Unique agreement takes Watco operations into Canada

by Tracie VanBecelaere
Managing Editor

As of November 1, 2018, Watco can say they manage rail operations in Canada. Watco is now responsible for the management of all aspects of the operations of the Stewart Southern Railway, a short line railroad that runs from Regina to Stoughton in the southeast region of Saskatchewan, Canada. The 80-mile line handles commodities such as grain, peas, lentils, and potash.

In most cases, Watco has leased or purchased the rail lines they operate but in this situation, the line is owned by a third party and Watco is operating the line, similar to the operations in Western Australia for CBH Group.

As with the Australia operation, grain is the key commodity but the difference in this situation is that there are plenty of opportunities to bring in a variety of commodities to enhance the diversity of the line.

Garrett Bolyard, vice president of operations, noted that there is a lot of potential for the line, including the shipment of canola oil, a product popular in Bolyard’s home state, Idaho. “When canola was mentioned I started thinking of the tie-ins with our operations in Idaho, there could definitely be some possibilities to work with our current Customers to bring more business to the area.”

The day-to-day operations are overseen by Carter Stewart, with a group of Team Members that includes retired Canadian Pacific railroaders.

Bolyard said, “We have 15 Team Members and over half of them are retired CP. They are just looking to keep busy. They all do a great job and are a really good fit into the Watco culture.”

One other thing that is unique about the line is how straight it is. “There isn’t a hill or a curve at all, it’s the straightest 80 miles of track you’ll ever find,” said Bolyard. “It’s beautiful, but straight track as far as the eye can see.”

Watco short line receives President’s Award for safety

by Jay Benedict
Digital Communication & Social Media Specialist

The Baton Rouge Southern Railroad (BRS) has plenty to celebrate right now. While most people consider 13 an unlucky number, it certainly wasn’t for them. On November 13, the BRS Team reached five years injury free, and at the American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association’s (ASLRRA) Central-Pacific Regional Meeting in San Diego, California, BRS general manager Brit Sonnier accepted the President’s Award for Best Safety Rate Less than 50,000 Man-hours.

“Our short line members work each day with safety in the forefront of their minds. Safe operations are good for our customers, good for our employees, good for the public interest, and good for business,” said Judy Petry, president and CEO of Farmrail System, Inc., and chair of ASLRRA.

“The President’s Award recognizes railroads who are leading our industry, operating well below the industry average of accident frequency.”

ASLRRA’s President’s Award is presented annually and recognizes railroads that have achieved either a 0.0 accident frequency rate, or the best safety rate below the industry average as measured by the lowest accident frequency rate per man-hour of operation. They must also be a Jake Award recipient, which recognizes above-industry average safety performance during the previous year. The BRS received a Jake with Distinction, for their injury-free 2017.

“The guys are committed to coming to work and not putting themselves in position to injure themselves or anybody else,” Sonnier said. “They bought into it and we haven’t had any issues with RPIs (Reportable Personal Injuries) since.”

The railroad has 25 Team Members and handles about 40,000 carloads each year. Sonnier says the more senior members of the Team’s leadership and willingness to stop a movement if something looks unsafe has been a key to the safety culture on the BRS.

“Our senior guys are an asset. We pair them with the newer guys as mentors,” Sonnier said. “The senior guys are bought in, and their leadership helps everyone stay committed to each other and make sure nobody’s going to get hurt.”
Osceola Terminal Team sets record over Thanksgiving holiday

by Tracie VanBecelaere
Managing Editor

While most people spend the Thanksgiving holiday eating, watching football, shopping, and spending time with family, the Team at the Osceola Terminal in Arkansas was busy setting records. The Team provides services to Big River Steel at their facility located along the Mississippi River in the northeastern part of the state.

Big River Steel (BRS) reached out to thank the Team for their efforts that led to record production in the 72 hour time frame.

To better understand the accomplishment, here’s a little detail on how the operation works. The initial step in the production of a “heat” in an EAF (Electric Arc Furnace) is to select the grade of steel to be made. This process is part of a new technology used by BRS promote the rapid melt of the material, reduce electrode breaks, and consume less energy to melt the steel. Preparation of the scrap being loaded into the haul trucks for the charging is an important part of the operation. This is known as the “recipe”. To create the recipe, the scrap must be layered in the trucks according to types of steel (commodity) and size, at this point it is referred to as charge. The charge is transported to the mill and dumped into a pit. The charge is then loaded into 70-ton trucks, called charge trucks, by a 860 Sennebogen crane. Three charge trucks make up a heat.

The material is dumped into a charge bucket and then transported by an overhead crane to the furnace. The furnace is lined with brick and ceramic mortar to withstand the extreme heat generated by the melting process. The melted material is then poured into the caster where the formation of the coils begins.

Over the Thanksgiving weekend, the Team set production records for 24, 48, and 72 hour time frames. In the past, no more than 21 heats were loaded in a 12 hour period. The Team set a 12-hour record with 23 heats. On 11/22 the team produced 37 heats. They did 42 on 11/24, and recorded 41 on 11/25.

Tim Bass, terminal manager, said, “I'm really proud of our team for what they accomplished. It's a big honor to have the Customer reach out and acknowledge their hard work. Considering we are new to the terminal and are already setting records, I look forward to seeing what they can do in the future.”


Public-private partnership plans Port Birmingham development

by Jay Benedict
Digital Communication & Social Media Specialist

Years of declining demand for coal in the Birmingham, Alabama, market led to declining shipments for Port Birmingham. In response, the recently formed Birmingham-Jefferson County Port Authority (BJCPA) and Watco Companies, LLC, have entered into a public-private partnership to revitalize and repurpose the port.

“The idea is to take this old, coal-focused facility and repurpose it into something that is attractive, still to coal, but also to a new commodity base,” said Watco commercial manager KR McKenzie.

The current proposal outlines roughly a five-year plan. Phase I is currently in development, and includes constructing a 50,000 square foot warehouse with overhead cranes, capable of storing weather-sensitive bulk and break bulk commodities. Future phases will continue to develop the port, making any necessary upgrades to the five barge docks and rail and truck access infrastructure, and create additional storage capacity and industry-specific build outs. Eventually, they plan for further developments along the Birmingham Terminal Railway (BHRR).

The 184-acre Port Birmingham has one-half mile of frontage on the Black Warrior River, part of the Tenn-Tom Waterway, just a few miles west of Birmingham, Ala. It long served as a coal and steel hub for the area. As the market changed, it became clear that Port Birmingham needed to change as well.

Watco Companies, based in Pittsburg, Kansas, is the parent company of the BHRR. The BHRR is the short line railroad that connects the port to Class I railroads BNSF, CSX Transportation, and Norfolk Southern. The company also provides transloading and other services at the port. They took over operations of both in 2012, and through local partnerships in the area, are making positive changes to Port Birmingham.

“We want to continue to grow our relationship with the BJCPA, and through that Port Birmingham,” McKenzie said. “This area will see the benefits through job creation and tax revenues, and we’re going end up with a more diversified port location in central Alabama.”
Watco assumed stevedoring operations at the Tulsa Port of Catoosa in October 2017, but the dock, and many of the Team Members who work there have decades of experience. The 200-ton crane has seen a lot in its day since being erected in 1972.

Operations manager Bill Golden has been there 45 years, almost as long as the crane. He started in March 1973 when they were still building the locks on the Verdigris River. The components for the locks were actually some of the first things he helped ship.

“When I started I told everyone I was only going to do this for a while because I was broke and needed gas money. Well, I’m still broke and need gas money,” laughed Bill.

Bill’s experience is paired with one of the best riggers in the business. Dock supervisor James McDaniel has been on the dock with Bill for 26 years. Both barge hands have been around 10 years and 17 years, respectively. During that time, they’ve gotten to ship a lot of things, and have gotten the loading and unloading down to a science.

“We don’t have a lot of turnover. I don’t know whether it’s because of our personalities or what, and that helps our efficiency a lot,” Bill said.

The Tulsa Port of Catoosa is a 2,000 acre industrial park on the northeast side of Tulsa, Oklahoma, with 70 companies as tenants. The crane dock is one of the oldest businesses in the port and Watco is the forth owner. Over the years, it’s shipped all over the U.S., and loaded everything from oil field components to peanuts to newsprint. Internationally, most of the shipments go to New Orleans, where it’s then loaded on to ocean vessels. These shipments have included glass going to Italy, billets to Saudi Arabia, off-road dump trucks to Venezuela, counterweights for pump jacks arriving from India and more to places like Germany and Russia.

The heaviest thing ever loaded was 398,000 pounds and was 180 feet long. The longest thing was 198 feet long and weighed 362,000 pounds, and was a component for a BP oil refinery in Indiana. The tallest object went to Brownsville, Texas. It stuck up 30 feet above the top of the barge. The crane has seen a lot in its day since being erected in 1972.

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“I’ve got a span under that overhead crane that’s 95 feet. We usually try to stay under 92 feet, but as long as it’s a vessel, a stack, or something like that and I can cradle it, then we can pick it up because I’ve got two 100-ton hooks on that thing,” Bill said. “These boys work in all weather, it doesn’t matter. Rain, cold, if we’ve got barges here and it’s not weather-sensitive, we pull it or we load it and very seldom do they complain about it.”

The dock also features a rail line under the crane, so railcars can be backed underneath a lifted object, if it needs to be transported by rail instead of barge. Three years ago, the crane was completely disassembled to modernize it. It was sandblasted and repainted, put all new components on it, and was reassembled in 45 days. The refurbishing has help keep it in top shape. The cycle time on it is one minute, 30 seconds in and out of the barge.

“Our general rule of thumb is that we can get 20 steel coils an hour. That’s pretty good pulling,” Bill said.

Preparing for a lift usually takes much more time than the actual lift. When a Customer approaches the Team about shipping something, Bill will look at the blueprints and get a plan. Then, he and a supervisor will do a site visit where the object is currently at to make sure there’s nothing out of the ordinary that wasn’t included in the paperwork. From there, the Team puts together a plan so what when it arrives, they’re ready to go. This includes knowing what type of rigging to use, where to hook it so the center of gravity is correct, and having the barge ready, which usually means having timbers on the barge floor to prevent it from puncturing the floor.

“We talk about how we’re going to do it and what we’ll need to do it so when they get it here, we’re ready for them. You know, we don’t piddle around with it. We’ve got our guys up top and the ones down in the barge ready. They know what they’re doing,” Bill said.

The shipper usually provides a plan for how the load needs to be secured. As soon as it’s in the barge, the crew down there starts securing it according to the specifications they received. Sometimes that even includes welding D-rings or Oklahoma clips to the barge.

We do anything that the larger ports can do even though we’re just a little port. Some places have bigger cranes, but we do a pretty good job. If a Customer wants to ship something somewhere, we’ll get it done,” Bill said. There was one time, a guy called me up and had some units he wanted me to load. He said, ‘Now, these things are heavy.’ So I asked him what they weighed. He told me they weighed 65,000 pounds, so I got to laughing. When he asked why, I said actually that’s real light. I’ve got forklifts that can handle that stuff.”
Cahokia cancer survivor gets iced at hockey game

by Tracie VanBecelaere
Managing Editor

Tracie Kent isn’t what you call a sporty-kind of gal but, when she had the opportunity to step out on the ice with the St. Louis Blues hockey team, it was an offer she couldn’t refuse. Tracie is an accountant for the terminal and port services group and she normally works out of the Cahokia Terminal in Sauget, Illinois. However, a recent illness is the same thing that not only resulted in her working from home, it was the reason she went out on the ice.

Tracie was diagnosed with triple negative breast cancer on April 27th of this year. That type of cancer can be more aggressive but luckily, she caught it early. After undergoing a lumpectomy, chemotherapy, and radiation, Tracie was one of four cancer survivors selected to walk out on the ice at a Blues match on November 24th for Hockey Fights Cancer night. Siteman Cancer Center chose one survivor from each location to represent the survivors on the ice. On the night Tracie was recognized, the Blues were also honoring past Blues alumni who lost their fight against cancer. The Blues first started this initiative in 1998. During the Blues warm up each player wore a warm-up jersey with the name of the different alumni who passed away. All warm-up jerseys were auctioned off by the St Louis Blues and donated towards the fight against cancer. A portion of all ticket sales also went towards the “Hockey Fights Cancer” initiative. All money raised stays in St. Louis to help raise awareness and the fight against cancer.

Tracie said, “It was so neat…people were given the “I Fight For” cards to write the names of a person or people that they are (or were) fighting for and the Blues announcer had everyone hold up the signs at the same time. It was such an incredible event. I am so grateful to have been a part of it. So blessed!”

A ceremony was also held the same night for children fighting the disease. Tracie’s husband Chad was able to accompany her that evening. She also has two daughters, 19-year old Alexis and eight-year old Kennedi, who have supported her.

Tracie said, “I feel very blessed to have been chosen by Siteman Cancer Center for such an im-

AWRR Engineering Team decreases derailments

The Austin Western Railroad Engineering Team was established in October of 2015 and although they do not generate any revenue, their efforts have made a difference in the efficiency and they have created cost savings for the railroad.

From 2016 to 2018 the number of track-caused derailments decreased roughly 72% leading to the decrease in derailment costs by 87%. To maintain the track, the Team has installed around 80,000 ties, dumped 30,000 tons of ballast, and surfaced more than 115 miles of track strictly on capital work.

Team Members who have worked to keep the track up to par and trains moving are Brandon Collier, track inspector; Jeremy Cazares,track inspector; Delmer Armentrout, track foreman; Manuel Torres, general foreman; Raul Medina, track foreman; Marcus Zambrano, assistant foreman; Corby Smith, laborer; Jason Worthey, laborer; Luis Medina, laborer; Homero Medina, laborer; and Tyler Geissen, laborer.

Tracie Kent and her husband Chad before the ceremony at the Hockey Fights Cancer event.

Tracie Kent and her fellow survivors, Thomas, Russell, and Shelly.

Tracie Kent and Louie, the St. Louis Blues mascot, who was sporting a mustache for No Shave November.

and Tracie’s doctor requested that she keep away from the facility because of the dust at the location as well as to protect her because of her weakened immune system.

The Cahokia Team said, “Tracie’s absence has left a void at the Cahokia Terminal, she is a positive influence and brightens everybody’s day in the office. Tracie has always been quick to offer anybody help and always goes above and beyond to give the best support possible. We look forward to her return and hope her recovery is going well!”

Luckily, for the Team that has missed her these past few months, she will be returning to work soon.
Ruben Powell has been the general superintendent for Watco’s stevedoring operations at the port. Between Gulf Stream and Greens Port, he spent some time doing contracting work on his own, before joining Texas Terminals. “Once they closed those other four, they blessed us with Watco,” Ruben said. “It’s been a blessing, once that happened with Texas Terminals. I’m a firm believer in our Father, our God. He closed one door and he opens another five. He closed the doors on us over there and this was really a blessing, 100 percent.”

That was five years ago. When Watco started self-performing stevedoring at Greens Port, Ruben joined that Team. Now, he helps oversee the loading and unloading of vessels at the port. With seven deep-water vessel berths and nine barge docks, the Team has plenty to keep them busy. “It’s busy, busy, busy,” Ruben said. “Just right now we’re receiving pipe for a vessel that’s starting next week, we have three rigs receiving right now. We’re working in barges with coils.”

Even though Watco’s only been performing stevedoring at Greens Port since April 1, 2018, the Team is operating like a well-oiled machine. Ruben and many others brought years of experience with them. The Team has a 3 p.m. meeting every day where Ruben lets everyone know what planned for the next day. With all the recent development at the port, there’s plenty to plan for. Everybody’s come together as a Team. It’s been eight months since we kicked this off, and there were different cultures on the Team, but everybody is coming along very well,” Ruben said.

Even with about 30 years in the field, Ruben doesn’t plan on going anywhere soon. “I’ve been doing it for so long, it’s what I like doing, and I’m with a company now that I want to retire from,” Ruben said. “One: Watco, I see that they care about their Team Members. Two: not only do they care, but they take care of you. The benefits here are wonderful. Mr. Jason Ford and Ernie (Farrand) (VPs of operations), their doors are always open if you have anything you need to talk about. Everybody’s just one big happy family.”

When he’s not at Greens Port, Ruben enjoys working out, playing basketball, watching football and basketball, fishing, grilling, and he recently got into golf. He says he’s not very good yet though. On his last outing, he played with three others and it took them almost three and a half hours to finish 18 holes, but he still enjoys the sport. Between his hobbies and a job he enjoys, Ruben feels blessed. “My favorite part of the job is dealing with all the different Customers, different types of material and product, project cargo, the whole shebang, the agents, the Team Members here. Just the whole nine yards. I love doing it,” he said.
Wisconsin & Southern Railroad hosts state and local officials onboard the Watco executive business cars

by Ken Lucht
AVP Government and Industry Relations

On a mild fall day in Wisconsin, the Wisconsin & Southern Railroad (WSOR) hosted a group of state and local government officials to tour the flood-ravaged area that was affected by the string of severe storms that occurred August 21-22, 2018.

Onboard the Stone-Gardner theatre car and the Northern Plains dormitory car, and powered by WSOR 3928, officials from the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) and members of the Wisconsin River Rail Transit Commission (WRRTC) were treated to a ride along the rails of the WSOR’s Prairie Subdivision. In total, over 40 people attended, including WisDOT deputy secretary Bob Seitz and chief engineer Joe Nestler, as well as WRRTC chairman Alan Sweeney. WisDOT and WRRTC own the land and track that WSOR operates on, and were instrumental in working together with WSOR to return this section of track to service.

The group traveled the recently repaired track and were shown first-hand the extent of damage caused by the severe storms. They were able to see the challenges the WSOR Team faced and put their response into perspective.

At a total cost of was approximately $1.6 million, the WSOR Team rallied to restore service to the entire segment in only 28 days. Approximately 26 miles of WSOR’s Prairie Sub, between Arena and Shorewood Hills, Wisc., were affected by the severe storms. More than 85 wash-outs occurred, causing more than 6,000 feet of track to be inoperable. With the help of WisDOT and Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker, the WSOR received a state grant of $750,000 toward the repairs. The repairs included replacement of 1,275 ties, 34,850 tons of fill material, 8,330 tons of new ballast, and 12 new culvert pipes in five different locations.

The business train paused at Mazomanie for a 45-minute tour of Plastic Ingenuity, one of WSOR’s Customers along the affected area. Plastic Ingenuity is one of the largest custom thermoformers in North America, and leads the nation in innovative packaging solutions that encompass every stage of packaging design and manufacturing.

“Watco applauds Plastic Ingenuity for its leadership within their industry and wishes them continued success for years to come,” said Ken Lucht, AVP government and industry relations. “Watco is pleased to be their primary service provider for inbound plastic resins and is committed to providing the best service possible in order to accommodate further growth in the future.”

The Watco executive business cars are stationed on the WSOR in Madison, Wisc., and are available for events throughout the Watco network. We’re fortunate to have two highly-qualified attendants that oversee the maintenance and operations of the business cars. George Falor and Jerry Lapidakis provide exceptional service to Watco and the WSOR, and we’re grateful for their professionalism and dedication to the Team.

Several members of the WSOR Team joined the ride, including superintendent of MOW Roger Schaalma, bridge structure supervisor Dave Bierman, project engineer Brent Marsh, general manager Preston Nelson, assistant general manager Aaron Dean, and Lucht. WSOR engineer Justin Cox and conductor Paul Muzik served as crew for the day.

The WSOR is a regional railroad operating 700 miles of track throughout south central Wisconsin and northeastern Illinois. The WSOR has terminal offices in Madison, Janesville, and Horicon and employs more than 200 people.

Coffeyville Team Members give breakroom a makeover

by Tracie VanBecelaere
Managing Editor

The Team Members at the Mechanical Services shop in Coffeyville, Kansas, didn’t take long to start making changes after they were brought back under the Watco umbrella. A key component of the Watco culture is being a responsible steward of your location and just two months after becoming a Watco property again, the Team at Coffeyville stepped up to improve their workplace and make it a better place.

Coffeyville Plant manager Jeremy Veley said, “The team decided it was time for a change, it had pretty much been the same since everyone could remember. The Team Members presented their plan to improve the breakroom to me and took full ownership of the project.”

Many of the Watco locations have a Team Safety and Improvement Committee (TS&IC) that is responsible for improving their properties but at Coffeyville they haven’t had time to form an official committee yet so the Team formed their own unofficial committee and got the job completed.

Rich Maillet, railcar repairman; Austin Murphy, railcar repairman; Kyle Clutter, EHS manager; Jimmy Sharpe, railcar repairman, Cody Bell, supervisor, and Kyle Mansfield, inspection supervisor participated in the makeover.

The group buffed the floors, repainted the walls, floors, and lockers, and installed additional lighting and fans. All their hard work paid off as the space is now a brighter, more inviting environment for all of the Team Members to enjoy.
Congratulations to the following Team Members celebrating anniversaries this month.


2 Years: Danny Alvarez, Parker Angel, Samuel Cain, Robert Carpenter, Jason Garza, Joel Gibson, Christopher Goforth, Michael Goss, Jon-Max Herman, Jarrod Jordan, James Langan, Quinlan Lindley, Dean Little, Kyle Loofboro, Connie Odegaard, Aaron Roelle, Luis Salmon, Lorri Smith, Kevin Thornton, Donny Trevino, John Turner, Michele Valdivia, Damon Webb, Madison Williams

3 Years: Jon Beach, Mark Coronado, James Fountain, Ronald Harman, Dustin Hiser, John Peterson, Robert Rogers, Tyler Roshong, Oliver Torrence, Nicholas Valverde

4 Years: Lindsey Alexander, Rebecca Armentrout, Matthew Bixler, Jessie Bryant, Jared Duyck, Josey Frazier, Xavion Gilbert, Raymond Gonzalez, Scott Hallman, Jacob Hamm, Nathan Higgins, William Huck, Bradley Hutchings, Melissa Johnston, Lena Kebert, Dakota Merritt, David Paz, Jerrad Read, Douglas Smith, Terry Sullins, Leah Woods

5 Years: Sergio Aguilar, Kelsey Berger, Micheal Berzas, Robert Harbour, Kyle Henson, Benjamin Kraus, Brennan Lyons, Brian Maxey, Stephen Potts, Joshua Roberts, Tiffany Schmidt, David Silva, Daniel Smith, Nancy Vargas, Prentice Washington, Brian Watson, Joshua Woody

6 Years: Bradley Beckner, Kyle Brown, Darrell Crum, Michelle Ivey, Jason Jewell, Brian King, Patrick McPhillips, Brenna Prestholt, Victor Smith

7 Years: Dexter Cahill, Hector DeHoyos, Terry Dugar, Charles Engels, Kevin Fulsome, Kurt Koontz, Ryan Krull, Kevin Rinear, Christopher Walther, Steven Wisniewski

8 Years: Hector Barrientos, Spencer Button, Michael Hancock, Jennifer May, Lisa Powell, Sharon Sexson

9 Years: Robert Aldredge, Timothy Eccles, George Freeman, Cheryl Galler, Daniel Gialalone, Christopher Jackson, Jose Maldonado, Charles Price, Eugene Stevens, Montez Tedford, Melissa Tuman, Joel Wilmot

10 Years: Esteban Robles

11 Years: Pedro Balencia, Richard Buehre, Kurt Kilgore, Jeff Washington, Penny Wood

12 Years: Kevin Beam, Richard Hensley, Bruce Martin, Transito Pedraza, Rafael Ramirez, Jonathan Tavernaro

13 Years: Cedric Bonner, Matt Drake, Michael Kissier, Joe Mercer, Obed Valdez, Joshua Williams

14 Years: Michael Hensley, Rafael Hernandez, Crezenita Van Beecelaere

15 Years: Johnnie Brown, Anthony Clark, Cory Clendenen, Lonnie Johnson, Stephanie Mize, Ismael Mondragon

16 Years: John DeLeony-Pena, Craig Richey

17 Years: Roy Buckhalter, Ernesto Elizondo, Johnny Johnson, David Larch

19 Years: Thomas Cooper, Charles Karamales

20 Years: Ricky Absher, Robert Lane, Anthony Otiara

21 Years: Brad Fralick, Jason Stutzman, Anthony Tillman

23 Years: Alex Contreras, Israel Garcia, Bryan Miller, Lupe Ramirez, Roger Schaalma

24 Years: Michael Carr, Keri Gognat, Randy Pindell

25 Years: Sherry Germusa

26 Years: Sidney Alfrey, John Byrd, Jean Kincade

28 Years: Claude McGuff

31 Years: Rodney King, Michael McGinn, Manfred Nelly

32 Years: Ronald Faulkner

38 Years: James Miller

39 Years: Joseph Escott, John Herron

40 Years: Roderick Bodfield

Births

Michael Charles Curry

Jason and Amber Marie Curry are proud to announce the birth of their son, Michael Charles. Michael was born on April 30, 2018. He weighed 6 lbs., 8 oz., and was 20 3/4 inches long.

Michael was welcomed home by his brothers William and Daniel.

Jason is a railcar repairman/welder at the Junction City, Kansas, mechanical shop.

Customer visits upgraded facility

Waste Management’s senior leadership team recently visited Watco’s Elizabeth Marine Terminal in New Jersey. The group toured the facility to view Watco’s operations and the $12 million investments that Watco has made to the terminal as a part of the long-term contract with Waste Management.

The visit also served as a ribbon cutting and senior vice president of strategic growth and development Marc Massoglia, along with other Watco Team Members, presented Waste Management chief executive officer Jim Fish and his team with a custom model Watco locomotive made by Watco Team Member Greg Baker.
Houston Switching Team cooks for charity

by Jay Benedict
Digital Communication & Social Media Specialist

In early November, the Team at the DOW Deer Park, Texas, switching location participated in DOW’s annual chili cook off for the first time. They didn’t win (that honor went to a local fire department), but they still had fun.

The cook off is DOW’s fundraiser for United Way. Twenty teams participated in the event and anyone could pay $10 to eat as much chili as they wanted. A silent auction was also held, auctioning items donated by participants in the cook off.

The Team had a better backdrop than the other participants, the track they operate on for DOW runs right behind their booth so they brought their locomotive out and handed out train whistles and pop sockets to people who visited their booth.

It’s always good to see our Team Members out supporting the communities they operate in!

Sixteen Team Members from ten different locations made up the largest class yet to graduate from ground school at the safety training center in Birmingham, Alabama. This eight-day class consisted of four days of classroom instruction and three days of field training and will be the model used for the MOW Ground School beginning in 2019 for all new MOW Team Members. The set up allows for more in-depth classroom training and allows students more time in the field. This was also the first class that was able to work on track defects located on the Birmingham Terminal Railway (BHRR) and experience, in a controlled environment, exactly what they will encounter in the field.

Michael Smith, director of engineering safety said, “During one day of the field training, the student crew was approached by an FRA inspector who was curious why we had so many people working on a track crew. After explaining to him this was a training class and giving him an overview of our training methodology, he was very impressed with the level of training we give our new MOW Team Members. They were excited to talk with each student and astonished at their level of rule retention.”

Smith added, “This was an excellent opportunity to build a stronger relationship with the FRA and show them that we are dedicated to safely and thoroughly training our MOW Team Members. We were able to accomplish this type of training due in part to having our own STAT Center MOW crew truck.”

Ground school class members included: Mike Womack-Toledo; James Theodore-GDLK; Dexter Gonzales-TXN; Richard Garcia-TXN; Migel Rodriguez-TXN; Jason Worthey-AWRR; Kyle Cunningham-KNWA; Matthew Testerman-KNWA; Anthony Waldschmidt-SKOL; James Rogers-SREI; Josh Fetzer-EIRR; Jeffery Thamer-SLWC; Caleb Schmidt-SLWC; Gavin Laquet-SLWC; Donovan Allen-SKOL; and Austin White-SKOL.