

Looking Ahead

Dates to Remember

Monday, January 7

Employee Benefits Meetings
Helena

Colonial Inn - 1, 4 & 7 PM

Tuesday, January 8

Employee Benefits Meetings
Livingston

Yellowstone Motor Inn - 1, 4 & 7 PM

Wednesday, January 9

Employee Benefits Meetings
Laurel

Locomotive Inn - 1 & 7 PM

Thursday, January 10

Employee Benefits Meetings
Laurel

Locomotive Inn - 9 AM & 1 PM

Wednesday, January 16

Employee Benefits Meetings
Thompson Falls

Rimrock Motel - 10 AM

Thursday, January 17

Employee Benefits Meetings
Missoula

Reserve Street Inn - 1, 4 & 7 PM

Friday, January 18

Employee Benefits Meetings
Missoula

Reserve Street Inn - 1 & 4 PM

Tuesday, January 29

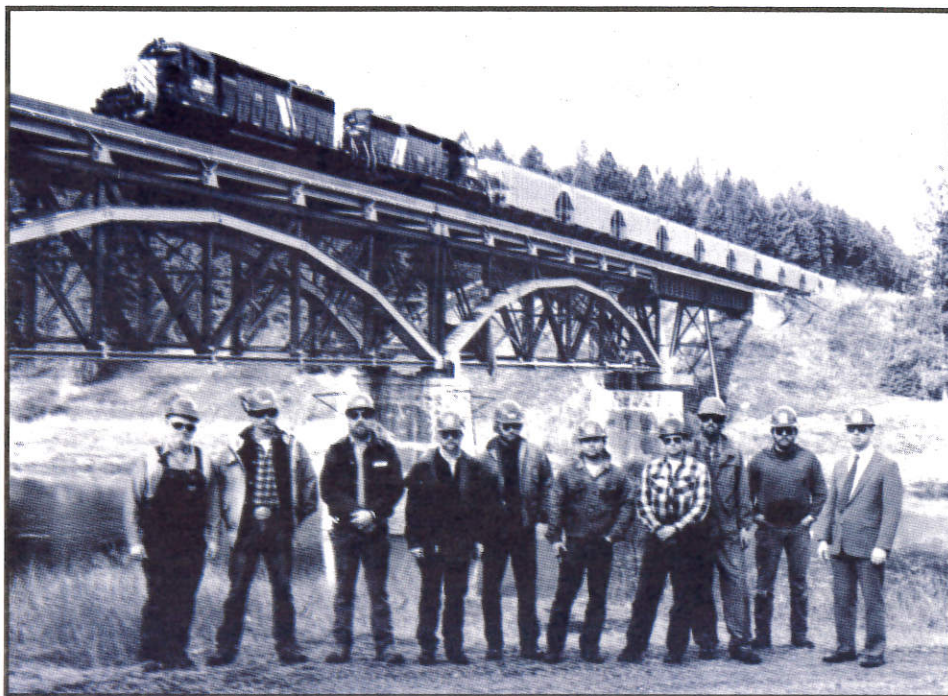
Red Cross Blood Drive
Missoula GOB

Wednesday, March 6

Powerful Business Writing Skills
Seminars

Washington Companies Seminar
Holiday Inn, Missoula

Bridge 208 Completed: A job well done



*With their work behind them, the two bridge crews that accomplished the task of rehabilitating Bridge 208 gathered for a brief ceremony to commemorate the completion of the work on October 3, 1990. Pictured left to right, **Walter Esterby**, foreman; **Richard Esterby**, carpenter; **Bill Madson**, foreman; **Dave Cook**, B&B supervisor; **Bill Huffman**, carpenter; **Andy McCarthy**, **Coleman Hill**, laborers; **Bob Eder** and **Bob Bilyeu**, truck drivers; and **Richard Keller**, chief engineer. Not present: **Andy Kulawinski**, **J. D. Sampson**, **Dave Pope**, carpenters; **Marty Pluth** and **Walter Esterby, Jr.**, truck drivers. The train was used to test the bridge. Please turn to Bridge, page 2, for more information.*

News Briefs

A derailment near Thompson Falls on December 3 demolished our bridge spanning the Thompson River disrupting through rail service. Normal service resumed Monday, December 10, using a shoo-fly track to bypass the bridge. The tremendous effort put forth by Washington Construction and our maintenance of way and mechanical forces reduced by several days the time the line was originally estimated to be out of service. See page 4 for more details. •

Montana Rail Link is on camera! Two video tapes featuring our railroad have recently been produced, one by Lambert Enterprises of San Diego, California and the other by Pentrex of Pasadena, California. Both tapes provide a scenic tour of the line and capture a lot of train action. •

(continued, please turn to News, page 11)

Letters

To the Editor:

Recently I have had conversations with members of safety committees at various locations and learned that many are unsure of their duties as committee members. Most individuals are placed in the situation by being asked to serve on a safety committee but being told nothing of their duties or what is expected of them.

The Training, Rules and Safety Department felt we should address this problem by providing guidance and information concerning this trust placed in your care by your fellow employees.

The Safety Committees serve as liaison between management and the employee performing the job. Therefore, a member's duty is to take the safety concerns of our co-workers to those who must see the job gets done. In a like manner, we must take to the employee the concerns of the managers, that we accomplish the task in a safe and timely manner.

It is your responsibility as a committeeman to actively solicit input

from each employee which will make the job, work place, or work conditions safer. We encourage the Safety Committee members to request the employee make out a Safety Report Form when presenting a safety item. This provides the committee with a record and routes the item to the proper department for handling.

Hopefully, we have clarified some misunderstandings and have given you an idea of the task and trust placed in you as a member.

In closing, the Training, Rules and Safety Department would like to impress upon each member that we can make a change in our safety record. You, as a member of the Safety Committee, are an important aspect of our operation.

Paul Adams

Manager, Training, Rules & Safety

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.

Bridge 208

Bridge 208 was built by the Northern Pacific Railway in 1908 at the time a new 26-mile line linking the former Missoula - Wallace, ID branch at St. Regis with Paradise was opened. The new route paralleled the Clark Fork River and with reduced grades compared to the old main line over Evaro Hill, the new route became the freight main line.

With the bridge showing signs of age, it was determined to try a new approach to fixing the problem. An engineering first, the truss bridge was reinforced with an arch, the floor system was replaced, and a new concrete ballast deck added. Three hundred tons of new steel was added to the bridge. By any measure, a very ambitious project for a company of our size. It took 24,922 man-hours and

two construction seasons to complete the \$1.3 million project. What's more, it was accomplished with no reportable injuries.

MRL contracted with the Association of American Railroads to test the theory and technicians were on hand for final checks. A train was run over the bridge at different speeds in each direction. Sensors attached to the structure fed information to an on-site computer and monitored for movement of the bridge. Muth Engineering of Missoula provided the engineering consultation. Roscoe Steel & Culvert of Missoula provided the structural steel and Montana Concrete Construction of Missoula the ballast boxes.

Because this type of rehabilitation can mean substantial savings com-
(continued, please turn to
Bridge, page 8)

Need a cap?

The MRL blue corduroy caps are available to employees for \$5 each.

Write or call

Jacquie Duhamel
at 523-1494 in Missoula

Misroutes:

Errors and omissions in previous issues

Correction: The information on the Photo Contest Winners, which appeared on page 4 of Newsletter #12, should have read: three \$50 awards to Jack Dorsey, locomotive engineer from Laurel; one \$50 award to Chuck Howe, locomotive engineer trainee from Laurel whose name was omitted.

Because we have used the current payroll for the mailing list, our retirees have not been receiving the Newsletter. We hope we have this corrected with this issue, but if you know of someone retired who is not getting the Newsletter, please let us know. We do have some back issues available, so if you would like one, please notify Mary Semmens at extension 400. We will be happy to mail them to you. •

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

Editor: R. Milton Clark

Member
Association of
Railway Communicators



No. 13 November-December/1990
December 10, 1990

How's your attitude? Survey shows positive results

Montana Rail Link conducted a confidential survey of employee attitudes this past year. The purpose was to gain knowledge of how we all felt regarding several important subjects.

Objective goals are to determine where things are going well; to give employees a chance to express ideas, suggestions, and opinions; and to make necessary changes. Improved communication among all employees was an expected result of the survey.

Throughout the process, improvements were made and problems have been resolved at the work group level.

Following are some of the problems that surfaced and action taken to resolve them.

Accounting

Problem: Employees do not seem to have the pride in working for MRL that was once evident. Pride has slipped.

Solution: A collective effort to make our individual pride contagious will be made. We will lead by example and show by attitude that we are proud to be a part of MRL.

Mechanical

Problem: Since the road to Running Repair has been rerouted away from LRC, it is difficult for those unfamiliar with the area to find the site. What if there is an emergency? Will response vehicle drivers be able to find the way?

Solution: Signs have been installed to guide traffic to Running Repair.

The following problems were highlighted and the solutions are pending approval of the 1991 budget:

Problem: Washing locomotives inside Running Repair is not practical as the vapors and water spray make it hazardous for other work being conducted in the building. In addition, the roof is leaky

Solution: A new locomotive wash rack at Livingston, separate from Running Repair, has been proposed as well as roof repairs.

Problem: Mechanical department employees are safety conscious and want to have more input into resolving safety related problems that arise.

Solution: Mechanical department safety committees have been established at Laurel and Livingston.

Problem: At Missoula, mechanical department employees thought that



Employee feed back meetings to discuss issues raised by the Attitude Survey have been held at many locations. To allow as many employees as possible to participate, the meetings have been held at all hours of the day or night. Pictured here at an evening session in Helena on October 11 are Vivian Diaz, helper locomotive engineer; and, right, Monica Mayo, clerk. Fred Simpson, executive vice president, left center and Mike Lemm, Helena trainmaster, conducted this session. Problems and solutions were recorded on the flip-chart.

there were interdepartmental communication problems.

Solution: Periodic interdepartmental meetings will be held to improve communications.

Problem: The locker rooms and offices are dirty at Laurel and Missoula.

Solution: Janitorial service at the Laurel and Missoula car shops have been improved.

Problem: At the Missoula Car Shop, the lighting is poor making it

hard to see during darkness, and welding fumes linger making it uncomfortable.

Solution: A new lighting system will be installed and the exhaust fans repaired.

Operating

Problem: There are communication problems between the train dispatchers and the train crews.

Solution: Specific problems are being identified. Dispatchers are being scheduled to ride with crews for one week each. The feedback from both groups has been positive and lines of communication have improved.

Problem: The Missoula Yard Office is crowded; there is not enough seating for crews waiting for trains to arrive.

Solution: The waiting area has been renovated and appropriate furniture added.

Problem: In Helena, crossings are continually being blocked by trains while crew changes take place.

Solution: Crew changes are now taking place at the east end of the yard.

Problem: Sometimes, radio communications with the dispatchers is difficult.

Solution: A new microphone system has been installed.

Problem: It is difficult to maintain a comfortable temperature in the dispatcher's office making it difficult to concentrate.

Solution: Air control and flow has been improved with the installation of new louvers.

Subsequent Newsletters will have updates on the survey and the progress being made to solve problems. •

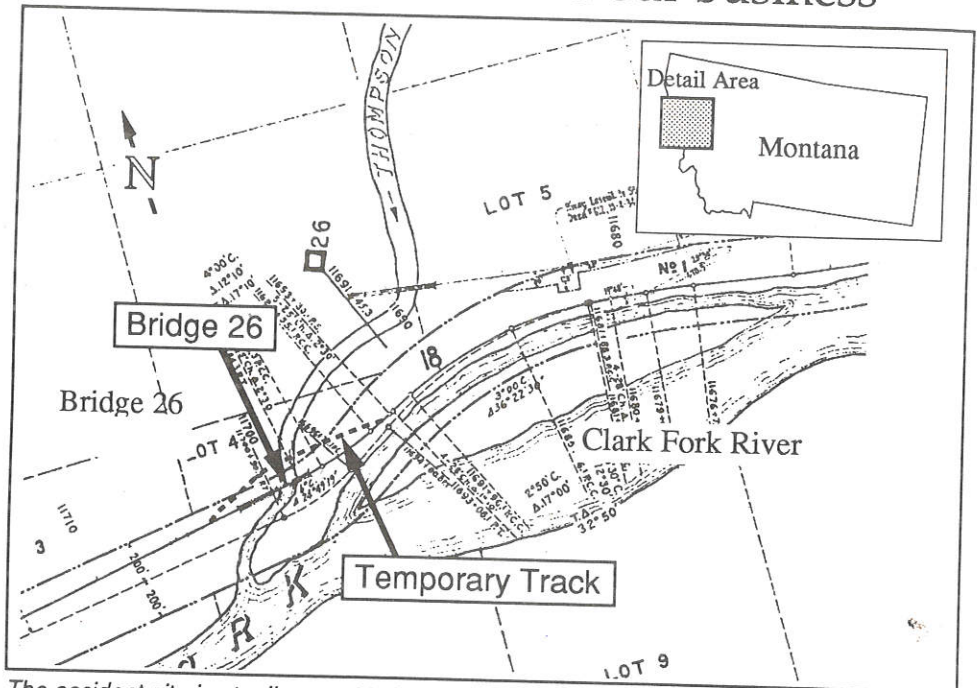
Accident near Thompson Falls cuts main line and our business

On December 3 about 7:25 PM, train G-15, a 102-car unit grain train of corn bound for Portland, Oregon with four locomotives and 13,039 tons, derailed 20 cars behind 70 at mile post 26, five miles east of Thompson Falls, Montana. The train was traveling about 34 miles per hour. The accident demolished Bridge 26 spanning the Thompson River and severed our main line. Larry Pfau, engineer; Owen Wood, assistant; and Alan Waldbillig, engineer trainee, made up the crew. The cause of the accident has not been determined. The event recorder on the locomotives indicated no crew error and that the train was being operated in accordance with all rules and accepted train handling procedures. Pfau stated that the bridge felt solid when the locomotives passed over it.

The bridge, which was built in 1925, is a four-span, deck plate structure, 233 feet in length and 40 feet high at its highest point and supported by two concrete abutments and three concrete piers.

The magnitude and impact of this accident on our company is tremendous. Immediately, all of the bridge traffic was rerouted and caused a layoff of approximately 200 employees. With disrupted car flows and slowed transit time on traffic to and from the West, a number of our local shippers including Stone Container Corporation, Champion International, Ash Grove Cement West, Holnam Cement, and numerous grain shippers will be impacted.

The cost of the damage, combined with the loss of revenue for the railroad, will amount to \$2 million. In a message to employees at the general offices in Missoula on December 4, executive vice president Fred Simpson stated, "The company is very strong. It is probably one of the healthiest railroads in the United States. We have paid off all of our debt. We are in a good position to take a blow like this."



The accident site is at mile post 26, five miles east of Thompson Falls on the Fourth Subdivision.

Our president, Bill Brodsky; engineering department forces headed by chief engineer Richard Keller; mechanical forces headed by chief mechanical officer Mel Dinius; were on the scene immediately to assess the damage and formulate plans to get the railroad back into service. Superintendent John Grewell and his operating people developed a plan of operation for our local service and made arrangements for the rerouting of traffic on the BN.

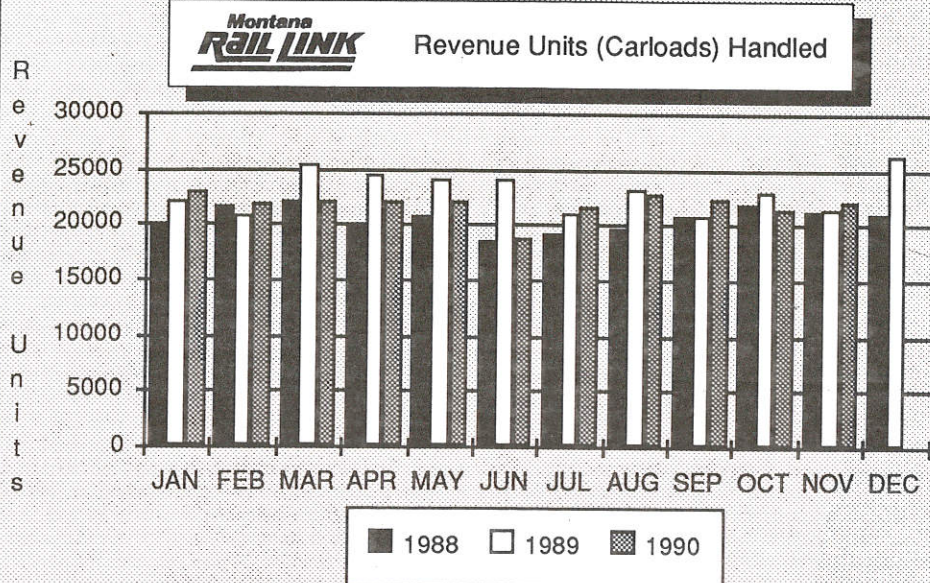
It is now estimated that through service can be restored within a week. As this is being written, a shoo-fly track around the old bridge site is being constructed. Three 150 foot long, 10 foot diameter corrugated culvert pipes will be placed in the river bed about 125 feet upstream from the derailment site to carry the water flow. The culvert will be covered with large, clean rock to just above the water level and a sediment barrier will be installed. Thirty to fifty thousand cubic yards of fill will be hauled from a nearby hillside. A new, temporary track will be built on top of the fill and get us back into full

operation and allow time to reconstruct the bridge.

To accomplish all of this, Champion International granted an easement over their land for construction of the shoo-fly. The Green Mountain Conservation District; the Water Quality Bureau of the Montana Department of Health and Environmental Sciences; the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks, and the United States Army Corps of Engineers all granted the necessary permits and authority. Washington Construction, a sister company, sprung into action with dozers, haul trucks, front end loaders and other equipment necessary for the work which will go on around the clock until completed.

The new bridge will be fabricated from parts of an old bridge not being used at Bonner (it has been removed and will be rebuilt by Roscoe Steel of Missoula); one existing span of Bridge 26 which can be salvaged, and some new construction.

All laid off employees will be recalled to work as soon as the normal traffic level is restored. •



Revenue units handled for the eleven months ended November 30, 1990, totaled 239,913. This is a decline of 11,038 or 4.4% 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 11,780 revenue units or 6.62% during the same period. Traffic which originates or terminates on Montana Rail Link increased by 1,930 revenue units or 3.22% during the same period.

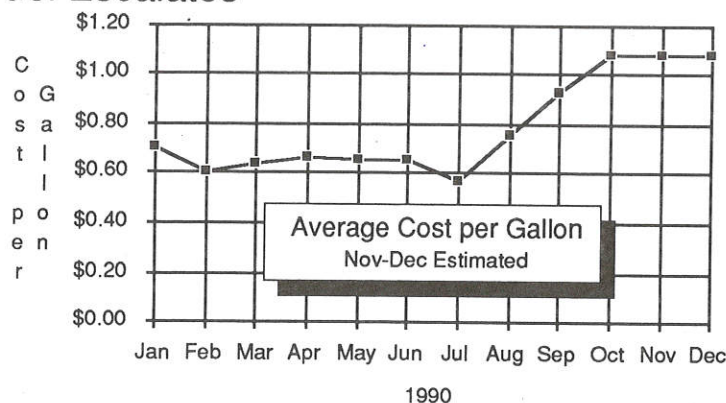
Health Plan News

Pre-authorization of benefits

Pre-authorization is a procedure to protect you from unexpected health care expenses. The plan recommends that any dental treatment in excess of \$300 and any elective surgery be pre-authorized. This is easy to do and most doctors and dentists understand what is needed for pre-authorization. Your doctor or dentist must submit a treatment plan to Administration Services in writing. The treatment plan must include a diagnosis, service codes and charges for each service. With dental treatment, it is good to include any x-rays that may assist the claims examiner. The examiner reviews the charges and provides you with a written statement explaining the allowable amounts and the percentage of benefits that will be paid. This procedure does not guarantee payment; however, it does give you an accurate picture of what portion of the bill will be your responsibility.

The claims examiners do not review pre-authorization for medical necessity, nor does this procedure waive the second surgical opinion requirement on the elective procedures which require it. If you have any questions regarding pre-authorization, contact Sue Blair at Administration Services. Call toll-free 1-800-344-3639. •

Cost of Fuel Escalates



Our locomotives consume an average of 24,458 gallons of diesel fuel daily.

Q&A

What are the highest and lowest elevations reached on MRL?

Montana Rail Link's main line crosses the Bridger Range of mountains at Bozeman Pass between Livingston and Bozeman at 5,561 feet above sea level through the 3,015 foot-long Bozeman tunnel. Surprisingly, the Continental Divide is crossed at a lower elevation, 5,546 feet, at Blossburg, Montana. The lowest elevation on our route is at Yardley, Washington at 1,951 feet above sea level.

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



PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER

A section crew's responsibility for the maintenance of railroad track has not changed much over the years. Many of the methods used to do the work have, however. Montana Rail Link is divided into sixteen maintenance sections. Each has a foreman and several men that report to one of four roadmasters who, in turn, report to the chief engineer.

What's a typical day like on section crew? Let's take a look at our section headquartered at Clark Fork, Idaho. The main line under the care of the section crew is all FRA Class 4 which means that track speed for freight trains is 60 miles per hour (except where reductions for curves are required). The Clark Fork section extends from the west switch at Noxon to Sandpoint Junction, 50.5 miles and is almost all laid with continuous welded rail. The line follows the Clark Fork River and then hugs the shores of Lake Pend Oreille before reaching Sandpoint Junction. By any description, it is well maintained railroad in a very scenic part of the Pacific Northwest.

Albert "Babs" Gerstenberger is the section foreman. A veteran, he has seen a lot of technological advances since he started with the Northern Pacific Railway in 1953 at Trout Creek, Montana. Back then, the sections were only 12.5 miles in length and had twenty five men assigned to them. Each section had responsibility for all cross-tie installation for their territory and motor cars were used to get around. Today, a typical section has about 50 miles of railroad with four men. These changes have been brought about by improvements in machinery and equipment. For example, hyrail trucks with hydraulic cranes and other useful, labor-saving equipment, which can be used on the roads as well as on the rail, have replaced the old motor car. Efficient system gangs of about 35 persons using many highly technical, labor-saving, machines are now used for

most cross-tie replacement and rail relaying.

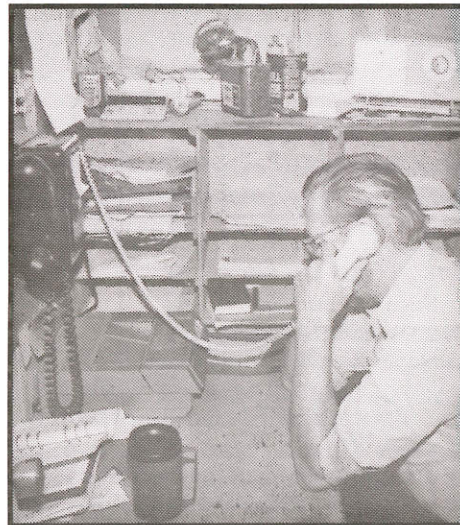
Montana Rail Link, with five employees in the state of Idaho, is not a large employer. But in Clark Fork, Idaho, population 400, those five are significant. Besides Gerstenberger, the members of the Clark Fork section crew are: **Mike Cavanaugh**, truck driver; **Randy Clark** and **Allen Abromeit**, laborers. The other employee stationed in Clark Fork is the signal maintainer, **Duane Hopkins**. We will cover the signal department at a later date.

In spite of the use of system gangs, there's still plenty of hard, physical work for the section crews to do. Routine can probably be used to describe a day on the section.

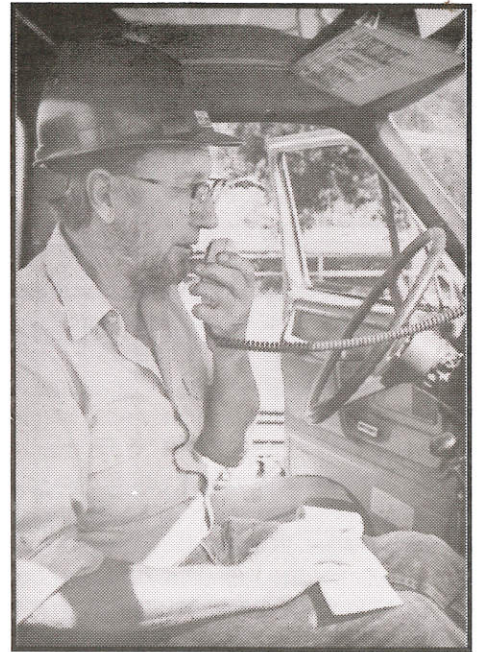
Safety is important. The Maintenance of Way Rule of the Day cover-

(continued on next page)

Below, Abromeit and Clark fill a flange lubricator, with grease at mile post 86 between Heron, Montana, and Colby, Idaho. It's a dirty job, but someone has to do it. Flange lubricators are installed in areas of tight curvature to reduce rail and wheel wear. A small amount of grease is applied to the flanges as they roll over it.



Gerstenberger talks to the assistant roadmaster at Thompson Falls about the planned activities for the day.



The Clark Fork section's territory is all CTC (centralized traffic control). Movements on the rail with their hyrail truck are done with track and time permits. Using the MRAS (mobile radio access system), **Gerstenberger** repeats a track permit to the train dispatcher in Missoula. The permit authorizes the crew to work in a specified area free of interference from train operations. Modern radio systems also have helped section crews become more efficient and improve their utilization of time by allowing contact with the train dispatchers and trains.

ing operating and safety rules is reviewed and a discussion about tasks to be accomplished is the first order of the day. Gerstenberger, as foreman, knows his territory well and has a number of tasks in mind that need to be done. These are sometimes superseded by instructions from the roadmaster for the territory, Rick Woodruff, or his assistant, Kenny Stevenson. They both patrol the line frequently in hyrail trucks or ride trains over it. Today, September 6, 1990, the work to be done is, (1) fill a flange lubricator at mile post 86, (2) pickup scrap between mile posts 76 and 78 east of Heron, Montana and haul it back to Clark Fork for sorting and piling, and (3) fix a low joint at mile post 111 near Hope, Idaho. •



The Clark Fork Section crew: left to right, **Abromeit**, **Cavanaugh**, **Gerstenberger** and **Clark**.

A day with the Section Crew at Clark Fork, Idaho



A recent inspection revealed a low joint at mile post 111 near Hope, Idaho. If not repaired immediately, the heavy train traffic over the line will cause increased joint bar and tie wear. To fix the problem, the rails were raised to the proper elevation with track jacks. Left, **Gerstenberger** sights down the rail to check that it has been raised to the proper height. Above, **Clark** and **Abromeit** use air operated hand tampers to tamp ballast under the ties, while **Gerstenberger** nips up the tie being spiked by **Cavanaugh**.

A Look at the Marketing Department

Marketing is one of several functions at Montana Rail Link that report to executive vice president **Fred Simpson**. There are six persons attached to the marketing department. **Howard Nash**, marketing/purchasing director, heads the unit and has been with MRL since start up. Originally purchasing manager, the marketing functions came under his area in 1989. Howard has a background in the timber industry and was a small business owner. **Mary Semmens**, administrative assistant, joined the department in October 1989, after serving as a utility clerk and accounts payable technician. She also has a background in real estate. Her duties include keeping traffic statistics, maintaining the transportation contracts and tariff files as well as coordinating all MRL travel (airline, hotel and rental car reservations). The department has three marketing managers. Their responsibilities are generally divided along commodity lines and each is assigned specific customers. **Larry Huff** is in charge of forest products (lumber, plywood, woodchips, logs), some mining (phosphate and lead/zinc concentrates) and cement. Larry came to MRL in November 1987 with nineteen years background in nonferrous metals at the Anaconda concentrator and smelter and has extensive knowledge of the Montana economy. **Milt Clark** also joined the company in November 1987. He has more than twenty years experience in rail operations and customer service gained with the Milwaukee Road and Soo Line. Milt handles the agricultural commodities (grain, hay, feeds), food and consumer products (beverages, machinery), and lime. He is also edits this newsletter. **Tom Coston** joined MRL this past October (see "Keeping

Track", page 11) after three years with the Burlington Northern Railroad. His responsibilities include the industrial products area (petroleum, chemicals, scrap, steel) and talc. The recent addition of **Cathy Richardson** has bolstered the efforts of the department. Cathy is customer accounting manager and has assumed, on a part-time basis, the marketing responsibilities for several food and consumer product accounts in Missoula, Helena and Bozeman.

Marketing at Montana Rail Link is an all-encompassing term that includes sales, service and pricing (setting rates). Sales, the selling of the railroad's services, include the development of new business and the retention of existing business. Service, as applied to marketing, means problem solving — helping the customer deal with the railroad. Topics can include assistance with car tracing, demurrage and storage, property and track leases, freight claims, and many other things. Marketing personnel often act as a liaison between the customer and other departments of the railroad.

Unquestionably, reliable service and transporting goods without damage is a strong selling point; however, developments of competitive freight rates are a must. It is important to realize that the 944 mile Montana Rail Link is but a small part of the nation's 130,000 mile rail network. Freight moves to and from various regions of the continent and overseas through the cooperative efforts of the carriers. Marketing personnel work closely with our customers and the marketing departments of other railroads to develop business, negotiate and publish rates.

(continued, please turn Marketing, page 10)

208 (continued from page 2)



B&B foreman **Walter Esterby** receives a tee shirt commemorating the Bridge 208 project from B&B supervisor **Dave Cook**. Behind, left to right, are **Bob Eder**, **Bob Bilyeu** and **Bill Huffman**. All B&B department personnel participating in the bridge project received one of the special limited-edition tee shirts.

pared to the cost of replacing a bridge, several railroads, including the Burlington Northern, have shown a great deal of interest in our project. It will be featured on the program of the annual meeting of the Bridge & Building Association to be held in St. Louis in September 1991. •

Christmas at our house

There's plenty of the old-fashioned Christmas spirit around MRL in Missoula. It's a spirit of sharing with those in our communities who are less fortunate.

Bev Gunderson, manager car hire accounting, **Lori Cochrell**, utility clerk; **Chris Ellsworth**, manager car repair billing; and **Anne Marvin**, car repair biller, are heading an effort to provide food for several families through the auspices of the Salvation Army Adopt-A-Family program. Non-perishable food is being collected in containers located at several points in the area. In addition, gifts for children are being gathered for the Salvation Army "Toys for Tots" program. •

SAFETY FIRST
make Safety... begin with you!



The crossing gates are down, lights flashing, bells ringing and the Montana Operation Lifesaver program is charging right down the track as 1990 draws to a close. More of our employees are getting involved and becoming certified presenters. Recent activity includes a coordinator's meeting held in Helena, August 14 to get acquainted, review guide lines and share ideas. **Monica Mayo**, clerk at Helena; **Fred Tully**, signal maintainer from Missoula; **Joe Lavigne**, section man from Livingston; **Tom Ricci**, electrician from Livingston; and **Robert Fox**, UOE from Laurel and MRL system coordinator for Operation Lifesaver, represented Montana Rail Link at the meeting.

Ted Tonn, locomotive engineer; **Rick Stabio**, signal maintainer; and **Sharon Taggart** of the Montana Highway Patrol were certified as Operation Lifesaver presenters at a certification training program held in Billings on September 11. **Rick Flink**, a Burlington Northern locomotive engineer from Whitefish and Operation Lifesaver state chairman, **Tully Broadbent** and **Robert Fox** were the training instructors.

Operation Lifesaver is a nationwide safety coalition aimed at eliminating rail highway grade crossing accidents through education, engineering and enforcement. •

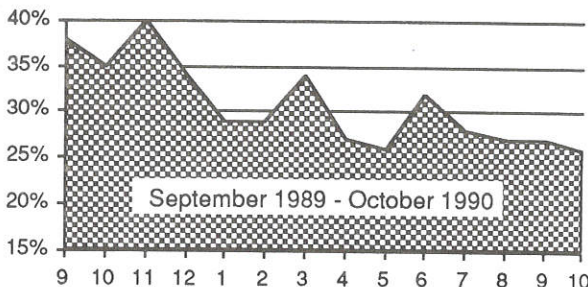
Any time is train time!

Missoula utility operating employee **Lloyd Schott** retired August 31 completing more than 40 years of railroad service. A farewell get together for him was held at the Missoula yard office on November 2. Pictured here, Missoula trainmaster **Tom Jones** presents **Lloyd** with a model train display. The Milwaukee Road locomotive, Burlington Northern box car, and Montana Rail Link caboose represent the railroads he worked for. Missoula locomotive engineer **Bob Bateman** crafted the gift.

A trend in the right direction:

MRL locomotive availability has improved dramatically. The \$5 million investment in locomotives through the 1990 capital improvement and operating expense budget pays off.

LOCOMOTIVES OUT OF SERVICE



MRL floats another winner!

We did it again! Montana Rail Link's float entry in the 1990 University of Montana Homecoming Parade on September 29 took first place in the commercial division for the second year in a row. "There's no place like home" was the theme of the parade. Responsibility for this feat rests with **Lori Cochrell**, utility clerk at the general offices, who headed a coalition of employees and others that designed and assembled the winning entry. **Anne Marvin**, car repair biller, and **Chris Ellsworth**, manager car repair billing, assisted Lori. Many employees and their families participated in the parade, but the effort of making the float a reality belong to those mentioned previously and **Laurel Kayser**, staff assistant, GOB; **Gerry Larson**, service auditor; **Marj Sawyer**, purchasing assistant, **Al Burns**, locomotive engineer; **Collette Thurston**, assistant manager demurrage/accessorial services; **Dave Franz**, assistant locomotive engineer; **Patty Seabaugh**, manager payroll; **Howard Nash**, marketing/purchasing director;

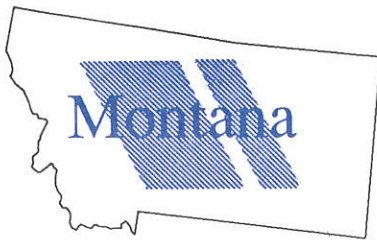


Lori Cochrell, center, with the blue ribbon award. With her are, left, **Anne Marvin** and **Chris Ellsworth**.

Fred Simpson, executive vice president; **Jacquie Duhamel**, administrative assistant; **Teresa Finnell**, Compass/YMS; **Orson Murray**, director operations information; **Van Blakely**, manager general accounting; **Jean Laber**, accounting; **Kay Jones**, accounts payable; **Lynda Frost**, administrative assistant to the president; **Mary Ann Hilston**, inventory accounting; **Trish Anderson**, accounts payable; **Dave Koerner**, director revenue accounting; **Cathy Richardson**, manager customer accounting; **Joe Richardson**, assistant to chief mechanical officer; **Deena Harris**, administrative assistant; **Roxie Smith**, clerk Missoula yard office. We are also indebted to **Jim Volker** for carpenter work and construction; **Bob Scott** and **Mike Padrotti** of Rainglow Services for equipment and spray painting lessons; **Dan Lake** of Equipco for driving; and to **Westran** for the use of a flat bed. •



IMPACT ON



The primary focus of the Washington Companies is to be successful in business. Through that success, the entire state benefits from a stimulated economy, an increased tax base and secondary job creation. The University of Montana's Bureau of Economic Research estimates that two to three additional jobs are created by every individual employed in basic industry.

The Washington Companies create 6,000 to 8,000 total jobs in the state (2,000 directly and 4,000 to 6,000 secondary). At mid-year, the Washington Companies employment level reached 3,257, a jump of 753 or 30% over the 1989 figure. In 1984, the figure was 889.

In 1989, the Washington Companies expended \$62.7 million in salaries, wages and benefits; \$22.9 million in taxes paid to the state; and \$66.2 million in purchases from other Montana businesses. That is a \$151.8 million impact on Montana!

Our primary responsibility to Montana and its cities is to continue our success in business so we may provide stable employment and economic stimulation to the state. •

From Washington Corporations News, November 1990.

Marketing (continued from page 8)

The railroad bases the money budgeted for expenses and capital improvements on projected revenue. Marketing has responsibility for forecasting the income, and department personnel maintain contact with industry traffic managers and others to determine future traffic levels and equipment needs.

Clark enjoys the challenges and the variety of assignments connected with his job. Tasks range from direct customer contact to desk top publish-

".....make customer service the No. 1 priority and make the extra effort to ensure customer satisfaction.Our future depends on it."

ing. "I enjoy working for MRL and my job has a good mix of travel and time in the office," said Milt. "We have a good team here at MRL and it is great to be a part of a growing company," he continued.

Coston, a native of Montana, is really glad to be back home. "I enjoy the family atmosphere at MRL and the ability to work across all facets of the railroad business," Coston said. "I have been very encouraged to hear all of the positive customer comments

regarding MRL's employees; I'm pleased to be aboard," he continued.

Huff enjoys working with the various departments and finds it especially rewarding to be a part of helping our customers meet their transportation needs. Stated Huff, "It's a real thrill to have a new customer begin using our services."

Montana Rail Link's marketing effort does not end with the marketing department. Indeed, marketing is carried out by all employees from the president on down as they interact with people where they live or work. The Marketing department relies on information provided by the line personnel and others for leads on new business or changes that take place in the field that effect the company. To assist with that effort, each employee, regardless of their job, can have a business card provided by the railroad.

Many of our customers have told us about the good job that MRL is doing. Nash summed it up: "Our goal must be to ensure that we always continue to make customer service the No. 1 priority and make the extra effort to ensure customer satisfaction. We are the best only because of the effort everyone makes. Keep up the good work. Our future depends on it." •

LETP digest



A class photo. Left to right, **Brian Helkkila**, director training, rules and safety; **Paul Adams**, manager, training, rules and safety; **Tom Gilbert**, **D. B. Frickel**, **Bruce Custer**, **John Tizono**, trainees; and **Duane Parker**, BLE instructor, were photographed at Laurel on June 22, the final day for the classroom phase for Class L-15 of Locomotive Engineer Training Program. The group is currently in the on-the-job training part of the program. Since its inception in 1988, more than 80 employees have been promoted to locomotive engineer through this program.

Health Insurance Claim Questions?

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Keeping Track

Montana Rail Link Personnel Changes

Thomas K. Coston appointed marketing manager effective October 8 replacing Derek Nelson who resigned. Mr. Coston was formerly a product manager - petroleum for the Burlington Northern Railroad in Fort Worth, Texas. He is a native of Montana and holds a degree in business administration from the University of Montana.

Retirements.....

Gilberto Rodriguez, section laborer at Missoula, retired July 30, 1990 with 34 years of service that began with the Northern Pacific in 1956.

Ruben Sanchez, machinist at the Laurel engine servicing facility, retired November 1 with 47 years of railroad service that began with the Southern Pacific at Ogden, Utah, in 1943. From 1958 to 1965, he was with the Union Pacific and moved to Laurel and began working for the Northern Pacific and later, the Burlington Northern. He has been with MRL since the beginning in 1987. "I've enjoyed working for MRL the most," said Sanchez.

Albert F. "Babs" Gerstenberger, section foreman at Clark Fork, Idaho, retired November 2 with 37 years of service beginning with the Northern Pacific on the Trout Creek, Montana, section crew. He was made assistant section foreman in 1969 and foreman in 1974.

Our best wishes to them for a happy retirement. •

MRL 1991 Holidays

New Years Day

Tuesday, January 1

Memorial Day

Monday, May 27

Labor Day

Monday, September 2

Thanksgiving Day

Thursday, November 28

Christmas Eve Day

Tuesday, December 24

Christmas Day

Wednesday, December 25

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Customer Profile: Billings Grain Terminal

Agriculture and the marketing of grain, in particular red winter wheat, is important to the Montana economy and provides a significant source of traffic for the railroads. The last decade has seen a trend develop toward large elevators with the capability to load unit trains. Because unit trains are more efficient and railroads can handle them at a lower cost, unit train points have lower freight rates than the single car shippers. The freight differential enables them to buy the volume of grain needed to load a 52 car train within the 29-hour free time provided in the tariffs. Montana Rail Link serves one of the more than 50 now located throughout the state, Billings Grain Terminal.

BGT was organized by John Greytak in December 1979. The former Midland Feed Mill was the basis for the plant which exists today on South First Avenue in Billings, Montana. BGT is a full-service grain marketing company buying and selling wheat. Dick Jonasen serves as general manager and Keith Bruner, grain buyer. There are five other full-time employees including a plant superintendent who becomes their locomotive engineer when grain trains

are being loaded. The elevator has a storage capacity of 1.7 million bushels. Twenty thousand bushels per hour can be handled through the loading chute. BGT's annual capacity is about 5 million bushels. A 52-car unit train, more than 170,000 bushels, can be loaded in approximately nine hours. MRL places the cars for the unit train on one of two tracks leased by BGT. The cars are spotted under the loading chute by BGT with their own locomotive, an EMD model SW-1. When a train is billed (forwarding information provided), a switch crew at Billings Yard pulls the train and lines it up for movement. Personnel at the dispatcher's office in Missoula arrange for enough power and order the train. In due course, 7,000 tons (weight of cars and contents) plus are rolling westward to Portland, Oregon or another point on the Pacific Northwest coast.

Montana Rail Link is pleased to have Billings Grain Terminal as a customer and be a partner in the marketing process of moving grain from grower to consumer. •

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

News (continued from front page)

Employees will have the opportunity to learn more about their benefits at a series of meetings to be conducted at several points along the line during January. Sharon Prinzing, personnel manager; Patty Seabaugh, payroll manager; and Toni Barrett from the Washington Corporations will be conducting the sessions. New booklets describing the benefits will be distributed prior to these meetings. See *Looking Ahead* for locations and times. •

Soil contamination from standing locomotives will be a thing of the past around the Livingston Running Repair facility. More than \$200,000 is being spent to install track pans to catch diesel fuel and oils that leak from engines. About 2,500 feet of track, ballast and the soil will be protected with the devices. The project should be completed by year's end. •

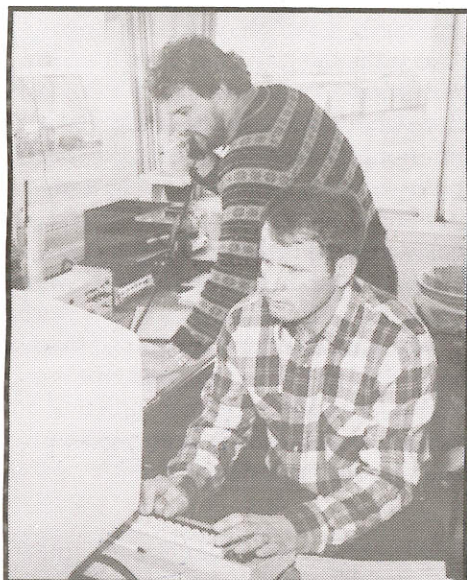
Two tracks serving The Western Sugar plant in Billings have been upgraded and a new track scale installed recently which will improve bulk sugar loading operations. •

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Laurel Yard, with thirty classification tracks (15 eastbound, 15 westbound with a capacity of 2,400 cars), two rip tracks, is a big operation. During a typical 24-hour period, 25 to 30 trains are handled with twelve switch engine shifts. Laurel will switch more than 240,000 cars in 1990. Assistant trainmasters supervise the switching from a tower on the third floor of the yard office building. Left, assistant trainmaster **Steve Huschka** is busy on the phone while utility operating employee **Dave Robertus** inputs data to the YMS (yard management systems) computer. Above, a view of Laurel Yard looking east from the tower.



Class I railroads loaded 5.6 million cars of coal in 1989 making it the single most important commodity handled. Coal is important to Montana Rail Link, too, and the regular shipments now moving from mines in Wyoming to Boardman, OR provide a steady source of income. Pictured here, train 01-RR241-10 with 110 cars, 14,410 tons, was photographed leaving the siding at West Winston, Montana with Laurel engineer **John Garreffa** and assistant **David O'Rear** in charge.