



## Company News for MRL Employees

Dispatch Staff: Lynda Frost • Brent Erickson • Kim Kautzman • Pete Lawrenson • Jim Lewis • Anne Marvin • Dave Schuyler • Erin Best

July 2011  
No. 69

## SUCCESS

### Meeting Challenge



*Brent Erickson,  
Assistant Superintendent*

The first half of 2011 has proven to be very challenging; especially in view of the extreme weather conditions. Winter seemed to last an eternity and was complemented by one of the highest moisture-laden springs in memory.

Our neighbors to the East who reside in the Dakotas as well as many of our own residents have suffered great and unprecedented peril as a result of the horrific flooding that has occurred during the past several weeks. In conjunction, our BNSF partners endured similar and equally devastating flooding which was prevalent throughout the Midwest and magnified in the North Dakota area.

The BNSF Hi Line in Minot was removed from service on June 21 as flood waters breached the barriers and associated protective structures which had been positioned during the weeks, days and even hours subsequent to the imminent disaster. Both main lines that traverse through the region remained under water through early July, at which time flow subsided to a point that rail service could be restored.

During the Minot service interruption, which spanned for a period of 18 days, MRL experienced an enormous volume of detour traffic in conjunction with our scheduled obligations – a grand total of 340 trains in 18 days. At any given time, we had from 19 trains to as many as 44 trains on our property. Certainly, this sort of volume commitment required absolute engagement from every team member and demanded collaborative planning, ingenuity and inherent cooperation from all.

Significant and creative measures were taken in order to protect and preserve the success expected of us by BNSF in conjunction with the expectations we always possess of ourselves. All work groups answered the call of duty.

A few examples of the operational changes that occurred include the temporary suspension of the 20 hour rest rule for the freight service employees, contract airline service which provided rapid crew transport between terminals, LSI fuel servicing at Laurel, and temporarily diverting MOW program work away from the main lines to the train yards.

Please recognize that the changes I mention are a mere sample and are not inclusive as to all that transpired. Each team member participated and equally shared in our success.

Without hesitation, it is my pleasure to say that the entire Montana Rail Link team and community did an outstanding job and performed at levels far exceeding expectation. You should be very proud of your accomplishments, all the while rejoicing in the fact that once again we have collectively proven that MRL and its people are truly the *Best of the Best*.

## Detour Snapshot

*Number of trains that traversed MRL property during the outage:*

103	Detour Z, Q, S, and V Intermodals
61	Grain loaded
14	Grain empty
44	Coal loaded
12	Coal empty
31	H or High Priority Merchandise
53	M or Moderate Priority Merchandise
21	Unit trains (ballast, ribbon rail, etc.)
1	Boeing Special

## News from Sales & Marketing

*Jim Lewis, Director Sales & Marketing*

Your Sales & Marketing team has been working hard to increase local traffic levels for this year and into the future. One of our recent successes is the start of a new local log program with Tricon Timber in St. Regis. Volumes are increasing for this program with logs shipping from Helena and Laurel, as well as outbound shipments of center beams shipping to the west coast. The Tricon contract process moved very quickly, and the Sales & Marketing Department wants to thank everyone involved in the process; including Real Estate, Engineering, Mechanical, and Operations. The staff of Tricon recognizes the effort and coordination it took to get this deal together and have repeatedly commented on how impressed they are with the entire MRL team. Thank you for your hard work.

One of our main focuses this year is our Assess, Improve and Maximize (AIM) program. AIM is a systematic approach to identifying impediments to and opportunities for growth at each customer facility. Our first goal is to assess all aspects of the customers' business; including real estate agreements, track agreements, operations, accounting, safety, track condition, and revenue



*Above: Loading another car at Tricon Timber.*

opportunities. We will then strive to improve our business relationship with each customer through on-site meetings. The final step is to maximize and manage the long-term relationship. The AIM project requires the involvement of all our departments. The Sales & Marketing team; including **Cathy Wilson, Mike McKay** and **Tom Coston**; will be calling on many of you to be involved in this process. Two of our greatest assets are our employees and our customers. AIM involves both and assists us in building stronger relationships with our customers. We look forward to working with you to make AIM a success.

## MRL Senior Safety Committee at Work

*Kim Kautzman, Director TRS*

What does the *Best of the Best* mean, and how will Montana Rail Link attain this goal? The answer to that question varies depending upon who is asked. Each department – whether it be Operating, Mechanical, Engineering, or Administration – will have a different means of contributing to that goal and will respond accordingly.

What we do know is that everyone must work together to ensure MRL can be the *Best of the Best*. Each department relies on the work and input from its people to make this railroad the safest and most efficient possible. This can't be accomplished without a strong commitment from every MRL employee. We all share responsibility when it comes to achieving our goal of being The Railroad that consistently stands out in the industry.

One opportunity to help attain this goal is through the Senior Safety Fund. The fund originated 14 years ago as a means for employees to request safety improvements to our railroad. These requests are submitted to the Senior Safety Council for approval. The Council consists of Senior Management **Tom Walsh, Mike Lemm, Claude Van Winkle, Randy Gustin, and Mark Smith**. It also includes area safety chairmen **Jeff LaMotte, Jason Thomas, Bob O'Dell, Christy Cheff**, and other delegates from each department. The SSC meets twice each year to discuss safety statistics and trends and to assess the progress of items previously approved for the Safety Fund. Since inception of the Fund, MRL has invested almost \$1.3 million in safety items submitted by employees. These suggestions help make our railroad safer, more efficient and a better place to work.

I would urge everyone to get to know your local Safety Chairman and to consider getting involved in this process. This is your program—and your ideas!

## Keeping Track

### Look Who's New

**Signal Laborer – East End**

Drew Barth

**Signal Laborer – West End**

Eric Aspetita

### Retirements

Josephus Lewis, *Operating Laurel*

Robert Liddell, *Mechanical Laurel*

Chris Southworth, *Mechanical Laurel*

Robert Speare, *Operating Laurel*

Eugene Tuka, *Mechanical Laurel*

## DATES to Remember

**August 12th**

Laurel Golf Invitational

**October 15th**

Missoula UM Tailgate Party  
(vs. Portland State University)

**October 31st**

MRL 24th Anniversary

## BROKEN WHEEL CLUB

Any MRL employee who finds a cracked or broken wheel or missing tread on a train can qualify for the Broken Wheel Club and a \$100 reward. Please report to your supervisor. Congratulations and thank you to:

*Dan Burns, Mechanical*

*Dave Hahn, Mechanical*

*Mike Firehammer, Operating*

*Sam Langue, Mechanical*

*Faron Stevens, Mechanical*

## Did you know

THE WASHINGTON COMPANIES  
EMPLOYEE FAMILY  
SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM



that the Washington Companies Employee Family Scholarship Program may be able to provide up to \$8,000 in lifetime financial assistance to each member of your family who is attending an accredited academic

institution? In partnership with the Dennis & Phyllis Washington Foundation, Montana Rail Link offers the Employee Family Scholarship.

The program provides \$1,000 per semester to a child (no age limit) or spouse of an employee who has worked with the company for at least one year. Funds may be used for post-secondary education at any accredited institution, provided the program is full-time and continues a minimum of one year. *Students must submit their application no later than 30 days after the school term has begun.* For details visit [www.montanarail.com](http://www.montanarail.com) and click "Scholarships & Grant-in-Aid" on the Employee Tools page.

## DEPARTMENT HIGHLIGHT

## WORK EQUIPMENT

*Dave Schuyler, Superintendent Work Equipment - Laurel*

A vital aspect of railroad operations is the equipment required to help move traffic. This is especially true when it applies to the maintenance and improvement of the track infrastructure. The MRL Work Equipment Department is supervised by **Dave Schuyler** and **Tom White** and consists of several dedicated employees who work tirelessly to keep Maintenance of Way equipment in working order—making sure that the track windows are efficiently used. During the summer MOW season, six hard working Traveling Mechanics; **Dale Argento**, **Steve Ball**, **Bob Barce**, **Brad Hanson**, **Rick Smith**, and **Pat Spence**; work alongside the system gangs to keep the machines operable while traversing the MRL system. Another big job is handled by **Dan Lake**. Dan is responsible for helping move equipment from one location to the next. As the season winds down in late November, the machines are relocated to shops at Laurel or Missoula. There they receive extensive maintenance and overhaul in preparation for the next rigorous work season which annually starts in early April. This four and half month period is referred to as "Winter Rebuild".

By late December the rebuild, which includes all machinery to the hundreds of smaller power tools, is in full-gear. All engines and hydraulic/electrical systems are serviced and repaired as well as wheels, sprockets, chains, drivelines, bushings, etc. Manpower is increased to 12 employees to complete these inspections prior to April.

To keep the Work Equipment fleet operable, MRL invests almost \$1 million annually on new equipment. This year a tie inserter/remover was added to the tie gang consist. The new machine is engineered differently than the existing machines and is more durable, safer to maintain, and more efficient than the current models. Also being replaced is the aging fleet of speed swings to the new "tilt-cab" generation. With this year's additions, we now have seven of this newer-style Pettibone. A new ballast regulator will also replace an aging cable-wing machine. Thanks to our Company's commitment to our equipment fleet and facilities, we can provide our Track Department with the tools and equipment required to do their job safely and efficiently—keeping the trains rolling across the Main Street of Montana.

## APU RevU

*Anne Marvin, Mechanical Foreman 3/Admin*

Livingston Roundhouse has completed the installation of Auxiliary Power Units (APU) on 34 MRL locomotives. Last June, the US Environmental Protection Agency awarded a \$1.13 million grant to the Missoula community for installation of the units. An APU is a small diesel engine that is installed on a locomotive to allow the unit to be shut off while keeping the oil and water circulating and warm. Not only does this save fuel, the units now use a half a gallon/hour compared to 4-5 gallons/hour when idling, but the APU will produce some 90% fewer emissions into the air.

Congratulations to the Livingston Roundhouse for meeting the one year deadline to complete this project efficiently and safely!

## Safety Gear by Special Order

For a limited time, MRL safety jackets and hooded sweatshirts are available for order. Enclosed is an order form for purchase. All orders for these items must be received no later than August 22nd.

(Order forms are also available on the MRL Extranet.) The safety jackets and hooded sweatshirts are available by special order only and must be ordered by the deadline provided.



MRL safety T-shirts and crew neck sweatshirts are still available year round.

The T-shirt and crew neck sweatshirt order form is also available on the MRL Extranet, or these two items may be purchased at the GOB Company Store.

## Together We Can Remain Secure

*Pete Lawrenson, Chief Security & Safety*

The safety and security of Montana Rail Link go hand in hand. To be safe we must be secure in our environment, operation and equipment; and to be secure we must exercise safety at all times. Exercising security is to be observant of risks that could potentially impact our employees, equipment, operation, and the communities with which we share Montana.

With more than 600 miles of main line track, five yard operations, and many tunnels, bridges and trestles; it is impossible to monitor everything at all times. As such, security is the responsibility of all MRL employees who share in the responsibility of safeguarding our property. The most important aspect of security is, when you see something that does not look right, to report it immediately. In the case of trespassers or other criminal acts in progress, report it to local law enforcement through 911.

Keeping buildings secure; safeguarding radios, lap tops and company keys; marking and engraving company property; recording serial numbers; and keeping good inventories of supplies and equipment are essential elements of a secure and safe organization.

A general security awareness brochure has been provided for all MRL employees. Please take a moment, review the information and share it with your family. If you ever have any security concerns or questions, please call (406)370-3168.