When talking to the Customers on Watco’s newest short line, the Jacksonville Port Terminal Railroad (JXPT), communication is the word heard most often.

Seasonus Stevedooring operates a commercial terminal on 15 acres at the Jacksonville Port Authority (JAXPORT) Talleyrand Terminal and is one of the four Customers served by JXPT. General Manager Scott MacGregor said, “Things are going well with the new railroad. The communication has been excellent since the start-up of the new line.”

MacGregor added that not only is the railroad serving their current needs, but there is also a desire on Watco’s part to be a logistics partner. “We communicate about what’s coming in, and Watco is offering their expertise on how to help move things-on both the move into the Port and trying to fill the back trips as well. They’ve really worked on helping out on the customer end to enable us be more efficient. We’re looking at the possibility of in the future streamlining services we receive from others so Watco would be a one-stop provider for many of our needs.”

JXPT is a 10-mile line that interchanges with the Norfolk Southern and the CSXT, providing the Customers at the JAXPORT Talleyrand Terminal with service Monday through Friday. Commodities shipped include automobiles, chemicals, farm and food products, intermodal containers, and pulp and paper. The Customers served are Seasonus Stevedooring, Toyota, Contanda Terminals, and Westway Feedplant.

Mike Leis, production supervisor at Toyota, said the Team came in and met with him two to three times before they began operations. “They’re doing a great job with the communication and things have gone smoothly since they took over the line.”

JXPT serves the Toyota facility 4-5 times a week, bringing in railcars loaded with domestic cars to deliver to Crowley Maritime (a Watco equity partner) to be shipped to Puerto Rico. The traffic at the port increases each year when the new models are introduced.

Tim Hurse, JXPT general manager, credits the Watco Go Teamers for the smooth start up of the railroad. The Go Teamers are a group made up of experienced Watco Team Members from a variety of departments who provide their knowledge and manpower to help with the start up of new railroads.

“The Support Team did so much and they are why the transition went so well. There was a lot of pre-planning and thought that went into every aspect of what we would need for a seamless start up,” said Hurse.

Brad Bourbina, applications support technician, was part of the Go Team and said he was impressed with the team at JXPT and how quickly they assimilated the Watco culture.

JXPT System Map

When stepping into a great situation, the Team had served the Port with the previous provider so they had the experience and they were 100% on board with doing things the Watco way. They picked up on everything they needed to do to work with Customer Service and the other departments in just a couple of days. It went very, very smoothly.” Four Team members who are providing service to the JXPT Customers are General Manager Tim Hurse, Roadmaster Billy Gathright and Trainmen Adam Crider and James Smithson.

Peggy Wilford, customer service representative for Contanda Terminals, agreed with Bourbina’s perspective of the start up.

“It was a pretty easy transition,” stated Wilford. “The team switches cars out and delivers them to the Class I railroads and things went well and are running smoothly.”

-The Tracie VanBecelaere, Managing Editor
Training Center simulators completed

The new Safety Through Awareness and Training Center in Birmingham, Alabama, is one step closer to being complete: Our new training simulators are finished!

In late March, four Team members from our Safety and Training Division completed factory acceptance testing on the simulators at CORYS in Jacksonville, Florida — a global company that combines the skills of physicists, ergonomics, trainers, software developers, graphic designers, and modelling experts to create innovative training and engineering simulators.

Travis Herod, senior vice president of Safety and Training, said the Team members put the simulators through their paces to ensure everything is functioning correctly.

“...They spent the entire week validating all functionality; working out any bugs, identifying any issues,” Herod said. “It’s a very time-consuming and tedious process, but it ensures we get what we paid for and that everything is working before it leaves their assembly area.”

Following that, the simulators will be shipped to Birmingham, to install in our new center, where instructors then will test and train on them before starting ground school conductor classes in April.

The new center means training in a standardized way, so it’s the same for everyone and is consistent with the same curriculum, instructors, and equipment — a big step for Watco that will directly impact recruitment, training, and performance, according to Chief Operating Officer Dan Smith.

“It’s all coming together,” Herod said.

- Andra Bryan Stefanoni
Contributing Writer

Omaha Terminal Team celebrates one year safety anniversary

The Omaha Team recently celebrated its one year safety anniversary at the transload terminal in Omaha, Nebraska.

Prior to this anniversary, the Team had held a record of being injury free for 3,374 days. The Team celebrated with a pizza lunch brought in by Assistant Vice President Adam Hanson.

An average day at the facility starts early with a pre-shift safety meeting that discusses the daily assignments. These assignments change frequently with daily demands.

Since becoming a Watco operation in July 2015, the Omaha Team has assisted in several operations involving unloading lumber, military vehicles, bulk, and sand.

Each Team member plays an important role to the success of the facility as a whole. Jan Ferrin is Omaha’s senior Customer Service Representative and has built great relationships with all the Customers. Paul Montagne is the yard crew leader who oversees the facility’s daily activities and Customer products.

Longevity is an important part of the terminal. The most junior member, Victor Proصولow, has been with the location for more than three years while the most senior member, Paul Montagne, has been at the location for more than 35 years. Part of the reason so many Team members have stayed on as long as they have is because the Omaha Team treats each other like family on and off the job, they say.

- Molly Henneke, Contributing Writer

#WatcoMoves

Editor’s note: Earlier this year, we kicked off a new feature in The Dispatch and on our social media accounts (Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn) that features products Watco transports before they arrive at the end user.

Product: Butter
Used for: Lecoq Cuisine Pastries
Location: Pennsylvania

If you enjoy pastries with your morning coffee, you may want to thank the Team on Watco’s Eastern Idaho Railroad and our Customers, High Desert Milk and Lecoq Cuisine! The EIRR moves butter that’s used to craft specialty croissants.

Using the "Perishable Express," which provides seven- to nine-day service for butter and other perishable products, Watco moved the first carload for Lecoq in February.

Like Watco, Lecoq Cuisine had humble beginnings: It started by a pastry chef/baker in a small rented kitchen space in Port Chester, New York, in 1991. His goal was to use quality ingredients and innovative manufacturing methods to achieve traditional croissant flavor and flakiness in a cost-effective, frozen product.

Today, Lecoq is one of the largest manufacturers of French pastries in the U.S. They’re also distributed to Canada, the Caribbean, and Latin America.

The 100 percent, USDA “Grade AA” pure butter that Lecoq uses comes from High Desert Milk. That company works more than 40,000 acres of farm land to provide feed for more than 35,000 dairy cows — all within a 30-mile radius of the plant.

“High Desert Milk has only six producers in the cooperative, which gives way to very tight parameters and high quality product,” said Winston Inouye, Watco manager of Strategy and Customer Development, based in Boise, Idaho.

Watco freezes the butter in transit using specialized refrigerated cars.

“When we pick it up, it has been stored at 38 degrees Fahrenheit,” Inouye said. “The Customer likes to store it frozen, so we help them out by freezing it during transit.”

The butter moves in 55,115-pound cartons, the equivalent of four truckloads per rail car, from Burley, Idaho, to U.S. Cold in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, where it’s stored until Lecoq needs it.

The Customer has indicated the desire to do as many as two railcars per month in the future.

To learn more about what #WatcoMoves, follow us at Facebook/WatcoCompanies, on Twitter at @WatcoRail, Instagram @WatcoRail, and on LinkedIn.

Have a suggestion for a product to be featured in #WatcoMoves? Email astefanoni@watcocompanies.com

Read the news as it happens on Watco’s blog, The Dispatch Now, at blog.watcocompanies.com
Blue Ridge Southern TS&IC cleans up track-side debris

The Blue Ridge Southern (BLU) Team members usually haul commodities — wood chips, paper products, plastics, concrete, aggregate, and such — but on a recent clean-up day along the track next to a customer’s facility, they were hauling something else: a dump truck full of trash and debris.

It’s another example of what Watco leadership, through the efforts of Team members making the communities in which they work even stronger through their contributions.

BLU General Manager Darl Farris said the effort was organized by Team Safety and Improvement Committee (TS&IC) members Brandon Parham, Jorden Johnson, and Josh Smiley. The area that was cleaned up has long been on the TS&IC’s agenda, and Farris said things finally fell in place to be able to make it happen.

“It is a real privilege to work with this team,” he said. “They’re always looking for ways to make things better and willing to work hard to make it so.”

Farris said the area they cleaned up is now not only a safer place to work, it also looks a lot better, which benefits the entire community.

Participants included CMO Jamie Miller, locomotive mechanic Ethen Green, trackmen David Woody, Brad Hamlin, and Josh Clifton, locomotive engineer Josh Smiley, trackman Brandon Parham, locomotive mechanic Jorden Johnson, and trainmaster Cain Greene.

- Andra Bryan Stefanoni, Contributing Writer

Railroaders petition Capitol Hill in record numbers

A dozen Watco Team members were among a record-setting number of citizen lobbyist railroaders, suppliers, and customers who swarmed Washington, D.C., last week for the annual Railroad Day on Capitol Hill.

Their goal: To advocate for balanced regulation, the continuance of the 45G tax credit that supports rail investment, and the holding of truck size and weight at current levels.

This year, the American Short Line Railroad Association reported that 367 Congressional offices hosted meetings for 456 visitors at the annual event, held since 1999.

For Watco Team members Craig Richey, Gary Vaughn, Ryan Williams, Stefan Loeb, Ken Lucht, Tracie VanBecelaere, Stu Towner, Laura McNichol, Michael Gray, Tim Enayati, Doug Story, and Ed McKechnie, it was a chance to advocate for things that impact nearly 4,000 Team members, more than 1,000 Customers, and more than 5,000 miles of track across the U.S. “We get to exercise our first amendment rights of getting our voices heard and petition the government with our concerns and issues that are important to us,” VanBecelaere said. “The representatives are always glad to see us, hear from people back home about what’s working and not working, and enjoy the feedback we provide them.”

VanBecelaere met with 11 members of Congress or their aides. “We got the same message from all of them: that they understand how important transportation is to our nation, they understand that railroads pay the burden of the cost for their infrastructure, and they want to find a way to help us because improvements help us better serve customers and provide jobs to the communities we serve,” she said.

Railroads operate on a 140,000-mile long network of track they almost exclusively own and maintain themselves. The nation’s major freight railroads plan to spend an estimated $22.3 billion in 2017 to build, maintain, and upgrade America’s rail network to ensure they can continue to deliver for the U.S. economy.

Since 1980, freight railroads have poured $630 billion in private capital — more than 40 cents out of every revenue dollar — back into the nationwide rail network that serves both freight and passenger rail customers.

Watco Chief Commercial Officer Ed McKechnie, who has advocated at Railroad Day on the Hill for 16 years, sees it as a tremendous opportunity to tell the story of rail to the nation’s decision-makers.

“As we continue to work on public private partnerships to invest in the U.S. rail infrastructure, explaining what we do as an industry every day is a very important part of the American experience,” McKechnie said.

This was the 10th year for Laura McNichol, Watco vice president of Government and Industry Relations. “I look forward every year to Railroad Day. This year was special because I am new on the job for Watco and based in Virginia. Railroad Day gave me the opportunity to meet several of my new colleagues.”

Her favorite part? “Meeting all the different railroaders who are all coming to DC to support our industry,” said McNichol, who lives in Virginia. “Given that I am on the Hill frequently on my own, I like to be able to spend the day with folks from all aspects of the industry who are here to help us with the 45G short line tax credit.”

McNichol said the day garnered 166 co-sponsors of the 45G tax credit.

It was Watco Associate General Counsel Michael Gray’s second time attending the event. “It’s always a pleasure to meet with members of Congress and share the railroad story of safety and Customer service,” said Gray, who this year had meetings scheduled in nine offices with members of Congress. “All of them were supportive of railroads and what we do for Customers in their respective districts.”

- Andra Bryan Stefanoni, Contributing Writer
Railroad enthusiasts from coast to coast have plenty of options when it comes to celebrating the railroad heritage and origins of American towns. Starting in April and extending through October, railroad festivals offer residents and visitors everything from crafts and music to train rides and talent shows. Here, a sampling for what’s up first:

April 6-8, 34th Louisiana Railroad Days Festival - DeQuincy, Louisiana: The town of DeQuincy, established by the Kansas City Southern Railroad in 1897, rolls out the welcome mat each year for its annual Railroad Days Festival that pays tribute to the fact that the town’s growth was a result of railroad jobs. It has been recognized as an official state festival since 1984. Held at the Railroad Museum Park, it consists of food booths, carnival rides, bands, a parade, a K9 Caboose Pageant, the Bizarre Boxcar Contest, and more. Details: www.larailroaddaysfestival.com

April 6-9, 2017 39th Annual Amory Railroad Festival - Amory, Mississippi: Like DeQuincy, Amory owes its existence to the railroad. The town was established by the old Kansas City, Memphis & Birmingham and named for railroad magnate Harcourt Amory. The KCM&B became the Frisco, in turn purchased by the Burlington Northern, which then merged with the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad, resulting in the BNSF. The festival includes the annual Mr. & Mrs. Railroad Pageant, a car and truck show, a fishing rodeo, vendors, and more. Details: amoryrailroadfestival.com

April 28-30, Railroad Days - Pleasant Hill, Missouri: A small town between Lee’s Summit and Harrisonville, Missouri, celebrates rail heritage in a big way each April. The emphasis is on trains, the talents of residents, and bits of regional history. The railroad has long been an important center point to Pleasant Hill, established in the early 1830s, and remains so today. Many buildings in the historic district are 150 years old. Details: phil4railroaddays.com/railroad-days/

May 6 – 7, Railroad Days in Fullerton - Fullerton, California: Once a year rail fans from all over the country come together at the Fullerton railroad depot for a weekend filled with railroad history and unique opportunities. Organized by the Southern California Railway Plaza Association since 1999, it seeks to preserve rail heritage through education and entertainment. A fully-restored and operational Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe steam engine is brought in for the festivities, and other railroad memorabilia usually is on display. Vendors sell toy trains, train t-shirts, collectibles, and model railroads abound. Details: www.scrpa.net/scrrdays.htm

May 26-28, Katy Days - Parsons, Kansas: In 1870, the first Missouri-Kansas-Texas train rolled into a new town in Southeast Kansas that would become Parsons, and the railroad would be remembered as the Katy! One-hundred forty-six years later, Parsons celebrates its railroad heritage and town history with the Katy Days Festival. It includes track building demonstrations, the High Stiker Contest, a history zone, a railroad reunion, locomotive tours and passenger train rides, a tour of the Iron Horse Museum and rail yard, as well as the usual festival activities like fun runs, food vendors, sports tournaments, petting zoo, and more. Details: http://www.katydays.com/

We’ll continue sharing these each month in The Dispatch Newsletter, or, you can find the sampling in its entirety on our new blog at www.blog.watcocompanies.com. Have one you think we should know about? Email astefanoni@watcocompanies.com.

- Andra Bryan Stefanoni, Contributing Writer

The Bronx Team celebrates six year safety anniversary

The Team at The Bronx Terminal in New York celebrated six years of being injury free on March 11. The Team will celebrate its anniversary by being rewarded with high visibility work jackets featuring the Watco logo.

The terminal who serves Customer Waste Management first opened in 1999. Watco took over the operations in February 2015. The facility takes in roughly 2,600 tons of solid waste from New York City every day. The Bronx Team works six days a week, 24 hours a day. Usually two Team members work per shift and there are three shifts a day.

The Team contributes its success to hard work and a family-like atmosphere. In addition, the Bronx terminal’s relationship, respect, and communication with Customers has played a factor in their success.

Long-term Team members include Enrique Castillo (2001) and Sunil Bangari (1999). Other Team members include Adrian Serrano, Anand Narine, Jerson Barrios, Joevanie Martinez, Mohamed Zahiruddin, and Zafrool Azeez.

- Molly Henneke, Contributing Writer
Watco interns hit the ground running

Caleb Dellasega didn’t have quite as much to worry about his senior year of college at the University of Kansas as his classmates: He already had a job lined up after graduation, thanks to a stint in Watco’s internship program the summer before his senior year started.

And that internship allowed him to hit the ground running when he became a full-time Team member, which benefitted Watco, as well.

"The internships at Watco are different than elsewhere," Dellasega said. "I was able to have a real impact and help the Team, rather than perform busy work – to really put my fingerprint on my work, not just be an afterthought."

Dellasega, an accounting major, performed tasks for the accounting team that enabled him to apply what he learned in the classroom to the real world. Watco offered him a job by the end of that summer.

"My whole senior year, I didn’t have to worry about looking for a job, and all the stress that comes with that," he said. "Likewise, Watco knew they could count on a new Team member who already knew the ropes, knew the culture of the company."

"By being put in the role where I was doing meaningful work, it propelled me forward to be at a starting point that was further than my peers," he said. "That allowed me to grow more in my first couple years out of college than the standard graduate."

His first week on the job full-time was a “close week,” the busiest time of the month for the accounting department, and he was able to pick up right where he left off as an intern.

"My on-the-job training was minimal, which means the company immediately got full value out of my time," he said. "I hit the ground running."

Now, two years later, Dellasega takes the lead on railroad operations accounting and working very closely with general managers to help them understand the numbers, and providing summaries to senior leadership. Dellasega was recently promoted to Senior Accountant.

Last summer, he paid his internship experience forward: Dellasega oversaw an intern from KU.

"It was a great way for him to get his feet wet, and a great way for me to get management experience at such a young age," Dellasega said. "Having been an intern, I knew what I liked and didn’t, and could tailor it to him."

His goal: Give the intern ownership, not micro-manage him, and treat him like a fulltime Team member. It’s possible that in a year or so, he might one day be.

"We’re picky in who we take, because we want someone who will step up," Dellasega said. "We’re making an investment in them, so both parties are benefiting. Over a three-month period, it’s like an extended interview, and we get to ask: ‘Is this person a good fit?’"

— Andra Bryan Stefanoni, Contributing Writer

Other Watco interns will be featured throughout April, National Internship Awareness Month, on our social media.

Greens Port Team gets Seussed out

Have you ever had a Wacky Wednesday, or while fishing, counted One Fish Two Fish Red Fish Blue Fish? Or have you ever experienced the opportunity to Hop on Pop, or pondered on the lessons learned from Sneetches?

These books and others were read to celebrate the birthday of Theodor Seuss Geisel’s, otherwise known as Dr. Seuss, at the Woodland Acres Elementary School in Houston, near Watco’s Greens Port Industrial Park.

A group of Watco Team members dressed up in Dr. Seuss hats, bow ties, and headbands to get into the spirit of cats in hats, foxes in socks, and wockets in pockets. We had representation from the switching sites, track, and liquids departments. Participants were Kersy Johnson, supervisor for Houston Liquids Terminals, Kelvin Jackson, dock operator for Houston Liquids Terminals, J.B. Gutierrez, site manager for the Galena Park switching location, Mark Cendejas, track maintenance manager, and Bret Burritt, supervisor for Houston Liquids Terminals.

The festivities started off with a good old-fashioned Dr. Seuss parade, where the children displayed their favorite Dr. Seuss book character costumes. After the parade, winners from every grade level were chosen for the “Best Costume” category.

“I have always had a love for Dr. Seuss books, and have ready many to my own kids, and consider it a privilege to do the same for the children at the local elementary school,” Johnson said.

Both teachers and children were grateful for the effort, and especially time taken out to bring attention to the importance of reading.

"Whenever I can help bring a smile and joy in a child’s life, I take the opportunity to do it," said Bret Burritt.

Gutierrez said he can’t wait for the chance to do this again next year.

“I had a great time, and the kids had a blast as well,” he said.

As we look forward to participating in this event next year, we realize our dedication brings happiness and cheer to all involved. The impact of reading is one that makes a lasting, positive impression, and we are dedicated to making that a goal in the contact we have with the faces of tomorrow — our kids.

— Jennifer Sévère, Contributing Writer

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Watco short lines on track to meet PTC deadline

Data released this month from the Federal Railroad Administration shows freight railroads are making consistent progress in implementing positive train control systems, and Watco is no exception.

"By the end of this year, 40 percent of our installation population will be complete," said Kris Hemby, Watco’s director of Revenue Accounting.

Implementing the system was necessary on 60 of Watco’s 456 locomotives on the KAW, SKOL, KCTL, PSRR, BVR, GRNW, and WSO — railroads that have sections of track used by both passenger and freight rail. When finished, Watco’s investment will be $6 to $8 million for equipment, software, and annual training, Hemby said.

Watco’s PTC Team meets every two weeks to weigh options and make decisions. That team includes the expertise of AJ Mee, Bill Goldsberry, Derek Prestholt, Garret Bolyard, Gary Wagenseller, James Andrews, James Moore, Jimmy Patterson, Joe Via, Keith Testerman, Mark Green, PJ Forbes, Preston Nelson, Stacy Grant, Tracy Wright, Travis Herod, Steve Coomes, and Hemby — all representative of the railroads that will be impacted.

"We’re making progress we can all be proud of," Hemby said.

It’s progress that other short lines are noticing.

"Some are reaching out to us to help guide them along," Hemby said. "It’s a complicated process, and one that we continue to learn about as we navigate through it. We’re happy to share what we learn with others."

How it works

The advanced safety system is designed to automatically stop a train before certain accidents occur, like collisions and derailments.

Installation and testing comes in the wake of The Rail Safety Improvement Act, which required all railroads to install such a system by December 2015. An extension was granted for Class 1 installation to be completed by Dec. 31, 2018.

Hemby said the technology must take into account factors like stopping distance, train composition, speed, and train authority.

A wireless communications system combines three elements of PTC. An onboard system on each locomotive, which monitors the train’s position and speed and activates braking when necessary; a wayside system that monitors railroad track signals, switches, and track circuits to communicate authorization for movement to the locomotive, and the back office server, which stores all information related to the network and trains operating on it, including speed limits and train composition, and transmits authorization for individual trains to move onto new segments of track.

Photographers: Stay off the tracks

About every three hours, a person or vehicle is hit by a train — many of them teens, many of them using the railroad tracks as a picturesque backdrop in a photo shoot.

Three teens in Utah, posing for a selfie. A high school student in Maryland, posing for a school photo project with his girlfriend, to be taken by a friend.

And last week, Fredzania Thompson, a 19-year-old aspiring model who dreamed of a career in modeling. It would be her last photo shoot. As she stood between two sets of tracks last week in Texas, she moved out of the way of an oncoming train, only to be hit and killed by a second train coming from the opposite direction.

According to statistics from the Federal Railroad Administration, 994 pedestrian rail trespass casualties (fatalities and injuries) occurred in 2016. The FRA issued a statement reminding the public that trespassing on private railroad tracks and property is illegal and often fatal.

Rail-related trespass deaths rose 19.8 percent from January through August 2016 compared to the same period in 2015, and injuries rose 12 percent. Watco joins Operation Lifesaver, the nonprofit rail safety education organization, in urging professional photographers to refrain from taking photos of high school seniors, wedding parties, and other subjects on train tracks or trestles.

Watco Senior Vice President of Safety and Training, Travis Herod, said it’s important Team members and Customers spread the word: taking photos without permission and protection on a railroad right of way is trespassing and can be deadly.

We ask photographers and those taking photos to consider this:

* Trains can’t stop quickly to avoid people or vehicles on the tracks.
* An optical illusion makes it hard to determine a train’s distance from you and its speed.
* The average train overhangs the track by at least three feet.
* Railroad tracks, trestles, yards, and rights-of-way are private property.

By the numbers

According to the Association of American Railroads, freight railroads have spent more than $7.9 billion on PTC development and deployment to date, and are spending $100 million a month on continuous development, testing, and installation.

They’ve geo-mapped 96,000 miles of railroad and 486,000 assets, and have 42 percent of locomotives fully equipped.

By the end of 2016, nearly 40 percent of the targeted miles have PTC, 63 percent of locomotives are equipped with PTC, and 51 percent of the targeted workforce is PTC qualified.

- Andra Bryan Stefanoni, Contributing Writer

Team members meeting on the PTC implementation are (l-r); James Andrews, Keith Testerman, Tracy Wright, Derek Prestholt, and Kris Hemby.

Fredzania Thompson, a 19-year-old aspiring model was fatally hit by a train during a photo shoot in Navasota, Texas.

* No tracks should be assumed to be abandoned or inactive.
* People mimic your behavior when they see your photos on the web and social media.

The only legal, safe place to cross tracks is at designated pedestrian or roadway crossings.

- Andra Bryan Stefanoni, Contributing Writer

John DeReggi (l) was struck and killed by a train during a photoshoot on Maryland railroad tracks with his girlfriend Natalie Crim.

SEE TRACKS - THINK TRAINS

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Births

Grayson Levi Balla
Hugo and Norma Ortega are proud to announce the birth of a grandson, Grayson Levi Balla. Grayson is the son of Emmanuel and Jacqueyn Balla.
Grayson was born on January 23, 2017, and he weighed 7 pounds, 14 ounces, and was 20 inches long.

Layla Elise Lockhart
Greg and Becky Lockhart are proud to announce the birth of a granddaughter, Layla Elise Lockhart. Layla is the daughter of Josh and Tayna Lockhart. Layla was born on March 22, 2017, and weighed 7 pounds.
She was welcomed home by her two-year old brother Liam.
Grandpa Greg Lockhart is a trainmaster for the Mississippi Southern Railroad and the Vicksburg Southern Railroad.

Names

Congratulations to the following Team members celebrating anniversaries this month.

1 Year: David Ault, Brian Baugher, Robert Bell, Donald Cheatham, Austin Conine, James Dale, David Dust, Jared Gandy, Matthew Gibson, Robert Lawson, Jeremy Lee, Jake Liles, Phillip Miller, Vincent Petrosino, Elvin Rivera, Christopher Salazar, Joseph Smith, Timothy Snook, Michael Standley, Jedidiah Tadlock, Joseph White, Joseph White, Hunter Womack
3 Years: Marcus Blumer, Brooke Brown, Eric Cummings, Paul Esparza, John Farrow, Christopher Garrett, Stacy Grad, Antonio Green, Frank Greenough, Alfie Hutchinson, Steven Izler, Jaden Jacobs, Kersy Johnson, Tracie Kent, Mary Lawrence, Toby Long, David McIntosh, Justin McLean, Donna Moore, Paul Muzik, Theodore Nicholson, Suzanne Owens, Isidro Palacio, Michael Porter, Dustin Schilling, Hunter Seawood, Chad Stacy, Johann Sutter, Aaron Tanner, Travis Weddle, Adam York
4 Years: Adam Barrera, Keith Bowman, Michael Crosslin, Dustin Hammer-schmidt, Tyler Hardy, Nathan Henderson, John Honaker, Devan Lynch, James Lynn, Quinchez Marshall, Jacob Nance, Mark Perry, Kyle Ratliff, Steven Schadler, Jennifer Severe, Noey Sistos, Dustin Steger, Terri Turiano, Brittany Turner, Chase Uphchurch, Caleb Ussery
5 Years: Scott Ayers, Willie Carson, Frederick Cooper, Aaron Greene, Justin Hayes, Stefan Holcomb, William King, Michael Kruse, James Latham, Michael Mulnix, Jason Randolph, Patrick Stout, Andrew Thompson, Mark Wells, Tyrus White, Jeremy Williams, Tracy Wright, Carlton Young

6 Years: Mark Adams, Joshua Alts, David Bader, Kraig Blackwelder, Christa Coates, Henery Dannehl, Douglas Deleboy, Allen Hasty, Richard Hudson, Tyler Neesam, Dustin Rhodes, Donald Robert, Michael Stofeko, Gerald Tjepkema, Megan Wilson
7 Years: Hayley Becker, Randall Bennett, William Casey, Jennifer Coursey, Kevin Crespo, Allen Godfrey, Kenneth Gryzwa, Anthony Hoyte, Jackie Ogden, Rachael Peterson, David Riley, Kevin Roth, Owen Schulz, Andrew Smith, Roidino Trevino
8 Years: Angela Bunker, Joseph Grupczynski, Mark Moorlag, Michael Murphy
9 Years: Carl Elrod, Chris Haddow, Russell Hamm, Robert Hurda, Joseph Magnone, Jose Martinez, Curtis Rice, Arnold Sandoval
10 Years: Anthony Clark, Rebekah Garner, Joseph Holcomb, Aaron Pattee, Danny Rodriguez
11 Years: Shellee Currier, Timothy Dunn, Cody Gilliland, Christopher Preuc, Mitchel Wilkinson
12 Years: John Bell, Jerad Brunskill, Gary Clark, Edward Deering, Brandon Eddleman, Travis Fellers, Brian Fox, Richard Moser, Tracie VanBecelaere, David Witzack
13 Years: Jeffery Greenwood, Gina Lamber, Jason Nix
14 Years: LeAndrea Bradley, Shane Engle
15 Years: Brent Booth, Lisa Butts, Pat Cedeno, John Galloway, Gary Vogels, Joe Watts
16 Years: Billy Woolsey
17 Years: Ralph Fielder, Robert Heiligen-thal, Jeanne Housel, William Kyzer, Byron Marshall, Ernest Palmer
18 Years: Marvin Ellis
19 Years: Timothy Bass, Stacey Hurda
20 Years: Anthony Ange, Jeremy Findley, Alonzo Orta
21 Years: Kenneth Barber
22 Years: Aaron Byle
24 Years: Neal Jacobs
25 Years: Condra Warhurst
26 Years: Gary Cooley, Gary Sanderson
27 Years: Dennis Phelps
28 Years: Dwight Browning
33 Years: Charles Trimer
34 Years: Michael Murphy, James Strawn
37 Years: Robert Koenig
38 Years: Larry Bohland, Michael Nosko
It’s hard to imagine the Wisconsin & Southern Railroad’s Track Team not missing the infectious laugh of retired team member Guy Zabel. After 36 years in the railroad industry, Guy has traded in his tool belt for a fishing rod and hunting rifle. The avid outdoors man said it’s hard to believe he’s retired.

“It doesn’t seem like I’ve worked long enough yet to be retired, the years have gone by really fast,” said Guy.

He began offering training through Watco U in April 2014, holding four classes in Pittsburg that first year with a field of 34 Team members completing it and earning certification. In 2015, he held 20 classes, with 157 completing certification. In 2016, another 20 classes were held, certifying 155. To date this year, he’s held six classes with 28 Team members earning certification.

Hayley Becker, systems analyst, was among recent participants, learning such skills as how to check for responsiveness in an injured colleague and how to move them safely out of harm’s way if they can’t move themselves.”

You may not realize the importance of first aid or CPR until you’re faced with a life-threatening situation so I would highly recommend this class to others,” Becker said.

Weber also offers Team Safety and Improvement Committee and Peer Trainer Development trainings.

- Andra Bryan Stefanoni, Contributing Writer

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The newsletter for Watco Companies

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WSOR Track Team bids farewell to retiree

It’s hard to imagine the Wisconsin & Southern Railroad’s Track Team not missing the infectious laugh of retired team member Guy Zabel. After 36 years in the railroad industry, Guy has traded in his tool belt for a fishing rod and hunting rifle. The avid outdoors man said it’s hard to believe he’s retired.

“It doesn’t seem like I’ve worked long enough yet to be retired, the years have gone by really fast,” said Guy.

In addition to hunting and fishing, Guy said he has a couple of special trips he’d like to take with his wife Carrie. Those include an Alaskan Cruise and a trip to Germany.

“I’ve always heard good things about the Alaskan Cruises and my mother-in-law came over from Germany during WWII. “We have family and friends over there that we would like tovisit - ones that we just get to talk to a few times throughout the year, during holidays,” he stated.

Guy said his time with the railroad was a good experience and he learned a lot.

“I hope others have learned a lot from me as well,” he stated.

One piece of wisdom Guy’s father passed on to him and he passed on to his younger co-workers was, “The day you start working, you start thinking about retirement. Plan ahead and save.”

Following that advice is most likely the reason for the smile on Guy’s face.

- Tracie VanBecelaere, Managing Editor