

Looking Ahead

DATES TO REMEMBER**October 7**

General Staff Meeting
Radisson Northern - Billings

October 11 thru 22

Biennial Employee Attitude Survey

October 31

Montana Rail Link
Sixth Anniversary

November 25

Thanksgiving Holiday

Employee Christmas Parties

Laurel - December 3

Livingston - December 4

Helena - December 10

Missoula - December 18

Newsbriefs

Safety is first! The Livingston Mechanical Department passed the 430 day mark without a reportable injury! A great effort when you consider this represents more than 105,000 man-hours worked by the 45-man staff. **John Wiesch**, general mechanical foreman, said, "Our equipment out of service ratio is one of the best in the industry and the employees have consistently shown that safety need not be sacrificed for production. The staff has made the commitment to work safely and it is reflected in our record."

Our business continues to grow! Sanders County, Montana, is known more for its timber resources and scenery than wheat, but that's where three cars originated recently. The Lawyer Nursery at Plains, Montana, a producer of shrubbery for markets throughout the U.S., uses wheat for a rotation crop and shipped it by rail this year. **Spokane Minerals Ltd.** began shipping limestone from Louisville (near Helena) to Taber, Alberta. This company is developing a deposit on Spokane Mount near here. Shipments of propane are on the increase due in part to **Cenex** establishing propane distribution facilities at

(turn to Newsbriefs on page 3)



Interstate Commerce Commission Chairman Gail McDonald was in Missoula on August 10 to address a meeting of the executive board of the Regional Railroads of America. She also visited Montana Rail Link and had an opportunity to gain some first hand knowledge about how one of America's largest regional railroads functions. Pictured here, Chairman McDonald discusses freight car issues with Lee Wind, car distributor, center, and Terry Jennings, car distributor trainee. President Clinton designated McDonald to serve as ICC chairman on February 5, 1993. She has served on the Commission since October 5, 1990 and was elected vice chairman for 1992.

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Montana Power Company
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Railroads meet challenge from floods

Despite massive Midwest flooding that has resulted in "one of the most devastating natural disasters to ever befall American transportation," railroads remained "open for business," said Edwin L. Harper, AAR president and CEO, at a press briefing on the impact of the flood on railroads.

Mr. Harper hailed the efforts of thousands of rail workers who have been laboring around the clock to repair flood-affected tracks, keep trains moving and customers satisfied. He noted that more than 25 percent of the nation's rail traffic either originates, terminates or passes through the flood-ravaged area. To keep customers satisfied, more than 1,000 trains have been rerouted over tracks of at least one other railroad since the flooding began, according to the nation's chief rail spokesman. And, he explained, the National Industrial Transportation League, the nation's largest shipper organization, has not received a single member complaint regarding railroad service through the flood-ravaged area.

"What is important is that freight is moving. And I do not expect to see any increase in the price of a can of tuna, a loaf of bread or a kilowatt of energy as a result of costs incurred by railroad to keep freight operating," said Harper. Putting an exact dollar figure on the damage sustained by railroads because of the flood is difficult, Mr. Harper said, "but I would not be surprised to see the bill – for physical

damage only – total somewhere between \$100 million and \$200 million." He noted that flood-related costs incurred by railroads do not include the cost of detouring trains and lost business.

More than 500 miles of track has been under water at some time during the flood, Mr. Harper stated. Although fewer than 100 miles have been washed away, he said, additional washouts and damage to track and roadbed may occur if the water recedes quickly.

Removing debris, cleaning fouled ballast and restabilizing track subgrade can cost \$100,000 per mile, according to Harper. Installation of new track in flat terrain under dry conditions costs \$1 million per mile, excluding bridges. He cited a Santa Fe Railway figure of \$2 million to replace a washed-away bridge at Marceline, Missouri.

"But, like the courageous residents of the flood-ravaged Midwest, we are neither resting nor conceding defeat," Mr. Harper said. "We're proving the inestimable value of an interconnected national rail network by which we are moving freight by every track and route possible."

"It is quite apparent during this severe natural disaster that more than a decade of economic deregulation has braced and fortified the railroad industry to permit it to weather the storm," Mr. Harper concluded. ●

From Association of American Railroads
Rail News Update, No. 2629, August 9, 1993.

Although Montana Rail Link was not directly affected by the flooding in the Midwest, our main connection, the Burlington Northern Railroad, was. Through trains handled by MRL for the BN have run off schedule or not at all. MRL and our customers have felt the effects of increased transit times due to the detouring of trains around the flooded areas that delayed the return of empty equipment for loading, especially box cars for lumber and paper. Some business has been lost or shifted to trucks. **Rick Zimmer**, manager of car distribution, said. "We had less cars to choose from and at times shippers accepted cars that did not necessarily meet their standards. In order to keep the flow of cars moving, the normal car cleaning process was bypassed in some cases," continued Zimmer. ●

Announcing

THE WINNERS

EMPLOYEE PHOTO CONTEST
1993

Eleven people entered 52 items for judging in the contest. **Mark Simonson**, field engineer at Missoula, **Jack Dorsey**, locomotive engineer at Laurel and **Jay Lentzner**, assistant chief engineer at Missoula, all received \$50 awards. **Alan Burns**, a locomotive engineer at Missoula, received the Grand Prize for his shot of a grain train at Rivulet, Montana, plus two \$50 awards.

Thanks to all who entered!

Judges for this contest were: Kyle Brehm, a professional photographer based in Billings, Noreen Rebich, also a professional photographer in Missoula, and **Lynda Frost**, administrative assistant to the president.



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Readers are invited to submit news items and comments.

R. Milton Clark, Editor

Mary Semmens, Associate Editor

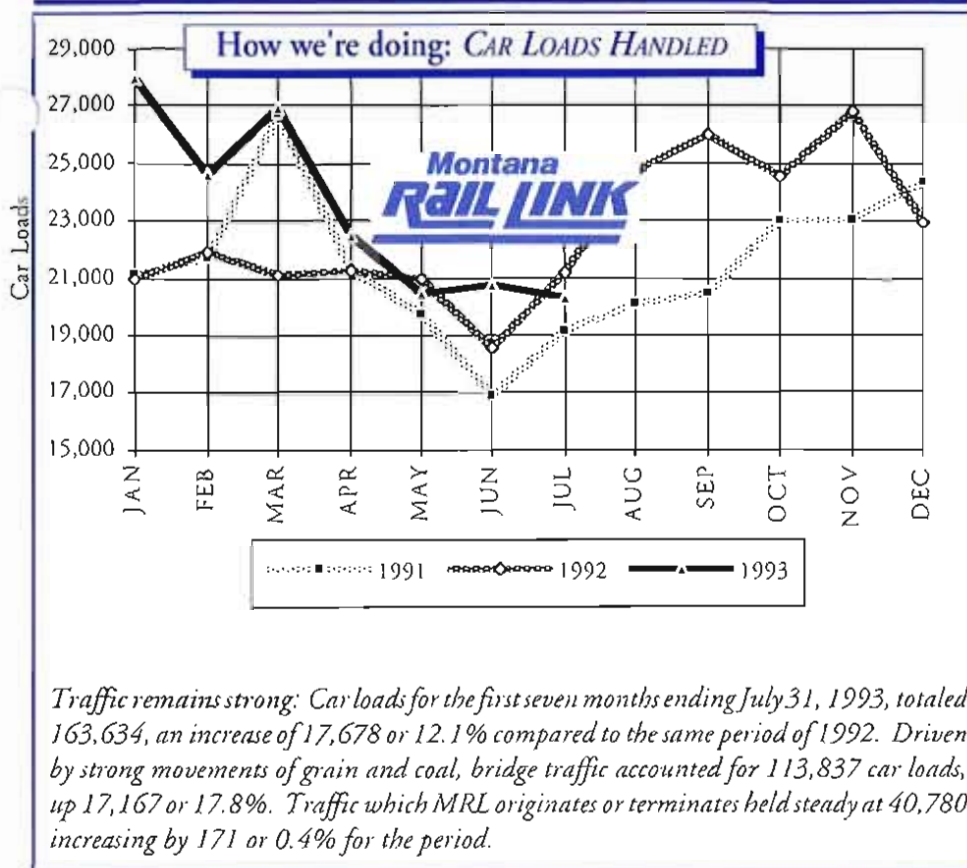
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Newsbriefs (continued from page 1)

Ronan, Missoula and Victor, Montana. ■ **Petrosol**, based in Spokane, also has a new storage tank at Woodlin near Thompson Falls. ■ This winter ethanol instead of MTBE will be used as the oxygenator and blended into gasoline distributed in the Missoula area. It will move to Missoula by rail from points in the Midwest. ■ **Fox Lumber Inc.** recently purchased the former Boise-Cascade modular home facility at Laurel and has established a lumber reload center.

■ **Tee time, tie time, rail to the links!** Great weather and 205 participants contributed to the success of the Sixth Annual Missoula Golf Outing held at Polson on June 19. One-hundred fifty people played at the Laurel Golf Outing on August 27.

■ **Excellent choices!** Helen Miller, Montana Rail Link corporate secretary, received the Missoula YWCA's Salute to Excellence Silver Award for Corporate Business and Marj Sawyer, materials manager at Missoula Car Shop, received a Recognition Award for dedication to professionalism and excellence on behalf of Washington Corporations and Montana Rail Link at the annual banquet held in Missoula on May 27.

■ **MRL'er kicks open Russian door!** Missoula customer service representative Ron Cowan placed first in a field of more than 300 participants representing nine countries at the International Martial Arts tournament held in St. Petersburg, Russia, on June 22-24. Cowan, 26, has practiced Kenpo Karate, since 1986. Congratulations, Ron! ●

Montana Operation Lifesaver and Literacy Volunteers of America-Billings, Inc., scored a "home run" at a Billings Mustangs baseball game on August 27! Their "hit" came in the form of a joint effort to benefit both organizations and the public as well. Fans were admitted to the game in exchange for books



OL-LVA booth at Billings Mustangs game, August 27.

and OL volunteers distributed literature on railroads and highway crossing safety. LVA-Billings received about 300 children's books. About 50% of the people in the U.S. can't read well and LVA promotes programs and donates books to help children and their families do more reading. Thanks to Tom Ricci and Robert Fox for organizing this event.

(turn to Lifesaver on page 6)

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Mullan Tunnel receives major upgrade

Mullan Tunnel west of Helena on a 2.2% grade is where MRL reaches the summit of the Rocky Mountains. The west portal of this 3,849-foot bore is just a few feet from the Continental Divide at elevation 5,548 feet above sea level. Without a doubt, the tunnel and surrounding territory is the toughest in which we operate. In terms of impact on our operation, Mullan Tunnel is a major factor. The acquisition of the "GAP" (so named because the 51-mile segment between Helena and phosphate divided MRL into two parts) from the Burlington Northern in October 1992 brought with it several maintenance headaches.



The final track panel being placed on July 19. Photo by Dave Cook.

Last winter was a good example. Water seeped into the tunnel and the flow was retarded by lack of a drainage system and by dirty ballast fouled over the years with engine sand. During cold weather, ice buildup heaved the track and reduced clearances. From November through March, track and Bridge & Building employees battled the elements, at times around the clock, where temperatures can plummet to sub-zero

very quickly. It wasn't easy for the crews trying to get the trains over the road either. Break-in-twos in the tunnel, derailments, train braking problems and sliding wheels were all too common.

Work to correct these problems began in June. The project called for eight-hour work windows designed to keep train operations as near normal as possible.

Don Smith, director of train movement, coordinated the train operations with the Burlington Northern to produce the desired schedules.

Phase I called for the track through the tunnel to be panelized. The continuous welded rail was replaced with jointed rail in 39-foot lengths installed with joints opposite each other (square joints) to

create track panels. An average of six panels of track were then removed and replaced each day. Using speedswing loaders with buckets, workers removed the old ballast right down to rock floor of the tunnel. The new track panels made of new ties with Pandrol™ tie plates and fasteners were

then installed followed by new ballast. In Phase II, all three mobile Bridge & Building crews worked together to

install a new drainage system of flexible eight-inch pipe laid in trenches at each edge of the tunnel floor. Heat tapes line the drainage system and should keep the water flowing during freezing temperatures. At

locations where water seeps through the walls and ceiling, insulation with heat tape was installed to keep the temperature of the water above freezing so it will flow down to the floor drain pipes.

Finally, the welded rail was reinstalled, the track lined and surfaced, and the vertical and horizontal clearances checked.



Gang 1956, the self-named "Tunnel Rats:" back row (l to r) Gary Baltz, Lloyd Mickelson, John Thomas, Guy Neubauer, Allen Abromeit and Shane Brashear. Front row (l to r), Augie Cantu, Chuck Hendrickson, Justin Abromeit, Mike Pritchard and Dan Boyd. Photo by Dave Cook.



Welded rail being positioned for relaying at the west portal of the tunnel.

To address possible air quality problems for workers inside the tunnel, a giant fan at the east portal of the tunnel, unused since the late 1970s, was reactivated. Dave Perkins, electrician for Equipco and B&B forces converted the old 250 horsepower electric motor to work on 480 v. AC instead of original 2,300 v. AC. Rotating at 1,800 rpm, the motor drives a nine-foot diameter squirrel



Old track panel being removed.

cage fan at 350 rpm creating a 12-15 m.p.h. air flow through the tunnel. In addition, all diesel-powered machines working in the tunnel were equipped with air purifiers on the exhaust systems. The air was sampled regularly to ensure air quality was being maintained.

The work plan, developed by roadmaster **Augie Cantu**, B&B supervisor **Dave Cook** and chief engineer **Rich Keller**, required some fine tuning once the project got underway. The yard cleaner machine, which was to remove the ballast, quickly plugged up with the wet, muddy ballast. Speedswings with buckets replaced it. The floor of the tunnel was found to be uneven and in
(turn to Tunnel on page 6)

The Past in our Present

Livingston Depot Center

Livingston, Montana, was founded just over 100 years ago by the Northern Pacific Railroad. In 1902 the grand, Italianate-style passenger depot, designed by the Minneapolis architectural firm of Reed & Stem, was completed by the railroad in downtown Livingston. This three-building com-

In 1985 Burlington Northern offered the old, rundown depot to the City of Livingston. A group of concerned citizens saw a solution to the economic problems of the community in the old building. If the building could be restored and converted to serve as a museum, it could become an attraction for many of the tourists

who visit Yellowstone National Park each year and bring much needed dollars to the community.

This citizen's group formed the Livingston Depot Foundation. The City accepted the building from the railroad and rented it to the Foundation for \$1.00 per year. The Board of Trustees began



Livingston Depot Center

plex was testament to the importance the railroad placed on Livingston as the gateway to America's first National Park, Yellowstone, located just 50 miles to the south of the town.

The 1970s and 80s saw the town of Livingston impacted by several events that would have far-reaching implications for this community of 7,000. In 1979, Amtrak discontinued passenger service on the southern route through Montana. The Burlington Northern Railroad, successor to the Northern Pacific, continued to use the depot as office space on a limited basis, but it was receiving virtually no maintenance or upkeep. Second, the railroad closed the locomotive maintenance shop in 1986, the main source of employment in the town. The result of these decisions was the loss of over 1,000 jobs in a period of just a few years.

fund raising activities for renovation. To provide a major exhibition, a five-year contract was signed with the Buffalo Bill Historical Center in Cody, Wyoming. The building was converted to a museum facility with the installation of environmental, lighting, and security systems. The result is a state-of-the-art exhibition center housed in a restored, historic railroad station.

The restoration required \$800,000 and created a 4,000 square foot exhibition space capable of accommodating the most sensitive museum object as well as large shows not normally seen in a town of this size. Three-hundred thousand dollars was raised in Park County alone (pop. 12,000). Other funds came from the Economic Development Administration, the Community Development
(turn to Depot on page 7)

In Memorium

Michael Patrick Rebich

Montana Rail Link employees extend condolences to the family of Missoula switchman Michael Patrick Rebich, 38, who died May 8. Mr. Rebich started with MRL on December 3, 1987.

Need a new MRL cap? We have a selection of colors available for \$6 each.

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Lifesaver (continued from page 3)

Rob Mayes of Laurel, Gordon Hendrick of Superior, Denice Rodgers and Sabe Pfau of Missoula, Brian Wohlers of Helena, Martin Rau of Huson, Mick Livermore of Livingston and Cindy Moore of Florence all joined the OL presenter program and were qualified at a training session held in Helena on March 9.

Operation Lifesaver is a nationwide safety coalition dedicated to the goal of eliminating highway/railroad grade crossing collisions through the three "E's" of Engineering, Education and Enforcement. ●

Personnel Changes • Retirements

Keeping Track

Mark S. Smith to assistant trainmaster at Missoula Yard from switch foreman effective April 19.

Richard A. Shelley to manager environmental projects with headquarters at Livingston, a new position on May 24. Operation of the waste water treatment plant at Livingston is the primary responsibility for the job. Mr. Shelley also handles other special environmental projects including air quality monitoring, disposal of hazardous wastes, environmental reports and permits and derailment cleanups. He was director of waste water plant operations and a projects manager with Environment Management Resources, Inc. in Lincoln, Nebraska, and holds an associate degree in waste water quality technology and environmental sciences from Northern Montana University in Havre.

Ginger G. Mapston to purchasing agent from utility clerk on June 11 replacing Michael Matejovsky, who resigned.

Tunnel (continued from page 4)

a few places the standard Grade 5 tie had to be shaped to match the floor.

Gang 1956, six men plus machine operators from Missoula and Thompson Falls, led by foreman Allen Abromeit, quickly adapted to the difficult working conditions inside the tunnel and became very proficient. Gang 1955 worked outside the tunnel constructing track panels. Howard Wilkinsen, Bill Madsen and Jesse Sampson were the foremen in charge of the mobile B&B crews.

The estimated cost for the project is \$500,000 and should contribute greatly to a much smoother operation this winter. ●



▲ East end of Mullan Tunnel sans the track. Photo by Dave Cook. ▼ Rising to the occasion – 5,548 feet above sea level – some of the employees who worked on the Mullan Tunnel project at the Continental Divide. The crews worked safely, too, incurring only one reportable injury during the project.



MPC (continued from page 7)

Entech, Inc., operates non regulated business ventures with principal activities in coal mining and the development, production and marketing of oil and natural gas. Entech's Coal Division, which includes Western Energy, ranks among the largest U.S. coal producers. Assets of the Entech companies total \$423 million.

The Independent Power Group (IPG) markets electricity at wholesale, owns and operates non utility electric generation facilities and provides engineering and plant maintenance services to electric energy producers. Assets of the IPG total \$165 million. ●

Retirements...

Bill D. Ripley, Sr., a locomotive engineer at Laurel, Montana, on April 30. Mr. Ripley started his railroad career with the Northern Pacific in 1953.

Rick H. Parker, a locomotive engineer at Laurel, Montana, on August 31. Mr. Parker started with the Milwaukee Road in 1948 and joined MRL on November 17, 1987.

A. L. "Hap" Jennings, a locomotive engineer at Missoula, Montana, on September 2. Mr. Jennings started with the Milwaukee Road in 1948 and joined MRL on October 31, 1987.

Our best wishes for a happy retirement! ●

Depot (continued from page 5)

Block Grant program, the Burlington Northern Foundation and the M. J. Murdock Charitable Trust. On July 1, 1987, Depot Center opened its doors with the exhibition "Yellowstone Days." Over 1,000 people attended the festivities.

The principal idea for the renovation of the Livingston Depot Center called for the main terminal building to be used primarily as a space for visual, static exhibitions. However, the Depot Center has also emerged as the leader in the community for cultural and educational events of many kinds. Sources of earned income for the Foundation include concerts, plays and lectures, business meetings, conventions and various social events.

The Depot Center continues to contribute to the revitalization of the community through cultural tourism and is the cornerstone of cultural activities for the local residents. ●

Help...

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

Customer Profile:



No. 21 in a series of articles designed to acquaint us with our customers

Montana Power's electric utility and its Montana coal mining subsidiary, Western Energy Co., celebrated 25 years of coal-fired electric generation and coal mining on July 10 with ceremonies at Billings and Colstrip, Montana.

MPC's first coal-fired plant, the J. E. Corette Plant in Billings, started operations in the summer of 1968. This signaled the move from a hydro-based electric generating company to one that, in the future, would see a majority of its electric generation come from thermal plants. It also foreshadowed Montana Power's willingness to diversify away from its utility roots.

In the past 25 years the Corette Plant has produced more than 21 billion kilowatt hours of electricity and used more than 12 million tons of Montana coal. The plant has 27 employees. Montana Rail Link serves the facility, switching the 50-car unit trains of coal that arrive from Colstrip.

Montana Power acquired the Rosebud Mine and related coal properties in 1959, but did not begin to realize the potential for the coal until Western Energy reopened the mine in 1968 to supply the Corette Plant. The Rosebud Mine now produces better than 14 million tons annually – serving MPC's five owned and operated thermal plants (four of them at Colstrip) plus additional Midwest markets.

Western Energy, the largest coal mining company in Montana, has performed well in its 25 years of operation. It has mined almost 250 million tons of coal, successfully reclaimed more than 4,000 acres of land earning national recognition for that effort, paid more than \$300 million in coal severance taxes and more than \$60 million in state and local production taxes. Western Energy presently employs some 400 workers at full production, with an annual payroll of more than \$18 million.

The development of the Rosebud Mine happened largely through the efforts of two people: Paul A. Walsh (deceased), then assistant vice president, pricing, of the Northern Pacific Railway (a predecessor of the Burlington Northern), and W. Paul Schmechel (now retired chairman) of Montana Power. It is perhaps a textbook demonstration of how rail transportation pricing can create new markets and serve the public interest. Attractive freight rates made it feasible for Montana Power to enter this new field of fuel supplier for electric power generation.

The Montana Power Company is a diversified energy company with total assets of \$2.3 billion. The company is organized in three business units.

The Utility Division, operating electric and natural gas utility systems serving the western two-thirds of Montana, has assets of \$1.6 billion. The service territory is one of the nation's largest, covering 107,600 square miles in the western two-thirds of Montana – with a population of 705,000.

(turn to MPC on page 6)

FOR SAFETY'S SAKE – COMMUNICATE

when using radios, understand and be understood

FIRST CLASS



▲ Batter up – MRL's Missoula baseball team turned Co-Rec "C" this year and finished the season with a 6-6 record, placing third in the division. The team, pictured here, back row (left to right): Jeff Shell, Randy Jensen, Mark Eisenmann, Mike Dunwell, Craig Moody, Leo Block, Carter Meyer, and Duane Parker. Front row (left to right): Johnna Eisenmann, Jan Smith, Steph Boyer, Perry Smith, Sandy Block, T. J. Curtin, Julie Pierce and Cheri Parker. Not shown are Kevin Denman, Hilde Creek, Dan Curtin and Kathy Perryman. Congratulations!



▲ Sabe Pfau, left, chief of security, removes a transient from No. 91 while stopped in Missoula. Trespassers on railroad property and transients riding trains pose a threat to themselves and our employees. Our security personnel have removed nearly 500 people from trains or the property this year. Employees are reminded of the provisions of Safety Rule 35. With everyone's cooperation, we will be assured of a safer workplace.



▲ MRL is doing its part to control forest fires and our efforts were recognized by the Keep Montana Green Association. Pictured here, MRL chief engineer Richard Keller accepts a plaque presented by Bill Chandler, vice president, left, and Mike Kopitzke, executive director, of Keep Montana Green at a ceremony held at the general offices on August 16. A significant reduction in railroad fires along the Third Sub between Missoula and Helena has been achieved through maintenance, fire breaks and fast suppression action. Keep Montana Green is a non-profit fire prevention organization.

▼ Montana Department of Transportation director Marv Dye rides a MRL engine during the "Officer on a Train" program held in Helena on May 20. MRL provided the train which ran from Helena to Austin. Paul Eisenpeter, a carman from Laurel, and Burlington Northern conductor Bob Jacobson, coordinated the event that provided law enforcement officers, government officials and the media an opportunity to observe the threat and consequence of driver negligence at highway-railroad crossings. Turn to page 5 for more on Montana Operation Lifesaver. MDT photo.

