There's a lot of sand in Louisiana, but it's not just another day at the beach. This sand, which is actually frac sand used in drilling, moves from Wisconsin down to Louisiana by rail, originating at one Watco short line, the Wisconsin & Southern Railroad (WSOR), and ending at another, the Louisiana Southern Railroad (LAS). Although this particular move just began rolling in June of 2017, there is history behind the move that made it happen.

The sand is being shipped from Badger Mining's Fairwater mine in Utley, Wisconsin. Badger Mining merged with Atlas Resin Proppants in 2015 and that's where the Watco connection began: Atlas had been shipping product on the LAS since 2010. Badger also has two other Watco destination terminals, Dore, North Dakota, and the Pecos Valley Southern Railway in Pecos, Texas. The primary difference between the shipments to Louisiana and the other locations is that this one will be consistent with an expected 2,880 railcars or 288,000 tons moving the first year.

Steve Banker, Badger Mining's logistics development manager, said, “When we need to research potential destination facilities to meet our Customer’s needs, one of my first considerations is to see if there is a Watco railroad or distribution point that services the Customer’s area. Watco is always willing to assist us in offering Customer solutions wherever they operate.”

That confidence is appreciated by the Team members who have worked with Banker to bring the frac sand down to Louisiana.

Joseph Bitner, LAS commercial manager, said, “We are excited to grow our partnership with Badger Mining. The transload operation in Minden is reflective of what you look for in a business partner. It took a lot of communication between the railroads and our Customer to make this work, and we were all proactive. It’s been awhile since we have seen this tonnage, and we anticipate that we will double it by the end of the year.”

Once the frac sand arrives in Louisiana, it is transloaded by the LAS Team from rail to truck using a RBT (Rail Barge Truck) machine and then delivered out to the oil and gas fields. Blake Smith is the general manager at the LAS and said he started out in the transload department when he began working for the railroad 10 years ago.

Smith said, “We used to just have some of the car department go over to do the transloading as needed. With this move, we have gone from having three Team members dedicated to the transloading to nine full-timers.”

The additional Team members were brought on to handle the increase from loading 4 to 5 trucks per day to 60 to 75 trucks per day.

Smith added, “We’ve seen our transloading business grow from just a few cars a month to what it is today. This is our baby and we are quite proud of how it’s grown.”

More than two million tons of sand is scheduled to ship annually from Badger Mining’s Fairwater mine in Utley, Wisconsin, to Louisiana. The railcars travel from Watco’s Wisconsin & Southern Railroad to the CP and then the KCS with a final destination of the Louisiana Southern Railroad in Minden.

LAS Team member Bradley Shows operates the RBT to unload the frac sand from the railcars to trucks for delivery to the oil and gas fields.

Nothing beats a selfie in the sand. Katie Sackett (left) – WSOR Director of Commercial received a tour of the Badger Mining facility. Along for the tour were Badger Mining employees (l-r) Shelly Bernhagen, transportation, distribution, and logistics leader, Darian Kuglin, resource center associate, and Nick Bartol, public relations leader.
The team members at the WTPS Oklahoma City facility who were at work servicing their Customers on the Fourth of July were treated to a barbecue rib and chicken meal furnished by Watco. It was prepared by Terminal Manager Tom Hansen in appreciation for their dedicated service and an outstanding first half of 2017.

Almost 20 team members and a few truck drivers delivering to the site enjoyed the meal, which was complete with all the trimmings. A potluck dessert table was available for those who wanted to satisfy their sweet tooth afterwards and of course, ice cold watermelon to cool down from the Fourth of July heat.

The Oklahoma City facility employs 36 Team members and is open 24/7, servicing a variety of Customers including several frac sand Customers that allowed the facility to load more than 15,000 truckloads from January through June.

Hansen shared some exciting opportunities being presented in the near future for Oklahoma City and the SLWC, and hosted a roundtable discussion.

WTPS is a leader in bulk, break-bulk, and liquids rail/truck transloading, railroad switching, warehousing, liquid tank storage, and barge and vessel loading/unloading. The Oklahoma City facility is served by the Stillwater Central Railroad (SLWC), which interchanges with three Class 1 railroads: the BSNF, UP, and KCS.

A flag cake was made for the OKC Team for dessert to celebrate the Independence Day holiday.

Team members at the OKC Terminal enjoyed a large spread to celebrate the Fourth of July. Thanks to all our Team members who work the holidays to serve our Customers!

WAMX 4174 leads train T004 into Milton, Wisconsin on July 4, 2017. The crew has decorated the cab and nose with three American flags to celebrate Independence Day.

Photo: Scott Kuelz

K&O Conductor Josh Sheets was working on the Fourth of July, but he still got to enjoy a few fireworks. His family was putting on a show in his parents’ driveway as he passed by in the locomotive! Shout out to all of the families who support our Team members while they’re getting the job done!

By Andra Bryan Stefanoni
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, Instagram, and LinkedIn) that features products Watco transports before they arrive at the end user.

Product: Bradley fighting vehicles  
Used for: National Guard  
Location: Red House, Virginia

The Kanawha River Railroad (KNWA), which runs from Ohio to West Virginia, typically moves carloads of product for the energy, aggregate, agriculture, and chemical industries. Just as the nation was celebrating the Fourth of July, the railroad moved something different: Bradley fighting vehicles for the U.S. National Guard.

The vehicles, named after U.S. General Omar Bradley, were designed to transport infantry or scouts while providing cover fire to suppress enemy troops and armored vehicles.

The Guard needed to get 12 of them from Ft. Hood, Texas, to Red House, West Virginia, and a cold call in person by KNWA Commercial Manager Brigid Rich came at the perfect time.

Rich said the Norfolk Southern (NS) had moved various military vehicles and components into the Red House facility several years ago using the line that runs from Refugee, Ohio, to Maeben, West Virginia. Watco began leasing the line last year and the KNWA began running operations on the 309 miles of track, so Rich took advantage of some free time to remind the Guard of the benefit of moving product by rail.

"I had a little time in my schedule at the beginning of May, so I stopped in there at Red House one day to let the Guard know we’re here, we’re KNWA, and if they ever needed anything, to let us know," said Rich, who was accompanied by Angela Stauffer, vice president of commercial.

As a result, a few weeks later the KNWA got the contract.

The distance — 1,170 miles as the crow flies — was more efficiently covered by rail, and it kept wear and tear off of the nation’s highway system.

The 12 vehicles, loaded two per railcar, started on the BNSE, switched to the New Orleans Public Belt, and then to the NS, with the haul being completed by the KNWA.

It went smoothly the entire route.

"We were dealing with so many layers. There was an officer in charge of releasing the vehicles from Ft. Hood, someone in charge of logistics for them, a receiving officer in West Virginia, a third party that the Army uses to help unload the vehicles, and someone ensuring the track was in good condition. But it was a pretty seamless coordination, and one we were happy to play a part in," Rich said. "And we think it’s pretty neat that they arrived on July 3, just in time for the celebration of our nation’s freedom and birthday."

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The Kanawha River Railroad (KNWA) consists of 309 miles of track running south from Refugee, Ohio, to Maeben, West Virginia. The railroad’s name is derived from the Kanawha River in West Virginia which the railroad follows south through the state.

Cahokia Team member is an everyday hero

by Tracie VanBecelaere  
Managing Editor

When Cahokia Leadman Aaron Garcia isn’t busy as a liquids terminal operator on the Mississippi River, he takes on the daunting role of saving lives.

While driving back to Illinois from a Florida vacation, Garcia witnessed a truck in front of him that was pulling a camper start to swerve.

Garcia, who was with his wife Katie and sons Camden, 6, and Behret, 1, warned them that something was going to happen.

"The truck and camper began swaying and then the truck lost control and both pivoted in front of them, catapulted into the air, and then flipped into the ditch. Garcia was able to slam on his brakes and stop in time before his vehicle became part of the accident."

"There were a lot of fluids leaking from the vehicles so I ran over to the truck to help the passengers out while Katie called 911," said Garcia. "I made sure the passengers were alert and then told them because of the amount of fluid leaking, it was best to get them away from the vehicle."

The accident broke the windshield and the back window of the truck and there was quite a bit of dirt that Garcia had to dig through to get the seat belts of the passengers unhooks. By that time two to three other cars behind them had also stopped to help.

"There were three passengers in the truck, the grandmother who was driving, her husband in the passenger seat, and their grandson who was best to get them away from the truck to help the passengers out and there was quite a bit of dirt that Garcia had to dig through to get the seat belts of the passengers unhooks. By that time two to three other cars behind them had also stopped to help."

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Cahokia Terminal Leadman Aaron Garcia took a break on his drive home from vacation to rescue a family involved in an accident.

"I was in the back of the truck. I don’t know what would’ve happened to them all if they hadn’t been buckled in," said Garcia. "The older couple were pretty scratched up but their grandson looked unharmed. Even the little dog that the older man was holding was OK."

Cahokia Terminal Manager Scott Schweitzer said, "I’m not surprised at what Aaron did. He’s a dedicated Team member who puts the needs of the terminal and his team members always above his own."

As Garcia left the scene, he thought how quickly it happened and at the same time how some of it seemed to move in slow motion.

"I’ve been around racing and have seen how the accidents with the liquid spills can get bad very quickly," he said. "I’m thankful we got them out of and away from the truck and the emergency responders were able to safely take over the situation."

CALENDAR CONTEST

Photographers get ready, Watco is now taking submissions for the 2018 Calendar Contest. The calendar is always more interesting when many different seasons and locations are featured, so start snapping away now!

Submissions must be received no later than September 1, 2017. The four-color high quality printing requires at least 300 dpi images at 100%.

Send submissions or any questions to: tvans@watcocompanies.com with Calendar 2018 in the subject line.

Entries can be submitted by anyone, Team members or not, but the photos must contain Watco properties as the subject matter.
Mini-Mobile serves GBW Customers

By Andra Bryan Stefanoni
Contributing Writer

When it comes to railcar repair, challenges that Derek Mecure has seen in the railroad industry inspired GBW, a Watco joint venture, to create a unique solution.

“What we’ve seen is two things that affect the Customer when it comes to railcars,” Mecure said. “One is the freight charges for cars that go to shop for repair. The costs of getting cars to shops now has substantially increased, which is a major factor in our Customers considering where and how they send cars to shops.”

“The second is when you do send a car to a shop, your asset that you’ve purchased to generate revenue for your company is now out of service for however long it takes to travel there and then back again,” Mecure said. “You’re losing revenue.”

Mecure wrote a business plan that tackles both of those problems; it was approved, and this year, the Mini Mobile began. The concept is simple:

“We can come to your property with our equipment, find an area we can house our equipment, and service your railcars onsite,” he said.

The Mini Mobile completely eliminates the cost of shipping cars for repair and drastically reduces out-of-service time. Working from mobile pickup trucks, gators, and UTVs they pull with a trailer, a two-member Team walks the length of the trains to inspect, with another Team following behind to make the repairs.

In Dallas, Texas, the service opened May 1 and operates in seven locations all within a two-hour drive. Among them, one serves an offload facility, another serves a quarry, one serves a cement plant.

“It’s going well so far,” said Richard Drummond, operations manager on a Team of five.

Daily, his Team services two and sometimes three trains, each of 96 to 130 cars. The environment, including Texas weather and occasional rattlesnakes — is the most challenging part.

“The most rewarding part is seeing the Customer happy; that means we’re doing our job,” Drummond said.

“We’re in the beginning of something new,” Drummond said. “This is the forefront for repair. I could see GBW really growing with this kind of model.

A Mini Mobile location opened January 3 in San Antonio, Texas. There, Jason Garza, operations manager, said his Team averages three to four hours to air test, inspect and make repairs to trains that range from 95 to 150 cars.

Three-quarter of the repairs are done in-train.

“That’s the part where it benefits the Customer,” he said.

Garza said the key is having Team members trained in a fast-paced environment, and having an organized and detailed plan.

“Coordination starts with us; as soon as the Customer notifies me, I identify the trains we have to work and send out a crew. We have mass text messages and emails going between the rail manager and the Customers and myself about when we start and when we should be done,” he said.

Team members work in two, 10-hour shifts, with a three-man crew rotating on call on the weekends to cover trains that come in.

It’s making a difference to GBW Customers. Derek Cargile, shop capacity analyst with Koch Rail, said his company had used an alternate mobile service for the Formaldehyde fleet to inspect and repair BOV concerns Koch was getting from their Customer.

“Sometimes it would take months to complete the mobile and utilize the car,” Cargile said. “Their Customer was receptive to charging services, opening the door for GBW Houston.

“The GBW Houston mobile has been great with communication and are very Customer-focused in their approach to servicing our needs,” Cargile said. “David (Ramirez) and his crew communicate well and timely.”

“I even had a ChemTrec call late last Friday, and David was ready to make another weekend call out to assist, but we were able to schedule for Monday,” Cargile said. “Thanks to David and his crew, we are able to utilize cars and are not creating extra switching for the guys at the plant.”

Editor’s note: This year, we began sharing in print the #WhyWatco stories we’ve been also sharing in video via Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn.

Team Member: Travis Henson
Title: Engineer
Location: Kanawha River Railroad

Travis Henson is all about family and that’s what he enjoys most about working for Watco at the Kanawha River Railroad (KNWA).

After working for a Class I railroad for 11 years and spending many nights on the road he was ready for a change. When the coal business dropped, he was laid off and is glad he found a spot with the KNWA.

“My daughters, Sophie, 6, and Ella, 2, are my world and it means everything to me to be able to spend time with them, which I wasn’t able to do before,” said Henson.

“My wife Catelyn had seen the stress I went through, having to spend so many nights away from home in hotels and away from my family. We are all so much happier now.”

“I really like the guys I work with, we get along really well. It’s like having another family.”

“We have a melting pot of railroads here at the Kanawha, and we have done a great job of blending together and finding the best ways to work together.”

Not only does Henson like the family atmosphere at the railroad but he also feels respected and valued by the management.

“The management lets us make our own decisions when serving our Customers and they value our input. That gives us a sense of pride in what we do.”

Henson started working at the KNWA just a week after their start-up a year ago and is amazed at the growth the railroad has already seen.

“I started working on the Hobson, Ohio, line that was previously deserted and now it’s just crazy how much the business has grown.”

“My daughter Sophie is celebrating her 7th birthday, before that was something that I would have had to miss or take a sick day for and it would have been a tense situation. Now, at the Kanawha, everyone made sure that I would be able to celebrate her special day with her. That is Why Watco.”

To hear more #WhyWatco stories, follow us on social media! If you have a #WhyWatco story to share, email asteфанони@watcocompanies.com.
Ed McKechnie had a choice to make. "When I went to the doctor in December 2014, he said I needed to lose weight," McKechnie recalled. "A year later, I went back, and he said I'd gained a pound."

"He told me: 'There's two things you should know. There are few old fat people, and there are fewer old fat people who have high blood pressure — they don't make it past middle age.'"

That was the wake-up call McKechnie needed. He imagined not being around to see his boys, Austin and Jackson, both in middle school, play baseball and go to college and start their own families.

"It really reached me in an eye-opening way," he said.

McKechnie set a course for losing 50 pounds. His strategies were common sense: Eating better, exercising every day, and identifying the things that caused him the most stress.

Today, 18 months later, he has lost the 50 pounds and then some. His blood pressure is much lower. And he feels like a new person.

"I sleep better, I can toss the ball around to my boys and not be out of breath, my pants fit better," he said. "And it's not as painful to be in a hurry through an airport."

His solutions:

- **Portion control.** "You can still eat mac and cheese — just eat less of it and not as often," he said.
- **Healthy alternatives.** "I eliminated eating fried and fatty foods at fast food joints and started choosing lighter options like salads, Subway sandwiches — every place now has healthy alternatives," he said.
- **Drink lots of water.** "When you're starving, drink the largest cup full you can find," said McKechnie, who now drinks 2 percent of the soda he used to.
- **Work out.** "Find someone who can help you learn how, a place you like, a thing you like to do, and stick with it," he said. For him, that was joining a gym with a comfortable, inviting atmosphere and equipment that could be programmed to his unique needs. "There are 100 ways to exercise," he said. "Figure out what's right for you — lifting, walking, jogging, whatever."

"I also began walking whenever I could — and not just after work," McKechnie said. "If I'm on a phone call, I'll get up and walk and talk. In an airport, waiting on a flight, I'll walk around. At a game, I'll walk."

He got a Fitbit and began wearing it every day, targeting a goal of 10,500 steps. "I feel like a new guy," he said.
Stu Towner, our senior vice president of network strategy, was one of 20 chosen for the award. The magazine defines a Rising Star as someone under the age of 40 who has made, or is making, a positive impact on his or her company, organization, department or team, and is viewed by others — peers, colleagues, supervisors, clients or associates — as an up-and-coming leader in the rail industry.

The nomination process, which lasted several months, brought in more than 220 nominations from readers — a record, according to the magazine. Those nominations included individuals who work for Class 1s, regionals, short lines, passenger railroads, transit agencies, government agencies, academic institutions, engineering firms and suppliers.

Towner, along with the other 19 honorees, was chosen based on his contributions to the railroad industry, career achievements, demonstrated leadership, professional association activity, and community involvement.

A graduate of Pittsburg State University with a degree in finance and a master’s degree in business administration, Towner began his career at Watco in 2004 as an RMI administrator responsible for maintaining the database which housed all railcar movements for all properties.

“I got lucky in the fact that I started working at Watco over 13 years ago when we were much smaller and I was a lot younger,” he said. “This meant that I had a lot of exposure to a lot of great people not only at Watco, but also to outside partners of Watco.”

Exposure to members of the executive Team, who Towner said always took time to educate and mentor, was invaluable.

After two years, he became a corporate financial analyst, then a regional financial analyst. He went on to become director of operations finance, assistant vice president, senior vice president. Today, as senior vice president of network strategy, he helps lead mergers and acquisitions.

Towner considers many of his coworkers friends, and has forged strong long-lasting relationships with Customers.

“Building real relationships based on trust and mutual effort are what I consider the most important part of life and business. I really enjoy working with others to set our goals and then to execute and accomplish our goals together,” he said. “We have had a lot of success doing that for many years and that is what makes Watco such a great company.”

Perhaps most influential in his life, however, have been his parents.

“My mom has shown unwavering love and 100 percent dedication to her family. Through the ups and downs of life, she’s always remained strong, positive, and moving forward. Her actions have taught me a lot about the importance of keeping family first and never giving up,” he said.

“My dad has had the most influence on my business career. He’s a person with very strong morals that are the foundation for what drives his decisions and actions. It causes him to work extremely hard, to treat everything as if it was his family, to continue to push and educate himself, and to treat everyone with a great amount of respect. He’s accumulated a ton of business wisdom over the years and is always willing to share those experiences with me.”

Ed McKechnie, Watco’s executive vice president, chief of global strategy, said he couldn’t think of an award that better captures Towner and what he does than the Rising Star.

“He’s a natural leader and extraordinarily smart — always the smartest in the room,” McKechnie said. “That’s why I try not to be in the same room with him.”

Towner said he was surprised to learn that he was nominated, and even more surprised that he received it.

“I know there are so many great Watco Team members out there who do great things for the company, their ‘Team,’ and society,” he said. “I’m always humbled and impressed every time I see these great stories in our monthly newsletter, and know we will see many years of great Watco Team members receiving this award.”

Towner’s story will be profiled at ProgressiveRailroading.com later this summer and published in the magazine’s September issue. He was also recognized with other honorees at a dinner on July 23 at the Chase Park Plaza Hotel in St. Louis during the American Association of Railroad Superintendents’ 2017 Annual Meeting.

By Andra Bryan Stefanoni
Contributing Writer

A Watco Team member has been named a “Rising Star” of the North American railroad industry by Progressive Railroading magazine.

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WTG Fuels keeps LBWR on the move
by Tracie VanBeeuwer
Managing Editor

Watco has locomotives running on tracks from coast to coast and one thing that each of them has in common is that they need fuel to function. At the Lubbock and Western Railway (LBWR), WTG Fuels has been keeping them on the go for more than eight years.

“Anytime—anywhere we need fueled, WTG is there for us,” said Young. “It doesn’t matter if it’s after hours, they’ll be there for us.”

Typically, the locomotives on the LBWR are fueled up once a week. WTG Fuels will get information on the locations of the locomotives and take the fuel to them, whether it’s in Seagraves, Texas, or 100 miles away on the other end of the line in Dimmitt, Texas. Depending on the usage, WTG Fuels will then go where needed if a locomotive is needing additional fuel before the next scheduled visit. Approximately 20,000 gallons of diesel fuel are delivered to the LBWR each month.

“With fuel being an extremely essential part of our business, it’s great to have a partner that has provided exceptional service locally,” added Young.

Established in 1976 WTG Fuels, Inc., handles sales of propane, motor fuels, diesel, lube oils, and frac diesel services throughout Western Texas and the Texas Panhandle as well as, southeastern New Mexico and western Oklahoma.
Watco shares safety program with KDOT

By Andrea Bryan Stefanoni
Contributing Writer

When the Kansas Department of Transportation began researching how to create a safety culture, they came across a Kansas company they found had a strong one: Watco.

When KDOT Safety Specialist Juan Delvallea contacted the Watco corporate office in Pittsburg, Kansas, Senior Manager of Training & Development Cris Hatcher was happy to comply with his request to provide an overview.

“Mr. Delvallea said KDOT wanted to work on achieving a better safety culture and how to overcome challenges,” Hatcher said.

He provided Delvallea a brief insight into the Watco Team Safety and Improvement Committee (TS&IC) program and the training that accompanies it. It was exactly what KDOT was seeking.

Last month, Hatcher provided an overview to their entire Safety Leadership Team, which represented all six KDOT divisions across the state.

“During the presentation, I gave a high level overview of our TS&IC Program, the Instructor Led Training we provide to the committee members, and how we utilize the program to improve our safety culture, engagement among Team members, and for developing our front-line Team members who will be our future leaders at Watco,” Hatcher said.

At the conclusion of the presentation, Hatcher led a Q&A discussion that included motivation, morale, and hiring struggles.

“It was an eye-opener for all of us,” Delvallea said. “He gave us a good concept of how it works in the rail industry, how you get everyone regardless of their job or background actively engaged and involved in the culture.”

Delvallea said Hatcher was an outstanding speaker, and inspired the KDOT Team to work toward implementing a cultural shift of their own.

“I think it was a great opportunity to support another group who provides services to our community and communities all across Kansas,” said Hatcher.

Senior Vice President of People Services Rachael Peterson said Watco is frequently recognized for a Customer-first culture, and it’s exciting to now see the Team get recognized for a safety-always culture.

Peterson said the Watco U Team has done “an amazing job of developing a Team of people who understand that Watco’s number one priority is safety.”

“To have KDOT reach out for our support in their safety initiative speaks volumes about the top-notch Team we have at Watco — from our Watco U trainers, to our safety Team trainers, and most importantly the Team in the field who take care of our Customers each and every day,” Peterson said.

One more Watco trip for Circus Train cars

By Tracie VanBeeckalere
Managing Editor

Although the The Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus (RBBB) took its last official run down the tracks in May, that doesn’t mean that the cars would never be on the rails again.

Proof of that was seen on the Wisconsin & Southern Railroad (WSOR) in late July when three of the RBBB cars made their way to find a home at the Circus World Museum based in Baraboo, Wisconsin. The museum began in 1959 with less than an acre of land and six old circus wagons and is now an internationally recognized and respected institution encompassing 64 acres, 30 permanent structures, seven winter quarters buildings, plus the Ringling Bros. Circus Train shed complex.

The Baraboo site has special significance as the location where the Ringling Brothers Circus got its start in 1871.

Shortly before the Circus Train’s final curtain call, the WSOR Team received a call requesting information on how to move the three cars that Circus World had purchased through an auction for the museum.

General Manager Joe Via certainly understood the historical nature of this move on the WSOR and was happy to assist with rolling the cars back home for their final trip. WSOR’s Operations and MOW Teams coordinated the final move to Baraboo at the end of July.

“Preserving this history is important and celebrating the 146 year run of the ‘The Greatest Show On Earth’ is a bit like a dream come true,” noted Katie Sackett, director of commercial for the WSOR.

Sackett added, “Visiting this historical site is something I have done for the past 20 years with my family. Knowing that the last rail car movement was executed by the WSOR is simply amazing.”

Scott O’Donnell, Circus World executive director, said, “When the announcement came in March of this year that Ringling Bros. Barnum and Bailey Circus would be closing after 146 years, we knew that we wanted to try and preserve as many artifacts as we could, including rail assets. The task seemed daunting to procure and relocate full sized rail cars until we received a comforting communication from Wisconsin & Southern Railroad. They understood the importance of these artifacts, respected their provenance to our greater circus family and said “We are here to help. Let’s get these family members home.”

“From the humble start of this journey to the conclusion, Katie Sackett and the team at Wisconsin & Southern Railway were valued compassionate partners. They responded immediately to any concerns or questions that we had, they continuously bested our expectations and delivered the rail cars safely to Baraboo for future generations to enjoy. Our profound respect goes to every one of the Wisconsin & Southern Railroad family that made our dream a reality. First Class all the way!”
Houston Division offers helping hand to Krause Children’s Center

by Jennifer Sévère
Contributing Writer

A group from the Houston Division offered a helping hand to some young girls at the Krause Children’s Center in Katy, Texas. Mark Cendejas, track maintenance manager for the Houston Division, headed up the project, and worked with other Teams to organize sessions that concentrated on job interviewing etiquette for the young ladies. The Krause Children’s Center is a facility that caters to the needs of girls between the ages of 12-17. Many of the girls in this Center have experienced difficult situations in life including neglect and abuse, but the Krause Center offers these young girls a pathway to achieve their goals and dreams for the future.

Cendejas was accompanied by Melissa Tuman, Customer service representative; Luis Oyervides, operator for GPMH; Pedro Barron, track supervisor; TraQuiesha Swan, liquids terminal operator; Martin Dudley, measurement specialist; and Nathan Trejo, assistant terminal manager for Houston Texas Terminals.

The group broke out into two teams, 10 girls worked with each group and was given a mock job interview.

Cendejas stated, “We wanted to give these kids an introduction on what to expect during a job interview, and how to go about navigating through the application process.”

The Watco Team gave each young adult various tips on how to dress, sit, the importance of speaking clearly, the art of a firm handshake, and the significance of active listening. The teens were given positive feedback on how they could better their presentations made to prospective employers; and how to stand-out from other applicants in order to help “land that job.”

Tuman stated, “These mock interview sessions will help these kids to get better acclimated with how to approach an interview through preparation and confidence.”

Flyers and handouts were given to participants to serve as reminders of the information that was presented and discussed. The Watco Team spent about two hours working with the girls, and every Watco Team member stated how rewarding the experience was, and how they were excited to participate in the next leadership opportunity.

Both the kids and staff at the Krause Center were appreciative of the time and effort taken to come on-site. They also commented on the significance and relevance of the material that was presented, and information such as this is something they can use in all aspects of life.

This Leadership Project focused on bringing out leadership qualities in each Watco Team member through involvement and initiative. The work the Houston Division has done with the Krause Center is a part of the Leadership Project Cendejas has organized within the Houston Division.

The goal is to make sure they can make a positive impact at both Watco, and the surrounding communities. Another aspect in this Leadership Project is to get all levels of management and Team members involved.

It is important for each Watco Team member to know that leadership qualities exist in them, and an activity such as this helps with personal and career development.

Although every project or opportunity presents its own challenges, we remember to learn and grow from those challenges. The Watco Houston Division plans on continuing its work through the Leadership Project by working with the Krause Children’s Center, and through other significant opportunities to serve.

ALABAMA SOUTHERN RAILROAD HOLDS TEAM MEMBER APPRECIATION

By Tracie VanBecelaere
Managing Editor

Alabama Southern Railroad General Manager Anwar Aiken is proud of his Team and cooked up a great way to let them know.

Aiken hosted a Team Member appreciation cookout at the depot to show his Team members how much he appreciated all they do.

“They’ve been dealing with a lot of adversity, caused by changes in traffic flow and they’ve done a tremendous job of taking care of the Customers. With the added pressure I haven’t heard one complaint from any of them,” said Aiken.

Commercial Manager Joey Bitner had been down for Customer meetings and said that the meetings had all been positive.

“It’s not often you go to these meetings and consistently hear the same message from each Customer on how pleased they are with the service,” said Bitner.

He added, “The main theme focused on how the ABS Team is getting the cars in and out and that Customers aren’t seeing delays on their end. It just shows what an efficient and consistent operation the ABS is, that’s not easy for any railroad to do, especially one handling 40,000 cars per year.”

Aiken repeated the same theme, “The Customers at the meetings have all been very complimentary and praised the service they’re receiving. Both our large and small Customers said good things about the Team and the great communication from the ABS.”

Not only did the Customers compliment the service they’ve received, they also gave accolades to a special Team member, Seth Morris. Morris serves as a conductor and has been with the railroad for seven years.

“Seth gets started at 4 am each day and works from Monday to Friday,” said Aiken. “He’s a hard worker and it’s good to hear the Customers say such great things about him.”

Aiken is especially proud of how the Team takes care of not only their biggest Customers but the smaller ones as well.

“That one rail car a Customer may get every other month is just as important to him as the 500 another Customer gets. We need to be sure that he’s as happy with his service as anyone,” said Aiken.

Joshua Williams not only serves as the ABS roadmaster, he also takes on the roll of chef whenever an event is planned at the railroad.

“Josh is a really good roadmaster, but he’s an even better chef,” Aiken said with a laugh.

In addition to the burgers and sausage grilled by Williams, the Team was also treated to a variety of sides and dessert.

One thing Bitner was impressed by as a guest at the picnic was that families were invited to attend the event as well.

“It was a great family experience, the spouses and kids showed up, and they made sure that there was enough food grilled to provide meals for the night crew when they arrived,” said Bitner.
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. The line-up this fall includes:

Sept. 9-10, Tennessee Valley Railfest, Chattanooga, Tennessee
This festival is held at the Tennessee Valley Railroad Museum, which bills itself as the largest operating historical museum in the Southeast. The event features Missionary Ridge Local train rides, live music, demonstrations, a petting zoo, children’s activities, exhibits, and displays. Details: www.tvrail.com/events-exhibits/rides/raiffest

Sept. 16-18, North Platte Rail Days, North Platte, Nebraska
At the busiest rail freight corridor in the world, rail fans can view a model train and hobby show, take a tour of the Golden Spike Tower, and see the Bailey Yard, where more than 150 trains and 10,000 railcars are processed every 24 hours. Details: www.northplaterraildays.com

Sept. 16-17, Derry Railroad Days, Derry, Pennsylvania
This annual event held at Derry Station Railroad Heritage Park beside the Caboose Museum and Gift Shop features a “hobo picnic,” a parade, entertainment, and food and craft vendors. Details: http://derryborough.org/railroad-festival-days

Sept. 23-24, Folsom Railfest, Folsom, California
Train, motorcar, and hand car rides, railroad equipment displays, model railroads, local history interpretation, delicious food, and fun play for kids are part of this festival held at Hampton Station. Details: www.psrr.org/folsom-railfest/

October 21-22 and 28-29, Hinton Railroad Days
Hinton, West Virginia
Each year for two weekends in October, the streets of Hinton are filled with vendors selling unusual crafts like rings made from coins, coal scrip and old coins, handmade wooden banks with old post office doors, wooden furniture, and more. Food and special events abound, and the New River Train arrives each afternoon. Details: www.hintonwva.com/railroaddays

Congratulations to the following Team members celebrating anniversaries this month.

2 Years: Larry Adams, Gautam Agrawala, Gregory Anderson, Crystal Arnold, Chad Baker, Clint Barnes, Lane Beldarke, Garrett Bequette, Armando Bernabe, Michael Brooks, Raul Covarrubio, Aaron Doyle, Elizabeth Espino, Jonathan Hall, Zachary Hammons, Michael Higgins, Kevin Hoyos, Jared Knee, Gilberto Larasquiti, Laramie Laude, Richard McCalla, Sergio Mohammed, Alejandro Molina, Phillip Morris, Johnny Ortegun, Francis Osterhout, Jason Ratliff, Terry Schmitz, Brett Smith, Matthew Smolek, Joel Spencer, John Sutphin, Brian Thompson, Andrew Williams
4 Years: Zafrool Azeez, Christopher Droddy, Clarence Earls, Adan Hernandez-Flores, Jared Humphrey, Joevanie Martinez, Tyler Ray, Alberto Rodriguez, Carlos Tapia, Kevin Woods, Brett Woolard
5 Years: Nicholas Bennett, Kevin Cook, Cindy Davied, Michael Ferguson, Ramiro Gomez, Robbie Haynes, James Henry, Donald Janda, Chase Manley, Carrie Middlebrook, Jason Overton, Michael Wastchak, Mikayla Widick
6 Years: Tyler Adkinson, Jeff Ecret, Erik Finnerty, Keith Johnson, Paul Leonards, Christopher McCready, Carl Petersen, Jastin Rainwater, Roman Salazar, Brit Sonnier, Cindy VanBecelaere, Ryan Williams, Adam Wittenuer
7 Years: Travis Combs, Rynzd Dziedzic, David Humble, William Jones, Nathan Keizer, Alvin Maney, Jason Miron, Seth Peterson, Terry Smallwood, John Staples, David Tackett, Nathan Tobey, Bryan Trexler, Dyllan Vincent, Damien Williams
8 Years: Luis Ferrer, Christopher Hayes
9 Years: Angelo Barrera, Raymond Barrera, Justin Dempsey, Raymond Howard, Regan Karl, James Kratky, Curtis Lindsey, Dave Rodriguez, Dennis Sawyer
10 Years: Phyllis Angermeier, Andrew Brown, William Buchinski, Ronald Jackson, Dwight Sayles, Joshua Seefeld, Robert Sua, Nathan Tuzicka
11 Years: William Beighley, Robin Conerby, Maurice Davis, Donnie Gunter, Charles Henderson, Jeff Mayfield, Kyle Moody, Alejandro Perez, Matthew Sodergren, Elizabeth Stevens, Alicia Stinson, Joseph Szakacs, Martin Wellmaker
12 Years: Edward Guy, Adam Hanson, John Korando, Douglas Linscomb
13 Years: Kyle Finn, Sofronia Howard, Ted Kadua, Steven Kincaid, Marlene Olson, Jimmy Patterson, Delta Wood
14 Years: Jason Hilsop, Roder Mercado
15 Years: John Binkley, David Gromer, Phillip Hedge, Jason Jeane, Christopher Moore, Albert Olvera, Tricia Underwood
16 Years: Mark Bray, Eugenio Ovalle
17 Years: Mark Lynn, Charles Stanley
19 Years: Micheal Crownen, Susan Hewko
20 Years: Brian Collier, Timothy Wiseman
21 Years: Doug Kerley, Kevin Krueger
22 Years: Joseph Brown, Susan Lewis
24 Years: Sam Carson, Anthony Guy, Timothy Jany
25 Years: James Boyle, Kenneth Dozier
26 Years: Maurice McGinnis
29 Years: Rodger Isbell, Darryl Marshall
31 Years: Sam Ricci
34 Years: Ellen Demaree
36 Years: Paul Montange
39 Years: Randy Glaze
42 Years: Judith Hardesty
43 Years: Willie McNunnels
47 Years: Michael Thompson
The newsletter for Watco Companies

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Watco Rocks

by Andrea Bryan Stefanoni
Contributing Writer

When a teacher in Pittsburg, Kansas — home base to Watco’s corporate office — began a summer project for kids and their parents, Watco jumped on the bandwagon.

Inspired when her family found a small painted rock on vacation in Florida, Michelle Harrison brought the idea home to her community and named it Pittsburg Rocks. Other communities across the U.S. are engaged in similar paint, hunt, and find projects.

The idea is simple: Families or individuals paint rocks and hide them around town. If they choose, they take photos of their rocks and post them in a Facebook group page. Others hunt for the rocks and, once discovered, may keep the rocks or hide them again for others to find.

More than 1,000 belong to the Facebook group now.

Watco extended the idea to children and grandchildren of Team members. Children painted Watco-themed rocks and brought them to the office. The Pittsburg Watco Team voted on their favorites, with the top three earning prizes.

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W ashing more about the Pittsburg Rocks project, Shannan Penrod, EHS Manager at the Scottsville, Texas, and Zwolle, Louisiana, facilities said, “Hundreds of hours of work are spent around and in railcars at GBW every day. Being focused on whatever task is at hand can lead our Team Members into a tunnel vision effect. Great care must be taken to remember the magnitude of hazards that are associated with our work. Prior to performing any task under, in, or on top of a railcar the proper sequence of events must take place or else the results will be catastrophic.”

Near miss video shows possible impact of accident

by Tracie VanBecelaere
Managing Editor

It’s often hard for someone to admit when they make a mistake, even more so when the mistake could have deadly consequences.

At the GBW Services Scottsville, Texas, location a Team member did just that, he followed safety protocol and reported a near miss to his supervisors. The Team member was performing work under a railcar when the railcar began moving. He was able to escape the situation without injury and promptly reported the close call.

His supervisors thought it would be a good opportunity to use the event to teach others the importance of following safety standards set in place and the wheels were set in motion to shoot a reenactment with EHS Support Manager Wesley Arthur behind the camera.

A mannequin was dressed to fit the part with a watermelon serving as his head to provide a more graphic rendition of what could have happened.

“I think the re-enactment brings to life the potential severity of the incident and it makes more of an impact,” said Arthur. “It was a rewarding opportunity to work with all levels at the Scottsville location to re-enact the incident and create a video to serve as a valuable learning tool for the entire network.”

Shannan Penrod, EHS Manager at the Scottsville, Texas, and Zwolle, Louisiana, facilities said, “Hundreds of hours of work are spent around and in railcars at GBW every day. Being focused on whatever task is at hand can lead our Team Members into a tunnel vision effect. Great care must be taken to remember the magnitude of hazards that are associated with our work. Prior to performing any task under, in, or on top of a railcar the proper sequence of events must take place or else the results will be catastrophic.”

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A dummy was given a watermelon head to show happens when a near miss becomes an accident.