



NEWS

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Timber Rock Railroad lifts traffic embargo on Conroe Subdivision

PITTSBURG, KANSAS – September 27, 2005 – The Timber Rock Railroad (TIBR) has lifted the embargo issued on all traffic moving on the Conroe Subdivision, which includes the areas between Silsbee and Dobbin, TX. The embargo was a result of damage from Hurricane Rita, which struck the area after 2 a.m. CST Saturday, September 24. The Timber Rock Railroad is a wholly owned subsidiary of Watco Companies, Inc. (Watco)

The hurricane hit the TIBR main line, which runs from Silsbee, TX north to Tenaha, TX west to Dobbin, TX and east to DeRidder, LA.

Pat LaCaze, TIBR General Manager, said though other portions of the track are still covered with debris, the Conroe Subdivision is ready for service.

“We have worked since Sunday to clear trees and other debris from the track in an effort to restore service to our customers,” he said. “It has been a slow process because of the general condition of this region, but we’re making progress.”

Though the TIBR is able to open the Conroe Subdivision for service, there appears to be moderate to severe damage to other portions of the railroad. The Beaumont Subdivision, including areas between Silsbee and Beaumont, TX is expected to be open for service late tomorrow. However, the San Augustine Subdivision, including areas between Silsbee and Tenaha, TX and the DeRidder Subdivision, including areas between Kirbyville, TX and DeRidder, LA are expected to resume service over the weekend or

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early next week. These two subdivisions sustained the most damage and crews are still trying to access them for evaluation.

“We are still in the early stages of evaluating damage to the Timber Rock and will be continuing the embargo on a day-to-day basis,” said Ed McKechnie, Chief Commercial Officer. “Our crews will continue to evaluate areas and we will restore service as quickly and safely as possible. Our primary efforts still remain to support our employees who were affected by the hurricane and work to get the railroad back up and running.”

Watco Companies, Inc. (Watco), a Pittsburg, Kansas, based company, operates the Timber Rock Railroad and 13 other short line railroads in 13 states. In addition to the TIBR, Watco operates the Appalachian and Ohio, Eastern Idaho, Great Northwest, Kansas and Oklahoma, Kaw River, Louisiana Southern, Mission Mountain, Mississippi Southern, Palouse River and Coulee City, Pennsylvania Southwestern, South Kansas and Oklahoma, Stillwater Central and Yellowstone Valley Railroads. During the next 45 days, Watco will take over operations of the Arkansas Southern and Alabama Southern Railroads. Watco also operates industrial switching locations and mechanical and locomotive shops across the United States. More information about Watco can be found on their website at www.watcocompanies.com

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