Montana Rail Link NEWSLETTER

Issue No. 16 | Information for Employees and Customers | May-June/1991

LOOKING AHEAD

Dates to Remember

July 21
Laurel/Billings Area
Employee's Picnic
1-4 PM Thompson Park
Laurel

August 1
Deadline for 1991 Employee
Photo Contest Entries

August 3
Livingston Area
Employees Picnic

August 17
Montana Rail Link
Washington Corp.
Corporate Leasing/Envirocon
Joint Employees Picnic
Grant Creek Ranch

August 30
4th Annual Laurel/Billings Area
Employee Golf Outing

October 2-4
Fall Meeting of the
Association of Car Accounting and
Car Service Officers
Missoula

Inside this issue:

News Briefs

■ Gang 53 installed 2,300 cross-ties during a 10 1/2 hour shift on June 5 near Noxon, Montana on the 4th Subdivision breaking the old record set last year by 200 ties. **Lyle Evans**, foreman, and his 31 person gang have established a good safety record. Says territory roadmaster **Rick Woodruff**, "....they have worked safely and experienced no injuries to date. Their productivity, professionalism and attitude have been outstanding...they represent what MRL is – an up and coming railroad."

■ Shipments of copper concentrates from Montana Resources in Butte to Asarco Incorporated smelters in El Paso, Texas, and Hayden, Arizona, began moving as of June 1 and should amount to about 1,000 cars annually. The shipments originate on the Rarus Railway. Besides Montana Rail Link, the other participating railroads are Burlington Northern, Montana Western, Southern Pacific and Union Pacific. MRL leased 120 open top hoppers to handle these shipments. Montana Resources is owned 50.1% by Dennis Washington and 49.9% by Asarco Incorporated.

(continued, turn to News on page 3)

The Montana Rail Link locomotive fleet is being upgraded with units such as No. 651 pictured here on Train 841. The Livingston-Helena local's in the siding at Lombard for a meet on April 10, 1991. ***Rick Fitterer****, engineer;* ***Dave Goodson****, assistant; and* ***Bob Allen****, utility operating employee made up the crew. Rebuilt from an aging SD9 by our own forces at Running Repair in Livingston, the 651 represents a major step forward in our goal of improving our motive power.* ***Chuck Hancock****, an electrician and project leader for the rebuilding of 651, was along on this trip and took the photograph.* *For more on the 651, please turn to page 4.*

Guest Editorial by Ted Hagemo

SAFETY...A seemingly simple task at first contemplation. However, on the railroad safety is anything but simple. Thousands of tons of equipment are moved every day during all hours, in all kinds of weather, over all kinds of terrain. Every piece of equipment and material is extremely heavy—mechanical parts, ties, rails, moving equipment, etc. Add the human factor to the scenario and safety quite obviously becomes a challenge which never ends. Employees working around heavy equipment are the most likely to sustain injuries or be involved in accidents, however, the injured party may not be solely to blame.

How many supervisors and coworkers have noticed an employee performing tasks in an unsafe manner prior to an accident or injury and remained silent?

Did a supervisor somehow encourage or intimidate the employee into rushing the task at hand?

Was a defective piece of equipment or an unsafe condition reported and not repaired, or noticed and not reported?

MRL is at or near the top in every measurable category of productivity. We are the envy of nearly every carrier in the nation. Those admirable statistics are overshadowed by our dismal accident and injury records. The one area that should be the most important to us has somehow been allowed to regress to the point that we should all be embarrassed.

During April, operating employees were offered suggestions for improvement at marathon safety meetings held by a coalition of concerned parties consisting of MRL officers **John Grewell, Brian Heikkila,** trainmasters along the line, Dave Brewer of the FRA, and BLE officers Ron Dean, Dale McPherson, **Bob Speare** (BLE Local Chairman - East End) and myself.

Employees also offered many suggestions that will be an excellent start toward improvement. A few simple suggestions, that if heeded, will result in immediate improvement:

- **Point out unsafe acts to coworkers. Don't be offended if a coworker points out an unsafe act. Thank him or her and return the favor another coworker.**
- **Supervisors, shouldn't suggest or allow subordinates to feel that they expect them to rush. Many safety rules prohibit short cuts. Take exception to unsafe short cuts that may serve to raise productivity. A slight rise in productivity is not worth an injury or accident.**
- **Report all unsafe conditions and equipment to the proper person. Those responsible for repairs and improvements, don't delay, make them as soon as possible. It is just as important to repair unsafe conditions as it is to keep the trains moving.**

Safety can be improved if the problem is attacked like every other problem: by a concerted effort.

Management can't achieve success in safety performance alone, any more than they can improve productivity alone. All employees must be totally committed to improvement. •

Editor's note: Ted Hagemo is Local Chairman - West End for the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers.

A cameo appearance

Information on more than 50,000 chemicals has been compiled by the U.S. Department of Commerce, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Hazardous Material Response Branch and published in computer data base form.

Called "Cameo," an acronym for Computer Aided Material Emergency Operation, the program cross-references chemical names, both trade and generic, to the actual name of the chemical and cross-references that to the proper emergency response. It enables emergency response organizations, and transportation companies such as ours, to provide correct and timely information during an incident involving hazardous materials.

Thanks to the efforts of manager of train movement **Dave Peterson,** Montana Rail Link now has this information available. Dave refined the data base for our use and, using a program called Hypercard, installed Cameo on a Macintosh Plus computer in the Transportation Center in Missoula. What's more, he developed a training manual to aid others in understanding Cameo, and conducted training classes for coworkers to perfect the skills needed to make inquiries.

Dave's efforts aptly display a dedication which will make Montana Rail Link a better and safer railroad. •

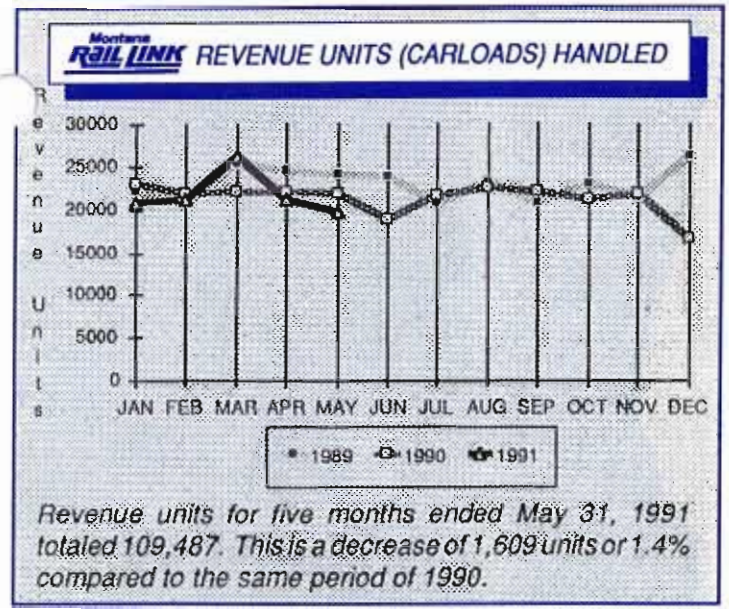
Misroutes:

Errors and omissions in previous issues

Chester Southern is FRA Regional Director and not regional inspector as reported in Newsletter No. 15, page 4. •

PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER

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. 16 May-June/1991
June 18, 1991



Revenue units for five months ended May 31, 1991 totaled 109,487. This is a decrease of 1,609 units or 1.4% compared to the same period of 1990.

News (continued from page 1)

■ And on the LCV (long combination vehicle – big trucks) front, by a voice vote, the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee has approved a proposal to freeze existing truck size limits across the country. The plan – introduced by Senators Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ) and John Chafee (R-RI) – was included in the $105 billion highway and mass transit bill (S.965), which will authorize federal highway and transportation programs for the next five years. The American Trucking Association had been hoping to use the highway bill as a Vehicle for gaining wider use of so-called longer combination vehicles (LCVs), consisting of two 48-to-53-foot or three 28-foot trailers and weighing as much as 135,000 pounds. However, that ATA plan ignited a groundswell of opposition across the United States from a broad coalition of highway safety advocates, environmentalists, consumer organizations, public interest groups, state transportation officials and legislators, and some elements of the trucking industry itself. Under the

(continued, turn to News, back page)

New antenna improves radio communications in Mullan Tunnel

The Radio Repeater for the Mullan Tunnel at Blossburg, Montana became operational on May 16. Information on this project which appeared in the January/February 1991 issue of the Newsletter was technically flawed. **Alan Hals**, MRL communications technician at Missoula, provides us with this data on how the radio system works:

A "Radiax" or leaky coaxial cable has been hung on the ceiling of the tunnel and connected to a tower at the west portal and to a radio repeater at the east portal. When the radio repeater receives a signal on one frequency it will key-up and transmit on another

(continued, turn to Tunnel, page 7)

*Broken wheels are the nemesis of any railroad. With our high-speed operation, a broken wheel not detected has the potential for causing a serious derailment. Fortunately, we have employees who have a keen eye or ear for such things. Laurel carman **Billy Williams** is one of them, pictured here, left, receiving a commemorative "Top Gun" hat from Laurel general mechanical foreman **Ron Wegh**. On March 27, while working the 3 to 11 shift in the Laurel train yard, he discovered a broken wheel on a loaded covered hopper of grain.*

Our Safety Record: *Some good news, but there's more to be done*

The on-duty casualty rate fell to 5.56 reportable injuries per 200,000 manhours in May as a direct result of the increased emphasis being placed on safety. Only five reportable injuries occurred during the month compared to 14 in April. This improvement is attributed to the hard work of all employees, the safety committees and supervisors. Accident costs for the period ending June 14, 1991 also were down 26.5% or $680,000 compared to the same period in 1990. The frequency of all accidents is also down by 30%, which translates into 21 fewer incidents than last year. **Brian Heikkila**, director of training, rules and safety stated: "We are encouraged by this progress and June is shaping up as another good month.....progress is being made (but)...much work remains to be done to achieve our 1991 goals. President **Bill Brodsky** set goals for 1991 of 7 reportable injuries per 200,000 manhours and a 48% reduction in accident costs (see Newsletter #14 January/February 1991). "Our safety performance for May proves that we can do it!" continued Heikkila, "Let's keep up the good work!" •

Saga of the 651

This is the story of No. 651, one of a new breed of locomotives now being utilized by Montana Rail Link. Designated as a model SD19-1, it is a prototype. And it is a story of a talented work force meeting a need.

It begins with Electro Motive Division outshopping a model SD9 diesel locomotive, serial number 23121, at their La Grange, Illinois, plant in March 1957 for the Elgin, Joliet & Eastern Railroad. The "SD" designation is EMD's model code indicating "special duty" with six-wheel trucks and rated at 1750 horsepower. According to EJ&E specifications, it was built to run with the long end forward. A leasing company acquired it when the EJ&E declared it surplus in the early 1980s.

Montana Rail Link began operations in 1987 and immediately found itself desperately short of motive power. The 52 units acquired at start up from the Burlington Northern were just not adequate to handle the business. Chief mechanical officer **Mel Dinius** spearheaded an intensive effort to locate additional locomotives. It was no easy task. Good power was difficult to find three years ago. EJ&E 601 was one of several units acquired early in 1988 from National Railway Equipment at a cost of $95,000. Fundamentally sound with a good prime-mover (diesel engine), main generator, traction motors and trucks, its design offered good tractive-effort at slow speeds; ideal for yard, transfer or local service.

The unit was re-painted and renumbered 609. As part of our 1990 locomotive upgrading program, No. 609 was at LRC for major work including a low-nose conversion and 26L brakes. The unit did have some major drawbacks, however. Says' **John Wiesch**, general mechanical foreman at Livingston, "It was getting to the point that we had to do something more with it. The wiring was bad and the electro-pnuematic switch gear had to be replaced."

The Mechanical Department decided to use the 609 as a pilot for a major rebuilding project. As mentioned earlier, the unit was basically sound. The 16-567C engine, trucks and traction motors were in good shape and were qualified. The work was done "in house" at the Livingston Running Repair facility.

Enter the talented work force.

Chuck Hancock, an electrician, headed the effort as project engineer. He volunteered for the effort. "It was a challenge and a real learning experience," he stated. Hancock designed and re-wired the unit. Machinists' **Mike Donahue, Jerry Jacobsen** and **Vic Warnick**; electrician **Dennis Knoll** and apprentice electrician **John Williams** were key personnel working on the project.

Assorted parts cascaded down from the SD40 rebuild program fed the 651 project. Included were: cab from No. 205 wrecked at Helena, high-voltage cabinet (redesigned for limited use of module cards), switch gear, console stand with rebuilt components, and AC locker. The car body was modified for the addition of dynamic brakes and the larger high-voltage cabinet. A 1750 gallon fuel tank from a GP38 replaced the old 900 gallon tank to increase range. Traction motor blower ducts were rebuilt and the battery boxes relocated. Also added was a new style slide-in equipment rack for oil cooler, water tank and sequential cooling fan controllers.

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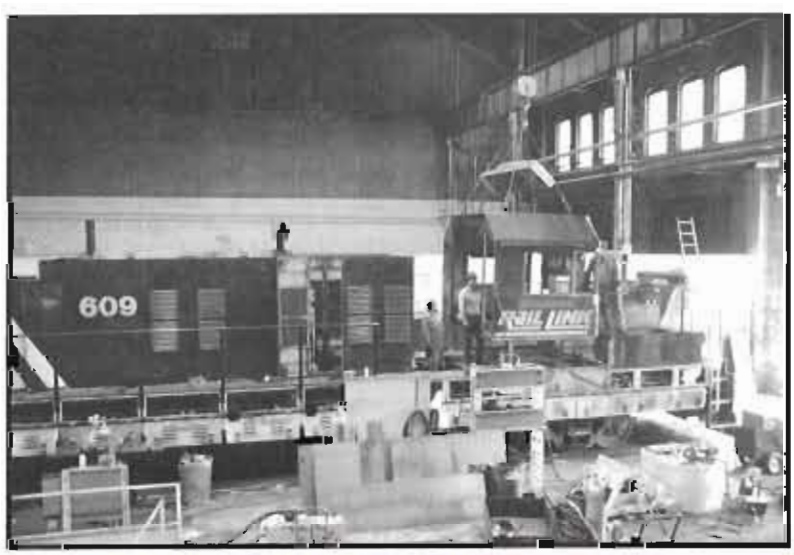
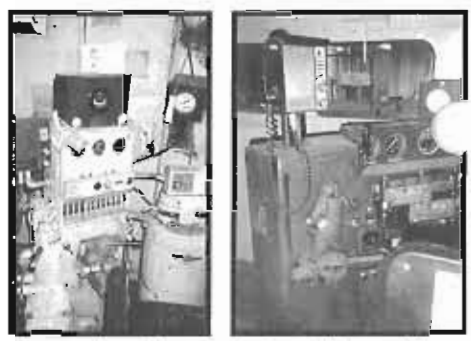
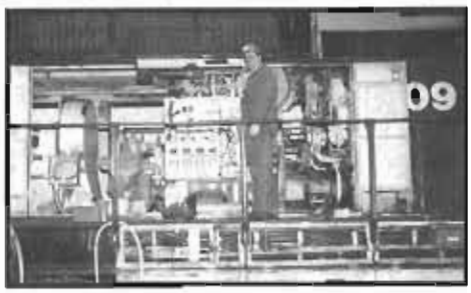


SD9 603 is representative of the way the 651 appeared before rebuilding.

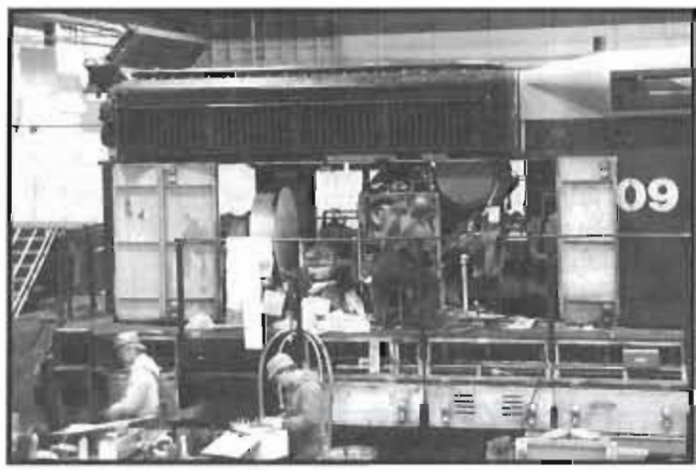


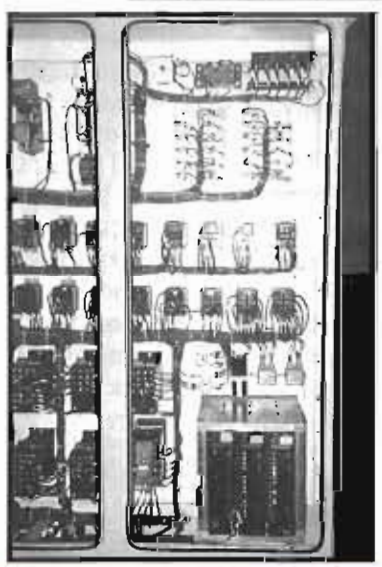
*Above, the old control stand, left, and the new from an SD40. Left, cab of former 205 is lifted into place, left to right: **Corky Dunagan, Hancock** and **Warnick**.*



Clockwise from left: ***Hancock*** *at the AC cabinet where controls for the cooling fans and shutters are located.* ***Warnick*** *working on cab modifications.* ***Williams,*** *left and* ***Hancock*** *rewiring the high voltage cabinet.* ***Knoll*** *wires the AC cabinet while, below,* ***Donahue,*** *left, repairs step and pilot damage to the locomotive and* ***Hancock*** *wires a terminal board.* ***Knoll*** *pulling wires for the new control stand. Electrical cabinet in the cab of 651 - the module box in lower right hand corner contains solid-state components controlling wheel-slip, dynamic braking and voltage regulator. The locomotive is compatible in multiple-unit service with newer high-horsepower locomotives.* ***Donahue,*** *left, and* ***Jacobsen*** *work on fabrication of the cab of 651. Running Repair staff and No. 651, left to right:* ***Hancock, Knoll, Jacobsen, Pat Shinn*** *and* ***Donahue.***

Old Unit + Mechanical Department Ingenuity = SD19-1





A look at the

Personnel Department

At Montana Rail Link "Personnel" is just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to describing the responsibilities of the department.

Personnel, as the name implies, has to do with all matters involving human resources. This includes development of personnel policies for MRL which involves research and drafting of proposals. The overall philosophical framework is to allow "each employee as much discretion as possible to act in the interest of the company" and where the company developes a minimum of restrictive policies. The department is also responsible for investigating, negotiating and settling FELA (Federal Employers Liability Act) claims of injured employees or the families of deceased employees. It also handles all personal injury and property damage claims of third parties arising out of activities of MRL, including persons injured at grade crossing accidents. This does not include freight loss and damage which is administered by Orson Murray.

Sharon Prinzing heads this department as manager. Reporting to her are **Gerry Larson**, auditor, and **Jacquie Duhame**, administrative assistant.

In the traditional personnel area, Sharon conducts interviews of job applicants as well as people leaving the company. New to Montana Rail Link is the concept of team interviewing. This technique involves the job applicant, the department supervisor and Sharon. The "team" process helps to more fully learn the prospective employees skills and attributes. Interviews are also conducted when people choose to leave the company. The so-called "exit" interviews help us learn about how well we are doing in treating people fairly.

Keeping abreast of state and federal employment practices and rules, including matters such as unlawful discrimination, hiring and firing guidelines, is an important area, too. The department serves as a resource for managers in the other departments, providing suggestions, publications and news items.

Prinzing works with injured employees to get them back to work as soon as possible after considering the employee's medical and mental condition. She also works with families of employees injured or killed to mitigate their hardship and assure them of MRL's continuing concern and support.

Prinzing is a graduate of Montana State University and holds a degree in sociology and a minor in social work. She joined MRL in February1988 and brought with her a wide variety of experience that includes ranch manager, job interviewer and job development officer for Montana Job Service, substitute teacher, assistant purchasing officer for a gold mine, office manager of a petroleum distributor, and office manager for two surgeons. She joined sister Washington company Montana Resources in Butte in 1986 as employment involvement coordinator.

Duhame schedules interviews and physical exams, handles correspondence and maintains files. Jacquie started with MRL as a yard clerk in May 1989 and moved to the general offices soon after. Her duties also include maintenance of our central filing system. She is a graduate of the University of Montana and holds a degree in economics.

Larson processes all bills related to work injuries and keeps track of all wages and medical expenses on a monthly basis. He also supervises the case management program. Established by St. Patrick Hospital in Missoula, this program is used to record and administer all employee

(continued, turn to Personnel, page 7)

Safety comes in cans.....
I can! You can! We can!

651 (continued from page 5)

It was completed at a cost of $240,000 on a cost plus basis. A new locomotive costs $1.3 million plus. Considering the alternatives, not bad!

Mel Dinius is pleased with the results. "We now have a reliable, serviceable locomotive that may not be quite up to 1990 technology but which should give us many more years of service," he stated. "What's more, it was all done with our own people using their wide range of skills in a way that probably could never be done within a larger organization. ...Thanks to the people of the Livingston Running Repair for the work put in to the development of this program. I don't think there's another group of people in the country that could keep our 30-year old locomotives running like they do!" he continued. Say's Hancock, "Overall it was a team effort and a satisfying experience for me."

Coming soon...conversion of a GP9 1844 to a GP19-1 151! •

*A training class for new utility operating employees was held in April in Missoula. **Randy Dody** practices manual operation of a power switch under the watchful eye of BLE instructor **Duane Parker**, left. Others from the left: **Gerald Lews**, **Ron Rahn** and **Randy Corbin** (hidden behind Parker), **Dave Thompson**, **Mike Mattson**, **Alec Krug**, **Tom Burgess**, **Tim Lindeman**, **Lon Skrivseth**, **Craig Moody**. Lindeman and Skrivseth, Missoula Safety Committee members, assisted with the training. Class members not pictured: **Bill Loessberg**, **Robert Pearson**, and **Mike Alfson**. Training consists of a four week course including classroom and on the job experience.*

Keeping Track ....
Montana Rail Link
Personnel Changes

Frank L. **Williams** appointed equipment planner with headquarters at Livingston, Montana, effective April 24; a new position. The job will open and close work orders on each locomotive in our fleet and track all labor and material spent on each unit which will help to determine which locomotives to rehabilitate, store or retire. Mr. Williams holds a degree in mechanical engineering technology from Montana State University in Bozeman.

Effective June 3, Pete L. **Storseth** named assistant trainmaster/road foreman with headquarters at Helena filling the vacancy created when **Marc VanOrman** was promoted (see Newsletter No. 15, March/April 1991). Mr. Storseth was formerly a locomotive engineer at Missoula. **W. D. "Bill" Barnes** to assistant trainmaster at Missoula replacing Diana Homan who resigned. Mr. Barnes was formerly a switchman at Missoula. •

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rsonnel (continued from page 6)
physical exams, random drug testing and work related injury files.

Gerry got his current job quite literally by accident. He started with MRL as a utility operating employee in December 1987. Injured in a switching accident in February 1989, he was brought into the general offices in August 1989, after physical rehabilitation, to work on a number of projects including a customer service audit and a study of truck movements for the marketing department. Gerry is a fine example of MRL's ongoing policy to rehabilitate and find meaningful work for any employee who is injured and can no longer function in his original job category.

Sharon believes that people are "the" asset of an organization and that you can get everything in life you want if you help enough people get what they want. Say's Sharon, "Lets all be a member of the crew, not just t of the cargo!" •

Customer Profile: Montana Recycling, Inc.

Increasing awareness of trash and what to do with it, landfills, solid-wastes and the effects of garbage on our environment have placed increasing emphasis on recycling of commodities. Montana Recycling, Inc., a Missoula-based company, is in the forefront of recycling activities in Montana.

Montana Recycling, currently the largest paper recycler in Montana, began operations in Missoula in 1971 handling just aluminum cans and bottles. Doug Stewart is president and helped establish the company at a time when recycling still sounded like a strange idea. Recycling centers opened in Billings and Great Falls in 1972, and the following year in Bozeman, Butte and Helena. Newspaper and non-ferrous scrap such as copper and brass were added to the commodity list in 1978. The Billings Recycling Center expanded in 1980 with the acquisition of a new building, and cardboard recycling began.

Montana Recycling not only runs its own centers, but actively assists individuals, non-profit organizations, and sheltered workshops to set up recycling centers which buy back aluminum cans and other home generated recyclables. Recycling programs for businesses and schools have been initiated to encourage individuals in their recycling activities. Montana Recycling has also become an information resource for the public wanting to know more about recycling or attempting to initiate projects of their own.

Montana Recyling's six centers continue to grow. Commodities accepted for recycling now include computer print-out paper, tab cards, ledger paper, batteries, radiators, white goods, tin cans and some plastics, in addition to those mentioned earlier. They now employe 55 people and last year sold 37 million pounds of other people's discards.

Montana Rail Link serves the Montana Recycling centers in Billings, managed by Mark Richlen; Helena, managed by Don Coburn; and Missoula, managed by Dean Meuchel.

We are pleased to play a part in making recycling work by providing low-cost, efficient transportation to move these commodities for processing. •

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

Tunnel (continued from page 3)
frequency. Since the transmit and receive frequencies are different, the radio repeater can receive and transmit simultaneously. The received signal is radiated through the entire length of the tunnel by means of the "leaks" in the cable. This will provide communication between trainmen in the tunnel or outside each portal. The new frequencies for the radio repeater have been added to the trainmen's portable radios as Channel 4.

Mel King, a locomotive engineer from Helena assigned to helper duty, likes the improvements to the radio system. "We can now talk to the dispatcher in Seattle, even using a portable (radio). It helps the operation and alleviates a lot of problems, especially with a break-in-two," (undesired uncoupling of cars in a train, Ed.) stated King.

Mullan Tunnel, at the crest of the Continental Divide west of Helena, is the toughest mountain territory in which we operate. The tunnel is 3,898 feet long and on a 2.2 percent grade westbound. Operating problems, such as stalling or breaking in two, occur all too frequently. Until now, a helper crew positioned mid-train and stopped in the tunnel could not communicate with the head end or anyone else by radio. The trackage is owned by Burlington Northern and the new antenna system was installed by them. •

Montana Rail Link

P. O. Box 8779
101 International Way
Missoula, Montana 59807

FIRST CLASS

Some people think recycling is a lot of garbage...*but not the folks at Montana Rail Link!*

Recyclable paper worth money gets thrown away every day. But not any more. Montana Rail Link, in cooperation with Montana Recycling, will begin a scrap paper recycling program at the General Offices starting on or about July 1. **Tom Coston**, marketing manager, is coordinating the program that will turn some of our waste paper into a benefit for ourselves and the community.

Here's how the program will work: each desk or work station will have a small corrugated cardboard container (purchased from Stone Container Corp.). When full, once or twice per week, employees will empty the contents into two larger central containers. One container designated for white paper and the other for computer paper. Because of glues and dyes, envelopes, magazines and colored paper can not be recycled at this time. The larger containers will be emptied into 95 gallon capacity containers located at the rear of the building each night by the janitorial forces. Montana Recycling will pick up these as needed.

Funds generated will be donated to charity or used in an ecological way to enhance our quality of life here in Montana. Once this program is established, outlying areas will be contacted and encouraged to organize a program of their own. With the cooperation of all employees, we can make this program a success. After all, what's one company's trash is another's treasure. •

***Denice VanDyke**, left, and **Joanne Pengra**, received the Bronze Award which honors successful women dedicated to excellence and commitment in their professions at the 5th Annual YWCA Leadership banquet held on May 24 at the University of Montana Center in Missoula. VanDyke is a crew caller and Pengra is administrative assistant for the engineering and mechanical departments.*

News (continued from page 3)
Lautenberg-Chafee plan, states that now permit the use of LCVs could continue under the specific conditions that exist on June 1, 1991. A total of 20 states permit some form of the LCV. The Senate bill could come to a floor vote sometime in June. The House subcommittee has not yet said when it plans to mark up its own version of the highway bill, which is still in the drafting stage.

Let your views on this importar issue be known. Write your senator and congressmen and let them know of your opinion. •