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## Looking Ahead

DATES TO REMEMBER

**February 2**

General Staff Meeting  
Montana Club in Helena

**May 16-22**

National Transportation Week

**May 19**

National Operation Lifesaver  
Awareness Day

**May 31**

Memorial Day Holiday

**June 19**

6th Annual G. G. Widle  
Missoula Area Golf Outing

**August 27**

6th Annual Laurel/Billings Area  
Golf Outing

## Newsbriefs

■ **More power to us:** In a non-cash transaction with the Helm Financial Corporation, we swapped eight non-working ex-CNW SD40s for four ex-ATSF SD45-2s. The 3,600 horsepower units, built in 1974, arrived in Laurel on December 28 and were put in service immediately. "The power goes a long way toward getting our locomotive fleet where it needs to be," said **Mel Dinius**, chief mechanical officer.

■ **Success the United Way:** Missoula-area employees increased their contributions to the annual United Way Campaign by nearly 35% over last year. Donations totaled \$3,100. The Missoula United Way Campaign for 1992 concluded in November ahead of the goal. Carman **Carter Meyer** headed the drive covering MRL employees in the area.

■ **Opportunity knocking:** Interested in a challenge and chance to make a difference? Montana Operation Lifesaver needs a few good people to be volunteer program presenters. A training seminar is scheduled for March 9 in Helena. If interested, please contact **Carter Meyer** in Missoula at 523-1532 or at home, 549-1052; **Maggie Larson** in Helena at 442-2262, **Dennis Knoll** in Livingston at 222-3920 or **Bob Fox** in Laurel 633-2750. Fox is MRL's coordinator for this important rail safety program.

(turn to Newsbriefs on page 3)



MRL 21001, the first of 250 former Railbox 70-ton cars rebuilt by Livingston Rebuild Center in Livingston, ready for final inspection on December 2. Pictured here, left to right: **Mel Dinius**, MRL chief mechanical officer, **Dan Sokolowski**, MRL project manager mechanical, **Bruce Nelson**, LRC car shop manager, and Jerry "Pete" Denton, LRC car shop lead man.

## Letters

Dear Editor:

In today's business world, it is not uncommon to give credit to sales and marketing people for a company's success at both acquiring and maintaining business. That may be an easy mistake to make in the railroad industry, because sales and marketing people are often charged with that task, and work directly with customers who influence transportation decisions. However, a closer look would reveal that those individuals who interface with the customer on a day to day basis play a more significant role with regard to customer satisfaction and the long term health of our industry. Yard clerks **Linda Thomson** and **Lorna Pettigrew**, and locomotive engineers **Terry Bankston** and **Larry Kays** demonstrated this in a meeting at the Laurel Yard Office last month.

The meeting in Laurel was called between the operating and marketing departments to trouble-shoot some temporary service problems our

customers were encountering in the Billings area. Lorna, Terry, Linda and Larry provided a better understanding of the problems and at the same time offered solutions to those problems. Montana Rail Link is fortunate to have quality people like these individuals. Those people who take personal interest in the results of their work, and are concerned about quality and customer satisfaction, do more to promote our livelihood than a whole army of sales people.

As a participant in the meeting, I was reminded that our operating people face complex challenges as they carry out their day to day activities. Their ability to communicate and their physical handling of our business has a tremendous impact on how our customers view Montana Rail Link and the railroad industry. Finally, I was reminded that organizations like ours need to encourage input from their people. Their thoughts and ideas make it a lot easier to achieve greater levels of quality and customer satisfaction.

*Tom Coston*  
Marketing Manager

## A message from Bill Brodsky

The future of Montana Rail Link is tied to the success or failure of our customers. If customers grow and multiply, then the businesses serving them will also grow. If customers fail or move away, then the businesses serving them will suffer the same fate.

These ideas seem obvious, but in our industry they are often forgotten. It is easy for railroaders to become so focused on running trains that we forget that trains run, only to serve customers.

Helping customers to grow and prosper is not new thinking. As early as the 1880s, railroad pioneer James J. Hill, president of the St. Paul, Minneapolis & Manitoba Railway, is reported to have begun a talk, "In line with our company's philosophy to help our customers grow and prosper..." That philosophy of customer focus was a key in growth of Hill's small railroad into the mighty Great Northern, a predecessor of the Burlington Northern.

In some ways little has changed since those days. Our future is tied to that of our customers today as much as ever before. The factors we can control that allow our customers to grow and prosper are the same factors that will allow MRL to reach its full potential.

(turn to Message, on page 3)

## Help...

*the American Red Cross Blood Center in Missoula needs donors call 543-6695 or stop in at 1431 South Higgins*

## Announcing



CASH  
PRIZES

EMPLOYEE PHOTO CONTEST  
**Montana RAIL LINK**  
1993

Watch your payroll check and the bulletin boards for the official rules and entry blanks. *Good luck and happy photographing!*

**Deadline for entries:**  
**August 1, 1993**

## 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



PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER

Montana Rail Link News is published by Montana Rail Link, Inc., issued bi-monthly, and mailed First Class at Missoula, Montana, to all active and retired employees.

Readers are invited to submit news items and comments.

**R. Milton Clark, Editor**

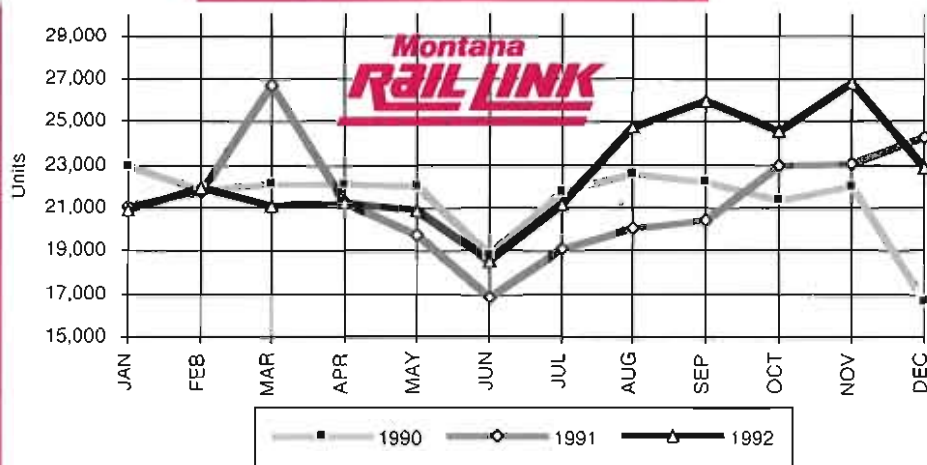
**Mary Semmens, Associate Editor**

Member  
Association of  
Railway Communicators



No. 24 • January/February 1993  
January 22, 1993

### REVENUE UNITS (CARLOADS) HANDLED



A great year: revenue units for the year ending December 31, 1992, totaled 271,037, an increase of 13,562 or 5.3% compared to 1991. Bridge traffic accounted for 184,803 units, an increase of 5,627 or 3.1%. Traffic which MRL originates or terminates posted a gain of 5,390 units or 8.2% for the year.

### Newsbriefs (continued from page 1)

■ **Ouch!** Medical costs in 1992 for Montana Rail Link jumped 20% over the previous year, reports Toni Barrett, Washington Corporations benefit coordinator.

■ **And on the business front:** Cascade Timber Co. will begin shipping wood chips from its new facility in Laurel by mid-February to markets in the Pacific Northwest. Jerry Parmenter and Phil Johnson of Cascade Timber have leased property for log storage and chipping, and a building for office space from MRL. The firm has been shipping saw logs to markets in Western Montana since mid-1992.

■ **Black gold:** Coal shipments from the Bull Mountains north of Billings are expected to begin during the second half of 1993. Developer, Denver-based Meridian Minerals Co., has been granted a permit by the State of Montana to proceed with development. Meridian has a preliminary agreement for a joint venture with a consortium that includes Arch Minerals and Japanese companies Sumitomo and Mitsui Mining. When fully operational, the mine could produce up to 3 million tons annually. Plans call for the coal to be trucked some 40 miles from the mines to the rail loading site at Huntley, Montana.

■ **Rolling stock in review:** On December 4, MRL 21001 became the first of the rebuilt 50-foot, 100-ton box cars to emerge from Livingston Rebuild Center. The cars, 250 in all, are former 70-ton Railbox cars. Vital signs: Plate "C" dimensions (measurements: 10 feet 11 inches inside height; 9 feet 6 inches inside width; 50 feet 6 inches inside length); 191,000 pounds capacity, 5250 cubic feet, 10 foot sliding doors, cushion underframes. The cars will be rebuilt at a rate of 30 cars per month when full production is attained.

■ The first of 100 new 50-foot, 100-ton, high cube box cars is scheduled to roll off the line at the Gunderson plant in Portland, Oregon, on January 18. The

(turn to Newsbriefs on page 4)

### Message (continued from page 2)

Each of us must strive to make 1993 a year in which our customers find it easier to do business with our company. The process will start with better communication, both electronic and verbal. Let's make sure the customer also understands that we are a people business committed to providing the personal attention that each and every customer deserves.

This year should be one in which our customers find us to be a safe, efficient provider of transportation services. Freight claims associated with lading damage and accident costs should be significantly reduced as we focus on the quality of the service we provide.

Nineteen ninety-three should be a year in which our customers experience the benefits of using a high quality equipment fleet. MRL committed over \$20 million to equipment in 1992. Quality equipment not only meets customers' expectations for loading but also ensures them that their shipments will move to destination without breakdown.

Nineteen ninety-three should be a year in which our customers experience a more disciplined level of service where car movement is properly scheduled from spotting for loading to destination. We must carry out the car movement plan consistently to accommodate better planning on the part of both the customer and MRL.

I hope each of you will reflect at the start of each day on how you personally and MRL as a company can help our customers grow and prosper.

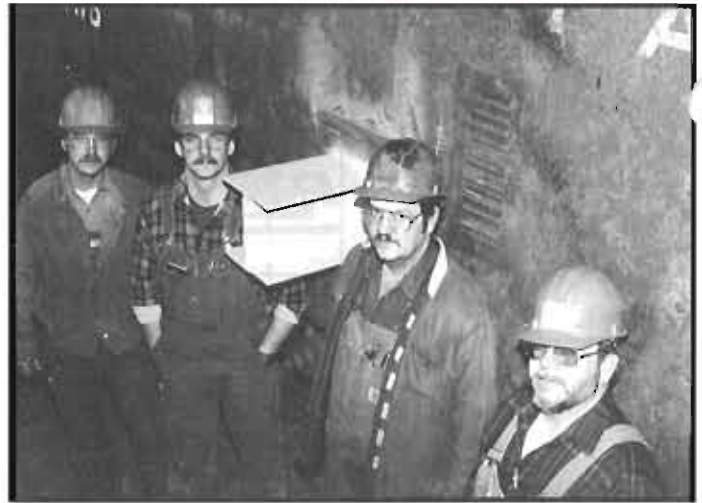
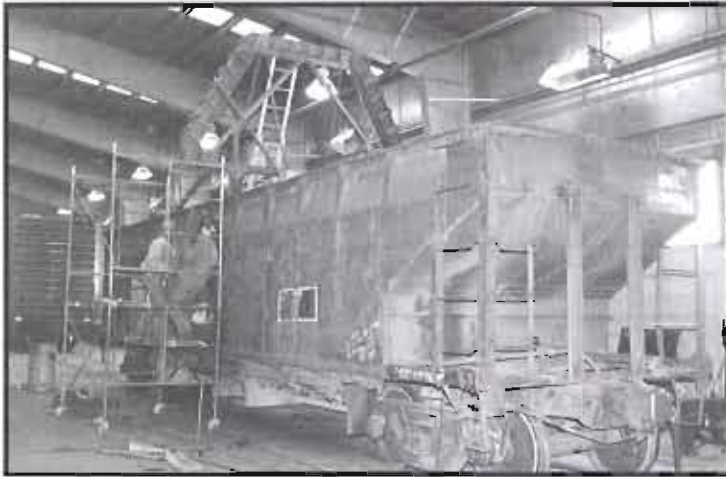
Things like ease of doing business, safety, quality equipment and quality service will help. They are keys to our success and represent a formidable challenge as we pursue excellence in 1993. ●

*William H. Budek*



## Iceman goeth...

craftsmen at Missoula Shops use ingenuity to solve problem



*Creating a steel monster: Carmen put the finishing touches on our home-built ice breaker car at the Missoula Car Shop on December 11. It is being used to clear ice from Mullan Tunnel. Using a surplus ballast car, Andy Kulawinski, B&B carpenter, Kevin Denman and John Peterson, carmen, and Dale Bennett, assistant B&B supervisor (pictured here l to r) designed and assembled the device.*

## No. 652

*No. 652, designated as an SD19-1, joined the motive power fleet on January 25. Rebuilt from SD9 603, the unit features micro-processor controls and develops 1850 horsepower. The Operation Lifesaver safety program gets a boost, too: note the special paint scheme.*



## Newsbriefs (continued from page 3)

cars are "Plate F" and equipped with cushion under frames, 16-foot double plug doors and have a capacity of 190,000 pounds. They will carry the number series 11,000 through 11,099.

■ **Up in the air:** The Washington Corporations aviation department has been named "Flight Department of the Year 1992" by Professional Pilot magazine, a monthly journal for aviation professionals. Thomas R. Philips is chief pilot and oversees the operation and maintenance of the fleet of aircraft that includes a Gulfstream II, III and IV, a Westwind 2, a Citation 1, a Bell 206 helicopter and a de Havilland Beaver.

■ **Have a nice trip?** Montana Rail Link celebrated its 5th anniversary on October 31 with open houses at Laurel, Livingston, Helena and Missoula. Drawings for cruises on the Mexican Riviera were held at major locations. The winners: **Patrick Lane**, locomotive engineer in Missoula, **Rick Fitterer**, locomotive engineer at Livingston, **Joe Lewis**, locomotive engineer at Laurel and **Bob Davis**, section laborer in Helena.

(turn to Newsbriefs on page 7)

**AVOID DAMAGE**  
switch customers' cars carefully  
**It's the safe way!**



# FEEDBACK

## *problem solving through group effort*

The second annual Attitude Survey and Feedback Sessions are complete. The program is designed to learn what each employee feels are strong and weak points about the company, and to develop ways of correcting any problems. Most importantly, the feedback sessions are conducted by employee work-groups (maintenance of way, mechanical, etc.). Problems are discussed and solutions recommended in a group setting. The process is ongoing. Here are a few of the problems presented and resolved since the last issue of the Newsletter:

- The Customer Service clerical personnel now have the opportunity for additional training. Each may select to ride with locals or switch crews to gain a better understanding of operations and/or attend training seminars twice per year. Recently, several attended a National Seminars program on telephone use.
- The Missoula assistant trainmaster's office received an upgrading with the installation of new flooring, furniture and a new IBM 4230 printer.
- The Crew Management office received a general sprucing-up. The work included a new floor and work stations, custom-designed with input from the callers, which feature computer installations with automatic telephone dialing.
- At Laurel, new heaters have been installed in the assistant trainmaster's office of the Yard Office tower.
- Hy-rail attachments were added to both Helena signal maintainers' trucks, which will make it easier to cover the new territory on the Third Subdivision between Helena and Garrison.
- The Helena and Belgrade signal maintainers' territories have been adjusted to reflect the changes brought about with the acquisition of the "GAP" (see Newsletter No. 23).
- The Missoula roundhouse now has a new, heated storage facility adjacent to the locomotive inspection tracks. An unused tool house from Hamilton was relocated and refurbished. ●

Center for Values Research, a Dallas, Texas-based consulting firm, developed the Attitude Survey and provided assistance with training, implementation and evaluation of the results. The aim of the program is to make our company a better place to work. This survey is used by all Washington Companies.

*Christmas  
at  
MRL*



◀ Santa, alias Missoula locomotive engineer Duane Parker, greets children on the Santa Express Train in Missoula on December 5. ▲ A crowd awaits the arrival of Santa at Paradise on a special train on December 19. Assistant roadmaster Don Boltz has coordinated this event for several years.

## **NCA begins operations**

On December 23, 1992, at 7:38 PM local time, and under the watchful eye of Peter Terrell, NCA's chief operating officer, train 211, a passenger, departed Zarate, Argentina, on time, northbound for Tucuman 675 miles and 18 hours away. This event signaled the start of operations for Argentina's newest privately controlled railroad, Nuevo Central Argentino (NCA). Rosario, Argentina, is headquarters for the new 2,700 mile railroad. Formerly the Mitre Line, it operates eight daily freight trains and six government-owned passenger trains. After the first month, train movements are expected to increase.

In preparation for start up, 262 operating employees, including locomotive engineers, dispatchers, switchmen and supervisors, were trained on the new operating procedures including track warrant control. William R. Otter of Anacostia & Pacific Co., Inc., and J. D. Wallace of Montana Rail Link, conducted the 13-week training program completed on December 4. Under the new operating practices, trains will have two-man crews, continuous air brakes, telemetry devices and will use track warrant control as main track authority outside yard limits. NCA will operate with about 1,000 employees compared to 8,000 under government control. It is a wide gauge (5 feet) railroad and freight cars have a capacity of 50 tons (in contrast to 100 tons in the US). NCA has 89 locomotives and about 3,000 freight cars. The locomotives cannot be operated in multiple, and, because of the European-style draft gear and hook and link coupling system used, the amount of tonnage that can be pulled is limited. Agricultural commodities including grain, edible oils and sugar form the bulk of the freight traffic.

We wish the folks at NCA all the best for a prosperous new year. ●



## The B&B Department: building bridges and much more

**T**heir accomplishments include rebuilding Bridge 208 near Quinns, reconstructing Bridge 26 near Thompson Falls after a disastrous derailment in 1990, installing a new track scale,

pans at Helena, Livingston and Laurel. **Dave Cook**, B&B supervisor, heads the 19 person department with **Dale Bennett** as assistant supervisor. Three mobile crews and two stationary crews (at Laurel and Missoula) cover



*The Helena locomotive inspection pit project was nearing completion when B&B Gang 101805 was photographed on December 2. Left to right: Marty Pluth, carpenter, Bill Madson, foreman, Bob Eder, carpenter, John Redman, foreman, and Bob Billyeu, truck driver. Work included reopening and rebuilding an existing inspection pit, increasing the clearance and new drainage.*

locomotive washing facility and sand tower at Livingston, new fuel storage tank at Missoula. Who's responsible? Why, it's our Bridge & Building Department (B&B).

This unit of the engineering department has completed many projects in the past five years that contribute greatly to the smooth operation of the railroad. B&B bears responsibility for the maintenance of 337 structures, more than 2,500 culverts, 11 tunnels, four turntables and five track scales. Carpentry, concrete repair and construction, welding and steel fabrication are just some of the skills needed to work in this department.

The B&B department is extensively involved in environmental projects, too, including assisting with the clean up of any oil or fuel spills. They also have installed the track

the railroad. The B&B capital budget ranges from \$0.5 to \$1 million annually depending on the scheduled projects, and \$800,000 for maintenance (wages, equipment, supplies).

B&B keeps busy year round. A mobile crew just completed installing new ties on Bridge 4.1 over the Madison River on the Fifth Subdivision. In December, work on the Helena locomotive inspection pit was completed. Another crew drove piling for slope stabilization at Red Hill near St. Regis on the Fourth Subdivision.

From large capital improvement projects to repair of loading platforms to painting depots, the diverse skills of Bridge & Building are key elements in keeping the railroad running. ●

Personnel Changes • Retirements

## Keeping Track

**Daniel T. Smith** to project manager - locomotives, a new position, from mechanical foreman, effective September 1. Based in Arvada, Colorado, a suburb of Denver, he will focus on marketing locomotives, components, and electrical and mechanical modifications. Mr. Smith completed a multi-country tour of South America December 21 calling on representatives of railroads in Chile, Argentina, Panama and Honduras.

**Monica A. Mayo** to manager train movement at Missoula from clerk at Helena on December 5.

**Richard J. Stoeckly** to assistant superintendent with headquarters at Laurel from director operations planning effective December 2.



*Section foreman Ken Loessberg received the well wishes of his coworkers at a cake and coffee gathering held in his honor at the Trident depot on December 2. See Retirements on page 7 for more information. Mark Simonson photo.*



Locomotive engineer **Bob Saxbury** with assistant superintendent **George Harper**, left, and superintendent **John Grewell**, right, at his retirement gathering at the Billings Yard Office on November 13. Saxbury is holding a model railroad display symbolizing his career with the NP, BN and MRL. Saxbury has two sons in the railroad business; Gary, a locomotive engineer with the BN at Glasgow, Montana, and John, a manager train movement with MRL in Missoula.

### Retirements...

**Kenneth E. Loessberg**, section foreman at Trident, Montana, on October 30, with 35 years of service. Mr. Loessberg began his railroad career as a section laborer with the Northern Pacific Railway at Manhattan, Montana.

**George W. Harper**, assistant superintendent at Laurel, on December 31. Mr. Harper's railroad career spans 50 years beginning as a car repair helper with the Northern Pacific Railway in Laurel. He served in several capacities including yard clerk, terminal office manager, and general yardmaster at Duluth, Minnesota. In 1970, he returned to Montana as trainmaster at Billings and later as terminal manager Laurel. He took an early retirement from the Burlington Northern in 1982 and came to work for Montana Rail Link on November 1, 1987.

**Robert J. Saxbury**, locomotive engineer at Billings, on January 3, with 39 years of service. Mr. Saxbury started his railroad career with the Northern Pacific Railway as a fireman in Livingston.

Our best wishes for a happy retirement! ●

### Customer Profile:

## The Montana Talc Company

No. 19 in a series of articles designed to acquaint us with our customers

**Y**ou won't find Sappington on the Montana highway map, but it's an important spot none-the-less. It is the home of The Montana Talc Co., one of three major talc producing firms located in the state. As with neighbor Luzenac America (see Newsletter No. 23), Montana Talc likewise mines this valuable mineral in the Gravely Range of mountains in southern Madison County.

The talc, 95% pure before processing, is trucked some 50 miles to the processing plant at Sappington where it is sorted and ground to varying degrees of fineness depending on the customer. The paper making industry is Montana Talc's primary user. Marketed under the trade name of Nicron 100™, the talc is particularly suited for use in improving paper quality by controlling pitch. The finished product is packaged in 50 pound bags, semi-bulk in one-ton super sacks or bulk. Much is shipped by rail to destinations throughout North America and overseas.

Founded in 1984, Montana Talc Co. is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Costain Holding Co. of Chicago. The processing plant was placed in operation in June 1986. The firm produces 90,000 tons annually and employs 90 with an annual payroll of \$3 million. Montana Talc has a multi-million dollar investment in its state-of-the-art mining and milling facility in southwestern Montana. With excellent reserves and one of the purest talc ore bodies in the world, Montana Talc is well positioned to move into the 21st century. Riley Malone, transportation and northwest sales manager, is liaison with the railroad.

Where's Sappington? It's a railroad station on MRL's 5th Subdivision thirteen miles west of Three Forks, where US highway 287 crosses the Jefferson River. The location was named after Henry Hiter Sappington, a pioneer from Sappington, Missouri. His farm was known as Sappington Ranch and when the Northern Pacific Railway built a siding there, the name was adopted. ●

### Newsbriefs (continued from page 5)

■ **Crew change:** Women for MRL, a Laurel-based employee support group, announced recently that **Deb Spathe**, wife of **Leon Spathe**, a switchman at Laurel, was elected president, and **Marilee Thomas**, wife of **Greg Thomas**, a carman at Laurel as vice president. **Cindy Burkhart**, wife of engineer **Fred Burkhart**, continues as secretary-treasurer for 1993. Make a note of these dates: the 4th annual bake sale is slated for February 13 at Jan's IGA in Laurel from 9 to 1, and the annual Christmas party center piece design contest will be held on April 15. Marilee Thomas' design won the contest for 1992. Women for MRL meets on the 3rd Thursday of each month at 9:30 AM at the Locomotive Inn in Laurel.

■ **Get into training:** Don't let problems with your PC frustrate you any longer! Register for a fun and informative training class on coping with computers now. Classes on Wordperfect™, Excel™, Lotus 1-2-3™, Windows™ and much more are being offered. There's even training material available for those who cannot attend the seminars which will be held in Missoula. Contact **Lynda Frost** at 523-1417 for additional information. ●

## FIRST CLASS



▲ Ladies' night at the Operations Control Center in Missoula and perhaps a first for US railroading: responsibilities for train dispatching on second shift (3:30 to 11:30 PM) on December 11 fell to, l to r, **Helen Tauscher** (handling the east end), **Monica Mayo** (handling the west end), and **Dixie Hart**, assistant director of train movement. Mayo joined the ranks December 5 after completing a six month training course that included six weeks at the Burlington Northern dispatcher's school in Kansas City.

▼ **Crushing business:** Lewis Gundlach, manager regional sales for the Burlington Northern in Billings put together the deal and we supplied one of our 85-foot log flats. The result: a new movement of crushed autos. Sheppard Trucking Inc. of Sheridan, Wyoming, began making shipments to Intermountain Steel in Salt Lake City, Utah, over BN, MRL, MWR and UP railroads. The log flats can carry a good payload. This shipment, which originated at Sage Creek Spur, Wyoming, weighed in with a net of 146,500 pounds.



▲ With an estimated 250 persons attending, full house was the best way to describe the MRL anniversary and open house held in Laurel October 31. Employees await the results of the drawing for a trip (see Newsbriefs). An estimated 250 persons attended festivities at Missoula. About 200 were on hand in Helena and 80 at Livingston.

► **Jerry Minch**, carman, points out MRL diesels at the Laurel open house. His son and daughter, Ryahn and Lisa are also watching as mom, Patty Joe, brings up the rear. **Jerry Riesinger**, mechanical department foreman supervises from the cab at right. Kyle Brehm photos.

