



An Interview with **Mike Lemm**

by Lynda Frost

Q: Things have changed for you professionally, what is your current position with MRL?

A: *My interim status is Executive in Training. With the pending retirement of our Vice President Operations in late 2005, this will provide me exposure to all operating departments.*

Q: What does a day in the life of Mike Lemm look like?

A: *My current assignment is with the Mechanical Department where I have been since January and will remain until mid-July. This is a true "hands on" training experience that allows me to better understand the intricacies of the department, as well as the railroad as a whole. And beyond the actual training, meeting employees from each location and department has been an exceptional experience. I'm really impressed by the strong focus on safety by our supervisors and employees – it's very encouraging to witness the commitment to our safety message. My next stop is the Engineering Department.*

Q: Tell me more about this experience of meeting our employees.

A: *I've always been extremely proud of this company, and even more so of its employees. This has proven to be an opportunity to witness an even wider scope of who we are – and it's gratifying to confirm that the typical MRL employee is hardworking, proud of his craft, and proud to say he works for MRL. I've seen this time and time again in the last five months.*

Q: How long have you been with Montana Rail Link?

A: *I began at startup as a trainmaster in Laurel and later made a lateral move to Helena, where I remained for six years. Upon my return to Laurel, I was promoted first to Terminal Manager and then to Superintendent Operations. I remained in that position until December 2003.*

Q: What value do you think this training process will offer our company?

A: *I liked the idea the moment it was suggested, but little did I understand the depth of this forward-thinking decision. I mentioned earlier that the assignment will offer me a better knowledge and understanding of all departments and how they function – truly a remarkable benefit for the operating future of MRL. But, I can't stress enough, the opportunity to work along side my fellow employees, learning from the best, and witnessing their knowledge and patience, is nothing less than startling. We've referenced MRL as the "Best of the Best" – I can testify, firsthand, that this is proving even more true with each day of my training experience.*

Safety Update

by Pete Lawrenson

Montana Rail Link's injury rate average over the past five years has been about 2.75 for every 200,000 man hours worked. While that rate might be acceptable to many companies, for MRL – it means too many employees are being injured and that is unacceptable.

We had a good 2004 first quarter, achieved the goal of seven or fewer accountable or reportable injuries and we all received a terrific incentive bonus. But we have exceeded our goal of six or fewer for the second quarter of 2004, so we need to get back on track!

Since January 1st, there have been several streaks of injury-free days – then a rough time occurs and injuries are sustained. We routinely prove to ourselves we can work safely, but we have yet to achieve total consistency.

Starting later this month, your safety teams will again be emphasizing the six major causes of injury relating to a worker's state of mind distractions. Those distractions are PREOCCUPATION, FRUSTRATION, RUSHING, SHORTCUTS, COMPLACENCY, and FATIGUE. Even though injuries happen to an individual, safety is a team effort. As part of that team, what are your ideas to improve safety?

Evacuate! ➤

A comprehensive building evacuation policy and procedure are in final development for the Missoula General Office Building and TRS Center. A test evacuation exercise took place last week. Emergency evacuation exit plans are now posted throughout the GOB. These plans identify primary and secondary evacuation routes, locations of fire extinguishers, first aid kits, and emergency eye wash stations.

Evacuation procedures for other MRL facilities with working staffs are being developed and when finalized, will be posted. People working in those areas will be briefed on the plans, routes and procedures accordingly.

Thanks for your attention to this vital component of safety.

Promotions

Russ Brownlee - now **Electrician Apprentice** at Laurel from Laborer effective May 17, 2004

David Franz - now **Temporary Trainmaster Passenger Operations** from Locomotive Engineer effective May 1, 2004

Ray Krenik - now **Temporary Signal & Communication Supervisor** at Missoula from Manager Control Systems, Missoula effective March 19, 2004

Chad Nelson - now **Electrician Apprentice** at Laurel from Hostler/Laborer effective May 10, 2004

Erin Peterson - now **Manager Material** at Laurel from Assistant Manager Material effective April 1, 2004

Who's new at Montana Rail Link

Devin Alfson ~ track laborer
Jeremy Archer ~ track laborer
Zach Archer ~ track laborer
Brad Barfknecht ~ track laborer
Terry Boivin ~ track laborer
Earl Brown ~ track laborer
Shane Coulter ~ track laborer
Micah Farlan ~ track laborer
Chris Flanick ~ track laborer
Gary Gordon ~ track laborer
Ben Hampson ~ electrician apprentice
Eric Hastings ~ track laborer
Jon Scott Henman ~ carman apprentice
Jerry Holloway ~ track laborer
Chad Hoover ~ track laborer
Corey Hyatt ~ track laborer
Gary Keegan ~ track laborer
Rand Loyland ~ track laborer
Chris Morrison ~ track laborer
Raymond Nelson ~ machinist apprentice
Jesse Rios ~ track laborer
Brett Roach ~ track laborer
Franklin Smith ~ track laborer
Marcus Sprattler ~ track laborer
Scott Thomas ~ track laborer
Patrick Wayne ~ carman apprentice
Bruce Young ~ assistant material manager

Dates to note:

June 12th	Missoula - Family Picnic
June 26th	Missoula - Golf Outing
July 4th	Holiday

REMOTE Control

by Mark Smith



Remote switch

From July 2003 until the March 2004 implementation of remote switches and point protection, there were ten switch-related accidents that resulted in derailments or damage to cars. The accidents occurred between the four main switching leads in Laurel and the one in Missoula. These are the only locations where the switches are in effect. Costs associated with the accidents were approximately \$14,400.

There were also two reportable injuries in 2003 that were associated with lining a switch or derail. Costs resulting from a reportable injury are not as important as the rehabilitation of the injured person and getting an employee back to work and a normal life.

Since the remote switches were put into operation in March 2004 in Laurel and Missoula, there have been no accidents or injuries at any location (main switching leads) where they were installed.

The stacking feature associated with the remote switch operation is not yet finalized and has a few technicalities to be worked out. The stacking feature allows the engineer to program several moves ahead, while the switches automatically reverse once a car clears a certain point on the tracks.

Local control panels are strategically placed on the switching leads to allow the switch crew to throw a switch from any location on the lead. Each switch is also fitted with a signal, similar to the signals located on the main line, that allows the crew to know when the switch is lined for the route they programmed. The colors are green for the lead, yellow for the route lined, and red to indicate the switch is in motion or out of correspondence.

The reduction in accidents and injuries, efficiency, and the ability to plan ahead electronically are all testimonials to the fact that modern technology does have a place in the railroad industry.



17th Annual Golf Outing

June 26th marks Missoula's 17th Annual Golf Outing. Course selections include the new Phantom Links Golf Club, developed by Washington Development. Registration is due by June 18th.

Changing Faces

by Jack Gabrian

MRL is in the process of repainting a number of cars in the current fleet. The 45000 series cars are getting a new face-lift with their color scheme changing from blue to gray.

There are 50 cars in this series with most of them in talc or aggregate rock service. They were built in the 1970's and have had both the bottom gates and top hatches replaced by the Missoula Carshop to keep them updated for our customers' needs.

The 25000 series cars are being repainted bright blue. These cars are going through an AAR rule upgrade to extend the life ten more years, from 40 to 50 years of service.

Also being repainted are eight of the 15000 series cars that bear the BNSF green color scheme.

Overall, there is a plan to repaint nearly 100 of our rail cars in the fleet this year.



MRL 45000 series



MRL 25000 series

Superior Boom

by Randy Gustin

The cab and chassis for the new Hy-rail boom truck have been delivered. The truck is an International crew cab, which will be equipped with a National 300 series boom and DMF hy-rails. It will be replacing the truck currently in use at Superior, and should be completed and delivered in July. MRL has continued to add features and capabilities to these trucks since purchasing the first ones in 1991, and the lessons learned over the years should make this the best of the series. The old Hy-rail will likely be retained for use as a replacement to be used when assigned trucks are undergoing maintenance or repairs.