Kaye Lynne Webb honored with Influential Woman in Business Award

by Jay Benedict
Digital Communication & Social Media Specialist

The Pittsburg Area Chamber of Commerce presented Watco co-founder Kaye Lynne Webb with the first ever Influential Woman in Business Award on December 8, 2017. Appropriately, the ceremony took place in a renovated freight depot.

The Frisco Event Center in Pittsburg, Kansas, filled up quickly as community and business leaders from around the area braved the below-freezing temperatures to gather to honor outstanding women, including Kaye Lynne. The award, created to honor a lifetime of accomplishments and service, started as a way to recognize all that she has done. Going forward, it will be known as the Kaye Lynne Webb Influential Woman in Business Award.

“Kaye Lynne emulates everything that an influential woman should be,” said Chamber President Blake Benson. “We wanted to create this award to show people, especially women business owners, what women can accomplish, even in male dominated fields like the railroad industry. We named the award after her because she sets the bar so high.”

Kaye Lynne has lived in the Pittsburg area most of her life. After graduating from Pittsburg State University, she taught at two local schools before taking a position with PSU’s President’s Office in 1972. Since her retirement in 1996, she’s continued to volunteer with the university, the Chamber of Commerce, and various other charities and causes. One of her proudest accomplishments was securing the funding to build Immigrant Park, which is at the location that her own grandparents and many other immigrants first arrived to the area by rail.

“All her life she’s been paving the way for women. Her leadership has left a mark on many, helping them find their way in business and many other endeavors,” said Linda Grilz, Kaye Lynne’s longtime friend, as she presented the award.

Kaye Lynne likes to downplay her role in the founding and success of Watco, attributing it to her late husband Dick Webb and the other eight founding members, and later to her son, and CEO, Rick Webb and rest of the Watco Team. However, her leadership, contributions, and insight along the way have been invaluable.

“I am honored to be the first recipient of this award. I know there are a lot of people in this room that are just as worthy of getting this award, and I see a lot of young ladies, my two grandchildren included, that may be up here someday getting this award, so that makes me very proud,” said Kaye Lynne.

Benson says the award was created with two purposes in mind. “First, we truly wanted to acknowledge and thank Kaye Lynne for all that she’s done for the community,” said Benson. “Second, we hope to use her story and success to inspire the next generation of women leaders in the community.”

Watco co-founder Kaye Lynne Webb was awarded the Pittsburg Area Chamber of Commerce Influential Woman in Business Award in December of 2017. Kaye Lynne was the first to ever receive the award and going forward the award will be named the Kaye Lynne Webb Influential Woman in Business Award.

Members of Kaye Lynne’s family were on hand to watch her receive the award. From left to right are son-in-law Gary Lundy, granddaughters Afton Lundy and Fallon Deao, Kaye Lynne, daughter Susie Lundy, daughter-in-law Stacey Webb and son Rick Webb.
#WATCO MOVES

**Cornejo & Sons LLC.**

**Customer:** Cornejo Materials  
**Commodity:** Industrial Sand  
**Location:** Dallas, Texas

It’s a plan that’s been in the works for almost two decades, and now that plan has come to fruition. Longtime Watco partner and Customer Cornejo Materials’ first shipment of industrial sand arrived at Watco’s Zacha Transload Terminal in Dallas, Texas, on December 22.

“When you look back, our Oxford (Kansas) sand plant was built 20 years ago with the intention of shipping sand to Dallas eventually. So, if you want to go back that far, the initial thoughts were about this. We’ve gotten close a couple times, but this is certainly the best opportunity we’ve had,” said Pat Short, Cornejo vice president of aggregates.

The sand is ideal for concrete, paving, and various other construction purposes, and Dallas has been one of the hottest construction markets in the U.S. for years and doesn’t show signs of slowing down. With so much construction happening, the reserves of raw materials continue to get farther and farther away. Short says that demand for construction sand may outpace current production by five million tons and that most sand currently in the market comes from the Red River on the Oklahoma-Texas border. Since most of the product has to be shipped in, it’s a great time to enter the market, and Cornejo’s sand has something else going for it.

“They believe that the sand coming out of Kellogg, Kansas, is superior in quality to the sand that Dallas is getting from the Oklahoma market,” says South Kansas & Oklahoma Railroad (SKOL) commercial manager Shellee Currier. “Oklahoma sand typically has a red clay consistency to it. This is a cleaner sand coming out of Kansas. So, it takes less of the product to get the same amount of strength. Higher quality allows companies to reduce volume in their mixes.”

After the first cars arrived before Christmas, 22 more followed. The cars are loaded near Oxford, about 30 miles southwest of Wichita. From there the SKOL moves them to Pittsburg, Kan., and delivers them to the Kansas City Southern Railway (KCS), who has a direct lane to the Zacha terminal. Once there, a third party unloads the sand into stockpiles, and as Cornejo builds a customer base and sells the product, Watco will load the outbound trucks.

It was a perfect storm of factors that finally brought the move together. The KCS named Watco as operator of the Zacha Terminal in October 2016, and the ball started rolling. The prospect of shipping the sand had been explored with other Class I railroads, but it wasn’t deemed economical at the time. Now, with the KCS and Watco partnered at Zacha, the numbers worked. The terminal’s location on the northeast side of Dallas, near Richardson and Plano, was key as well. They’re among Dallas’s fastest growing suburbs.

“When the opportunity developed with the KCS, who has always been a good partner with Watco, and we got to the point where we could share details with Cornejo, that’s the first thing we did,” said Currier. “Upon completion of the site visit, they were sold that it was going to be an excellent solution for them.”

Watco was able to lease the gondola cars needed and begin a move that brought Cornejo to a new market where Watco provides service at origin and destination. Now that there’s sand on the ground, the focus shifts to scaling the operation up. The goal is to send two 88-car unit trains each month.

“We’ve always had a good relationship with Watco. It’s more than a relationship; it’s a partnership, really,” said Short. “The potential is unlimited. Initially, this first year we’re looking at maybe 200,000 tons. We anticipate the possibility, and we should plan for the likelihood of a million tons a year operation. If we can make two turns a month in a ten month period, we’ll be in really good shape next year.”

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**WSOR’S CAPITOL CHRISTMAS**

*by Ken Lucht  
AVP, Government and Industry Relations*

Each year, the Wisconsin & Southern Railroad loans its G-Gauge model train to the Wisconsin State Capitol in Madison to run around the bottom of the Christmas tree in the center of the Capitol Rotunda. This year, the 40-foot balsam fir was harvested in the town of Emery, Wis., and donated by Jim Ryf.

The WSOR began this tradition in 2006, and hundreds of people see the WSOR locomotive pulling its train every day from November 29 to January 5. The Rotunda is open daily from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. to members of the general public.

Many people say it wouldn’t be the Capitol Christmas Tree without the bright red Wisconsin & Southern Railroad train.

“This year’s State Capitol Christmas Tree will have the added privilege of honoring the Capitol’s centennial with ornaments from school children around the state,” Governor Scott Walker said.

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Sand cars from Oxford, Kansas, arrived in Dallas, Texas, on December 22. A move that originated on Watco’s South Kansas & Oklahoma Railroad and ended at the Watco operated Zacha Terminal. Photos by Jake Gandy.

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This feature in The Dispatch and on our social media accounts (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn) highlights products Watco transports before they arrive at the end user. Article written by Jay Benedict, Digital Communication & Social Media Specialist. If you have a idea for a future story email nbenedict@watcocompanies.com.
Cassie Bicknell just wrapped up her busiest months of the year. As the All Aboard Foundation’s event coordinator, November and December included the Wesley House Food Drive, toy drives for area foster agencies and Salvation Army, the Christmas train ride for area first graders, organizing Watco’s Salvation Army bell ringers, and before those, it was Watco’s Customer Appreciation Days.

“Many of the biggest things that we do all happened very recently,” Cassie said. “This time of year is the busiest because it’s when so many not-for-profits are helping those in need.”

Cassie needed a job after she finished college, and landed a position as a marketing coordinator in Watco’s Pittsburg, Kansas, office. She managed customer account databases, ran reports, collected data, conducted research, and assisted the marketing team with anything they needed.

“Honestly, when I first started, I wasn’t sure how long I would last because I didn’t know anything about the transportation industry. I learned that this industry is actually way more interesting than I thought it was going to be. There was a lot more to it than I ever would have imagined, and realized that Watco is one of the best companies to work for in Pittsburg,” Cassie said.

Cassie had previous experience working with non-profits in the area. Her résumé included time with the Rita J Bicknell Women’s Giving Circle, as president of the board for Big Brothers and Big Sisters, and with various other causes in the community. So, when Watco established the All Aboard Foundation in 2015 as a way to provide funding and support for a better quality of life in the communities in which Watco serves, she jumped at the opportunity to join the Team.

Now in her sixth year with Watco, Cassie takes pride in not only finding causes to support monetarily, but in creating outside-of-the-box solutions that will benefit non-profits long-term as well.

“We try to think outside the box. We don’t just write a donation, we look at things that people are asking for and find creative ways to make that happen,” Cassie said.

Some examples include collecting donations at Pittsburg State football tailgates for various local non-profits, helping Communities In Schools organize a golf tournament, supporting the Loving Angels with all of their school fundraisers year-round, donating open office space to the Alzheimer’s Association Idaho Chapter in Twin Falls, Idaho, and getting Great Northwest Railroad Team Members a day off to assemble a playground in Lewiston, Idaho.

“This is the story of Watco. I love any reason that it’s been so successful and it makes you want to be a part of it,” Cassie said.

Plans like this and the continued support that Watco offers have Cassie excited about the opportunities she’ll have to help communities in the coming year.

“I love the story of Watco. I love anybody that’s come from nothing and has made something out of it. The pride that they have in how they treat their Customers and their Team Members, that’s the reason that it’s been so successful and it makes you want to be a part of it,” Cassie said.

Editor’s note: We enjoy sharing your stories on why our Team Members enjoy working at Watco. #WhyWatco stories are shared in video format via Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn. Article written by Jay Benedict, Digital Communication & Social Media Specialist.
LOCOMOTIVE LIFE:
Dwight Browning's YEARS IN THE CAB

by Jay Benedict
Digital Communication & Social Media Specialist

Model trains running around the base of a family’s Christmas tree were common in American homes in the 1950’s and 60’s. That was the case in Dwight Browning’s home as well. However, it wasn’t as common for one of those model trains to spark an interest that leads to a 40-year career in railroading.

“I got a Lionel train to run around the tree for Christmas when I was a child. Ever since then, I was fascinated,” says Dwight, Birmingham Terminal Railway (BHRR) engineer.

Dwight started out in 1976 as a fireman on steam locomotives for Norfolk Southern (NS), but got bumped from that position later that year. He was out of railroading from 1976-1982, but it was still on his mind. Dwight started working for a company that did boiler and machinery inspections and became an American Society of Mechanical Engineers certified inspector.

“I did that because I liked steam engines,” Dwight said. “I figured I could get qualified to inspect boilers and use that to see what I could figure out on these old engines and help restore them.”

He went back to the NS steam division in 1982 working as a fireman again. The fireman is in charge of tending the fire that creates the steam. Dwight says there were a lot of hot days keeping those steamers going, and that he wanted to do more.

“We had this old guy, you’d have to take the pry bar and pry him out of the seat in order to get to run the thing,” Dwight said. “After he left, there was a younger fella who took over and he’d let you run the engines a lot more often than the old head would. I tried to run every chance I got.”

Dwight hired on with the Birmingham Southern Railroad (BS) on April 17, 1989. His wife had seen an ad in the local paper requesting anyone with engineer experience, which Dwight had. He’d qualified in 1981 with the Tennessee Valley Railroad Museum (TVRM). The TVRM is a tourist line running steam and diesel passenger trains on a 40 mph main line near Chattanooga, Tenn. He stayed with the BS until Watco took over operations in 2012 and renamed it the BHRR.

“Watco was nice enough to hire me and keep me on when they bought the Birmingham Southern. I had just bought a house, and didn’t want to have to move or start over at the bottom,” Dwight said. “They let me keep my vacation too.”

Dwight’s wife has been an important part of his career. She even adjusts her schedule to match his, so when he was working nights, she’d stay up and do her housework at night.

“She used to listen to the scanner at home and was tickled to hear where the trains were. Some of the guys started calling her The Trainmaster. I’d come in and they’d ask me, ‘How’s The Trainmaster doing today?’ She’s a good wife,” Dwight said. “We hung the same shift together and she supported me entirely.”

BHRR trainmaster Rodger Isbell says the couple shares a lot in common, and one of those things is a passion for railroading.

“He’ll tell her about what they’re doing, and she can understand it like she was out there running an engine. He’d call her during breaks and say, ‘We put in this much fuel, this much oil, this much sand,’ and she’d document it,” Isbell said. “She took care of home, and he took care of the railroad.”

Isbell says it’s Dwight’s attention to detail and knowledge about those details that make him a great railroader.

“He knows his way around an engine, and not just the mechanical part. He knows all the rules, the federal regulations, and when he runs an engine, he runs it like he owned it,” said Isbell. “I had him as an engineer when I was on the ground conducting. When I was riding with Dwight, I knew that I was in good hands because I knew he’d be on his game.”

That attention to detail and awareness showed in 2016 when Dwight spotted a broken rail at the Port Birmingham Terminal. A ball had broken off from the weld and the rail had moved over. Dwight managed to see that and stopped the train before it derailed.

“We could have had a lot of equipment on the ground from that. He was paying attention, saw it, and turned something that could have been bad into a near miss,” Isbell said.

BHRR general manager David Tarwater says one of the biggest benefits of Dwight and his experience is that he’s eager to share it.

“His experience and being able to share that as a peer trainer has really helped the BHRR a lot. We send a lot of our new engineers out with Dwight for at least two or three weeks to learn the ins and outs because he can answer any questions they might have,” Tarwater said.

Dwight credits his time inspecting boilers as what taught him to look at everything, and that eye for problems is just another way to keep Team Members safe.

“I’m trying to keep an eye out for everything, even other engines that aren’t mine. I’m glazing at them as we go by to make sure I don’t see anything falling off them or anything’s broken,” Dwight said. “I mainly want to make sure no one gets in trouble and that they don’t get hurt out here. Watch out for everybody, that’s my motto.”

Fortunately for Watco and the BHRR, Dwight plans to stick around for a while. He’ll have his 30 years in 2019, but it’s not easy for a lifelong railroader to leave, especially when they enjoy it as much as Dwight does.

“I’ve always liked railroading since I was a kid and since I got involved with the steam train in 1976, it’s never got out of me. They always say trains and railroading gets in your blood,” Dwight said. “I hate to say goodbye, but at a certain time, I guess you have to pull the cut lever and roll on down the track.”

Photo by Rodger Isbell
With the New Year, we are usually inspired to set resolutions for
ourselves that don’t always last. The fear of failure or the thought of
how much work will be required can sometimes be overwhelming,
but if you have a strategic plan and vision, you can break down those
insurmountable goals into small, daily achievements that will lead to
success over time. Here are a few tips on how to achieve greatness in
2018 and beyond:

• **Create a Five Year Vision:** You have to know where you want to
go before you can get there. Write out a page long vision of where you
see yourself in five years. Get descriptive - who surrounds you? What
does your career look like? Where do you live? What do you do on
a daily basis? Make it as detailed as you can and don’t limit yourself
based on your current situation. Dream bigger, get excited, and maybe
even a little bit nervous!

• **Break it Down:** Creating goals from your five year vision allows
you to make a plan for achieving your best life. Try setting one or two
ambitious personal, health, and career goals that you wish to achieve
in the next five years. From there, set one or two three year, one year,
and six month goals that will lead you to your five year vision.

• **Write in the Present Tense:** Make sure you write as if the goals
have already been achieved. “I am a Supervisor” or “I own my home.”

• **Make Your Goals Measurable, Specific, & Time-Driven:** Don’t
just say “I workout,” instead say “I workout four times per week for
60 minutes by July 2018.” Be as specific and concise as possible to
know exactly what you need to do to get to your long-term goals.

• **Use Affirmative Language:** You will feel more confident in your
abilities if you say what you will do versus what you won’t do.

Looking to be happy and healthy this year? Then you may be inter-
ested in these 14 easy tips to help you improve your well-being. Read
on to learn more!

1. **Stay on top of preventive care.** This includes regular phys-
ical exams, vaccines, blood pressure checks, well-woman exams, and
more.

2. **Add an extra serving of fruit or vegetables per day.** Each day,
find a way to eat one more serving than you normally would. You may
have more opportunities than you realize!

3. **Add 10 minutes of exercise to your day.** If you don’t already
exercise, aim to get 10 minutes each day. Try walking to start. If you
do currently exercise, add 10 extra minutes to your routine.

4. **Correct your posture.** Your posture can affect both your physical
and mental health. Work on keeping your back straight, shoulders back
and head up, as if you were balancing a book on your head. Avoid
slouching!

5. **Get adequate amounts of sleep.** Aim to get between seven and
nine hours each night.

6. **Take time away from your “screens”** (cell phone, computer, TV, tablet, etc.). Re-
ducing your “screen” time can help you improve sleep, productivity and feel better about
yourself. You’ll have more free time to do and experience things.

7. **Skip the salty snacks or sweet treats.** Go for fruit to round out packed lunches and
trade that sugar packed dessert for an after-dinner stroll.

8. **Stay in motion.** At home, pace, march in place, or sit down/stand up when you’re talk-
ing on the phone, folding clothes or watching TV. At work, get up and shake out your limbs
every hour, use the restroom farthest from your work station, or get up a relay to message to a
co-worker rather than sending an email.

9. **Don’t drink your calories.** Over the course of the day, you can easily cut calories if
you skip or reduce your soda, juice and alcohol intake. Choose water instead; it’s calorie-
free.

10. **Stay ahead of stress.** Whether you’re having an easy or difficult day, plan to spend at
least five minutes on stress relief, such as a brisk walk, quick meditation or deep breathing
exercises.

11. **Avoid work burnout.** Take your designated breaks as often as you are able. Limit the
number of days you go in early or stay late. Plan to take time off for personal days and vaca-
ations. When you’re away from work, avoid checking emails and voicemails, if possible.

12. **Track your activity!** Use a fitness device, app or pedometer to see how active you are
and where you may need to improve.

13. **Unwind before bed.** Take 10 minutes to mentally unwind before getting into bed.
Writing about your day in a journal or closing your eyes and meditating are some great ways
to relax.

14. **Try a new exercise…** Now’s the time to switch it up—for example, if you’ve been
jogging the same route, pick a new one. Switch from the treadmill to the elliptical, take a
new fitness class…the possibilities are endless!
Panhandling for a good cause

by Jay Benedict
Digital Communication & Social Media Specialist

Panhandlers have become a regular sight at busy intersections around Jonesboro, Arkansas, and the Watco Supply Chain Services Team had gotten accustomed there being several near the office. After learning that some of the panhandlers had been offered jobs and refused them, business development associate Tom Barnes decided to do something about it.

“People are always saying, ‘somebody needs to do something about this, somebody needs to say something,’ so I decided to. I’m just one of those biker guys. I just wanted to run somebody off a corner,” said Tom. “I told my wife I was getting a poster board and I needed her help making a sign and that I’m gonna go take a corner.”

Tom’s idea was to panhandle alongside others, but to use it to bring in donations for local children in need. He called it the “Panhandler Test.” On Saturday, Dec. 23 at around 1 p.m., with his poster board explaining that he had a job and that all donations were going to a good cause, Tom claimed a corner at one of Jonesboro’s busiest intersections across from three other panhandlers.

“I think about an hour after I got out there, all three other guys left. People were stopping and handing me money out their car windows, and I was so excited it was working, but I watched the other guys leave,” said Tom. “They’re standing about 150 yards away, leaned up against a truck. Another guy comes up, and they all get into these two nice pickup trucks and drive away.”

Tom’s friend, Shelby Tribble joined him later in the day, and when they left around 5 p.m., they’d received several toys and $377 cash. After their success, they decided to head out again the next day and were joined by a young man named John Foley.

Tom became a local viral sensation overnight after his wife, LaVondia, posted about his activity on her Facebook page and on a Jonesboro community page. The group ended up raising $1,557.86 and several hundred more dollars in toys and gift cards.

“It was just awesome. I never believed that that would have happened. It made people say ‘we’re so proud to be in Jonesboro.’ It started out being a crazy thing just seeing what it would do and it ended up being such a success,” Tom said.

Christmas came a day late for one family in Jonesboro. LaVondia and the Barnes’ niece found a single mother of five daughters not too far from their home that could use the help. The mother had a broken leg that had prevented her from working, which caused her to get behind on bills and run low on food.

The panhandling team brought over some of the toys, took the family to dinner, and bought groceries and school clothes for the girls.

“They wanted to model everything they got. They’d come out and they’d spin and giggle. You’d just stand there and your eyes watered up,” said Tom. “The mama said, ‘this is the best day they ever day.’ I told her in my 66 years this is the best Christmas I ever had.”

The overwhelming support from the Jonesboro community has inspired them to do this again next year, but with a little more planning, more volunteers, and starting in November.

Christmas at the Ann Arbor Railroad

Santa Claus and Mrs. Claus (Roadmaster Steve Ayala and His Fiancee Tonia Spieth Turner) and their Elf (Track Inspector Art Perez) traveled to the Ann Arbor Railroad on the WAMX 3879 and visited with all of the families at the AA.

“We were Blessed to have such a successful event and owe a huge thank you to all of the Ann Arbor and Auto Warehousing Teams for their contributions in making such great memories. A special thanks goes to the Locomotive Team (Jeff Adams, Chris Hayes and Matt Adams) for their time in decorating the WAMX 3879.”

- John Vance, AA general manager

More than 120 team members and their spouses attended a holiday gathering at Dave & Buster’s.

“It was an awesome time to have everyone get together and have so much fun.”

- CMO Mike Hayden
Landyn James Nieves

Jamie and Michelle Miller are proud to announce the birth of their second grandson, Landyn James Nieves.

Landyn is the son of Madison Kline and Anthony Nieves. He weighed 5 lbs., 12 oz., and was 17 inches long.

Jamie serves as the Chief Mechanical Officer for the Blue Ridge Southern Railroad.

Deaths

Sherry Bulot

Former Watco Team Member Sherry L. Bulot, 66, of Frontenac, Kansas, passed away at 3:23 a.m. Tuesday, December 19, 2017 at the Via Christi Village.

Sherry worked in several different departments during her tenure with Watco until her retirement in 2015.

She was born December 30, 1950 in Los Angeles, California, the daughter of Jim and Illa M. (Baldwin) Wofford. She attended schools in Porterville, Kansas and then in Pittsburg, Kansas, where she graduated from Pittsburg High School.

On January 25, 1985, she was united in marriage to Mike Bulot at the Timmons Chapel.

She worked for TWA in Kansas City for fifteen years, before moving to Pittsburg. She then worked at AAA Travel Agency until they closed.

Sherry went to work for Watco, where she worked for 12 years until she retired.

Sherry had a love and passion for her horses and the horse show world. She enjoyed showing and raising horses and was actively involved for many years with the Tri-State Association, the Ozark Quarter Horse Association, and the Lucky Riders 4-H Horse Club. She volunteered many hours in each association and at the Crawford County Fair.

She is survived by her husband, Mike Bulot of the home; two sons, Grant and Carter of the home; her mother, Illa Wofford of Pittsburg; a brother, Bob Wofford and his wife, Shirley of Warsaw, Missouri; her brother-in-law, Brian Bulot; niece, Rayna Bulot; nephew, Blake Bulot; and two good friends, Kim Duncan and Lisa Butts.

January Anniversaries

Congratulations to the following Team Members celebrating anniversaries this month.

1 Year: Jennifer Alons, Derek Batterton, Justin Cole, Cooper Case, Stephen Dominguez, Michael Frederick, Blaine Gibbs, Kyle Gilchrist, Tyler Hallett, Jeffrey Harris, Esteban Hernandez, Isaac Jaramillo, Kathleen Lankey, Carlton Lawrence, Shawna Mateo, Dean Matsuoka, Laura McNichol, Joel Meyer, James Riggis, Jake Thomson, Earl Walter, Shayne Wood


3 Years: Melissa Amaya, Mike Berry, Blankenship, Matthew Brooksher, Jesus Carlos, Jacquelin Chavis, Daniel Coiner, Michael Cooper, Corey Crutchfield, Edis Cruz, Archie Fields, Patrick Forbes, David Fugge, Lesli Hicks, Brittany Hodge, Jesus Ibarra, Amy Iori, Aridan Johnson, Iran Johnson, Keith Locace, Manuel Mendoza, Destini Palen, Robert Rios, Thomas Shilling, Jeffery Stebbins, Bryan Stewart, Jordan Vasquez, Solomon Watkins, Amanda Whetzel, Marcus Wiley, Jeremy Williams

4 Years: Luther Boothe, Nick Coomes, Lance Gates, Amanda Haggerly, Darvis Hicks, Andrew Jones, Richard Lee, Laura McKinnell, Juan Moreno, Jessica Nelson, Buddy Olvera, Brad Peot, Theodore Savage, Perry Thomas, Jonathan Thompson

5 Years: Michael Barajas, Robert Campbell, John Dellinger, Gregory Ferguson, Willie Green, Jonathan Hamm, Matthew Hayes, Jaime Henry, Kenneth Hogarth, Travis Linkstra, Kevin Martin, Kelly Sanders, Morgan Speer, Tina Swallow, Todd Trammell, Joseph Whitaker, Cyle Windsor, Michael Yoger

6 Years: Kenneth Brown, Justin Harch, Jeffrey Hart, Kris Hawley, Danielle Kenny, Russ Koczyra, Preston McNee, Curtis Nobis, Todd Peterson, Lee Smith, Marcos Soto

7 Years: John Anderson, Daniel Caine, Nathan Champion, Israel Garza, Angela Gilmer, Bill Goldsberry, Daniel Hankness, Miranda Kichler, Stephanie Magrath, Todd Vaughan

8 Years: Eric Bowlin, Seth Morris, Keith Owens

9 Years: James Carter, Jorge Gonzalez, Michael Kertz, James McCoy, Steve Smardo, Raymond Warrington

10 Years: William Brackin, Ricky Carter, Scot Clark, John King, Charles Lambert, Jon Mihalic, Michael Ward, Robert Ward, Gina Williams

11 Years: Joshua Beaudry, Ron Close, Melissa Faughn, Steve Iseli, Herman Lewis, Amy Miori, Frank Nichols, Doug Whalen, Jason Wood

12 Years: Thomas Addison, Derek Brown, Johnny Fields, Michael Gray, Robert Gray, Anthony Kirkland, Eddie Lapine, Joshua Leslie, Donnell Rhone

13 Years: Matt Heeren, Timothy Watson

14 Years: Gary Griswold, Brian Pflughoef

15 Years: Sallyn Deao, Patrick Peabody

16 Years: Samuel Winegarner

17 Years: James Brewer, Kenneth Parkin, Melinda VanBuren

20 Years: Justin Cox

21 Years: Roger Kelley, Arlis Smith

22 Years: Dennis Godds, Kelly King

23 Years: Paul Cain, Clarence Kinzeler, Shannon Kniels, Rob Thrall

24 Years: Gregory Hoffman

25 Years: Sherlyn Graham, Santiago Montoya, Millburn Stewart

26 Years: Michael Beatty, John Falk, John Pond

27 Years: Kirk Hawley

28 Years: William Gast

30 Years: Melvin Davis, Paul Swanson

38 Years: Fredrick Burrell

40 Years: Lawrence Winningham

41 Years: Tex Inman

Watco was a sponsor of Kansas City Southern’s Holiday Express which stopped at many Watco locations enroute from Shreveport, Louisiana, to Kansas City, Missouri, this past Christmas season. Residents were able to tour the train and get a gift bag from Santa and his elves.
Blue Ridge Southern Railroad locomotive engineer, Andrew Plotts, recently took advantage of an opportunity to make a positive difference at a Customer’s facility by making a suggestion for an improvement that may have been overlooked for years.

At one particularly challenging location to service, the difference of a few feet in available track length determined whether the service could be safely provided or not provided at all. The location of the track prohibited extending the track in either direction.

Andrew recommended that the folding Blue Signal at the entrance to the track be turned around so that it folds in the opposite direction, providing a few more feet of usable room in the track for the Customer.

The Customer accepted the suggestion, made the change, and instantly two more feet of track was available with just a twist of a few screws. Andrew’s desire to serve, and his willingness to share an idea has brought some simple, and welcome, relief to the Customer and his fellow Team Members.

The Blue Ridge Southern and its Customers are not the only ones to benefit from Andrew’s “service” attitude.

He served in the U.S. Coast Guard for five years, where he met his wife, Rebecca. They currently reside near Fines Creek, North Carolina, with their one year old daughter Mattison. Andrew also volunteers on the community fire department. Andrew joined the BLU in July 2015 when he transferred from another Watco property.

General manager Darl Farris said, “Ever since I’ve known Andrew, he has exhibited a desire to make things better. It’s easy to see why we consider ourselves fortunate and proud to have Andrew and his family on our team. Thank you, Andrew!”

Watco Strategic Partner featured in industry publication

Watco Companies has found a great strategic partner in Crowley Maritime, the second largest private maritime business in North America. Chairman and CEO, Tom Crowley, spent some time visiting with writer Greg Trauthwein for an article in the November issue of the Maritime Reporter and Engineering News. The article covers topics that range from Jones Act waivers, to the state of the market, and Crowley’s thoughts on the energy rebound.

The marine solutions, transportation, and logistics company has come a long way since the first $80 investment that was made by Crowley’s grandfather and founder Thomas Crowley in 1892. The 18-ft. Whitehall boat was purchased to provide transportation of personnel and stores to ships anchored on San Francisco Bay. The company now has more than $2 billion in annual revenues and employs approximately 5,300 people and is still wholly and privately owned by the Crowley family and Crowley employees.

You can read the article on Tom’s thoughts on the current landscape and future of the maritime, transportation, and logistics industries at https://buff.ly/2AT31Kj.