%

Currently the RBMN benefit plan has a deductible of \$10,000.00. This is a financial strategy used by RBMN to control the cost of the health

insurance. By implementing a plan with a higher deductible, RBMN pays a lower premium and only has to pay more to the insurance carrier when and if deductible expenses are incurred. Under the new law, total out-of-pocket expenses cannot exceed \$6350 for an individual or \$12,700 for a family. Even though RBMN pays the majority of the expenses for new hires with less than one year of service and the entire deductible for all other employees, the plan cannot have a deductible higher than \$6,350/individual or \$12,700/family, thus creating an increase in premium.

Offering a comprehensive benefit plan is important to RBMN. As we are faced with rising premium, we will continue to look for ways to control costs.

Happy Birthday!

July 1st	Jeremy Atwel	Aug. 3rd	Alicia Borger
July 3rd	William Bubeck	Aug. 7th	Brian O'Neal
July 4th	David Kamp	Aug. 8th	Matthew Fisher
July 5th	Christopher Nefos	Aug. 8th	Michael Kolbe
July 6th	John Dubick	Aug. 9th	Brent Jacob
July 8th	Ernest Henritz, Jr.	Aug. 11th	Beverly Hess
July 9th	Michael Kalage	Aug. 13th	Shane Frederickson
July 10th	Joshua Youpa	Aug. 13th	Andrew Muller, Jr.
July 14th	Dale Homm	Aug. 13th	Raymond Zweizig
July 15th	Daniel Rawleigh	Aug. 14th	Duane Engle
July 15th	Michael Sharadin	Aug. 19th	Chris Goetz
July 17th	Matthew Collins	Aug. 21st	Jason Trainor
July 20th	Rachel Kozlowski	Aug. 23rd	David Johnson
July 20th	Darrell Matz	Aug. 23rd	Frances Karycki
July 20th	Nathan Mengel	Aug. 25th	Ryan Parks
July 21st	Tammy Debkowski	Aug. 27th	Jim Mizner
July 23rd	Christopher Bost	Aug. 29th	Robert Dash
July 24th	David Hutton	Aug. 29th	Ashley Kalage
July 25th	Steven Kolbe	Aug. 20th	Jamie Solomom
July 25th	Kyle Sanders	Sept. 8th	Diane Leiby
July 28th	Michael Voorhees	Sept. 9th	Brad Handling
July 30th	Zachary Simpson	Sept. 11th	Thomas Stemko
July 31st	Shawn Slusser	Sept. 12th	Wayne Michel
Aug. 1st	Michael Bischak	Sept. 19th	Eric Slekovac
Aug. 1st	Matthew Minnich		

Red Creek Wildlife

‘Helping Wildlife in Distress’



Baby woodchucks (ground hogs) are rabies vector species.

BY: PEGGY HENTZ, PRESIDENT/EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

It can happen any day, quite unexpectedly. You are going about your routine at work or home when a wild animal interrupts everything. It could be a baby bird on your porch or an injured squirrel in the street. It might be presented to you by a child or a pet. However it happens, this unfortunate creature becomes the center of your life for a short time and you want to do something, anything, to help.

The choices you make will have an impact on that animal's life and possibly your own. Using common sense, having basic knowledge of wildlife, and receiving the right advice from the beginning can mean the difference between a heartwarming, educational experience and disaster.

Spring and summer bring greater chances for wildlife encounters. Human and animal interactions are very common during breeding season, and baby animals often find themselves in true distress due to automobile and gardening accidents, pet and child mishandling, as well as a multitude of other dangers.

Finding a baby animal can be a heart-warming experience that often instills awe in the finder but not all foundling baby animals need help. A baby animal may appear to be alone and helpless but is actually developing normally. Our own human instinct to protect and nurture can lead to an unnecessary “rescue” of a baby animal. Each year countless baby animals are kidnapped and whisked away from their mothers by well-meaning people who find them.

So how do we know when to intervene and when to walk away with only a wonderful memory? By understanding the normal nesting behaviors of the animals that live around us, and seeking professional advice while it's happening.

For example, it is normal to find many baby animals alone for extended periods of time. Very young animals such as deer, mourning doves, and owls are almost NEVER seen with a parent until they are old enough to travel. Finding such an animal alone is not an emergency.

On the other hand, a few species are ALWAYS with the parents and travel with them from birth. Baby opossums and precocial birds such as ducks, geese, killdeer, and turkey are in immediate danger without the parent and swift intervention can save their lives.

Staying quiet and hidden is how baby denning and nesting mammals such as raccoons, foxes, and squirrels stay safe. A juvenile denning animal who ventures from the den and is vocalizing loudly, is often hungry and in trouble. The mother may have become a victim of an accident and did not return to the den.

A few species, such as cottontail rabbits, are independent when very tiny. Only two weeks old and five inches long when they leave the nest to



Two baby great horned owls with a foster dad.

venture on their own, these tiny creatures may look helpless but they are genetically programmed with the survival skills to carry them to adulthood on their own. Understanding their behavior can prevent unnecessary captivity.

This is where having Red Creek's phone number available comes in handy. Saving our phone number (570-739-4393) in your cell phone today will ensure that it is handy when needed and you can reach us quickly. When in doubt, give us a call. We can often talk a person through identifying a baby animal, determining its need, and offering assistance. With today's smart phone technology, digital pictures can be shared instantly, helping ensure accurate identification and that the best choices are made.

Once it is determined that an animal does need help, do not give it any food or water. This simple act can have devastating effect on the animal's health. Dehydrated animals cannot process food and the wrong foods can injure delicate digestive systems. Supply only safe containment and gentle warmth. A sock filled with rice or beans can be warmed in a microwave and placed inside a box so a young animal can cuddle against the warmth.

Minimize handling as much as possible and wear gloves when handling is necessary. Handling not only increases an animal's stress level, it can also expose you to parasites and disease.

A few species of mammals in Pennsylvania are considered high risk for carrying the rabies virus. Raccoons, fox, skunks, woodchucks, coyotes, and bats are specifically listed as "rabies vector species" and special handling is required to ensure your safety. Exposing yourself to the animal's saliva can be a risk to your own health and mishandling can cause an animal to be needlessly euthanized and tested for rabies.

To prevent the animal from disappearing before help can be reached, an animal can be contained easily by placing a box over it. Simply sliding a flat board or piece of cardboard underneath the box, packages the animal for transport without even touching it. Taking precautions like wearing gloves, not attempting to feed the animal, and transporting it to us as quickly as possible means the animal can grow up to live a normal life, wild and free.

When in doubt, give us a call (570) 739-4393. We are happy to consult with you during any wild animal emergency. We also have a twenty-four hour "wildlife virtual expert" program on our website that can walk you through the steps to determine if you need to intervene in a wildlife situation and how to do it safely. The link to the program is on our website at www.RedCreekWildlifeCeter.com. ♦



Baby red squirrel learning to eat on its own.

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



Pictured above is the entire Maintenance of Way Department.

Front Row: Chris Goetz, Justin Hughes, Dave Kroznuski, Josh Rodney, Chris Nefos, Duane Engle, Brad Handling, Vince McGuigan, Frank Sebelin; Second Row: John Brown, Aaron Cassel, Dale Homm, Matt Minnich, Dave Kittner, Ryan Rupprecht, Alex Scubelek, John Walaitis; Third Row: Zach Simpson, Brendle Stuffed, Mario DeMarco, Larry Weller, Ben Cole, Jason Witner, Mat Mizikoski, Shawn Slusser, Duane Zimmerman; Fourth Row: Dave Kamp, Wesley Westenhofer, Justin Levan; Not pictured: Erik Yoder.