

NEWSLETTER

Issue No. 18

Information for Employees and Customers

November-December/1991

LOOKING AHEAD

Dates to Remember

December (all month)
Enrollment/change period
for 401(k) Plan

December 7
Missoula's Santa Train
Southgate Mall
11-3

Employee Christmas Parties:

December 7

Livingston Area

Livingston Depot Center

December 13

Laurel/Billings Area

Holiday Inn Billings

December 14

Missoula Area

Holiday Inn Parkside

December 20

Helena Area

Jörgenson's

December 31 Engineer Certification Begins

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 Super Trucks

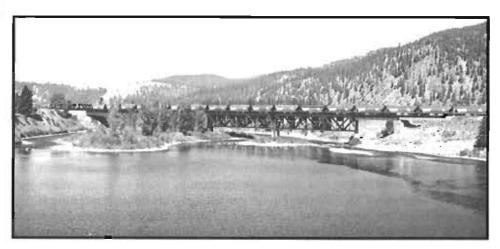
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News Briefs

- Track crews wrapped up work on the Polson Line rehabilitation project the first week of November. Upgraded to FRA Class II standards (track speed 25 m.p.h.), the line received 14,000 cross-ties, 37,000 tons of ballast and 33.4 miles of surfacing. A Federal Railroad Administration program administered by the Montana Department of Commerce funded \$500,000 of the \$782,000 total cost. MRL funded the balance. Roadmaster Rick Woodruff and assistant roadmaster Don Boltz spearheaded the work. Steve Werner, field engineer, was the liaison between the state and railroad. The Polson Line was selected for rehabilitation because it best fit the criterion for the grant meeting requirements for existing business and potential growth.
- Increased shipments of lumber from the new Tricon Timber sawmill near St. Regis, Montana, dictated increasing service on the main line between Superior and Thompson Falls. All stations between those points began receiving daily service on Monday, November 11. The Paradise Local works Monday through Friday. "The improved service is another indication of our commitment to providing the kind of service our customers demand." says Larry Huff, marketing manager. Under the new arrangement, Trout Creek, formerly served by the Paradise Local, will now be switched by train MS (Missoula-Spokane).
- Montana Rail Link is participating with BN, UP, ATSF in a new movement of copper concentrates from the Asarco mine at Troy, Montana, to their smelter in El Paso, Texas. MRL provided 48 open top hoppers; annual volume: 480 carloads.

(continued, turn to News on page 3)



A fifty-two car unit train of wheat (all MRL cars), more than 170,000 bushels, photographed crossing the Clark Fork River near Bonner, Montana, on September 4. Designated as Train G03, it is enroute to Portland, Oregon, from Billings Grain Terminal in Billings, Montana.

From the President's Desk

e are well into the Fall of '91 and by now I hope that each of you has had an opportunity to enjoy some time with family. The Montana summer was truly spectacular, once it finally arrived.

Two things come to mind in reviewing the first ten months of 1991: our customers and our people. Certainly our customers are everybody's business and the news is quite encouraging. In spite of the loss of a boiler at Stone Container, reducing production by approximately one third during most of the year, and a shut-down of the Champion facilities at Bonner for approximately 90 days, our on-line traffic levels are very close to budget. This has occurred because of more than 20 new customers as well as increased shipments by existing customers. The fact that we can lose substantial traffic from two of our biggest customers and still offset the loss with new and expanded traffic

opportunities is a credit to our marketing department and the efforts of all of our employees that are sensitive to customer needs.

I'm continually reminded of the extra effort put forth by our people to serve our customers. It's especially rewarding to receive unsolicited endorsements of specific individuals from our customers. This year there have been many; whether it's a quality piece of equipment for loading, accurate weights on cars, tracing shipments or simply someone caring enough to make a particular customer feel important. It's our attention to detail and commitment to service that contributes to MRL's service being set apart from the competition. Let's never take any customer for granted.

The Burlington Northern, our single biggest customer, has felt the effects of a national recession during the first half of the year. As a result our bridge business is down approximately 8% on a carload basis. Unfortunately, our expenses have not been reduced proportionate to revenues.

Train accidents account for the largest unfavorable variance. We must take advantage of every opportunity to be a efficient railroaders, eliminating unnecessary expense and maximizing revenue opportunities.

The goals we established for ourselves this year represent a most formidable challenge; one of which was achieving a 61% operating ratio in 1991. Although revenues through the 3rd quarter were under budget by a little over \$1 million, we expect to experience a strong 4th quarter. In fact October traffic trends were up and we ended the month a bit less than \$1 million ahead of budget. Revenues at year end will benefit from Stone Container's return to full production in mid-October, one month ahead of schedule, and strong movements of grain. The result should be revenues very close to the original budget plan. In order to achieve the goal of 61%, we must totally eliminate accident expense through the remainder of the year. An uncompromising commit-

(continued, turn to President on page?

Big-Truck (LCV) Update

ne of the most far-reaching pieces of legislation being considered by the 102nd Congress is the Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (H.R. 2950 and S. 1204). Included in the bill is a provision to halt the proliferation of longer combination vehicles (LCV's). A key supporter of efforts to restrict truck size is CRASH – Citizens for Reliable and Safe Highways.

CRASH points out that in a triple-bottom truck configuration (three 28-foot trailers), the rig is up to 110 feet in length and weighs as much as 110,000 pounds. Even more frightening to many motorist are the double-bottoms (two 48-foot trailers) which can be 120 feet long and weigh 135,000 pounds. CRASH states that authorizing these behemoths would create a greater hazard than the 80,000 pounds now permitted. Data supplied by the Association of American Railroads supports that conclusion. According to research released by the AAR, the LCV record for fatal accidents is 75% higher than for single-trailer units.

In addition to fears about safety, other groups opposed to allowing more LCV's on the nation's highway cite environmental factors, traffic congestion, and excessive road damage as reasons for concern.

As of November 15, a Senate-House conference committee is working to resolve differences between the House-passed and the Senate-passed versions of the bill. Conferees are reported as leaning toward allowing individual states to regulate truck sizes but both bills would freeze allowable truck lengths at current levels. Conferees think they can work out any differences by Thanksgiving and have a bill ready to be voted on. Watch for developments on this important legislation. •

Thank you!

The Tom Ness family wishes to thank everyone for their contributions and expressions of sympathy following the death of their wife and mother, Mona. (Tom is a laborer with the Belgrade section).

Tom, Becky, Amanda, Nicole, Stacey & Emily.

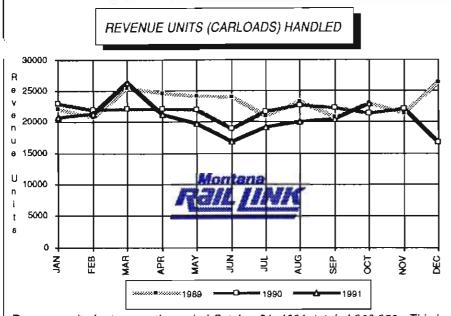


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items and comments. Editor: R. Mitton Clark

Member Association of Railway Communicators

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Revenue units for ten months ended October 31, 1991, totaled 208,950. This is a decrease of 8,931 units or 4.1% compared to the same period of 1990.

News (continued from page 1)

- Have you noticed the big pile of logs at the west end of Laurel Yard? All Timber Material of Montana leased 10 acres of property to deck logs trucked in from surrounding timber lands. Sawlogs are being shipped to several mills in western Montana. In an operation expected to start after the first of the year, ogs that grade for pulp will be whole-log chipped at the site for shipment to paper mills.
- Bonita Tunnel repaired. Because of cracks, distortion and fall-out of a portion of the tunnel lining, two short sections of the 896-foot tunnel were relined this Fall. The project involved several phases including realignment of track to the center of the tunnel to maintain clearances for high-wide shipments and relocation of a bridge and a hotbox detector. Patrick Harrison Company of Salt Lake City was contracted to place heavy concrete lining and localized rock anchors. The project cost \$350,000.
- MRL people are in demand on the speaker's circuit. President Bill Brodsky made a speech on "Meeting the Service Challenge: Five Points to Increase Labor Productivity" before the 5th American Railroad Conference in Washington, D.C., on November 13. On October 3, he addressed the Association of Car Accounting and Car Service Officers at their Fall meeting held in Missoula. Executive vice president Fred Simpson addressed the same group on "MRL's Approach to Marketing." Chief engineer Richard Keller was selected as a panelist along with several other representatives of industry and suppliers for the Railway Track & Structures/Railway Age Maintenance of Way Conference held August 20 in Chicago. Standardization...research and development...partnerships between railroad and suppliers...planned purchasing...were just a few of the topics discussed.
- Clean locomotives are safer locomotives. Our ability to clean motive power vill receive a big boost with the completion of the new locomotive washing (continued, turn to News on page 4)

Q&A

How many different railroads are represented within our ranks of employees?

Answer: 40

Alaska Railroad Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Baltimore & Ohio **Burlington Northern** Butte, Anaconda & Pacific Canadian Pacific Central Montana Rail Chicago & Eastern Illinois Chicago & North Western Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Chicago, Central & Pacific Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul & Pacific Conrail **CSX Transportation** Dakota, Minnesota & Eastern Denver & Rio Grande Western Erie-Lackawanna Georgia Eastern Great Northern Illinois Central Illinois Central Gulf Indiana Union Kansas City Southern Louisville & Nashville Missouri-Kansas-Texas New York Central Norfolk & Western Northern Pacific Panama Railway Pend Oreille Valley Penn Central Seaboard Systems Soo Line Southern Pacific Southern Railway St. Louis Southwestern St. Louis-San Francisco Toledo, Peoria & Western Western Pacific Wisconsin Central

If you worked for a railroad not listed here, please let the editor know.

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

Super Trucks:

Giving the section crews a lift





The Super Truck for the Plains, Montana, Section Crew fresh from the Equipco shop on September 6 where the tag axle, other accessories, and the markings were added. Right, assistant roadmaster **Don Boltz** and Plains

truck driver Gary Baltz demonstrate the operation of a hydraulic spike hammer.

he Plains, Superior and Trident, Montana, section crews are receiving new "Super" trucks as part of our capital improvement program for 1991.

The trucks have an International chassis with crew cabs and International 466 diesel engines which were selected and purchased through Missoula Truck Sales. Pierce Manufacturing of Kalispell equipped the trucks with the truck beds, tool boxes, rail racks, National 300 hydraulic cranes (units rebuilt by Coast Crane of Spokane), and DMF hydraulic hyrail equipment. Stanley hydraulic tools (spike hammers and pullers, impact wrenches, and tampers) can be operated from the truck. Other features include a tag-axle which greatly increases the gross weight limits of the vehicle, and an engine exhaust system that vents out the top of the vehicle and eliminates emissions around the lower area where personnel may be working. Equipco of Missoula added the tag axles and other accessories making them ready for service. The vehicles cost about \$90,000 each.

Says roadmaster Augie Cantu: "These new trucks improve the productivity of the section crews and are a source of pride for the men." •

News (continued from page 3)

building at Livingston. The 2,600 square-foot, cinder block and steel structure replaces facilities formerly housed inside the Running Repair building. The new building not only provides for more efficient and safer cleaning of locomotives, but frees up space in the repair building. Our own B&B people built the structure that was designed by Muth Consulting of Missoula. The cost of the project: \$223,335.

Chuck Winnett joined Livingston Rebuild Center as president on August 19 replacing Jack Jolley who returned to his position with the Oxford Group in Chicago. Mr. Winnett was formerly with Morrison-Knudsen as plant manager at their Mountain Top, Pennsylvania, facility. LRC, a contract locomotive and car repair shop established in 1988, is a unit of the Washington Corporations.

For the third year running, Montana Rail Link's float in the University of Montana Homecoming Parade, held October 12, took first place in the Commercial Division. A result of a cooperative effort with the Missoula County Fire Protection Association, the volunteers successfully transformed the parade theme "Magic Moments" to the float entitled "The Magic Begins When We All Work Together." Lori Cochrell, Ginger Moss, Darcy Dantick and John Vandenberg served on the MRL committee and worked with Nancy Porter of MCFPA. Westran donated the use of a flatbed trailer and Roscoe Steel provided a large piece of culvert used on the float.

Where have the wide Boeing airplane cars gone? Ice buildup in Mullan Tunnel reduced clearance to the point where cars exceeding a maximum width of 12 feet would not clear. Burlington Northern has an engineering consulting firm studying the water-flow and ice problems at the tunnel. Temporarily, the Boeing cars are being rerouted via the Twin Cities. Handling via MRL saves about 900 miles and the traffic is expected to return as soon as the clearance problem is solved. •

Who's Calling?

enice Van Dyke Rogers, Toni Hinton, Carol Houchen, Jay Barnes, Colette Thurston, Shawn Cearly, Craig Moody, Mark Davenport, and Heber Hill, that's who. These nine people make up the full time staff of crew callers in the crew management department. Katie Rawhauser, Brian Dayton and Terry Jennings are GREB clerks (Guaranteed Rotating Extra Board) and relieve Union labor agreements. They must keep records of who is rested and available for service and who is qualified for what job. Above all, callers work closely with the Transportation Center to coordinate efforts and ensure a smooth operation of the frains.

Most of the train crews work on an "on call" basis; that is, there is no regular day or time that they may be called to report for work. Eligibility to work is based on when they have



Part of our crew management team. Standing, left to right: Moody, Rawhauser, Swanson, Rogers; seated Houchen and Barnes. The magnetic crew board can be seen in the background,

in the callers office. Dave Swanson, manager crew operations, heads the department and reports to assistant superintendent George Harper.

Located in the Missoula general office building adjacent to the Transportation Center, the office is open around-the-clock with two people assigned on each shift. MRL has two crew districts or zones. The Laurel Zone has about 85 locomotive engineers and 125 switchman while the Missoula Zone has 115 engineers and 75 switchmen.

The callers' main job is seeing that the trains are properly staffed with a qualified locomotive engineer, assistant engineer and, if required, a switchman, at the proper time and place. They also call any extra clerical people for vacant positions. Callers must be fully conversant with the rules and interpretations of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Transportation-Communications

received their rest. To a great extent, people in train service are totally dependent on the callers for what they do when they are off duty. Information provided by the callers' office dictates when they will try to get some sleep or if they can attend their children's basketball game or a school play, or if they can go hunting for a few hours.

Callers keep track of crew status on a large magnetic board with tags representing each operating employee and his status regarding assignment, location and tie-up time. This is backed up with a permanent written record.

A computer system is being phased in which will ultimately replace many of the tasks now done manually. A Digital 486 computer with two 200 megabytes hard drives and software developed by PST (Personnel Service Technology of (continued, turn to Callers on page 6)

President (continued from page 2) ment of all of our employees can make this possible. It simply means we must all be more attentive to business, to accident prevention, and if we error it must be on the side of caution. With accident elimination, tighter control of expenses and a strong 4th quarter, we should come very close to our goal. Reduction of accident expenses by 48% (already mentioned) and reduction of personal injuries by 45% were the other goals we set for ourselves in 1991. Note that both of these goals are key to achieving a 61% operating ratio.

Personal injuries are particularly troubling because there is simply no acceptable justification for our employees becoming injured on the job. We will never sacrifice safety for the sake of productivity. Highly motivated, productive employees are safe employees. Likewise, safe employees are productive and highly motivated.

Like our other goals for 1991, this requires the total commitment of all of our employees if we are to be successful. Thus far in the area of accidents and injuries we have simply not reached far enough beyond our grasp to achieve these important goals. Let's all make the commitment to ourselves to do everything in our power to be the safest railroad in the industry. You deserve it and so do our custom-

In conclusion, I'd like to suggest that the future looks exciting for us all. We've weathered the storm of a recession relatively well and I'm confident that with our total commitment to customer service, traffic will grow. We will become more effective competitors. Our jobs will become more challenging, more rewarding and the opportunities more plentiful. Working safely, we will have the opportunity to enjoy fully the fruits of our labor. We will be a prideful company, knowing that we have truly "reached beyond our grasp." .

A look a crew management

Callers (continued from page 4) Denver, Colorado), maintains a data base of information to aid the crew management effort. It includes employee work histories (names, seniority dates, social security number, telephone and pager numbers, craft qualifications, sickness, injury and discipline). The computer also tracks train and yard history (how many shifts, which trains called when and where and the crew) and provides summaries of the data for management. When fully operational, the computer will dial the telephone and provide crew data and much more.

Inbound calls are a big part of the job, too; an average of 400 per shift. Usually it's employees wanting to know how they stand for the next tour of duty, families wanting to know when a man will be home, or lodging facilities wanting to know how many crews are enroute. Callers also arrange for ground or air transportation when it becomes necessary to deadhead crews.

The crew office also serves as a message center. Callers receive information for any maintenance of way Form B's (track work) and D's (speed restrictions) for the Transportation Center. The master printer is constantly running and messages are checked, copied and distributed to personnel involved. As stipulated by the BLE agreement, the number of pool turns is regulated bi-weekly as well as the engineer's extra board which can move as many as forty people around to a different job assignment in one day.

As with many MRL employees, most of the callers began without previous railroad experience. Carol Houchen and Toni Hinton are exceptions. Carol started working for the St. Louis-San Francisco Railway in Tulsa, Oklahoma, in 1972 and had experience as a caller. Her husband, Dave, was a locomotive engineer with the Frisco/BN and transferred to Whitefish, Montana, in 1984. He came to MRL at start-up and they relocated to

Missoula. Carol was looking for a job and with her qualifications and knowledge of the BN computer systems, fit right into the Compass/ YMS area. About three years ago she moved to crew management. "I really enjoy this work because of the personal contact that I have. You really get to know the families, names of the wives, number of children and so forth," stated Carol. Toni worked as a switchman/brakeman in Missoula for a period until suffering a knee injury. She was on the BN brakeman roster at start-up and her knowledge has proven very valuable in understanding the stress of operating employees. A new hire in April 1990, Craig Moody started as a clerk in the Compass/YMS area. He transferred to operating and went through the switchman training program but was furloughed. Fortunately, he was able to retain his clerical seniority and, after working again in Compass/YMS and the billing department, had an opportunity to move to calling where he now works the Missoula Zone. Craig, too, likes the job and feels it is a very challenging place to work because you "...have to get a job done in a certain amount of time." His stint as a switchman helps, too. He knows many of the people he is now calling to work. Says Craig, "Frustration comes from people not being available when they are called."

The Crew Management office functions because of the high caliber of help employed. Says Dave Swanson, "I can't say enough good about every single crew caller...they are conscientious and some of the best people I have ever worked with."

Look, Listen & Live



Engineer Certification

fter December 31, 1991, all railroad locomotive engineer. must be certified and have evidence of this fact in their possession while operating a locomotive under provisions of Title 49 Code of Federal Regulations Part 240. Promoted MRL engineers will be certified under provision of a grandfather clause as of that date and a wallet-size certificate will be issued by Training, Rules & Safety.

Under provisions of the new rule, engineers thereafter will require recertification at least every 36 months. Certification will include vision and hearing acuity testing, an examination on the rules, a required level of documented field supervision, classroom instruction and operations testing. In addition, certain background checks of motor vehicle records and railroad safety performance will be required.

Most important, the new law makes it illegal for employees who are not certified engineers, or certified student engineers, to operate a locomotive after December 31, 1991. It also imposes mandatory sanctions that require decertification of engineers who violate certain major rules and prescribe the duration of suspension on a sliding scale ranging from one month to five years.

March 9 is the date tentatively set for the start of the next engineer training class. Two and one half day recertification training classes will begin April 13 with six classes scheduled annually.

(continued, turn to Engineer on page 7)

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

Keeping Track Personnel Changes at Montana Rail Link

Effective October 14, G. Jay Lentzner promoted to assistant chief engineer replacing Charles D. Chambers, who resigned. Mr. Lentzner was formerly design and maintenance engineer at Missoula.

Gary M. Loeffler appointed assistant signal & communications supervisor with headquarters at Livingston, Montana, effective October 21. He replaces Terry Burdett who returned to a position of signal maintainer. Mr. Loeffler was formerly a signal inspector at Livingston. The position covers the territory between Huntley and Helena.

Way Off Center

ssistant signal maintainer
Marvin McIntyre was on a
trouble call near Colby, Idaho,
on Thursday evening, October 17 and
observed a car on Train SM (SpokaneMissoula) throwing sparks and

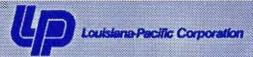
otified the train crew to stop. A car was found to be six feet off center (one of the trucks of car knocked off its center pin). McIntyre's observance undoubtedly averted a potentially disastrous derailment. •

Engineer (continued from page 6)

All locomotive engineers must complete an "engineer certification questionnaire form" and return it to the Training, Rules & Safety department.

Concerns for rail safety brought about the legislation enacting this new rule. FRA is establishing minimum qualifications for locomotive engineers. The rule requires railroads to have a formal process for evaluating prospective locomotive engineers and determine that they are competent before permitting them to operate a xomotive. •

Customer Profile:



ouisiana-Pacific is a major forest products firm with a leadership position in innovative, affordable wood products. Headquartered in Portland, Oregon, L-P is the leading redwood manufacturer and one of the largest lumber producers in the world. They are best known for innovation in panel products, starting with Waferwood in 1980 and more recently, developing Inner-Seal™ OSB (oriented strand board, a multi-use panel product that competes with plywood). L-P also manufactures pulp, hardboard, plywood, medium density fiberboard, particleboard, and windows and doors.

L-P was formed in 1973 as a spin-off from Georgia-Pacific. Today, it has stewardship over two million acres of timberland and operates 124 facilities in 24 states, 2 provinces in Canada and Mexico, employing 13,000 people. L-P places emphasis in these areas: developing innovative, affordable products, striving to be the most efficient manufacturer around, building a superior workforce, providing outstanding customer service and maintaining the financial strength to take advantage of opportunities.

Montana Rail Link serves L-P's particleboard plant at Missoula. Originally built in 1970 by Evans Products, L-P acquired it in 1976. The approximately nine acres of buildings occupy a 140 acre site on the west side of the city. A second line, added in 1987, raised the annual production to

155 million square feet on 3/4" basis. Two-thirds of the production moves by rail in box cars and on bulk head flat cars to markets in the Midwest and inter-mountain West. The plant employs about 200 people including 19 salaried. Charlie Likes serves as plant manager, George Washington, plant sales manager, and Ben Carson, as shipping supervisor.

Particleboard has many applications including furniture manufacturing, cabinets and building construction. It is produced by compressing milled wood shavings, a by-product of area sawmills, with resins and wax. The shavings are milled (ground to a fine consistency) and blended, depending on species of wood. Manufacturing is a three layer process. Fine material is used for the exposed surfaces and a coarse mixture for a center core. At the forming station, wood fibers are mixed with resins and wax, fed into the press and cooked, i.e. heat and pressure bonding them together to form a sheet. The particleboard sheets emerge from the press and are cut to size and packaged for shipment. Recycling is important to the efficiency of the plant, too. Product trimmed off at the forming station and remnants of the finish board cut in the final sizing process is ground up and reprocessed. •

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

No job is so important nor any service so urgent that we cannot take time to perform our work safely.

Make working safely your personal responsibility!





FIRST CLASS



Left: MRL hosted the Fall board meeting of the Regional Railroads of America by running a special train from Spokane to Missoula on September 20 with 40 guests on board. Train consist: business cars 'Montana', owned by Missoula businessman Robert Clegg; Burlington Northern's 'Como' and 'Meramec River'; and MRL's 'Silver Cloud'. Tom Hymes and B. C. Reeves were the engine crew. MRL's one-of-a-kind GP19-1 No. 151 powered the special. The locomotive was rebuilt with many new components and features from a GP9 by Livingston Rebuilt Center using a design and engineering techniques developed by Dan Smith, MRL mechanical department. MRL locomotive engineer Alan Burns photographed the train west of Noxon. Montana.

Below: Concerns about grade crossing safety led Conoco Inc. (begin a program to place reflective safety striping on their fleet of tank cars. Developed by 3-M with Conoco, the striping or tape, makes the cars highly visible at grade crossings. MRL is cooperating with the safety program by applying the tape to the 250 cars assigned to the firm's Billings refinery. Pictured here at Billings on August 28, the date the first cars received the stripes are, left to right, Roy Blohm, Paul Elsenpeter, Jr., MRL carmen (holding a piece of the tape); Tom Coston, MRL marketing manager; John Bennitt, Conoco director of public relations; Jack Flannery, Conoco Billings Refinery safety director; and Paul Adams, MRL manager training, rules & safety.

Above: Theress Morrison, president of the University of Montana Rodeo Club, and an MRL car hire technician, is presented a check for \$5,000 from the Dennis R. Washington Foundation by Dom Parkinson, president of the Washington Corporations. Walter Barry, left, is club vice president. The money will be used for scholarships for those competing in the college rodeo circuit. The club's purpose is to foster and train people to be rodeo competitors. To qualify for membership, one must be a full-time student carrying a minimum of 12 credits.

