

the Dispatch

The newsletter for Watco Companies, Inc. and Watco Transportation Services, Inc.

February 2010, Volume 11, Issue 2

Watco's Biggest Losers win big

by Tracie VanBecelaere
Managing Editor

Typically no one wants to be called a loser. However, six months ago 242 members of the Watco Team set out to be not only *A* loser, but the biggest loser of all. Motivated by the benefits of better health and some extra cash, Watco Team members from across the United States hopped on their scales and treadmills and focused on their goal. In the end there were three who could claim to be winners of Watco's Biggest Loser Contest.

Participants weighed in on the first and last day of the contest and winners were determined by the percentage of body weight that they had lost. Watco's mechanical services team is apparently made up of some very motivated people, as all three winners are on the mechanical team.

Sally Kissell, IT analyst from Hollidaysburg, Pa. claimed the title of Biggest Loser by losing 29.62% of her weight. For her efforts she earned \$1,500. Mike Berkheimer, a welder also from Hollidaysburg, was the second place winner and won \$1,000 for his loss of 27.84% of his total weight. The third place winner, William Norris, mechanical switchman from Neodesha, Kan. lost 20.09% of his weight and was rewarded with \$500.

Many people call the Hollidaysburg, Pa., mechanical location and ask for Sally Kissell when they need help with their computers. But to win first place in Watco's Biggest Loser contest Sally was the one who received help.

"My lunch buddies were really great about talking me out of eating certain foods in my moments of weakness," said Kissell. "They were a good support system to have."

Kissell, the now size-four mom-of-four, said her path to weight loss was following common sense. She ate low-fat foods and tried to restrict her diet to 1,000 calories per day. Like everyone else these days, eating out is a common habit, but Kissell relied on the tools available that allow you to make better choices when you do eat out.

Kissell said, "I would go online and look at the calorie count of the foods at the restaurants we went to and plan ahead. I also always asked for a to-go box; restaurants always give you too much food."

"Another thing I did was cut out most of the fast food. There's a Subway close to work so I would go there for lunches. I could be their new poster child," said Kissell. "I ate the six-inch hoagie sandwich with no cheese or sauces on it and everyone would laugh at me because I'd take the top bun off."

In addition to her low-fat diet, Kissell also hit the roads and made walking a part of her daily routine. "I tried to walk at least two miles, six days a week. I also lifted weights to tone up and did one hour of cardio/aerobic activity five days a week."

One of the biggest benefits of winning the contest is that she doesn't have to take blood pressure medicine anymore. "That was really one of my main goals," said Kissell. "I wanted to lose weight but I hoped the result (Continued on page 4)



Sally Kissell, IT programming analyst, Hollidaysburg, Pa.
Lost 29.62% of her body fat.



Mike Berkheimer, welder, Hollidaysburg, Pa.
Lost 27.84% of his body fat.



William Norris, switchman, Neodesha, Kan.
Lost 20.09% of his body fat.

There's no place like dome

by *Tracie VanBecelaere*
Managing Editor

Unique is the best description for Watco's mechanical shop in Wood River, Ill. What looks like a giant golf ball stuck halfway into the ground is actually one of two geodesic domes designed by R. Buckminster Fuller to serve as roundhouses for the Union Tank Car Co. The dome was the first industrial use of Fuller's design and the prefabricated, lightweight structure was chosen because of its versatility and the fact that it could be erected almost anywhere with ordinary labor.

The first and larger dome was built near Baton Rouge, La., in 1958 and was 384 feet in diameter and 125 feet high. It was demolished in November of 2007 leaving the Wood River dome as a testimony to the futuristic design skills of Fuller. Fuller himself helped supervise the erection of the Wood River dome which became fully operational as a Union Tank Car Co. car shop in 1964. St. Louis Refrigerator Car Company, an Anheiser Busch Company, purchased the dome in 1975 and in 1999 it came under the ownership of Millennium Rail, which was acquired by Watco in 2007.

The Wood River dome, built in 1961, is 354 feet in diameter and is 120 feet tall - tall enough to be

required to display aircraft lights. It can hold three 80-foot tri-level autoracks end-to-end with room to spare. The building sits on 40 acres and is able to accommodate more than 300 railcars on-site. The dome itself houses 37 work tracks and a turn table to place the cars on the tracks. Twenty-seven of the work spots are reserved for repairs and the remaining tracks are used to keep painted cars out of the elements.

Steve Prokopich, plant manager, said of the facility, "The turn-table makes it possible to move cars in and out during the shift. If we have a light hour car we can move the car out when completed and put another car in to be repaired. The building itself is a challenge to heat and cool compared to a traditional car shop but the circular dome best suits the roundhouse design of our shop."

The historic aspect of both the dome and the roundhouse has brought many visitors to the Wood River shop. Cornelius Crane who is the president of the Buckminster Fuller Society visited the location last summer and made various comments about how much better the environment inside the dome was. According to Crane, Fuller had said that he designed the dome so that there 'wouldn't be any inside corners to trap thoughts.'

Many rail buffs also venture to the site

to take pictures of what is one of a few roundhouses still standing. There are fewer than 200 roundhouses still remaining and of that, only a third are still in railroad use. At once time there were more than 3,000 roundhouses throughout North America.

"We even had a television station come in and film



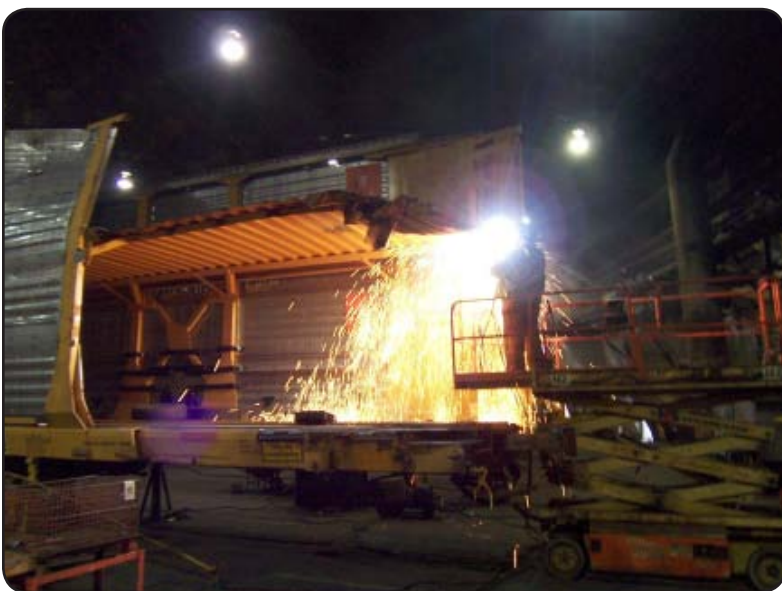
The Wood River, Ill., geodesic dome is the lone remaining roundhouse-in-a-dome left standing.

the dome for a documentary they were doing," said Prokopich.

An interesting connection exists between the two domes that served as roundhouses; Watco's mechanical services operates the Wood River location and Watco's Baton Rouge Southern Railroad now occupies the land where the first dome once stood.

The futuristic dome is probably the last place one would look to find a throwback into railroad history but roundhouses represented a innovative solution to effectively providing railcar repairs. Both the dome and the roundhouse reflect the forward thinking of their designers and have withstood the test of time.

Wood River carman, Wade Dallas, welds on the automobile rack that is representative of one of the railcar types repaired inside the dome.



Left: rows of cars wait to be repaired on the work tracks. Above: The car mover delivers a car to the work tracks to be repaired.

Mechanical services team exceeds safety goals

by Dr. Ron Withers, PhD, CSP, CMI, REM
Corporate Environmental Health & Safety Director
Watco Mechanical Services

The Watco Mechanical Services Team has made a significant impact to the overall safety success of the Watco in 2009. As a result of the overall safety, health and environmental contributions made by each shop, along with each individual employee, the Watco Team not only met the challenge but exceeded the company goal of finishing with 35 or less OSHA reportable injuries for the year. The Watco mechanical shops had only 32 total OSHA reportable incidents for the year – 3 less than forecast. Additionally, there were two plant locations that went a full year without a single OSHA reportable incident – in fact; they achieved Zero Injuries for 2009!

Those shops that achieved Zero Injuries were: the Council Bluffs, Iowa plant and the Council Bluffs



A member of the mechanical services team works to repair the top of a railcar.

shop in Iowa led by Mike McGinn. Mike wears “two hats” at Council Bluffs – he is both the Plant Manager and EHS Manager. The second injury free shop was the Hollidaysburg, Pa., shop.

McGinn was asked, what do you attribute the successes to for Council Bluffs going accident free in 2009? He said, “We had only one choice in 2009 and that was to improve our performance over 2008. Several factors come to mind that impacted our safety record.”

“I believe that the reduction in our workforce in February of 2009 played a role regarding our safety statistics. Our core group has many years experience and a good track record regarding personal injuries.”

McGuinn also indicated that “we took different approaches when discussing past injuries, we informed the team not only of the financial ramifications of an injury to Watco, but to their immediate family as well.”

Mike and his supervisors always emphasize the importance of leaving work in the same shape you arrived and plan the same for tomorrow.

“Efficiency testing played an important role as

it grew. When it was first implemented, many took it as personal hit against them. It was only after we reinforced the notion that it was a measuring tool for strengths and weaknesses that it was actually well received.”

Periodically the safety team will implement a little humor to start the gang meetings which seems to get more attention than just a supervisor reading from a document. In others words, they try to make it personable. The Irish in McGuinn allows him to make fun of himself, which in most cases, lacks rebuttal from the team as well.

McGuinn said, “I believe another contributing factor is sharing the incidents from other locations. We normally bring them to the attention of our employees for discussion or simple awareness. With that, we always try to leave the gang meeting with the key phrase, ‘Work Smart and Work Safe as there is no room for complacency today.’”

“Finally, we remind our team that this shop has had runs of 979 days and 859 days without a lost time incident. That’s an accomplishment they should be proud of especially in today’s industry.”

The Hollidaysburg, Pa., shop is led by Jeff Maier, plant manager, and his leader for the safety efforts is Ray Barroner, EHS coordinator. When Jeff was asked about the keys for the success enjoyed by his plant having no OSHA reportable injuries for 2009 he said, “The reason for our successes is that the folks we have are “top-notch” and they do not want to have an injury.”

Barroner has played a vital role in creating a safer workplace by spearheading the employee EHS training, workplace safety inspections and daily safety talks along with the supervisory team. Another thing which has been instrumental in their successes has been the use of the company tool for testing individual effectiveness by using our personal safety and quality evaluations through the Watco Efficiency Testing Program.

“We believe that safety is not only the “right thing to do for our employees” but makes us both profitable and puts us ahead of our business competition. We here at Hollidaysburg are shooting for a second year with the goal of having no OSHA reportable injuries,” said Maier.

All the employees at these shops are given a special “Hats Off for a Job Well Done!” But more importantly, together the Watco mechanical services team both met and exceeded the safety goals for the year of 2009.

Finally, all our team rallied in, working to remove and eradicate hazards and unsafe acts – all are to be congratulated for their efforts of sending each worker home at the end of the day – just like they arrived...Injury Free!

Rail, by Rail

Late in 2009 WTIS’s largest Customer at the Rockford, Ill., location, learned that the rail service to their Houston yard would require significant repairs. At the same time they were bidding on a project to supply 5,000 tons of rail for the Houston Metro expansion. Wanting to take advantage of the multiple needs in Houston, they wanted to find a storage solution for the rail until it was ready to be used. Their logistics team knew about Watco’s Greens Port Industrial Park (GPIP) and secured a competitive rate to have the rail shipped to GPIP, off-loaded and stored until such time as it will be required.

Now is where the problem lies. The quote specified that no more than five railcars should be received at a time to avoid demurrage charges from the delivering railroad and GPIP storage charges. Unfortunately, the steel mill shipped the railcars in blocks of 20.

Under the leadership of Dave Hambrick, the Houston area regional switching manager, and Paul Friedrichs, GPIP yardmaster, the GPIP switcher was able to provide additional track space for unloading and pulled the empty cars immediately, avoiding any additional demurrage charges to the Customer.

Friedrichs said, “It was really a simple matter of making sure that once the first cars were emptied we were there with a switch crew to move them out and re-spot loads so the transloaders could continue the unloading process. We also located an additional track they could unload from and that helped to move the cars out faster.”

“Since the cars had been shipped together we knew that they could incur demurrage so we worked out a plan with the transload schedule. We made sure there was a full spot when they came on duty and I kept an eye on their progress to know when they would be ready for a switch on either track. I also helped the WTIS rail coordinator read the trace report so they could actually “see” the cars moving from day to day and therefore anticipate arrival here at GPIP. This helped them to schedule additional men and equipment once the cars arrived.”



Rail stored at the Greens Port Industrial Park is ready and waiting to be used.

Watco's Biggest Losers win big, continued

(Continued from page 1) would be getting off the medication.”

Her strategy lead to a total loss of 54 ½ pounds during the six-month contest but she claims the last three pounds were from the haircut that finished up her new look. Kissell joked, “Anything to lose that extra pound or two.”

For the Biggest Loser's second place winner, Mike Berkheimer, walking was also a key factor in his weight loss success. The Hollidaysburg welder added a five-mile walk to his daily routine and ended up losing a total of 74 ½ pounds between the July and January weigh-ins. “I've lost another five pounds since the weigh-in,” said Berkheimer. “My goal is to get down to 180 and right now I'm at 190.”

Cutting out junk food was the biggest change to Berkheimer's diet. Berkheimer credits his wife Linda for all she did to help in his weight loss efforts. Not only did she start cooking healthier meals but she joined in and lost 30 pounds herself. He said they got rid of pop, beer and pizza and started eating healthy foods.

“You really need to learn to push yourself away from the table,” said Berkheimer. “I may eat 4-5 meals a day now but the portions are a lot smaller. I take veggies, jello and sandwiches for lunches.”

The biggest change that Berkheimer can see is the increase in his energy level. “I'm full of energy now,” he said. “I don't sit around and watch TV anymore. Right when I get home from work I put on my running shoes and walk the secondary roads. It's all hills out here so it's a good workout.”

“I can't ever see myself going back to my old lifestyle. I feel so much better now.”

Although the mechanical services division wins the prize for motivation in the Biggest Loser contest, one of the top three winners came from a location other than Hollidaysburg. Third place winner William Norris is a switchman for mechanical services in Neodesha, Kan., and says once his wife LouAnn found out about the contest he didn't have any options other than losing weight, a whole 47 pounds.

“She really put a limit on the amounts and types of food that I ate,” Norris said about his wife. “No more mashed potatoes and gravy, no breads. The good thing is I like about anything, so switching to eating a lot of vegetables wasn't that hard for me. I can do some major damage to a salad bar. Another thing I tried to do was drink a lot more water.”

“My doctor was also pushing for me to lose some weight and he was really glad to see the progress I had made. My blood pressure has gone down and the doctor expects my cholesterol levels to go down as well.”

In addition to all the walking and climbing on and off of trains that Norris does at work, he also took up riding the stationary bike at home.

“I know the weight loss will help me out this summer at work; I had lost a lot of weight right from the start at the end of summer last year and could already tell the difference in how the heat had less of an effect on me,” Norris said.

“I haven't been this little since I was in high school. My goal was to get down to 180 and I get on the scale every day to check to see where I'm at. I'm just a pound or two from that. A lot of people can tell that I've lost weight and I can't believe how big the old clothes are that I've kept from before.”

Although there were only three official winners there were many other “winners” on the Watco Team. Carlita Guiles, divisional controller for mechanical services, and Penny Wood, corporate accounting manager, teamed up to encourage each other to work out and eat healthier.

“I decided to do the Biggest Loser contest just to make me accountable. We re-

ally didn't get serious about this until October,” said Guiles.

The duo now can be seen at the Pittsburg, Kan., YMCA during most lunch hours. Guiles can be found on the elliptical or the cardio glide and Wood likes running on the treadmill. Both women also have added weight lifting into their workouts. Another thing they've added to their workout is their spouses. Guiles' husband started working out in November and Wood's husband decided to join in on the workouts in December.

As far a meals go, both women said it's just a matter of watching your portions and making better choices. Both said it was hard to make good choices when eating out, but it's something you have to do if you're really wanting to keep your weight down. Wood's weakness is fried foods and she's worked hard to stay away from them. She also shares meals with her husband when they eat out.

“We've gone out to eat and just shared an appetizer as a meal and it's enough,” said Wood. “You don't have to eat until you get to the point where you are just stuffed. It's all about portion control.”

Exercise and portion control has proved to be a good combination for the two. Guiles lost 15.6 pounds and Wood has lost 13.6 pounds. Both say they feel so much better and never want to go back to their old weight. They're even going to sell their outgrown clothes in a rummage sale since they don't plan on wearing them again.



Penny Wood, corporate accounting manager and Carlita Guiles, divisional controller for mechanical services, teamed up to find success in their weight-loss efforts.



Brian Oleske, director of customer service and dispatching/West Region, after his 43 pound weight loss.

Wood said, “It was inspiring to go shopping with Carlita and see her face when she was fitting into the smaller sizes, that really encouraged me to work harder at watching what I ate.”

Wood probably had that same look on her face on weigh-in day. She pulled a pair of jeans from her closet that she hadn't been able to wear for three years just to see how close she was to fitting into them - they fit.

Brian Oleske, director of customer service and dispatching/West Region was the West Region stand out. He lost a total of 43 pounds, mainly by way of diet.

“I basically changed my eating habits. I cut out sugars, sodas and foods with high fat content,” said Oleske. “I also tried to keep myself active in my free time by exercising instead of being stagnant at home watching TV or playing video games. I just focused

on eating proteins, veggies and fruits. I plan to continue eating this way, my son is into healthy eating so it helps to have someone that eats this way as a lifestyle to encourage me.”

Heather Webb, senior benefits administrator, said the contest was held as an effort to put more focus on making healthy lifestyle choices and she was pleased with the results of the contest.

“Everyone did a great job and it's encouraging that all of the winners were able to lose their weight by diet modification and exercise,” said Webb. “They didn't have to join any expensive programs or clubs.”

Those who weighed in lost a total of almost 700 pounds or a total loss of 6.73%. There were several people who didn't do the final weigh-in because they thought that they hadn't lost enough to win but just losing 10% of that extra weight can reduce the risk for heart attack and stroke.

Webb said, “Each winner said how much better they felt and how much more energy they had once they started eating a healthier diet. As busy as everyone seems to be, that extra energy is something that I'm sure we all would welcome. The three winners were a great inspiration to all the Watco Team and hopefully their examples will encourage others to follow the same path to better, healthier lifestyles.”



This section is dedicated to the Watco Team members to give you a chance to share what's happening in your corner of the Watco World.

Births

Blake Harrison Meyers Tristan Jacob Meyers

Jake and Marcia Meyers are proud to announce the birth of their twin boys Blake Harrison and Tristan Jacob on January 17. Blake weighed 5 lbs, 15 oz. and was 18 ½ inches long. His younger brother Tristan also weighed 5 lbs, 15 oz. and was 19 ½ inches long. The twins were welcomed home by their five year-old brother Calder. The twin's dad is a trainmaster on the Grand Elk Railroad and works out of Kalamazoo, Mich.



Blake Harrison Meyers (l) and Tristan Jacob Meyers (r)

May Graduations

April showers bring May flowers but studying hard brings May diplomas. In a few short months members of the Watco Team and/or their family members will be crossing stages across the country to receive their diplomas from various academic institutions.



The Dispatch would like to acknowledge the hard work of all graduates from Watco families by listing them in May's edition.

If you would like to have your graduate listed, send in the information in the following format: Graduates name: how related to Watco Team member, Watco Team member's title and location. The school graduate is attending and location of that school. If the graduate is receiving a degree from a college, university or trade school list the graduates degree type. An example would be:

Billy Miskell: Son of Bill Miskell, car department supervisor in Oklahoma City, OK; graduating from Houston Baptist University, Houston, TX with a Bachelor of Science in Kinesiology and Sociology.

You can send your graduation information electronically to: tvan@watcocompanies.com. Please put Dispatch-May Graduation in the subject line.

If you are unable to send the information electronically, mail it to:

Tracie VanBecelaere
Communications Director
Watco Companies
315 W. 3rd Street
Pittsburg, KS 66762

If you would like to add any December graduations we will include those with the May graduations and note the December date.

February Anniversaries

1 Year: Gerald Carter, Joseph Forchione, Jim Gees, Gary Hackemack, Tim Holan, Edward Jones, Alvin Parker, Shawn Pool, Thomas Roach, Gregory Seal, Frank Webb, Ronald Whitewater, Fred Withers.

2 Years: Timothy Ainsworth, Audric Broussard, Perry Clark, Christopher Coles, Gary Cooper, Ben Coward, Brian Ezell, Jimmy Hann, David Hougardy, Preston Hummel, Howard Johnson, Robert Manley, Federico Mendieta, Allen

Parrie, Joseph Patalano, Shannon Redman, Aaron Reedy, Gregory Robinson, Walter Robinson, Robert Smith, Jim Soulia, Timothy Visser.

3 Years: Robert Balzer, Rickey Carter, Wes Cornelison, Jeffery Denton, Januario Enriquez, Albert Glenn, Ismael Guevara, Eric Hazelwonder, AJ Mee, Francisco Pedraza, Anthony Rogers, Andres Zacarias.

4 Years: Michael Lewis, Benjamin Martinez, Richard Polk, Daniel Reeves, Donald Ritchie, Darrell Thompson, Carla Wilson.

5 Years: Michael Berkheimer, Richard Boehler, Douglas Fleming, Michael Hempen, Matthew Hinojosa, Charles Houlton, Gregg Lovelace, Jeremy Smith, Robert Switlik, Charles Thompson.

6 Years: Brian Clark, Adam Delgado, Jeffrey Maier, George Villa.

7 Years: Scott Adams, Jason Cox, Michael Dumont, James George, John Glover, Gary Goodwin, David Moody, James Taylor.

8 Years: Sara Polchlopek.

9 Years: Gregory Andersen, Serafin Contreras, Robert Cunningham, John Novacek, Kevin Schoenhofer, Robert Stewart.

10 Years: James Andrews, Bill Brown, Michael Cathorall, John Clark, Russell Huber, Michael Rock.

11 Years: Kenny Burnett, Gerald Carlson, Melvin Minnis.

13 Years: Debbie Ross, Jeff Adams, Jerry Klidies.

14 Years: John Henderson, Chad Rose, Mike Todd, Troy Tracy.

15 Years: Penny Linthicum.

16 Years: Michael Berley, Billy Davis.

17 Years: Filiberto Barrientos, Richard Berkheimer, Fredrick Breth, James Kilmer.

20 Years: Horace Gilbert.

21 Years: Dale McCord.

22 Years: John Zini.

23 Years: John Everson, Theodis McClain.

24 Years: Stephen Chestnut, Kenneth Joyce, Jack Lewis.

29 Years: Nathan Cooper, Rickey Eaton.

30 Years: Richard Leopard.

33 Years: Bobbye Russell.

39 Years: John Behiter.



Clark, Christopher Coles, Gary Cooper, Ben Coward, Brian Ezell, Jimmy Hann, David Hougardy, Preston Hummel, Howard Johnson, Robert Manley, Federico Mendieta, Allen

Watco Calendar

Calling all shutterbugs. It has come to our attention that there are some very talented photographers on the Watco Team and we would like to give you an opportunity to show off your talents in the upcoming 2011 Watco Calendar.

Any picture of a Watco switching facility, short line, mechanical shop or transload facility qualifies for consideration for the new calendar.

E-mail your photos to: tvan@watcocompanies.com with your name, the location the photo was taken and any other descriptive details that would be needed to identify the photo.

Put Watco Calendar in the subject line of your e-mail.

If you are unable to send the photograph electronically, send the photograph via snail-mail to:

Tracie VanBecelaere, Communications Director
Watco Companies
315 W. 3rd Street
Pittsburg, KS 66762

Any photos sent through the mail will not be returned so keep a copy for yourself if you want one. Winners will be notified in October.



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Lamar student studies railroad futures

by Tracie VanBecelaere
Managing Editor

Most boys go through a stage where they suffer from train fever and Ethan Lawrence of Lamar, Mo., is no different, but most don't have the BNSF passing through their farm. He took his liking of trains from having a small set under his bed to creating an HO scale-sized model railroad layout featuring the Frisco Railroad. When he received an assignment at school to shadow a job he was interested in learning about he knew the perfect person to contact, John Chambers. He and Chambers met this fall while attending a Frisco Railroad Convention in Pittsburg, Kan., sponsored by the Heart of the Heartlands and Watco.

"I knew John worked for a railroad that was close to Lamar so I sent him an e-mail asking if he could help arrange something for me," said Lawrence.

Chambers, Central Region revenue analyst, made

plans for the student to visit the Watco Service Support Center, the South Kansas and Oklahoma Railroad (SKOL) and the Cornell car shop. The day started out with orientation and a tour of the Pittsburg, Kan., office. The two then headed to the SKOL headquarters in Cherryvale, Kan., where Lawrence met John Spahn, SKOL assistant trainmaster, who arranged a cab ride with engineer Dee Mitchell in the WAMX 3831 locomotive. He boarded the train just north of Cherryvale and rode along approximately 25 miles of track to Chanute.

"The cab ride was the best part of the job shadowing," said Lawrence. "I was surprised at the size of the crew. I thought there would be more people in the cab."

Chambers explained that the crew was small because a switchman was following in a truck to save time. He can drive to various switches instead of having to waste time walking back and forth and also has

a way back if the train isn't returning to the original destination.

After shadowing Mitchell, Chambers took Lawrence to the mechanical shop in Cornell, Kan., where Jim Herman, general manager, showed him around the shop and explained the various types of repairs performed at the shop.

The two then headed back to the Pittsburg offices and Lawrence had the opportunity to meet with customer service representatives and members of the revenue accounting team to examine what part they play in the rail industry.

"The car shop was really cool. I learned a lot about short lines and Class I railroads. Things were really different than I thought they would be," said Lawrence. "The job shadowing helped me think about what I want to do in the future."

Who knows, maybe someday that future will involve a Watco railroad.

Below left: Lamar, Mo., middle school student Ethan Lawrence and John Chambers, Central Region revenue analyst, at the Pittsburg, Kan., office. Right: A close look through the window of the locomotive cab reveals student Ethan Lawrence in the passenger seat.

