

LOOKING AHEAD

Dates to Remember

Wednesday, March 6

Powerful Business Writing Skills
Seminars

Sponsored by the
Washington Companies
Holiday Inn, Missoula

Monday, April 15

Deadline for filing Income Tax

May 12 - 18

National Operation Lifesaver Week

June (all month)

Next opportunity to enroll in or
change the 401(k) plans.
Contact the Payroll Department or
your supervisor.

Saturday, June 22

4th Annual MRL Golf Outing
Hamilton Country Club

August 1

Deadline for 1991 Employee

Photo Contest Entries

August

Dates to be announced
4th Annual Laurel/Billings Area
Employee Golf Outing
Washington Companies Employees
Picnic
Grant Creek Ranch

Montana Rail Link Goals for '91: Reaching beyond our grasp for a better company

President Bill Brodsky presented the 1991 Montana Rail Link goals at the Board of Directors meeting held in Missoula February 5. They are:

- **REDUCE OPERATING RATIO TO 61%**

Sixty-one in ninety-one! The goal is to reduce the operating ratio to 61% for 1991. This statistic is the ratio of expenses to revenues and the reduction is one we can achieve if we continue to reach beyond our grasp. The operating ratio for 1990 figure is 62.99%.

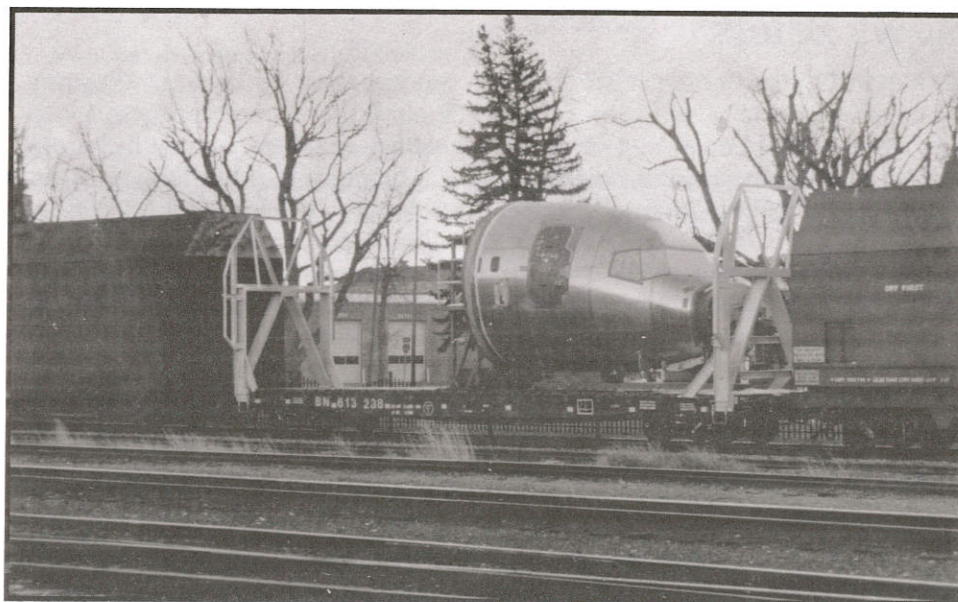
- **CUT ACCIDENT EXPENSES BY 48%**

A 48% reduction in Accident Expense in 1991. Montana Rail Link incurred \$4.8 million in accident expenses in 1990. Our goal for 1991 is to keep that figure under \$2.5 million.

- **REDUCE PERSONAL INJURIES BY 45%**

An On-Duty Casualty Rate Reduction of 45% in 1991. This will mean reducing the Frequency/Severity Index (based on number of accidents per 200,000 man-hours worked) from 12.82 to 7.0. Safety must continue to be a high priority on Montana Rail Link. Supervisors must set the pace in achieving this goal.

The ability to set goals and measure our effectiveness is a key element to our success. We must all strive to make 1991 the best year ever on Montana Rail Link by reinforcing these three goals. •



The Boeing Company's Commercial Airplane Group relies on rail transportation to move jetliner parts to their Seattle, WA area assembly plants. Pictured here, a body section for a Boeing 737 enroute to Renton, WA on Train 91 at Livingston, MT on December 15. The closed cars in the photograph also contain Boeing parts. For more on Boeing, please turn to page 6.

Letters

To the editor:

I am a native Montanan, a mother of two children, a Montana Rail Link employee and have a real interest in protecting our environment.

The company that I take a great deal of pride in being a part of has come under fire recently from a Missoula-based environmental group called The Clark Fork Coalition.

The railroad has worked diligently and in cooperation with a number of regulatory agencies to minimize any environmental damage caused by the derailment near Thompson Falls. In fact, expenses have not been spared to clean up the spilled corn.

What does the Clark Fork Coalition want? A Montana without Montana Rail Link?

Let's look at a scenario without our railroad. We handle about 1500 cars across our line every day using 45 to 50 diesel locomotives. Convert this to truck traffic and our highways would be jammed with more than 2500 additional vehicles, much more

fuel consumption, environmental damage and exposure to chemicals and other products that are now carried safely by the railroads.

Montana Rail Link is a new and growing company. Safety is high on its list of priorities. There are varied employee safety programs ranging from training seminars to participation in "Operation Lifesaver," a national organization promoting rail grade crossing safety.

I haven't written this letter on behalf of Montana Rail Link nor have I written this letter as an activist out to get my name in the paper. It is written on behalf of common sense and true concern for the world we live in.

Lori Cochrell

Utility Clerk, General Offices

PARAPHRASED FROM A LETTER WRITTEN TO THE MISSOULIAN BUT NEVER PUBLISHED.

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.

News Briefs

■ A 1991 Capital Budget of \$10.7 million was approved by Board of Directors at a meeting held in Missoula on February 5. Non-discretionary projects (those required because of operating necessity, regulatory or safety reasons) include additions to the waste water treatment plant at Livingston, rehabilitation of the Laurel turn table, installation of 820 feet of track pans at Helena and 1000 feet at Laurel, a new locomotive washing facility at Livingston, and rewiring the Missoula turntable. Discretionary projects include installation of 75,300 cross-ties, surfacing 250 miles of track, renewing bridge ties on Bridge 7 -- Marent Trestle -- on the 10th Subdivision, installation of 6.5 miles of new 136 pound continuous welded rail (most on the 4th Subdivision), two No. 20 and seven No. 9 turnouts, installation of 7 miles of 115 pound secondhand rail (sidings and yards), purchase of new equipment including vehicles, maintenance of way equipment, two-way radios and more. One of the single largest expenditures, \$2 million, will be invested in rebuilding locomotives.

■ Bridge 26 across the Thompson River near Thompson Falls, Montana has been rebuilt and back in operation February 1. The task of removing the shoofly has begun and should be completed by March 31. The bridge was demolished when a grain train derailed on December 3. The new four span bridge was assembled from spans from an old, unused bridge at Bonner, salvage of some of the demolished bridge and new construction. Roscoe Steel & Culvert
(continued, turn to News on page 3)

CONTEST

Rules

- Photos must be Montana Rail Link related. Subjects can include trains, scenic photos from MRL territory or employees at work. *Photo subjects must be shot using a high-quality color transparency 35mm. film (Ektachrome, Kodachrome or Fujichrome) -- Slides.* Photos must have been taken after January 1, 1990 and must be the original slide.

- Contest open to active or retired MRL employees or their immediate families only.

- Enter as many times as you wish.

- Entries will be judged for quality and composition by a panel of judges.

- MRL reserves the right to reproduce any entry in promotional materials or publications, therefore, slides will NOT be returned. If you wish to retain copies of your entries, remember to have duplicates made.

- Deadline for entries is August 1, 1991. Official entry forms will be included with paychecks in the near future.

- **Prizes:** One Grand Prize of \$300, 11 other entries will be selected for \$50 awards.

THE 1991 MRL EMPLOYEE PHOTO

The **Newsletter** is published by Montana Rail Link, Inc., issued bimonthly, and mailed First Class at Missoula, Montana, to all active and retired employees.

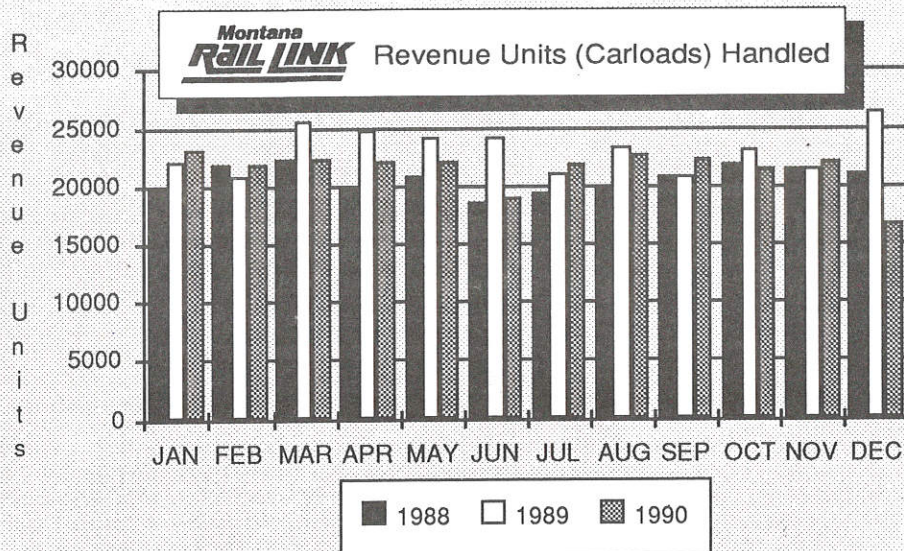
Readers are invited to submit news items and comments.

Editor: R. Milton Clark

Member
Association of
Railway Communicators



No. 14 January-February/1991
February 15, 1991



Revenue units handled for the year ended December 31, 1990 totaled 256,606. This is a decline of 19,987 units or 7.23% compared to 1989. Our largest single source of business, bridge traffic which is handled for the Burlington Northern between Laurel and Spokane, declined by 20,624 or 10.44% during the same period. Traffic which originates or terminates on Montana Rail Link increased by 637 units or .81% in 1990. The bridge traffic was impacted by a generally softening US economy during the year and the Thompson River bridge outage in December. Originated/terminated traffic was bolstered by the coal shipments from the Bull Mountains and strong movements of wheat which helped to offset declines in the forest products area.

News (continued from page 2)

plants at Missoula and Billings refurbished parts of an unused bridge from Bonner, Montana and fabricated the necessary new steel span. The derailment cost \$3.3 million and resulted in a loss of revenue of about \$1 million. The cause was a broken rail on the bridge.

■ Radio Communications between train crews passing through Mullan Tunnel at Blossburg, Montana will improve with the installation of a passive radio antenna. The work is being done by the Burlington Northern as a result of efforts initiated by Helena safety committee. BN Montana Division safety director Bob Morelli, and BN communications and electric supervisor Ray Southworth were instrumental in seeing the project move forward. Called a "Radiax" or leaky coaxial cable, it will be hung on the wall of tunnel and connected to a tower at the west portal. It will enable crews to maintain radio communications between the head-end and helper consists while operating in the tunnel. The project is underway and should be completed by March 31.

■ Employees represented by the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers ratified a new five-year contract with Montana Rail Link on December 21. The contract applies to all MRL Operating Department personnel including locomotive engineers, assistant engineers and those who occupy switching positions. It provides for an overall increase of 22% over the five year life of the contract. Larger "equity adjustment" increases apply on certain job positions and each employee received a one-time 3% contract signing bonus which will be paid on or about April 1. Labor contract negotiations are continuing with unions representing non-operating employees (maintenance of way, clerical, signal, carmen, machinists, electricians, and firemen and oilers).

(continued, turn to News on page 4)

Health Plan News

Short-term disability:

Procedures revised effective 1/1/91

Starting in January 1991, the administration of our Short-Term Disability benefits has changed. Previously, Administration Services made the determination of benefits and issued a check from the Washington Companies Benefit Plan. Payroll deductions for the health plan and taxes could not be withheld from the Short Term Disability checks. Only Tier 1 Railroad Retirement was deducted. This made it necessary for employees to make separate payments for the health plan and created tax problems at the end of the year for those who received the benefit.

Under the revised procedures, Administration Services will continue make the determination of benefits on short-term disability claims. The Payroll Department will process the checks which will make it possible for health plan deductions as well as federal and state taxes to be withheld. The change will mean biweekly checks rather than weekly but will make it easier at tax filing time. Contact the Payroll Department if you have any questions. •

Attaboys in order!

The Burlington Northern Rail Plant cropping building caught fire January 5. Switch foreman Richard Abromeit, trainmaster Kim Kautzman, and assistant trainmaster Tom Reffitt noticed the fire and called the Laurel Volunteer Fire Department. Their quick thinking and action prevented extensive damage to the building which housed the central processing unit for the rail complex computer system.

Laurel switchman Larry M. Schannel adverted a potential derailment on February 1. He was off-duty driving in the Park City area when he observed smoke from an overhead (continued, turn to Attaboy on page 6)

FOREST PRODUCTS FIRSTS

On November 27, 1990, Sirco Manufacturing of Missoula began shipping processed particleboard by rail to their plant in Stevens Point, WI which is served by the Wisconsin Central. Used in the manufacturing of furniture, the board is produced in Missoula by Louisiana-Pacific. Sirco applies a finished coating and packages it for shipment. Cascade West, a forest products carloader, loads the cars. Pictured here for the first car load are, left to right, Mike O'Shaughnessy, Burlington Northern national account manager - forest products, Missoula; Larry Huff, MRL marketing manager; Keith Eggleston, Sirco Manufacturing transportation supervisor; Craig Hodgson, Cascade West manager; Doug Heald, Burlington Northern asset protection, Billings; Bo Koch, Sirco plant foreman; Bob Trowbridge and Ken Martin, Cascade West fork lift operators. Not pictured is Andy Dobson, market manager - panel products for the BN in Fort Worth, TX who was instrumental in putting together a competitive rate package for this move.



Flathead Post and Pole near Dixon, Montana began making rail shipments on December 11 with two car loads of landscape timbers on center-beam flat cars for Greeley, Colorado. On hand for a ribbon cutting were, left to right, Cal Pulius, sales manager for Teton West (sales company for FHP&P); Larry Huff, MRL marketing manager; Arnold Torosian, FHP&P shipping foreman; John Morigeau, FHP&P plant manager; Fred Shammel, FHP&P financial manager; and Bill Brodsky, MRL president. A new 830 foot track to serve the mill was the result of a joint venture with the Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes, operators of the plant, and Montana Rail Link. Morigeau declared, "(rail service) will open up a lot more customers to us because shipping by rail is cost effective." Brodsky stated, "This was an opportunity to work jointly with the Tribe and promote some business for the railroad. More importantly, it's an opportunity for this company (Flathead Post & Pole) to expand some of the markets it serves. It is good for them, good for us, and good for Montana. We said in the beginning that it was our intent to focus on the small customers. We've put a lot of time and effort into this and it's beginning to pay off," he continued.

In other forest products related areas, Montana Wood Specialties of Missoula began making rail shipments of lumber from their mill in Missoula. MWS, an employee owned operation formed by employees of the former Champion sawmill in Missoula, began operations late in 1990. The former Champion Missoula mill (closed earlier in the year) was converted from a stud operation to one that produces value-added wood products such as laminated flooring for truck beds and tongue-and-groove paneling for the remodeling market.

The Louisiana-Pacific particleboard mill in Missoula has begun making rail shipments to National Wood Products in Salt Lake City, UT, the result of rate action taken by Montana Rail Link, Burlington Northern and Union Pacific.

We have seen a dramatic increase in the use of rail for log shipping in recent weeks. New movements recently began from Hardin, Townsend and Laurel to Superior, Missoula, Polson, and Schilling, MT. "We should handle more than 500 cars of sawlogs and pulp logs during 1991!" says Larry Huff. The number was zero when we started in 1987. •

News (continued from page 3)

■ A temporary waiver of Class I railroad status has been granted to Montana Rail Link and Wisconsin Central by the Interstate Commerce Commission. The waiver excludes the two roads from the Class I financial reporting requirements for 1991. A request for a permanent waiver will be filed later this year. Class I railroads are subject to greater reporting requirements and more regulatory oversight than smaller railroads. Both roads are approaching the 1989 revenue threshold of \$93.5 million for Class I status. They seek to have the threshold level raised to a 1991 level of \$235 million. Operations of regional carriers are materially different than on most Class I carriers. Most regionals operate in limited markets, are dependent on just one or only a few Class I connections, and limited administrative staffs.

■ Montana Rail Link has acquired a passenger-type diesel locomotive from a private party. The locomotive, a 2400 horsepower. EMD model E9, was originally built for the Milwaukee Road in 1961 and numbered 37C. The unit will be rebuilt and used to power business car trains.

(continued, turn to News on page 7)



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RAILS PLAY KEY PART IN PRODUCTION OF JETLINERS



The Boeing 737 final assembly line in Renton, Washington. Airlines and other operators ordered 2,885 Boeing 737s through December 1990, extending the twinjet's record as the best-selling commercial airline in history. Boeing delivered 174 737s in 1990, the most of any Boeing jet type ever delivered in a single year. The 737s have more than 27 miles of wire and the 737-400s have more than 100,000 individual parts which are quality manufactured to Boeing's high engineering standards by more than 1,700 suppliers.

Boeing Commercial Airplane Group, with headquarters in Renton, Washington, is the world's largest producer of commercial jetliners.

By December 31, 1990, Boeing had announced orders for the year for 543 jetliners valued at about \$47.7 billion, a dollar record. Boeing's 1989 orders totalled 883 jetliners valued at \$46.6 billion.

Boeing has five major facilities in the Puget Sound area, three of them involved in production of aircraft. At the Renton headquarters of Boeing Commercial Airplane Group, just south of Seattle, 737s are produced at the rate of 17 each month, highest production rate of any jetliner in the world. This is scheduled to increase to 21 per month in mid-1991. The 757 is produced there also, at seven per month. At the Boeing Everett facility,

30 miles north of Seattle, 767s are manufactured at five per month. Each model is produced in several versions to suit any customer's exact needs. The next Boeing jetliner, the twin-engined widebody 777 will be produced at Everett.

Railroads play an integral part in the production of these jetliners. Assorted fuselage parts are fabricated at Boeing's Wichita Division in Wichita, Kansas and shipped in a variety of open and closed cars. Originating on the Santa Fe, they are interchanged to the Burlington Northern at Kansas City who handles them to destination. Because of restricted clearances through the 3952 foot Mullan Tunnel west of Helena, Montana Rail Link handled a very limited amount of this traffic. In November all that changed. By

(continued, turn to Boeing on page 6)

Lawrence McCaffrey Elected Director

The Board of Directors elected R. Lawrence McCaffrey as a director at a meeting held in Missoula on February 5. He fills a vacancy created by the resignation of Jim Marvin. Mr. McCaffrey is chairman and a founding shareholder of the Washington, D.C., law firm of Weiner, McCaffrey, Brodsky, Kaplan & Levin, P.C. and an officer and shareholder of Anacostia & Pacific Company, Inc.

Mr. McCaffrey specializes in transportation law and finance. His practice emphasizes representation of small and regional railroads in all aspects of acquisition transactions. Prior to the formation of his law firm in 1977, he served as special assistant to the general counsel of the U.S. Department of Transportation. He also served as chief counsel of the Federal Railroad Administration.

Mr. McCaffrey was graduated from Colgate University with a B.A. in 1966 and from George Washington University with a J.D. in 1969. He is also co-author of *Starting a Short Line*, which was published through the American Short Line Railroad Association. He has been a speaker on railroad subjects before the American Short Line Railroad Association, Transportation Research Forum, the Association of Transportation Practitioners, the Legal Affairs Committee of the Association of American Railroads, and before numerous other transportation industry groups.

Mr. McCaffrey was instrumental in the formation of Montana Rail Link and his knowledge and insight of the railroad industry as a whole will be invaluable.

Dennis Washington; Dorn Parkinson, president of the Washington Companies; Mort Lowenthal, an investment banker from New York; Milt Datsopoulos, a Missoula attorney; and Bill Brodsky are the other directors of Montana Rail Link, Inc. •

Inside the Demurrage Department

To many rail customers the term "demurrage" is a four-letter word with a very negative connotation. To the railroad it is the means of recovering some of the expenses associated with delay to its most valuable and costly asset – the rolling stock or freight cars. New freight cars can cost anywhere from \$40,000 to \$70,000 each! The primary function of a railroad is to provide transportation service. Efficiency is reduced when freight cars are delayed by a customer's inability to load or unload equipment promptly.

What is demurrage and how does it work? Demurrage by definition is the compensation paid for the detention of a freight car or other cargo carrying vessel beyond allotted free time. Issued by the Railroad Publishing Service in Atlanta, Georgia, freight tariff RPS 6004 series contains all of the rules and charges that govern rail demurrage. It is national in scope and most railroads are a party to it. Proper application of demurrage rules and regulations is required to protect revenue and comply with Interstate Commerce Commission regulations. In a nut shell, the demurrage day begins at 7 AM. The tariff provides for a certain amount of "free" time for loading (24 hours from the first 7 AM) or unloading (48 hours). In most cases, weekends are not chargeable.

At Montana Rail Link, the demurrage department is a centralized unit and part of the Revenue Accounting Department. Centralized means that the department processes the demurrage record for every car loaded or unloaded at any MRL station by any and all customers. During a typical year that equates to more than 70,000 records! Income from demurrage in 1990 amounted to \$376,685 which helps to offset our \$7.6 million car hire expense bill. Data on car placement and releases from the Compass/YMS computer systems and direct communications with the various yard offices, car distribution and customer billing

departments is furnished to the Demurrage department. It is entered into a personal computer system using a program called C.A.R.S. – Central Agency Reporting System, which creates a record and generates invoices and reports. The department also prepares switching and weighing bills and notifies customers using public tracks when their cars are placed.

Larry Lippert manages the department which reports to Dave Koerner, director of revenue accounting. Larry had more than 20 years' demurrage and auditing experience with the Western Weighing & Inspection Bureau before joining MRL in 1987. Collette Thurston serves as assistant manager and Julie Devlin as revenue technician. Both are relatively new to the railroad business and have made steady progress in mastering a complicated subject.

"Problem solving is a big part of the job!" says Lippert. The old adage "the job's never completed until the paper work is done" takes on a great deal of significance in the demurrage department. Getting the necessary data in a timely manner with accuracy and completeness is vital and reduces the processing time. Information on customer requests concerning switching and service needs is vital to the proper preparation of a demurrage record. Communication with field employees (those in the yards and on the trains) and proper reporting of what, where and when cars are being handled is vital to the record keeping task. "It is all very necessary to properly and efficiently serve our customers," Larry continued. •

**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

Washington honored as Montana businessman of the year

Dennis Washington was honored as the person who had the greatest impact in the area economic development in Montana in 1990 by the Montana Ambassadors. Montana Governor Stan Stephens, who presented the award to him on February 8, stated, "I feel the Montana Ambassadors have come forward with an excellent idea by annually honoring the individual they feel has made the greatest contribution to our state's economic welfare. Most certainly, Dennis Washington, with all he has accomplished in the last few years, has earned this year's honors and annual award being named after him." This was the first such award given by the group and will be named after Washington when presented in future years. •

Boeing (continued from page 5) trimming part of a concrete liner and then relining the track, the clearance restriction in the tunnel was removed. All work was done by Burlington Northern forces. The volume of Boeing traffic has increased dramatically via this route. We will see approximately 1600 shipments during 1991. Boeing traffic is of high-value (the range is from \$500,000 to \$1,500,000 per car)! Because they contain special tooling and devices to hold the lading in place, even the empty cars have extraordinary value. The traffic is all very time-sensitive. The loaded cars and empties must be on time for Boeing to maintain production schedules. •

Attaboy (continued from page 3) journal on a car on train 01-003, a westbound Burlington Northern intermodal train being detoured on our line. The car was set out after he went to a pay phone and notified manager of train movement, Randy Hanks. Good work, Larry! •

Keeping Track

Montana Rail Link Personnel Changes

Charles L. Reeser appointed assistant trainmaster at Laurel. Mr. Reeser served previously as a switchman and replaces Larry Kays who returned to an operating position.

Terry G. Burdett appointed assistant signal & communication supervisor with headquarters at Helena, Montana, effective January 7. He replaces Pete J. Molenda who resigned to return to college. Mr. Burdett served previously as electronic control specialist.

William E. "Buster" Pritchard appointed work equipment supervisor with headquarters at Missoula, a new position, effective January 15. Mr. Pritchard served previously as a machine operator. •

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

Random Drug Testing: Positives from Negative Results

Since the Federal Railroad Administration began the mandated random drug testing on July 2, 1990, 77 Montana Rail Link employees have been checked resulting in no positive tests. "The MRL random drug testing program continues to demonstrate an effective team effort to maintain a drug free working environment," stated **Brian Heikkila**, director of training, rules and safety. "The absence of a single positive test to date is also a tribute to the outstanding quality of our employees," he continued. •

Customer Profile: Borden Packaging and Industrial Products Division of Borden, Inc.

Ever wonder what holds particle-board or plywood together? It's done with adhesives. And chances are if the product (plywood, particle-board, oriented-strand board, and fiber board) originated in the inter-mountain area of the Pacific Northwest, Borden Packaging and Industrial Products Division of Borden, Inc. Missoula plant made it.

Methanol, urea, and phenol are the basic raw materials for adhesives. Methanol and urea are received by rail from Canada. The methanol is converted to formaldehyde by reacting it with air in a plant which runs 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. Most of the formaldehyde stays on the plant site as a raw material for adhesives and foundry resins. To make adhesives, formaldehyde is mixed with urea or phenol and "cooked" for several hours. The finished adhesive (or resin) is then cooled, tested, and shipped to customers via rail car, truck, and pipeline. The urea-formaldehyde resins are white and are commonly used to make particle-board. The phenol-formaldehyde resins are darker in color and used mostly in plywood. The cured resin is visible in finished plywood if one looks carefully between the plies.

The Missoula plant, founded in 1970, is one of 16 U.S. and four Canadian forest products adhesives plants operated by Borden. It is in an ideal location because of the proximity of

forest products businesses and access to transportation. Twenty-two persons are employed there with an annual payroll in excess of \$600,000. Doug Anderson serves as plant manager and Jack Widdicombe as plant superintendent.

Borden is committed to operating the Missoula plant with no adverse effects on the environment. All waste water is collected on the plant site and reused in the plant processes. Air emissions are minimal because waste gasses are captured and recycled as fuel to a steam boiler. The utmost care has been taken to design the plant so spilled materials are collected and reused. Borden recently spent \$225,000 for pollution abatement equipment which collects dust and storage tank fumes. Safety is a high-priority, too. The Missoula plant just completed 20 years of operation without an accident!

Borden, Inc., founded in 1857, is a diversified producer and marketer of packaged foods, non-food consumer products and packaging and industrial products with more than 200 plant locations and 45,000 employees worldwide. The home office is in Columbus, Ohio. •



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

News (continued from page 6)

■ An American Red Cross-sponsored blood drive was held at the general office building in Missoula on January 29. With over 50 Washington Companies donors, 27 for the first time, it was considered a huge success.

■ Montana Rail Link has embarked on a new business venture: Locomotive leasing and sales. As a result of the recent merger of Corporate Leasing, Inc. with the railroad, there are 47 diesel locomotives for lease or sale. The units are all EMD and models (GP7s, GP9s and SD40s) that range in horsepower from 1500 to 3000. The locomotives will be rebuilt to suit the lessors needs or sold as is. •



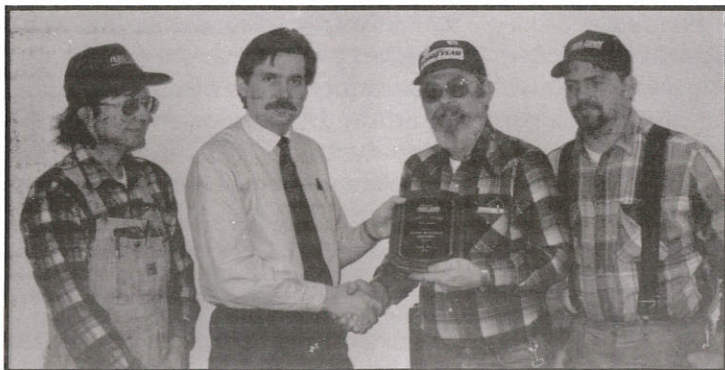
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Women for MRL

Women for MRL, a Laurel/Billings area support group made up of spouses of MRL employees, is very active and have a number of events planned for 1991 including a fund-raiser bake sale to be held at Jan's IGA in Laurel on March 9. The new officers for the group were introduced on December 14 at Laurel/Billings area Christmas Party. Left to right: Lezetta Sheets, wife of locomotive engineer Steve Sheets, will serve as chairperson for 1991; Cindy Burkhart, wife of locomotive engineer **Fred Burkhart**, is the secretary-treasurer; and Jennifer McCandless, wife of locomotive engineer **Jeff McCandless**, is the out-going chairperson. Co-chairperson Nancy Edwards, wife of locomotive engineer **Jay Edwards**, was not available for the picture. Regular meetings are held the first Tuesday of each month at the Owl Cafe in Laurel at 7 PM.



Injury free in 1990! Quite an accomplishment and one achieved by the Helena mechanical department. To commemorate the event, **Jack Hazard**, assistant general mechanical foreman, second from right, accepts a special plaque presented to the employees by **Joe Richardson**, assistant to chief mechanical officer. **Rich Labbe**, electrician, is at the left and **Bill Honadel**, apprentice carman, is on the right. Not available for the picture were carman **Doug Thomson**, laborers **Doug Garcia**, **John Woods**, and machinists **Gary Devine** and **Dale Matilla**.



Part of the job description? Not necessarily. Emergency situations do often bring out the best of our hidden talents, though. Just such an incident occurred on December 3 when a grain trail derailed and destroyed Bridge 26 over the Thompson River near Thompson Falls, MT. Debris, rail cars, car parts, and pieces of the bridge were submerged in the river creating a need for scuba divers to locate parts and attach cables and hooks for removal. **Paul Elsenpeter, Jr.**, left, a carman from Laurel and **Mike Blohm**, electronic communications specialist from Laurel, answered the call of duty and put their diving hobby and skills to work. Pictured here on December 11, they are about to don their masks and air tanks for another plunge in the frigid waters of the Thompson River.

THINK.... before you act!