#WatcoStrong - Team members supporting Watco flood victims

As the flood waters in Denham Springs, Louisiana, continued to rise amidst an historic flooding event in August, Baton Rouge Southern Team Member Alvin Maney and his wife waited as long as they could to leave.

But when the water hit their top front step, they knew it was time.

“We packed a bag with what we could carry, tried to put our irreplaceable stuff up as high as we could, then flagged a passing boat,” Maney said.

Three feet of water coursed through their house. At the same time, barge loader James Miller was watching cartoons with his 2-year-old son in his Baton Rouge apartment when he got a call from his son’s mother that flood waters were coming.

Miller sent his son with family, moved clothing and other items up high, and packed a bag. Not long after, he was knee-deep in water. Miller spent the next 18 hours in an upstairs apartment with others from his complex until they were rescued by boat.

Both Miller and Maney are now in the process of rebuilding their lives, and both are thankful for the support they got from Watco team members.

Watco People Services Senior Vice President Rachel Peterson said rallying resources was a no-brainer for Watco managers and locations across the nation.

“As soon as the flooding happened, our managers in Louisiana, Brit Sonnier at the Baton Rouge Southern (BRS) and Geron Crotwell at the port, worked with our People Services Team, Lindsey Alexander and Matt Lewis, to coordinate support,” Peterson said.

Immediate housing needs was their first focus. “We were able to locate hotel facilities for our team members that had families, and for those who were individuals without children, we were able to purchase some trailers to put on the site,” Peterson said.

For Maney, a hotel room is their new temporary home.

“We packed this for us, and it’s been a great help. We’re so thankful. Without them, I don’t know where we’d be,” said Maney, whose 18-year-old son just started college.

Miller was provided a camper trailer on the job site.

“The days I work, I stay there, and the days I don’t, I spend with my family,” he said. “It works out real well.”

Team members then began identifying other needs: cleaning supplies, generators, food and water, and clothing.

“We were able to collect and go purchase those types of things,” Peterson said. “To help with that, we began a t-shirt fundraiser.”

Peterson, Communications Director Tracie VanBecelaere, and Designer Matthew Brooksher put their heads together and developed a quick plan, obtaining bids and having a design ready in 48 hours. A mass email plea to team members across the nation resulted in the sales of 1,130 shirts and netted $8,678.

“That just showed me how we are one large Watco team,” Peterson said. “It’s not a Pittsburg or Southern (BRS) and Geron Crotwell at the port, worked with our People Services Team, Lindsey Alexander and Matt Lewis, to coordinate support,” Peterson said.

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“That just showed me how we are one large Watco team,” Peterson said. “It’s not a Pittsburg Team, a Baton Rouge Team — we’re all in it together.”

Additional donations from Watco and Watco team members netted an additional $6,250.

“We were able to provide $1,700 each to nine team members,” Peterson said.

One was Maney, who in addition to his home, lost two cars in the flood, as well.

“It’s unbelievable,” Maney said. “I don’t know how to say thank you.”

“Everyone was sticking together, and without that I don’t know where we’d be right now.”

Maney joined the Watco team six years ago as a conductor, then became an engineer and recently was named a yardmaster.

“For me, it’s a great place to work. I appreciate everybody from the top on down — Rick Webb, our general manager, our safety guy,” he said.

“Every little chance they get they try to give back. During Summer Spike we get Gatorade and gift cards, and at Thanksgiving and Christmas they remember us.”

Miller said he also received funds, and is holding onto them until he has sorted through things and decided what to replace first.

“I got more help from Watco than any disaster relief, any governmental assistance. If it wasn’t for Watco, I don’t know where I’d be,” he said.

Neither man is sure yet what the future holds for any of the affected team members.

“It’s a waiting game,” Maney said. “If you had flood insurance, you have to wait for claims to go through, and if not, FEMA is taking applications and you have to wait on...”

- Continued on page 6

The National Guard was called in to help rescue victims that had been stranded because the waters rose so quickly during the Louisiana flooding.
Watco Track Team provides capital services

When it comes to the word “team,” Scott Adams believes the members of the Watco Northwest Track Services — also known simply as the tie and surface gangs — are the very definition of the word.

Adams, chief engineer in Twin Falls, Idaho, reached out to The Dispatch with a request to recognize the team members for their safety performance, their accomplishments across the northwest to help improve Watco’s track structure, and for the time they spend away from their families to do this.

The two gangs perform the majority of track capital projects. They take a lot of pride and ownership in the work they do. They know they will be coming back to the properties for other work. “These two gangs are a big business rolling down the tracks of Victory Energy. They take a lot of pride in their work,” said Adams.

The gangs got their start in 2005 on the old West Region and have worked with other projects or maintenance issues as needed or as requested while still trying to stay on schedule for the capital projects. “These two gangs are a savings to the profit centers they work on as their costs are less than most track contractors,” Adams explained. “These teams also take a lot of pride and ownership in the work they do. They know they will be coming back to the properties for other work.”

The Track Services Team relaying rail across the Murtaugh Bridge in Twin Falls County, Idaho.

The gangs are pretty much self-sufficient other than needing a backhoe from the RR’s or renting one,” Adams said. “We have a transport trailer for moving their equipment to and from the locations and they have a job trailer to carry most of their tools needed.”

Ben May, track gang supervisor, said it’s very gratifying to return to the profit centers and see the accomplishments and improvements his team has been involved in with improving the track structure. “It makes me feel good when I can come back to a railroad and I can see what we did and say we did that; it makes me feel proud of our team,” he said.

Other team members in the track gang include track machine operators Francis Benally, Jose Martinez, Jeremiah Foy, and Boyd Stanley, and mechanic/operator Brad Scott.

For the surfacing gang, Kevin Adcock serves as gang foreman and John Radicke serves as machine operator (ballast regulator). Adams said that the men are not only equipment operators, but assist in whatever duties are required to get the job done. “They are a great group of guys and enjoy what they do,” Adams said. “They take a lot of pride in their work.”

Watco Track Team provides capital services

Victory Energy is steaming ahead

There’s big business rolling down the tracks of Victory Energy’s new spur track, literally. This Watco Customer in Collinsville, Oklahoma, builds industrial steam boilers and ships out the high-wide loads on the South Kansas and Oklahoma Railroad (SKOL). The new spur was built to accommodate for Victory Energy’s growing business.

“We built our first spur 14 years ago,” said Jeff VanderMaas, Victory Energy’s Director of Transportation. “This will be a boost in how quickly we can get our product out to our customers.”

The track spur was being built in conjunction with a redesign of the facility so a feature was built in with the spur running directly through the plant. This allows for the boilers to go through the production process being built on the railcar so it’s ready to be shipped out upon completion. Often, two boilers are shipped out at the same time.

The track gang — 168 — has installed most of the capital project ties over the years other than a few due to the large quantities, in which case a contractor was used, Adams said. The surface gang — 167 — has surfaced all of the capital projects along with the maintenance surfacing needed on the properties. “The gangs are pretty much self-sufficient other than needing a backhoe from the RR’s or renting one,” Adams said. “We have a transport trailer for moving their equipment to and from the locations and they have a job trailer to carry most of their tools needed.”

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The new rail spur leading into to Victory Energy’s Collinsville, Oklahoma, facility.

These high-wide loads are massive, weighing up to 500,000 pounds. The basic boilers are shipped on eight-axel center cars and are about 12 feet wide and 19 feet tall and 105 feet bumper to bumper. There are exceptions to this size as Victory Energy has an engineering team that helps their customers by building boilers to fit special requirements. That’s what sets Victory Energy apart from similar companies.

“Once it became known that we had an engineering team, our customers began involving us in the building process earlier so that our team could offer suggestions to enhance the efficiencies of their project,” said VanderMaas.

Watco’s SKOL Railroad shipped its highest load last year, a boiler for Victory Energy that was 23 feet high. “That’s the highest that would ever be shipped,” said Ron Spencer, Watco’s Director of Customer Service and Collections. “With overpasses and bridges, that’s the tallest that could safely go through.”

The spur project was started a year and a half ago and the first shipment went out on the spur in July.
Watco U teaches students team building and critical thinking

Editor’s note: Dispatch contributing writer Andra Stefanoni’s son, Jack, volunteered to write this story for the newsletter about a recent team building activity Watco’s Nick Weber did for Jack’s sixth grade class. Weber also taught team building to seventh and eighth grade classes last month, and is looking at offering such activities to fourth and fifth grade programs soon as part of Watco’s practice of supporting communities and schools. “The idea,” Weber said, “is to have them work through problem solving challenges that are heavily based on a kinesthetic approach to learning that they don’t usually have in the regular classrooms.”

When the teacher said my class was going to Watco for a field trip, I thought it sounded pretty cool. We went the morning of September 26.

In the basement, Nick Weber met us and introduced us to Watco, then told us what we were going to do: team building and leadership activities.

We need to know team building because in the real world, if you work in a group with people of any age, you need to know how to get things done and work together.

On the floor, we all noticed that there were two stacks of cups. Each stack had a tennis ball on top. Nick divided the 16 of us into four groups of four and he explained the first challenge we were going to do.

Two teams at a time would start at the starting line and rush to the cups, take the tennis ball off, then re-stack the cups into a pyramid shape and put the tennis ball back on top. Then we had to take the pyramid apart and put the cups back into their original stack with the tennis ball on top. Each team went five times, he took our best score, and whoever had the best score won.

I liked that challenge a lot. Another challenge was that each team had a bag of PVC pipes and each bag was the same. We had to use up every single piece in the bag without having any open ends in the finished product, and we only had one end cap. It was hard but my team did it!

In both of those challenges, we used critical thinking.

Another challenge was that there were wooden platforms on the floor, stretching from one line to another across the whole room. He divided us up and put half of us on one side and half of us on the other. Each team had two wooden boards, one long one and one short. Neither would reach all the way from one platform to the other. Teams were supposed to switch sides without touching the floor, just touching the platforms and the boards. That was tough but fun.

We got to eat sack lunches at Watco, too.

All in all, it was a fun day and I hope we get to go back. If you ever get the chance, I would recommend that you do Nick’s team building.

- Jack Stefanoni

Pittsburg Community Middle School
While the Pittsburg (Kansas) State Gorilla football team is busy warming up and executing moves on Game Day at Carnie Smith Stadium, Watco Facilities Director Kevin Anselmi and his team are preparing for and executing moves of their own in the nearby parking lot for hundreds of fans.

They’re the Watco tailgating crew, and at every home game for the past seven years they’ve grilled hamburgers and brats for the masses.

In addition to Anselmi, the team includes Scott Gray, Mike Shoemaker, Joe Del Smith, Mike Carr, and Jim Fearmonti, who not only cook and serve the food on Saturdays, but shop for it on Thursdays, load it into the trailers on Fridays, and transport it to Pitt State.

“We get all the food local, giving everyone in town some business,” Anselmi said. “We’re here, this is our home base, and we need to make sure to give back.”

Getting up at dawn on a Saturday to get the tent set up, grills out, and begin cooking is a labor of love, they say.

“It’s a nice atmosphere. Every year we get better and it grows. It’s a way for the company to give back to the people and the university,” Anselmi said. “I think it’s a great thing and lets people know we care.”

Anselmi credits Brad Snow, who heads up the All Aboard Foundation, with starting the first Watco tailgating effort about a decade ago.

“Back then, it was just for the company,” Anselmi recalled. “When I came here seven years ago, we got it started the way it is today, where it’s open to anyone.”

It was slow in the early days, Anselmi said — perhaps 100 people total.

“By the next game, we were serving 200, and then it just continued to grow. It wasn’t long before the band began coming over and we began feeding them,” Anselmi said.

PSU Director of Bands Doug Whitten said that at least half of his marching band members eat at the Watco tent after working up at appetite performing at the tailgate at Gorilla Village, the pre-game and halftime shows, and playing pep band songs nearly continually in the stands.

“I think it is great and the band kids really love it,” Whitten said.

Anselmi’s team always makes enough to feed the football players and coaches after the game.

After every player and coach has eaten and the tents and equipment have been packed away, it’s usually midnight when Anselmi leaves.

“It’s worth it. We’ve gotten lots of positive feedback,” Anselmi said. “I’m very fortunate to be in the position I am to be able to be part of it. You don’t see this atmosphere at too many universities. It’s pretty amazing.”

New this year

This year, the team set up a big screen TV in a nearby pavilion and streamed the game live. This allows the team members who are working to see the game and when games are sold out others can view it as well.

Also new this year, Snow began working with area charities setting up a sign and tip jar, with 100 percent of the money collected going to the charity; a recent game saw the SEK Humane Society take in $540.

“It’s super because it stays right here,” Anselmi said. “We get all the food local, giving everyone in town some business.”

Did you know?

Pitt State is the only university in the nation with a gorilla as a mascot.

Watco founder Dick Webb attended elementary school on the campus of Pitt State. He went on to graduate from what was then called Kansas State Teachers College, as did his wife, Kaye Lynn, who worked at Pitt State for many years.

Many other Webb family members graduated from Pitt, including Watco CEO Rick Webb.

Team member rides for rubbish

What started out as a quest to get rid of trash ended up growing into something much more. John Boehm works at the Fryburg Terminal in North Dakota and he used his last weekend off in August to hold a “Ride for Rubbish” event. The event was organized to clean up an area down by the Missouri River near Bismarck, North Dakota. There are a lot of riding trails in the area along with great spots for camping and fishing.

John visited several of the off-road dealerships in his area asking for $150 from each to fund the event. He then got a screen printer and advertisers to donate to the cause. Approximately 50 people showed up for the event and after each one would turn in their first bag of trash, they would receive their shirt. The group ended up filling a 30 yard dumpster 3/4 of the way full.

“It turned into more than I expected,” said Boehm. “Not only did we get the area cleaned up, we also had money and food left over that we donated to a family and the homeless shelter.”

Duane and Toni Schneider were given $570 to help with costs associated with Toni’s treatment for brain cancer.

“In addition to the cancer, Toni recently suffered a stroke and Duane has been the only one able to work. It felt good to be able to do a little something to help them out,” said Boehm.

Boehm had plenty of food left over from the event and instead of tossing it in the dumpster like some people would do, he went that extra mile and delivered the food to a local homeless shelter along with some shirts left over from the event.

“I definitely want to make this an annual event,” said Boehm. “I’ve already been contacted to see if we could do it in conjunction with the Public Land Day held here in September.”

Justin McClean, EHS Coordinator, “I thought this was a very selfless act all the way around and has restored a little faith in humanity for us out here in Fryburg North Dakota.”

More than 50 people showed up for the “Ride for Rubbish” event organized by Fryburg, North Dakota, Team Member John Boehm.

Left: Leftover food and shirts were delivered to the Ruth Meiers Homeless Shelter. Team Member John Boehm is pictured with one of the shelter’s employees.

Right: Remaining funds from the “Ride for Rubbish” were donated to Duane and Toni Schneider, pictured with organizer John Boehm.
Wichita Dispatch Team reaches out to build relationships

Ground School Training
When Lucas Conrad, manager of safety and training, recently held a Ground School in Wichita, Kansas, part of the training involved a visit to the Dispatch Center. The Dispatch Center is a key part of the Watco Transportation Team who are responsible for traffic on Watco short lines, from Washington to West Virginia and everything in between.

Lisa Berry, director and senior chief dispatcher, said, “Putting a face with a name is the beginning of building a relationship between team members. We believe this interaction between trainmen and dispatcher begins the relationship needed to be successful. This is very important in developing trust and respect between team members in the field and the dispatch office. We work closely with Lucas to achieve this right out of the gate with the new conductors. Also, this is a way to begin to establish a strong foundation, to grow and reach our ultimate goal - delivering great service to our Customers.”

Part of the Ground School involves teaching rules in regard to track warrants and Conrad said, “Sending our Ground School class into the dispatch office begins building trust. This gives them a chance to see how the full process works. This gives them the chance to hear the whole communication process. By sitting in with the dispatchers they hear and see what they are doing on the other end of the phone. They also got to hear team members in the field repeating the information back to dispatcher. This helped them see that the dispatchers are not only dispatching for their railroad but multiple roads. We paired them with the dispatcher assigned to their own railroad so they could see it firsthand.”

Trainmaster Nathan Higgins and TSIC members Aaron Sexton (conductor) and Jordan Johnson (locomotive mechanic) grill burgers and dogs for the team.

The Watco Team is all about family, and sometimes the family is all about Watco. When the Blue Ridge Southern Railroad (BLU) recently celebrated working through 101 days of the Summer Spike without a single human factor incident, Sally Farris, the wife of general manager Darl, played a big part in prepping and cooking for the event.

“Sally loves to cook and spoil our team,” said Darl. “I think if the team had to pick between me as a general manager or her as a cook, they’d boot me right on out.”

The event was celebrated with a hamburger and hotdog cookout for all team members and was held at the Canton, North Carolina, depot. Along with Sally, BLU supervisors and TSIC members prepped and cooked for the event.

This event coincided with BLU team members actually celebrating over 150 days human factor incident free and was an impressive milestone for the whole team.

Farris said, “I am so proud of this team’s performance. They faced some pretty severe challenges this summer, including some record breaking heat. While they may not face the same extreme temperatures as our Watco team members in places like Texas and Arizona, the heat in the relatively cool mountains this year was tough to overcome.”

He added, "BLU team members coped by taking frequent breaks, hydrating often, and most importantly by keeping an eye on one another for signs of heat stress. These team members genuinely care about each other.”

As tokens of appreciation, team members received a special hat and mug to commemorate their success.

- Tracie VanBecelaere, Managing Editor

Managing Editor

Managing Editor

Managing Editor

Managing Editor

Managing Editor
Rock Chalk

Watco wants Jayhawks

Accounting Team Members Caleb Dellasega, Matthew Nash, and Jason Abbott were joined by Kansas University’s mascot as they hosted a table at the University of Kansas Career Fair.

When Caleb Dellasega said that the candidates they’ve been talking to at the University of Kansas Career Fair get better and better each year, he had to remember to make an exclusion for the first year. That was the year he was recruited to intern.

Dellasega laughed, “I was the first intern on the Accounting Team from KU, so that first year, it was a really good one.”

The Watco Accounting Team in the Kansas City area has been making trips to the University of Kansas for the last several years, looking for a few good Jayhawks to join the Watco Team.

Dellasega, Matthew Nash, and Jason Abbott all manned the Watco table as students checked out the many different companies in the hall.

“We had about 30-40 people stop by and visit with us about opportunities in the areas of accounting and finance,” said Dellasa. “We actually have a few in the office today for the second round of interviews for summer internships.”

The Career Fair was specifically for those in the accounting and finance fields and more than 500 students visited the 60-75 companies that had displays set up at the fair.

Dellasa said, “Our internship program is vital to recruiting key talent and getting the Watco brand known in the Kansas City area. It is always exciting to inform the students about the opportunities at Watco and hopefully at the end of their internship, after seeing these opportunities, they want to come join our team for the long term.”

- Tracie VanBecelaere
  Managing Editor

Watco web site revamped

Watco Creative Services Manager Matthew Brooksher followed in his dad's footsteps.

Not literally — his dad was a letter carrier.

But when computers hit the market when Matthew was a kid, his dad became a huge computer geek.

“He went out and bought the family one and really got into it, and I was hooked immediately,” Brooksher recalled.

It was the young man's salvation.

“I was never a book guy. I always struggled in school. I just couldn’t catch on quickly learning things from books. But when I was 11 or 12, my dad got a copy of Photoshop and I loved it.”

Brooksher built his first website at age 14 to see if he could do it. And he knew immediately he’d found a career. By age 16 he was freelancing web design for companies.

Last month, he finished one of his biggest projects yet: a six-month focus on completely overhauling the Watco website with a redesign and improved functionality.

"Watco is always growing, and our website should too," Brooksher said. "The old site wasn't bad, but it had hit the ceiling. We needed something more responsive that can adapt to changes in the future."

Brooksher said that in an age when 75 percent of Internet users prefer mobile, the trick is ensuring the site is dynamic and adaptable to all devices, including quicker load times.

"A website is often the first impression to anyone," he said. "It's the front door to your company and a 24-7 salesperson."

Executive Vice President Dan Smith said he’s very pleased with it so far.

"With today’s expectation of instant information, our new website offers a tool for both existing and future customers of Watco," Smith said.

“It is much easier to find out who to contact for a specific need, and it does a great job of explaining Watco's ever-changing service offerings."

- Andra Bryan Stefanoni
  Contributing Writer

#WatcoStrong

- Continued from page 1 those.”

He said he and fellow displaced BRS team members are thankful, too, that not everyone at their job site was affected so that there was manpower to keep the site going while flood victims cleaned out their homes and settled in elsewhere.

CEO Rick Webb said displaced team members will have the company’s support as long as it’s needed.

“We are blessed with amazing team members. All we have ever accomplished has been done through their good work and perseverance,” he said. “I will never forget what makes us who we are, our team members!”

By the numbers:

Some areas of Louisiana received as much as 30 inches of rain in one day, while Aug. 8-14 saw 6.9 trillion gallons pummel the state — enough to fill more than 10.4 million Olympic-size swimming pools.

More than 60,000 homes were reported damaged by Louisiana parishes impacted by the flooding, according to the Louisiana Governor’s Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness.

The Red Cross called it the worst disaster to hit the U.S. since Superstorm Sandy, estimating it will cost at least $30 million.

Twelve parishes were declared disaster areas, with more than 106,000 individuals and households registering with FEMA for assistance. Members of the Coast Guard and National Guard, along with emergency responders and regular civilians, helped take more than 20,000 residents and 1,000 pets to safety, officials said.

- Andra Bryan Stefanoni
  Contributing Writer

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  Contributing Writer

- Andra Bryan Stefanoni
  Contributing Writer
Births

Amelia Grace Flaugh
Joshua and Jessica Flaugh are proud to announce the birth of their daughter, Amelia Grace. Amelia was born August 13, 2016. Amelia weighed 9 lbs., 14 ounces, and was 20 inches long.

Joshua works at the GBW Hollidaysburg Shop.

Her grandmother works for (Millennium Rail Fleet Services) WATCO Supply Chain at Hollidaysburg, Pennsylvania, as Rail Fleet Administrator.

Amelia Grace Flaugh

Brodie Christopher Griffiths
Russell and Meghan Griffiths would like to introduce Brodie Christopher to the Watco Team. Brodie was born on July 30, 2016, and weighed 5 lbs., 9 oz.

Brodie was welcomed home by James 9, and Angela, 8. Russell is Assigning Zone Manager- Kwinana, for the WA Rail in Western Australia.

Keelian Gordon Stewart
Kyle and Tasha Stewart are proud to announce the birth of a son, Keelan Gordon. Keelan was born on September 5, 2016 and weighed 6 lbs., 9 oz.

Keelan was 19 inches long.

Proud grandma Lisa Berry works as Watco’s Director and Senior Chief Dispatcher in Wichita, Kansas.

Knox Jordan Baumann
Seth Baumann and Victoria Berry are proud to announce the birth of a son Knox Jordan. Knox was born on September 11, 2016, and weighed 8 lbs., 1 oz., and was 20 inches long.

Sean is a switchman at the Wallua, Washington, location.

Knox Jordan Baumann

Jordyn Jenean Hayes
Matt and Ashi Hayes are proud to announce the birth of a daughter Jordyn Jenean. Jordyn was born on September 14, 2016, and weighed 6 lbs., 5 oz., and was 17 inches long.

Matt is an engineer for the Kaw River Railroad in Kansas City.

Jordyn Jenean Hayes

Elizabeth Ann and Margaret Louise Hayes
Michael and Erin Hayes are proud to announce the birth of twin girls Elizabeth Ann and Margaret Louise.

The girls were born on August 18, 2016. Elizabeth weighed 5 lbs, 7 oz. and Margaret weighed 5 lbs., 12 oz.

Michael worked as a technical writer for Watco and helped write the WATTS manual. Proud grandpa is Tom Hayes, Associate General Counsel.

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Anniversaries

Congratulations to the following team members celebrating their anniversaries!

1 Year:

2 Years:

3 Years:
- Amber Brown, Nicholas Burnham, James Burris, David Charters, William Coleman, Kylie Collier, Rossie Drain, Vanessa Coptima, Shannon Fox, Rebecca Garza, Credrick Gray, Thomas Hansen, Leroy Henderson, Robert Llewelyn, Marcus Olvera, Michael Onuskanch, Clint Pavlicek, Mark Rice, Marcell Salmond, David Shertel, Brian Spiller, Tommy Terrell, Micheal Townsend, Mary Young

4 Years:
- Rebecca Beaudry, Peter Christy, Justin Crandall, Tyler Crawford, Billy Estes, Jaxon Exum, Michael Galligan, Jesus Garcia, John Harrigan, Brad Kilburn, David Lawson, Jeff Liggert, Larkland Linton, Brian Morgan, Austin Osborn, Rodney Pickett, Patrick Smith, Richard Wheeler, John White

5 Years:
- Joseph Abrahamson, Tyler Bennett, Peter Bercier, Bryan Brooks, Jeffrey Back, Gabriel Grad, McKenzie Green, Travis Ivy, Timothy Joyce, Brian Manning, Erik Mitchell, Arturo Perez, Salvador Sanchez, Keith Schepp, Robert Sullivan, Derrick Williams

6 Years:
- Miguel Auces, Timothy Dykes, William Gray, William Soensern, Brandon Stewart

7 Years:
- Rebekah Bolton, Merlin Bridge, Joseph Carlucci, Kevin Flammang, William Hill, Elvis Johns, Todd Johnson, Aaron Pattee, Brian Pitt, Michael Toler, Dion Weichsel

8 Years:
- Sherrie Baykowski, Lucas Conrad, James Calbertson, Troy Forsib, Michael Harris, Albert Perez, Justin Ray

9 Years:
- Russell Antonucci, Jana Austerman, Billy Barton, Ryan Gordon, Elizabeth Newberry, Amanda Santana, James Schneider, Jason Seger, Sterling Teague

10 Years:
- Gregory Baker, Teri Kinyon, Karl Meyer

11 Years:
- Christopher Brotzman, Jeffery Hoagland, Scotty Presley, Thomas Scherer, Delia Winegarner

12 Years:
- Galen Dyck, Bo Fox, Travis Herod, Myron Kilburn, Debra Spencer, Phyllis Wyatt

13 Years:
- Jeffrey Baum, David Hambrick, Kyle Kozman

14 Years:
- William Czapla

15 Years:
- Scott Lynas, James Wren

16 Years:
- Lisa Berry, Randy Hartley

18 Years:
- Norman Neal

19 Years:
- Donald Brau, Heath Morgan

20 Years:
- Ivan Ferrin, Silvio Gomez, Phillip Lee

21 Years:
- Steven Korell

22 Years:
- Lori Magee

23 Years:
- Carl McCartney

24 Years:
- Brian Daentl, Bruce Hueter, Craig Stanbury

25 Years:
- Danny Bary, Tony Clark

26 Years:
- Kevin Welshans

28 Years:
- Michael Allen, Franklin Miller

29 Years:
- Ralph Ferrebee, Michael Noss

31 Years:
- Keith Lacaze

32 Years:
- James Nichols, Mark Turner

33 Years:
- Phillip Penner

36 Years:
- Kimberly Bourgeois

39 Years:
- Mario Marghella

40 Years:
- Medric Hayes
Solvay Green River is celebrating being injury free for one year. The facility handles roughly 700 cars a day and can receive anywhere from 100-300 cars a day from the UP alone. The team handles 10 different product lines that have to be spotted precisely in five tracks. With this traffic, the team is always busy, no matter what day or time it is. The team also handles Watco cars that get cleaned to be used from one product line to another.

Location Manager Matt Tillery stated, “We have staged over 520 cars already this year, which is a record for clean outs. We recently started taking Praxair CO2 tank cars. We have to spot and pull cars for ARI (the car repair facility) on 2-4 tracks daily. We handle more cars in a day than some of our railroads handle in a week or even a month. The facility has a four-man track team that maintains about 27 miles of track. There is also a two man team that services four locomotives at Solvay.

CMO Jasper Clarke is in charge of two properties and has eight locomotives total. Clarke said, “At any given time my locomotive mechanic could be called to help with repairs at the other property.”

Tillery said, “Essentially we are a railroad without the railroad name. We have a lot of moving parts to deal with on a daily basis. All these different teams, people, contractors working daily on or about the tracks with their own agendas, their own rules, can make for a complicated day. Our team always has to have their ‘head on a swivel’. That’s what I mean when I say I am extremely proud of my guys for being able to perform their duties on a daily bases without HFI and RPI’s. It really says a lot about my team’s approach to safety.”

The team at this particular location is a relatively new crew. Thirteen out of the twenty team members have had less than, or a little over a year on-site, and nine of them have had no prior railroad experience. Despite being relatively new to this line of work, the team has been successful and this is in part due to their emphasis on safety. Each day there is a morning safety briefing, followed by another briefing later on in the day when the day shift begins.

While there has been no set date yet for a celebration, the crew will likely celebrate in the future with a barbecue and order of Carhart Jackets.

- Molly Henneke
Contributing Writer

Mississippi Representatives visit Vicksburg properties

Watco team members in Vicksburg recently had the pleasure of hosting two Representatives from the state legislature on their properties. Representative Alex Monsour and Representative Oscar Denton were joined by Mississippi Railroad Association members Bryce Yelverton and Joel Yelverton for a tour of Watco’s Vicksburg properties.

The group met at the Vicksburg Depot for a safety briefing and were given a brief history on the railroad. Next up was a tour of Port of Vicksburg Terminal from Terminal Manager Chris Maxwell. Following the tour, the group drove back to the railroad and the Representatives received a short ride on the locomotive. Warren County Port Commission President Margaret Gilmer and Customers Ergon Refining and Harcros Chemical joined the group for lunch to conclude their busy day.

Pictured are (l-r): Bryce Yelverton, MRA; Chris Maxwell; Watco Terminal and Port Services; Rep. Alex Monsour, Joey Bitner, Marketing Manager; Joel Yelverton, MRA; Rep. Oscar Denton; Jeff Buck, Vicksburg Southern Railroad General Manager, and Jeff Van Schaick, AVP Government Affairs.