

R & N Magazine

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

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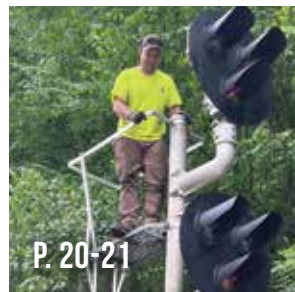
2022 Record Year!
RBMN breaks all Carload and Passenger Records!

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COVER PHOTO

Andy Muller, Jr, the Locomotive Engineer on a Frac Sand Train at Independence. Behind the five locomotives is a Unit Train of Frac Sand heading to wells in the Marcellus Region. Photo by Tyler Glass.

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KEEPING ON TRACK

BY: WAYNE A. MICHEL, PRESIDENT

THANK YOU!

This year it seems appropriate to start our year in review issue with a simple message of thanks. The extraordinary growth in both our freight and passenger business was remarkable. Not only did we buck national industry trends we also pushed back the worldwide forces that are slowing down business. In the face of continuing supply chain problems stemming from the pandemic, worker shortages, parts shortages, and inflationary pressures, Reading & Northern didn't just persevere, we thrived.

Our revenue carloads increased by over 15%, over 4000 additional carloads.

Our passenger ridership surpassed 250,000 for the first time ever, a 10% growth.

And our corresponding revenues increased even more.

Our success leaves us with many to thank.

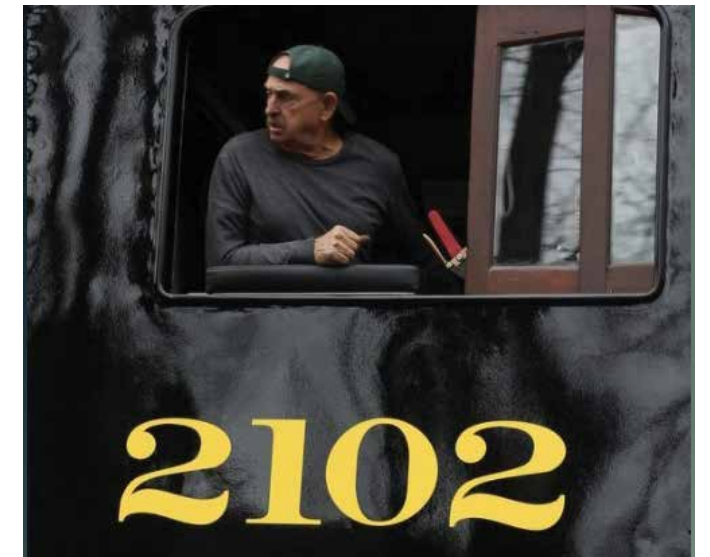
First, I must start with our employees. Anyone in the business world knows how difficult it is to retain good employees in this day and age. We have been fortunate to not only retain almost all our employees, but thanks to our excellent HR team and our pay and benefits package, we have been able to add 59 new employees to our ranks. And all of our employees, new and old, worked tirelessly year round to serve our customers. It's not easy for a company to just turn around and handle 15% more business. It takes long hours and we thank our dedicated workforce for keeping our tracks open and safe and for keeping our trains operating on schedule. Thank you to all 300+ employees

Let me also thank our managers. I know the extra hours so many of them worked this year as we adjusted to the new realities of extra business and higher fuel and other costs. Our owner/CEO made sure we were laser focused on watching our costs AND providing exceptional service to our customers. To meet these two sometimes competing goals required vigilance, creativity and flexibility from all of our departments.

I sometimes think of our railroad as a lemonade shop, taking lemons and turning them into lemonade. We made a lot of lemonade this year. We adjusted to the struggles many of our Class 1 partners had in finding crews and power to handle their business as well as our increasing business. Two 2022 examples. On the coal side, we worked with Norfolk Southern to shift unit train business, which was way up in 2022, to manifest service. On the boxcar side, we worked with shippers to send their raw materials by truck for transloading at Ransom. Our managers did a great job keeping our trains running safely and on time and that was a total team effort.

Of course, at Reading & Northern we always think of our customers. At RBMN we have dozens of customers and all different categories of customers. We have over 60 on-line customers who we actively serve. We have dozens of destination customers who bring in coal that is shipped off our railroad. We have dozens of origin customers who ship material to our on-line customers. And, we have customers who take advantage of our warehouse and transload locations. Some of our customers we talk to daily. Some we seldom hear from. But one thing they all have in common is they are all RBMN customers, and they deserve and receive our respect and appreciation.

This year I have to say an extra word of appreciation for our on-line coal producer customers. We could not have enjoyed our record year, which included 2600+ additional carloads an almost 40% increase in shipments, without the tremendous efforts of our coal producers. These companies managed to change their production schedules and sales strategies on a dime. When Russia invaded Ukraine the demand for Pennsylvania anthracite went through the roof. But it's only demand until someone makes the investments in manpower and equipment to produce the coal. Our coal producers stepped up and did an amazing job satisfying much of the demand. Frankly, we had orders for another 2500 carloads of material, but that was a bridge too far. The actions of the coal producers in staffing up despite worker shortages, in ramping up production despite equipment and parts shortages, and in meeting so much of the global demand is a true success story and they should all be very proud of what they accomplished in 2022. And we are happy to report that 2022 was just the beginning as we believe they will increase their



Andy Muller, Jr. testing the highly acclaimed "2102" steam engine in early 2022. Photo credit John McCardell.

production even more in 2023. Thank you to the entire anthracite coal community.

Railroading is a team sport. Almost nothing we handle moves exclusively over us. We are dependent on our Class 1 connections, our ports and our transload network to make the transportation cycle work. This year all of our partners went the extra mile. A special word about Norfolk Southern. Despite facing its own service issues, NS did an amazing job of working with us to handle the additional coal volume and to support our frac sand terminal startup. Our relationship with the NS Coal group, which has always been good, became supercharged after we hired Bill Clark, a former NS Coal employee, to join the team. Working with NS, Bill has ensured phenomenal communication and a true partnership. On the frac sand side, Jim Raffa brought his knowledge of the Marcellus Shale business into his discussions with a new frac sand team at NS. Without NS support and cooperation our efforts to establish the Tunkhannock transload fails. In the Forest Products area, Rian Nemeroff has built a great relationship with the new NS team and we now work seamlessly to take care of the needs of our mutual customers. And with our decision to hire Eric Peters, formerly NS Division Superintendent Harrisburg Division, we have further cemented our excellent working relationship with NS Transportation. So a sincere thank you to the folks at NS who were so helpful to our success in 2022.

I must also thank Kinder Morgan for working with us to keep the export business through Fairless Hills flowing despite the switch from unit trains to manifest service. Thanks also to our phenomenal operator of the Tunkhannock transload terminal, Texas Sands. They have worked hand in hand with us to ensure that this start-up succeeded despite bumps in the road like a long drought that shut down drilling in our region. Together we have built a product that is going to handle thousands of additional carloads in 2023. And thank you as well to all the terminal operators who support our coal business and help serve distant steel mills and other anthracite users.

Finally, an additional word about Andy Muller. In this issue you will see a press release we issued acknowledging the efforts of dozens of customers and elected officials to have Andy named "Railroader of the Year" by Railway Age magazine.

Although ultimately the magazine chose to recognize Katie Farmer, the first female CEO of a Class 1 railroad, BNSF, Andy did receive serious consideration. And the reason for that consideration is that Andy is unique to the industry in our modern times. He is the local entrepreneur who keeps his focus on his home region.

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Continued from page 3.

Andy has taken a group of rundown Conrail tracks with almost no local business and through grit, determination, and a lot of risky investment he has turned it into a regional railroad powerhouse. He brought the same entrepreneurial zeal to his passenger business, which now gives joy to over 250,000 riders a year.

I have known Andy for over 35 years as he first approached me when I was in charge of the Conrail line sale program. We are both a lot older, but he is no less brash and confident than the young man I met in the 80's. Andy set out to build a legacy railroad and he has done just that. His efforts to build the Nesquehoning Bridge to connect our two divisions was deserving itself of national recognition. No Board of Directors ruled by balance sheets and hurdle rates would have authorized that investment, let alone supported the dream for over twenty years. No Board would have approved his purchase of the Carbon County railroad line when he already had effective control of the line in perpetuity. No Board would have sanctioned the restoring to service of not one but two steam locomotives and the acquisition of hundreds of thousands of dollars of beautiful passenger equipment.

In my forty years in the business, I have known dozens of shortline CEOs and a number of Class 1 CEOs and I can honestly say no one was like Andy. He was and is exceptional. His passion drives him to be hands on. To this day he is still out marking ties and running trains. He still reviews every commercial and strategic decision we make. Although he gives his managers latitude to get the job done, he sets the principles upon which we all work. If we focus on taking care of our customers, it is because Andy instructs us to do so AND gives us the resources to do so. He buys the additional freight cars, or the conveyors to unload coal at distant transload sites, or the warehouse for P&G safety stock. He gives us the human resources we need to do the job, never better evidenced than this year when in the face of a massive growth in our coal business he authorized the hiring of additional customer service people to handle the business.

I could go on and on about Andy, but I think I have made my point. On behalf of all of us at Reading & Northern, I thank Andy Muller for his support and for Keeping us On Track! ♦

2022 Year in Review Merchandise Freight Business

BY: WAYNE MICHEL, RIAN NEMEROFF, & JIM RAFFA

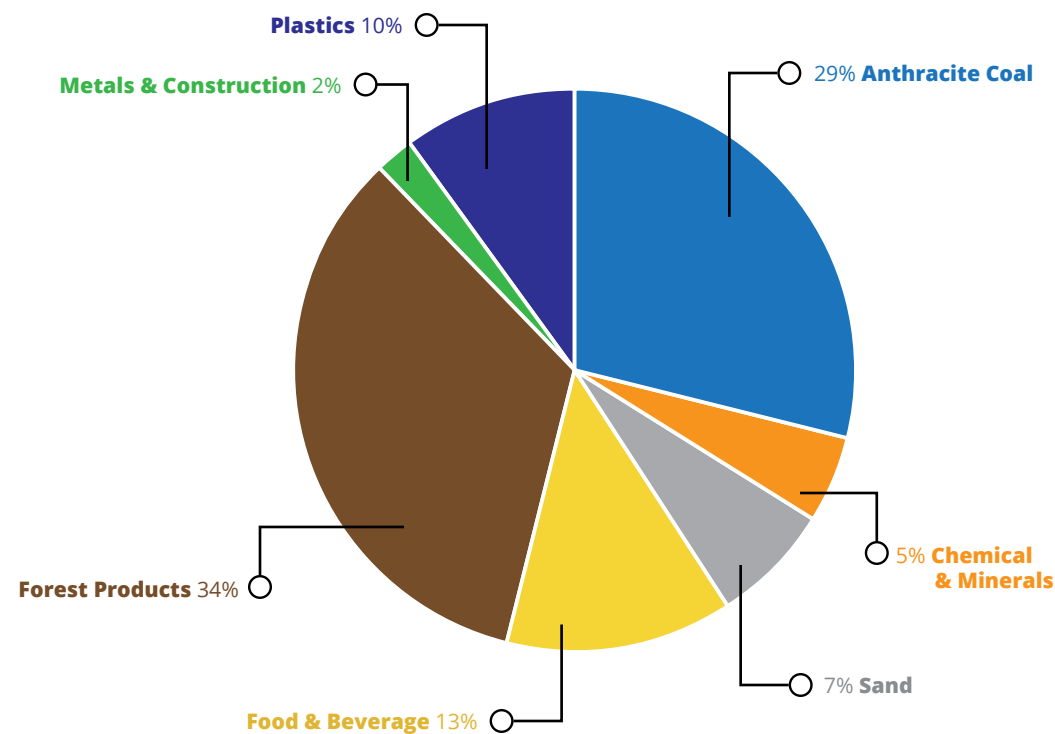
In 2022, RBMN business grew at an unexpected rate. We ended the year handling over 4000 more revenue carloads, a growth rate of over 15%! Most of that growth was in our anthracite coal franchise and our new frac sand business for the Marcellus Shale. Bill Clark and Jim Raffa have written articles about their respective business areas. Below we will be discussing the rest of our freight business, which comprises over 20,000 carloads and 60% of the company's 2022 volume.

At RBMN, our commercial workload is so large and diverse and our dedication to serving the customers is so great that it requires a large staff. A look at the pie chart below shows the diversity of our business. Given that diversity we purposely hired a staff of experienced railroad professionals who bring specific subject matter expertise as well as broad experience dealing with all railroad commodities. Rian Nemeroff, Bill Clark, and Jim Raffa, for example, have over a century of experience working with railroads and railroad customers and during their careers they have handled every type of business moved by rail.

Today, Rian is primarily focused on Forest Products, fitting given that he began his career working for forest products companies. But he now handles all other boxcar business. His total portfolio is almost half of our business, over 14,000 carloads. When Jim Raffa rejoined RBMN he not only took over responsibility for the development of our frac sand business, but he also manages our plastics, chemical and other covered hopper business. And Daren Geschwindt not only handles our warehouse and transloading, but he also handles our metals business. This team is ably supported by Susan Ludwig and her amazing Customer Service team, that handles all the day-to-day customer issues, and Jim Cerulli, who manages industrial and business development for us. It is this entire team that deserves much of the credit for our continued success.

The big picture for 2022 was our growth in anthracite coal (+2624 cls) and frac sand (+2213 cls). Our other business was basically flat from our excellent 2021. The factors that led to the growth in coal and sand, the Russian invasion and subsequent international demand for American anthracite and energy, did not apply to the rest of our business. Instead, the rest of our business got caught up in some of the broader issues impacting the national economy. Supply chain problems, worker shortages, parts shortages, Class 1 service issues, and inflationary pressures all contributed to impact our customers and thereby impact our volumes.

For example, in the Forest Products area we found that many of the Canadian suppliers of wood pulp to Procter & Gamble's huge Mehoopany facility, which we exclusively serve, were forced to divert hundreds of railcar moves to emergency trucks because of poor rail service or inability to get sufficient empty cars. Since P&G prefers rail delivery, we have worked diligently this year to put in place a new program for 2023 that encourages greater use of our Ransom warehouse for safety stock in order to ensure P&G of a steady delivery of wood pulp by rail.



Yuengling beer taps set up at RBMN's Holiday Party inside the Nesquehoning campus.



Stella Jones pole cars unloaded at new site in Morea, PA.



Packaging used in shipping to protect and ship gifts. Will be recycled in the form of OCC (Old Corrugated Cartons) before being manufactured into new containerboard.



Stella Jones site being set up for utility pole distribution.

A further element of our program to support P&G is to allow truck inbound shipments to our Ransom warehouse. Unlike traditional warehouses, Ransom is clearly established to support exclusive rail business. We purchased and rehabilitated Ransom in order to make sure P&G had the material it needed on a day's notice. In 2022 it became clear that some of P&G's suppliers were having trouble getting railcars or timely rail service. That meant the only way they could ship their product was by truck. But P&G is not set up for large scale truck deliveries and so we have agreed to assist these shippers by accepting truck deliveries to our warehouse. The material is trucked in, unloaded and then shipped for next day rail delivery at P&G when the material is needed. We believe our focus on assisting shippers in getting their material to P&G will bring back much of the volume that was lost to truck in 2022.

Another headwind we are facing is the shift away from on-line buying. Headlines make clear that Amazon is laying off workers and shutting down some of the many satellite facilities they opened during the pandemic. As shipping to homes goes down it impacts the need for corrugated boxes, which in turn negatively impacts the need for containerboard. Our explosive growth in pulpboard during the pandemic was based on the need to keep six corrugators up and running to supply boxes. We expect that demand to continue to soften in 2023 so that business will likely be flat. The pulpboard and wood pulp business accounts for almost 10,000 carloads a year for RBMN and is a key part of our marketing strategy. We will remain vigilant in protecting this core business.

One bright note is that we welcome a new Forest Products customer in 2023, Stella Jones. We are pleased that they chose a site on RBMN to set up a huge, new regional utility pole distribution yard. See the photograph above showing the interim development from a heavily wooded green field site.

Rian also works with two major customers active in the adult beverage space. We are proud to have the original Yuengling brewery along our railroad and have enjoyed many years of bringing raw materials to their facilities. We also have had a long and productive relationship with Gallo wine, which ships wine to our region for distribution. At our recent RBMN Holiday Party, held this year at our new campus in Nesquehoning, we served Only Yuengling beer (see nearby photograph) and Gallo wine!

Jim Raffa's non-sand business was steady in 2022. While some customers saw healthy increases such as JVA Deicing, Kopyy's propane, IRIS (a plastics receiver we located in Humboldt a few years back), and Alpha (a maker of quality pet food in Humboldt), others saw slight decline due to economic conditions. Every customer on RBMN is important to us and they all contribute to our overall success so we will continue to pay close attention to their needs and look for ways to expand their business.

The bottom line is that 2022 was an exceptionally good year for RBMN. All of our business contributes to our success and we are grateful for the support of so many shippers and receivers. We will continue to work hard to earn your trust. ♦



Andy Muller, Jr, the Locomotive Engineer on a Frac Sand Train at Independence. Behind the five locomotives is a Unit Train of Frac Sand heading to wells in the Marcellus Region. Photo by Tyler Glass.

2022 Marks R&N's Emergence as a Player in the Frac Sand Market

BY: JIM RAFFA, VP MARKET DEVELOPMENT

It has been around 20 months since I returned to RBMN. One of the goals set for me was to resuscitate the Frac Sand Business that RBMN enjoyed from 2009 to 2015. During that period, RBMN created and serviced a terminal in Pittston Yard that was operated by Hi-Crush. A total of 5,770 cars were moved into the terminal for transloading for use in the Marcellus Gas Industry during that period. The terminal was designed within the Pittston Yard which allowed for a large capacity of cars to be stored and handled. The problem with the terminal was that it was too far south of the Marcellus play. That distance caused additional trucking costs to get the sand to the well heads which priced out much of the business.

Reading and Northern being very in tune with this issue explored and planned for a terminal in Tunkhannock, PA which was 30 miles further north and on the southern limits of the play. Engineering was done, and the plan was to construct the terminal with partner Hi-Crush. However, an overall slow down of the industry forced Reading and Northern and Hi-Crush to mothball the plan at that time.

After my return in 2021, it was decided to dust off the Tunkhannock Plans and begin construction of a Marcellus Terminal in Tunkhannock. Typical of Reading and Northern, construction began without the guarantee of a customer. Reading and Northern service is so spectacular that we knew that if we built the terminal, business would land there. Construction on this multi-million-dollar project started in August of 2021. TSS, an industry leader, was selected as our terminal partner and operator. I started reaching out to the companies in the Marcellus industry to start lining up work to go through our terminal. Our first milestone was at the end of November 2021 when we received our first cars for the terminal. They were sent in as "spec" or speculation cars with no end consumer identified. The terminal was completed and ready to begin operations on December 3, 2021.

Between December of 2021 and April of 2022, we moved very little sand. All was "spec" sand and the total carloads were less than 150 cars for

that period. The problem was we still needed to prove ourselves as an independent terminal and prove our service and facilities to the industry which we did. Our big break came in May of 2022, when we formally landed Nextier as a customer. With that, the unit trains began. We took delivery of our first Unit Train of sand on May 15th, 2022.

After that point the business began taking off. We have now moved sand for almost all of the regional service companies, sand suppliers, and gas companies. Between May and December of 2022 we moved over 2,000 railcars of Frac Sand ending the first year of operations with receiving 2,240 carloads of Frac Sand. That is close to double our best year in the 2009-2015 era.

EYES ON THE FUTURE

2023 will most certainly be a growth year for Reading and Northern's Frac Sand Business. We have now landed two anchor customers which will keep the facility busy day in and day out. In addition to that we are confident that we will be getting several "spot moves" which is when we bring sand in for customers that use Frac Sand but, not as frequently as our anchor customers. My early projections for 2023 are that we will receive 7,500-8,000 carloads of Frac Sand dependent on weather, car, and sand supply issues. It may sound like an aggressive number to most but, the amount of sand that goes into a gas well is truly staggering.

Keeping that growth in mind, Reading and Northern will be making infrastructure additions and improvements. Currently under construction is a 3,000 foot runaround / storage track at Tunkhannock. This runaround/storage siding will simplify rail operations and thus make the switching time at the terminal more efficient. In turn, this will allow more trucks to get loaded and get on the road faster. Additionally, we are exploring other improvements including the installation of a third unloading track and upgrades to the unloading pad and road access.

I am very pleased with our 2022 start up year. All departments of Reading and Northern came together as a team to make this terminal a success and I am extremely optimistic about the future of this terminal. ♦

2022 Year in Review

Anthracite Recap

BY: BILL CLARK, SENIOR VP COAL MARKETING

but•ter•fly ef•fect

[butterfly effect]

NOUN

1. (in chaos theory) the phenomenon whereby a minute localized change in a complex system can have large effects elsewhere.

On February 24th, 2022, the Russian Federation invaded Ukraine. With over 200,000 casualties, millions of people displaced, and billions of dollars of damaged and destroyed property, "Butterfly Effect" is not an apt description. The impact of the war has been extensive and wide ranging.

Even our little corner of the planet was affected. Russia (and the portion of Ukraine annexed by Russia), produces a vast majority of exported Anthracite. While China and India still consume Russian Anthracite, the West, in response to Russia's invasion, prohibited importation of Anthracite from the region. As a result, Anthracite produced in Pennsylvania was the only source of high-quality coal available to Europe and Canada.

Up to the invasion, RBMN export shipments of Anthracite were small; forecast to be slightly over 150,000 tons. Within a week things changed markedly, the initial forecast ballooned into a 500,000+ tons market. Export demand for PA produced Anthracite was limited by the ability of RBMN served mines to increase production. While our domestic produces couldn't meet the total demand this year; they were able to increase supply into the international market by over 300%; an amazing feat for any business.

Making the coal was difficult; getting the coal moved tested our mettle even more. At the same time volumes were increasing, NS was in the midst of a severe service meltdown. Adding 40-unit trains was not practical. Rather than forcing the additional trains on NS, RBMN came up with an innovative solution; move everything in manifest service. Doing so allowed NS to better utilize the crews and power and provided our export customers with a more consistent delivery schedule. Equipment was another potential snag; NS did not have rail cars available for this service; RBMN has traditionally supplied all the cars needed. Fortunately, by reallocating our fleet, RBMN was able to place 370 rapid discharge cars into this service. Ultimately, we were able to meet the increase in demand.

As coal production continues to ramp up, we expect our export business to continue to grow. For 2023, volumes should increase by over 30%. With a large fleet of cars, and regular, scheduled service, RBMN and NS are well situated to handle the increased demand.

On the domestic side, 2022 brought mixed results. Shipments to the river were negatively impacted by the shift to the export market. Our initial 2022 forecast called for an increase of 20%. Actual shipments were down 24%, all attributed to coal being shifted into the export market.

Our domestic shipments into the steel industry continued to increase. Since 2016, shipments to Electric Arc Furnaces (EAF) have shown an Compounded Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 12.5% per year. Most of this growth was thru rail-truck distribution centers. As we go forward, we expect to see more business morphing to on-site locations, reducing the cost for our customers and improving reliability of rail.

As the domestic steel industry adds more EAF capacity, we should see this market segment continue to grow. To help meet this demand, RBMN continues to invest in additional rail cars, as well as unloading systems, allowing new steel mills to access the cost benefits of rail.

Our coal business in 2022 grew by 41%. Forecasted 2023 volumes are expected to grow by an additional 35%. With additional investments, this growth should continue for the foreseeable future. Regardless of the whims of fortune, the future of "The Road of Anthracite" looks as bright as a beautiful butterfly!

Finally, a word to everyone at RBMN who made 2022 possible. Without the selfless dedication and commitment from operations, mechanical, maintenance of way, customer service, and all the others who keep the trains running, the monumental gains of 2022 wouldn't have been possible. They are truly unsung heroes! ♦

Reading & Northern Smashes All Freight & Passenger Records

Port Clinton, PA – January 10, 2023

Reading & Northern Railroad (RBMN), Pennsylvania's largest privately-owned railroad, once again broke its own records for freight traffic and excursion passenger ridership.

Revenue freight traffic rose over 4,000 carloads, an impressive 15.4%. This compares to the 1.5% decline in overall North American railroad volume. RBMN's success was driven by anthracite coal shipments and the opening of its new Tunkhannock frac sand terminal.

For RBMN, and much of the world, everything changed when Russia invaded Ukraine. As a result of the invasion and resulting western embargo on Russian goods and raw materials, RBMN saw a huge uptick in demand for Pennsylvania anthracite. Russia and the eastern portion of Ukraine were major international suppliers of anthracite. Without those sources the world looked to Pennsylvania anthracite, and those producers did a great job of meeting much of that global demand in 2022. By the end of the year RBMN's coal business increased by 2,624 carloads, almost 40%, with much of this additional traffic going to international markets.

To handle the huge surge in export business, RBMN and Norfolk Southern Railroad (NS) worked together to move the business in manifest service, instead of traditional unit train service. This shift allowed more regular shipments to the export terminal and eliminated the need for NS to provide power and crews to move unit trains. RBMN was able to make this alternate transportation plan work because it had purchased 550+ rapid discharge cars for the export market.

RBMN's domestic coal business also continued to increase as more electric arc furnace facilities expanded and came on-line. Steel mills are increasingly looking to use anthracite as their charge carbon. To meet this growing demand, RBMN continued to invest in purchasing additional rail cars and in expanding its rail-truck transfer network. With new steel facilities opening in Texas and Ontario, and continued growth in the export market, RBMN is forecasting double digit growth in 2023 as well.

As the Russian invasion caused havoc in the international anthracite market, it also caused wild swings in the energy market. As a result, the demand for domestic sources of energy also increased, which led to an increased demand for Marcellus Shale gas. Thus, the opening of RBMN's new Tunkhannock Marcellus Shale terminal was timely. Completed at

a cost of well over \$1,000,000 in 2021, this facility is well on its way to becoming a resounding success. RBMN built this facility in Tunkhannock due to its excellent location and great local truck routes. Over the course of the year more and more drilling companies decided to try the facility, which is run by Texas Sands. Customers were impressed with the superior service, free local storage and excellent location. By the end of the year, RBMN had handled over 2,000 carloads of new business. RBMN expects to triple that volume in 2023.

One of the continuing strengths of RBMN is its diverse traffic base. In addition to coal and now frac sand, RBMN has very successful Forest Products, Plastics, Food Products, Metals and Chemicals business. Those business segments contribute over 20,000 carloads a year to RBMN. In 2022 those market segments were generally flat as RBMN customers dealt with supply chain issues, inflationary pressures and the same problems other businesses had with staffing shortages and difficulties in getting equipment and parts. Nonetheless, these market segments remain critical parts of RBMN's network, and RBMN expects continued growth in these areas.

RBMN's passenger business also took a huge leap as RBMN entertained over 250,000 riders for the first time in its history, an increase of more than ten percent. Under the direction of General Manager Matt Fisher, RBMN added more train trips, more equipment, and more origins.

In 2023, there will be further expansion of RBMN Passenger service as Jim Thorpe trains are now operated year-round. Later this year, RBMN will be starting excursion service from the Wilkes Barre/Scranton area out of Pittston. Also, of much interest to railfans everywhere, RBMN steam locomotive 2102 will continue to operate in train service. As further proof of the commitment to the passenger business, RBMN Owner/CEO Andy Muller, Jr. purchased 3 additional rail diesel cars and 1 passenger coach in 2022. The future looks very exciting for RBMN passenger operations.

All of this growth does not come without continued investment. It is only because Muller purchased an additional 100 rapid discharge cars at the end of 2021 that RBMN had sufficient equipment to handle the export surge in 2022. It is only because Muller built the Tunkhannock sand terminal in 2021 that RBMN was able to handle the surge of sand business in 2022. It is only because Muller continued to purchase conveyors and additional coal cars that RBMN was able to expand service offerings to steel mills across the country.

This year Muller made a substantial real estate investment when he purchased the Nesquehoning Campus of eight buildings on 9 acres along our main line railroad from KME for over \$2 million. The Campus is already being used by many RBMN departments as it offers a centralized location for equipment and parts and repairs. Muller also invests in RBMN's human resources, which are the backbone of RBMN's success. In 2022 RBMN hired over 50 full-time employees to join the company and help it handle the growing business.

In summarizing the year's success, Muller said, "Our performance in 2022 was amazing. Faced with an unprecedented surge in business, our employees stepped up and handled the additional business perfectly. It was all hands on deck. We needed more people and HR found us more people. We needed more equipment and supplies and our Finance and Purchasing people made it happen. We needed to acquire property and protect our existing property to keep our employees safe, and Real Estate and Police delivered. We needed more locomotives, freight cars and vehicles in service, and our shops got it done. We needed our tracks and signal system kept operational and expanded at the same time, and MOW and Signals delivered. We needed our trains to keep running on time, but with more traffic, and Transportation kept everything running smoothly. And we needed Customer Service and Marketing to keep close to our customers so we could provide the service they needed, and the commercial team made sure we kept our customers satisfied. That's why I always say it starts with our employees. I couldn't be prouder of the men and women of the Reading & Northern for what they did in 2022 to take care of our freight and passenger customers. On to 2023!"

Reading & Northern Railroad, with its corporate headquarters in Port Clinton, is a privately held railroad company serving over 70 customers in nine eastern Pennsylvania counties (Berks, Bradford, Carbon, Columbia, Lackawanna, Luzerne, Northumberland, Schuylkill, and Wyoming). It has expanded its operations over the last 40 years and now handles over 34,000 carloads of freight and 250,000 excursion train riders over 400 miles of track. Reading & Northern operates both freight services and steam and diesel-powered excursion passenger services, owns over 1,700 freight cars, and employs nearly 300 dedicated employees. Reading & Northern has repeatedly been honored as one of the premier railroads in the nation including being named Regional Railroad of the year in 2020 by Railway Age Magazine. ♦

Andy Muller Nominated as Railroader of the Year

Port Clinton, PA – December 22, 2022

The Reading Blue Mountain & Northern Railroad's (RBMN) CEO, Mr. Andy Muller Jr. was recently nominated for the distinction of 2022's "Railroader of the Year" in the renowned magazine Railway Age. His nomination was supported by letters and testimonials from dozens of elected state senators and state representatives, other regional officials, dozens of RBMN rail customers and the entire management of the Reading & Northern.

After considering many nominees, Railway Age named Katie Farmer, President and CEO of BNSF, Railroader of the Year. In announcing their decision, Railway Age noted that Farmer was a trailblazer in the industry by being the first female Class 1 CEO. BNSF is the nation's largest railroad in both route mileage and revenues. BNSF is privately held by Warren Buffet's Berkshire Hathaway holding company.

Andy was honored to be considered in such prestigious company and is appreciative of all the customers and regional officials who recognized the value of the company that he has built based on entrepreneurial values and his laser-focus on customers and employees.

In their letters of support for Andy Muller, customers and regional officials noted that he has built one of the finest regional freight railroads in the country over the last 30+ years. Key local figures such as Senator David Argall, Joseph Lettiere – President & CEO of CAN DO, Doug Topkis of Lehigh Anthracite Coal and Dick Yuengling, Jr. of Yuengling & Sons, Inc. wrote letters of support praising Muller's investments in the region.

Over a little more than 30 years, Muller expanded a rundown group of tracks that served the Pennsylvania anthracite industry and turned it into a regional powerhouse serving dozens of major customers like Procter & Gamble, International Paper, Gallo Wine and Yuengling in addition to the anthracite and Marcellus Shale industries. He expanded his network to over 400 miles, 300+

full-time employees, over 70 locomotives, and 1800 freight cars. Under his leadership the RBMN has been named Regional Railroad of the Year multiple times and it has won the coveted short-line Marketing Award multiple times.

Muller has done all this while remaining privately-owned. Using his entrepreneurial skills and a focus on taking care of the customers and RBMN employees, Muller has built a corporate juggernaut that breaks its traffic and revenue records annually.

While growing the freight business Andy Muller has also built a world-class tourist railroad, which led to his recently winning the coveted "Heritage Railway Award", Nowhere is Muller's dedication to local communities more recognized than in Carbon County.

At a public meeting on December 1st, the Carbon County Commissioners adopted a resolution promoting Muller for the title of "Railroader of the Year. Chairman Wayne Nothstein and Commissioner Chris Lukasevich addressed the attendees by expressing their thanks for Andy's pioneering spirit and significant contributions to the economic health of Carbon County residents and business districts.

Mr. Lukasevich remarked, "Carbon County has been blessed with pioneers in railroading over the centuries, including Asa Packer, Josiah White, and later on George Hart. But, it was Muller who has been the "Railroader of the Year" in Carbon County for the last two decades and we're extremely appreciative of that."

Carbon County is home to the famed "Switzerland of America", Jim Thorpe, Pennsylvania and the Lehigh Gorge State Park where RBMN's scenic railway runs. With rolling hills, sprawling vistas, specialty shops, a multiplex of dining options, and outdoor adventures for the adrenaline lovers, it is a magnet for all walks of life.

RBMN's Passenger Department reached record levels of ridership in 2022 under their popular moniker and aptly titled, "Leigh Gorge Scenic Railway"

(LGSRY) which serviced over 250,000 passengers. With distinctions, such as the ability to serve over 7,800 customers in a single weekend, RBMN and LGSRY continue to pioneer quality of service while keeping the history of rail alive, delighting passengers of all ages through various seasonal trips, and a sundry of locomotive options.

In true RBMN spirit, Mr. Muller and his organization will continue into the new year with the same passion, energy, and innovative entrepreneurial excellence that has defined short-line railroading expertise for decades.

Undauntedly, and as a preview for 2023, RBMN's Passenger efforts will expand further northward, freight services are expected to grow, and the newest acquisition of Nesquehoning's industrial campus affords added infrastructure opportunities to capitalize on a premier location.

RBMN's culture and appreciation for the company's legacy may be best exemplified by Andy's daughter and member of the railroad leadership team, Tina Muller-Levan who accepted CC's resolution in Andy's absence stating, "He (Andy) is my Railroader of the Year", a sentiment supported by all of RBMN's management team and employees.

Reading & Northern Railroad, with its corporate headquarters in Port Clinton, is a privately held railroad company serving over 75 customers in nine eastern Pennsylvania counties (Berks, Bradford, Carbon, Columbia, Lackawanna, Luzerne, Northumberland, Schuylkill, and Wyoming). It has expanded its operations over the last 30+ years and now handles over 34,000 carloads of freight and 225,000 excursion train riders over 400 miles of track. Reading & Northern operates both freight services and steam and diesel-powered excursion passenger services, owns almost 1,800 freight cars, and employs nearly 300 dedicated employees. Reading & Northern has repeatedly been honored as one of the premier railroads in the nation including being named Regional Railroad of the year in 2020 by Railway Age Magazine. ♦

2022 Year in Review Transload

BY: DAREN GESCHWINDT, VP DISTRIBUTION SERVICES

It may sound cliché, but one thing that has proven to be constant in the transload and warehouse business is “change”. 2022 has proven that old cliché to be true yet again.

At the Ransom Warehouse, our ability to respond to changing conditions has enabled us to provide solutions for our customers. While the Ransom warehouse is primarily operated to support the rail business, in some cases we need to get creative in order to find a way to keep the business moving on rail, even if it is only for a portion of the move. One such example of this was our decision to allow a customer to ship product into the Ransom Warehouse by truck. This need was driven by the shipper having difficulty in getting empty cars to load at the origin. When it became clear that the originating railroad was unable to provide the amount of railcars that would be needed, we put together a package that enabled the customer to truck their product to the Ransom Warehouse with the understanding that it would later ship outbound by rail to the end user. This resulted in over 400 truckloads of material moving into the warehouse by truck. This product was later shipped out of the warehouse by rail, resulting in us handling 92 outbound railcars. This is product that would have been forced to be moved exclusively by truck if we had not worked with the customer to find a solution.

2022 also saw one of our long-time customers increase their shipments to Ransom by over 80 carloads. This was product that moved into the warehouse by rail, and later moved out by rail, resulting in an increase of over 160 revenue carloads.

These two increases helped offset the loss of one of our largest accounts from 2021. In 2021 we handled over 300 carloads of woodpulp from a supplier in Tennessee. However, at the end of 2021 it was announced that the mill was closing. As a result, we didn't handle any of this business in 2022. I didn't say that all of the change in 2022 was positive. The reality is that sometimes the world changes around you, and there is nothing that you can do to prevent it. In this case the customer was happy with our service and the warehouse economics worked, but there were larger factors in play that affected the final outcome.

At the Cressona Transload we saw some positive indicators that the world is getting back to normal after COVID, and that lumber prices are getting back to where they need to be. We saw increases in same store sales with our 2 existing customers of 117% and 166% respectively. We also added a new lumber customer at Cressona in 2022. These 3 customers combine for a net increase of over 200% vs. 2021 levels.

As we look forward to 2023 the future looks bright. In December 2022, we finalized a deal with a new woodpulp supplier who did not use Ransom previously. The new deal will see them using our warehouse to hold safety stock for 2 of their end users. Meanwhile one of our longtime customers recently reached out seeking to double the amount of safety stock that they will be sending to Ransom. We are also in discussions with 2 other woodpulp suppliers about potential use of the warehouse for their product.

We will also resume receiving steel coils at West Hazleton for delivery to the end user. This is business that we previously handled in 2021 but did not move in 2022 due to the supplier not being able to supply that grade of steel in 2022. The supplier has resolved their production issues and reports that shipments will get back to normal in 2023.

If January is any indicator, 2023 looks like it will be another exciting year. ♦



(left, top to bottom)
Steve Werley; Sherry Primrose; Justine Berger; Kristen McGowan;
Leanne Moser

(right, top to bottom)
Michele Daub; Mary Synnott; Lori Chinchar; Susan Ludwig

2022 Year in Review Customer Service

Expanding to Better Serve Our Customers

BY: SUSAN LUDWIG, VP MARKETING & CUSTOMER SERVICE

As RBMN enjoyed a record year of carload growth, the Customer Service Department adjusted and added resources in order to keep our customers satisfied.

We had four new hires in our department this year. Each one of them has added something unique to our team and has complimented our existing core team members. With the addition of new customers and increased business growth it was necessary to expand to keep up with all our customer needs. We have had a busy year with our increased coal business and our new sand terminal.

In January of 2022 Mary Synnott was hired to assist our expanding coal business. Mary handles day to day customer needs for coal and assists with various reporting functions. Justine Berger joined our team in March. Justine has been handling general merchandise customers as well as our ISS rating system. Kristen McGowan joined us in April to learn our fleet management and the coal business. Sherry Primrose joined our team in August. Sherry has learned our transload customers as well as several general merchandise customers. All our new employees have been great additions to our team.

Our seasoned core team is comprised of Steve Werley, Director of Fleet Management. Steve handles all the daily duties of our RBMN fleet. RBMN presently owns and maintains a fleet of 1,570 freight railcars. The fleet includes, 278 gondolas, 353 bottom dump coal hoppers, 543 rapid discharge hoppers, 201 covered hoppers, 11 high sided gondolas, 35 low sided gondolas, 17 ballast cars, 12 flat cars, 30 boxcars, 2 tank cars, and 87 Maintenance of Way hoppers. Additionally, RBMN passenger fleet consists of 54 cars, including coaches, open air, dome, lounge, dining, observation, parlor, pullman cars and bike gondolas. RBMN also maintains 6 rail diesel cars (RDC). Steve's duties also include backing up coal daily customer duties and our car hire payables and receivables. He has been with the company over eleven years

Lori Chinchar, Director of Customer Service, has been working here for six years. Lori is very versed in all general merchandise customers as well as our ISS rating system. Lori is my direct back up and steps in to manage the team in my absence and does the hands-on day to day assistance for the team. Michele Daub has been with RBMN for 5 years and is very proficient in several areas. Michele handles, transload, coal customers, general merchandise, ISS rating for coal traffic and backs up Steve with car hire payables and receivables. Leanne Moser has been with RBMN for over three years and is very involved in our coal and general merchandise customer service. She also assists in ISS rating for our coal business.

With this team in place we are in a great position to serve all the customer needs in a timely manner. We have cross trained in every aspect of the daily duties to ensure that all customer needs are met. Thank you to all the customers for a successful year, it has been a pleasure working with all of you. A big thanks as well to my Customer Service team at RBMN for doing a fantastic job. We look forward to another great year in 2023. ♦

2022 Year in Review

Operations

BY: TYLER GLASS, EXECUTIVE VP OPERATIONS

Well, another year is in the books. 2022 has come and gone and it certainly didn't disappoint. We were already anticipating some traffic growth in 2022, but early in the year the Russian invasion of Ukraine flipped the anthracite coal market upside down. We really had to start brainstorming ways to handle the challenge of this unprecedented growth.

Anthracite coal and frac sand would be the bigger stories of the year for Operations. However, our expanding passenger operations and the long-anticipated release of the steam locomotive 2102 certainly added to an already busy year. In the end, we handled the business as efficiently as possible and laid a good foundation upon which to build for 2023.

In early 2022 the Class 1 railroads still were struggling a bit from not having enough personnel to fill train starts. NS also went through a leadership change early in the year and was now looking to see where some changes could be made to streamline operations and promote efficiency. Our increased coal unit train business, which interchanges at North Reading, and the merchandise interchange at Reading were two pieces that we worked with NS to help keep traffic moving efficiently.

Our anthracite business that traditionally moved in unit trains to Fairless Hills and Leetsdale would now be moved in the regularly scheduled merchandise train service in blocks since NS personnel shortages would not allow dedicated unit trains. Working with the NS Transportation management was necessary to ensure we would balance the movements on the various connecting trains to keep the trains moving efficiently while keeping the various yards along the route fluid.

Reestablishing the interchange at NS' Spring Street yard versus RBMN's North Reading Yard was huge for both companies. NS would often struggle to make concrete delivery and pick up times which would cause backups in the yards of both railroads. RBMN was a little more nimble and the fact that we could schedule a more consistent operation helped tremendously, especially given the fact that we saw a large increase in our interchanges with NS this year.

Frac sand was another big change for the operations team this year. Our facility at Tunkhannock was open for business and we were receiving traffic from our NS interchanges at Reading and Taylor. The ebb and flow nature of the business this past year gave us some good training on how to handle the future business, which we expect to triple or quadruple from our current levels.

In mid-March steam locomotive 2102 was in its final days of rebuild and finally in early April we operated our first test runs. Success! A locomotive that had not operated since 1991 was now an active member of the fleet. It would once again be a star and lead many passenger rambles as well as operated on some freight trains hauling anthracite coal. Our steam shop employees can certainly be proud of the work that they performed over countless years to get us to the point of operation.

The diesel shop also did their part to resurrect locomotives. In anticipation of the projected new business, they were busy getting some SD40-2 locomotives returned to service. These were bought from NS a couple of years ago and were in storage. The diesel shop personnel continue to do an excellent job communicating with the transportation team to ensure that any issues that may arise with a locomotive are properly diagnosed and promptly repaired to maintain maximum locomotive uptime. The quality of our fleet is apparent to anyone that operates them!

Our Maintenance of Way Department continued to put in more welded rail and completed surfacing on the portion of our Main Line that we bought from Carbon County in 2021. In addition, MOW continues to add infrastructure to support our business increases. These improvements continue to enhance the efficiency of our train movements.

The Communications and Signals Department completed a huge signal project in the Jim Thorpe area. Three interlockings were completed which allowed complete automation of three heavily used switches and thus trains can continue their movements without stopping. There are more signaling projects in the works that will enhance the safety and efficiency of our train operations. Also, during the year Matt Collins took over the role as Vice President Communications and Signals. Jonathan Barket moved to a lead role at Innovative Operations Technology (IOT), a subsidiary of RBMN. We thank Jon for leading the team for the last 12 years and we are fortunate to be able to pick his brain from time to time.

On the Operations personnel side we now have Ryan Trexler handling the Operations Administrator role. He handles all of the crew scheduling among other tasks.

We have also been busy hiring and training new conductors. With the new business and some other employees moving on to other careers we've completed training of over a dozen new conductors. This is a team effort that involves the management and field workers in operations to make sure we give every new hire the best possible blend of classroom and hands on training to meet our customers' expectations.

We have been very busy on the planning end for 2023. We anticipate more volumes in our freight and passenger networks, so we are making sure we have the right resources in place to handle the business. Customer satisfaction is our priority, and we certainly strive to give the best possible service.

Looking forward to a successful 2023!♦

Safety Always

Advancements in 2022 & Beyond

BY: ERIC PETERS, VP TRANSPORTATION & SAFETY



Matt Collins, VP Communications & Signals speaking to an Operations group at Rules Fest 2023.

2022 was certainly a busy year, but no matter what is going on we are never too busy to work safely. This year has been about giving each individual the knowledge and power to embrace the safety always mindset. I have always believed that no one comes to work to get injured or have an accident, but there are times individuals do not do enough to prevent them. That is why we must look out for each other.

Many folks talk about using common sense which is essentially just the sum of knowledge and experience. Since we all have different levels of both, it is not equal across the company. Knowledge is the first step in being a safe worker. That is why new employees go through training classes to learn everything from basic to advanced material pertaining to railroad safety and their position within the company. The classroom training is a key component towards becoming qualified. Equally pertinent is the experience. The initial experience comes from on-the-job training with previously qualified instructors. It is essential that these two pieces go together to form the foundation of safety.

In 2022 we brought on 42 new employees into regulated and highly safety sensitive positions. This monumental task has meant each department has been extremely busy with training and a constant flow of new faces in the classroom. As we structured our training to produce the best results with the influx of new hires we were able to incorporate the new Federal Railroad Administration guidelines for qualifications in the Mechanical, Maintenance of Way, Locomotive and Real Estate Departments. We have used these new requirements to provide framework for an already robust internal training program. We not only focus on new hires, but also conduct multiple day rules and safety classes with all existing regulated employees yearly. This gives a great opportunity to hit the knowledge piece of the safety program as well as using the vast experience in each class to share best practices. The new format allows more time for interdepartmental discussions, questions, and overall increase in content.

For the first time Reading Blue Mountain & Northern published our own operating manuals for rules, safety, equipment handling and hazmat in 2022. This accomplishment took an immense amount of hard work and discussions with all departments to produce. In addition, we utilized outside resources to enhance our internal safety program. As I wrote in previous articles, the Short Line Safety Institute provided a hazmat training class to train-the-trainer and came back to facilitate a tabletop exercise to increase our readiness in an event that something did occur. Also, hazmat and response personnel experts are assisting us in beefing up our hazmat plan and internal response procedures. The American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association resources were leveraged this year as we updated our certification programs for engineers and conductors, drug testing and rule checks. The Federal Railroad Administration performed periodic audits for certification and incident reporting in the spring. We took the opportunity to learn best practices the inspectors have taken from other railroads and experience to combine to our already highly organized and detailed records. It was a positive experience to collaborate with the FRA.

The Reading and Northern is always exemplifying the safety always attitude. Andy not only supports the exceptional training, but also makes investments that enhance the safety. He continues to replace rail throughout the network and is near completion on the Crossline between Haucks and Jim Thorpe Junction. New tracks and upgraded infrastructure allow the railroad to operate more efficiently and reduce exposure. The purchase of the Nesquehoning Campus has opened many possibilities for all departments. I'm excited to end a great year and jump right into what is sure to be an exciting 2023. ♦

2022 Year in Review

Maintenance of Way

BY: CHRIS GOETZ, VP MAINTENANCE OF WAY

The year 2022 was another remarkable year for the Maintenance of Way Department picking up right where we left off in 2021. The year kicked off with a bang scheduling both RailWorks and LORAM, two large railroad contractors, to assist with some of the maintenance along our Main Line. In the scheduling of RailWorks to install 16,000+ ties, heavy coordination was needed from both within MOW and from other departments at RBMN. This prep includes everything from our Owner, Andy Muller, and MOW VP, Chris Goetz, identifying the locations and ties to be changed, to our prentice trucks staging materials at predetermined locations for the contractor. This also includes partnering with other departments so that MOW can be supported throughout the campaign. For example, our Operations Department adjust train schedules to allow for the RailWorks crews to work uninterrupted. Our Signal Department worked behind the scenes to make sure signal equipment was not affected as the tie gang works down the Main Line. The entire project took 8 weeks to complete with Russ Monroe overseeing the entire project from the first tie laid out to the last tie picked up. In total this tie project ran on the Main Line from Tamaqua (ML MP 99.6) through the Glen Onoko State Park (ML MP 127.6).

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Grinding southbound on the Pottsville Branch, LORAM's RG 417 approaches the Chutes. Water spraying from grinding creates rainbow.



Railwork's machines are staged and ready to kick off the 16,000 tie replacement project along the Main Line at MP 106 in early March.



After needing emergency repair, a new railbed and timber structure is placed in Oak Ridge Road in Humboldt working with the assistance of PennDOT.



With new timbers, rail, plates, and OTM to fit, B. Kalbach and D. Hutton spike the plates down ahead of surfacing at Commerce Drive in Humboldt where PennDOT's 424 extension will soon enter the park.



Railworks tie installation continues along the Main Line near MP 104.



Now cruising along through the Lehigh Gorge, Railworks completes ties up the Main Line near MP 123.



Surfacing of the Industrial Drive East crossing at ML MP 115.7 is underway as J. Hughes pilots the regulator while plowing fresh ballast.



Ballasting and surfacing continues on the Main Line at MP 118 with M. McGinnis operating the Tamper 1 and J. Hughes operating the ballast regulator while following a the ballast train.



Being laid in stages, stone starts going into Commerce Drive with M. McGinnis running the Tamper 1 to bring the crossing to the same elevation as the soon-to-be paved roadway.



C. Garcia puts the finishing touches on prior to paving on the Maplewood Drive crossing rehab in Humboldt, a crossing that was worked in heavy cooperation with CAN DO.



The PT-4 with Operator DeMarco delivers and assists with a rail change prep at mainline MP 110 working with (right to left) J. Antosh, M. Aton, C. Carl, D. Rosohac, and R. Rupprecht.



LORAM's RG417 128 stone rail grinder arrives in Port Clinton on its first day grinding the Main Line northbound.



Final touches and flangeways being placed on White Birch Road in Humboldt by M. Nestor Jr. and E. Bleiler, this project was cooperated with H&K and CAN DO.



Working together with the C&S Department, MOW drops a fresh thermite weld on an insulated rail being installed in order to allow full signaling of the wye at Jim Thorpe.

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RBMN also brought in LORAM to grind our Main Line from Belt (ML MP 61.7) to Old Penn Haven (ML MP 126.6) providing a smooth ride for freight and passengers alike. Rail grinding is performed to maintain a fresh profile on the rail head and removing irregularities which extends the life of the rail. Also, a helpful side effect of the grinding stones the rail grinder uses is the way it scores the head of the rail to assist in mitigating wheel slip and allowing engines better tractive effort without sanding. This project requires almost constant supervision as the grinding train is a 24-hour operation. While the train grinds for 12+ hours a day, it also requires daily maintenance during any down time. It also requires multiple MOW crews following up behind this massive train checking for fires that ignite as sparks are thrown from grinding the rail. Also, just like the RailWorks project, multiple departments are needed to work together for a project of this magnitude to flow smoothly. A large part of this background work is handled in the office with collaborating with operations for track outages, signals for DED removal, and our police for notifying nearby vehicles parked close to the rail to move their vehicles. We also worked with individual townships to help provide water to the rail grinder for fire mitigation.

With the heavy hitters in play, our focus was back onto installing rail along our Main Line and Hazleton Lines. In total, the MOW Department

installed 33,445 feet of rail this year. This is no small feat as it requires the bulk of our forces to prep and install the massive 1600' rail strings at a time, sometimes with multiple strings being installed weekly. Each of these rail strings must endure a process of heating to specific temperatures and anchoring in order to allow for proper expansion and contraction through all four seasons. Each of these rails installed also get fresh 18" double shoulder plates to match, creating a brand-new railroad from the tie up. In addition to all the rail we have installed this year, MOW was also able to build 7 switches, rehab 12 crossings, surface 331,895 feet of track, and dumped 23,834 tons of new ballast on our tracks.

A large facet of 2022 for MOW was stone and surfacing. That 23,834 tons of ballast was provided largely from the partnership with Rausch Creek aggregates and loaded into railcars at the top of the Tremont Branch. At some points of the year, we were loading and unloading twice a week. However, ballast would be for naught if not for equipment like the regulator and tamper to follow it up. After many months of work by the Mechanical Department, a million-dollar second Mark IV production tamper was restored and put into service this year. This second machine allowed RBMN to surface 63 miles of track this year along with surfacing the newly build switches and rehabbed crossings.

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Stockton Mountain Road now being surfaced by R. Monroe in the ballast regulator and M. McGinnis and D. Keener in the tamper.



M. Nestor dumps ballast over fresh rail at ML MP 113.



Trackmen R. Rupprecht and R. Monroe gage the Main Line bridge over the Lackanna river at Pitt Jct.



Operator B. Cole lifts out the rubber crossing panels on SR 424 in a joint venture with PennDOT to pave up to the crossing surface for a smooth drive overtop.



Trackmen J. Shields and J. Kalinich clear low hanging branches on Spruce Siding in Tamaqua Yard which were getting too close to operation's equipment.



Following a railbreak, emergency repairs commence by Foreman Hutton and C. Garcia at Green Mountain Road in Humboldt.



Keeping trains running, operator S. Himmelberger clears ice from the south portal of the Tamaqua Tunnel.



A fresh rail string gets threaded in at ML MP 113 for install with Foreman B. Van Blargan's gang.



In conjunction with PennDOT, RBMN forces rebuilt Stockton Mountain Road in Hazle Township. Photographed is Operator Himmelberger and Welder C. Hamm while a thermite weld is being dropped on new rail in the crossing.



C. Garcia sorts and organizes track bolts in the new RBMN Nesquehoning Campus MOW building #7.



Newly constructed shelved stand at the east end of the Nesquehoning Campus MOW Yard to hold joint bars, switch materials, and other OTM.



Deep in the Buck Mountain Tunnel, at M&S BT MP 106.3, Brad Handling and M. Nestor install ties with operator S. Himmelberger.



Plate prep for a railchange at Hazleton Line MP 108 is completed by M. Nestor and B. Kalbach, the new rail string can be seen ready to be threaded in the middle of the ties.

Continued from page 17.

In MOW, ballast and surfacing builds the foundation of the railroad and much of this focus was incorporated into the Main Line from milepost 105 to 120. Some portions of track were lifted clear out of the mud and given a fresh ballast bed underneath to allow for adequate drainage and a stronger roadbed. By lifting this portion of the Main Line, leveling, and aligning we were able to see a huge improvement in ride quality and will be able to allow a speed increase for both our passenger and freight trains.

In 2022 we also saw an acquisition of the ex-KME property in Nesquehoning by RBMN. Dubbed the Nesquehoning Campus, this facility was quickly turned into MOW's main receiving yard and central hub for material movement and crew origin. MOW swiftly turned around building #7 to be a resupply location for crew trucks and act as a home for central based crews on the system. Shelves of bolts, power tools, joint bars were installed along with a workbench for an indoor area to construct new tools and switch components. Outside of building #7 was transformed into a supply lot for larger materials like ties, timbers, rail, and frogs allowing our prentice trucks to grab and go when materials are needed.

A focus in 2022 was the collaboration of projects with CAN DO and PennDOT. The Humboldt Industrial Park was a gleaming example of this cooperation with a few major crossing projects being constructed. Maplewood Drive was upgraded to allow for a more robust crossing protection system and safer train movement due to the influx of road traffic from the development of PennDOT's SR424 extension. The new Commerce Drive crossing was constructed in conjunction with PennDOT to serve as an entrance off the new construct 424 extension into the park. This is a large crossing allowing for multiple lanes of traffic and turning lanes, as well as insulation upgrades to allow for traffic light preemption and gates for the heavier road traffic. Oak Ridge Road crossing was in need some emergency repairs. Since this crossing was a tub crossing MOW worked with Real Estate and Hazel Township for a complete crossing rehabilitation and converting the crossing to timber and asphalt. Jumping to the east of Hazleton, RBMN also coordinated with PennDOT to upgrade the existing crossing at Stockton Mountain Road in Hazle Township. The crossing was reconstructed and raised to allow for a smooth driving surface overtop.

All of the remarkable work in MOW could not be possible if it wasn't for the hardworking men and women implementing these tasks in the field or the office personnel planning and coordinating the projects handed down by upper management. This teamwork is a large reason for our success and accomplishments here at RBMN in 2022 and will continue as we move into 2023. ♦

2022 Year in Review *Signal Department*

BY: MATT COLLINS, VP COMMUNICATION & SIGNALS

2022 was an exciting year, to say the least, with new challenges and expansions of both signaled territory, crossings, and staffing. It was one of our busiest years to date.

Our most significant accomplishment in 2022 was the completion of the three Main Line interlockings, Jim Thorpe Junction, River Interlocking, and Nesquehoning Junction. We also installed the 118 Approach Signal and updated Coal Interlocking and the 124 Signal as part of the interlocking installations. This major signaling project allows for more efficient operations of our NRFF and LGSR trains. It reduces the number of times these trains need to stop and hand-throw a switch and helps keep them on schedule. As with all of these large projects, the signal department appreciates the assistance from Facilities, Car Shop, Operations, and MOW that allowed this project to be completed.

Once the three interlockings were completed, we refocused on Humboldt Industrial Park's three outstanding crossing projects. These three crossings are a major part of the Rt 424 extension project to allow for a safer and quicker route between Interstate 81 and the CAN DO Humboldt Industrial Park. We first set to work to complete White Birch Road Crossing, which was started in 2021. Once done with White Birch Road, we began on Maplewood Drive, which required the installation of two bungalows and gates. Once we had mostly finished Maplewood Drive, we then started Commerce Drive. Commerce Drive may be the biggest crossing project the C&S team has done. With over sixty-five hundred feet of bonding, quad-crossing gates, two adjacent remote start bungalows, and over ten thousand feet of fiberoptics to link everything together, this crossing project is one of our biggest to date.

While the signal department worked on these larger projects, it was able to install several DED (dragging equipment detectors) that detect any anomalies as the train crosses over them. Such as a derailed axle that, once caught, the DED will notify the train crew to stop and inspect their train before a more disastrous derailment event could occur. We also installed a railcar RFID tag reader at Belt. These readers help the train crews and traffic department digital record and track where each car is on the railroad. And we refurbished the North Reading Yard railcar scale that weighed over one thousand trains carrying over nine hundred thousand tons of coal in 2022. With the addition of a C&S electrician position in 2022, the team installed all new LED lights in the engine house and clock tower, switch heaters at Cressona and Port Clinton, and numerous repairs and electrical buildouts.

With the closing of 2022 and a reflection on the past year, 2022 was a busy year for the signal department. This year the department accomplished a lot with the three interlockings, crossings, and additional trackside equipment and still completed all required testing and trouble calls. Hats off to my entire team; job well done! Now on to 2023! ♦



Electrician Ryan Boyer (left) and maintainer Don Matter (right) work to install cable at Maplewood Drive, with MOW working on the crossing in the background.



Locomotive engineer Jim Cook, working with the signal department to install the Maplewood Drive crossing gates.



(Left to Right) Maintainers Matt Kunkle, Don Matter, Locomotive engineer Jim Cook and maintainer Kyle Kogoy work to install the crossing gate arm and the gate lights at Maplewood Drive, Humboldt.



Maintainers Zack Baker (Left) and Aaron Schweibinz (Right) install signal heads on the River bracket mast before it is lifted into place.



Maintainer Aaron Schweibinz working to align the signal heads at Nesquehoning Junction Interlocking.



Maintainers Aaron Schweibinz (Left), Zack Baker (Center), and Kyle Kogoy (Right) are working on connecting the signal head wiring to the River bracket mast.



Maintainers Darnell Young (Left) and Don Matter (Right) are working to install Maplewood Drive, Humboldt Industrial Park bungalow.



Maintainer Zack Baker working to align the signal heads at Nesquehoning Junction Interlocking.



(Left to Right) Maintainer Don Matter, MOW Supervisor Matt Minnich, Operator Mike Aton, Foreman Dave Hutton, and Trackman Chris Garcia are working to install the Commerce Drive bungalow.

2022 Year in Review

Motive Power Mechanical

BY: DUSTIN BERNDT, VP MOTIVE POWER



Car 3 on north end of the Wheel shop after completing wheel change and truck work.

As we began December 2022, it was evident to me we would be continuing the trend of the previous eleven months. That means there has been no letup in sight throughout the year for large project repair and continued maintenance in the Motive Power and Passenger Mechanical departments.

Within these departments, we have been full throttle throughout the course of the year, with a few of these noteworthy projects having been the additions to active service of the 3064, 3068, 3069 and the return of the 3051 from storage. The three ex-NS EMD SD40-2's purchased in 2020, were an easy choice to activate from storage when inspected as I determined these needed very little done to them for adding them to the active roster. We quickly brought them into the Port Clinton Engine House for this analysis and did the repairs necessary to bring them back to active duty. The mechanical team also brought the 3051 back to the shop in 2022 from short term storage after gathering the items needed to repair it. We made the necessary repairs in Spring and added it back to the active roster just as it had done the previous twenty years we owned it.

As promised, the 2102 entered active service in the early portion of 2022. This was a huge accomplishment for the Steam mechanical team after years of progress to get to this point. To say the remainder of the year was a success running the

popular engine can be an understatement although there were some teething issues to overcome as can be expected with any project of this magnitude. The Team quickly moved on from these setbacks and engineered successful Ramble trips and October excursion trains in 2022. Upon completion of these trips, the engine was finished for the season with some repair items that will be addressed over the Winter. Look for another successful 2023 from the 2102 as we continue to create the schedule for this impressive locomotive!

Next, in the first complete year of ownership, we have also made great use of one of the companies' biggest accomplishments of owning a wheel truing machine that maintains wheels on all the rolling stock. It has become quite evident the machine saves noteworthy costs of wheel replacements by closely managing wheel wear and cutting them at the proper times to extend the life of wheelsets. With well-maintained wheels, it also has shown a reduction of locomotive suspension component wear and helps with reduced wear to the rails. The addition of the machine also brought the need of 3 phase power to the building. This resulted in the power capabilities necessary of purchasing a set of 4 50-ton railroad jacks this year to operate in unison inside the wheel shop to efficiently jack up any piece of equipment we own. After some minor upgrades to the wheel shop wiring and



Car 3 inside Wheel Shop.

jack setup time, we are able to plug them in and use the jacks as needed. The first significant projects completed were the needed repairs to the 1256 generator car and the long-awaited completion of Car 3. We jacked these coaches up on all four corners and completed the repairs and wheel installs needed under them while suspended on the jacks inside the building. With these new benefits, we will look to continue the trend of car and coach repairs inside the multipurposed wheel shop.

Our fantastic 2022 addition of the Nesquehoning complex has also created future opportunities for locomotive maintenance and current storage. With the usage of Building 3 cranes, we also took the opportunity this year to store our RDC drivetrain parts and house some EMD engine blocks indoors. This has freed up space for us at Port Clinton for active repairs. We also look forward to the day when we can do heavy locomotive maintenance at this facility.

Lastly, the economy has also had an influence on the Motive Power and Passenger departments in 2022. Although we are always conscious of costs, we needed to re-evaluate some common practices in place for years already such as locomotive utilization, locations, and fuel consumption with the late year increases in fuel and parts costs. We became more proactive with monitoring usage and keeping

locomotives shut down whenever possible to control fuel costs. The department also needed to adopt more practices for price savings on parts but at the same time ensure we have on hand what is needed to repair our locomotive fleet and have them available when needed during global parts demands and shortages. This becomes another example of behind-the-scenes efforts and the work that goes into all aspects of locomotive maintenance. So, as we continue into these changing times of the future and thrust right into 2023, we will continue to be vigilant with our maintenance, parts and utilization. All of this is necessary to be successful, but at the same time continue to be efficient with our locomotive fleet and be productive in preparation for a very busy 2023! ♦

2022 Year in Review

Real Estate & Police Departments

BY: JOLENE BUSHNER, AVP REAL ESTATE & SERGEANT RYAN PARKS

REAL ESTATE DEPARTMENT

From an exciting new property acquisition to a busy construction season, the Real Estate Department experienced a year of new opportunities and project completions.

The Real Estate Department had an exciting year in 2022 with the acquisition of the Nesquehoning Campus property in the Spring. As covered in our Fall 2022 magazine issue, the Nesquehoning Campus was acquired from KME Rev Group, of the former Kovatch Fire Truck Company in Nesquehoning, Pennsylvania. This industrial complex comprises of eight industrial and office buildings over nine acres and is ideally located along our Main Line in Carbon County. Multiple departments have started the process of expanding their operations at the Nesquehoning Campus and many other plans for the campus are still in development. Reading & Northern employees and guests enjoyed visiting the campus as it played host to the 2022 Fall Fling. Building 2 on campus – formerly used by KME Rev Group as one of their final truck assembly buildings – was transformed into a banquet hall for a night of celebration, with guests arriving via train and debarking right on site. The Reading & Northern is thrilled for the opportunities Nesquehoning Campus holds for the future for many departments.

The public projects coordinated by the Real Estate Department have been in full swing this past construction season. Particularly in the CAN DO Humboldt Industrial Park in Hazleton, multiple public grade crossings have made progress in their construction and upgrades. A part of a joint township, State, and private roadway expansion project in the Park, the Reading & Northern has completed construction on a brand new roadway public crossing, “White Birch Road”, upgraded an existing crossing, “Maplewood Road”, and is finalizing construction on a third, “Commerce Drive”. CAN DO acquired funding to improve roadway access to and through the Park and with the State, Hazle Township, and the Reading & Northern has coordinated the construction and upgrades to these three crossings. Reading & Northern’s Maintenance of Way and Signal Departments have been busy this past year performing our portion of work at these crossings with assistance from Hazle Township and the contractor awarded by CAN DO’s grant in paving the crossings. Completion of these crossings and these roadways will greatly improve traffic in and through the Park, with an extension of State Route 424 and a new exit off of route 81.

The Real Estate Inspectors have had a busy year making progress on the multi department milepost upgrade project that started in 2021. Since our last update in our “2021 Year in Review” article in our last winter magazine issue, the Real Estate Inspectors have completed the milepost upgrade project on the Main Line. Beginning with MP 133 in January of 2022, Real Estate installed new signs to MP 176 on the Main Line, making our milepost structure one continuous numbering system moving north from Reading. Following the completion of the sign installations, Real Estate worked with the Signals and Operations Departments to set a date to unveil the new signs. With the completion of the Main Line project, we look forward to continuing to upgrade signage in the years to come.

Overall, 2022 was a year that demonstrated that the Reading & Northern Railroad is ever growing and by working together, the opportunities for future development will always be present. ♦



The Commerce Drive crossing is a new public crossing in the Humboldt Industrial Park. Once the roadway is opened, this crossing will allow the new extension of SR 424 to connect to the industrial park.



The newly completed Maplewood Drive crossing in the Humboldt Industrial Park. This crossing was rebuilt over the summer



The concrete tub at Oak Ridge Road was removed over the summer and was replaced by a smooth asphalt surface.



The new White Birch Road crossing is another crucial part of the extension of SR 424 into the Humboldt Industrial Park.

POLICE DEPARTMENT

The Police Department continued to stay busy this year and has experienced an uptick in the occurrence of more serious crimes. Drug possessions, thefts, rail tampering, burglaries, and fraudulent checks have been occurring more prevalent than in years past. One example of these incidents included an individual placing a shunt across our Mainline track. Using social media, we were able to positively identify an individual we had captured on a camera. We worked together along with local police departments to apprehend and take into custody two suspects associated with this incident and through interviews and search warrants we were able to gather enough information for prosecution and motive. Although many shunting attacks have been linked to terrorist or anarchist organizations, we believe this was an isolated incident. This incident has now been used by multiple law enforcement agencies in the railroad industry as an example of the benefits of using social media and community policing to help gather information quickly in identifying suspects.

Our Police Department continually faces criminal trespassing on foot and by motor vehicle. Officers throughout the year have prosecuted these trespassing incidents with the help of local law enforcement agencies and railroad employees. We have also been continuously educating the public on rail safety through Operation Lifesaver, Facebook, and local first responder events. One of these first responder events was mentioned in an article in the Fall Magazine which took place at Cabela’s in Hamburg, near Reading & Northern Railroad Corporate Headquarters. Our goal in the coming year is to continue utilizing education to build community relations and spread rail safety and awareness.

Officers have also responded to calls of service for wildlife in need of assistance. Some of these incidents included releasing a fox which was trapped illegally along our property, relocating a pair of black snakes to a new location away from the dangers they could face on the railroad property. Officers also continue to patrol our properties to deter hunting on and around railroad property during hunting season.

Working with the Passenger Department, the Police Department had been very busy with the revival of the 2102 steam locomotive this past year. Ridership turnout for these excursions was truly remarkable along with the presence of railfans from across the country to chase the train when it was out running. We were keeping up with allowing rail fanning to be done in a safe manner and had numerous stops to keep people at a safe distance while trying to catch a glimpse of the 2102 for videos and photographs. We also had our hands full with parking patrons for numerous sold-out train trips for the 2102 and other fall foliage train trips. After the trains would leave Outer Station and Pottsville our officers would shadow the trains and make their way up to Jim Thorpe for arrival into the Jim Thorpe station where officers would spend the day protecting the very busy and active Jim Thorpe County lot railroad crossing to help keep pedestrians and vehicles coming and leaving the County lot safe.

Towards the end of the year the Reading & Northern Police Department officers joined the Tri State Transportation Intelligence Group. This group does information sharing between railroad police departments involving current threats, crimes, and suspects to pass this information along to take a proactive approach to railroad policing by sharing information with one another.

Det. Hedrick became a liaison for the FBI Joint Terrorism Task Force for our department through the FBI Rail Program. This task force will help our department with sharing information and keeping Det. Hedrick apprised of current threats facing railroads and the areas we travel through. This will also help with investigations and future incidents that may occur on the railroad. Our Police Department will have access to resources immediately needed in the event of a major incident happening along our rail lines and property in the areas we travel through daily.

As we reflect on the year, we want to thank all those who have been supportive of our Police Department and came forward with reporting information and issues along with those that have been an assistance to aid us in the apprehension of trespassers and the continued threats we face. We look forward going into the new year to being able to protect the railroad and working with various departments, customers, neighbors, and the public to keep everyone safe while being out and about around the railroad. ♦

2022 Year in Review

Mechanical

BY: DAN PUKSAR, VP MECHANICAL



Exterior view of the Vehicle Shop at Nesquehoning Campus.

2022 was another highly productive year managing the maintenance and repair of Reading & Northern freight cars as well as our equipment and vehicles. Especially with the addition of more infrastructure adding to greater productivity and efficiency.

There is no hiding the fact that the RBMN keeps breaking records. As the company grows, all of us, no matter what department, see a growth in our workload. That certainly holds true for the mechanical teams as well.

With the huge increase in coal shipments this year, the car shop was very busy with coal car inspections, ensuring every car that is loaded has zero issues for the customer. The car shop also stayed on top of repairs in field, making quick work out of any issue that arose to keep the cars rolling and our customers happy. As a railroad we pride ourselves on keeping the entire freight car fleet in outstanding working order and I believe that shows. We take pride in the fact that RBMN was able to handle thousands of additional carloads of coal without any equipment shortage problems.

With the car shop addition being finished at the tail end of 2021, we were able to put the addition to full use this year, a major help in shop production. Earlier this year the MOW department tied in the tracks behind the addition to allow us to have storage for five more freight cars and the ability to make repairs outside when needed. Also, to help with maintenance needs and shop demands we hired a fourth carman for our second shift within the shop, allowing us to not only perform car repairs but focus on making changes to existing cars. For example, in 2023 we will be revamping some of our cars that can no longer be used in coal service and retrofitting them into ballast cars,

an excellent use of the car which will assist in track maintenance.

Our team responsible for maintaining maintenance of way equipment also had a busy year. We brought on two more mechanics and began utilizing our Nesquehoning Campus. We will now have our small engine mechanic reporting out of Nesquehoning Building 4, full time in 2023, along with using buildings 1 and 5 for smaller projects. We were able to utilize both buildings for the rebuild of the railroads lowboy trailer which is relied on heavily to move both on track and off-track equipment. In addition to day-to-day maintenance and projects, the railroad purchased a few new pieces of equipment this year to include two low hour backhoes, which the equipment team had in-service and ready to go in a very short time.

The vehicle shop had what was most likely one of the more difficult years to date. With the lack of availability on newer vehicles, part shortages, and overall use being higher than before, the pressure to keep the existing fleet in top condition was felt this year. Both Ernie Henritz and Nate Billet did an extraordinary job in keeping the vehicles in top working condition. With Ernie now covering the vehicles from the Lehigh side and Nate covering the vehicles on the Reading side, we are now able to split our forces in a more versatile way and save other departments the need to drive an excessive amount for repairs. Once again using the Nesquehoning campus to our advantage!

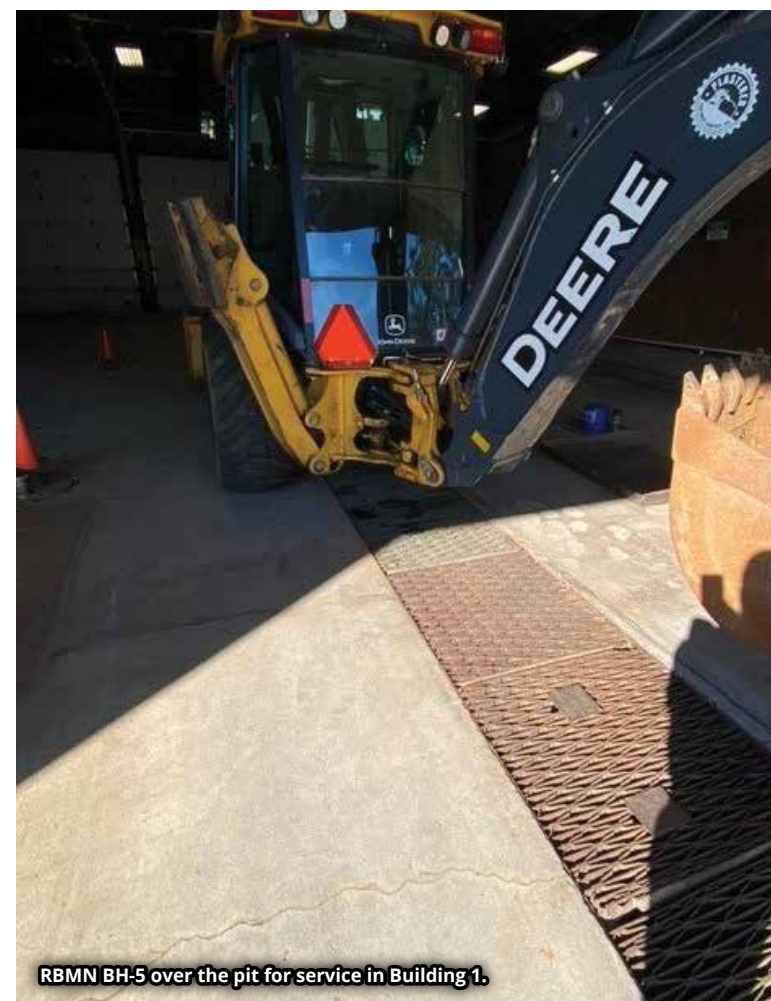
With 2022 in the rearview mirror, 2023 looks to be nothing short of another busy year for the mechanical departments and we look forward to it! ♦



Exterior view of the Equipment Shop at Nesquehoning Campus.



Wheels for the RBMN lowboy ready to be sandblasted in Building 5.



RBMN BH-5 over the pit for service in Building 1.



Ernie repairing the rail gear on the HRV-21 in Building 4.

Passenger Department Sees Over One Quarter-Million Riders

BY: MATT FISHER, PASSENGER GENERAL MANAGER



Steam locomotive 2102 departing Jim Thorpe for a return trip to Reading Outer Station. October 2022.

The 2022 passenger department season was, by far, the most successful on the Reading & Northern with a grand total of over a quarter-million riders. We saw record profits, record ridership, and all purchases of coaches paid for with no debt. Many special train excursions made national headlines in the industry, with the return of steam locomotive #2102 being the biggest story. Also, the growth of the both the passenger and paint and restoration departments was a notable story.

The Lehigh Gorge Scenic Railway train rides continue to make up the bulk of the passenger business. Ray Zweizig continues to manage the day-to-day train operations with new managers Josh Cascarella, Russ Scianna, Jr., and Jen Frederickson. More people than ever frequented the Lehigh Gorge trips.

The LGSR carried a staggering total of 214,011 riders on its trains in 2022. This is an increase of 11% over 2021, during which we hauled an impressive 192,818 riders. The high point was during our Fall Foliage Season, where on Saturday, October 22, 2022, in ONE day, we hosted an astounding 5,302 riders! Additional trips were scheduled several times on Fall Foliage weekends to accommodate all the eager and excited passengers who visited Jim Thorpe to ride our train. An additional 3,859 passengers rode our very popular Bike Trains this past year as well.

The Reading-to-Jim Thorpe operations had a notable year. Marie Knadler-Cunningham, Assistant General Manager of the passenger department, helped plan the return of steam locomotive #2102. Overseeing nearly a dozen people, the return of Rambles was planned.

The planning of our Iron Horse Rambles coincided with the finalization of the restoration of T-1 #2102 in late 2021 into early 2022. The entire Reading & Northern Railroad worked tirelessly to prepare for the Iron Horse Ramble season. Every member of the Reading & Northern family went "full steam ahead" when

the excursion dates were finalized and announced within the company. Multiple stages of planning, a thorough decision-making process, and a strong and focused attention to detail were put into motion to make these special trips come to life.

One major step in the planning process was to enter data into our new ticket system and work in unison with Innovative Operations Technology, a Muller company, to ensure the online advance ticket sales system performed flawlessly. We anticipated tickets would sell quickly, and our customers did not disappoint! Thousands of tickets sold during the first day of sales with many of the car accommodations selling out within minutes!

The next step involved a massive amount of creativity and design to develop a multitude of newspaper/magazine advertisements and sales flyers. The advertising products began to take shape with multiple R&N team members coming together to complete this extraordinary task. The first Iron Horse Rambles advertisement was published in the March 2022 issue of Trains Magazine. Shortly thereafter, social media posting began (mainly using the popular Facebook platform) where our passenger-specific accounts reached over 40,000 excited people! Part of the advertising process involved ordering souvenir items to be sold during Iron Horse Rambles events.

On February 15, 2022, at 9:00 A.M., ticket sales went live for all four Iron Horse Rambles trips. The office staff at the passenger department headquarters in Schuylkill Haven worked extra hard answering rapidly incoming phone calls and questions.

A special bonus on the Iron Horse Rambles trips included the use of the Sunset Grill Dining Car as a merchandise and snack car. Riders onboard these special trips were able to purchase commemorative memorabilia in the Sunset Grill which allowed them a keepsake of their experience onboard our train!

Merchandise included #2102 Iron Horse Rambles t-shirts, magnets, pins, program books, and pens. Refreshments and snacks, which many riders enjoyed, were also offered for sale in the Sunset Grill.

Each passenger who rode an Iron Horse Rambles excursion received a complimentary souvenir envelope containing a program book, RBMN system map, passenger car history program (specific to the passenger car in which they were enjoying their ride), magnet, pen, and a "thank you" letter from CEO Andy Muller, Jr. All items mentioned were custom designed and written by our talented passenger department staff members.

Over 7,500 people rode on the Rambles trips and fall foliage trips from Reading Outer Station to Jim Thorpe pulled by the #2102. At Schuylkill Haven Borough Day, #2102 was the star of the show for the first time since 1991. The #2102 rebuild project was a multi-year, \$2.4 million project. It certainly was worth the money and the wait. Trains magazine featured the return of the steam locomotive as one of their top ten stories of 2022.

Not to be overshadowed by the #2102, the rail diesel car excursions had a very strong year. The season began in early April with charter trips, followed by trips from Reading Outer Station to Jim Thorpe, and Pottsville to Jim Thorpe during October.

Our regularly scheduled RDC trips from Reading Outer Station to Jim Thorpe also saw an abundance of passengers with almost all weekends selling out. Toward the end of the season, our mechanical department was able to release a third RDC back into service which allowed us to increase capacity for the last several weeks of the season.

Several trips from Reading to Pottsville were also offered again this year where guests could explore the downtown area and visit local businesses, restaurants, and museums. In addition to regular excursions, the passenger department hosts a multitude of private charter trips. Many of these trips are sponsored by local museums and historical societies as fundraisers for their groups. However, some join us just to have a fun day on the rails.

The paint and restoration department saw significant growth in 2022. Throughout the year, a few talented technicians were added to the team which improved our productivity and workmanship. Among the seven coaches and two locomotives that were refinished were steam locomotive #2102, one observation car, and one dome car. The #2102 was repainted in coordination with its restoration by the steam shop. Many of the parts were painted individually. The entire locomotive and tender were painted black with gold lettering and safety yellow handrails. Car #7 is an observation car that originally ran on the City of New Orleans, and still bears the name Mardi Gras on the mirrored wall inside. In Reading & Northern colors, it is now named King Coal. The restoration of the interior and exterior shows off the car's beauty. Open-air car #22 also received a completely new look, both inside and out, to closely resemble the rest of our open-air cars. This car carried many passengers on the LGSR in 2022. Private car #30 was updated with a fresh coat of paint as well.

One giant leap we made was the relocation of the paint shop to its new home in West Cressona. The shop is well-suited for our talented department to perform work year-round no matter the weather. That brings me to our final proud moment of 2022, car #5, the ex-Milwaukee Superdome! We had been working on car #5 on and off all year. We replaced seven windows and resealed the rest, along with performing a total facelift inside and out. It truly is a wonderful car and is ready to hit the main line at its new home on RBMN.

The overall success of the 2022 season can be attributed to the loyalty and dedication of all Reading and Northern Railroad employees. Collectively, the entire railroad made all trips possible for our customers, families, friends, and railfans! ♦



Sky Top Explorer car 5 is the third full dome to be put into service after nearly a year of work.

2022 Year in Review

Human Resources: Enhancements for Employees

BY: KYLE BARRELL, AVP OF HUMAN RESOURCES;
JACK MCCOY, DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES; & SABINE FIDLER HUMAN RESOURCES ASSISTANT

If you were a RBMN employee in 2022, it was a good year. Andy and his family have always touted the family-oriented environment that is RBMN, but this year took the cake. The year 2022 was filled with coal bonuses, the addition of company holidays, raises, company events, and additional vacation time. Many companies don't see this type of activity over ten years, let alone all of it happening in the same year.

The Muller Family's generosity was on full display in 2022. The company added two additional company holidays to bring the total to ten for 2023 and beyond. In addition, the waiting period for paid time off and paid holidays for newer employees was eliminated to allow for earned PTO sooner which was appreciated by our newer employees.

RBMN employees saw a total of four coal bonuses in 2022, which was the first time since 2017 that we reached that number. The railroad's coal business peaked for various economic reasons and the employees reaped the benefits of that peak.

RBMN had many reasons to party in 2022. The company kicked off its events with the Spring Soiree in April, the company picnic in July, and the Fall Fling rounding out the festivities in November. The soiree was held at the fire company in Landingville with a highlight

being transportation provide by RBMN out of Reading Outer Station and Port Clinton, with curbside drop-off right at the fire company. The company picnic was held at Knoebels as it has been in the years past to allow family and friends to enjoy the food, rides, and summer weather. RBMN outdid itself with the Fall Fling. The event took place at the newly acquired facilities of the former KME plant in Nesquehoning. Again, transportation was provided by RBMN, but this time out of Penobscot and Port Clinton, and people were dropped off at the doorstep of the new campus. Unbeknownst to RBMN employees, the crop of cool raffle prizes and giveaways took a massive leap forward at a party not soon to be forgotten. The list of prizes included travel vouchers, additional days of paid time off, a box of cash and, wait for it...a brand-new car! What an amazing gift to unsuspecting employees! A very deserving member of our mechanical department was the lucky recipient of the new set of wheels.

We are unsure of what Andy will do next to show his appreciation for his hard-working employees, but he always keeps us guessing and on the edge of our seats. We can't thank Andy enough for treating us in a manner that is unsurpassed, but it makes coming to work fun and motivating. ♦

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

BY: SABINE FIDLER, HUMAN RESOURCES ASSISTANT



It is my privilege to introduce William Keim, HVAC Technician, as our Winter 2023, "Spotlight Employee". William has been with the Reading and Northern Railroad since April 2017.

Prior to his employment at RBMN, Bill worked at Berkshire Mechanical doing commercial and industrial HVAC for seven years. He also worked at Petro/D. J. Witman as a residential HVAC Technician. In addition, Bill taught HVAC classes at BCTC for fifteen years.

Bill was born in Reading and raised in Temple, eventually graduating from Muhlenberg Township High School. He went to RACC for accounting but says, "I realized God's gift to me was using my hands!"

Bill has been married to his beautiful wife, Louise, for 41 years. Louise is a retired schoolteacher from Hamburg. The Keims were blessed with one daughter, Mallory, who graduated from Hamburg Area School District and Kutztown University and is now teaching at Oley Valley Middle School. Bill says, "All three of us were blessed to be teachers." The Keims had two Siamese cats named Mikita and Tommy for over forty years but do not have any pets now.

In his spare time, Bill collects trains, works on his train layout, plays pickleball, and travels with his wife in their motorhome.

In closing, Bill says his lifelong love for trains is the main reason his job at RBMN is a lifelong dream come true!

Bill was chosen to receive this honor by his Supervisor, Steven "Chut" Balthaser. Chut says, "Bill Keim has added a new dimension as to what our company can do. With his many years in the HVAC field, RBMN now does everything in-house. He has taken on every challenge and handled them with a high professional standard. Thank you, Bill, it has been my pleasure to nominate you."

As spotlight employee, Bill will receive a gift card for \$100 to the restaurant of his choice, Texas Roadhouse. ♦

Congrats William!



In Memoriam Bob Dash

The Passenger Department recently lost a beloved coworker in Bob Dash. Bob began working for the Passenger Department on December 8, 1988, and on October 31, 2016, Bob retired from his role as a Car Attendant.

Matt Fisher, Passenger Department General Manager, remembers, "Bob Dash was one of the friendliest people I ever met at the railroad. He was always very soft-spoken and loved working for the Blue Mountain & Reading, and later the RBMN and LGSR. Although many current employees did not know Bob, many of us still can remember enjoying time with him."

Lisa Matz, Passenger Reservation Specialist, recalls, "Bob Dash was a jovial person who worked as a car host in the Passenger Department. He was hired back in 1988 and retired a couple of years ago. He could be always counted on to keep our passengers entertained."

Russ Scianna, Jr., Passenger Office Manager said, "Bob was one of the first guys to welcome me aboard here when I started working as a car attendant back in 2003. My first-ever job assignment was the RBMN 20th Anniversary Open House and we worked together on the short excursion trains that the railroad was featuring as part of the festivities. He helped show me how the job was done. I will remember him with great fondness."

Bob will be greatly missed by all who had the pleasure of working with him. The railroad extends its deepest sympathy and comfort to his family in this difficult time. ♦

WELCOME ABOARD

New Employees!



Michael Lojewski

Michael Lojewski was recently hired as a Trackman within our Maintenance of Way Department. He attended Pittstown Area High School. Prior to working at RBMNR, Michael was an Inventory Supervisor at Lennox Ind. for three and a half years. Michael became an Eagle Scout in 2018 and took first place in a forklift rodeo two years in a row.



Kelsey Buechle

Kelsey Buechle was recently hired as an Animal Caretaker/Vet Tech at MLR. She attended Chase County High School in Imperial, NE, and Fort Hays State University in Hays, KS. Prior to working at MLR, Kelsey was a Vet Tech/Ranch Hand at Sandhills Animal Health Center in Ainsworth, NE, and Buechle Ranch in Johnstown, NE, for two years. Kelsey says, "I graduated with a degree in Ag Business, then worked as a Vet Tech before working as a team roping producer, traveling around to different states helping put on team ropings. I then moved home to Wallace, NE, where I worked in processing cattle at a feed yard before moving to Ainsworth. My husband and I just got married so we are just enjoying married life together with our three dogs Snuff, Luke, and Willa. Kelsey says she loves to spend time going to team ropings and spending time with family.



Kathleen Gipe

Kathleen Gipe was recently hired as a Real Estate Office Assistant within our Real Estate Department. She attended Pottsville Area High School and Central Pennsylvania College. Prior to working at RBMNR, Kathleen was a TFC Program Coordinator at Merakey for thirteen years.



Jagger Gradwell

Jagger Gradwell was recently hired as a Conductor within our Operations Department. He attended Blue Mountain High School.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

FEB. 1.....EDWARD COLL	MAR. 3.....DAN PUKSAR	APR. 2.....SAMUEL HOLLOCK
FEB. 2.....SILAS BAUSER	MAR. 3.....DARNELL YOUNG	APR. 3.....DAREN GESCHWINDT
FEB. 3.....ANDREA COLLER	MAR. 3.....JOSEPH ZIMMERMAN	APR. 3.....DEVIN OSWALD
FEB. 4.....MATTHEW KUNKLE	MAR. 14.....JAMES GARRAWAY	APR. 3.....DANIEL BOYLE
FEB. 5.....MICHAEL PAINTER	MAR. 14.....EDWARD MOUL	APR. 3.....KELSEY BUECHLE
FEB. 7.....JOHN SMOLCZYNSKI, SR.	MAR. 15.....ROBERT KEMPES	APR. 5.....ADAM C. STUMP
FEB. 8.....JAMES CERULLI	MAR. 16.....HUDSON HENRY	APR. 7.....JARED COLLER
FEB. 9.....JAMES COOK	MAR. 17.....DERRICK KEENER	APR. 9.....MIKEAL GEOGHEGAN
FEB. 9.....AMY MILLER	MAR. 17.....JACK MCCOY	APR. 11.....WILLIAM YANOSHIK
FEB. 11.....MICHAEL KOHL	MAR. 18.....MARK HARRIS, JR	APR. 12.....BRADLEY AUMAN
FEB. 12.....BENJAMIN COLE	MAR. 19.....MARY CULP	APR. 12.....AARON CASSEL
FEB. 13.....PHILLIP SCHAEFFER	MAR. 19.....TARA GOWRIE	APR. 12.....ANTHONY DEBELLIS
FEB. 17.....DAVID EVELY	MAR. 20.....NATHAN BISSEY	APR. 14.....GENE BUECHLE
FEB. 19.....TIMOTHY BILLET	MAR. 20.....MATTHEW MIZIKOSKI	APR. 15.....JOSEPH BROWN
FEB. 21.....KENNETH MILLER	MAR. 22.....RICHARD BERNHARDT	APR. 16.....JEFFREY BAVITZ
FEB. 22.....TYLER GLASS	MAR. 23.....WALTER GREUSEL	APR. 16.....JARRED STROHL
FEB. 24.....JONATHAN BARKET	MAR. 24.....ENOS BLEILER	APR. 18.....EDWARD PHILBIN
FEB. 26.....TAYLOR HAUPT	MAR. 24.....RYAN RUPPRECHT	APR. 19.....AARON MULLER
FEB. 26.....CAROL MULLER	MAR. 25.....SHELLEY HALL	APR. 19.....MARK SCHMEHL
FEB. 28.....STEPHEN GILBERT	MAR. 27.....WILLIAM KEIM	APR. 20.....BOYD LENICH
FEB. 29.....JOHN SMOLCZYNSKI, JR.	MAR. 29.....ELIZABETH NEIFERT	APR. 21.....GREGORY ZELINSKY
MAR. 1.....MATTHEW FREDMONSKI	MAR. 29.....BRANDON WAGNER	APR. 21.....KATHLEEN GIPE
MAR. 2.....STEVE BALTHASER	MAR. 30.....ROBERT SIKORSKY	APR. 22.....ADAM BOAK
MAR. 3.....MEGHAN FAUST	MAR. 31.....JOLENE BUSER	

♥ Rescued, Adopted, Loved ♥

Mary Culp, Assistant Office Manager-Passenger Department, recently adopted three kitties – Lucky Charm, Princess Butterscotch Fancypants, and Baby Rocky. They join their other furry siblings... Mimi and Maggie. Mary adopted Mimi in January 2022. Maggie was adopted thirteen years ago from Animal House in Mechanicsburg, PA. Mary says, "It's like a 3-ring circus at my house!"



Baby Rocky



Lucky Charm



Princess Butterscotch Fancypants



Mimi & Maggie

RBMN Anniversaries

20 YEARS



NOVEMBER 26, 2002
RYAN LAMM
ENGINEER - OPERATIONS

15 YEARS



JANUARY 21, 2008
STEVEN BALTHASER
VICE PRESIDENT - FACILITIES

10 YEARS



JANUARY 7, 2013
ZACHARY SIMPSON
DIRECTOR - MAINTENANCE OF WAY

5 YEARS

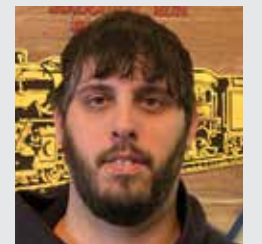


JANUARY 29, 2018
MATTHEW MCGINNIS
MACHINE OPERATOR - MAINTENANCE OF WAY

3 YEARS



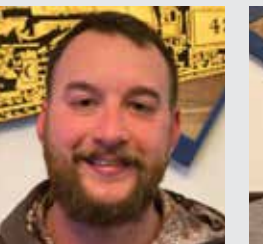
NOVEMBER 7, 2019
JEFFREY JONES
MASCOT - PASSENGER



NOVEMBER 25, 2019
MARK HARRIS
CARMAN - MECHANICAL



NOVEMBER 25, 2019
DEVIN OSWALD
CARMAN - MECHANICAL



DECEMBER 9, 2019
BENJAMIN LEONTI
CAR SHOP SUPERVISOR - MECHANICAL

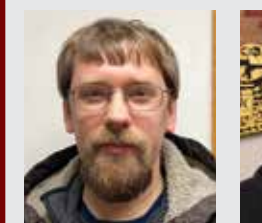


JANUARY 13, 2020
EVAN KERR
CONDUCTOR/DISPATCHER - OPERATIONS



JANUARY 29, 2020
MEG PURSEL
PAINT DEPARTMENT & OCS CAR MANAGER

1 YEAR



DECEMBER 10, 2021
MARK CAIN
ELECTROMECHANICAL
LOCOMOTIVE TECH. - MECH.



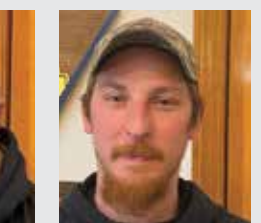
JANUARY 3, 2022
ALEX SCUBELEK III
BACKHOE OPERATOR - MAINTENANCE OF WAY



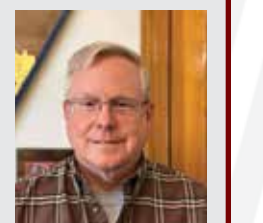
JANUARY 3, 2022
CHARLES MINER
VP - SOFTWARE ENGINEERING



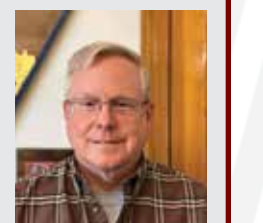
JANUARY 5, 2022
MARY SYNNOTT
CUSTOMER SERVICE
MANAGER - TRAFFIC



JANUARY 10, 2022
BENJAMIN BIBIK
PRINCIPAL SOFTWARE
ENGINEER



JANUARY 24, 2022
JARRED STROHL
PAINT & RESTORATION
TECHNICIAN - PAINT



JANUARY 24, 2022
RUSSELL SHURTLEFF
PASSENGER ENGINEER - PASSENGER



Sam Hollock and Eddie Philbin are on train PICW-14 "The Crestwood Drill". Sam is moving cars in the tablet that Conductors use to document when and where they place cars throughout the RBMN system.



Carter Jones on the 2017. He's running one of the newest engines purchased from Norfolk Southern.



Eric Peters talks safety with Eugene Boyle and Carter Jones at Port Carbon.



Gavin Seip and Chris Peters seen doing yard work at Port Clinton.



Saturday YJNR crew Alvin Rineer, Nick Suruskie and Amber Peiffer taking a break while switching to allow the Santa Train through the yard.



Engineer Jeff Bavitz switching customer in Hazleton



Gene Boyle with a grin after finishing up a special shift.



Ryan Lamm putting the WHFF train together after a long day of customer work.



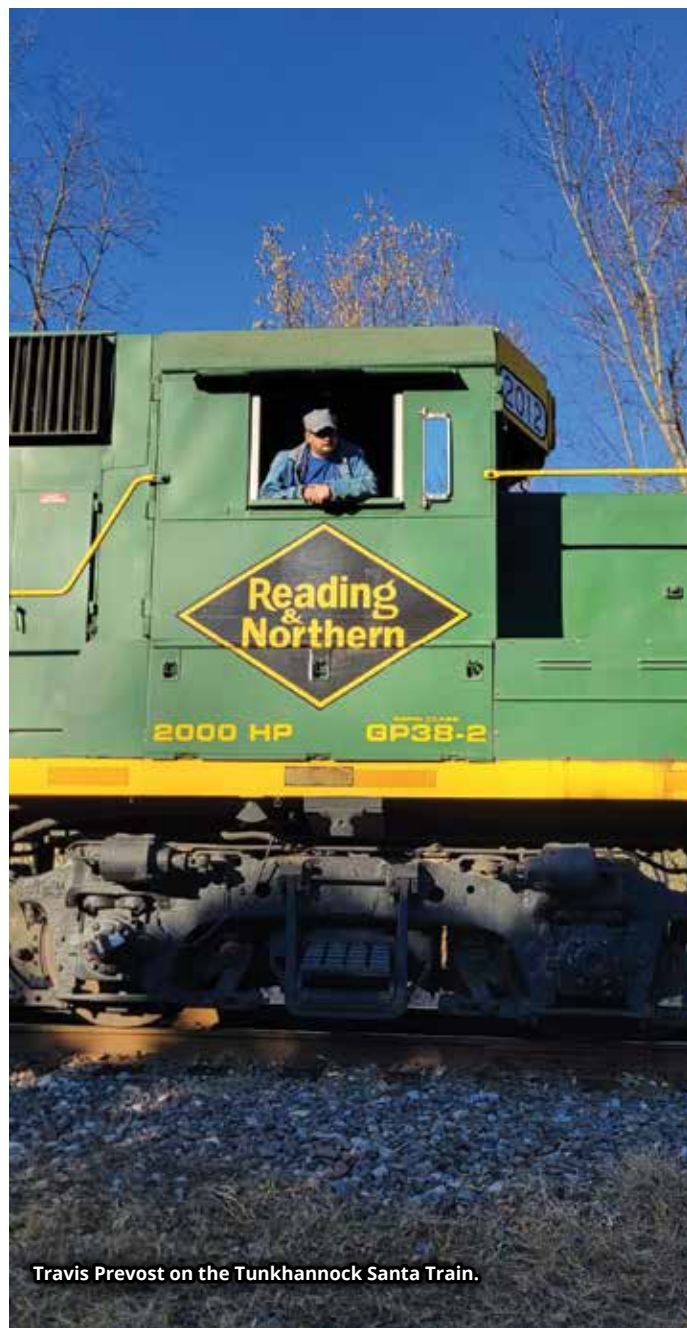
PIME and YJPI combining trains at Pittston Yard. Travis Prevost, Mike Voorhees, Mike Bischak, Erik Ostroskie.



James Cook working as a Conductor switching cars out at Locust Summit.



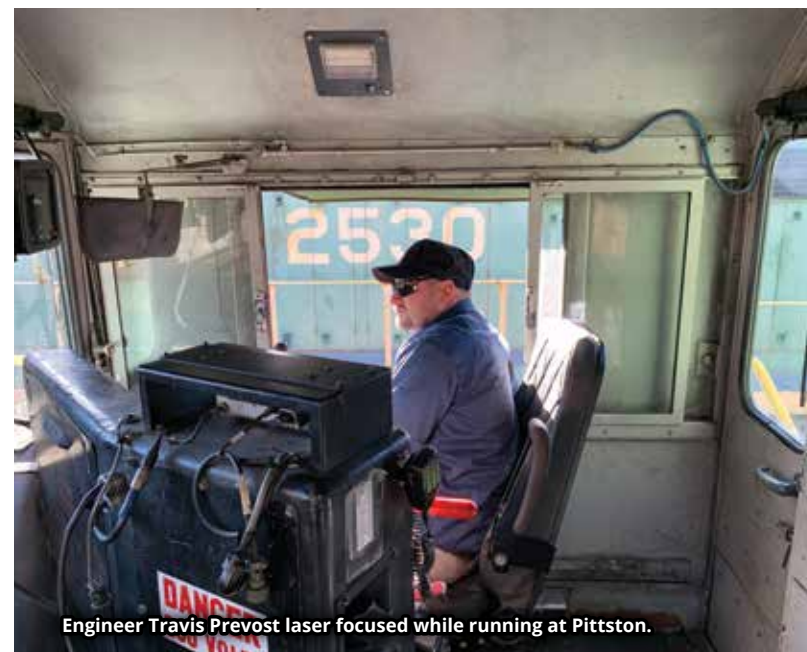
Conductor Andrew Zehner on train LNRX rides the caboose through Tamaqua Yard. They had just loaded the train with export coal bound for Fairless and are seen heading down into the yard to set up for a pick up by Fast Freight train, WHFF.



Travis Prevost on the Tunkhannock Santa Train.



Tom Stemko from the car shop removes his blue locks and flags so Conductor Nick Suruskie can begin switching cars at the Port Clinton Car Shop.



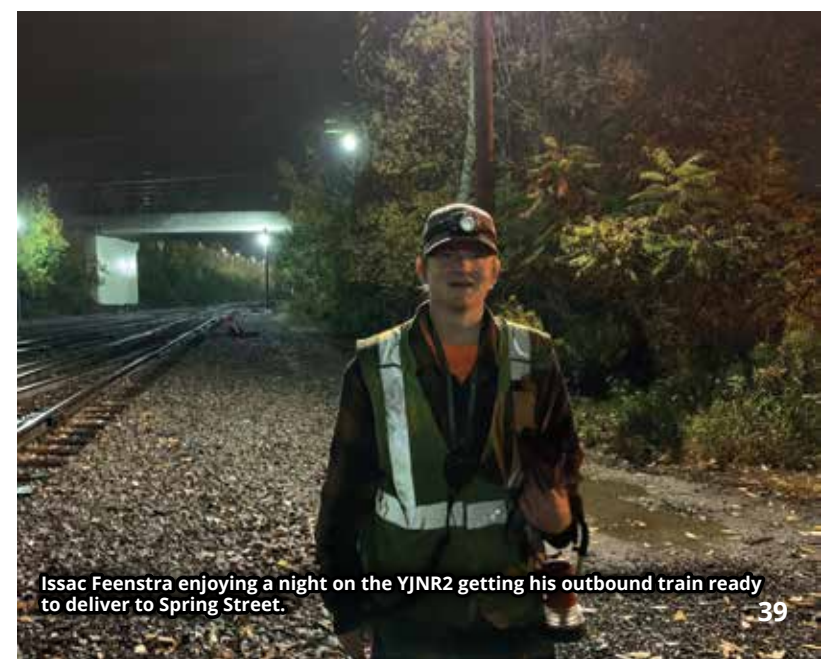
Engineer Travis Prevost laser focused while running at Pittston.



Rare glimpse of Ron Papiercavich conducting.



The WHFF and NRFF late night at North Reading. (Darren Spare, Hudson Henry, Tony Weachock)



Issac Feenstra enjoying a night on the VJNR2 getting his outbound train ready to deliver to Spring Street.

Red Creek Wildlife

A New Year, A New Beginning

BY: PEGGY HENTZ, PRESIDENT/EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF RED CREEK WILDLIFE

On December 5th, 2022, every animal rescue's worst nightmare became a reality for Red Creek Wildlife Center. As our rehabilitators were driving to the clinic to begin their day, emergency fire departments were already responding to a structure fire on the property. By the time staff arrived, our clinic building was completely engulfed in flames. The entire building and all of its contents were lost, including forty-one animals that were housed inside.

The emotional impact was immediate and overwhelming. We watched helplessly as the fire crews attempted to gain control of the fire. Half of the animals inside the building were residents that had been under our care for decades. Others were patients that were making leaps and bounds in the rehabilitation process. The loss of one life in our care, let alone 41, is a tragedy. Everyone at Red Creek has been touched by this and is grieving.

I often refer to Red Creek's staff, volunteers, and supporters as "the Red Creek Family." That day showed the truth in that name as volunteers and staff held each other up emotionally, and supporters came to Red Creek to offer help.

And their dedication to the wildlife didn't stop. When the first staff arrived on the scene, as the fire raged, they noticed the smoke from the fire heading up the hill beside the clinic. Worried about the bald eagles recovering in the cages up the hill and being exposed to the possibly toxic smoke, they got the keys. They grabbed each bird, carrying them across the road to the other building we used primarily for storage.

These eagles are two of the twelve patients and fourteen residents in outdoor enclosures untouched by the fire. These animals still needed our care, but our freezers and food were gone. A group of Pennsylvania wildlife rehabilitators organized a food transport and a freezer arrived donated by Fresh Start Pet Rescue. We had what we needed to care for the animals that remained for the next few days.

By the afternoon, the fire trucks and the press had left. Volunteers from Red Creek and other rehab centers worked on restocking donated emergency supplies and prepping food for the outdoor animals. A group of us stood outside the building across the road and talked. Suddenly the door opened and out walked Greg Nason and Kaley Egan, welding gloves on, holding the two bald eagles against them, and returning them to their enclosures on the hill. The group was silent. Nothing needed to be said. It was symbolic. Red Creek had and still has its mission to help injured and orphaned wildlife and give every animal a second chance.

The fire cost us most of our equipment and supplies. We are slowly rebuilding our stock of needed items and setting up animal housing in my former house across the street. It will serve as a temporary clinic until a new clinic building is built this spring.

We are currently accepting animals on a case-by-case basis, depending on the equipment and supplies we have on hand. By April, we hope to fully open for all species of Pennsylvania wildlife.

That tragic day was caused by an electrical power strip. The power strip wasn't old or overloaded. It was a better-quality one purchased in the spring. It has since become my personal mission to warn everyone who will listen about the dangers of these convenient but dangerous appliances.



Peggy Hentz with Phoenix the Peregrine Falcon. Phoenix had been a Red Creek ambassador visiting schools for eighteen years.

At Red Creek, we used power strips for heating pads and lights to keep the animals warm. When not in use, each was unplugged and put away. I have learned that power strips used in this manner weaken over time. Each time a plug is inserted and removed, the metal strips inside loosen and can eventually cause heat resistance to form from an incomplete connection. Where I had thought that power strips were an added level of protection from power surges and overheating, in reality, they are an additional risk.

Over the past month, many good things have happened. The outpouring of love from the public has been extraordinary. Donations and offers of services began arriving on the day of the tragedy, and they are still coming in. We will rebuild. Red Creek will continue and will be stronger for it. If we ever doubted we could handle something so terrible, we doubt no more. The year 2023 will be a new beginning full of challenges and transitions. I am ever thankful that the Blue Mountain Reading and Northern Railroad is ever willing to support us and participate in that journey. ♦

Congratulations!

ON YOUR NEW ARRIVAL



We would like to congratulate Corey Hamm, Thermite Welder, and his wife, Shellie, on the birth of their second child. Walker was born on November 22nd at 7:30 a.m. He weighed 8 lbs. and was 20" long. Walker joins his big brother, Jace, and now they are a family of four. Welcome to the RBMN family, Walker!



Congratulations go out to Steve Werley, Director of Fleet Management, and his wife, Kate, on the birth of their 2nd child. John Steven Werley was born on October 31, 2022. He weighed 8 lbs., 5 ozs. and was 22" long. Welcome to the Reading and Northern family, John!

Reading & Northern's Family Recipes

Salmon Patties

Sabine Fidler, HR Assistant, said this recipe has become a family favorite. "The salmon patties are moist, flavorful, and nutritious. The original recipe calls for canned salmon, but we use wild-caught salmon because the nutritional benefits are far superior to canned or farmed salmon."

Ingredients

- 1 lb. wild-caught salmon filet
- 1½ tbsp. finely chopped onion
- 2 pastured eggs
- 3 tbsp. sour cream
- ½ cup panko breadcrumbs
- ½ tsp. salt
- ¼ tsp. pepper
- Old Bay seasoning & parsley to taste
- Avocado oil for frying

Directions

Bake salmon on a foil-lined baking sheet until almost done. Remove from skin and flake in a mixing bowl. Add remaining ingredients. Divide into 8 patties. Coat the frying pan with a thin layer of oil. Fry until golden brown on both sides. Enjoy!

Note: These patties freeze well so I usually make 4 batches at a time.

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

Wellness Corner

BY: MEGHAN FAUST, RECEPTIONIST

Fight the Inflation

With inflation at an all-time high and everyone feeling the burden on their finances lately, we could all use a few tips and tricks to help ease the pain of the current economic crisis. Sometimes it can be hard to find easy ways to save money and spend less on everyday essentials when we have seen everything from food to gas, cars to utilities increase in price over the last year. Now, more than ever, we need to be more conscious of our spending.

According to the USDA, grocery prices have gone up 10 percent in the last year. That is the largest annual rise in 40 years. When it comes to buying food and dining out, we can go overboard quickly and spend more than what our budget allows. The average household of two adults and two children, spend an average of \$1,040-1,200 each month just on groceries! There are several ways to save money at the grocery store or when eating at a restaurant.

1. Try using an app to place your grocery order. This keeps you from impulse purchases that you would otherwise see while you walk around the store or standing at the register to checkout.
2. If you would rather go inside to do your shopping, be sure to set a budget before you leave the house and go with a grocery list in hand. Going shopping without young kids also helps keep the grocery bill down since children tend to ask for items they wouldn't otherwise see.
3. Set up a weekly meal plan and base it around food that is on sale at your local grocery stores.
4. Whenever you catch sales on items that can be stored for long periods of time, buy in bulk. Paper products can be expensive, but if you buy them on sale in bulk, the price per item significantly drops. Same is true for meat. Just be sure to portion the meat out into airtight storage and place in your freezer.
5. Shop store brand/generic instead of name brand items. Typically, the store brand has the same quality without the fancy marketing. Those elaborate logos usually only add more dollar signs to your bill.
6. Cook from your pantry at least one night a week. Americans throw away about 30-40 percent of their food supply because it sits in their pantry or refrigerator until it is no longer edible. Dedicate one night every week to cooking food entirely from your pantry, freezer, and/or refrigerator.
7. Save even more with cash-back apps like Ibotta, Fetch Rewards, and Coupons.com. When using these apps to purchase groceries, you accumulate points toward gift cards to retailers such as Target, Walmart, and Amazon.
8. Sometimes ordering online actually pays off. Delivery costs can add up but if you use sites like CouponFollow.com, you can find some great deals that more than make up for those pesky fees, like \$10 off your first delivery of \$20 at Instacart, or 15 percent off a Kroger grocery shipment.
9. If you plan on dining out, ask for a to-go box before your meal arrives. When your meal comes, immediately put half of it in the box. That way, you get two meals for the price of one. If you choose not to take half of it home with you, you can always split a meal with someone since portions are extremely large in the U.S.
10. Sign up for coupons and/or birthday discounts. If you don't want your inbox flooded with discount emails that you have to sift through, create a separate account specifically for those coupons.
11. Some restaurants offer free meals to kids (ages 12 and under) certain nights of the week. Red Robin, for instance, offers a free kid's meal with an adult entrée purchase on the first Wednesday of every month.

Ever since 2020, gas prices have steadily increased and even though they are slowly dropping again, the price per gallon is still higher than they have been since 2014. With that, there are a few tips you can use to help save money on your fuel budget. First, be sure to fill up early in the morning, preferably on a Wednesday. Prices typically rise on Thursday in anticipation of the weekend and gas station owners tend to increase prices after 9 A.M. or so. Take advantage of loyalty programs that many gas stations and grocery stores offer. For example, Sheetz gives you 3 cents off per gallon with their loyalty card and grocery stores like Giant and Redner's offer gas rewards by earning points on groceries or special promotions. Lastly, try using apps such as GasBuddy to find the best gas prices on your route and save you up to 25 cents per gallon by using the free fuel card. Also try Upside or Checkout 51 to earn cash back at gas stations, restaurants, and grocery stores.



If you are worried about paying your utilities in the coming months, please take note to some of the easy ways you can save money and lower your energy bills.

1. Switch to energy-efficient light bulbs and turn them off when they are not currently in use. Bonus: those bulbs are also better for the environment!
2. Unplug any unused electronics, including televisions, laptops/desktop computers, gaming systems, or tablets. Unused electricity is called "vampire electricity" and it can accumulate to 10 percent of your electricity bill.
3. Install a programmable thermostat and turn the temperature down 7 to 10 degrees from its normal setting when you're not at home. This can save as much as 10 percent a year on your energy bill.
4. It takes a lot of electricity or gas to heat an entire oven so, if available and whenever possible, use a toaster oven or air fryer instead of turning on the oven.
5. Seal air leaks around doors and windows with caulk or weatherstripping. This will keep the heat in your house during the winter and cool air in during the summer months.
6. Do not rinse your dishes before loading them in the dishwasher and be sure the dishwasher is full before running it. Rinsing the dishes first just wastes water since modern dishwashers work better on dirty dishes anyway.
7. Wash your clothes in the coldest water the fabric will allow. Approximately 90 percent of the washer's energy-consumption comes from heating the water. Also, try air drying your clothes as much as possible.

Even though each of these tips seems small and insignificant, the savings really do add up and can help lower your bills and save you money. If you'd like to learn more money-saving, debt-reducing tricks, Dave Ramsey has some incredible, free online resources, including Baby Steps, EveryDollar, and the Debt Snowball Calculator. His methods have helped more than 10 million people get out of debt and stay debt-free through his Financial Peace University.



For more information, visit:

www.aarp.org/money/budgeting-saving/info-2022/99-great-ways-to-save
www.ramseysolutions.com/budgeting/save-money-on-restaurants
www.ramseysolutions.com/budgeting/the-secret-to-saving-money
www.nerdwallet.com/article/finance/gas-apps
www.allstate.com/resources/home-insurance/how-to-save-on-utilities
<https://re-volv.org/blog-center/article/save-on-your-energy-bill>

**Reading Blue Mountain &
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Kevin Boyko pictured in front of his new set of wheels at the November 2022 Fall Fling!