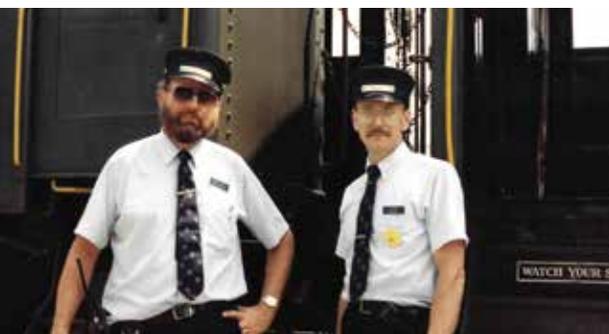
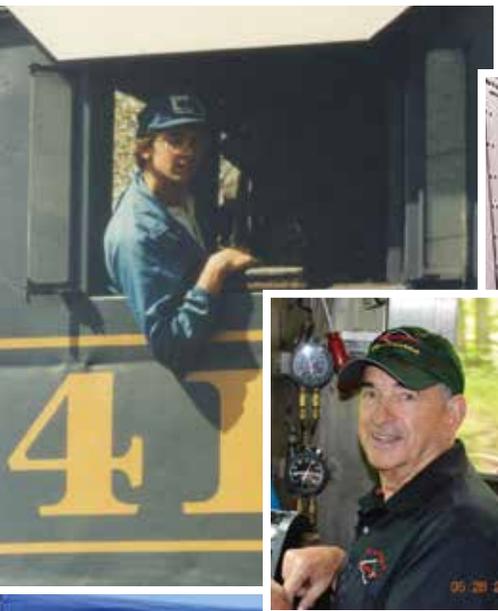


# R & N Magazine

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

SPECIAL EDITION 2023 | VOL. 25, ISSUE 5

*Reading & Northern Railroad Celebrates 40 Years! 1983-2023*

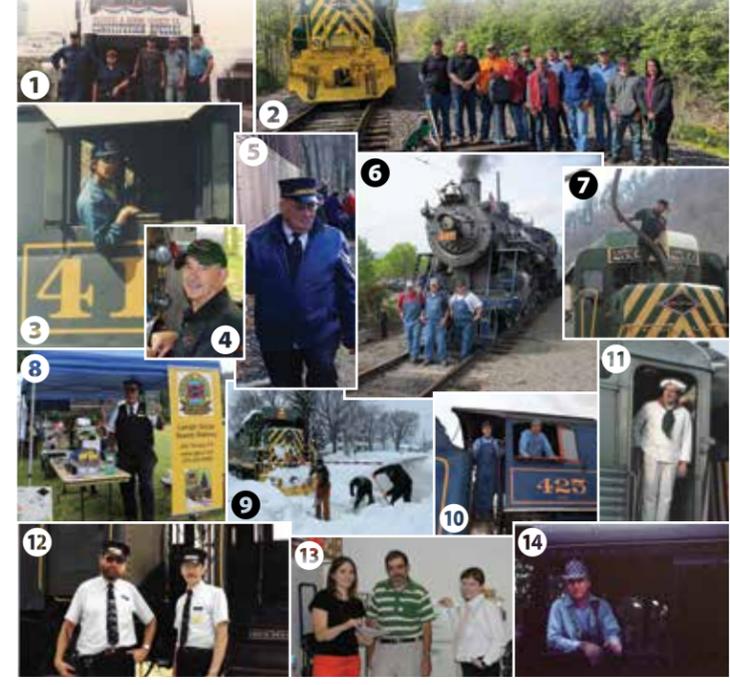




# R&N Magazine

Official Magazine of the Employees and Customers of the Reading & Northern Railroad  
SPECIAL EDITION 2023 | VOL. 25, ISSUE 5

*Reading & Northern Railroad Celebrates 40 Years! 1983-2023*



1. Steam locomotive 2102 on the Constitution Special with Blue Mountain & Reading crew, left to right, John Stoudt, DJ Shirey, Andy Muller, Jr., Bill Frederickson, Fritz Roehrig.
2. Qualification trip for engineers and conductors, pictured left to right, Nate Mengel, Jeff Knadler, Ryan Frederickson, Colin Gipe, Alec Humes, Daniel Rawleigh, Tyler Geschwindt, John Rizzo, Russ Shurtleff, Spencer Buckingham, Marie Knadler-Cunningham.
3. John Hartman in the cab of Blue Mountain and Reading 413.
4. Andy Muller, Jr is the engineer for an Outer Station to Jim Thorpe RDC trip. Photo credit Bruce Adams.
5. Bob Dash car hosting on the Lehigh Gorge Scenic Railway.
6. Shane Frederickson, Bill Frederickson, and Chad Frederickson in front of steam locomotive 425.
7. Frank Daub sanding a locomotive at Steamtown..
8. Car Host Jim Danner promoting Reading & Northern excursions at Muhlenberg Township Riverfest in 2018.
9. Aaron Aigeldinger, Ron Papiercavich, and Jim Cerulli working on digging out an iced over crossing while plowing the Scranton Branch the day after the storm in Scranton.
10. Chris Bost and Shane Frederickson in the cab of steam locomotive 425.
11. Sam Lenhart working as the cook on a Blue Mountain & Reading passenger excursion.
12. Rich Bader and Leo Davis on passenger service for the Blue Mountain & Reading.
13. Liz Neifert, Phil Geschwindt, and Denise Kacsur working together in Port Clinton.
14. Chris Bost in the cab of CNJ 113.

15. Andy Andrews and Charlie Kachel on a Blue Mountain & Reading excursion train.
16. Bill Bubeck, Dawn Bubeck, Lehigh George, Harry Moore, and Mike Kolbe on a Lehigh Gorge Scenic Railway excursion.
17. Dan Gilchrist at work in Port Clinton.
18. December 11, 2010 Jeff Seidel's last run. Left to right: Steve Gilbert, Tyler Glass, Jeff Seidel, John Smolczynski, Daren Geschwindt.
19. The Signal Department together to celebrate the retirement of Victor Gavinski. Left to right - Darnell Young, David Hutton, Graham Hantz, Matt Collins, Victor Gavinski, Jonathan Barket and Edward Kopeck.
20. Matt Nestor checks the preheating phase of the thermite weld.
21. Beverley Hess tracing offline cars in August 2015.
22. John Dubick performing repairs on the inside of one of our open top coal railcars.
23. Dave Hutton (Signal Department) assisting with Brendle Stufflet (in backhoe) to backfill around a signal cantilever base.
24. Duane Engle and daughter; Rebecca Engle, working along the tracks.
25. Mike Bednar in the cab of locomotive 5049.
26. Locomotive Electrician Joe Zimmerman working on getting the 2016 in service.
27. Honoring Blue Mountain & Reading passenger employees. Left to Right: Ralph Bender, Raymond Hamilton, Charlie Kachel, Marty Griesemer, and Bob Wentzel.
28. Leo Davis dispatching at Port Clinton.
29. Matt Collins running factory tests of the "brain" at the Alstom plant in West Henrietta, NY.
30. Reading & Northern Police Department in 2022, from left to right, Office Mike Painter, Sergeant Ryan Parks, Detective Connor Hedrick, Corporal Matt Fredmonski, Lieutenant Matt Johnson, Office Angel Brazzdionis.
31. Duane Engle in the passenger department of the Blue Mountain & Reading before working in the Maintenance of Way Department.

Continued on page 34.

# The People of the Reading & Northern Railroad

BY: CHRISTINA MULLER-LEVAN, EVP STRATEGIC PLANNING

Hundreds of miles of track have been acquired, hundreds of thousands of ties replaced. The locomotive roster and car fleet has grown. The number of shifts, jobs, excursions have quadrupled. Offices, repair shops, reporting stations have sprung up all over our nine county system. With each year of new developments and opportunities, the number of personnel the Reading & Northern Railroad employs has grown to meet the challenges and ventures of the future. It must be recognized, however, that the Reading & Northern employee base grows because of the men and women who have supported the Reading & Northern's growth from its early days in 1983 all the way through to 2023. The loyalty, ingenuity, and character of Reading & Northern's employees is unequalled, because as many employees can attest to, not every day at the Reading & Northern is without its challenges. In the early days of the Blue Mountain & Reading and later at the inception of the Reading & Northern, the winters were a testament to the dependability of our employees as together, we faced blizzards, ice, and snowdrifts that made success seem insurmountable. Later, came summers that rained floods washing out our lines, that without all hands on deck from multiple departments, customers would be stranded without service. And growth itself is not without its own obstacles, as Operations crews, Maintenance of Way gangs, Customer Service teams all navigate busy logistics to make customer shifts happen. But this is what makes our employees exceptional. From the determination and positive outlook of each employee comes the good days. The first day of servicing a new customer. Returning to the station after a daylong excursion unloading hundreds of happy passengers who made new memories. The construction completion of a new bridge. Welcoming new employees, and celebrating others' retirements. Looking at pictures and reminiscing together over the "old days". From my earliest days working on the Blue Mountain & Reading passenger excursions through my executive roles in the Reading & Northern, I have worked with so many extraordinarily talented, good hearted, and dedicated employees. Working with all of you, past and present, has been my greatest pleasure and source of pride.

Reading & Northern employees do what we have to do to get the job done. And it's knowing that getting it done together, will mean that we always have each other to rely on and a future that is promising to look forward to.

The landscape has changed remarkably over forty years, but the heart and soul of our employees is still what keeps the Reading & Northern Railroad moving ahead into the future. ♦



Andy Muller Jr. and Carol Muller at Reading Outer Station. Picture credit John Gabriel.

## Introduction

By Andy Muller, Jr., CEO/Chairman, RBMN

Growing up in a small, industry rich town surrounded by a mostly PA-Dutch farming culture, I had several hobbies besides the usual bike riding and ball playing that adolescent boys enjoy. Those hobbies were numismatics (coin collecting) and railroads.

As I went through my college years for additional income, I dealt with coins. I set up at several local farmers' auctions and markets. I built a substantial clientele and reputation for honesty and fair pricing.

All that aside, I still liked railroading. It fascinated me so much that as a young married man (I had married my high school crush – Carol Hill), I set up a sizable HO scale model railroad in my home's basement. I operated that HO layout just like a real railroad. Although I wanted to, I never dared dream of owning a bona fide railroad.

Vocationally, after school teaching for a short while, and with my wife Carol's blessing, I stepped out on my own to form Andy Muller, Jr. Rare Coins in my small hometown of Hamburg, PA.

During the late 70's and early 80's my business flourished immensely, partly because of my business sense and ethics and partly due to the steady increase in gold and silver prices. My coin business rode that non stopping surge in precious metal pricing. I had made a name for myself in that market, my business was a huge success and soon I was able to semi-retire.

Semi-Retire! I was only 32 years old. Too young to do nothing with the rest of my life! At this juncture I contemplated, what else?

As fate (not luck) would have it, one evening while socializing with a friend (who just happened to work for a big railroad) asked me, "Do you know the Commonwealth of PA and a group of 5 businesses are looking for an operator to provide rail service on the Hamburg to Temple, PA short section of the former PA railroad?"

Railroading, my hobby, didn't seem hard. It sounded like a good idea to me. I thought hmmm... I'll give it a try. Not long after presenting my qualifications to the executives of those 5 companies, I was designated as the operator over that 13-mile stretch of railroad (badly in need of maintenance). It was that something-to-do that I had been looking for. Well, my fascination and interest in railroads led me on a new venture and soon with the help of a few good employees I became the designated operator on a total of 5 Commonwealth owned but disjointed short-lined railroads all within a 30-mile radius of my home but all in need of repair. Through the 80's, with monetary aid from the Commonwealth, my employees and I repaired and operated the 5 rail lines giving service to the rail line-based customers on an as needed basis. The money from the Commonwealth went into the infrastructure and any other expenses incurred had to be covered by rail tariffs paid by the customers for numbers of cars moved.

But all this aside, I always desired owning the Reading Railroad which ran parallel on the opposite side of the Schuylkill River of the "Pennsy" Branch. Fat chance of that happening I quipped to myself.

Remember fate – well it reared up and smiled on me once again. During late 1989, Conrail had decided to divest itself of the "Shamokin Division." The very piece of Reading Railroad I always wanted.

*Continued on page 6.*

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

People of the Reading & Northern Railroad .....	<b>P. 2-3</b>
The People of the Reading & Northern Railroad .....	<b>P. 4</b>
Introduction.....	<b>P. 5-6</b>
Interview with Andy Muller, Jr.....	<b>P. 6-9</b>
Interview with Christina Muller-Levan.....	<b>P. 10-11</b>
The History of the Reading Blue Mountain & Northern Railroad .....	<b>P. 12-25</b>
Interview with Wayne Michel .....	<b>P. 26-27</b>
Interview with Therman Madeira .....	<b>P. 28-29</b>
Interview with Tyler Glass .....	<b>P. 30</b>
Building of a System Map .....	<b>P. 31-32</b>
Award Winning Reading & Northern Railroad .....	<b>P. 33</b>
William C. Vantuono Credit.....	<b>P. 33</b>
People of the Reading & Northern Railroad Continued.....	<b>P. 34-35</b>

### EDITORS

JOLENE BUSHER • TAYLOR HAUPT • SABINE FIDLER • KATHY GIPE

Continued from page 5.

Conrail searched and scrutinized across the country for qualified buyers. I threw my name in the hat with my qualifications. I was locally situated; I had run a previous successful rare metal business; I was a successful operator on PA's 5 short lines; I was impartial and fair in business and I had the means to purchase the "Shamokin Division." All this equated to railroad operational experience. Thusly Conrail selected and sold me the "Division" in 1990. December 15, 1990, midnight found me, and my hand chosen employees (most of which were railroad experienced) hustling to continue rail service to the remaining customers. Hustling also included buying motive power and railcars, repairing a diminished right of way, erecting facilities, the ability to make quick decisions, and lots of hard work.

In retrospect, as the RBMN encompasses its 40-year anniversary the "hustling" has never subsided due in part to one of my most genuine beliefs – "My success is directly related to the attention paid to my customers."

I also reflect upon the fact the railroad's most valuable assets are its employees. The efforts and performances both past and present put forth by them continue to impress not only my family and me but many others watching and standing on the "sidelines." Reading & Northern employee skills, attitudes, and willingness to dedicate themselves to their related jobs, is most certainly a pivotal factor in the huge success of this railroad.

As CEO/Chairman of this great company, I sincerely appreciate our employees hard work, commitment to quality service and most of all their loyalty.

It is hard sometimes for me to accept the magnitude of the RBMN's achievements. It is truly beyond my wildest dream and for all this I'd like to say that I am extremely proud of all we have accomplished together. I am proud to lead what I consider the best railroad team throughout this amazing endeavor. Thank you! ♦



Private Car 5 on the Blue Mountain & Reading as the Muller Family sits for dinner. Pictured left to right: Ray Hamilton, Christina Muller-Levan, Carol Muller, Andy Muller, Jr., Greg Pawelski, and Aaron Muller. Photo courtesy Greg Pawelski.

# William Vantuono

## Interview with

# Andy Muller, Jr.

CEO/Chairman, RBMN

**William Vantuono: What brought you into the rail industry, to what is today the Reading & Northern?**

**Andy Muller:** I always liked trains ever since I was a little kid. I had the little wooden ones that rolled on the oak tracks. I started with them. Then, I had a big HO model. I had to crawl underneath that to get into bed up in my room. I had taken pictures now and then, but I was never really a big railfan, but I was always interested. If a train was coming, I would wait to see it. My main interest was silver and gold coin collecting. I started that when I was 10 years old. When I went to college, I got a teaching degree and I decided to teach school for a while. And so, while I was teaching school, I started making more money collecting coins than I was teaching school, so I only lasted four years as a school teacher. I quit that and I went into the coin business full time. That was 1973.

From 1973 to 1980, silver and gold were doing pretty much what they're doing today. They were just on the rise the whole time, so obviously that was helping with my business because my business was mostly bullion. Melting dimes, quarters and halves. Melting gold jewelry. And then, in 1980, the price of silver and gold went through the roof. I made a lot of money and I basically quit in 1982. I retired when I was 35 years old. I was burned out and looking for something to do. I was sitting in a bar one night and guy yells across the bar—I didn't know who he was—"Hey Muller, they're tearing the railroad out in Hamburg. You ought to buy that. You've got money." I thought, "Wow. They shouldn't be tearing all these railroads out."

My interest was only casual because I was focused on precious metals. I told my wife, "I heard they're tearing the railroad out. I'm going to find out about it and try to buy it." So, in February of '83, in the snow, Carol and I walked down the Temple to Reading branch and checked it out. I was very disappointed because the snow was out and all I could see was the rails. I decided to buy it, so I contacted the Penn Central Corporation and had it appraised. I had an appraisal value on 13 miles of \$300,000. And so, I offered Penn Central \$300,000 for the 13 miles and they said, "No, no." They were selling it to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.



Andy Muller Jr. at the throttle of locomotive #5033 as he personally runs the first train over the newly completed Nesquehoning Bridge on February 4, 2020

I'd never been involved with the government. I could not believe I had to compete with the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to buy this railroad. So, I hired a guy to help me wade through that. He taught me that if you're in the railroad business you're going to have to be heavily involved with the government, at least to get started. And so, the state ended up paying \$1.2 million for it. And I was really bent out of shape about this because, as a taxpayer, I couldn't believe the state was buying this. The guy that I dealt with sold 78 railroads to different government entities from the Penn Central and he told me, these are working railroads, and if the states don't buy them, they'll tear them out. And of course, he had never met anybody like me that was willing to throw my own money at a railroad that had nothing on it.

**Vantuono: These were lines that were left out of the Conrail system?**

**Muller:** Yes. The line from Temple to Reading was not included in that. Conrail had been leasing it and running it, and then in 1981 they just stopped. They didn't want it anymore, and the railroad hadn't moved a car from '81 to '83, when I was trying to buy it. But I knew there were a couple of potential customers.

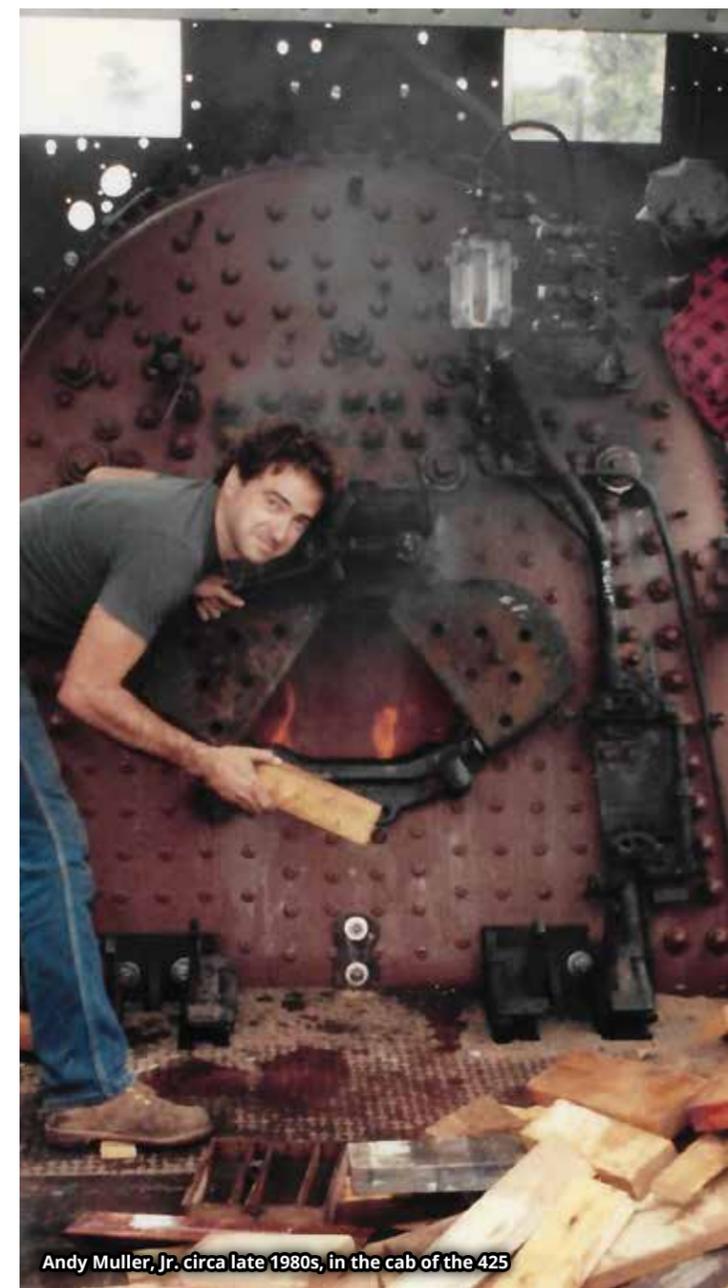
**Vantuono: That's about when the whole short line and regional renaissance started, right after partial deregulation under the Staggers Rail Act, because the railroads were in a better position to sell off lines.**

**Muller:** It was a railroad, I was trying to buy it. But I figured, if the state's going to buy it, they're going to need somebody to operate it. So, I did a lot of politicking, and grudgingly, the state made me the designated operator in 1983. That was my entry into the railroad business. The first year or two I was in business, just hired people and started running trains. I basically leased the railroad from the state for a dollar a year, the 13 miles, and bought an engine and started serving customers.

**Vantuono: You shifted from leasing for a nominal fee to outright ownership on that line?**

**Muller:** I knew that when something is worth nothing, nobody wants it, but as soon as it's worth something everybody wants it. The state showed up one day because they owned the railroad, even though I leased it, and they wanted to give me \$30,000 to put ties in. Well, I couldn't believe that they were giving money away like this. So, I got \$30,000, put the ties in, and I started realizing that as I do more and more to this railroad, it's going to be worth more and more money. And if I turn this thing around there are going to be people that are more politically connected than I am and they're going to take this railroad from me. So, I convinced the Bureau of Rail Freight to give me the first option to purchase. Don't ever lease anything and operate it without an option to purchase, because if you're successful somebody else will come in and feed off your success. In 2000, I started making enough money, and I went to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The state had decided they would sell off all 12 lines they owned. So, they appraised the Temple to Reading line, and in 2000 I bought it for \$600,000.

Continued on page 8.



Andy Muller, Jr. circa late 1980s, in the cab of the 425

Continued from page 7.

In 1988, I realized that Conrail was going to sell the Reading Cluster, so I started spending a lot of time in Philadelphia, getting to know everybody, trying to prove to them that I had the ability to do this. And you have to remember, back then these lines were not that desirable. There were people that wanted them, but the kind of people that wanted them back then generally had no money and really didn't know what they were doing. I convinced Conrail that if the Reading Cluster comes up for sale, they should give me a chance to buy it without offering it to anybody else. And that's what happened. I got a call from Conrail in July of 1990, and they said they wanted to sell the 125-mile Reading Cluster, and if I could settle by December 15th they wouldn't offer it to anybody else. They just gave me their word.

I made Conrail an offer so that they wouldn't talk to anybody else, unless they didn't like my offer. So, I again was down in Philadelphia all the time between July and December of '90. I used to take the Conrail guys to the Ben Franklin for the buffet. That was one of the nicest places in Philly to eat. We had a meeting there, and I offered them \$2.5 million, and Wayne Michel said to me, "I think the chairman will accept that." On December 15th, 1990 I paid Conrail \$2.5 million for 125 miles. They were impressed with my ability and they gave me that chance. And my strategy was, I was only going to buy something that was connected. I didn't want to deal with having to cross Conrail with a locomotive, so I was only focused on this area. And at first, it was hard, finding good people to come work for the railroad.

**Vantuono: Today you have a much different story to tell.**

**Muller:** Well, I think we've built a reputation. Our compensation is comparable to Class I railroads. We really attracted the best and the brightest into this company based on our compensation, the friendly attitude, the family attitude. Just the way I run the company. We treat people right. And so, we get about 100 applications a week right now and we get all the employees we want. We're hiring all the time. I can't even tell you how many people we've hired. We're more than 300 people now, full and part time. The passenger business is just terrific. We're actually making very serious money in the passenger business, and I don't know how many people can say that. Our ridership has already doubled this year to what it was last year, daily. It's unbelievable.

**Vantuono: You've seen a lot of growth in freight. You do a lot of business development now.**

**Muller:** Well again, I come from a generation where I generally paid for my own stuff. I notice in the world we live in now, especially in business, a lot of people don't want to make any investment. They only want to do it if somebody else pays for it or the government pays for it. We have a totally different attitude. I have the Field of Dreams attitude, "If you build it, they will come." We have a large full-time marketing staff. We visit our customers all the time. We know all of them. We watch every car that moves. Every night I get a printout of every car that comes on this railroad. I look at every car. We analyze everything. And we're just chasing people all the time. It's very, very difficult to get new business. There's a lot of competition from the trucks.



Andy Muller, Jr. "christens" the first Blue Mountain and Reading engine #413 at Eagle Chemical siding, Temple, on September 23, 1983. (John Hartman Photo, Chris Bost Collection).



Andy Muller Jr. stands on the newly completed Nesquehoning Bridge on February 4, 2020. Photo credit Tyler Glass.

**Vantuono: You see a lot of growth potential and you get ready for it.**

**Muller:** Years ago when I pretty much knew I was going to get Hazleton, the Humboldt Industrial Park, and that was going to raise my traffic. I started building that yard three, four years ago with no business. I just knew it was coming. Today we have three crews that originate there, and six trains a day that pass through that yard. We're running 18 trains a day now. We used to run like five a week. We're running 18 a day now. I look at things in perspective. I bought 15 locomotives from NS this year. I don't need them right now, but I will. I just bought another rail train. We're putting 25,000 ties in a year now.

**Vantuono: Where do you see growth potential?**

**Muller:** We see growth in everything. The growth potential of this railroad, it just keeps going. We've had record growth every year for the past 15 years. When the railroads started deteriorating in the '70s, the people that lived in the area were still buying stuff. It just wasn't coming on this railroad. It was coming into Philadelphia, being trucked out. It's taken me 30 years to gradually get these commodities back, because it's hard to break that chain when it's moving. A lot of stuff goes into the Bethlehem terminal and gets trucked around me, and we're cracking all that. We're getting it rail-direct instead of having it unloaded in Lancaster and trucked in here.

**Vantuono: Your success really flies in the face of the conventional wisdom that says, you give up traffic and it'll never come back. Well, you're proof positive that it can come back. It may take some time, but it can come back and grow.**

**Muller:** It takes a lot of time and a lot of work. We chase new business all the time. Eventually, people say, "Wow. Andy and Wayne, they really have an interest in it." And then there's our reputation for service. You can just about set your watch to our fast freight. It's within five minutes every day. Our customers have a service window. There's no, "Just when we get there." We ask when they want us there, and we get there. I don't have any answering machines at this railroad until after five o'clock. You've got to answer the phone. If you call Reading & Northern, my people must answer the phone. They can't look at the number and say, "Well, I don't want to talk to them today." I think you can see my passion for the business. We're turning a daily train, seven days a week, between Reading and Scranton on time every day. I'm very proud of that. ♦



Christina Muller-Levan and Shane Frederickson in the cab of steam locomotive 425.

# William Vantuono

## Interview with

# Christina Muller-Levan

### Executive Vice President Strategic Planning

**William Vantuono:** It's good to see the Muller family continuing the grand tradition with a second generation.

**Christina Muller-Levan:** Thank you. My family has wanted to make RBMN something of a legacy. Being independently owned and operated was a very important goal to my mom and dad, so I am happy to make that goal a reality. Right now, I'm in the process of getting my kids involved. They are a little young yet, but we are moving in that direction

**Vantuono:** Tell me about your background, growing up in the Muller family and on the railroad. What are your fondest memories?

**Muller-Levan:** I was seven or eight years old when we started operating the Blue Mountain & Reading. I have a lot of great childhood memories of being on the railroad and working on the holiday trains. I was an elf on our Christmas train and a bunny on our Easter train. I handed out candy to all the little kids—and ate a lot of candy myself! I remember when we operated the Kutztown line and my dad and my brother Aaron would run the locomotive, and my mom and I would ride the train. So I've been around the railroad for as long as I can remember. I had a birthday party on the train when I was eight, the most memorable birthday party I think I ever had. It was a lot of fun!

**Vantuono:** So at this point, railroading is in your blood, literally and figuratively.

**Muller-Levan:** Absolutely! It may actually be in my family's DNA at this point. I don't know what my life would be like if I wasn't involved in our railroad's operation.

**Vantuono:** What does a typical day look like for you, in terms of your responsibilities? What motivates you?

**Muller-Levan:** I spend a lot of my morning meetings with several departments, from Real Estate, to Facilities, and the HR department. I'm involved with other departments, as well, and I help coordinate interdepartmental goals. As you can imagine a "typical" day really revolves around organization, strategic planning, and meeting the needs of our companies with as much efficiency as possible. I continue to learn as much as I can about all facets of the company to prepare me for our future endeavors. I also oversee the management of our computer software design company, Innovative Operations Technology (IOT), which offers dispatching and ticketing programs currently.

As far as motivation, I really like interacting with our employees. The number one driver for me is trying to provide an excellent place to work for them. I feel like our success is dependent on their success and vice versa. When my family says that our most valuable asset is our people, we mean it. I am proud to say that we run our businesses like family units.

**Vantuono:** This company is known for growth and good service. If you look at how it has grown in terms of business, customer service, employees, what is it about the Reading & Northern that that sets it apart from a lot of other railroads.

**Muller-Levan:** A large part of it is how we treat our employees. They're not just a number. We do a lot of things in-house where other railroads use contractors.

We have skilled people in many different trades, and they are as committed and dedicated to us as we are to them. That has been key to our growth and success.

**Vantuono:** You grew up immersed in your father's vision and dreams. What is your vision for the future of the Reading & Northern?

**Muller-Levan:** My overall vision is to continue running the business as my father has done all these years and by continuing the spirit of his philosophy and practices. He has been extremely successful and I, as well as the entire family, am proud of what he has accomplished. I want to see this continue... I want our efforts to continue being family-oriented; a small business mindset no matter if our interests expand further.

**Vantuono:** Would you say that the Reading & Northern is one of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's premier companies and employers? You're well aware of how vital a railroad can be to a local or regional or even a national economy.

**Muller-Levan:** Without sounding too brazen, I'd have to say that we are a premier employer. We have touch points on the local level and up to international interests. When Blue Mountain & Reading started in the 80s, we didn't have the significant business and outreach we have now. Everything that has benefited the railroad, its branching companies, and our interests have had a huge impact on surrounding communities. A notable example is our passenger service operations in Jim Thorpe, Lehigh Gorge Scenic Railway. Our impact has been huge economically and developmentally due to progressive growth in annual tourism. Jim Thorpe is beautiful by itself. But, the added advantage of the popularity of our rail services has created something even greater.

**Vantuono:** You have a lot of energy. I can see that.

**Muller-Levan:** I get that from my dad! Everybody tells me that I have a lot in common with him. I guess positive energy creates even more positive energy. I just hope that I have some of his entrepreneurial capabilities and can continue to progress in my own journey as successfully as he has. ♦



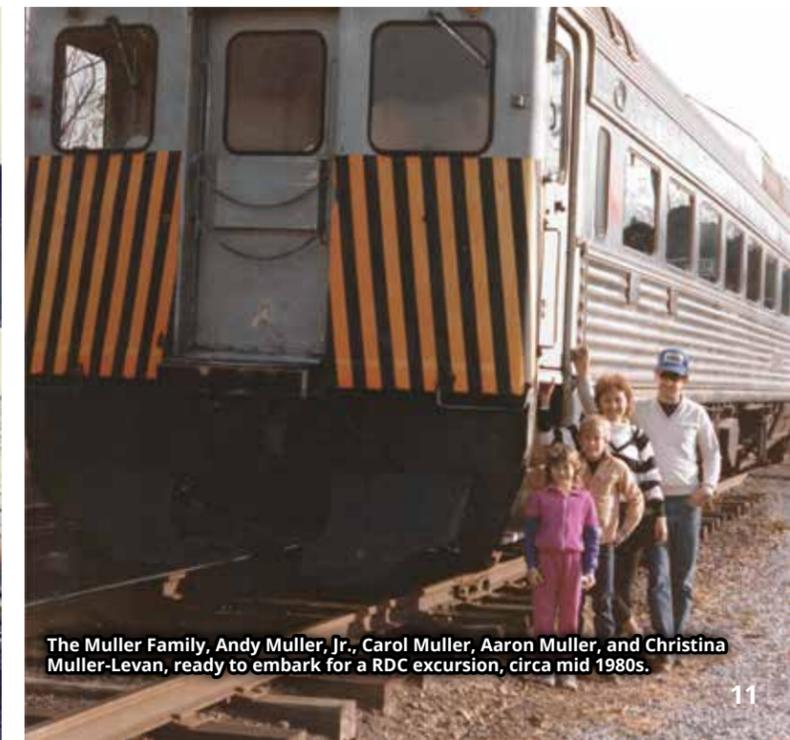
Kneeling in front is Greg Pawelski, station agent. The three elves in front are from L - R: Jamie Wetzel, Tina Muller and Andy Wood. The three gentlemen in ties with black hats standing are L - R: Grantz Printz, Car Host, Frank Bryson, Conductor and Alan Hunsberger, Car Host; Shane Frederickson (in bib overalls) Fireman; Carla Hess (in Santa hat) popcorn server; Tom Hughes (in black hat) Car Host; Beverly Hess, Gen. Mgr.; Jeff Fry, Food Service; Carol Muller, Elf Manager; Andy Muller, Jr., Chairman & CEO; Aaron Muller (in Santa hat), Souvenir Sales; Charlie Kachel (light blue host); Rick Kantner, Car Host; Therman Madeira, President and Passenger Agent; Paul "Sleepy" Vollmer, Fireman. Photo courtesy of Greg Pawelski.



Daren Geschwindt, RBMN VP Distribution Services; Susan Ludwig, RBMN VP Marketing & Customer Service; Christina Muller-Levan, RBMN Executive VP Strategic Planning; and Eric Peters, RBMN VP Transportation & Safety, together at Norfolk Southern Headquarters in Atlanta summer 2023.



July 13, 1985 Carol Muller, Christina Muller-Levan, and Andy Muller, Jr. pose on the locomotives in South Hamburg Station for the first passenger trips on the Blue Mountain and Reading.



The Muller Family, Andy Muller, Jr., Carol Muller, Aaron Muller, and Christina Muller-Levan, ready to embark for a RDC excursion, circa mid 1980s.

# The History of Reading Blue Mountain & Northern Railroad 1983-2023



Duane Engle on the diesel locomotive 413 in South Hamburg Yard. Photo courtesy Greg Pawelski.



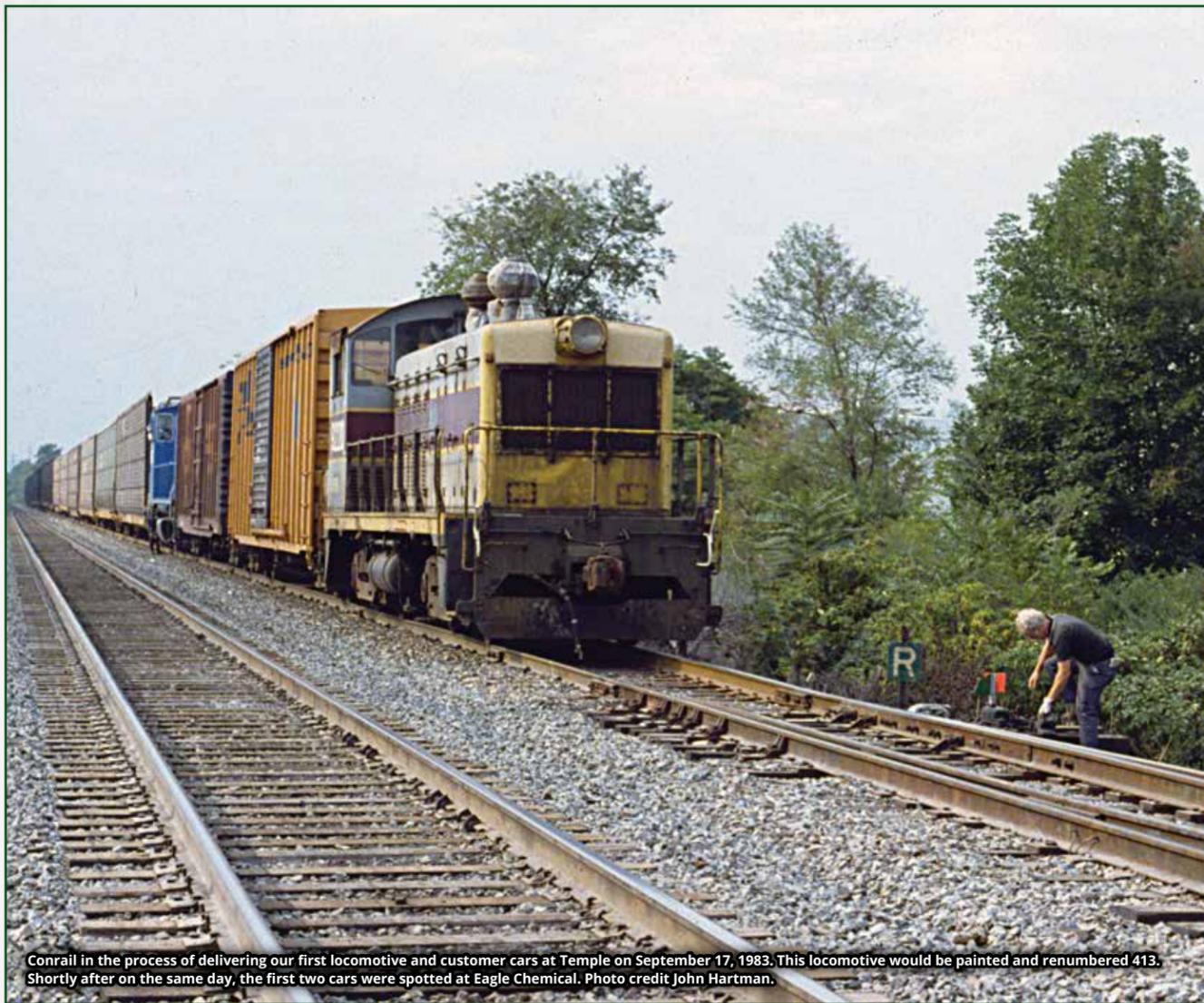
Blue Mountain & Reading color scheme on diesel locomotive 413. Blue Mountain & Reading also detailed on the caboose. Photo courtesy Greg Pawelski.



Maintenance of Way work on the Blue Mountain & Reading, pictured left to right Shane Frederickson, Bill Frederickson, Jim Raffa. Photo courtesy Greg Pawelski.

September 10, 1983  
Operations begin with the Blue Mountain & Reading Railroad as the operator of a 13 mile State-owned rail line between Temple and Hamburg, Berks County

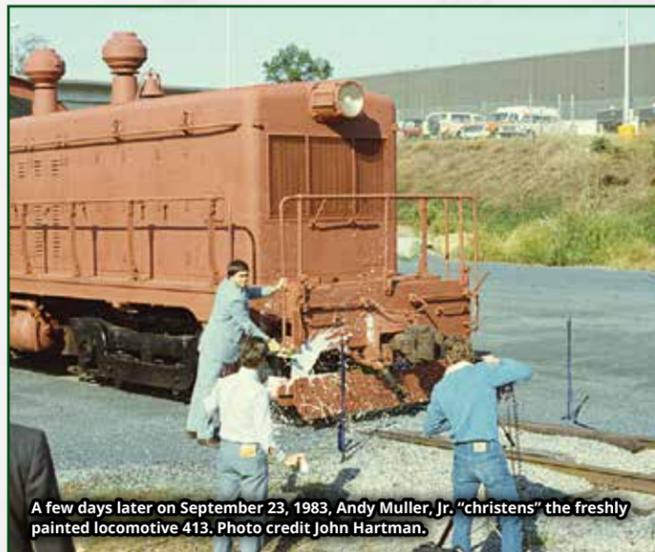
1983



Conrail in the process of delivering our first locomotive and customer cars at Temple on September 17, 1983. This locomotive would be painted and renumbered 413. Shortly after on the same day, the first two cars were spotted at Eagle Chemical. Photo credit John Hartman.



Jeff Seidel spots the first two cars at Eagle Chemical on September 17, 1983. Photo credit John Hartman.



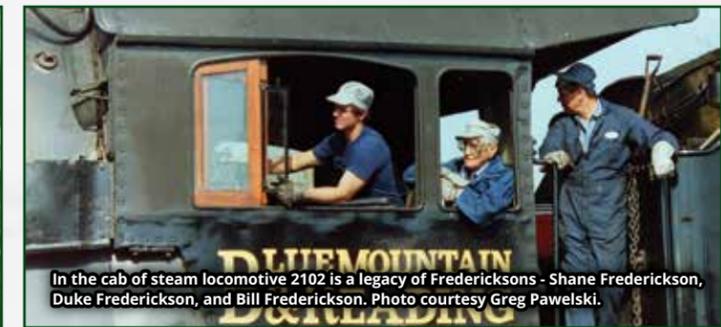
A few days later, on September 23, 1983, Andy Muller, Jr. "christens" the freshly painted locomotive 413. Photo credit John Hartman.

September 17, 1983

1983



The Golden Spike of the Grand Opening ceremony for passenger operations on the Blue Mountain & Reading. Photo courtesy Greg Pawelski.



In the cab of steam locomotive 2102 is a legacy of Fredericksons - Shane Frederickson, Duke Frederickson, and Bill Frederickson. Photo courtesy Greg Pawelski.



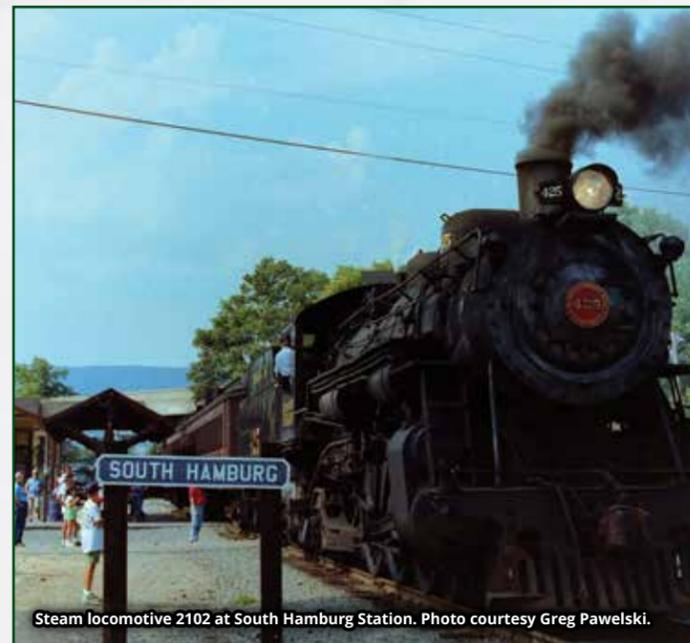
Clown Days at Temple Station! One of the many fun themed excursions days on the Blue Mountain & Reading. Photo courtesy Greg Pawelski.



Rich Bernhardt and Greg Pawelski promoting Blue Mountain & Reading Passenger in the 1980s. Photo courtesy Greg Pawelski.



Steam locomotive 425 at Temple Station. Photo courtesy Greg Pawelski.



Steam locomotive 2102 at South Hamburg Station. Photo courtesy Greg Pawelski.

July 13, 1985

Passenger service is introduced with a golden spike ceremony in Leesport, Berks County. Passenger excursions ran between stations in South Hamburg and Temple

1985

**BLUE MOUNTAIN & READING RAILROAD CO.**  
—PRESENTS—  
**1988 RAIL EXCURSIONS FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY!**

<b>May 8th</b> <b>Jim Thorpe, Pa.</b> Join us on a steam and trolley to the "Heartland of Pennsylvania" via the Blue Mountain & Reading Class V-1 - No. 2102. Spend 4 hours visiting attractions including the Ash Park Mansion, Harry Packer Mansion, Millstream Run, Jones Central R.R. Station, plus more and varied meals, shopping, refreshments, gifts, specialty foods and much, much more. Admission prices to attractions which charge - not included in fare. <b>FARE: \$39.00 each</b>	<b>May 21st</b> <b>Gettysburg, Pa.</b> Relive history with the Blue Mountain & Reading Railroad as we travel back to recreate historic locomotive No. 2102. We'll board the Getty onboard to the Civil War's most famous 3 day encirclement - Gettysburg, Pa. We'll tour the battlefield, feel the excitement and witness the outcome of this great encounter between north and south. This is one trip you don't want to miss! Bring your camera! There will also be a game engine and the market street fair within walking distance. Breakfield tour and transportation to and from Gettysburg Railroad Station included in fare. <b>FARE: \$62.00 each</b>	<b>June 11th</b> <b>Harrisburg Capitol</b> What is impressive, educational, inspiring, beautiful and right here in Pennsylvania? The answer is simple, it is our State Capitol. From the train and the work in the floor to the stained glass windows to the majestic paintings - Pennsylvania's Capitol Building in Harrisburg, Pa. will amaze and fill you with wonder. Complimenting this historic excursion, will be Steam Locomotive #2102, the Rockville Bridge - Antark Station - the State Museum of Pennsylvania and the state's varied shops of Newberry Square Mall. See first hand where our State Legislature gather and work to keep Pennsylvania the Keystone State. All attractions within walking distance. <b>FARE: \$38.00 each</b>
<b>July 9th</b> <b>Philadelphia Zoo Philadelphia, PA</b> It's an opportunity of a lifetime! You can relive your fondest childhood memories by riding the Blue Mountain & Reading Railroad steam locomotive, #2102 to the PHILADELPHIA ZOO. Spend an enjoyable day viewing nature's exotic animals at one of our nation's most prestigious zoos. It's your time to treat your children to a day they will never forget - the day they took the steam locomotive to the Philadelphia Zoo. Order these tickets early. Admission and Round Trip from Station at Philadelphia to Zoo included in fare. <b>FARE: \$36.00 each</b>	<b>October 9th</b> <b>Heritage Days Festival, Tamaqua, Pa.</b> Ethnic foods, antique cars, working blacksmith shops, music, horse drawn mules, cow rides, crafts, horse made apple cider and more awaits you at the Heritage Days Festival in Tamaqua. The BM & R is going to follow 2 of the oldest rail routes in the country - the PRR and the Little Schuylkill Navigation Railroad as we journey to the "Land of the Beaver" during the height of the fall foliage season behind Great #3113 & #3106 - "A Real Treat". <b>FARE: \$28.00 EACH</b>	<b>October 16th</b> <b>Autumn Splendor, Jim Thorpe, Pa.</b> Jack Frost will have been working overtime and you'll get a chance to view his handiwork as never before. Steam locomotive No. 2102 will be huffing and puffing over the mountains and through scenic valleys painted red and gold all the way to downtown Jim Thorpe and the Jones Central R.R. Station. You'll ride open window coaches reminiscent of a bygone era and spend 4 hours touring this historic village named for one of America's greatest athletes. Small curio shops, Victorian Architecture, exquisite attractions make Jim Thorpe, Pa. a sure out time. Order these tickets early! <b>FARE: \$43.00 each</b>

**DEPARTURE TIMES**  
The following Blue Mountain & Reading Steam at 9:00 A.M., Harrisburg, Pa. to 8:30 A.M., Leesport at 9:30 A.M. and South Hamburg at 10:00 A.M.  
We are Jim Thorpe, Pa. - October 16th - Tamaqua, Pa. - Oct 18th - Philadelphia - Oct 19th - Jim Thorpe, Pa. - Oct 20th - Philadelphia - Oct 21st - Harrisburg, Pa. - Oct 22nd - Harrisburg, Pa. - Oct 23rd - Harrisburg, Pa. - Oct 24th - Harrisburg, Pa. - Oct 25th - Harrisburg, Pa. - Oct 26th - Harrisburg, Pa. - Oct 27th - Harrisburg, Pa. - Oct 28th - Harrisburg, Pa. - Oct 29th - Harrisburg, Pa. - Oct 30th - Harrisburg, Pa. - Oct 31st - Harrisburg, Pa.

**December 3rd**  
**"Gallery Shoppers' Special", Philadelphia, Pa.**  
Save one "ALL ABOARD" for The Gallery Shoppers' Special! There is no better time to visit the "Big City" than the Christmas season. You'll spend the day shopping Philadelphia's famous Gallery at Market East, witness the lights, decorations and excitement only the Christmas holidays can create. The something different this holiday season - ride steam locomotive No. 413 and join yours and the Blue Mountain & Reading Railroad in the spirit of Christmas aboard the "Gallery Shoppers' Special". You'll love it.  
**FARE: \$36.00 each**

**FOR ADVANCED TICKET SALES AND INFORMATION WRITE OR CALL:**  
**425 Concessions, Inc.**  
c/o BLUE MOUNTAIN & READING RAILROAD  
PO Box 425  
Hamburg, PA 19326  
(215) 562-4083

**OFFICE HOURS:**  
MONDAY - FRIDAY  
9:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M.  
"The Heart of Pennsylvanian Steam"

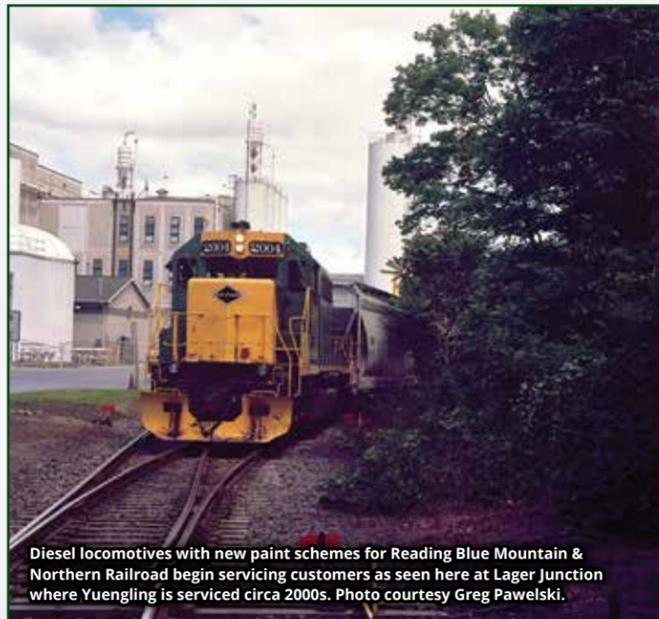
1988 Blue Mountain & Reading excursion advertisement poster detailing trips to Jim Thorpe, Tamaqua, Gettysburg, Philadelphia, Harrisburg.

1990

1995



Diesel locomotive 3303 on passenger service. Photo courtesy Greg Pawelski.



Diesel locomotives with new paint schemes for Reading Blue Mountain & Northern Railroad begin servicing customers as seen here at Lager Junction where Yuengling is serviced circa 2000s. Photo courtesy Greg Pawelski.

June, 1995  
The Blue Mountain & Reading Railroad absorbed into the Reading & Northern Railroad rail system.

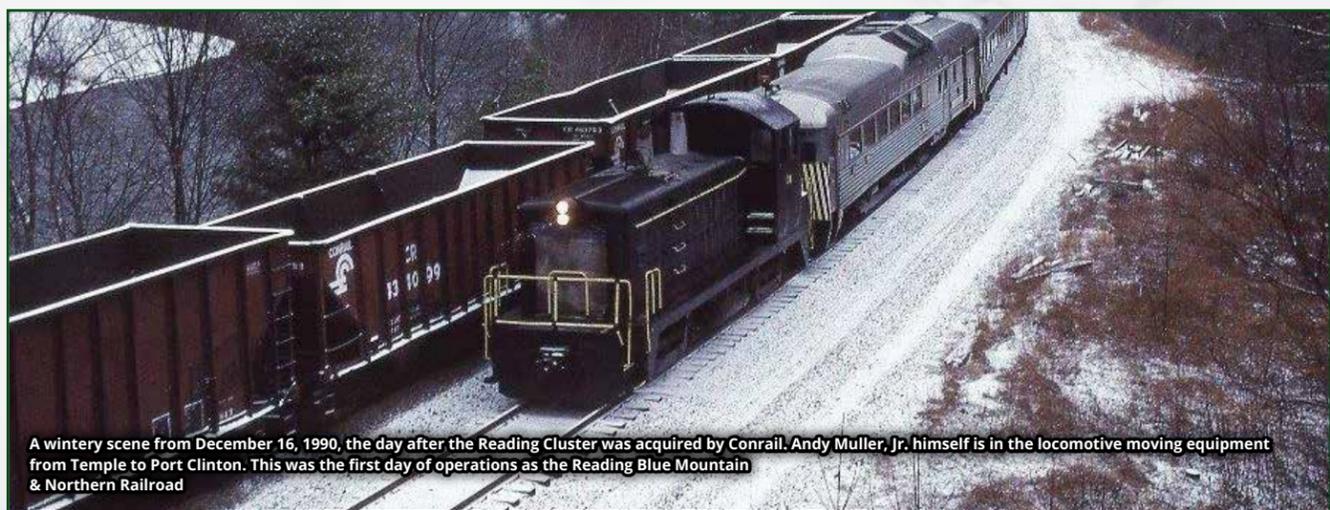
1993

Winter 1993, 1994  
The "Winter from Hell" - the infamous Blizzard of '93, eight foot snowdrifts, icy derailments proved challenging in the early winters of the Reading & Northern Railroad's history.

August 7, 1992  
Purchase from Schuylkill County Rail Transit Authority of various branch lines in Schuylkill, Carbon, and Luzerne counties.

July 21, 1992  
Purchase from Conrail of the East Mahanoy & Hazleton Railroad in Luzerne County.

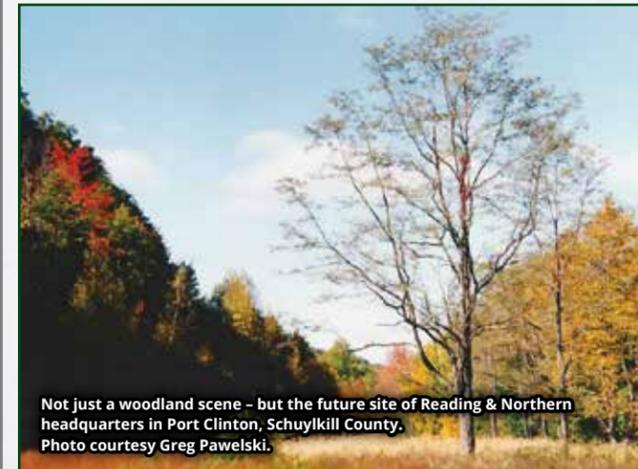
1992



A wintery scene from December 16, 1990, the day after the Reading Cluster was acquired by Conrail. Andy Muller, Jr. himself is in the locomotive moving equipment from Temple to Port Clinton. This was the first day of operations as the Reading Blue Mountain & Northern Railroad

December 15, 1990  
Purchase of the Conrail "Reading Cluster", by the Reading, Blue Mountain & Northern Railroad (Reading & Northern Railroad). The Reading Cluster comprised of Main Line and branch lines running through Berks, Schuylkill, Columbia, Northumberland, and Carbon counties.

1990



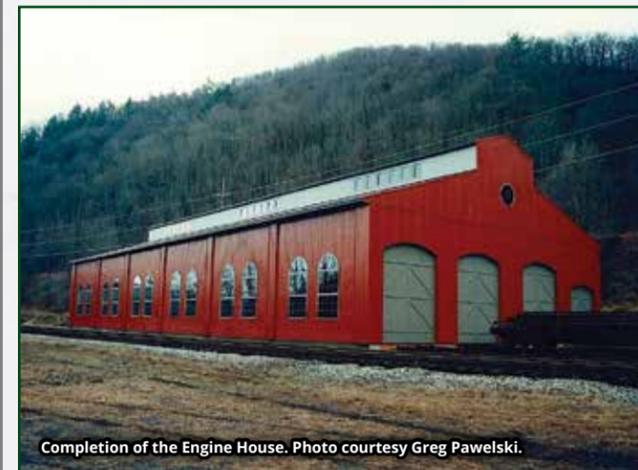
Not just a woodland scene - but the future site of Reading & Northern headquarters in Port Clinton, Schuylkill County. Photo courtesy Greg Pawelski.



Port Clinton offices before paint, and before the addition of the now present sky walk and annex. Photo courtesy Greg Pawelski.

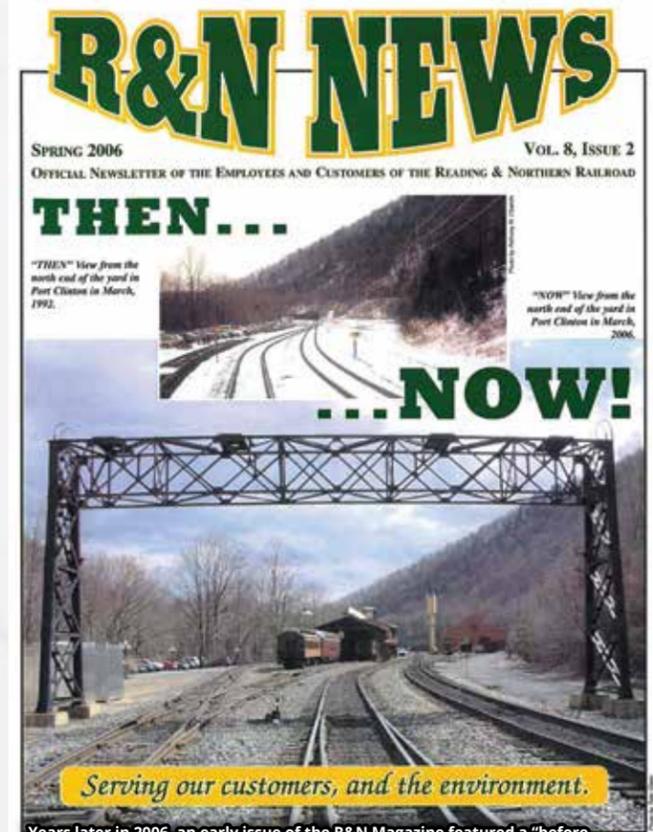


Frame of the now existing Engine House - with a building-free background in Port Clinton. Photo courtesy Greg Pawelski.



Completion of the Engine House. Photo courtesy Greg Pawelski.

November 29, 1995  
All train crews, dispatchers, and traffic department personnel reporting out of the newly completed Port Clinton Headquarters in Schuylkill County with an annex added later in 1997 to accommodate growing staff.



Years later in 2006, an early issue of the R&N Magazine featured a "before and after" perspective of Port Clinton prior to and after construction of headquarters.

1996

2000

April 17, 2000  
Purchase from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania the former Penn Central Line in Berks County.

May 4, 2000  
Purchase from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania the Auburn Branch of the former Penn Central Line in Schuylkill County.

August, 2001  
Reading & Northern begins providing exclusive service to Procter & Gamble's largest manufacturing facility in Mehoopany, Wyoming County.

November 30, 2001  
Reading & Northern purchases the rail line servicing the Crestwood Industrial Park in Luzerne County, and takes over service of the Park.

2001

2002

2003

July, 1999  
Wayne Michel joins RBMN after Conrail is split between NS and CSX.

June 1, 1999  
Norfolk Southern takes over as our connection replacing Conrail.

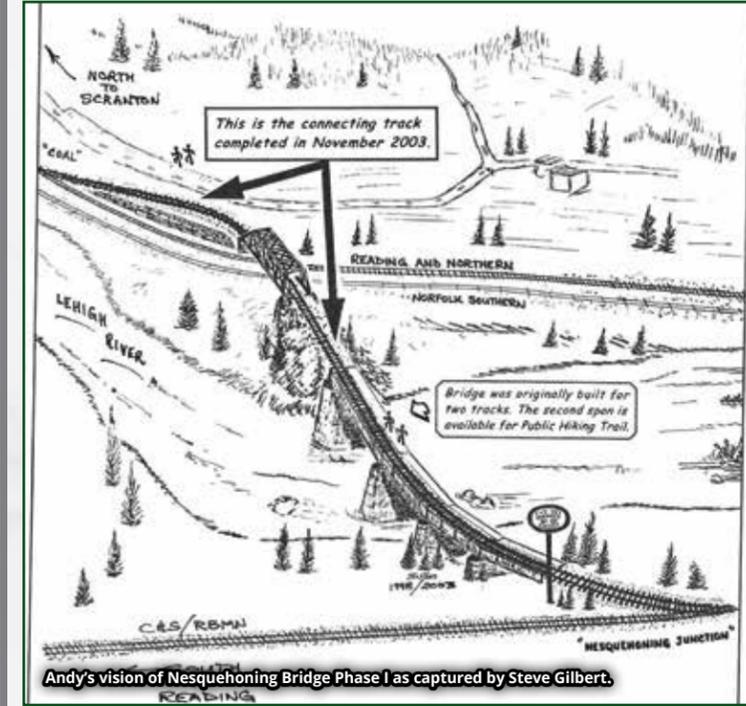
1999



This picture from August 2001 shows our first day serving Procter and Gamble at Mehoopany. The train crew poses with some RBMN managers. Left to right Mike "Breezy" Bischak, Therman Madeira, Len Balent, David Hempeler, Jim Raffa, Andy Muller, Jr., Dan Gilchrist, Aaron Muller and Tyler Glass. Photo by Daren Geschwidt.

August 19, 1996  
Purchase of the Conrail "Lehigh Middle Cluster" by Reading & Northern Railroad. The Lehigh Middle Cluster comprised of Mainline and branch lines in Carbon, Luzerne, Lackawanna, and Wyoming counties.

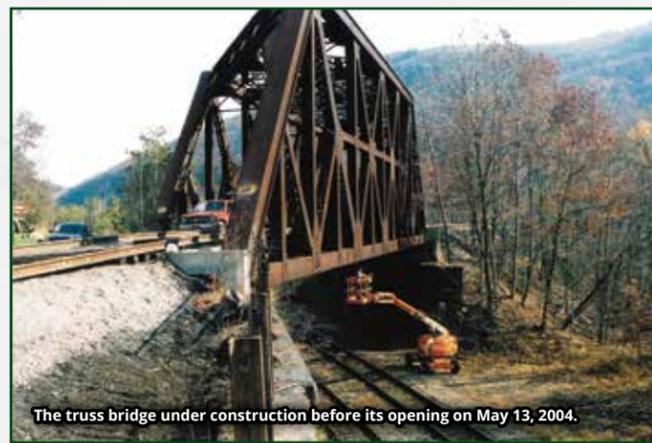
1996



Andy's vision of Nesquehoning Bridge Phase I as captured by Steve Gilbert.

July 3, 2002  
After acquiring the Reading Cluster and Lehigh Middle Cluster from Conrail, as well as trackage rights connecting the operations of both Reading and Lehigh divisions from the C&S Railroad, the Reading & Northern Railroad sought to restore river and truss bridges over the Lehigh River to directly connect the Reading and Lehigh division tracks. This was the early stages of Nesquehoning Bridge Phase I - restoration of this first Lehigh River and truss bridge with the assistance of State of Pennsylvania capital budget program funding. As this river and truss bridge was managed by the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) on the behalf of the State of Pennsylvania, the Reading & Northern Railroad entered into a long-term lease of the river and truss bridges on July 3, 2002. Nesquehoning Bridge Phase I meant not only a connected Main Line for the Reading & Northern Railroad, but also new public recreational use of this bridge for hikers and bikers traveling between the Lehigh Gorge State Park and the tourist destination of Jim Thorpe in Carbon County.

2004



The truss bridge under construction before its opening on May 13, 2004.

May 13, 2004  
Grand Opening of Nesquehoning Bridge Phase II! Restoration of the river and truss bridge is completed with a celebration held May 13, 2004. The same year, the Reading & Northern Railroad set their sights on Nesquehoning Bridge Phase II. Nesquehoning Bridge Phase II would be the construction of a brand new bridge over the Lehigh River at the same location as Nesquehoning Bridge Phase I, to create a wye-like track configuration with the goal of creating a progressive move - a more efficient route with safer and more cost effective operations. Over the next ten years, the Reading & Northern Railroad would work towards securing State capital budget grant monies in the amount of \$10 million with Reading & Northern Railroad contributing \$4 million towards construction of Nesquehoning Bridge Phase II.

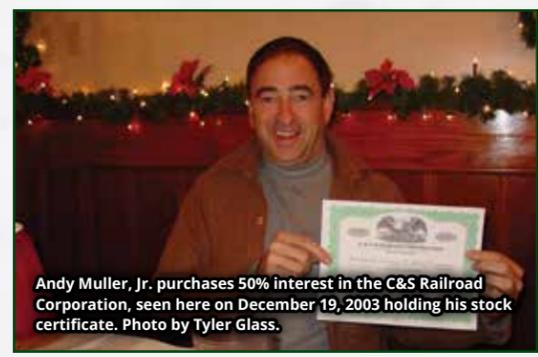


Ribbon Cutting ceremony at the newly opened Nesquehoning Bridge. Pictured left to right, Former Senator Edwin Holl, Senator Raphael Musto, Pat Solano Special Advisor to the Majority Leader, Andy Muller, Jr., and Representative Keith McCall.



Tom Stemko welding the new switch at CP Independence.

November 21, 2003  
Work associated with the Nesquehoning Bridge Phase I continues with the construction of a new critical switch, CP Independence. Construction of this new switch freed Reading & Northern Railroad from operating on an interlocking located on Norfolk Southern right of way and also connected Reading & Northern Railroad Main Line track at this location. CP Independence construction was completed on November 21, 2003.



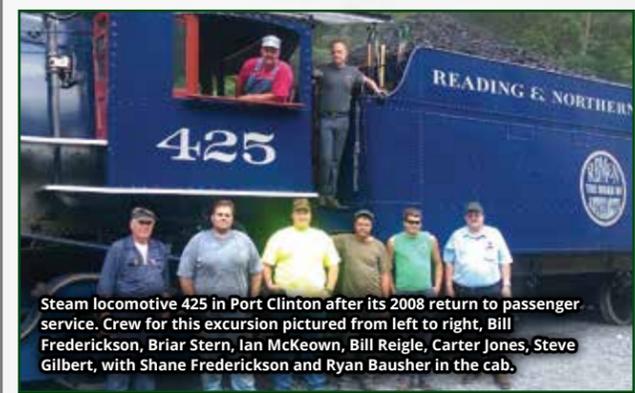
Andy Muller, Jr. purchases 50% interest in the C&S Railroad Corporation, seen here on December 19, 2003 holding his stock certificate. Photo by Tyler Glass.

December 19, 2003  
Andy Muller, Jr. purchases 50% interest in the C&S Railroad Corporation.

2005

2009

December 30, 2009  
Reading & Northern Railroad purchases the 4.7 mile line formerly know as the Towanda Monroeton Shipper Lifeline in Bradford County.



Steam locomotive 425 in Port Clinton after its 2008 return to passenger service. Crew for this excursion pictured from left to right, Bill Frederickson, Briar Stern, Ian McKeown, Bill Riegle, Carter Jones, Steve Gilbert, with Shane Frederickson and Ryan Bausher in the cab.

July 2008  
Steam locomotive 425 returns to passenger service!

March 31, 2006  
Penobscot reporting office completed in Luzerne County

2015



Passenger Headquarters at Schuylkill Haven Station.

February 4, 2015  
Reading & Northern Railroad purchases the former Schuylkill Haven Borough office to transfer Passenger headquarters to. The Borough office was the former passenger station of the Philadelphia & Reading Railroad.

2016



January 1, 2016, the first train leaving to service Humboldt Industrial Park. Left to right are Tyler Glass, Conductor Jeff Knadler, Engineer Bill Riegle, and Tom Cook.

January 1, 2016  
Reading & Northern Railroad takes over service of the Humboldt Industrial Park in Hazle Township, Luzerne County, after entering into an agreement to purchase the rail assets in the Park from CAN DO earlier in 2012.



October 2015 Dennis Shaffer, Dan Gilchrist, Andy Muller, and Wayne Michel get their bearings as they look at a site plan in the CAN DO Humboldt Industrial Park. Photo by Tyler Glass.

2008

2006

2005



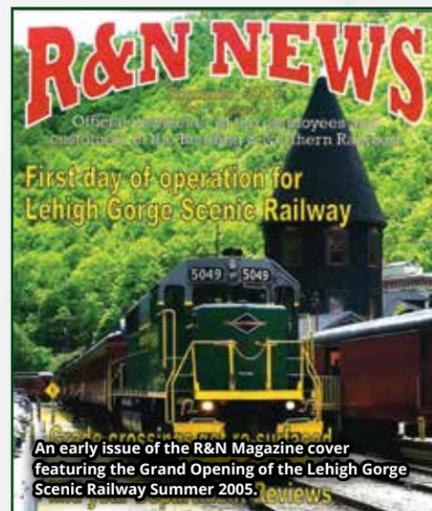
Lehigh Gorge Scenic Railway crew, back row left to right: Matt Fisher, Tiff Meade, Mary Culp, Larry Fisher, Eli Wilson, Dawn Bubeck, Evan Getzey. In front, long time employees Eric Quimby (left), Bill Bubeck (right).



Since the beginning of its operations, the Lehigh Gorge Scenic Railway has offered many different excursion opportunities, including fall excursions, bike trains, and like pictured here, Santa trains. The crew posing together here after the final train ride of 2020 on December 30th in Jim Thorpe. left to right Matt Fisher, Mary Ann Culp, Ally McGinley, Eric Quimby, Bimbo (Carl) Schwenk, Carla Wingle, Deb Schwenk, Dawn Bubeck, Jenn Cullins, Colin Gipe, Jo Evans, Bill Bubeck, Bill Solomon, Jim Garraway, Ryan Frederickson.



Easter Bunny trains came to the Lehigh Gorge Scenic Railway, a return to this passenger offering from the Blue Mountain & Reading Days. Pictured here from left to right, Bill Solomon, Daniel Rawleigh, Cal Gerhard, Larry Fisher, Darrell Matz, Jamie Solomon, and the Easter Bunny! Photo credit Tyler Glass.



An early issue of the R&N Magazine cover featuring the Grand Opening of the Lehigh Gorge Scenic Railway Summer 2005. [View](#)



Andy Muller, Jr. at the future site of the RBMN Outer Station as track is being constructed.



"Naughty or Nice?" Officer Mike Painter seen with Santa Claus at Reading Outer Station during one of the many Santa Train Excursions out of Reading Outer Station.

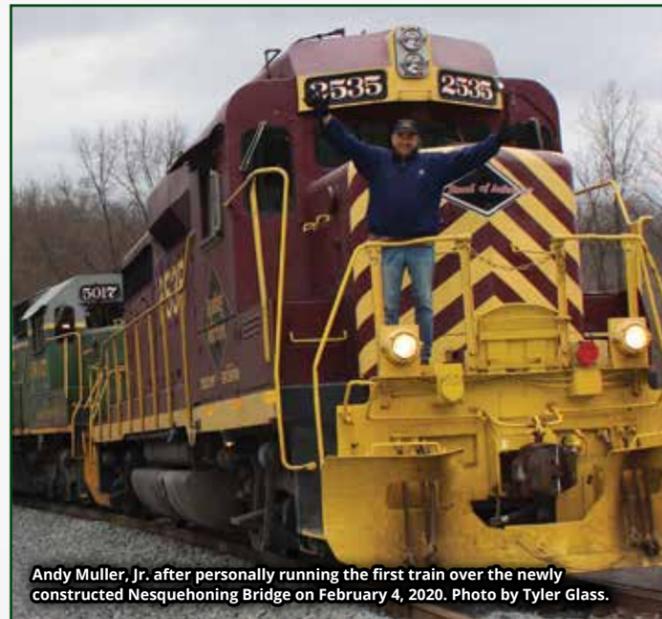


Christmas Wonderland at Reading Outer Station.

August 12, 2016  
Reading & Northern Railroad purchases vacant parcels in Muhlenberg Township, Berks County to develop passenger operations to what would become the Reading Outer Station.

2019

May 21, 2005  
The Lehigh Gorge Scenic Railway begins operations in Jim Thorpe, Carbon County.



Andy Muller, Jr. after personally running the first train over the newly constructed Nesquehoning Bridge on February 4, 2020. Photo by Tyler Glass.



Aaron Muller and Andy Muller, Jr. together during construction of the Nesquehoning Bridge Phase II. Photo by Tyler Glass.

February 4, 2020  
Grand Opening of Nesquehoning Bridge Phase III! Over a decade of planning, securing funding, and construction, the Nesquehoning Bridge Phase II's construction is completed in Carbon County. Andy Muller, Jr. personally runs the first train over the Bridge. A progressive move between Reading and Lehigh divisions can now be accomplished!



January 11, 2019, was the first day of service to the Ransom Warehouse transload facility acquired on October 31, 2018. Pictured together are Operations, Maintenance of Way, and Facilities crews. Onboard locomotive: Tom Cook, Andy Muller, Jr. (on steps), James Cerulli, Rian Nemeroff, John Smolczynski. In front of locomotive: Tyler Glass, Ray Chippa, Chris Goetz, Russ Monroe, Josh Rodney, Matt Mizkoski, Ryan Rupprecht, Brad Handling, Ryan Davis, Randy Reber, Steven Balthaser, Cole Handling, Tim Billet, Ray Schwenk. Photo by Daren Geschwindt.

October 31, 2019  
Reading & Northern Railroad purchases Ransom Warehouse for transloading operations.



Andy Muller, Jr. presenting a check for \$4,700,000.00 to Carbon County Commissioners, pictured from left to right, Carbon County Commissioner Chris Lukasevich, Carbon County Railroad Commission Rick Forgay, Andy Muller, Jr., Carbon County Commissioner Wayne Nothstein, and Carbon County Commissioner Rocky Ahner.

June 24, 2021  
Reading & Northern Railroad purchases 19 mile rail line from Carbon County, connecting the Reading and Lehigh divisions.



Exterior of Building 3 at Reading & Northern's Nesquehoning Campus. There are a total of nine buildings on campus utilized by multiple departments to expand operations in Carbon County.

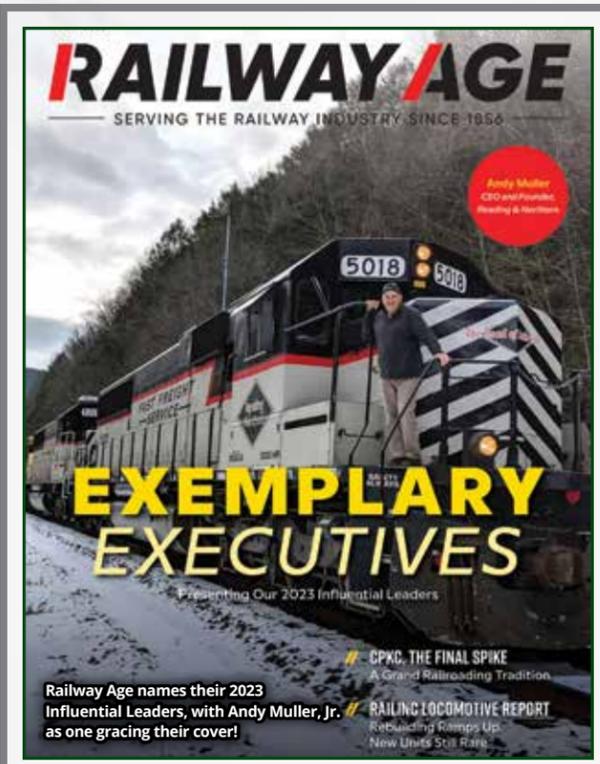


Exterior of buildings 3 and 4 on Nesquehoning Campus.



Interior of Building 3 at Reading & Northern's Nesquehoning Campus.

March 16, 2022  
Reading & Northern purchases 10 acre industrial complex in Nesquehoning, Carbon County for operational expansion.



May, 2023  
Andy Muller, Jr. appears on the cover of Railway Age as one of their 2023 Influential Leaders.



Grand Opening of the Wilkes-Barre Scranton Regional Railroad Station! From left to right holding Ribbon: Robert Savakinus, Pittston Mayor Mike Lombardo, US Representative Matt Cartwright, Christina Muller-Levan cutting ribbon. Back row left to right, Tyler Glass, Andy Muller, Jr., Carol Muller, Matt Johnson, and the dedicated passenger employees of the RBMN.

May 27, 2023  
Grand opening of the Wilkes-Barre Scranton Regional Railroad Station for passenger operations in Pittston, Luzerne County.



Freshly painted locomotive "1983" with color schemes to recognize our beginnings as the Blue Mountain & Reading.

2023

December 22, 2022  
Andy Muller, Jr. nominated as Railway Age's Railroader of the Year with letters of support from employees, customers, and political leaders.



The return of the 2102 to passenger excursions! Pictured here by Ian Hollida, steam locomotive 2102 cruises onto Main 1 after passing by Muller Interlocking while pulling an Iron Horse Ramble excursion north.

May 28, 2022  
The return of steam locomotive 2102 inaugurated the start of the Iron Horse Rambles for the first time in over 30 years.



Diesel locomotive numbered 2023 painted in celebration of our 40th Anniversary!

September 10, 2023  
Reading & Northern celebrates 40 years of freight and passenger rail service! Reading & Northern debuts two diesel locomotives painted in celebration of this monumental anniversary year.

and beyond!



Wayne Michel together with marketing team members on a summer 2017 Customer Train Trip. Pictured left to right, Bill Clark, Senior VP – Coal; Dan Gilchrist, Executive VP Marketing & Sales; Wayne Michel, President; Rian Nemeroff, VP Forest Products; Dennis Shaffer, VP Business Development.

# William Vantuono

## Interview with

# Wayne Michel

President, RBMN

**William Vantuono:** Tell me about your background and how you came to the Reading & Northern.

**Wayne Michel:** I went to college in Washington D.C. at George Washington University, then to law school there. In my second year of law school, in 1976, a friend helped me find a job at the Interstate Commerce Commission as a law clerk. Two years later after graduating and passing the Bar exam I was hired as an attorney at the ICC. It was right at the start of deregulation of the railroads and as a result I ended up drafting regulations governing railroad abandonments and line sales. In 1981 when Congress passed laws to help Conrail attain profitability, I was asked to draft and then manage the regulations governing the Conrail abandonment and line sale program. As a result, I worked closely with Conrail in implementing its massive line sale and abandonment program that shed thousands of miles of railroad.

In the Fall of 1985 Conrail offered me a job to manage its line sale and abandonment program. However, instead of handling the legal end of the program I would now be focused on managing the line sales, which included choosing buyers and negotiating terms.

For the next six years I ran that program, which is how I first met Andy Muller. Andy was interested in acquiring the Reading Cluster, which was targeted for sale. In 1989 when Conrail decided to focus on selling the Cluster I began reviewing the options and meeting with Andy. Conrail ultimately sold the Cluster to Andy in December of 1990.

Five years later, after having had other jobs at Conrail including running the industrial development department and starting the solid waste business group, I was asked to undertake a massive new line sale program. These lines included profitable branch and secondary main lines that did not fit within Conrail's strategic plan. In selling these lines I was asked to design a Shortline franchise program, which we did calling it Conrail EXPRESS. When Conrail rolled out the EXPRESS program in April of 1996, Andy and the Reading & Northern were one of the first five railroads in the program. In April Conrail also announced a long list of major lines that would be put up for sale including the Lehigh Line, which was divided into three segments due to its size and different markets. In August of 1996 Conrail sold the middle portion of the Lehigh Line to RBMN. Conrail planned to sell the remaining portions of the Lehigh Line to RBMN in the coming years but before that could happen, Conrail and CSX announced their "strategic merger of equals," and all line sales ceased. NS strongly opposed that merger, and when the dust settled, Conrail was split between CSX and NS. I stayed at Conrail until "Split Date", June 1, 1999, helping NS and CSX understand the Conrail shortlines and the EXPRESS program.

After "Split Date" I reached out to certain short lines offering my services as a consultant. I started working with a couple of them, including RBMN. After a couple months, it became clear that Andy wanted most of my time and I decided to work exclusively with the RBMN, initially as Executive Vice President, and a few years later President.

**Vantuono:** I'm sure you had more options to consider, but you thought this was the best path to take?

**Michel:** Andy and I had always connected well. It was very clear that he and I would work very well together. We could finish each other's sentences. There was also very clearly a need in Andy's management team at the time for someone with my legal skills. I had developed a relationship with Norfolk Southern. There was a lot of work to be done. Andy and I realized quickly in our first meeting together that we'd be a good team.

**Vantuono:** During these past 20-plus years we've seen a tremendous amount of growth at Reading & Northern. You're really all about that spirit of entrepreneurialism, business development and service, and keeping the employees happy and committed.

**Michel:** Andy approaches the business in a very entrepreneurial way, taking risks, not taking "no" as an answer. He instills customer service in his management team and in the company. Andy has made it clear from day one that customer service is essential. He's always said that we must focus on the customer. They have options. The railroads traditionally have provided poor service, and Andy insisted RBMN must provide exceptional service... and get paid for it. We must be aggressive.

Andy's other priority was and is taking care of the employees. Even though we've grown to hundreds of employees, Andy is still out on the railroad all the time talking to people working on the tracks and running the trains. We're hiring, growing fast, so it's a little harder. But he and his daughter, Christina Muller-Levan, our Executive Vice President Strategic Planning who has been running Human Resources and other departments for the past few years, have made it abundantly clear that we must do a lot more for our employees. We have to make it very easy for people to join and to stay. So, employee retention has always been a key component of our company. We don't want people leaving in part because it takes a long time to train them. But it's mainly that we want to be where people want to retire from. That culture is ingrained in our DNA and it comes from Andy.

**Vantuono:** what were some of the key developments in the growth of RBMN over the last 20 years?

**Michel:** One of the key developments was landing Proctor and Gamble, which today is 4,000 carloads a year. Another was getting Canadian Pacific trackage rights in addition to Norfolk Southern's, because having both continue to use us was critical, especially in the first 15 years of this century. We also focused on industrial development and we had a series of award winning projects that grew our business. In 2012 The deal to buy the Humboldt Industrial Park was a game changer. And over the last five years we acquired the track connecting our Lehigh and Reading Divisions from Carbon County, built the \$14 million Nesquehoning Bridge, which allowed us to implement directional routing from our different interchange locations, expanded our passenger service to the point that we will exceed 350,000 riders this year, and invested in our coal and frac sand business to the point that those two area alone will bring us over 15,000 carloads in 2023.

**Vantuono:** What are your longer-term goals?

**Michel:** Making sure we have a trained and knowledgeable senior management team. We have probably the highest number of executives in marketing and sales of any regional railroad. We are trying to make sure the team understands Andy's philosophy and the way I do business as well, which is process oriented. We focus on good communication internally and externally, and having good procedures in place. We have great people in all of our departments, and are spending a lot of time with them. Andy and I do a monthly retreat with all of them. We make sure people understand our history, because history is too easy to lose. That's key because we have a phenomenal base line of business. Andy has built an amazing infrastructure. We have some great industrial development properties available to us. And our passenger business is booming. A lot has happened in the past six or seven years. It's been an amazing period. ♦



October 2015, prior to the Reading & Northern's take over of service at the CAN DO Humboldt Industrial Park in Luzerne County, Wayne Michel is seen here reviewing a site plan of the park with Dennis Shaffer (left), RBMN VP Business Development; Andy Muller, Jr., and Dan Gilchrist (front), Executive VP Marketing & Sales. Photo credit Tyler Glass.

# William Vantuono

## Interview with

# Therman Madeira

Executive Vice President Special Projects



Therman (left) pictured with State Senator Edwin Holl for the Blue Mountain & Reading. Photo courtesy Greg Pawelski.



Therman Madeira promoting Blue Mountain & Reading passenger excursions for WFMZ circa mid 1980s. Photo courtesy Greg Pawelski.

**William Vantuono: How did you get involved with Andy Muller?**

**Therman Madeira:** Andy and I have known each other since almost childhood, and he went into the coin business early in life, in the 1970s. He asked me to work with him in the coin business. So I did that part-time, maybe three times a week. Andy was always a railfan. In fact, he had a fairly large HO model railroad in his basement. He was partners with a gentleman named Bob Flagel, who had a sporting goods store in Hamburg. At that time I had been the sales manager for a cabinet company that supplied schools and universities. Well, Bob unexpectedly died of a heart attack. Andy called me up and said, "Hey, I really need somebody to replace Bob. Will you come and work for me full time?" After a little discussion, I agreed. So we were doing coins in the shop in Hamburg.

I always looked at myself as something of a businessperson. Andy came in one day and said, "Hey, I was talking to a gentleman last night, and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania wants a designated operator for the Hamburg to Temple line. I think I'm going to apply for it." Knowing little about railroads, this didn't mean much to me. Conrail had discontinued service in 1982. The Commonwealth took it over. But Andy applied and he got it. The railroad was overgrown and needed a lot of work. Andy organized all this. He got a track crew and started replacing railroad ties, cutting brush, repairing switches. He built a small railroad yard at Hamburg. Then he bought an NW2 switcher and started serving the industries on the line. That was in September 1983. The customers were Glen-Gery, Cabot, Eagle Chemical Company, Service Star, Van Mar Feeds, Agway and Reading Metals. Some of those companies were part of Berks Rail Corporation. Andy approached Peter Deck, who was owner and operator of Eagle Chemical Company, but also president of Berks Rail Corporation. He convinced Peter to let him be the designated operator.

**Vantuono:** You would say that from the outset, Andy's mindset was about growing the business?

**Madeira:** Yes, he's quite an entrepreneur. The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

owned several short lines, and he became the designated operator on all of them. He did a great job. When he bought the 425 in 1984, he decided to run a passenger service in conjunction with freight service. He wanted to run a passenger service from Hamburg to Temple. It was seasonal. It ran basically Easter to Christmas, with two stations, one in Hamburg and one in Temple. They were full-service stations with restrooms, gift shops, ticket agents, and a snack shop.

There were three of us still working out of the sporting goods shop during this time. Beverly Hess, Sandy, and I. He asked Beverly which department she'd like to run— coal, freight, or passenger. She opted to take the freight department. So he came to me and said, "Therm, since I've been buying and selling coins, you've dealt with the general public. How about you, under my auspices, be the passenger agent and run the passenger service?" I took that on, and I stayed with Andy in that capacity right up until my retirement, which was a few years ago.



Therman in character for the Blue Mountain & Reading!

**Vantuono: Was that successful from the outset?**

**Madeira:** It was a hard sell to the general public, because at Hamburg we stopped short of the town, and at Temple there wasn't anything there other than a few lumber companies and a metal manufacturing company. So there were no attractions for people. Other than railfans, you need the day tourists to ride your trains. Andy pumped a lot of money into this to build a reputation that he could run passenger trains. That's what he did for years until he bought Conrail's Reading Cluster. Then he could run excursions with the 2102 and the 425. Those were on a limited basis and were successful. But the Hamburg to Temple line, he lost money on that for years. But he did it first class.

**Vantuono: The return on investment ultimately came from building the reputation that then enabled him to acquire the Reading Cluster from Conrail, and then turn that into one of the nation's premier Class II railroads?**

**Madeira:** You're right. That's what Andy saw. He's one of those people that will invest in the future. A lot of companies today, a lot of CEOs, they're there for the short term and they don't want to invest in the future. Andy's business outlook was, we're going to build this for the future. That's what he did.

**Vantuono: You're one of the founding fathers of this organization?**

**Madeira:** Well, Andy's the founding father. I would say that I was more of a disciple, because what I learned, I learned from him. He is a great entrepreneur. He could make a silk purse out of a sow's ear any day. This is what he does best. I'm very structured. I look at something and think, "Oh man, we've got to fix that." My background is in restoration and building and that type of thing. But Andy has the foresight, the vision. He knew what he wanted to do, and he worked at it, and it took him a lifetime to get to this point. He was a school teacher before he became a coin dealer. Later, when he began running passenger trains to Jim Thorpe, it was mildly successful. We would have good days and bad days. Today, it's booming, the town has just come alive. ♦



Therman and Andy together in recent years before a passenger excursion for the Reading & Northern. Photo credit Tyler Glass.

# William Vantuono

## Interview with Tyler Glass

### Executive Vice President Operations

**William C. Vantuono: You've been with the railroad for how long?**

**Tyler Glass:** Over 32 years. I started in December 1990 as a conductor trainee. I was involved with the Reading Company Technical, & Historical Society and Andy was close with those folks. One of those people, Jeff Seidel, who started working here full-time in 1990 but was involved with Andy from the beginning during the Blue Mountain & Reading days on a part-time basis got me interviewed. I was subsequently hired in operations. I quickly qualified as a conductor. Back in 1991, my first full-time year, there were no FRA regulations for locomotive engineers, so you could just basically run a locomotive. From day one I worked with a lot of seasoned railroaders and they were not shy about letting a young guy know if I was doing something wrong. In 1996 I learned to be a dispatcher part-time. And then in 1998, the individual that handled our rules department was set to retire. I was asked if I'd like to jump into the rules and safety end of things at the railroad. That was my first management role. I wanted to do something different.

In 1999, I became assistant general manager of the Reading Division. And then in January 2000, I became General Manager of the railroad. Right around that time, Wayne Michel joined the railroad. In November 2001, he restructured the management team and I became Vice President of Operations until 2013, when I hired a Vice President of Transportation. At that point I was elevated to Executive Vice President of Operations.

**Vantuono: The freight traffic base is quite varied. RBMN is "The Road of Anthracite," but you move a lot more than coal.**

**Glass:** The great thing is we have a very diverse traffic base. Coal is about 20% to 25% depending on the year. But of our 32,000-plus annual carloads, we handle a lot of chemicals. Plastics and lumber are huge. Our forest products traffic is also thriving. Rolled paper for making shipping boxes is huge. We have six paper plants on our system. And during the pandemic, as you can imagine, when everybody was shipping everything, those paper box plants were hopping. That business has diminished only a little bit post-pandemic, but those plants have still been going strong. And we now have more than 60 diesel locomotives—SW8s, SW1500s, MP15s, GP39s, GP38s, SD50s, SD38s, SD40s.

**Vantuono: As the railroad expanded geographically and the traffic base grew, what did that mean in terms of operating? What has been your experience managing that growth?**

**Glass:** We had about five interchange points with Norfolk Southern, and one with Canadian Pacific, up until about 2017. For a while, we ran separate divisions and individual locations for each interchange. We started to do some directional routing, and then we started getting a lot of cross-divisional traffic. We took over Humboldt in January 2016, which gave us a huge presence in Hazleton. Around that time, we started running fast freight service at night. Many of the interchange trains would come down from Hazleton to the Reading area to get the traffic that came in during the day. They would be dispatched at night, returning to those locations so the cars were spotted for delivery the next morning. That's about the same time we started running our fast freight from Reading to Jim Thorpe. When we completed the Nesquehoning Bridge in 2020 we started running a train from Reading all the way to Pittston and return. Our fast freight is dedicated trains that operate point to point. They might have a few pickups and setoffs along the way. You could call them overnight hotshot trains.

**Vantuono: You bought the Reading Cluster from pre-Norfolk Southern Conrail. How would you describe your relationship with Norfolk Southern now?**

**Glass:** We've always had a good operating relationship with Norfolk Southern.



Like any Class I, they would trip up from time to time with delaying traffic for various reasons. But we would do the best we could, once we got the cars on our railroad from Norfolk Southern, to try and smooth over those operating inefficiencies and expedite the cars to our customers. Generally, they are reliable on getting cars to their interchanges in a timely fashion. We certainly have times when NS has challenges on its system, like any class 1, but as far as their interchanges are concerned we've never had long term problems. They make a good faith effort, and we do as well to try and work together to make things as efficient as possible. They're doing the best they can, and they do a pretty darn good job, I must say.

**Vantuono: You also manage communications and signals. How is Reading and Northern set up, in terms of traffic control and signaling?**

**Glass:** All but about 12 of our 120 miles of main line between Pittston and Reading are signalled. We are planning to finish the line within a year. We're centrally dispatched out of Port Clinton, 24/7, every day of the year, except Christmas. We are not equipped with PTC, as its not a FRA requirement. We did get a lot of used signal equipment that was in excellent condition because the railroads had to replace it during their PTC installations. We have a signal work force of about eight people who do our new installations. Andy is always willing to invest in the infrastructure and the signals are no exception. The signal system has greatly enhanced our operating efficiency as well as the safety benefits that come with the system.

**Vantuono: The big buzzword in the industry is PSR, Precision Schedule Railroad. But you've been doing scheduled railroading for a long time.**

**Glass:** Andy and Wayne will always talk about how they did PSR before that was even a coined phrase. It was just common business sense. We're just doing what we're supposed to be doing, what our customers expect.

**Vantuono: Reading & Northern has really become an essential part of the community. Lots of good press?**

**Glass:** We've gotten a lot of favorable press in our region. Andy can tell you just how nice it is these days. It's a refreshing change that people now are buying into Andy's vision where before he had to prove himself. The world has changed. A lot of people want to ride our passenger trains on the weekends, and we give them a nice experience and different options. With the way this railroad has evolved over my 32 years, we're doing things I could have never predicted. This railroad has far exceeded any dreams and hopes we had back in the early '90s when it seemed like it difficult to move a 100-car coal train from the mine to the interchange without derailing. We've come a long way, with a lot of investment and some fantastic people to make it all happen. We started as a typical short line struggling to do some Class I railroad type moves. But we kept at it, and it has paid off. I can never say enough about Andy's perseverance, having his eye on the goal and not listening to the noise. ♦

# Building of a System Map

BY: TYLER GLASS, EXECUTIVE VP OPERATIONS

Although I originally wrote this for our 35th year in the railroad business it is worthy to reprint an updated article as there have been some changes in the last five years.

The railroad has grown quite a bit since its humble beginnings in 1983. In this article we will show how our railroad's system map grew from a tiny startup operation to a large regional powerhouse over the last 40 years.

The story has been told many times how Andrew "Andy" Muller Jr. got his start in the railroad business by a simple quip by a gentleman in a barroom. "Hey Muller you oughtta buy the railroad." Although he didn't buy that particular piece of railroad Andy did take over operations on a Commonwealth-owned piece of railroad on September 20, 1983. Under the name the Blue Mountain and Reading Railroad Andy began operations over a 13 mile former Pennsylvania Railroad branch that ran from Temple to South Hamburg. In addition to trying to build the freight business Andy decided to bring tourists to the area and began offering train rides. In 1985 Andy took over a 2 mile line at Auburn, Schuylkill County. His designated operator empire grew to include lines in Berks, Montgomery and Lehigh Counties, specifically the 16 mile Perkiomen Branch, the 8 mile Boyertown Line and the 4 mile Kutztown Line.

With the railroad bug firmly planted Andy was ready to actually own a railroad. The natural place to look was Conrail. His railroads interchanged with Conrail and Conrail had cooperated with him on some excursion trips. Andy decided to persuade Conrail that it should sell railroads in his region to him if and when Conrail chose to sell. Towards that end Andy would regularly visit Philadelphia and often would take Wayne Michel, Conrail's Director of the line sale program, out to lunch. The opportunity soon presented itself when Conrail decided to sell the Reading Cluster, a 120 mile cluster of rail lines that once served the vast anthracite coal market previously owned by the Reading Railroad. Andy's efforts paid off as Conrail chose to negotiate with him on the sale. Eventually a deal was reached and on December 15, 1990 the Reading Blue Mountain and Northern Railroad, also known as RBMN, acquired the lines located in Schuylkill, Columbia and Northumberland Counties.

Shortly thereafter in 1992 two simultaneous transactions led to further expansion in the coal fields. Conrail agreed to sell an 8 mile line to serve Jeddo Coal, located on the east side of Hazleton along with certain trackage rights. Concurrently RBMN worked to acquire from the Schuylkill County Rail Transportation Authority (SCRTA) the 14 mile line from East Mahanoy Jct. to a connection with Conrail at Oneida Jct. This sale also included a 5 mile line to Delano. The purchase of the lines from SCRTA and the trackage rights granted from Conrail enabled the railroad to access its newly acquired lines and connect them with the Reading interchanges. These endeavors would allow the railroad to expand into Carbon and Luzerne counties.

The railroad map actually shrank a little in 1995 when Reading and Northern would pull out of the operations of the Commonwealth-owned Perkiomen, Boyertown and Kutztown lines. The Blue Mountain and Reading Railroad would be no longer.

The next huge step for RBMN came in 1996 when Conrail announced its intention to embark on a significant series of line sales involving viable railroad lines. Among those lines was the Lehigh Line, which ran from Allentown to Sayre, a distance of 170+ miles including 10 miles of railroad to Hazleton. Conrail chose to shed this operation in three pieces, lower, middle and upper Lehigh Clusters. In 1996 Conrail decided to work with Andy on the sale of the Lehigh Middle segment. The other segments were scheduled to be sold in future years and Conrail made clear its intent was to sell them to RBMN. On August 19, 1996 Reading and Northern took over the 86 mile middle Lehigh Cluster from Lehigh to a point just short of Proctor & Gamble's manufacturing facility in Mehoopany. This also included a 12 mile branch to Scranton, trackage rights to Bridge 60 in Scranton, and service to the Crestwood Industrial Park. This trackage is located in Luzerne, Lackawanna and Wyoming Counties.

With the Conrail sale in place the railroad obtained trackage rights over the C&S Railroad from Haucks to Packerton Junction. Andy realized he needed the rights over the C&S to move towards his dream of connecting his Reading Division with his new Lehigh Division. Along with the acquisition of trackage right Andy began an effort to pursue restoration of a defunct railroad bridge across the Lehigh River so as to ultimately be able to connect his divisions without the need of talking to a Class 1 dispatcher.

At the time of the Lehigh Sale RBMN, and most other people in the northeast, assumed Conrail would be around for a long time. In two decades Conrail had shed its government ownership and had become a profitable, well-managed competitor in the region. However, within weeks of Andy's acquisition of the Lehigh Middle cluster, Conrail announced its intention to merge with CSX. Norfolk Southern quickly responded with its own proposal. When the dust settled CSX and NS would agree to split Conrail. And with that decision came the end of Andy's near-term plan to acquire the rest of the Lehigh Line. As it turned out NS became the owner of the Conrail lines in RBMN territory and NS became RBMN's Class 1 partner.

With Conrail's "Split Date" Wayne Michel was no longer working for Conrail. Andy reached out to Wayne about joining his team and the two soon agreed to work together. And work together they did! With future line sales from Conrail dead, Andy Muller turned his attention inward. In April 2000 the Reading and Northern purchased the 13 mile line from South Hamburg to Temple from the Commonwealth, thus taking ownership of the first line he had operated for the Commonwealth. Also included with that transaction was the purchase of the 2 mile line in Auburn.

In July 2001 RBMN entered into an agreement with NS for trackage rights to take over exclusive service to Proctor & Gamble in Mehoopany.

In November 2001 RBMN purchased the Crestwood Industrial Park trackage near Mountain Top on the Lehigh Division.

During the Summer of 2002 construction of about a mile of track was completed, including a wye track, from Lager Junction to St. Clair to serve a new brewery for Yuengling.

In December 2003 Andy Muller bought out one of the two original partners of the C&S Railroad, which operated the important trackage that RBMN used to connect its Reading and Lehigh Divisions. The C&S had a long-term contract from the Carbon County Railroad Commission, which owned the line. Following Andy's purchase he reached an agreement with the President of the C&S, James Zurn, whereby RBMN would provide all operating, maintenance and commercial services for the C&S effective at the beginning of 2004. C&S remained the operator under its lease and the C&S agreements with Norfolk Southern and Carbon County remained in place. Now that Andy had a stronger relationship with Carbon County he was able to persuade the Commissioners to allow him to take over the passenger excursion service in Jim Thorpe. This led to the formation of passenger service on the Lehigh Gorge Scenic Railroad, which was established in 2005.

Late in 2004 Andy finally secured his dream of acquiring a railroad bridge over the Lehigh River to connect his two rail divisions. Thanks to a lease from the PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Andy acquired two old railroad bridges and some land with which he could build the direct connection. Through a state grant the railroad bridges once again came to life, along with a nature trail, and added by connections built by RBMN that allowed RBMN to connect the C&S to the Lehigh Main without going over NS property RBMN was truly independent. RBMN trains could not move from the Reading Division to the Lehigh Division without getting NS dispatcher approval. This new location on RBMN is known as Independence.

*Continued on page 22.*

Continued from page 21.

Also in 2004 the railroad entered into an operating agreement with the Locust Valley Coal Co to operate its line that ran from Delano to Morea Industrial Park, a length of nearly six miles. Andy would ultimately purchase this line from Locust Valley in 2016.

Service to downtown Pottsville for excursion train purposes was restored in 2006. While required track construction was just over 1200 feet it was a vital link for the region and one that had been many years in the making.

Late in 2009 the railroad made a deal to buy and operate the 5 mile Towanda-Monroeton Shippers Lifeline operation in Bradford County. This line is located in the heart of Marcellus Shale activity.

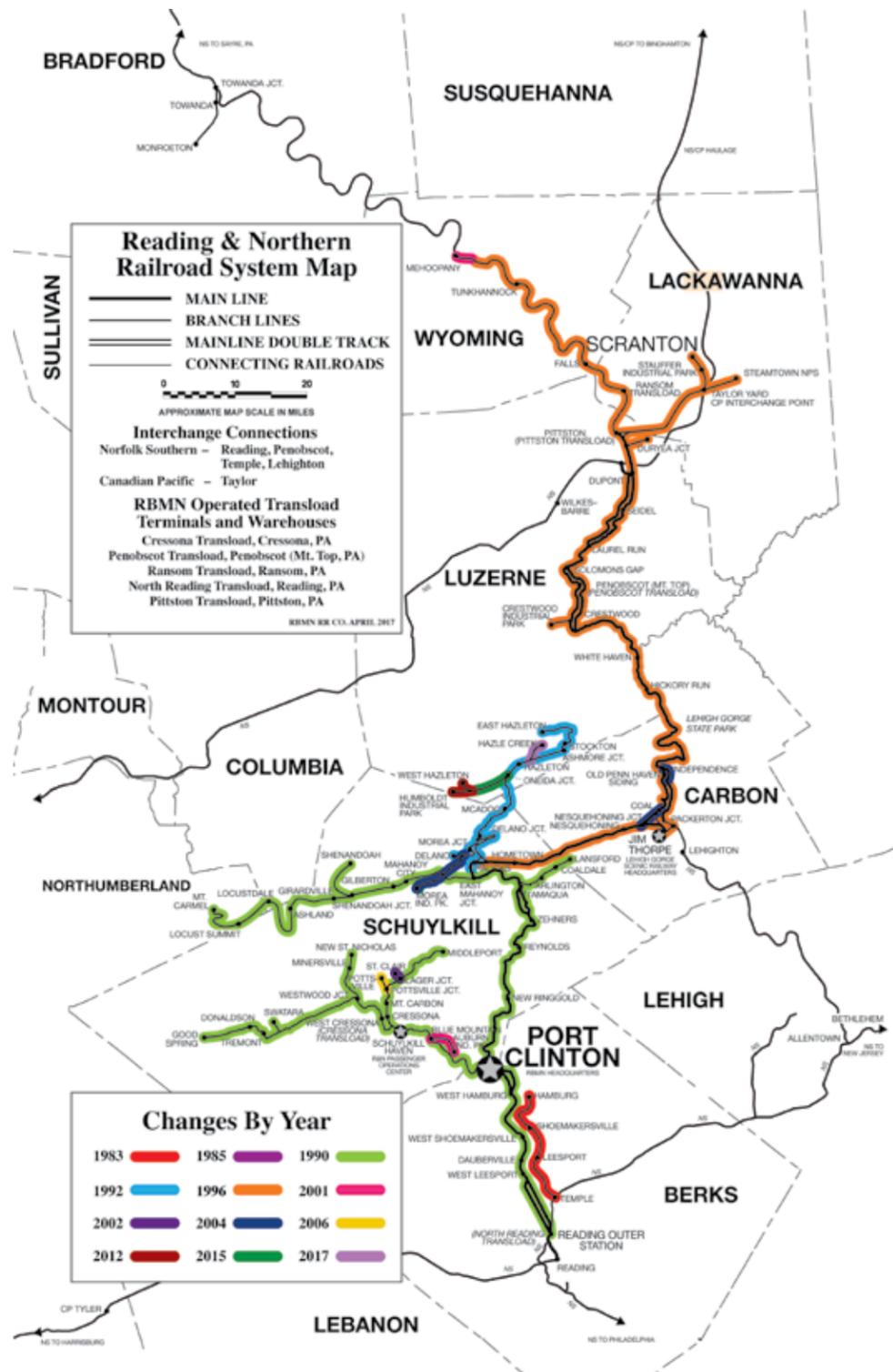
Another game changer for RBMN was the purchase of the Humboldt Industrial Park in Hazleton. For years RBMN and CAN DO, the owner of Humboldt, had had a friendly relationship. When Norfolk Southern gave CAN DO a green light to pursue sale of the park's trackage, CAN DO put it out for bid and contacted RBMN. RBMN quickly made an aggressive bid, which was accepted by CAN DO. The sale closed in June 2012 but since NS still had a few years left on its operating agreement the take-over of operations did not occur until January 1, 2016. With the takeover NS granted RBMN the right to connect Humboldt to the rest of the RBMN rail system so that interchange would take place in Reading with NS. In total RBMN acquired over 7 miles of track with a dozen customers and many excellent industrial development sites. RBMN has already begun turning those sites into new business for RBMN and NS as well as new jobs for the Hazleton community.

The final step in Andy's 20 year effort to own a direct connection between his two railroads is took place in 2020. Thanks in part to a significant grant from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania we built a new bridge in Nesquehoning that will allow for a progressive move on our entire Main Line from Reading to Scranton. Building a new bridge over a river in a state park is nothing short of amazing.

Finally in 2021 RBMN was able to purchase the 19 mile line from Carbon County. This was huge as RBMN was finally able to invest in the line to upgrade the Main Line. Within two years many miles of continuously welded rail was installed and a signal system continues to be built to make a consistent Main Line from Reading to the Scranton area.

Reviewing this history makes you appreciate Andy's vision. Once he got into railroading he decided to make the investments necessary to do the business right. These track investments and construction projects don't even touch on the level of investments Andy has made to upgrade the lines and service to the customers. As you connect the dots you will see how a true entrepreneur managed to turn a collection of low density lines into a regional powerhouse.

Today the railroad has 400 miles of trackage serving over 70 customers in nine eastern Pennsylvania counties. What will the railroad look like in 40 years? Stay tuned. We certainly love to talk about it. ♦



# Award Winning Reading & Northern Railroad

**2002 Regional Railroad of the Year Award**  
*Railway Age*

**2018 Marketing Award**  
*ASLRRRA*

**2004 NS Marketing Award**  
*Norfolk Agriculture Products Group*

**2020 Regional Railroad of the Year Award**  
*Railway Age*

**2010 Marketing Award**  
*ASLRRRA*

**2020 Marketing Award**  
*ASLRRRA*

**2011 Regional Railroad of the Year Award**  
*Railway Age*

**2022 Regional Railroad of the Year Award**  
*Railway Age*

**2014 Marketing Award**  
*ASLRRRA*

**2022 Andy Muller Nominated for 2022 "Railroader of the Year" Award**  
*Railway Age*

**2015 Regional Railroad of the Year Award**  
*Railway Age*

**2023 Marketing Award**  
*ASLRRRA*

**2016 Marketing Award**  
*ASLRRRA*



Interviews in this Special Edition by: William C. Vantuono, Editor-in-Chief, *Railway Age*  
 With *Railway Age* since 1992, William C. Vantuono has broadened and deepened coverage of the technological revolution that is so swiftly changing the industry. He has also strengthened *Railway Age's* leadership position in industry affairs with the conferences he conducts, among them *Next-Generation Train Control*, *Next-Generation Freight Rail*, *Light Rail*, and *Rail Insights*. He is the author or co-author/editor of several books, among them *All About Railroading*; *John Armstrong's The Railroad: What It Is, What It Does*; *Railway Age's Comprehensive Railroad Dictionary*; and *Planning, Engineering, Operating Light Rail, With Applications in New Jersey*.



1. The Customer Service team together September 2023. Left top to bottom: Steve Werley, Justine Berger, Kristen McGowan, Susan Ludwig; Right top to bottom: Michele Daub, Chrissy Martin, Sherry Primrose, Leanne Moser, Lori Chinchar.
2. Rules Class. Left to Right: Charlie Kachel, Beverly Hess, Shane Frederickson, and Colleen Bost.
3. Blue Mountain & Reading passenger crew break, left to right, Jim Andorker, Ed Teahl, Jr., and Marty Griesemer.
4. Darnell Young completing a required monthly crossing test at Shackamaxon Street in Leesport, Pennsylvania.
5. Car Host Joe Brinsko outside Temple Station.
6. Left to right on ground: Tom Cook, RBMN Locomotive Engineer and Eric Ostroskie, RBMN Conductor. On Locomotive: Rian Nemeroff, RBMN VP Forest Products; Bob Yacubeck, CSC PA Warehouseman; Russ Williams, CSC PA Facility Manager; Charles Root, CSC PA General Supervisor; Liam Marsh RBMN Marketing Apprentice after delivering the first loaded railcar of paper from International Paper Company to CSC PA West Hazleton, PA.
7. Mechanic Ernie Henritz cleaning up at the end of the day.
8. Dustin Berndt evaluating a locomotive for purchase.
9. Zack Baker working to align the signal heads at Nesquehoning Junction Interlocking.
10. Conductor Darrell Matz on a passenger excursion.
11. Mario Carannante performing network changes to the server.
12. Joe Brown working on a piece of MOW equipment.
13. Tamaqua passenger excursion crew in summer 2015, from left to right, Russ Scianna, Mike Evangelista, Jolene Busher, Chad Frederickson, Bill Bubeck.
14. Car Shop Team from left to right, Jim Somers, Tom Stemko, John Byassee, Stan Burczy, John Dubick.
15. Daren Geschwindt working the ice cream stand on the Blue Mountain & Reading.
16. George Rineer car hosting a passenger excursion.

Continued from page 3.



**Reading Blue Mountain &  
Northern Railroad Company**

PO Box 218  
Port Clinton PA 19549



Andy Muller, Jr. in the Lehigh Gorge on December 12, 2003, along with long time Reading & Northern friend, Al Keller, pictured on locomotive 5033.  
Photo by Tyler Glass.