



NEWS

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Timber Rock Railroad back in service after embargo lifted from DeRidder Subdivision

PITTSBURG, KANSAS – October 3, 2005 – The Timber Rock Railroad (TIBR) has lifted the embargo issued on all traffic moving on the DeRidder Subdivision. Lifting this embargo results in the TIBR being able to provide full service on the entire railroad. Last week, the embargo was lifted on the Conroe, Beaumont and San Augustine Subdivisions.

The TIBR 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 the railroad is open in all locations.

“All interchanges are in full service and we are now able to serve all of our customers on the line,” he said. “It has been a challenging time, but our crews have worked very hard to complete the required work to get us to the point we are today.”

Crews worked to remove debris such as trees and power lines since Hurricane Rita hit the area. Much of the railroad was covered with trees more than 50 feet tall.

Although the railroad is cleared of debris and able to offer services again, power is still unavailable. This results in railroad crossings not having use of safety crossing arms and lights.

“Operations are slow right now because of the lack of electrical power,” LaCaze

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said. “We are using additional safety precautions such as flagging crossings since the usual safety equipment is not working. We are asking residents be extra careful at railroad crossings in the area.”

Terry Towner, Watco President and COO, traveled to affected areas in Texas and Louisiana last week and was inspired by TIBR employees who suffered losses, but continued to work.

“The devastation we witnessed from the hurricane was tremendous and amazing,” he said. “But even more amazing are the many great people who work for the Timber Rock and Watco. Even though all of them experienced some level of loss and destruction to their property and possessions, all of them were eager to get back to work and serve our customers.”

An estimated 80 percent of TIBR customers are still without power. It is not known when power will be restored. Those who do have limited power are being supplied by generators.

TIBR Customer Service agents continue to maintain contact with customers via e-mail or phone. As soon as customers regain power and request rail service, the TIBR will fulfill those requests as quickly as possible.

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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