

Looking Ahead

Dates to Remember

October 31:

MRL's Third anniversary.

Tuesday, November 6:

Election Day. Be sure to vote!

December:

All month. Next opportunity to enroll in or change 401(k) Savings Plan.

Saturday, December 1:

Livingston area Employees Christmas Party. Livingston Depot Center, Livingston.

Friday, December 7:

Helena area Employees Christmas Party. Colonial Inn, Helena.

Saturday, December 8:

Missoula area Employees Christmas Party. Holiday Inn Parkside, Missoula.

Laurel/Billings area MRL Children's Christmas Party. West Elementary School, Laurel, 1 PM.

Friday, December 14:

Laurel/Billings area Employees Christmas Party. Holiday Inn, Billings.

Saturday, December 15:

Missoula Santa Claus train.

Bigger trucks pose a threat to your safety and to the railroads

The long-haul trucking industry is vigorously lobbying the federal government for increases in the size and weight of trucks allowed to travel the nation's interstate highway system. Current federal limits place restrictions on the types of vehicles that can use the interstate highways. Truckers are pushing for changes that would increase by 50 percent or more (gross vehicle weight) the size of trucks sharing the highways with you. Those increases would bring a dramatic decline in truck unit costs and the volume of goods a single vehicle can haul. The competitive impact would adversely

(Please turn to Trucks, page 2)



Gang 53 installed a MRL record-setting 2,100 cross ties during one 10-hour shift on May 23 near Perma, Montana. Commemorative T-shirts were given to the gang members. Pictured here, machine operator John Harbrige is wearing one of the, sure to be, collector's items.

From the Desk of Bill Brodsky

By now I hope that each employee has had an opportunity to participate in the Attitude Survey which was developed by the Center for Values Research (CVR). This program is an important tool in helping to evaluate and quantify the effectiveness of Montana Rail Link's participatory management style.

I cannot over-emphasize the importance of this program in helping to shape the future of Montana Rail Link. The process by which the survey is conducted is the most significant element of the program. It is designed to foster communication at all levels of the company. In addition, a forum is provided to identify problems, establish priorities for problem solving and facilitate a team approach to achieving solutions.

All this, you might say, out of just

an attitude survey? We can do even better than that. The ultimate goal is to enhance the profitability of the company, thereby enhancing the profits available to each employee, and overall to improve our quality of life.

This does not just happen, however, because we have had an attitude survey. It happens because the company and each and every employee is committed to making it happen. The survey will simply facilitate the process.

The initial phase of the attitude survey is taking about six months to complete. The process is ongoing, however, with a considerable commitment. We think this is time and money well spent. You have witnessed our commitment at every level of the company. You should expect

(Please turn to Desk, page 6)

Letters

To the editor:

Now that Montana Rail Link has implemented its attitude survey program and followed it up with the problem solving portion of the same program, it is up to management and the employees to do everything in their power to make the necessary adjustments to work closer with each other in order to resolve any differences they have and to enhance their working relationship with each other.

One problem the Montana Rail Link could face is the carryover of the old "BN" attitude and it could well affect the next survey. BN tried several different types of these programs with very little success due to a lack of follow up by both the company and the employees. If not much is done with this survey, it could very well follow the same direction as the BN surveys, with more of a negative attitude than a positive one, and less willingness of everyone to participate in the next one.

Another problem faced with this survey is that many of the MRL employees were away from the railroad industry prior to the start up of the Montana Rail Link and had been furloughed by the Burlington Northern Railroad or some other road. They had been left with the feeling that the company that they worked for did not care and they were considered no more than just a number. The first year back working for a railroad at a fair wage, they were happy and had

very little to complain about. But as the "honeymoon" ended, more and more of the concerns that did not seem so bad then have started to surface.

Management must make the best decisions they can with this survey. They must work hard in order to solve any of the problems they can and have the answers to the problems they can not solve at this time. Management also must learn to accept justified and constructive criticism in a positive manner and learn from it. The employees must, at the same time, enter into the survey with an open mind and a commitment to help resolve any of the problems they can and have the attitude that it takes time to resolve any problem.

In conclusion, we feel that it is important that everyone must cooperate to the best of their ability. They need to enter into the problem solving phase of this program with a positive attitude that as we work together for one positive goal, it is a team goal; and can not be achieved without the combined cooperation of management and the employees.

Jack Gabrian and Fred Feurbacher III
Laurel Mechanical Department

Letters Policy: Employees are invited to send their comments. Be sure to include your name, work location and a phone number where we can reach you to verify your letter, if necessary. Names will be withheld upon request, but letters received unsigned will not be published. Your letter may be edited if space limitations do not permit printing it in full.

Trucks (continued from page 1)

affect railroads and would be devastating to our nation's highway system. Please study the information included with this issue of the Newsletter. Write your congressmen and senators.

For Montana they are: Pat Williams, Congressman, 2457 RHOB, Washington, DC 20515; Ron Marlenee, Congressman, 2465 RHOB, Washington, DC 20515; Conrad Burns, Senator, 183 DSOB, Washington, DC 20510; Max Baucus, Senator, 706 SHOB, Washington, DC 20510. •

Women for MRL

Can you name one organization that is involved with company picnics, food and clothing drives, Christmas parties, bake sales, golf tournaments and sponsoring informational meetings (the Railroad Retirement Board and benefits were explained at a recent meeting by a RRB representative. The session was taped for those not able to attend.)? If you haven't guessed by now, it is the Laurel/Billings area based **Women for MRL**. Spouses of Montana Rail Link employees form the core of this dedicated group. Jennifer McCandless, wife of Laurel locomotive engineer Jeff McCandless, chairs this organization that has been active since MRL start up in 1987. All interested persons are welcome to attend their meetings which are held on the first Tuesday of each month at the Owl Cafe in Laurel at 7 PM. •

Need a cap?

The MRL blue corduroy caps are available to employees for \$5 each. Write or call **Jacques Duhamel** at 523-1494 in Missoula.

Misroutes

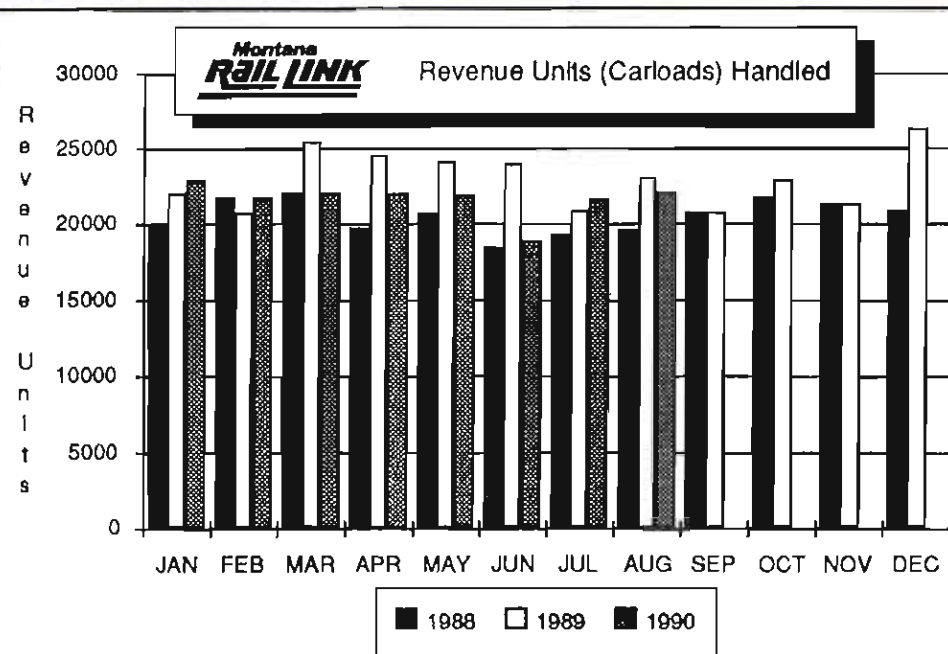
The photograph of the coal train which appeared on the front page of Issue No. 11 of the Newsletter was taken west of Columbus, Montana, not east.

The Newsletter is published by Montana Rail Link, Inc., issued bimonthly, and mailed First Class at Missoula, Montana, to all active employees. Readers are invited to submit news items and comments.

Editor: **R. Milton Clark**

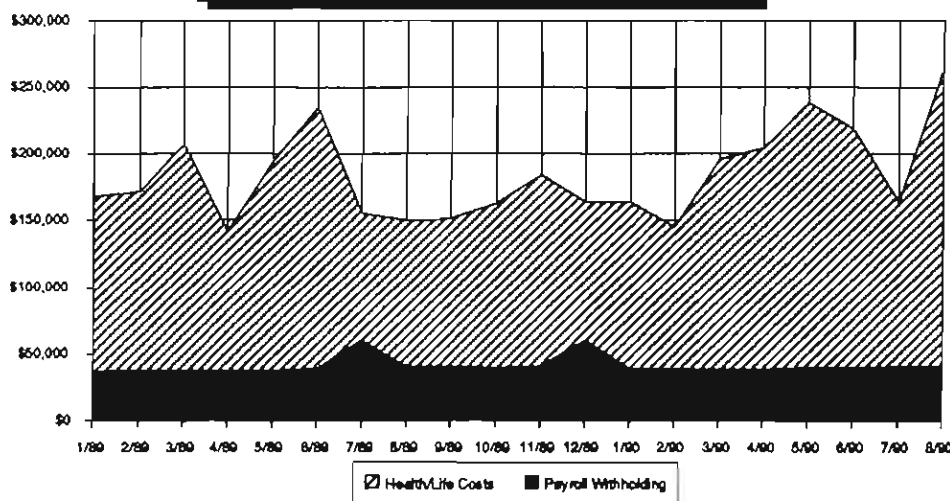
Member Association of Railway Communicators.

No. 12 Fall/1990 October 1, 1990



Revenue units handled for the eight months ended August 31, 1990, totaled 173,688. This is a decline of 11,426 or 6.2% compared to the same period last year. Our largest single source of business, bridge traffic which is handled for the Burlington Northern between Laurel and Spokane, declined by 11,359 revenue units or 8.6% during the same period. This is due, in part, to reduced intermodal and grain shipments. Traffic which originates or terminates on Montana Rail Link increased by 957 revenue units or 2.2% during the same period.

Health and Life Insurance Costs January 1989 through August 1990



Approximately 20% of Health & Life Insurance Costs are paid through employee contributions

Health Plan News

What to do when a claim is not paid

Pending Claims

There are several reasons why a claim is not paid immediately. The most common are: (1) Administration Services (AS) needs additional information from the employee, or (2) AS needs additional information from the provider of service. If your claim is not paid within two weeks, there is probably nothing to worry about; however, if it is over a month, you should begin to investigate.

Check your correspondence to see if an explanation of benefits or a letter from AS was received. Read your correspondence carefully. Four out of five times it will save you from making a telephone call. If AS has returned a form for your completion, fill it out and return it immediately. If you have an explanation of benefits but you are uncertain of what it means, call AS at 1-800-344-3639 and ask for Sue Blair.

If you are sure you have not received any correspondence from AS and your claim has been submitted for more than thirty days, contact Sue Blair.

Denied Claims

A claim can be denied for a number of reasons. Some of the common reasons for nonpayment are:

- The charges were applied to your deductible.
- The service was not a benefit covered by the plan.
- The dependent was not covered under your policy.
- The charges exceed the usual and customary fees.
- The charges exceed the maximum benefit year allowance.

If a claim is denied, review your health plan booklet. If you feel that the denial is wrong, contact Sue Blair for further explanations. If the claim cannot be resolved, you have sixty days to notify Administration Services

(continued, please see Health, page 6)

A Look at the Compass/YMS Department

Computers play a significant role in the railroad business with many applications. Indeed, we would be lost without them. One of the largest tasks for a railroad is to keep track of the freight cars and locomotives that it uses. Our railroad alone generally has 3500 to 5000 cars on hand on any given day with 20 to 30 train movements. Customers need to know where their shipments are at all times. Locomotives require servicing at regular intervals; management needs information on car hire expenses, equipment utilization, and gross ton miles to name some. All this information and more are generated from data input to computers by our Compass/YMS department located in the general office building.

Montana Rail Link adopted the Burlington Northern's Compass/YMS system for train and car reporting at the time of start up. This program, together with the Computerized Billing System (see Newsletter #10, Spring 1990), provides the majority of operating and revenue data needed to run the railroad. Compass, an acronym for "Complete Operating and Processing Service System", was developed by the Southern Pacific Railroad in a joint venture with International Business Machines (IBM). The BN purchased the program in the early 1970s. YMS stands for "Yard Management System." While this may sound complex, YMS is just an updated, more user-friendly version of Compass. Incidentally, these systems are all "cardless"; i.e., direct data input to the computers has replaced the old IBM punch card.

The Compass computer configuration consists of a main frame located in St. Paul; a smaller unit in Laurel; and the CBS main frame located in Overland Park, Kansas. The three computers interface, communicate with each other, and update as data is entered. Personnel at our offices in Billings, Laurel, Livingston, Helena and Missoula have access to this

system through I/O CRT's (input-output cathode ray tubes) and are important as data input locations and sources of operating information for the Missoula office.

Orson Murray, director of operations information, heads the department. He is assisted by Dennis Meyer, manager car service. Staffed around the clock, there are two car service representatives assigned on each shift. In addition, there is a day time only customer service representative position, currently held by Christy Kyle, which handles customer car tracing, diversions and reconsignments and various communications tasks. Mark Bjorlie, Don Allison, Bryan Dayton, Dave Cullinan, Chris Blazok, Jeff Shell, Jeanne Finley and Cheryl Peterson fill out the balance of the staff, including relief assignments. A car service rep handles train reporting (arrivals, departures, work done enroute, bad order set outs and more) from information faxed to the office from the field reporting stations. Mark Bjorlie is representative of the type of employees working in the Compass area. He was new to the railroad industry when MRL began operations. Mark finds the work very interesting, "Because you find out everything that goes on; the movement of cars and trains and have involvement with many other railroad personnel." Input of data is important. "Accuracy is much more important than speed in this work. Complete, correct and legible data from the field is very important to the Compass/YMS personnel," he continued.

Freight car management is also contained within the Compass area and will be profiled in a future issue. •

THE WINNER'S CIRCLE

Montana
RAIL LINK

1990
Photo Contest

Livingston signal inspector Tom Miller's photo of a train at Louisville, Montana, took the grand prize award of \$300 in the MRL 1990 Photo Contest. The eleven \$50 awards went to, two each, Marty Rau, section foreman at Superior, Montana; Bill Lackman, locomotive engineer at Missoula; Jack Dorsey, locomotive engineer from Laurel. Ed Stoll, clerk at Helena; David Franz and Roy Reineke, locomotive engineers from Missoula each received one \$50 award. Seventeen employees entered 82 items for the contest.

The judging was based on a weighted point system based on exposure (40 points), composition, impact on the individual judge and MRL image (20 points each). Lynda Frost, administrative assistant to the president; Jay Lentzner, design & maintenance engineer; Alan Burns, Missoula locomotive engineer; and Barbara Rock, a professional photographer, served as judges.

An exhibit of the twelve winning photographs is being prepared for display at various locations in the coming weeks. The entries will be used for advertising, visual displays, the photograph file, calendars and more.

Watch for the announcement for the '91 Photo Contest and in the meantime, practice your techniques and watch for suitable subjects. •

Our safety performance: Improvement a No. 1 priority

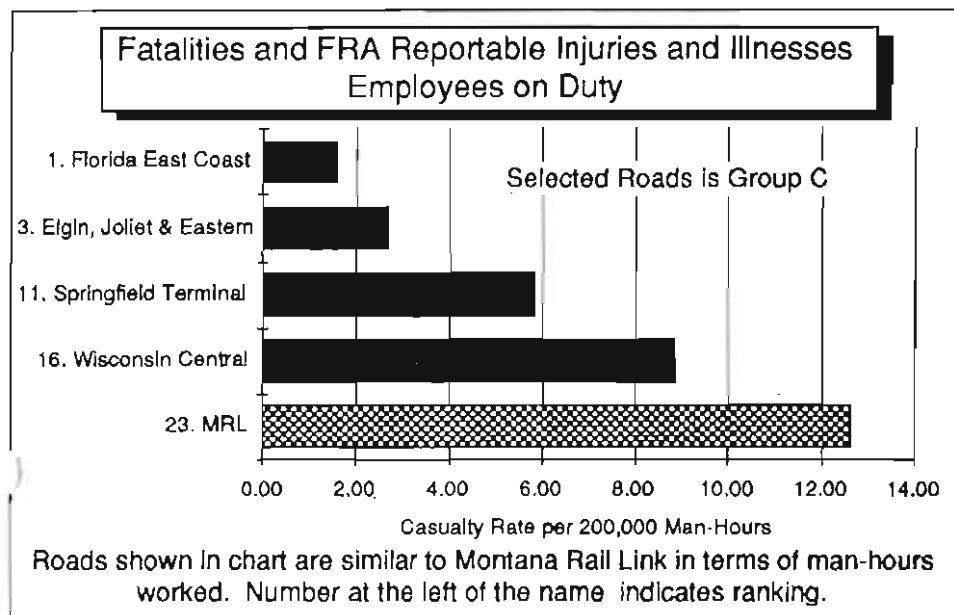
We pride ourselves on being one of the best railroads in the country and most statistics reflect that fact. Our safety record is a glaring exception. Through July, 1990 there were 79 injuries were reported. Montana Rail Link ranks 23rd among 25 railroads reporting to the Federal Railroad Administration in Group C (Group C railroads are those with less than 4 million annual man-hours

worked).

While there is always a question as to how accurately other railroads are reporting, the result is so extreme, that it is clear we have to radically change our practices. It is just not acceptable to have the accidents we are experiencing. While the majority of the accidents are relatively minor, each has the potential to cause serious injury. President Bill Brodsky has set

safety improvement as his number one priority. We have added to the training staff which now includes Brian Heikkila, director of Training, Rules and Safety; Paul Adams, manager, and Duane Parker, BLE instructor. We have put an emphasis on reviewing accidents and holding fact finding sessions to determine the cause of accidents and methods for correction. In addition, safety committees with regular monthly meetings, are active at Missoula, Helena, Laurel and Livingston. The importance of their work is being re-emphasized. Our insurance agent, Terry Payne & Co. of Missoula, has assigned Bill Peoples to work with us. He is reviewing specific work practices and is assisting with training people to carry out assignments in a manner designed to avoid accidents.

The most important person and the one most likely to impact our safety record is you. Make working safely your personal responsibility. If you have suggestions or questions concerning safety, please do not hesitate to share them with your supervisor, the training department and your co-workers. •



Signal department personnel changes

Terry Burdett was named electronic control specialist with headquarters at Helena effective May 31. His responsibilities include the maintenance of hot box detectors and crossing signals for the east end of the railroad. Mike Hardesty is the new signal maintainer at Livingston replacing Gil Just who retired in July. In other moves during July, Gary Loeffler became signal maintainer at Trident, Larry Roos went to signal gang 1961 and Tom Fontaine became the new east end assistant signal maintainer. •

Dennis R. Washington Foundation Report

The Dennis R. Washington Foundation granted 31 contribution requests totalling \$84,600 during the second quarter of 1990. This brings the year-to-date total to \$99,100. The Foundation endowment now totals \$2,587,465.

The Foundation is the major philanthropic funding organization for the Washington Companies. It administers a consistent program of contributions in recognition of the company's ability to support the general welfare and quality of life in the communities it serves. A uniform assessment of the Washington Group of companies pre-

tax profits is the source of the Foundation endowment. The assessment may be adjusted to reflect operating conditions or other sources of funding. Only the earnings of the endowment are used to fund grant requests from the Foundation.

The Dennis R. Washington Foundation priorities for grant consideration are youth oriented programs and education. The focus of the Foundation is on the needs of the under privileged and less fortunate located in those communities served by the Washington Group of Companies. •

Desk (continued from page 1)

positive results; studies have clearly demonstrated that the vast majority of problems can be resolved within our specific work groups.

I encourage employees that were unable to participate in the sessions this time to visit with those who have and commit to being a participant in the future. Don't wait to communicate, be a part of the team.

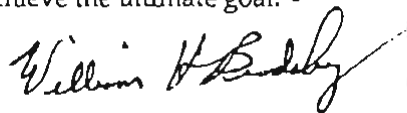
Administratively, there are some improvements in the conduct of the survey that will be made. It has been a true learning experience for everyone. If each of you will overlook some of our glitches in the system and focus on participation and results, then we will have progressed a long way toward the ultimate goal.

Change is always difficult and most often slow. Be patient and fair in your evaluation of the program, as well as in your evaluation of your fellow employees.

What can you expect as a result of the survey? Communication should start to improve immediately within your group and throughout the company. You should have an

increased awareness of where responsibilities are placed. Are you willing to accept those responsibilities that are truly yours or is it the fault of someone else? You should have more comfort in dealing with your supervisor and he/she should be more comfortable in dealing with you. You will both have a better understanding of each other. Remember that each of us is as much a part of the solution as we are a part of the problem. If we rightfully demand results then we are also demanding that we participate in the solution.

Personally, I feel considerably enlightened about our employees and our company having reviewed the results of our feed back sessions. It is apparent that each of us has much work to do in addressing the concerns and opportunities that have been presented. The true irony is that the success or failure of the program rests with each of us individually. Let us accept the challenge and responsibility to achieve the ultimate goal. •



Locomotives being rebuilt

Six locomotives are being rebuilt by Livingston Rebuild Center as part of our 1990 capital expenditure program (SD40s 203, 207, 212, 219; SD45 6681; and SDP40 290). The locomotives are being transformed into model SD40-2 x's with new numbers in the 250 series. The rebuilding includes all new low and high voltage wiring, "dash 2" electrical systems, and new draft gear with alignment control couplers. The units will also feature the new "clean cab" concept with built-in radios and "Marys" (receiving units for the rear of train telemetry devices). Electric cab heaters with auxiliary strip heaters, protective padding on protruding edges to reduce the possibility of injuries, and Benelex™ brand cab floors (a new nonmetallic synthetic material) are being installed. These locomotives all received prime mover and truck work in 1989. The project, which represents an investment of \$1.6 million, will make a significant improvement in the availability of our road power. The target date for completion is December 31. •

Q&A

Is all of our 45000 series covered hopper cars involved in a rebuilding program at Missoula Car Shop? How extensive are the repairs and how long does the work on each car take? Can you give us some details on the program?

Montana Rail Link has 50 cars of this series, all 4427 cubic feet, 100 ton capacity, which were built by Pullman-Standard in 1970. The interior compartment dividers and slope sheets developed cracks and pulled away from the side walls, weakening the cars. An outside contractor is repairing the cars in Missoula using a kit provided by MRL. About 40 man-hours of labor is required for each car. The entire project will cost \$90,000. •

Have a question you want answered? Contact the editor, we'll try and get it for you.

Health (continued from page 3)

in writing of your protest of the denial. The claim will be reviewed.

We want you to understand your benefits so that you can use them wisely. •

Health Insurance Claim Questions?

Call Administration Services in
Spokane, toll free at

1-800-344-3639

Office Hours:
9-5 Mountain Time
Monday thru Friday

SAFETY *Safety.... make it your #1 priority!*

Keeping Track

Montana Rail Link Personnel Changes

Effective September 13, 1990:

Steven R. Werner named field engineer, a new position, with headquarters in Missoula. He was formerly with the Burlington Northern Railroad where he was an estimator with the engineering department in Havre, Montana. Mr. Werner holds a civil engineering degree from North Dakota State University in Fargo, ND. •

Retirements.....

Our best wishes go to Missoula signal inspector **Jim Otto** who retired on September 7, 1990, completing 41 years of service that began with the Northern Pacific in Livingston; and **Lloyd Schott**, Missoula utility operating employee, who retired August 31 completing more than 40 years of railroad service that began with the Milwaukee Road in Marquette, Iowa. •

Give, The United Way

The United Way campaigns are being conducted in communities served by Montana Rail Link. Our friends and neighbors have needs that must be met. Whatever the need – food, shelter, clothing, counsel, comfort, or help in a family crisis – the United Way is there providing funding for many programs. Montana Rail Link believes in the United Way and as a company, does our share by providing corporate donations. Each of us, however, should consider personally participating in this drive. Your gift indicates you care and the gifts stay in the community where given. •

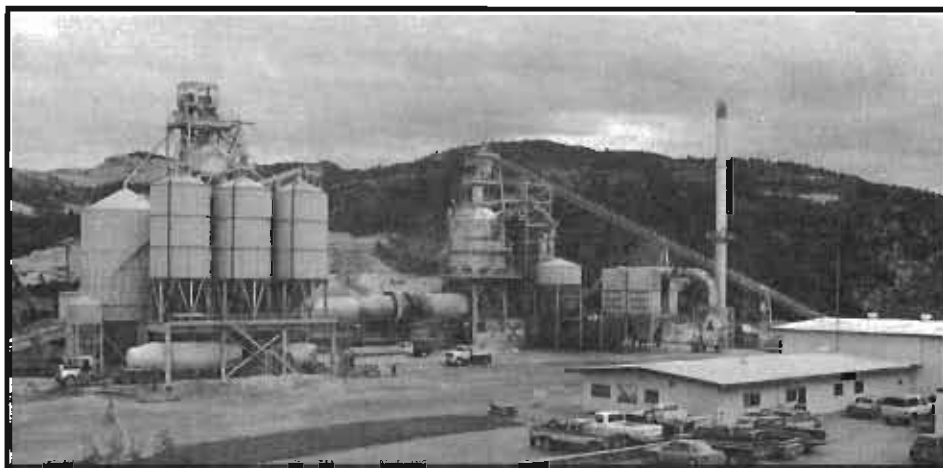
United Way



Customer Profile: Continental Lime Inc.

Lime has been called "the" versatile chemical, and for good reason. Lime is the primary chemical used in water and waste water treatment. A vital ingredient for environmental clean-up, it is being used in water, air and solid wastes. It is also used in steel flux, non-ferrous metallurgy, pH control, pulp and paper, sugar refining and soil stabilization. In annual tonnage produced, lime is second only to sulfuric acid as an industrial chemical. Quicklime, pro-

duced by heating limestone to approximately 2,400 degrees Fahrenheit; and hydrated lime, produced by the reaction of quicklime with sufficient quantities of water, the end result being a fine powder, are the two types of lime in common usage. annually. Up to 2500 tons of lime can be stored at the plant. Trucks are used to transport the lime to a rail terminal located at the intersection of Indian Creek Road and Montana Rail Link where there is a further storage capacity for 2000 tons.



The part of Continental Lime's Indian Creek plant that only a few see because it is five miles up in the mountains west of Townsend. The truck under the storage bins hauls the lime to the rail loading facility. A bit of the stone quarry area is visible in the distance at the left. The office and shop are at the right.

duced by heating limestone to approximately 2,400 degrees Fahrenheit; and hydrated lime, produced by the reaction of quicklime with sufficient quantities of water, the end result being a fine powder, are the two types of lime in common usage.

A leading producer of lime in the Western U.S., Continental Lime has plants at Delta, Utah, and Tacoma, Washington. Corporate offices are located in Salt Lake City, Utah. Their newest facility, opened in 1982, is the Indian Creek Plant, located five miles west of Townsend, Montana, in the Limestone Hills. It consists of a stone quarry mining area, a crusher and screening plant with a capacity of processing 700,000 tons of limestone

per year. A 1,500 foot conveyer carries the crushed stone from the crusher to the stockpile. The lime producing plant consists of a pre-heater and rotary kiln which is fired with pulverized coal to a temperature of approximately 2500 degrees Fahrenheit. The hot waste gasses are drawn back through the kiln and into the pre-heater which is charged with lime-stone approximately 2" x 3/8" in size. The design capacity of the process plant is 150,000 tons of quicklime

The Indian Creek facility is currently being expanded with an additional kiln which will effectively double their production capacity. It is expected to be operational early in 1991. Continental Lime employs thirty persons at the plant, including Elton Chorney who serves as the plant manager; and Cindy Howard who coordinates rail shipments. •

Seventh in a series of articles designed to acquaint us with our customers.



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Right, Ravalli County fairgoers this year had an opportunity to learn more about Montana Rail Link first hand. A display train, made up of a locomotive, a log flat, a 50' box car, a covered hopper and a caboose, was placed adjacent to the Ravalli County Fairgrounds in Hamilton, Montana August 29 through 31. Visitors could climb aboard the locomotive or caboose, pick up literature provided by Operation Lifesaver and visit with MRL personnel. Some of our employees on hand to assist were, pictured here l. to r., Rick Jones, locomotive engineer; Chris Ellsworth, manager car repair billing; and Afton Dupuis, administrative assistant to the executive vice president. Not pictured: Mitch Dahl, Suzanne Bonner, Bill Schutter and Mike Eide. Lower right, Afton helps a youngster with one of our children's engineer hats.

MONTANA



Any time is train time!

OPERATION
LIFESAVER®



Hood ornaments for the inspection car? No. A new corporate logo has been adopted and these are the mascots? Not quite. They are just three goats that got away from the stock yards in August and have been roaming about the west end of Missoula ever since. Goats have a natural affinity to climb and our inspection vehicle proved to be an alluring quest. They're a wily bunch, however. Despite considerable efforts made to round them up, they have managed to elude capture. No kidding!

