

R & N Magazine

Official Magazine of the Employees and Customers of the Reading & Northern Railroad

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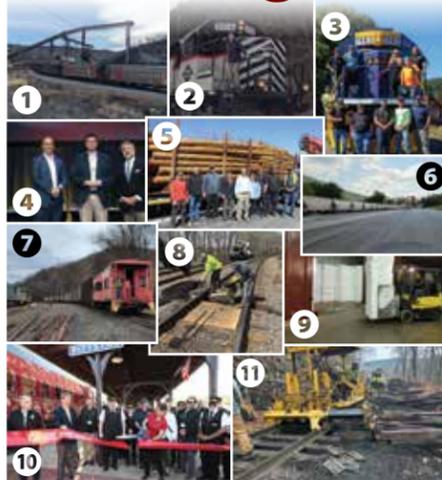
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COVER CAPTIONS

- Lehigh Anthracite loader operators work with an RBMN Indexing crew at Lehigh's Breaker facility to load 50 Rapid Discharge cars for an Anthracite Export order destined to Kinder Morgan at Fairless Hills, PA.
- Andy Muller Engineering a Frac Sand Unit Train at Independence. Behind the five locomotives is a Unit Train of Frac Sand heading to wells in the Marcellus Region. Photo by Tyler Glass. Andy Muller was named one of Railway Age's 2023 Influential Leaders with this picture gracing the cover of that Railway Age magazine issue.
- Newly painted locomotive 1983 completed in 2023 to celebrate the Reading & Northern Railroad's 40th anniversary. Pictured top left to right: Zach Freye, Steve Gilbert, Meg Pursel, Matt Fisher, Jeff Knadler. Bottom left to right: Tyler Stoudt, Brock Regnier, Jamie Makin, Corey Rehrig, Jarred Strohl, Jason Sanchez. Not pictured but part of the project, Cameron Odell.
- RBMN accepting the Business Development Award at the 2023 ASLRRRA convention in New Orleans. From left to right in photo: Chuck Baker (ASLRRRA President), Jim Cerulli (RBMN VP Industrial Development) and Matt Walsh (ASLRRRA Chairman).
- Posing in front of the first inventory utility pole car to be unloaded at the new Morea Yard for new 2023 customer, Stella Jones. L to R: Eric Peters, RBMN VP Transportation; Tyler Glass, RBMN EVP Transportation; Ettore DiCasimiro, Skytop Fuels Owner; Rian Nemeroff, RBMN SVP; Brian Kwiatkowski, Stella-Jones Corporation Site Manager; Susan Ludwig RBMN VP; Ettore DiCasimiro, Jr., Skytop Fuels VP; Jesse Redgate, Skytop Fuels Head of Operations; and Jim Carr, JFC Hauling, Owner/Operator.
- Photo of the Tunkhannock sand transload pad on the day of paving completion in 2023.
- Conductor Andrew Zehner on train LNRX rides the caboose through Tamaqua Yard. They had just loaded the train with export coal bound for Fairless and are seen heading down into the yard to set up for a pick up by Fast Freight train, WHFF.
- Signal Maintainers (Left)Matt Kunkle and (Right)Bruce Kellman as they tackle the often-overlooked yet vital task of backfilling and tamping cable cribs at Williams South Crossing, in Plains, PA.
- Brad Handling, transload, unloading a car of wood pulp at the Ransom Warehouse. The pulp will be placed in storage as safety stock, as part of the customer's supply chain.
- Wilkes-Barre/Scranton Regional Railroad Station Grand Opening on May 27, 2023. From left to right holding Ribbon: Robert Savakinus, Pittston Mayor Mike Lombardo, US Representative Matt Cartwright, Christina Muller-Levan cutting ribbon. Back row left to right, Tyler Glass, Andy Muller, Jr., Carol Muller, Matt Johnson, and the dedicated passenger employees of the RBMN..
- Jason Moyer, Chucky Carl, Brian Van Blargan, and Dennis Rosohac in MOW install ties along the M&S BT at MP 120.9.

R&N Magazine



EDITORS

JOLENE BUSHER • TAYLOR HAUPT • SABINE FIDLER • KATHY GIPE

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KEEPING ON TRACK

BY: WAYNE A. MICHEL, PRESIDENT

Another Banner Year for Reading & Northern Railroad!

The results are in. Nationally rail traffic declined overall for the second year in a row. The results are in. Reading and Northern freight traffic increased by over 10% for the second year in a row.

These are legitimate data points that could be used to buttress an argument I have been making for over 30 years; shortlines are uniquely positioned to GROW rail freight traffic.

Since I was hired by Conrail in late 1985 to run its line sale and abandonment program, I was gifted with a front row seat to the shortline phenomenon. Even before that as a lawyer at the Interstate Commerce Commission, now the STB, I recognized the potential of shortlines as deregulation made it easier for Class 1 railroads to spin off lower density lines. I even brought in the authors of a new handbook, "Starting a Shortline Railroad", to help educate my fellow attorneys on what it was that made shortlines unique.

But over the years I also discovered that not all shortlines are created equally. So, in 1995 when Conrail management asked me to take over the shortline program and design a new shortline franchise program while assisting in right-sizing Conrail to the "Big X", I started spending more time with the almost 200 shortlines that connected with Conrail. And what I noticed was that the best shortlines were those with a local owner entrepreneur.

Over the years Conrail had sold a number of properties to counties or large shippers that hired operators to run the railroad business. Conrail had also sold rail lines to large publicly traded holding companies. But what I determined was the most aggressive shortlines were the ones owned and operated by local entrepreneurs. And not surprisingly I chose a number of these railroads to be charter members of our CONRAIL EXPRESS franchise program in 1996, including Andy Muller's Reading and Northern Railroad.

Before CONRAIL EXPRESS really got underway Conrail was split, and I soon found myself with the opportunity to work directly with Andy. And 24+ years later my belief in Andy, that began when I sold him the Reading Cluster in December of 1990, has proven justified.

So, what is it that Reading and Northern does differently. Let me identify a few critical factors.

FOCUS ON CUSTOMER SERVICE. Everyone says they focus on customer service but in my experience, few actually spend the money to put the words in motion. At RBMN we spent the money. We went out and gave every customer a negotiated two-hour service window. And we hit that window 99% of the time in 2023. And working within that window means we do NOT show up early or late. Our goal was to look like a trucker. If our crew is early, they stay outside the gate until the customer is ready for us. That's putting the customer first.

Good customer service is more than just keeping the trains running on time. It's having a live body available to talk to the customer about issues. And our customer service department of 8 people is available 11 hours each workday for routine calls, and 24x7 for emergency calls. And we also visit our customers regularly. Our Marketing VPs visit the customers at their facilities every year and also meet virtually or by phone on a regular basis.

This isn't just good customer service, this is good business development. I learned a long time ago that the best way for a railroad to grow its business is with its existing customers. So RBMN stays close to our customers and focuses on providing exceptional service.

FOCUS ON EMPLOYEES. For RBMN to provide exceptional train service we need hundreds of dedicated men and women maintaining the tracks, signals, locomotives, and freight cars, and dispatching and operating the trains. And we need people

making sure we hire, develop and properly compensate all these employees. At Reading & Northern Andy has always made it clear that all employees are well paid with excellent benefits. And we make sure our employees know they are valued. And one way we do that is WE NEVER LAYOFF OR FURLOUGH ANYONE. That's right. Even during recessions everyone works. Andy Muller's philosophy is simple; take care of your employees and they will take care of the customers. It's simple and it works. The savings we enjoy by retaining workers is incalculable. And it's a key to our success.

HIRE SUBJECT MATTER EXPERTS. Throughout my time at the railroad Andy has given me the green light to bring in marketing professionals to assist in our growth. These professionals are also hired to train and develop the wonderful home-grown talent at the company. So, starting in 1999 with Dan Gilchrist we have hired a steady supply of marketing professionals. We brought in Dennis Shaffer, who was invaluable in our business development efforts such as our Ransom Warehouse, Rian Nemeroff to handle our growing forest products portfolio after we acquired the Humboldt Industrial Park in 2016, and Bill Clark who has overseen a massive increase in our anthracite coal business. Most recently we brought back Jim Raffa to manage our frac sand business after he had brilliantly developed that business for Lehigh Railway. Each of these people had dozens of years of experience dealing with rail freight at either Class 1 railroads, shortlines or rail customers. And they have each contributed to the railroad we are today, and, perhaps more importantly, they have helped train our other Marketing VPs, Susan Ludwig, Daren Geschwindt, Jim Cerulli and Mike Sharadin.

Working with Tyler Glass, our homegrown EVP-Operations we have also hired subject matter experts to support the Operating Departments. Tyler and I brought in Eric Peters, our superb VP Transportation, from NS where he has been Harrisburg Division Superintendent.

It takes a great team to run a great railroad. And at Reading and Northern we constantly go out and hire great people with great attitudes and knowledge to join our team.

ENTREPRENEURIAL ZEAL. All of the attributes listed above are critical, but in my mind the secret sauce behind our amazing run of success is Andy Muller's entrepreneurial zeal.

One of the hardest things I had to learn when I joined RBMN is that decisions aren't always made based on ROI or hurdle rates. Sometimes you have to take risks. And watching Andy for over 24 years it's clear that he has an amazing insight into what risks are reasonable. Time and time again Andy decides on a course of action and invests significant sums with no clear return and then along comes an opportunity for an immediate payback. This happened when he built the original Nesquehoning Bridge allowing a direct connection between our Reading and Lehigh divisions. It happened when we purchased and upgraded the Ransom Warehouse. It happened when he jumped into the passenger business. Even before I joined the company it happened when he started buying hundreds of coal cars.

I can't explain how liberating it is to a commercial team to know you have an owner willing to take risks. The opportunities are multiplied if your company is willing to invest monies. When we needed a new export coal facility Andy invested millions to first purchase the needed under-car conveyors at Fairless Hills and then the needed rapid discharge car fleet. When we needed to improve efficiency at the river port we used at Leetsdale, PA, Andy invested in that facility. When we needed to help distant steel companies better handle anthracite coal, Andy purchased the needed conveyors and covered hoppers. ALL OF THESE INVESTMENTS WERE DOZENS, IF NOT HUNDREDS, OF MILES AWAY FROM OUR RAILROAD. And all of these investments used NO PUBLIC MONIES.

Continued on page 4.

Continued from page 3.

And Andy's unique investment strategy isn't limited to our freight business. Anyone who has followed our amazing passenger success story knows how much equipment Andy has purchased and rehabilitated and how many new facilities he has opened. Without that massive investment our ridership does not grow to over 320,000!

And it's even more that Andy does. Andy has saved the company millions by buying track materials and locomotive and freight car parts during market turndowns. His investment in switches and rail allows us to build connections for our new customers at prices below what contractors charge.

In my opinion, having the right local entrepreneurial owner is the number one reason

for the success of shortlines.

And apparently, I'm not the only one who recognizes Andy's unique abilities. Last year Andy was a serious candidate for Railroader of the Year and he was recognized as a Railroad Innovator and even graced the cover of that Railway Age issue. The fact is Andy's track record, pun intended, is as good as any industry leader.

Obviously, it's not just about Andy. Just reading the trailing articles by the accomplished men and women of the Reading and Northern you will see what a great team we have.

Bottom line, it takes a great leader, a great team and great employees to continue breaking carload and ridership records year after year. And it takes ALL OF US to keep on track. ♦

"The Road of Anthracite" FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:



2020: The second train over RBMN's then-new Nesquehoning Bridge consisted of locomotives returning to Reading. Andrew Muller, Jr. stopped on the bridge and then walked to the end to take a look at the final product.

For RBMN, Consecutive Record Years

Port Clinton, PA – January 4, 2024

Written by William C. Vantuono, Editor-in-Chief

Class II Reading & Northern, Pennsylvania's largest privately owned railroad and four-time Railway Age Regional of the Year, in 2023 posted double-digit growth in both its freight and passenger excursion operations for the second year in a row. RBMN traffic eclipsed 37,000 freight carloads, up from 33,000 in 2022. Excursion ridership went from 250,000 riders in 2022 to more than 320,000.

RBMN attributed freight traffic growth to two primary factors. First, significantly more anthracite coal moved out of the Pennsylvania anthracite fields as the "Road of Anthracite" handled more than one million tons for the first time in its 33-year history. Second, RBMN's new frac sand terminal in Tunkhannock, Pa. doubled volume in its second full year of operation. These two market segments contribute about half of RBMN's traffic base, the remaining 50% of which includes forest products, petrochemicals and minerals, food and agricultural products, metals, and consumer products. In addition, RBMN owns a warehouse, various transload facilities and a trucking firm "that all support its core rail business."

RBMN's growth in passenger excursion ridership resulted from significant

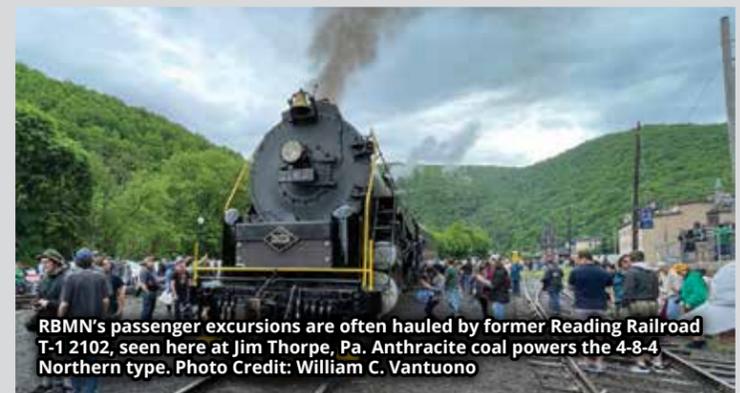
expansion of new services, especially the opening of the new Wilkes Barre/Scranton Regional Railroad Station in Pittston, as well as increased train starts and equipment. Additionally, iconic steam locomotive 2102, a former Reading Railroad T-1 4-8-4 Northern type, returned to excursion service, reviving the famous "Iron Horse Rambles."

"It is fitting that in his 40th year in the railroad business, Andy Muller, Jr., our owner and CEO, would be named one of the innovators in the railroad industry," said RBMN President Wayne Michel. "His accomplishments during the past 40 years are noteworthy, and the railroad's record-breaking performance in 2023 is further evidence that his management philosophy works. Take care of your employees, focus on the customers and constantly invest in the business. Over the past three years Andy has invested heavily in the anthracite coal, frac sand and passenger business, and it is no surprise that is where our growth has occurred."

RBMN, with corporate headquarters in Port Clinton, Pa., serves more than 80 customers in nine eastern Pennsylvania counties (Berks, Bradford, Carbon, Columbia, Lackawanna, Luzerne, Northumberland, Schuylkill, and Wyoming) on more than 400 miles of track. The railroad owns almost 1,800 freight cars and employs more than 350. ♦



Lehigh Anthracite loader operators work with an RBMN Indexing crew at Lehigh's Breaker facility to load 50 Rapid Discharge cars for an Anthracite Export order destined to Kinder Morgan at Fairless Hills, PA.



RBMN's passenger excursions are often hauled by former Reading Railroad T-1 2102, seen here at Jim Thorpe, Pa. Anthracite coal powers the 4-8-4 Northern type. Photo Credit: William C. Vantuono

Coal 2023 Year in Review

BY: BILL CLARK, SVP – COAL

We can thank the Chinese philosopher Lao Tzu for coining the phrase "A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step." My "journey" with Anthracite began in earnest in early 2017. That was when I made my transition from managing logistics and coal purchasing for Pennsylvania Power and Light to helping develop the Anthracite business for Reading and Northern. We have seen many changes in this business since 2017.

In 2023, the coal business at Reading and Northern (RBMN) hit a milestone. For the first time in 33 years, coal shipments from RBMN origins exceeded one million tons! Our business has doubled since 2017. How we reached this milestone says a great deal about the railroad Andy Muller built.

Export traffic – Our export business is the most volatile traffic on RBMN. While the US has the largest Anthracite reserves in the world, we also have the highest costs, making the US a swing producer; I.e., our producers gain business when the major Anthracite producer (Russia) is unable to meet demand. In 2016, RBMN served mines exported 270,000 tons of Anthracite. By 2021, this had shrunk to less than 176,000 tons. Export shipments changed dramatically in 2022 with Russia's invasion of Ukraine. While a horrific event, the loss of millions of tons of Russian (and Russian controlled Ukrainian) Anthracite drove demand to the Pennsylvania coal fields.

Overnight the demand for export Anthracite exploded; far exceeding the capacity of US producers. By the end of 2022, RBMN shipments increased from 176,000 annual tons to 479,000+ tons, an increase of 2.7 times our 2021 shipments. Production continued to increase in 2023; leading to a record 647,000 tons shipped into the foreign market. This is great news for a region in Pennsylvania that has struggled for decades.

Massive increases in demand created a huge problem for the railroads. In a matter of weeks, our service plan was upended. Additional demand required more cars, crews, and demanded more attention from management. The investment decisions made by Andy Muller, combined with the resilience and creativity of RBMN employees were the reason RBMN and NS were able to manage an almost tripling of demand in a few weeks. Since purchasing the RBMN, Andy has invested tens of millions of dollars in rebuilding the railroad. At the start, RBMN owned no coal cars, today we own close to 1,800 cars and are planning to purchase more as demand continues to grow.

Because Andy purchased more rail cars than needed at the time, we were able to immediately add 350 cars into the export market. We were able to coordinate service with NS, changing how we interchanged cars. This, combined with our guaranteed service, allowed RBMN and NS to manage the increased business without missing a beat.

Domestic shipments – Unlike the export market, domestic demand for Anthracite is more stable. Our growth in this segment has been incremental, not seismic. Our challenge has been to design truck-like service at a competitive price. Again, Andy's willingness to invest and take risks has been a major factor in our growth. In 2016, RBMN moved 292,000 tons of Anthracite into the domestic market. By 2021, this had grown to 485,000 tons (an average of 9% compounded growth annually). While our domestic growth has been impacted by a lack of coal (caused by increased export demand), we expect to see continued incremental growth for years to come.

Certainly, as long as the war in Ukraine continues, the United States (particularly Pennsylvania) will be the major alternate supplier of Anthracite. As the war ends (God willing soon), some demand will move back to Russia and/or Ukraine. Even when the conflict is settled, the value of American Anthracite as an alternative means our international business will remain stronger than before February 2022.

On the domestic side, we see a much rosier picture. Andy's willingness to invest in equipment and destination rail-truck transfers has made rail preferred to truck. We see additional incremental growth to existing destinations continuing to add to our business. The North American steel business is seeing the largest investment in new mills since WW2. All this investment is going into the construction of Electric Arc Furnaces (EAF). EAF mills require carbon to make steel and Anthracite is the preferred source. We are beginning to see the impact of this expansion and could see a doubling of our domestic market segment over the next 4 – 5 years. This new demand will require additional investments in rail infrastructure and equipment. Andy Muller has shown he is willing to "talk the talk and walk the walk." Andy's entrepreneurial spirit and willingness to take risks will ensure Reading and Northern will remain "The Road of Anthracite" for decades to come. ♦

Mine Development in the Anthracite Fields

BY: MIKE SHARADIN, VP COAL SOURCING

As Bill Clark mentioned in his article, 2023 was a banner year for anthracite coal shipments on RBMN. For the first time ever in company history, anthracite coal shipments eclipsed one million tons and 10,000 carloads. To accomplish this historic milestone, our producers needed to step up their game, and they have certainly delivered.

Prior to the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, our average annual volume between 2017 and 2021 hovered around 725,000 net tons. After the invasion, the trade sanctions that were imposed on Russia created a void in the domestic and global anthracite markets. For example, in 2021, the U.S. received over 300,000 net tons of anthracite coal imported from Russia. So, in the U.S. alone, there was a need to replace over a quarter million tons of anthracite. In addition, growth in the U.S. steel industry created additional demand for anthracite. This excess demand doesn't even include the impact the Russia/Ukraine war had on the export market. The bottom line is there was a global demand for anthracite coal and an opportunity for our U.S. coal producers to expand their market share. So, the question was how do they increase their production to reach these markets?

U.S. producers needed to strike while the iron was hot, and there were numerous levers that could be pulled to increase production. One way to increase production was to maximize the capacity of existing infrastructure. This meant increasing efficiency and throughput at existing processing plants. Some producers began adding a second shift and/or running over the weekends. Others invested in upgrading existing infrastructure and equipment, while others purchased new assets. We also saw producers expand their mining operations in existing pits or open new pits. Doing this allowed producers to increase the amount of raw material they could run through their processing plants and make available to the market. We even saw some acquisitions of smaller mining operations that took place within the industry. The results over the past two years speak for themselves. Our annual coal volume went from an average of 725,000 tons between 2017 and 2021, to 935,000 tons in 2022, and then to 1.08 million tons in 2023.

All these capital investments in infrastructure, equipment and resources helped push more U.S. anthracite coal into the domestic and export markets. So, when we see our partners making these types of investments, it helps in our decision making when it comes to making our own investments. And, as always, Andy Muller made key investments in railcars, track infrastructure and personnel to support the increase in coal shipments.

One of the vital components needed to support our coal business is the railcars used to ship coal from the producer to the end user or destination. We have over 1,800 RBMN-owned railcars and a team that manages all aspects of our fleet. Managing the fleet goes beyond ensuring we have enough railcars to handle the current surge in business. One of the more strategic aspects in fleet management is looking 3, 5 or even 10 years ahead and recognizing potential car shortages. Per federal regulations, railcars are limited to a 50-year life span of interchange service. In 2023, we did an in-depth analysis of our fleet based on current and anticipated demand. From this analysis, we began developing options to replace critical car types that will age out over the next decade. Some car types can be replaced with newer, like-kind acquisitions. However, we found that some car types might be very difficult to replace and may require some outside-the-box solutions, such as increased life or car modifications/conversions.

With the record-breaking year behind us, it's time to focus on the year ahead. January has started with a bang, and the outlook for 2024 looks to surpass the record we just set. Beyond 2024, we expect to see new processing plants and coal dryers come online. This is a good sign that the demand for U.S. anthracite will continue for many years to come. Who knows, maybe a few years down the road we'll be talking about a two-million-ton milestone! ♦



RBMN Hazelton Shaft.

'Road of Anthracite' Tops 1MM Tons

Port Clinton, PA – December 11, 2023

Written by William C. Vantuono, Editor-in-Chief

Class II Reading & Northern (RBMN), "The Road of Anthracite," has surpassed hauling one million tons of the coal that provides its nickname.

"Ever since December 1990 when Andy Muller Jr. purchased from Conrail the rail lines serving Pennsylvania's anthracite coal region (the Reading Cluster), it has been his goal to exceed a one million tons of anthracite moved over the tracks," RBMN said. "For many years prior to Conrail's sale, the tracks had been in disrepair and rail tonnage had been in decline. When Muller, now owner and CEO, acquired the lines, he began investing in the properties. He brought the tracks back into operating condition, and little by little he acquired freight cars to handle the coal business. And from the beginning he called the railroad The Road of Anthracite," which has been displayed on RBMN locomotives starting in 1991."

"Owning this rail line has been a dream come true," Muller said. "Watching our company grow has been the accomplishment of my lifetime. We now own more than 400 miles of track, 1,800 freight cars, more than 65 locomotives and employ more than 350 full- and part-time people. It's thanks to those great employees that we have now accomplished that seemingly unattainable goal."

"Thanks to Andy Muller's laser focus on growing our business, we have been able to cross the million-ton threshold," RBMN President Wayne Michel noted. "Andy pursued this business like a true entrepreneur. He risked millions of dollars in buying hundreds of coal cars and investing in facilities both on and off the railroad, which was unprecedented in the industry. Andy has invested in infrastructure at distant ports not directly served by RBMN as well as customer facilities hundreds of miles away from the railroad. He has also invested in building the best coal marketing organization in the industry. Led by SVP Bill Clark, formerly of Norfolk Southern and PPL, the team includes VPs Jim Cerulli and Mike Sharadin and a team of customer service men and women who manage the fleet and the day-to-day business. Thanks to the foundation provided by Andy we are well-positioned for continued growth in the years to come."

Muller was named one of Railway Age's 2023 Influential Leaders, who are selected by subscribers. He was featured on the May 2023 issue's cover. "The

growth potential of this railroad, it just keeps going," said Muller. "We didn't miss a beat during the pandemic. We're up 15%-20% in revenues every year. We've had record growth every year for the past 15 years. There's so much potential. When the railroads started deteriorating in the '70s, the people who lived in our area were still buying stuff. It just wasn't coming on this railroad. It was coming into Philadelphia, being trucked out. It has taken me 30 years to gradually get these commodities back, because it's hard to break that chain when it's moving."

RBMN's success really flies in the face of the conventional wisdom that says, you give up traffic and it'll never come back," Railway Age noted. "It may take some time, but it can come back and grow."

"It takes a lot of time and a lot of work," added Muller. "We chase new business all the time. Eventually, people say, 'Wow. Andy and Wayne Michel really have an interest in it.' And then there's our reputation for service. You can just about set your watch to our fast freight. It's within five minutes every day. Our customers have a service window. There's no, 'Just when we get there.' We ask when they want us there, and we get there. I don't have any answering machines at this railroad until after five o'clock. You've got to answer the phone. If you call Reading & Northern, my people must answer the phone. They can't look at the number and say, 'Well, I don't want to talk to them today.' I think people can see my passion for the railroad business."

RBMN's passenger excursions are often hauled by former Reading Railroad T-1 2102, seen here at Jim Thorpe, Pa. Anthracite coal powers the 4-8-4 Northern type. William C. Vantuono photo

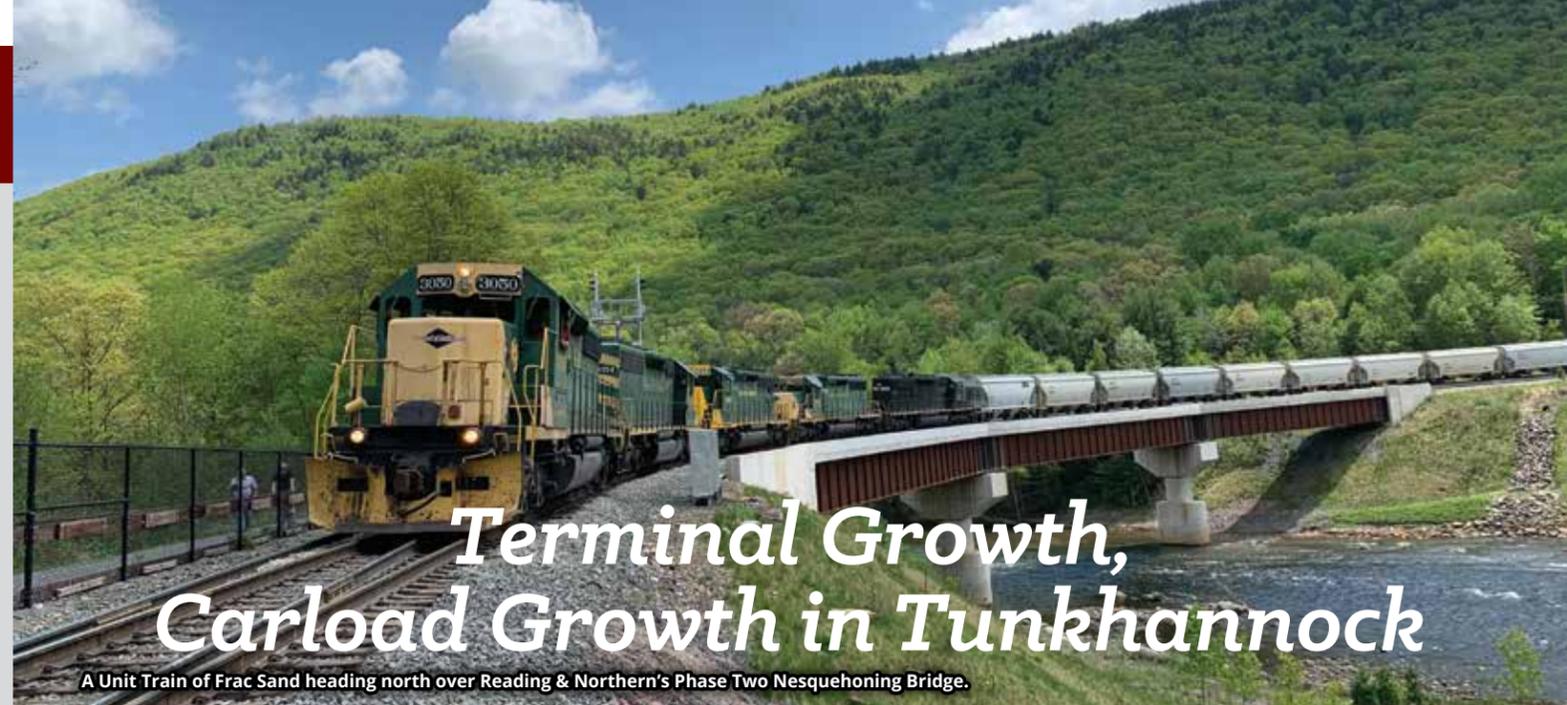
Reading & Northern, with its corporate headquarters in Port Clinton, is a privately held railroad serving more than 80 customers in nine eastern Pennsylvania counties (Berks, Bradford, Carbon, Columbia, Lackawanna, Luzerne, Northumberland, Schuylkill, and Wyoming). It has expanded its operations during the past 40 years, and now handles nearly 40,000 carloads of freight, which removes more than 200,000 trucks from highways. RBMN's Passenger Department handles 300,000 riders annually. RBMN has been repeatedly honored as one of the premier railroads in the nation, including being named Regional Railroad of the Year four times (2002, 2011, 2015 and 2020) by Railway Age. ♦



Lehigh Anthracite loader operators work with an RBMN indexing crew at Lehigh's Breaker facility to load 50 Rapid Discharge cars for an Anthracite Export order destined to Kinder Morgan at Fairless Hills, PA.



RBMN's passenger excursions are often hauled by former Reading Railroad T-1 2102, seen here at Jim Thorpe, Pa. Anthracite coal powers the 4-8-4 Northern type. Photo Credit: William C. Vantuono



Terminal Growth, Carload Growth in Tunkhannock

A Unit Train of Frac Sand heading north over Reading & Northern's Phase Two Nesquehoning Bridge.

BY: JIM RAFFA, SVP – PETROCHEMICALS AND MINERALS

Since the Reading & Northern's Tunkhannock Terminal opened in late 2021, it has not been a disappointment for our Railroad.

In late 2021, we went out and hired TSS, a premiere trans-loader in the industry to operate the terminal. We combined their service and knowledge of the industry with our rail abilities to store large amounts of cars, accept and return unit trains in our large North Reading Yard, and to quickly react to switching changes. That combination of characteristics created a winning formula for our Tunkhannock Terminal.

In 2022, our first year of operation, we moved 2240 carloads of Frac Sand through the facility despite the Marcellus market being down.

2023 was the year of progress and growth. Seeing that the business wasn't a flash in the pan, Reading & Northern decided to make significant upgrades to the facility. Those upgrades included paving the entire unloading pad, creating a new truck access road so that the trucks have a progressive move for loading, and making improvements to the drainage of the pad.

Additionally, Reading & Northern expanded its rail infrastructure to handle larger volumes. First,

a long passing siding was added at Tunkhannock. The purpose of adding the siding was to create a runaround to make shifting the customer easier, as well as track space to store specific sand meshes that may be needed for added switches during the day. Additionally, The Pittston Yard, which is the serving yard for the facility, had its north end completely rebuilt to handle additional volumes of rail traffic.

Build it and they will come. This statement holds true. Reading & Northern's investment in the property and infrastructure didn't go unnoticed. 2023 saw a significant increase in Frac Sand traffic. We shattered the 2022 numbers by more than twice the volume. 4716 to be exact. That is almost 2500 carloads of growth! Everyone came together to make that happen. Operations provided exceptional service for the customer. Maintenance of Way completed all projects at or ahead of schedule with a level of quality not matched in the industry. Customer Service provided excellent support in managing the different meshes of sand provided by as many as 6 different mines and getting this sand to the terminal when it is needed. All in all, the team provides excellent service and has set the bar at the highest level. The success of this business is due to all the people involved. I thank everyone for their excellent work. ♦



An aerial photo of the pad showing the vast layout of the facility prior to paving of the pad.



Photo of the transload pad on the day of paving completion. This makes for a much cleaner operating facility.



First Trucks utilizing the new access road to the loading pad.

Consumer Products

2023 Year in Review

BY: RIAN NEMEROFF, SVP – CONSUMER PRODUCTS

My portfolio at the railroad is Consumer Products that we transport. 2023 presented a mixed bag in terms of our traffic. On the plus side we had increased wood pulp deliveries and new customers. On the other hand, the pulpboard market decline continued in 2023 as a result of the continued bursting of the so-called Amazon bubble.

Pulp & Paper

RBMN is blessed to have seven corrugators churning out sheets and corrugated boxes from some of the largest producers in the world. We serve integrated recognizable names like International Paper Company and Packaging Corporation of America, known better simply by their initials of IP and PCA. Also, some not as well-known companies such as Freedom Corrugated LLC, Corrugated Supplies Company, and Progressive Converting Inc. with some supply sourced from another industry giant, WestRock Company.

Ever since RBMN took over the Humboldt Industrial Park in Hazleton, PA in 2016, corrugated shipments have been positive and in certain years very positive. That is until 2022. As the trailing chart shows, our experience was not unique. And the chart will look even worse when 2023 results are reported.

Containerboard and Boxboard, known by railroads as Pulpboard, had a difficult year whether you were a producer or a railroad. Receivers of the product did better comparatively, from reduced pricing but they encountered decreased sales and higher inventories. RBMN lost almost 700 carloads of pulpboard in 2023. If the market were not punishing enough, one of our rail-served box plants suffered a factory fire and was out of business for 19 days. Jeffrey Kleintop, Chief Global Investment Strategist of Charles Schwab characterized the “2023 economy as being in a cardboard-box recession.”

These paper losses were partially offset by gains in wood pulp to the tune of almost 500 carloads. Wood pulp had a rebound year because of RBMN's full court press to reduce emergency trucks. This was achieved by the more effective use and expansion of the RBMN owned and operated Ransom Warehouse, known as Reading Railroad Transfer. We can bundle the potential services of traditional warehousing, car-to-car or -truck transloading, rail transportation and truck delivery for final-mile customer satisfaction. A great investment by CEO Andy Muller, Jr. that has paid many multiples of dividends over the past five years of ownership.

Adult Beverages

E. & J. Gallo, a family business like the RBMN, along with two 3PIs, combine to distribute table, sparkling and luxury wines, beverage products, dessert wines and distilled alcoholic beverage spirits in the population dense northeastern US. We had anticipated a worse year in 2023 with the introduction of their southern winery and distribution center slurping away volume from the Pennsylvania Distribution Center. There is also a continuing trend of using more private cars that hold more cases than the traditional railroad-owned boxcars, thus fewer overall carloads. Bottom line, we handled 300 fewer cars in 2023 with another planned smaller reduction in store for 2024 before stabilizing. However, we have some ideas for new products and lanes to arrest the decline and resume our historical volumes. RBMN separately concluded negotiations for a long-term contract that solidifies our business relationship for many years to come.

Wood Products

While Susan Ludwig took over responsibility for this commodity group midyear, I still follow it since I have been involved with wood products for much of my career. At RBMN we have four wood-related customers with rail sidings. Last year at RBMN, wood declined over 100 carloads versus 2022.

Although our same store sales wood business was down, we ended up much higher thanks to the opening of a new Stella Jones facility. We expect that customer to receive upwards of 300 cars a year. One big challenge for Susan, and our interline partner NS, is how to participate in the growing imported lumber and panel business. The European and South American wood products companies are gaining market share over Canadian and US producers which is not conducive to rail delivery.

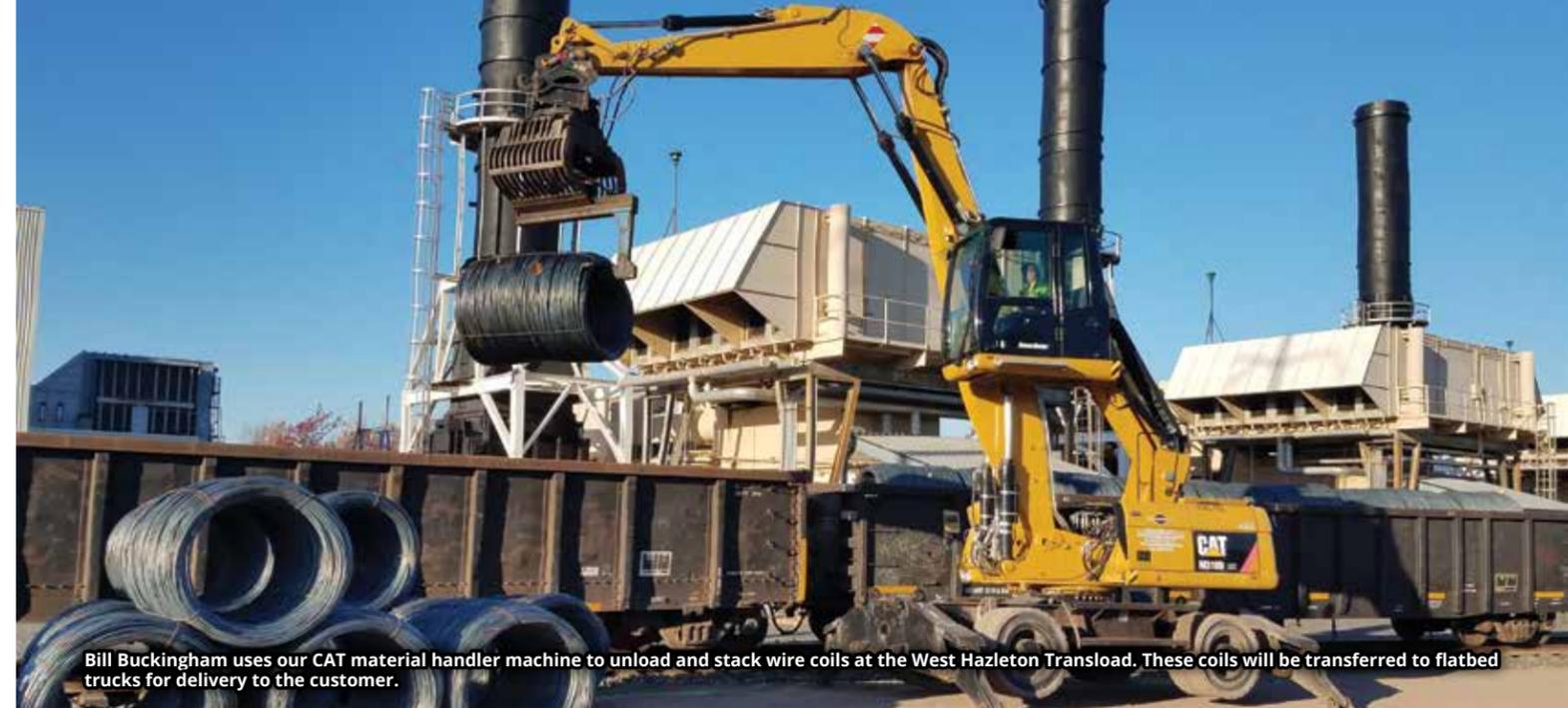
New Business

I had the help of two new customer start-ups, one, Stella Jones Corporation opened a wood utility pole distribution yard and, two, Patton Warehouse that brought Clearwater Paper to RBMN. These two customers contributed close to 400 cars of new business for RBMN! The expectation is even more carloads in 2024 with a full year of operations. Both customers report very favorable relations between our companies.

2024 Outlook

It appears the desired soft landing for the US economy will occur in 2024 because my customers tell me to be hopeful for 2024! And the best and biggest forward-looking metric is the stock market and how about those year-end closes and records for 2023? So, the inner voice for me is Stay On Mission and that is precisely what I plan to do this year! ♦

U.S. corrugated-product shipments, change from a year earlier



Bill Buckingham uses our CAT material handler machine to unload and stack wire coils at the West Hazleton Transload. These coils will be transferred to flatbed trucks for delivery to the customer.

Transloads Smash Carload Records in 2023

BY: DAREN GESCHWINDT, VP DISTRIBUTION SERVICES

As 2023 comes to a close, it's time to reflect on the past year and all that we have accomplished. Any staff member in the Transload Dept can anecdotally tell you that the past year has been a busy one. There were several times this year where I found myself making the comment that it feels like we are so busy that we are “drinking from the fire hose”. But just how busy was it? Well, the numbers are in, and we have beaten our old record for carloads handled. Not only did we beat the old record... we smashed it, with a 78% increase in carloads handled vs. our previous high year of 2021.

So, what led to this increase? One component was an expansion project at one of our online customers. The construction project required the removal of their rail infrastructure and the construction of 2 new rail sidings. The customer wanted to continue to bring in their raw material by rail during the project, so they looked to the Cressona Transload for help. For 4 months we unloaded their inbound railcars and trucked the product to their facility. This spot project accounted for 250+ carloads to the Cressona transload.

However, our growth was not solely attributable to this special project. The reality is that we smashed the old record with our core business which was up 53% after you back-out the special project. Both the West Hazleton transload and Ransom Warehouse saw 50%+ increases vs the old record.

At West Hazleton we handled a record number of cars of steel coils with our original customer, as well as adding a new customer into the mix. This combined for a carload growth of 57%, and the volume is forecasted to be even higher in 2024.

At Ransom we also saw a 50%+ increase in our core business. This was a result of more customers taking advantage of the Ransom warehouse for safety stock, and a conscious effort to reduce the need for emergency trucks. This trend is continuing into 2024 with several customers locking

in reserved warehouse space for 2024. We are also seeing a need for material to be transferred from 60 ft cars to 50 ft cars for 2024. We have brought our fleet of RBMN boxcars back online in 2024 for use in this lane. These cars had previously been in off-line service supporting the traffic that was moving out of the Port of Philadelphia to RBMN. The car-to-car transfer service is a byproduct of changes occurring in the rail industry, specifically the large railroads retiring older 50 ft cars and replacing them with new 60 ft cars. The problem is that the receiver's infrastructure was designed for 50 ft cars many years ago and does not easily accommodate the longer cars. As such we are working with customers to transfer product to 50 ft RBMN cars for the final delivery to the plant. This is another example of RBMN seeing a need and stepping up to provide a solution for our customers.

As we look to 2024 the future is very bright, with all indicators showing that we are on track to have another solid year. ♦



Brad Handling is seen here unloading a car of wood pulp at the Ransom Warehouse. The pulp will be placed in storage as safety stock, as part of the customer's supply chain.

Customer Service

2023 Year in Review

BY: SUSAN LUDWIG, VP MARKETING & CUSTOMER SERVICE



Customer Service Team: left side bottom to top: Susan Ludwig; Kristen McGowan; Justine Berger; Steve Werley; Michele Daub. Right side bottom to top: Lori Chinchar; Leanne Moser; Sherry Primrose; Chrissy Martin.

RBMN enjoyed a record year of growth in 2023, which kept all of our departments very busy. Customer Service handles the rail shift information for over seventy customers. RBMN completed over 7500 customer rail shifts in 2023. Customers all have a 2-hour service window for their shifts, and we met our customer windows 99% of the time. We receive shift information daily from our customers with the cars they request for placement and the cars they release empty or loaded. From this information we prepare work orders for each crew daily that list each customer's daily shift information. We have regular communication with our train crews, who inform us on ETAs for us to communicate with each customer to ensure they are ready for our train crew to shift them.

Customer Service traces customer cars to be able to assist customers with the current location of their cars and to help get hot rush cars moving on the Class 1 Railroads. Customer Service makes sure all revenue is correct for each rail car by auditing for accuracy. We also process all ancillary charges that apply to each customer. The Customer Service group works closely with the Marketing team to assist with any issues that may arise and prepare metrics to help them in preparing rates. Steve Werley and Kristen McGowan keep track of all railcars in the RBMN fleet and work daily with the car shop to ensure all cars have necessary repairs and are moving in a timely manner. All car hire is processed through the Customer Service team as well.

The Customer Service team consists of Lori Chinchar, Director of Customer Service, Steve Werley, Director of Fleet Management, as well as six Customer Service Managers, Michele Daub, Leanne Moser, Justine Berger, Kristen McGowan, Sherry Primrose and Chrissy Martin. I would like to thank each one of them for all their hard work and dedication this past year. We would also like to thank each of our customers for another great year and look forward to working with everyone in 2024! ♦



For the 5th time in 15 years, RBMN accepted the Business Development Award at the 2023 ASLRRRA convention in New Orleans for work on our Tunkhannock Transload Facility. From left to right in photo: Chuck Baker (ASLRRRA President), Jim Cerulli (RBMN VP Industrial Development) and Matt Walsh (ASLRRRA Chairman).

Another Successful Year of Industrial Development!

BY: JIM CERULLI, VP – INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

At Reading and Northern, we view Industrial Development as a calling. We understand we have limited railroad-owned property and we have limited turnkey sites. But we refuse to allow these impediments to get in the way of our constant goal of growing the business.

Accordingly, we remain very active in working with industrial realtors. Anytime we see a business close that is on the railroad or near the railroad we follow up. And we aggressively go after any lead coming from the PA Governor's Action Team or our local development partners.

Our aggressive approach culminated in 3 new customers for the railroad in 2023.

Nearly 2 years in the making, the first of these projects was the completion of the Stella Jones pole distribution facility at Morea, PA in March. To land Stella Jones, we worked tirelessly for nearly 2 years identifying potential sites and working through the land development process with both the developer and Stella Jones. With existing rail infrastructure and 20 + acres of level property, the former mine site that was chosen was the perfect fit for a transfer and storage yard for telephone poles. To meet the needs of Stella Jones and to ensure the long-term success of this new business, extensive trackwork and service adjustments were needed on the seldom used branch line that serves the site. Our MOW team along with contractors installed nearly 5000 new ties and completed gauging/surfacing work on the branchline. Our Transportation team designed a new operating plan and added crew/power resources to increase service to Delano/Morea from 1 day per week to as many as 5 days per week. We look forward to working with Stella Jones for years to come at their new facility, which will service much of the mid-Atlantic and Northeast region.

We also welcomed 2 new customers that moved into formerly vacant buildings in the Humboldt Industrial Park near Hazleton, PA. The first was Schutz Container Systems which opened its doors in August, occupying the former Graham Packaging facility which closed in 2021. We were fortunate enough to have a good relationship with the brokerage company that was

handling the building sale and aggressively worked with them to locate a new rail user to occupy the site. After over a year of searching, we were able to land Schutz Container Systems. Schutz manufactures plastic containers and was a perfect fit for the former Graham Packaging plastics facility. The second was Patton Warehousing, which now occupies the former Office Max distribution facility that sat vacant after shuttering in 2020. Although initially Patton did not have a need for rail service, we still took the time to visit their facility and maintain a positive relationship with their management team. By continuing to stay engaged with Patton, when a rail opportunity came along, they knew who to call and we were quickly able to get them set up as an active rail user.

In addition to our 3 new Industrial Development successes, we also worked through a significant expansion and upgrade to our Tunkhannock Transload facility in 2023. Due to the high volume of truck and rail activity at the site, the need to upgrade the road, rail and transfer area infrastructure was paramount to our continued success. Throughout this past year, we have constructed a 3000' runaround track to support rail operations and completed a \$250,000 paving and loop road project to allow for smoother truck and transfer operations at the terminal. All these upgrades, along with aggressive marketing have allowed us to handle over 4700 carloads through the facility in 2023, a 200% + increase in volume over 2022.

Looking toward 2024, there are several Industrial Development projects that are in varying stages of development. These include both traditional Industrial Development opportunities, but also opportunities to work with our existing Coal Customers to expand or develop new Anthracite facilities along the railroad. Much of my time will be spent working with the coal team and our coal producers on the development of these exciting new projects. Although these large-scale projects take years to come to fruition, the potential for several thousand carloads of additional coal business exists with the development of these new coal facilities.

I look forward to working with new and existing customers, our various partners and of course my wonderful colleagues to continue our Industrial Development success in 2024! ♦

Operations

2023 Year in Review

BY: TYLER GLASS, EVP OPERATIONS

2023 is behind us in a flash and again we wonder where the time went. Another record year is in the books and it proved to be challenging on many fronts to keep things moving.

I'm really proud of the way our personnel stepped up to handle the strain our additional traffic put on the railroad. There were many instances throughout the year where we were already operating at maximum capacity (or so we thought) and then we would be blessed to have some more unanticipated traffic come our way. Thankfully we have a culture of figuring out how to execute, checkmate isn't an option.

Once again anthracite coal and frac sand would be the bigger stories of the year for Operations. Our expanding passenger operations in the Wilkes-Barre/Scranton area would also add more complexity, mostly to our weekend operations.

Our anthracite business traveling to the ports from multiple origin coal suppliers required many more crews to handle than in past years. Demands were not just on Transportation but also our car shop that had to increase inspections and maintenance to ensure the equipment would be in shape to handle the demands. Our partners at Norfolk Southern also did a fantastic job ensuring the additional bulk coal traffic remained fluid.

Our frac sand business more than doubled, which meant additional unit trains. But because of investments in infrastructure at our Tunkhannock transload facility we would be able to handle the additional business efficiently.

We also saw some growth with other freight customers that also required rethinking how some of our locals are operated. For example, our operations starting at Tamaqua have doubled in recent years. So in order to keep that operation fluid we added additional locomotive storage tracks as well as additional facilities for crew safety and comforts.

And to help us handle all our new business we have been busy hiring and training new conductors. One of the reasons the company focuses on taking care of its existing employees is that it takes a lot of

time to train new staff. But that training is essential in order to ensure safe and efficient operations.

As you will also read in many places in this magazine, our passenger business continues to expand. Opening the Wilkes-Barre/Scranton Regional Railroad Station was huge and added more complexity to our operations around Jim Thorpe. Good planning gave us a great start to the new operation, but the ability to see how it goes once you finally get it going can bring some things to light. So we adjusted as necessary and eventually it just became another train in the mix. MOW really helped with the new business by adding more trackage at Pittston and Jim Thorpe. The signal department also made many upgrades to our signal system on the Lehigh Division to further enhance our passenger operations.

Our railroad continues to be a 24/7 operation and with the additional passenger activity the weekends are far busier than they were a few short years ago. Amazing how over time the addition of one train here and there add up and pretty soon our dispatchers have plenty of activity on the weekends.

The diesel shop also continues to push out quality products. And again this year they continued to bring back to life more locomotives we bought from NS a couple of years ago that came out of storage. The diesel shop personnel always works closely with the transportation team to ensure that any issues that may arise with a locomotive are dealt with quickly and efficiently to keep things

moving. Special shoutout to the restoration shop in Cressona, they have continued to run several locomotives through their shop to give them a fresh coat of quality paint.

Our steam shop made sure steam locomotive 2102 was in tip top shape for our Iron Horse Rambles and they did not disappoint. They also were huge in helping with some passenger car maintenance as well as making some custom parts for all kinds of equipment on the railroad. Our machine shop makes some amazing things for multiple departments on the railroad.

The Communications and Signals Department completed several crossing projects along the Main Line this year. These crossing enhancements included flashers and gates. Gives our crews some extra comfort with the addition of the warning devices. Keeping the wayside signal in great shape is no small feat either, the department continues to excel in this area no matter what challenges they face.

The larger we get the more processes and such we need to implement to operate similar to the larger railroads. However, we do our best to have the spirit of the small railroad that got us here. Balancing the two is not always easy but that is what keeps it interesting. The challenge is real!

One thing I need to reiterate, all our people in this fine organization did an amazing job stepping it up and doing all the great things you are reading about in this issue of the magazine! ♦

Safety Always

Navigating Growth Safely

BY: ERIC PETERS, VP TRANSPORTATION & SAFETY

Every year we think we can't possibly get busier, but then we do. 2023 proved to be a challenging year for Transportation as well as many of the other departments to navigate the growth safely. The increase in volume and complexity meant a demand for more people in several departments. The year saw several individuals getting promoted into management roles as well as people crossing into new departments. There were 40 people hired of which the Transportation Department was responsible for half. Unfortunately, not all the new hires had what it took to be a safe and efficient railroader. It can be tempting to take shortcuts in education and training when a company is shorthanded, but not at Reading and Northern. The safety always culture prevailed, but it did put a lot of pressure on the existing workforce to absorb the increase in work. Beyond the new hires each department did training for existing employees to promote them to roles of more responsibility and skill sets.

Safety and Rules Classes are a foundation for the company to learn and share experiences. The expanded qualifications for all safety sensitive crafts increased the importance of quality training through classes and on-the-job training. Many of our veteran railroaders took on the challenge of training and became mentors to assist with the development of the next generation. There was a new class of 6

Locomotive Engineers that graduated during the year to join the elite R&N Engineer roster.

As the day turns into night and the rain turns into sleet, the freight trains continue down the tracks. The Transportation team worked long hours day and night to serve our revenue customers and our internal customers. The men and women in train service were successful nearly 99% of the time in 2023 at meeting our customers' two-hour service windows. During the year three new customers came online, adding to the complexity of the operation. One of the new customers, Stella Jones, required additional crew starts and increased train traffic on a running track we hadn't been utilizing consistently. We put in thousands of cross ties and rehabbed portions of the route that needed it. The other two customers began getting service in the already extremely busy Humboldt Industrial Park. Servicing them adds to the daily puzzle of how to successfully meet the customers' demands in the park.

Though not new, our sand terminal had exponential growth in 2023 and records were set with the amount of coal we transported. These bulk commodities are resource intensive not only for Transportation, but also the supporting departments such as the car shop, locomotive

and Maintenance of Way. The coal is loaded in our own cars which requires additional maintenance by the car shop and switching by the crews to get the cars to Port Clinton and into the shop. The large increase in tonnage traveling the system meant we needed more locomotives in service and once in service they are being pushed hard. This adds work and pressure to the locomotive shop to keep reliable engines in service. The increase in train traffic and tonnage has caused the need for more maintenance and additional infrastructure. MoW and contractors have performed a large amount of work to keep the railroad safe and operational. The Signal Department continues to be busy working on new crossing projects with warnings and adding signals to more efficient and safer transit. The year also saw new passenger service start at Pittston and an overall increase in ridership. This gave our passengers an opportunity to see the safety always culture firsthand.

All the additional safety sensitive work equates to increased exposure by our workforce. Each department has done a fantastic job mitigating the risk they are faced with daily. With education and training as the base, the entire team has navigated the growth with enhanced situational awareness and focus on safety. 2023 saw a decline in the injury ratio for the company.

A great example of going above and beyond for the safety of our employees, customers, and general public was that we changed how we operated trains to multiple hazmat customers. The company decided to take steps to put safeguards in place that surpass industry standards. We also continue to partner with the Federal Railroad Administration to not only ensure our programs meet the standards, but that we continue to be the positive example among short lines of our administering and organization.

2023 was a banner year for Reading and Northern. I am delighted to welcome all the new team members that joined throughout the year as well as have excitement for our future recruits in 2024. Everyone at Reading and Northern exemplifies our core value of servicing our customers safely. ♦



Passenger Mechanical is repairing maintenance items from our 2023 list beginning with RDC 9168.

Locomotive Mechanical 2023 Year in Review

BY: DUSTIN BERNDT, VP MOTIVE POWER

The completion of the 2023 year has been like no other in the history of the Reading & Northern. This past year has been the busiest year in the prosperous history of the Railroad, and none of that busy schedule has excluded the Locomotive and Passenger Mechanical departments.

In the past year, both of these mentioned departments work closely together as a team to get the job done moving freight and people throughout the year. The Locomotive Mechanical department has been busy maintaining the existing locomotive fleet while still adding a couple of locomotives to active service this past year. The RBMN 2023 was finally completed and added to active duty after some extensive repairs were finished since purchasing the locomotive in 2020. We have also added the SD40-2 3061 to active duty in 2023 after sorting out some high voltage electrical problems it had since getting it out of storage. These repairs were the result of rebuilding the Main generator to get rid of its grounded condition and two traction motors. Since repairing these specific items and replacing a few small items it has finally become dependable and a worthy addition to the active family of locomotives at the RBMN.

We have also continued with the painting program throughout the year getting a few more locomotives outfitted in some beautiful paint schemes. The 2023 immediately received new paint as it was quickly directed towards the passenger trains in Pittston that also enjoyed a fantastic inaugural year. We have also painted the 3068 and the 3064 to the standard but impressive green and yellow Reading and Northern SD40 scheme. Lastly, the 3062 was pulled out of storage to be used again this year while getting a new Blue Mountain and Reading paint job and changing the number to date the paint job as the 1983. The Restoration department did an excellent job replicating this paint design used many years ago on this locomotive!

Next, the Passenger Mechanical had an unprecedented increase in maintenance this past year while moving many coaches through the Wheel Shop we share for maintenance and wheel work to all the fleet including Locomotives. It would be too many coaches to list that were added to active duty in 2023 to have available for service for the busiest last three months of the year, but it was accomplished with the total nearing 50 coaches! The talented and dedicated group of Passenger mechanics have done everything from replacing wheels with rolling bearing sets, to repairs to cosmetic exteriors, generator maintenance and many air brake conversions this year. I

also assigned a multi-talented and versatile electrician to predominantly be in the Passenger Department daily to work on all the coaches electrically. This is no doubt a full-time position to keep the cars in good electrical condition and keep all the lights working in the coaches while repairing any other issues and upgrades that do arise. Another addition to the passenger department this year has been in the form of people in the Management of the department. With so many trains running this year and on the same days, this team of exceptional personnel has done a wonderful job working with mechanical to keep everything running on very tight schedules while using excellent planning. Without these folks and good reporting, it would not be possible to keep the fleet in proper working order to be presentable to the public. I must say I am proud to say what an excellent job I saw this department do as a whole this year when thinking about all that was accomplished. We could not have done all this without the team effort that was shown from all persons involved.

Lastly, the Passenger mechanical wouldn't be complete without mention of the excellent group of guys dedicated to keeping the 2102 in perfect working order this past year when called upon to run their scheduled trips mostly in the fall months. The 425 was out of service this past year going through some extensive work in 2023, but I expect to see this locomotive in good working order soon. Also, while all this steam work is being done, the staff shouldered the loads of helping many other departments at the Railroad. They are the "go to" guys for all machining work in the company to be completed and they have helped immensely with fabricating parts and repairs done so far on the 1165 coach car. The Steam Shop guys often work behind the scenes, but always deserve recognition for another job well done and I'm sure we can expect the same in 2024 when called upon.

Finally, I expect there to be no letup in sight for 2024 for all the mechanical departments. With the increase in work mentioned previously, I am looking forward to making Building 3 operational at Nesquehoning this year! We have discussed plans to have a track enter the facility, get the building operational and hopefully perform some heavy repairs to locomotives and passenger coaches alike in the coming year. This addition would greatly add to our potential of the work that could be accomplished throughout the year in the maintenance of all rolling stock. I look forward to the possibilities that could be brought to this location in 2024, so keep an eye on things to move along this year at Nesquehoning as it would be very beneficial to the Reading and Northern to continue to grow in the years to come! ♦

Mechanical 2023 Year in Review

BY: DAN PUKSAR, VP MECHANICAL

2023 was another highly productive year managing the maintenance and repair of Reading & Northern freight cars as well as our equipment and vehicles. Especially with the addition of highly qualified personnel to help manage the growth.

It may seem redundant time after time saying that the RBMN keeps breaking records and growing, but the truth is, the RBMN keeps growing and breaking records. This year was no different and for our mechanical team that meant keeping up with car demand, getting cars in service, purchasing new vehicles, and growing our equipment fleet. Where other companies are cutting costs, selling items, or downsizing, the RBMN is doing the opposite. While we maintain cost saving through many ways, Andy is never afraid to grow the fleet of railcars, vehicles, and equipment. This year alone the RBMN purchased 98 additional railcars, along with 15 pieces of equipment, and 20 vehicles.

The car shop had easily one of the busiest years to date with 1,400 cars coming through the shop for service and repairs. Crews also went out on over 500 service calls, and we were able to change out nearly 100 wheelsets thanks to our aggressive tactic on condemnable wheels. The shop worked hard to ensure that along with the day-to-day items being handled, we were also able to get the 98 newly purchased covered hoppers in service. This included painting some of the cars, lettering, and giving an overall mechanical inspection/service to the new fleet. The Carshop is also 100% on board with Andy's Zero Tolerance for graffiti- if we see graffiti on cars, it gets taken care of asap, or gets shipped to our Paint Dept. Andy takes great pride in his fleet and so do we! The shop strives for the best maintenance and repairs, along with ensuring the cars are clean and presentable.

The Equipment shop saw another outstanding year keeping all the on track

and off-track equipment in excellent working order. We brought on two truck mechanics to fill vacancies in our Class 7 & 8 truck mechanic roles out of the Nesquehoning Campus. They will be responsible for assisting in maintaining all the PT trucks, Semi Trucks, and all trailers. The Equipment Shop will be starting something entirely new for 2024- a second shift mechanical team. This will help ensure all demands for rail equipment are met in a timely manner as not only do we continue to purchase more equipment, but the need for equipment also grows every day. Andy continues to invest in the right equipment to maintain over 400 miles of track. One of the biggest investments on the equipment side was the purchase of the RBMN's third Tamper. This machine is critical in track maintenance, and it is the first time ever the RBMN had three Tampers running and maintaining track, and with all three Tampers in good running order, they are ready for whatever 2024 has in store.

In the world of vehicles things just never seem to stay consistent, prices fluctuate, parts availability is inconsistent, and lead times change in minutes. I believe the only consistency is the fact that every year more and more trucks/cars are needed for this growing company! In 2023 the RBMN purchased 20 vehicles, MOW crew trucks, Mechanical trucks, but also vehicles for office personnel use, and departments that have several locations, i.e. Passenger & Police. These vehicles are vital to the railroad and vital to helping other departments get their work accomplished. With over 100 vehicles being maintained by two excellent mechanics it is amazing what gets accomplished. In 2024 we will look to grow the vehicle shop in Nesquehoning by adding in more equipment to help bring down some of the outside cost and help maintain the fleet even better.

On behalf of the entire mechanical team we wish everyone a Happy New Year and we can't wait to see what 2024 brings! ♦

Fleet Management 2023 Year in Review

BY: STEVE WERLEY, DIRECTOR FLEET MANAGEMENT
& KRISTEN MCGOWAN, CUSTOMER SERVICE MANAGER

2023 shaped up to be a busy year for Fleet Management. While day to day management of 1500+ railcars is no ordinary feat, 2023 presented some additional challenges and areas for growth. These day-to-day tasks include establishing the line up of cars to enter the Car Shop for repair, coordinating the inspection of inbound RBMN anthracite equipment (all inbound anthracite equipment is inspected before placement for loading), and tracking empty cars coming back online. New for 2022, and greatly expanded with our increased volume to the Kinder Morgan Fairless Hills, PA is detailed tracing, and follow up on the RBMN rapid discharge fleet.

98 covered hoppers were purchased this year to both replace cars aged out of service, and to expand the fleet to meet growing business. These cars had to be traced while moving to RBMN to ensure that no cars got misrouted or otherwise delayed from

arriving. Once here, coordination with our Car Shop to order AEI tags, and get them into the shop for preparation to enter RBMN anthracite coal service was the order of the day. No newly purchased RBMN car goes into service without going through our Car Shop. Once out of the shop, cars are weighed on RBMN's certified scale, and a new tare and load limit established. Cars are then made available to RBMN service coal producers where they are promptly loaded and sent throughout the United States.

Making this happen requires coordination between Marketing, Mechanical, Operations, and Customer Service departments and no 2 days are quite the same. However, with Kristen McGowan's invaluable assistance, we're ready to tackle the new fleet needs in 2024 and beyond. ♦

2023, One for the Ages

BY: CHRIS GOETZ, VP MAINTENANCE OF WAY



This year, 2023, started right where 2022 left off. A mild winter gave way to softer ground, allowing for rail and tie installation to continue. We were able to make a push this winter to complete our mainline CWR installation as well as complete some larger mainline tie projects due to the mild temperatures and favorable ground conditions. MOW forces did not slow down as is traditionally expected of the season, January and February of 2023 were just as busy as any other months in 2022.

In addition to our mainline projects, we completed a massive undertaking in Jim Thorpe for our Passenger Department. As part of a total rehabilitation project, MOW forces constructed 5 new switches, built 1500 feet of track, and installed our first diamond allowing the passenger business to operate more efficiently. This all was in addition to the grand opening of our train station in Pittston, which included the rehabilitation of the Pittston wye, construction of 2 additional tracks, and an immense clean-up project of an entire railyard to make way for customer parking.

Riverside Yard, Tamaqua Yard, and North Reading Yard all received upgrades to assist with our expanding sand and coal business. Countless hours were spent installing timbers and ties, gaging, and adjusting switches. Once those steps were done, we finished with a ballast dumping and surfacing regiment. All these pieces came together to revitalize these yards that rivaled class one railroads, a look that these yards haven't seen in over 50 years.

With assistance from contractors and intense coordination, MOW installed

14,000 ties on the Delano RT and M&S BT. RBMN worked hand-in-hand with Tartaglia Railroad Services to bring a new standard to the Delano RT for new-found Stella Jones pole traffic, and the M&S BT for the ever-expanding anthracite coal business. For a period this summer RBMN MOW forces also ran a tie gang of their own installing about 2,500 ties between both tracks one and two north of Seidel on our mainline.

A change for RBMN this year was the undertaking of our own, in-house, weed spray and paving programs. In late-spring, RBMN took ownership of our own hi-rail spray truck which quickly tackled the ever-growing vegetation along the right of ways. Then, in late summer, RBMN took ownership of our first paving equipment including a paver, mill-head along with many other paving facets. This undertaking proved to be fruitful as we then used the equipment to pave the 1700 sq ft Tunkhannock Sand Transload pad and about half a dozen grade crossings.

Ballast and surfacing was a large focus for MOW in 2023, we dumped just shy of 35,000 tons of ballast and surfaced 511,000 (96.9 miles) track feet. The bulk of which was honed in on the Hazleton Line and Lehigh Mainline. The Susquehanna Branch also received a surfacing up-lift with a tamper and regulator duo tackling the whole line from Sand to Spring.

As our accomplishments of 2023 come to an end and we look to 2024 with many ambitions, none of what we do could be done without the hard work of men and women that make up our MOW department. ♦

Images continued on page 18.

Jeremy Green nearing completion of the High Bridge from high above the Little Schuylkill.



Station Siding rehab is nearly complete to kick off the Jim Thorpe Yard overhaul for our passenger customers with Chris Garcia and Dale Homm finishing ties.



On its first day running, the HRV-45 piloted by Nick Alberswerth sprays on the Tremont RT.



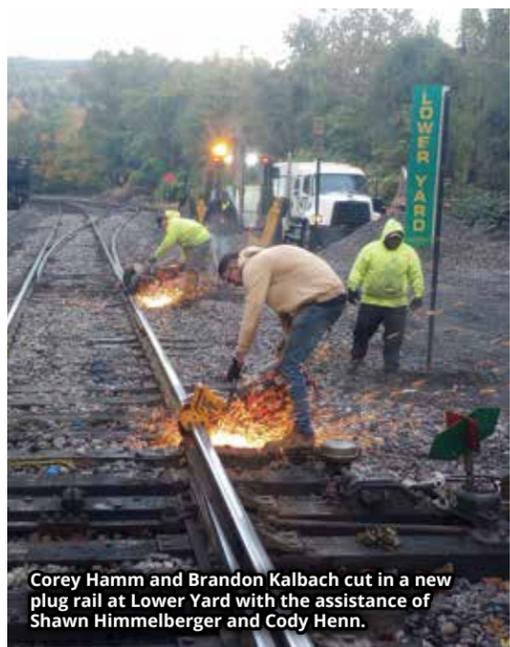
Jason Moyer, Chucky Carl, Brian Van Blargan, and Dennis Rosohac install ties along the M&S BT at MP 120.9.



Josh Antosh, Russ Monroe, and Matt Mizikoski gage and replat the White Haven Bridge.



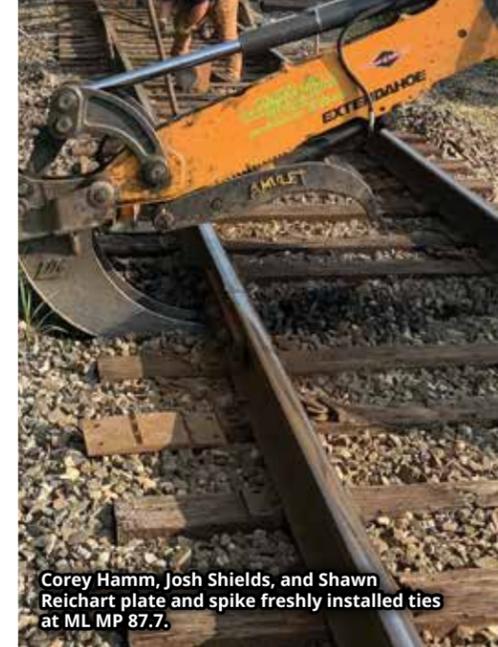
Following install, Matt Minnich tamps the diamond track with the Tamper-4 after a bead of stone.



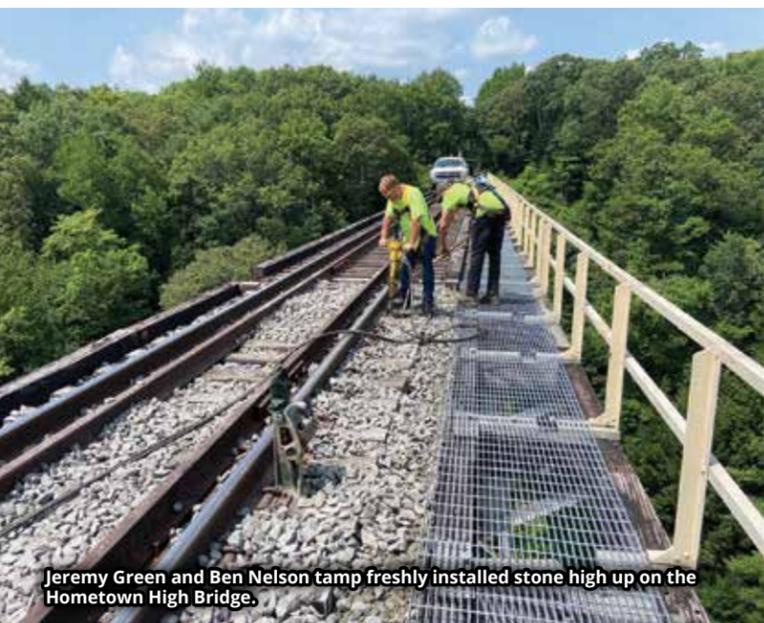
Corey Hamm and Brandon Kalbach cut in a new plug rail at Lower Yard with the assistance of Shawn Himmelberger and Cody Henn.



Joe Sword, Mike Lojewski, Josh Antosh, Alex Scubelek, and Ryan Rupprecht operate a paver on the Tunkhannock Transload Pad.



Corey Hamm, Josh Shields, and Shawn Reichart plate and spike freshly installed ties at ML MP 87.7.



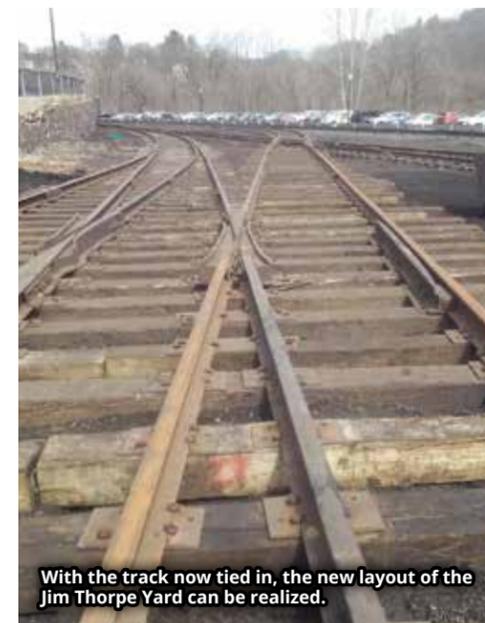
Jeremy Green and Ben Nelson tamp freshly installed stone high up on the Hometown High Bridge.



Mario DeMarco lays out rails for the construction of the Pittston Passenger Storage Track with the PT-4.



Part of the Jim Thorpe Yard overhaul was the installation of a diamond, here Ben Nelson is assisting with the backhoe in lining up the diamonds location.



With the track now tied in, the new layout of the Jim Thorpe Yard can be realized.



RBMN forces work together with Muhlenberg Township to finish rehab of the Tuckerton Road crossing.



Matt Minnich and Chris Garcia cut into the rail to begin the rehab of Spruce Street in Tamaqua.



Derek Reber completes grinding on a fresh thermite weld nearing the end of the Tuckerton Crossover rehab in North Reading Yard.



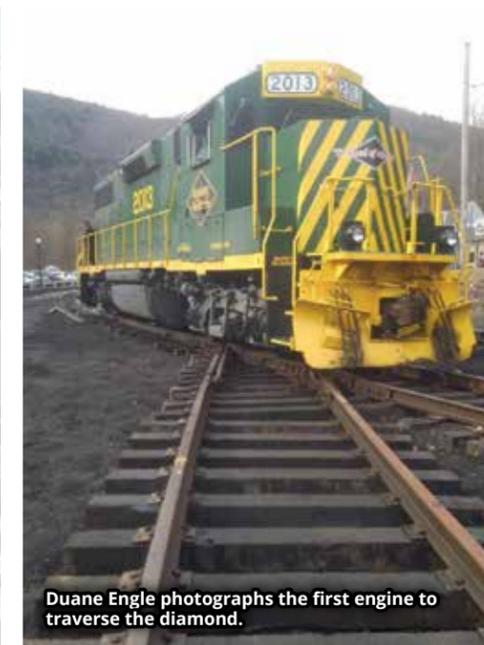
Corey Hamm makes a cut at ML MP 95.4 to install a plug rail.



In progress shot of the red stone being laid out by MOW forces in and around the new station in Pittston.



Chris Garcia, Joe Sword, and Jason Winwood finish nipping and spiking ties on the north end of Hughes Ave in New Ringold.



Duane Engle photographs the first engine to traverse the diamond.



Mike Lojewski, Russ Monroe, and Alex Scubelek utilize the Tamper-4 to surface the Riverside XO #2.



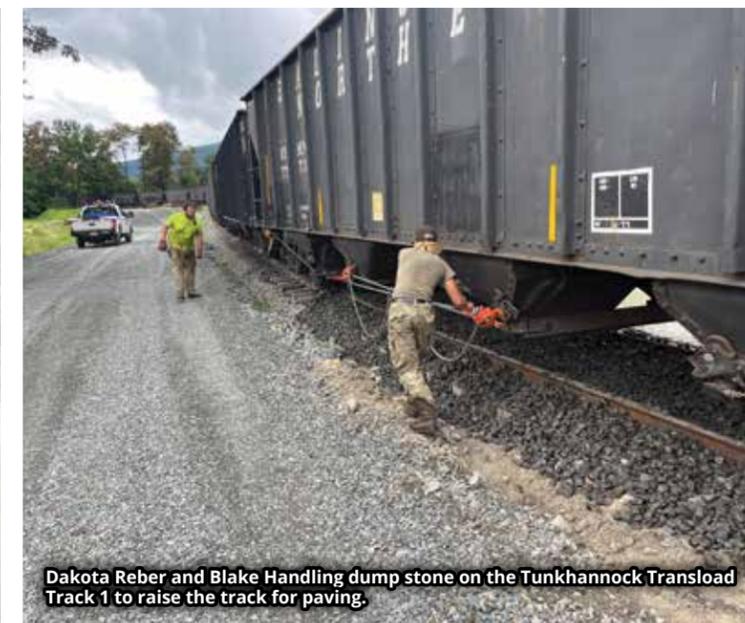
With a fresh bumper installed, construction of the Pittston Passenger Storage Track is complete.



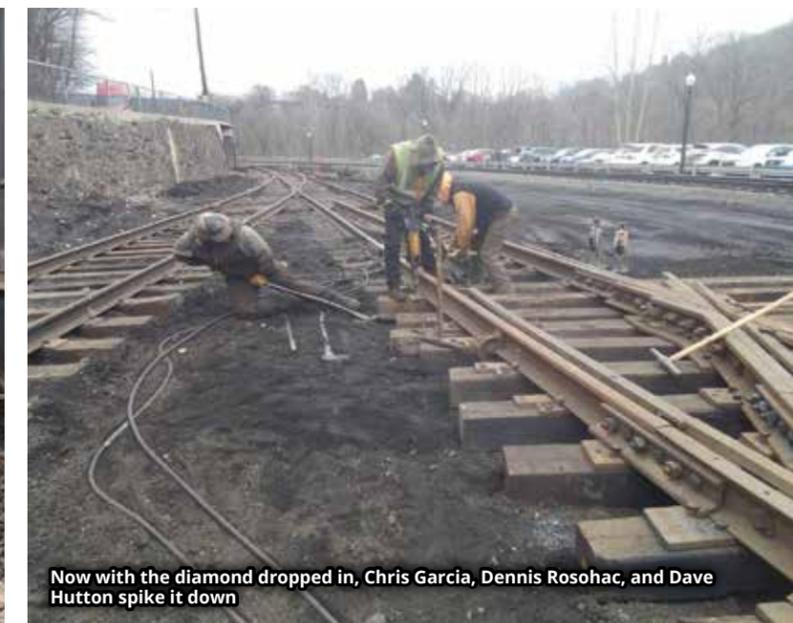
Russ Monroe and Alex Scubelek install new ties in the RBMN Ransom Warehouse after raising the tracks inside.



Matt McGinnis photographs a nearly completed 3000' siding/runaround in Tunkhannock to help facilitate sand traffic.



Dakota Reber and Blake Handling dump stone on the Tunkhannock Transload Track 1 to raise the track for paving.



Now with the diamond dropped in, Chris Garcia, Dennis Rosohac, and Dave Hutton spike it down.

Communications & Signals

2023 Year in Review

BY: MATT COLLINS, VP COMMUNICATION & SIGNALS



(Left) Electrician Ryan Boyer and (Right) Backhoe Operator Shawn Himmelberger are busy installing engine heater backboards at the Pittston Wilkes Barre/Scranton Regional Railroad Station project.

We witnessed a flurry of activity in the Communications and Signals (C&S) department, emphasizing crossing safety-related projects.

C&S's first significant undertaking of 2023 involved the construction of two double-tracked gated crossings on our Main Line near Wilkes Barre, PA, designed to accommodate a new pipeline traversing the area. These two crossings entailed extensive wiring, requiring meticulous planning and implementation to ensure safety and efficiency. In addition, installing the gates and bungalows was executed within a concise time frame, demonstrating the team's exemplary time management skills and ability to work under pressure. Despite the complexity and rigorous demands of the project, the team's efficiency and dedication enabled the successful completion of this project on time. C&S then shifted our attention to completing electrical work in the Pittston Yard Office area and the new Wilkes Barre/Scranton Regional Railroad Station, which entailed installing additional engine heaters for the new storage tracks and fiber optic lighting circuits and the new entrance sign.

Once the primary electrical infrastructure was established, the department moved on to installing the active warning system for Union Street Crossing as part of the Pittston project. Unique for its use of wig-wags in the warning system, this crossing stands out in our portfolio.

After wrapping up operations in the Pittston area, the C&S team moved southwards to the Industrial Drive, West Crossing, on our Main Line near Nesquehoning. This location was a priority due to its high volume of truck traffic utilizing the crossing. This project involved the upgrade from flashers to gates and flashers. This significant improvement required the installation of a new bungalow, state-of-the-art electronics, comprehensive cabling, gate mechanisms, and flashers for safer and more efficient operations at Industrial Drive, West. This project is yet another testament to the railroad's commitment to increasing its safety and efficiency.

After completing the project at Industrial Drive West, the C&S team embarked on another significant mission. This next project involved the meticulously planned installation of gates and flashers at the Creek Road Crossing. Notably positioned just north of the Seidel Interlocking on our Main Line. Creek Road presented its unique set of challenges of being a double-track crossing that integrates the Seidel Interlocking limits as part of the approaches. Despite this, the team's successful project execution demonstrated their ability to overcome challenges and deliver results. Their dedication and commitment to the task and innovative problem-solving skills ensured the project's success, even under challenging circumstances. The team's accomplishment serves as an exemplar of resilience and high-performance teamwork.

In addition to our work on crossing projects, the C&S Department also made significant progress in updating and improving our signal system. This included implementing a new lunar aspect at Rick Interlocking to inform crews that they are being routed to our scale track at North Reading Yard, along with a wayside update at the 65 Signal.

In terms of our green initiatives, the electrician team was significantly engaged in carbon reduction projects throughout the year. This included updating inefficient lighting fixtures to more efficient LED units at various locations and installing additional locomotive heater plugs to reduce idle locomotives. These endeavors underscore Andy's commitment to environmental stewardship.

In summary, the C&S department's remarkable performance in 2023 is a testament to the team's dedication, technical skills, and unwavering commitment to safety. We have successfully executed numerous projects and made significant improvements. As we enter 2024, we aim to build on these accomplishments and continue to enhance our infrastructure, focusing on creating a safer and more environmentally friendly railroad. ♦



Electrician Ryan Boyer, analyzing the wig-wag operation at Union St, Pittston.



(Left) Electrician Ryan Boyer and (right) Signal Maintainer Matt Kunkle are hard at work, installing one of several engine heater backboards for the Pittston Wilkes Barre/Scranton Regional Railroad Station project.



Out with the old, in with the new! In bucket Signal Maintainers Zack Baker and at the turret Matt Knuckle efficiently replacing a damaged pole in Tamaqua, PA.



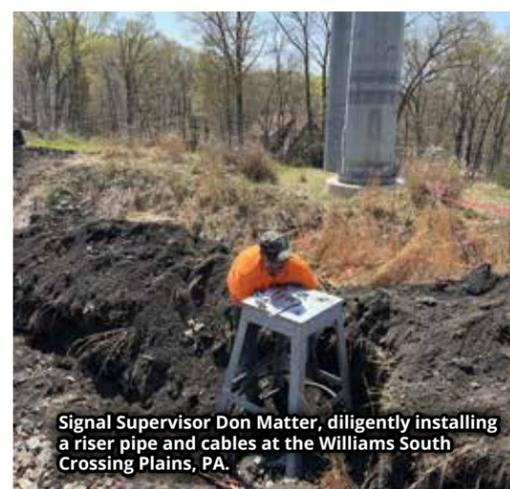
Don Matter, Signal Supervisor, hard at work setting up the crossing at Creek Road in Plains, PA.



Signal Maintainers (Left) Matt Kunkle, (Center) Brenton Bezek, and (Right) Kyle Kogoy as they collaborate to reinstall the switch machine at Seidel Interlocking in Plains, PA.



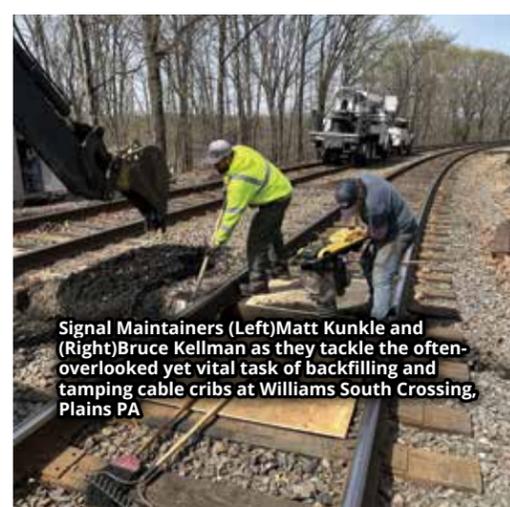
Signal Maintainer Bruce Kellman, diligently installing the wigwags at the Union St Crossing Pittston, PA.



Signal Supervisor Don Matter, diligently installing a riser pipe and cables at the Williams South Crossing Plains, PA.



Signal Maintainers Aaron Schweibinz and Brenton Bezek as they work meticulously to reinstall a knocked-down flasher at Broad St, Port Clinton PA.



Signal Maintainers (Left) Matt Kunkle and (Right) Bruce Kellman as they tackle the often-overlooked yet vital task of backfilling and tamping cable cribs at Williams South Crossing, Plains PA

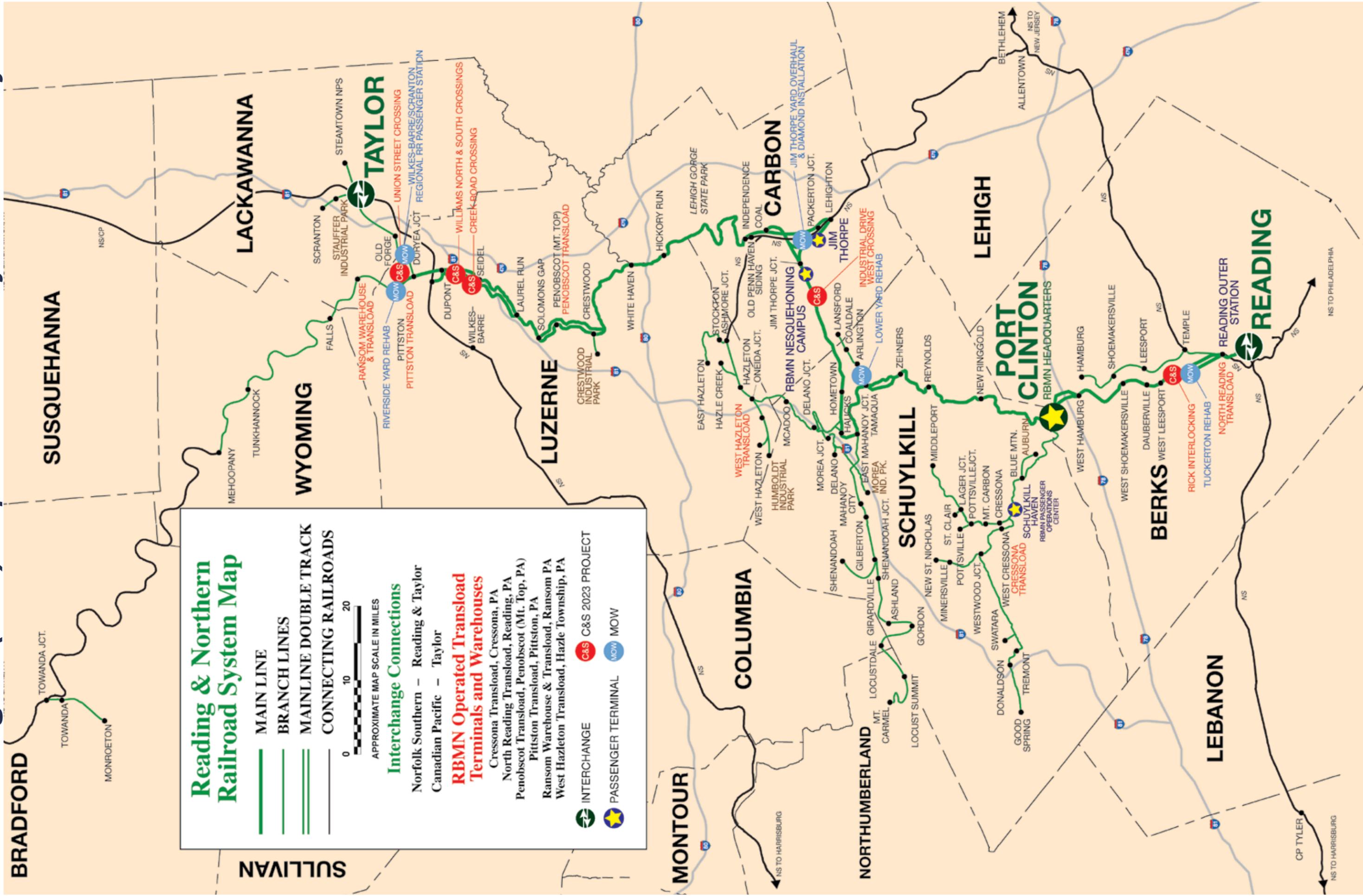


At Williams South Crossing in Plains, PA, Signal Maintainers Aaron Schweibinz and Kyle Kogoy work diligently on installing gate and flasher cables.



Humboldt, PA, where Signal Maintainers Matt Kunkle, Brenton Bezek, and Aaron Schweibinz can be seen working together to install a flasher tree.

MOW & Signal (C&S) Departments Major 2023 Projects



Real Estate Department 2023 and Beyond

BY: JOLENE BUSER, AVP REAL ESTATE

The Real Estate Department was on the move in 2023! Early in January 2023 the Department's corporate records and office was relocated to the former Wells Fargo bank in Hamburg, a bank originally built in 1926 with many of its original 1920s characteristics still in place. This move was carefully organized as to not disrupt the day to day operations of the Real Estate staff as well as to maintain records organization from the Department's previous location in Port Clinton to Hamburg. This move was possible with the help of Reading & Northern's IT and Facilities departments, as well as Real Estate Inspectors Phil Schaeffer, Jeff Gerber, and Spencer Buckingham who did a tremendous job keeping all of the Department's records organized during the move.

The Real Estate Department also now has an "outpost" at the Reading & Northern's Nesquehoning Campus as well, so we can readily navigate to more northern locations on our rail line. This reporting location has been critical for this winter's schedule for the Real Estate Inspectors who, after completing a busy summer of public construction projects, are undertaking a thorough inventory of our mainline and Branch lines, starting with our northernmost locations. All four of our Real Estate Inspectors, Jack Wassel, Phil Schaeffer, Jeff Gerber, and Spencer Buckingham have been completing hi rail inspections of our lines with the goal of inventorying all utility occupations and property encroachments. This will help our staff, Kathy Gipe, Derrick Keener, and Taylor Haupt in investigating utility occupations on our lines not covered by license agreements and also so that we can handle instances of trespass with the Reading & Northern Police Department. These hi rail inspections will be an ongoing effort moving forward to stay alert of property matters along our lines.

At grade crossings were given much attention in 2023 with plans into 2024 for more upgrades and rehabilitation. Wherever possible, the Reading & Northern advocates the removal of at grade crossings, and we were pleased to work with Tamaqua Borough in Schuylkill County on the planned 2024 removal of one of their at grade crossings in town located on Vine Street. We hope to see other communities seek the removal of unnecessary or otherwise unneeded crossings. Reading & Northern was also pleased to partner with Muhlenberg Township and Leesport Borough in Berks County this past summer on crossing surface rehabilitations, and hopes to continue to do so as needed in other communities this coming summer. Barnesville in Schuylkill County will see crossing signal upgrades on State Route 54 and Grier Avenue this coming year as the Reading & Northern has partnered with PennDOT District 5 to perform safety upgrades at these crossings.

The Real Estate Department is eager to start the new year with goals of managing the many miles of property and encouraging safe travels through our neighboring communities. Each year brings its new challenges and opportunities, and the Real Estate team ready for what 2024 has to offer! ♦

Police Department 2023 in Review

BY: RYAN PARKS, RBMN POLICE SERGEANT



Officer Michael Painter looking over the 425 Steam Locomotive in Jim Thorpe at the Passenger Station.

There was no easing into the year 2023 for the Reading and Northern Railroad Police Department as it started off with a burglary and arson several days into the new year at the Ransom Warehouse. The subject was taken into custody after a 12-hour man hunt with assisting agencies involved including PSP, Duryea PD, and the Game Commission. The use of a helicopter and UTV played a key role in helping to apprehend the suspect. The suspect had an active warrant for aggravated assault with a deadly weapon stemming from an incident on New Year's Eve. Our officers, responding in a timely manner, were able to aid in extinguishing the fire started by the subject inside the building. During the investigation and search of the warehouse our officers recovered a homemade firearm and we then worked with the ATF agency regarding the firearm. Continuing into 2023 the police department stayed very busy receiving numerous calls for service for trespassing, thefts, graffiti, encroachments, and collisions. We had one of our officers who served over 10 years with our police department retire and we also relocated to a new home at the Nesquehoning Campus in the middle of the year. Rounding out the year we assisted with traffic control at various crossing projects and aided with all passenger train trips.

We received hundreds of reports of trespassing incidents and other calls from co-workers, neighbors, customers, and other law enforcement agencies. Many of these trespassing incidents turned out to be more than just trespassing and through further investigation led to more serious arrests, some of which included possession of controlled substances and theft of railroad materials. We responded to numerous calls for trucks striking our railroad bridges, vehicle collisions on railroad property, and grade crossing collisions at multiple locations throughout the railroad. We also encountered several wildlife incidents with trapped animals and abandoned dogs along the tracks. All animals encountered were released and several dogs were rescued by officers and taken to nearby animal shelters. Corporal Fredmonski ended up adopting a yellow lab he rescued as no one came forward claiming ownership of the dog after a story was run on social media and in the local newspaper. He named him "Yogi" and he was welcomed into his family along with his other lab "Triton".

Throughout the year our officers attended a variety of training courses to advance



Corporal Matthew Fredmonski towing Detective Connor Hedrick on a trespasser's abandoned ATV found along the Hazleton Line near MP 112.0 north of State Route 1016 in Lofty while Sergeant Parks secures tow chains.



Corporal Matthew Fredmonski leaving Susquehanna Branch near Mehoopany with abandoned (later adopted) yellow lab "Yogi".

themselves with continued education and knowledge in the law enforcement field. Many of these classes have been helpful with using the knowledge gained to investigate many crimes we encounter. Officer Brazdzionis attended a graffiti investigation course and has since been successful in solving several graffiti crimes that occurred on the railroad and helped other law enforcement agencies with graffiti cases. Corporal Fredmonski attended firearms Instructor Training School and has become a certified instructor for our police department. Detective Hedrick has continued to work with the Joint Terrorism Task Force and has attended numerous classes on terrorism, bomb threats, and active shooter scenarios.

In February 2023 Michael Painter, who was with our department for over 10 years and had over 45 years in law enforcement including being Chief of Police at Hamburg PD retired from service. Mike was a great officer and showed us what it meant to be a police officer and we were all honored to have worked beside him. He was enjoyed by all those that knew him and that got to know him over the years while he was working here. He will be missed but we wish him the best and hope he is enjoying his retirement! An article outlining Mike's retirement was featured in the Reading Eagle and in the 2023 spring edition of the R&N Magazine.

Shortly after Mike's retirement we began the hiring process to replace him. Finding a replacement wasn't easy because of his ties to Berks County and relationships he had made. After many applications and interviews we found an officer who had the experience and qualities we were looking for to further the department and bring us back up to six full-time officers. In April we were fortunate enough to hire Ronald Mohl who recently had retired as a Sergeant of the Northern Berks Regional Police Department. Officer Mohl brings numerous years of experience, networking, and various specialties to the department including crash reconstructionist, MCSAP/DOT Certified, Evidence Technician critical incident response instructor, and years of criminal investigation experience just to name a few. Officer Mohl has already been a



Officer Brazdzionis assisting with traffic control while MOW makes repairs to West Broad St. (Route 209) railroad crossing on the Main Line.



Parking lanes and spaces being marked out entering the Wilkes-Barre/Scranton Regional Railroad Station in Pittston, PA by Officer Ronald Mohl and Sergeant Ryan Parks prior to the Memorial Day Opening Weekend.

huge asset and has been a perfect fit here with the department. He has been a welcome addition, and we look forward to working together with him for many years.

Some of our additional police work we have been keeping busy assisting MOW, C&S, Operations, and Passenger departments. We have been assisting with providing traffic control while MOW department has done upgrades to numerous grade crossings. We also assist C&S Dept. when their work requires being around the grade crossings as well to help keep everyone safe. We also work with MOW on getting the proper signage and set up the required signage for extended road closures when crossing work would require several days/weeks to complete. A big need from the PD again this year was to assist with handling the parking of passenger train riders for train rides to Jim Thorpe, special train trips, fall foliage trips, and Santa Claus train trips with a large addition being the grand opening of the Wilkes-Barre/Scranton Regional Railroad Station located in Pittston, PA. The police department had to divide its forces and put officers at Outer Station, Port Clinton, and Pittston to handle all the riders and get everyone safely parked on all weekends. Officers would then shadow the trains after departure while other officers immediately made their way to the County Courthouse railroad crossing in Jim Thorpe to assist with protecting the crossing for all incoming trains from Pittston, Pottsville, and Reading and for the various moves the Operations/Passenger Departments had to make to get all passengers off the trains. Jim Thorpe was busier than ever this past year during fall foliage with thousands of visitors coming into the town each day in October/November. Once the trains would depart one officer would stay to assist the LGSRY while the other officers shadowed trains back and would assist with getting the hundreds of cars out of the parking lots. Though this past year passenger trip weekends were hectic, overall, it was a great success with minimal issues.

Looking ahead, we look forward to a busy, safe, and productive 2024 and we would like to wish everyone a safe, healthy, and happy new year! Stay Safe! ♦

I Think I Can, I Think I Can Hitting Record Ridership Over 320,000

BY: MATT FISHER, SVP & GENERAL MANAGER PASSENGER

The Passenger Department, and the entire Reading & Northern Railroad for that matter, have grown exponentially in 40 years. We can only hope that 2024 is as successful as the 2023 passenger season. In total, we carried over 322,000 riders. We launched our brand-new passenger service between Pittston and Jim Thorpe. In so doing, we opened a new station at the completely revived Pittston Yards named the Wilkes-Barre/Scranton Regional Railroad Station. Several new coaches were put into service. More diesel locomotives and coaches were painted and restored. Several more people have been hired including three new managers and many part-time people.

Watching the Lehigh Gorge Scenic Railway ridership numbers grow from January 2023 through New Year's Eve in Jim Thorpe was exciting. Very few days saw less riders compared to the same date in 2022. More trains were available with more seating classes. Lounge car service was added to the already popular dome, crown, standard, open air, and caboose options. The Lehigh Gorge trips were often so busy that we were forced to turn people away in October and December. We simply needed more coaches. The passenger mechanics continue to keep the trains running. For the first time in many years, every coach was in service during the peak seasons of October and December.

The Pittston to Jim Thorpe trains, known as the PIJT trips, were completely new for 2023. As mentioned in previous newsmagazine articles, the May 2023 grand

opening of the Wilkes-Barre/Scranton Regional Railroad Station in Pittston was a tremendous success. PIJT trains operated every weekend thereafter through Christmas Eve. Nearly every trip sold out, including the October Fall Foliage trips where the train swelled to as many as twelve coaches from the normal two coach/one dining car train set.

In December, we also offered Santa and Winter Character trains. These were a lower cost option, with adult tickets priced at only \$20.00 per seat. Each ride was 70 to 80 minutes round trip, departing Pittston and heading south to Laurel Run. The railroad, at total expense of \$47,268.00, distributed over 35,000 cookies and over 72,000 candy canes to all passengers on these trains as a free special gift. Also, an extra special thanks to the Operations and Transportation departments for keeping these trains on time and out of the way of the very busy freight operations based in Pittston Yard.

The Pittston location resembles nothing short of a state park. Facilities, Maintenance of Way, and Signal Department employees were the impetus behind making this facility a reality. A special thanks to the Paint & Restoration Department for working closely with the Passenger Department to keep the grounds beautifully maintained. The Paint & Restoration Department also made both Pittston and Reading Outer Station look extra festive this holiday season. More decorations were on display this year than ever before in Reading, making



Santa (James Umbenhauer, Jr.) is getting ready to board the train with new car host Michael Kitsock in Jim Thorpe.



Not a person over 30 in sight, these young employees are pictured on Christmas Eve at Reading Outer Station before Outer Station to Jim Thorpe and Reading Santa train trips. From left to right, Ryan Frederickson, Josh Cascarella, and Eli Wilson. Picture taken by Jeff Jones.



Long time employee John Rizzo isn't afraid to look festive in the Santa hat engaging with our guests. Santa trains have become a large piece of business not only in Jim Thorpe, but also in Reading, Pittston, Minersville, Tunkhannock, and Tamaqua. Picture taken by Jeff Jones.



"We Survived Fall Foliage 2023!" says the cake. Taken at the Jim Thorpe Station on November 5, 2023. Unfortunately, not everyone working that day could be in one photograph due to constant trains in and out of Jim Thorpe Station. Pictured top row standing left to right: Jeff Knadler, Jen Frederickson, Jimmy Garraway, Larry Fisher, Kenny Miller, Matt Fisher, Larry Curvey, Sierra Wanamaker, Michael Kitsock, Josh Cascarella, Marie Knadler-Cunningham. Sitting lower row: Jeff Jones, Bob Lynch, Cameron Odell, Kathie Kramer, Tim Wright. Picture taken by Stephanie Curvey.



Many of the original Blue Mountain and Reading employees are pictured at the 2023 Winter Party at Nesquehoning. Pictured left to right are Therman Madeira, Shane Frederickson, Cal Gerhard, Eric Quimby, Leo Davis, Duane Engle, Bill Bubeck, Kenny Miller, and Christina Muller-Levan. This picture was taken by Jamie Makin and was Eric Quimby's idea.

it a local attraction to see Christmas lights. Pittston, with its long driveway and numerous trees, made it a perfect location to decorate, thus starting a new tradition in the area.

Three new Crown Class cars were put into service. Numbers 560, 561, and 562 helped boost the overall ridership number to exceed 300,000. Two of these three coaches (#560 and #562) to date have had their exteriors repainted. All three were updated inside with new lighting, and some even received new seat fabric. The third Vista Dome was put into service early in 2023. These dome cars, with their trademark glass roof on the second level, are a railfan and tourist favorite. Parlor Car #3 was reintroduced into service this year. The Parlor Car seats thirteen people and is the most luxurious premium coach available to the public. Several of the Standard Coaches are receiving new thermostats to heat the cars in a more efficient and cost-effective manner. Another Standard Coach car was painted this past summer, and the three dining cars were painted into an updated scheme early in 2023.

A major focus for the Paint & Restoration department this year was on the freight side of the railroad. Several diesel locomotives were painted, including an SD40-2 (#1983) and GP38-2 (#2023) commemorating the 40th anniversary of the Reading & Northern Railroad. In total, five locomotives were painted with two receiving partial repaints. Many newly purchased covered hoppers were painted red, and dozens of freight cars owned by Reading & Northern were painted that had graffiti vandalism. The Nesquehoning Campus had a facelift with eight buildings receiving paint. Finally, at the end of 2023, a classic red caboose used in freight was repainted. The caboose is an iconic piece of railroad equipment that the public still recognizes to this day, and the railroad uses them in both freight and passenger service.

Another important achievement of 2023 was the amount of talent we hired in the departments affiliated with the passenger operations. Several additional part-time employees were hired for the busier trains in Jim Thorpe and the new Pittston operations. Our roster of over 60 part-time employees continues to be the heart of the passenger operations. A third full-time position in the Passenger Mechanical Department has been filled by Gavin Seip, who started in early 2023. Jen Frederickson was promoted from a part-time to a full-time employee overseeing merchandise inventory, advertising with Marie Knadler-Cunningham, and

supporting the LGSR operations in Jim Thorpe. Tim Wright was hired as Director of the Lehigh Division Passenger Operations, which includes Pittston. Tim brought much experience with him, having worked for another tourist railroad. The biggest management change in 2023 was the promotion of Jeff Knadler to Senior Director of Passenger Operations. Jeff oversees the passenger facilities workers, along with the Lehigh and Reading Division directors. Through Jeff's leadership, the department has progressed by leaps and bounds from this time in 2022. While many industries have a difficult time finding employees, the Passenger Department continues to find people who are very passionate about the railroad and customer service.

Personally, I am very impressed with all the work that was done this year. One moment that stood out most was during the last Reading & Northern Iron Horse Ramble with steam locomotive #2102 in September. The train was very long, reaching a length of nearly 20 cars. The skies opened with rain right before the on-time departure from Jim Thorpe on return ride back to Reading. Just south of Jim Thorpe Junction, the train lost speed due to its size and weight, not to mention its lack of any diesel-powered assistance. The many curves with the wet rail slowed the train down even more. I was standing in a vestibule between coaches watching the show. Nearly all the riders got out their phones and started taking videos and pictures, anticipating that the train would stall on the slight uphill climb. It was reminiscent of the children's story *The Little Engine That Could* where the steam engine makes the hill saying, "I think I can, I think I can". The operating crew of the train knew that we were going to make it up the hill. With the experience of the steam crew, led that day by Shane Frederickson at the throttle, the train was going to make it.

After two miles and fifteen minutes at walking speed, the train reached a stretch of straight track and took off reaching the speed limit of 30 miles per hour. That entire situation reminded me of the railroad in general. In the early days of our 40-year history, many people thought that Andy Muller, Jr. and the newly formed railroad were not going to make it. They were waiting in anticipation of the railroad's failure. After 40 years, the railroad now hauls over 37,000 carloads of freight (including over one million tons of coal) and over 322,000 passengers. Not bad! ♦



The Muller Family together at Reading & Northern Holiday Party & Frances Muller's 100th Birthday Party, pictured left to right, Colton Levan (son of Justin Levan and Christina Muller-Levan), Reese Levan (daughter of Justin Levan and Christina Muller-Levan), Justin Levan (husband of Christina Muller-Levan), Christina Muller-Levan (daughter of Andy and Carol Muller), Andy Muller, Jr., Frances Muller (seated, mother of Andy Muller, Jr.), Sierra Levan (daughter of Justin Levan and Christina Muller-Levan), Carol Muller (wife of Andy Muller, Jr.), Kaia Muller (daughter of Aaron and Tia Muller), AJ Muller (son of Aaron and Tia Muller), Tia Muller (wife of Aaron Muller), and Aaron Muller (son of Andy and Carol Muller).



Christina Muller-Levan (left) introducing prize winners, (left to right) Tammy Debkowski, Bruce Kellman, Brian Van Blargan, Nate Mengel, William Buckingham, William Oates, Tom Stemko, Nate Bissey, John Brinich, Devin Oswald, and Steve Werley.



Muller Bucks! This was presented to every non-prize winning employee in attendance at the party to exchange for USA \$1,000.00 cash!

Reading & Northern Railroad's Christmas & Frances Muller's 100th Birthday Party

December 16, 2023

The Reading & Northern Railroad hosted its annual Christmas party with a special celebration of Frances Muller's 100th Birthday! This special event took place Saturday, December 16 at the Reading & Northern Railroad's Nesquehoning Campus. Frances Muller, Andy Muller, Jr.'s mother, would be turning 100 on Sunday, December 17, and was the guest of honor at the Winter Wonderland that was party central! The annual Christmas parties are a wonderful time for employees past and present and friends of the railroad to socialize and celebrate a year of hard work and accomplishments at the Reading & Northern. And this year, there was a lot to celebrate! September 13, 2023 saw the 40th anniversary date of the beginnings of the Reading & Northern Railroad with the commencement of operations of the Blue Mountain & Reading Railroad in 1983. Passenger had an exceptionally busy year in 2023, and quite a few passenger employees who started on the Blue Mountain & Reading were in attendance this evening as well.

Frances Muller's 100th birthday had everyone in a festive spirit! Poker chip tokens graced with Frances's picture were given to employees upon arrival, and a four-tiered birthday cake decorated with pictures of Frances over the years was brought in for the celebration.

The evening's festivities were hosted by Christina Muller-Levan, Executive VP Strategic Planning. After singing Happy Birthday to Frances, the party games began! Remember those Frances Muller poker chips? Different colored chips correlated with mystery prizes for chip holders to unwrap! The prize winners of the evening were:

Extra Week Vacation!

Tammy Debkowski – Payroll Manager
Bruce Kellman – Signal Maintainer

Groceries/Walmart \$1,500!

Nate Bissey – Sr. Dispatcher
John Brinich – Conductor
Bill Oates – AVP Mechanical
Devin Oswald – Class 2 Carman
Tom Stemko – Car Shop Manager

Gas for a year/\$2,000 to Sheetz!

Bill Buckingham Jr – Truck Driver/Transload Operator
Nate Mengel – Passenger Operations & Safety Coordinator
Brian Van Blargen – MOW Division Foreman

\$4,000 voucher to Boscovs Travel!

Joe Brown – Manager-Rail Equipment
Steve Werley – Director-Fleet Management



Frances Muller upon arriving at her 100th Birthday Party!

\$5,000 to Lowes!

Ryan Boyer - Electrician

\$5,000 to Raymour & Flanagan!

Rebecca Engle – MOW Quality Control Inspector

New Cars!

2023 Ford Bronco- Mark Cain - Electromechanical Locomotive Technician
2024 GMC Terrain- John Brown Jr – MOW Division Foreman

But everyone walked away a winner when every employee was handed a large \$1,000.00 bill with Andy Muller, Jr. on it, that employees got to cash in for \$1,000.00 right then and there!

This wonderful evening would not have come together without the hard work and planning of the party planning committee at the Reading & Northern. Andrea Coller and Katie Bonner dedicated many hours to the planning and set up of the party, with the support of fellow committee members, Bev Hess, Sabine Fidler, Meghan Faust, Tyler Glass, and Matt Fisher. In true Reading & Northern spirit, many people came together to accomplish something extraordinary!



Andy Muller, Jr. assists his mother, Frances Muller, into her center seat at the head party table.



Winter wonderland at the Christmas Party!



2023 Ford Bronco! Winner Mark Cain!



2024 GMC Terrain! Winner John Brown, Jr.!



Winter wonderland at the Christmas Party!



Frances Muller's 100th Birthday Cake!

WELCOME ABOARD

New Employees!



Richard Majorino

Richard Majorino was recently hired as the Director of Merchandise Marketing in our Marketing Department. He attended West Scranton High School and Temple University. Prior to working at RBMNR, Richard was a Quality Manager at PSA BDP for five years. Despite living in Pennsylvania his entire life, Richard's favorite baseball team is the Atlanta Braves.



Robby Russell

Robby Russell was recently hired as a Truck Mechanic in our Mechanical Department. He attended Pottsville Area High School and Penn College of Technology. Prior to working at RBMNR, Robby was a Truck Mechanic at Panther Valley Carriers for 24 years.



Bart Crary

Bart Crary was recently hired as a Conductor in our Operations Department. He attended Tupper Lake High School and Paul Smith's College. Prior to working at RBMNR, Bart was a Conductor/Engineer at Norfolk Southern for nine years.



Julius Dudash

Julius Dudash was recently hired as a Conductor in our Operations Department. He attended Mahanoy Area High School and East Stroudsburg University. Prior to working at RBMNR, Julius worked at Ondeck Concrete. Julius has been a volunteer firefighter for 24 years.



Jason Andreas

Jason Andreas was recently hired as an Engineer/Conductor in our Operations Department. He attended Carbon County Vocational Technical School. Prior to working at RBMNR, Jason was an Engineer/Conductor at Norfolk Southern for 17 years.



Nikolas Ridgley

Nikolas Ridgley was recently hired as a Truck Mechanic in our Mechanical Department. He attended Pittston Area High School, Luzerne County Community College, and Wilkes Barre Vo-Tech. Prior to working at RBMNR, Nikolas was a Heavy Equipment Field Mechanic at Wince Construction for three years. Nikolas went to vo-tech for diesel mechanics in high school, and then went to college for welding.



Wesley Price

Wesley Price was recently hired as a Conductor in our Operations Department. He attended Lake Lehman High School and Lehigh Carbon Community College. Prior to working at RBMNR, Wesley was a Machine Technician at L&D Millwork in Kingston, PA for five years. Wesley says he owns a car twice his age. He encourages you to ask him about it.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

FEB 1.....	EDWARD COLL	MAR 3.....	DARNELL YOUNG	APR 2.....	SAMUEL HOLLOCK
FEB 2.....	SILAS BAUSHER	MAR 3.....	JOSEPH ZIMMERMAN	APR 3.....	DANIEL BOYLE
FEB 3.....	ANDREA COLLER	MAR 7.....	WALTER STOCKNICK	APR 3.....	KELSEY BUECHLE
FEB 4.....	MATTHEW KUNKLE	MAR 14.....	JAMES GARRAWAY	APR 3.....	DAREN GESCHWINDT
FEB 6.....	MICHAEL SKASKO	MAR 14.....	EDWARD MOUL	APR 3.....	DEVIN OSWALD
FEB 7.....	JOHN SMOLCZYNSKI, SR.	MAR 15.....	ROBERT KEMPES	APR 5.....	ADAM C. STUMP
FEB 8.....	JAMES CERULLI	MAR 16.....	HUDSON HENRY	APR 7.....	JARED COLLER
FEB 9.....	JAMES COOK	MAR 17.....	DERRICK KEENER	APR 9.....	MIKEAL GEOGHEGAN
FEB 9.....	AMY MILLER	MAR 17.....	JACK MCCOY	APR 11.....	WILLIAM YANOSHIK
FEB 9.....	WILLIAM RICHMOND	MAR 18.....	MARK HARRIS, JR.	APR 12.....	BRADLEY AUMAN
FEB 11.....	MICHAEL KOHL	MAR 19.....	MARY CULP	APR 12.....	AARON CASSEL
FEB 12.....	BENJAMIN NELSON	MAR 19.....	TARA GOWRIE	APR 12.....	AARON CASSEL
FEB 13.....	PHILIP SCHAEFFER	MAR 20.....	NATHAN BISSEY	APR 14.....	GENE BUECHLE
FEB 17.....	DAVID EVELY	MAR 20.....	MATTHEW MIZIKOSKI	APR 15.....	JOSEPH BROWN
FEB 19.....	TIMOTHY BILLET	MAR 22.....	RICHARD BERNHARDT	APR 15.....	JOSEPH GARELLI
FEB 20.....	JOYCE "JAMIE" MAKIN	MAR 23.....	WALTER GREUSEL	APR 16.....	JEFFREY BAVITZ
FEB 20.....	COTTON ROBBINS	MAR 24.....	ENOS BLEILER	APR 16.....	JARRED STROHL
FEB 21.....	KENNETH MILLER	MAR 24.....	RYAN RUPPRECHT	APR 16.....	TIMOTHY WRIGHT
FEB 22.....	TYLER GLASS	MAR 25.....	SHELLEY HALL	APR 18.....	EDWARD PHILBIN
FEB 24.....	JONATHAN BARKET	MAR 27.....	WILLIAM KEIM	APR 19.....	AARON MULLER
FEB 26.....	TAYLOR HAUPT	MAR 28.....	NIKOLAS RIDGLEY	APR 19.....	MARK SCHMEHL
FEB 26.....	CAROL MULLER	MAR 29.....	ASA FRANTZ	APR 20.....	BOYD LENICH
FEB 28.....	STEPHEN GILBERT	MAR 29.....	ELIZABETH NEIFERT	APR 21.....	GREGORY ZELINSKY
FEB 29.....	JOHN SMOLCZYNSKI	MAR 29.....	GAVIN SEIP	APR 22.....	KATHLEEN GIPE
MAR 1.....	MATTHEW FREDMONSKI	MAR 29.....	BRANDON WAGNER	APR 23.....	CHARLES BIBIK
MAR 2.....	STEVE BALTHASER	MAR 30.....	ROBERT SIKORSKY	APR 25.....	ADAM BOAK
MAR 3.....	MEGHAN FAUST	MAR 31.....	JOLENE BUSHER	APR 30.....	BART CRARY
MAR 3.....	DAN PUKSAR	MAR 31.....	CARL REICHART		

Reading & Northern's Family Recipes

Railroad Pie

Eric Quimby, Car Host/Narrator, submitted this recipe that he found in the Omaha Home for Boys 2024 calendar. Because it is just him and his wife, Jo, at home, Eric typically doesn't make large meals. He did, however, think this sounded good and thought the name of the recipe is perfect for Reading & Northern Railroad.

Ingredients

- 2 lbs. ground beef
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 1 can tomato soup
- 1 can water
- 1 Tbsp. chili powder
- 1 can cream style corn
- 1 green pepper, chopped
- 1 small jar diced pimiento
- Salt & pepper to taste
- 1 box cornbread mix, prepared according to package

Directions

1. Brown ground beef and onion in skillet; drain fat.
2. Add remaining ingredients and bring to a boil. Simmer for 15 minutes.
3. Pour into greased 9 x 13 baking dish.
4. Top with cornbread batter and bake at 400° for 30-40 minutes until cornbread is done.

Serves 6-8.

Note: These patties freeze well so I usually make 4 batches at a time.

We would like to encourage everyone to send us their favorite family recipes to mfaust@readingnorthern.com.

RBMN Anniversaries

15 YEARS



NOV. 17, 2008
PETER COLLINS
CHIEF INSPECTOR/TECHNICIAN
READING JET MAINTENANCE



NOV. 17, 2008
NICK RICCIO
VP - READING JET MAINTENANCE
READING JET MAINTENANCE

10 YEARS



DEC. 2, 2013
DENISE KACSUR
ACCOUNTS PAYABLE MANAGER
FINANCE

5 YEARS



NOV. 26, 2018
SHAWN FREDERICKSON
SR. CLASS 2, STEAM MECHANIC
PASSENGER



JAN. 14, 2019
ZACHARY BAKER
SIGNAL MAINTAINER 3
COMMUNICATIONS & SIGNALS



JAN. 21, 2019
TAYLOR HAUPT
DIRECTOR OF REAL ESTATE
REAL ESTATE



JAN. 22, 2019
NICHOLAS SURUSKIE
ENGINEER/CONDUCTOR -
OPERATIONS



JAN. 28, 2019
BRETZ FETTEROLF
CLASS 3 LOCOMOTIVE
MECHANIC - MECHANICAL

3 YEARS



NOV. 30, 2020
CHRISTOPHER NEFOS SR.
TRACK INSPECTOR
MAINTENANCE OF WAY



JAN. 25, 2021
LUKE WEIGHT
MACHINE OPERATOR,
CLASS 1 TRAINEE
MAINTENANCE OF WAY



JAN. 29, 2021
BRIAN VAN BLARGAN
DIVISION FOREMAN - READING
MAINTENANCE OF WAY

1 YEAR



NOV. 28, 2022
KATHLEEN GIPE
OFFICE ASSISTANT
REAL ESTATE



DEC. 13, 2022
JAGGER GRADWELL
CONDUCTOR - OPERATIONS



JAN. 3, 2023
WILLIAM RICHMOND
SMALL ENGINE MECHANIC
MECHANICAL



JAN. 3, 2023
BRENTON BEZEK
SIGNAL MAINTAINER
COMMUNICATIONS & SIGNALS



JAN. 4, 2023
STEPHEN PERRETTE
ENGINEER/CONDUCTOR
OPERATIONS

*“The greatness of a nation
can be judged by the way its
animals are treated.”*

~Mahatma Gandhi

The Muller family is well-known for its staunch advocacy of the rights, safety, and welfare of animals. Over the years, they have supported organizations such as Red Creek Wildlife Center and The Animal Rescue League of Berks County; just to name a few. Recently, Christina Muller-Levan, Executive Vice President-Strategic Planning at Reading and Northern Railroad (R & N), had the opportunity to tour a facility in Schuylkill County, PA, which tugged at her heart strings – Hillside SPCA.

Hillside SPCA, located in Pottsville off the Gordan Nagle Trail, is a non-profit corporation that provides animal welfare services to all of Schuylkill County, Pennsylvania. The staff includes trained and certified humane officers appointed by the Court of Common Pleas of Schuylkill County, humane investigators who perform animal cruelty investigations, and countless volunteers. Hillside SPCA conducts education programs in local schools focusing on the humane treatment of animals. Financial assistance is available for individuals who cannot afford to have their pets spayed or neutered. The shelter operates almost solely through donations received from individuals, groups, and fund-raising events and is open seven days a week.

Sherrie Schafer, Shelter Manager, and Sabine Fidler, R & N's Human Resources Department, collaborated on numerous occasions leading to R & N's first sponsored adoption event at Hillside SPCA called “Home for the Holidays Adoption Event”. To date, 25 cats and 11 dogs have found “forever” homes through this “spread the love” event. Sherrie expressed her gratitude saying that R & N is very easy to work with and so generous sponsoring all adoption fees.

During the two days she spent at Hillside during the adoption weekend, Sabine said, “The interactions between staff members and animals indicate mutual love and respect. Very heartwarming to watch!” R & N employees, Kyle Barrell of Human Resources and Mary Culp of the Passenger Department, were also in attendance during the weekend to represent the company and support visitors hoping to adopt a furry family member. Thank you, Kyle and Mary, for sharing some love with the Hillside residents!

“Home for the Holidays” has been a successful adoption event and one of many mutually gratifying events to come for Hillside and Reading and Northern. ♦

Spreading the Love at Hillside SPCA

BY SABINE FIDLER, HUMAN RESOURCES



Holly, Hillside SPCA volunteer, and Dalayna.



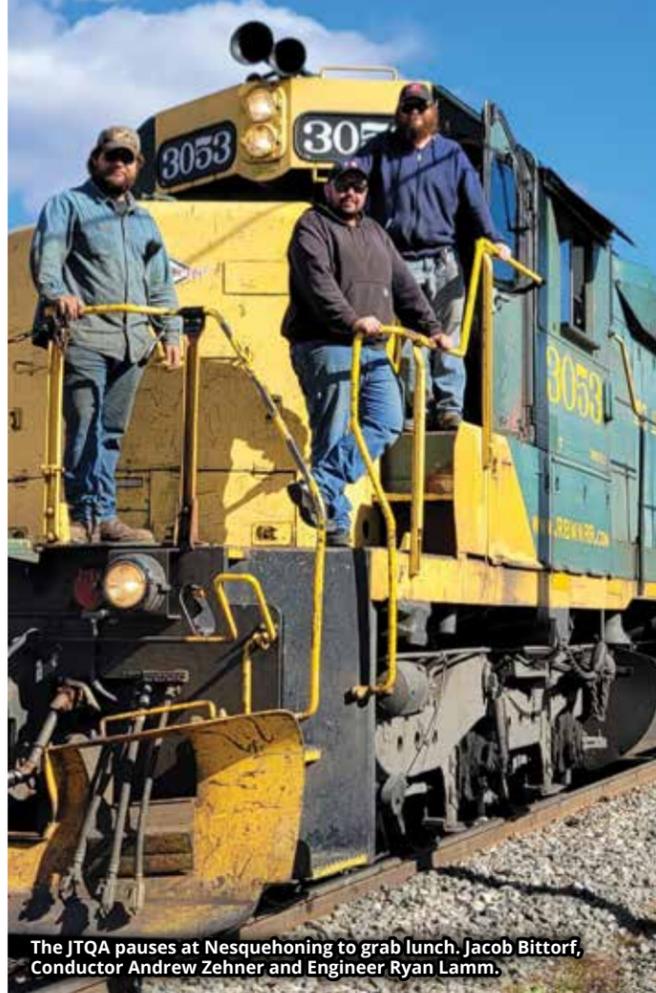
Roxy.



Devyn and Buckley.



Mary Culp and Chewy.



The JTQA pauses at Nesquehoning to grab lunch. Jacob Bittorf, Conductor Andrew Zehner and Engineer Ryan Lamm.



Train QAPI with Steven Schorr and Alex Lepone take a quick pause at Nesquehoning to go over a game plan with Ryan Trexler on what moves to make when they get to Pittston Yard.



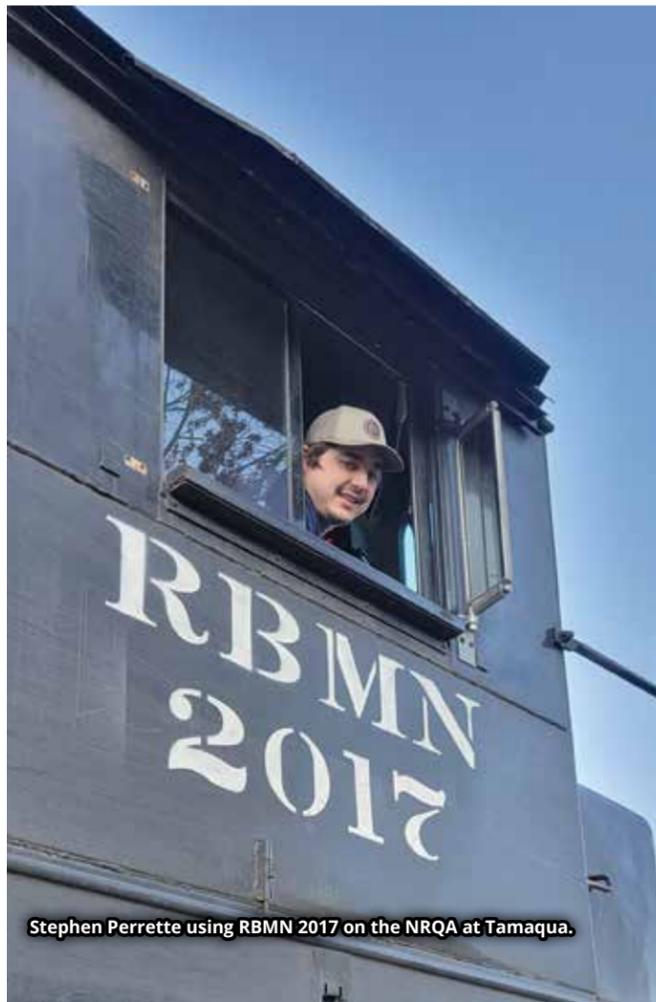
Conductor Andrew Zehner is seen coupling back up to his train deep in the Lehigh Gorge near Ox Bow curve.



Cotton Robbins tying down cars at Tamaqua.



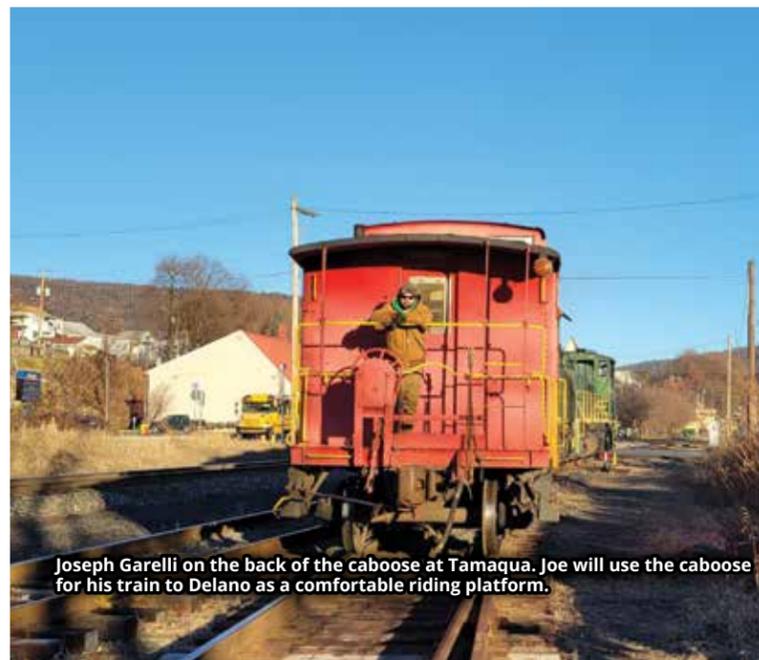
Chris Holland putting in a new power assembly into RBMN 3056.



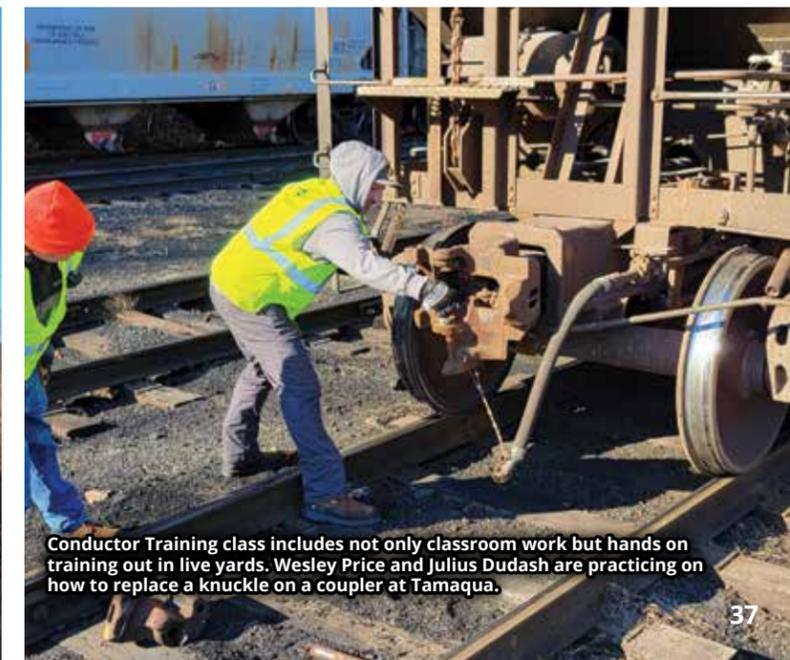
Stephen Perrette using RBMN 2017 on the NRQA at Tamaqua.



Nathan Mengel helping out at Carbon where 3 train will meet at this location. He's lining the switch to allow a train to get in the clear so another can pass on through.



Joseph Garelli on the back of the caboose at Tamaqua. Joe will use the caboose for his train to Delano as a comfortable riding platform.



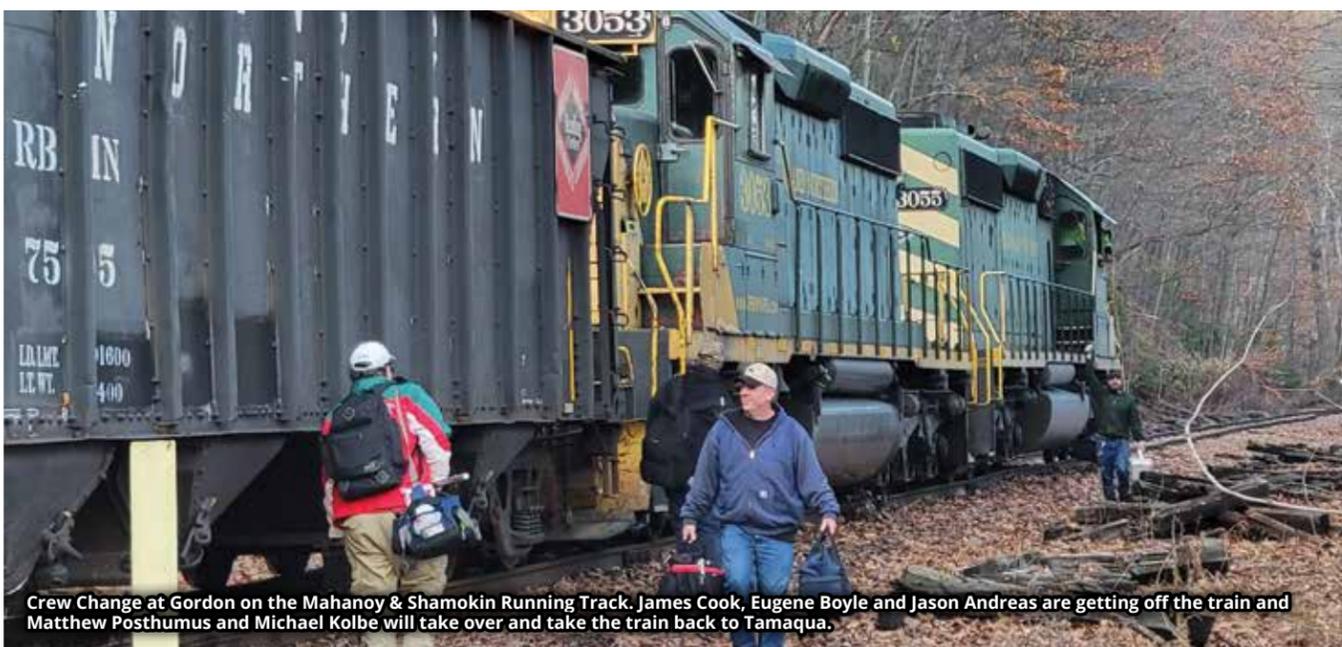
Conductor Training class includes not only classroom work but hands on training out in live yards. Wesley Price and Julius Dudash are practicing on how to replace a knuckle on a coupler at Tamaqua.



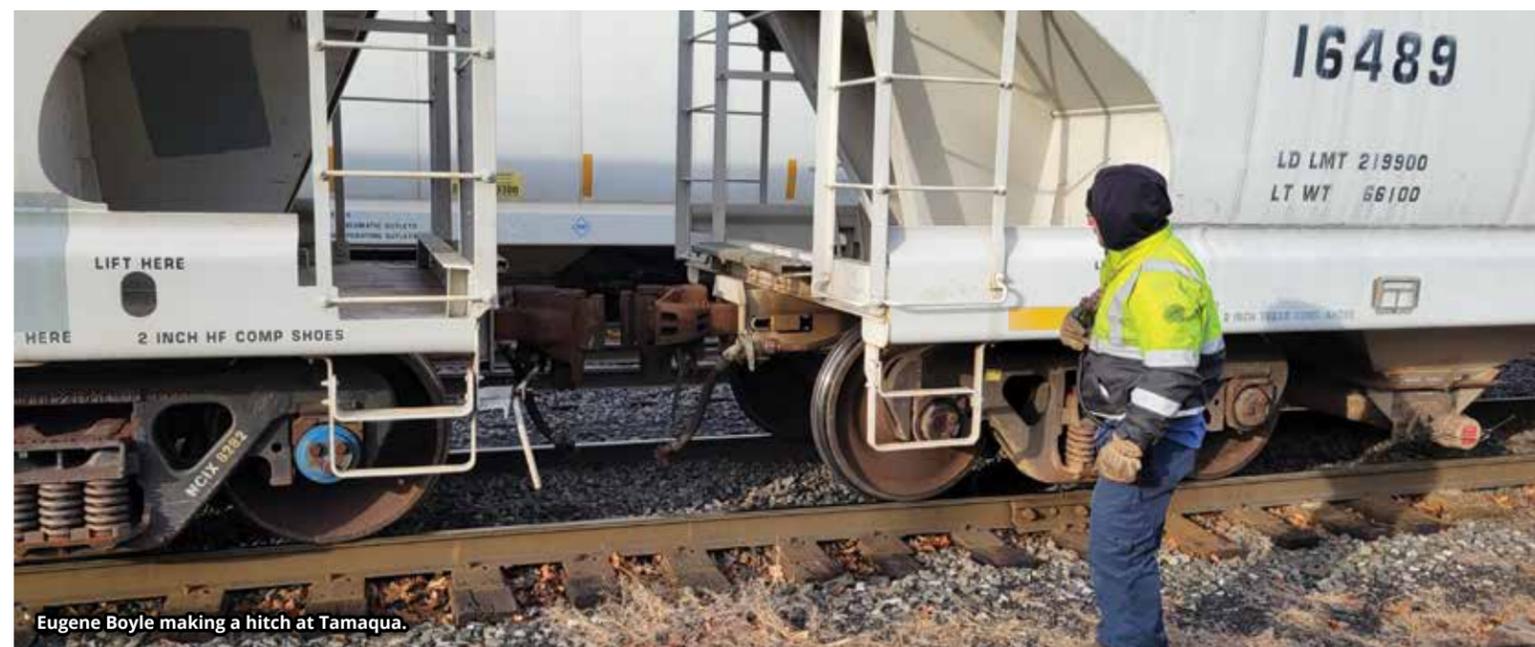
Eugene Boyle, Madison Nicholls, Kyle Sanders and Nicholas Suruskie pose for a photo at Tamaqua.



NRQA Conductor Lucas Reichard making a set off at Lower Yard, Tamaqua. He's pulling the train by the switch to then reverse onto track 2. These are empty hopper cars ready to be selected for loading. The cars won't sit here very long...



Crew Change at Gordon on the Mahanoy & Shamokin Running Track. James Cook, Eugene Boyle and Jason Andreas are getting off the train and Matthew Posthumus and Michael Kolbe will take over and take the train back to Tamaqua.



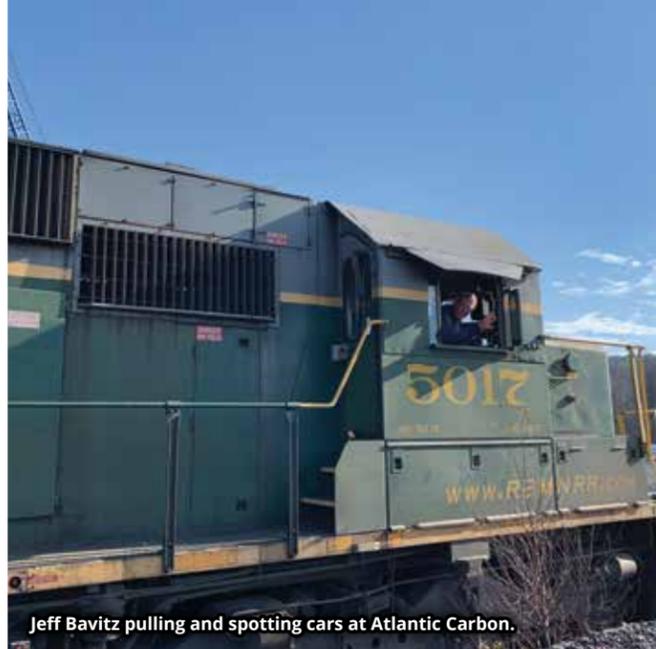
Eugene Boyle making a hitch at Tamaqua.



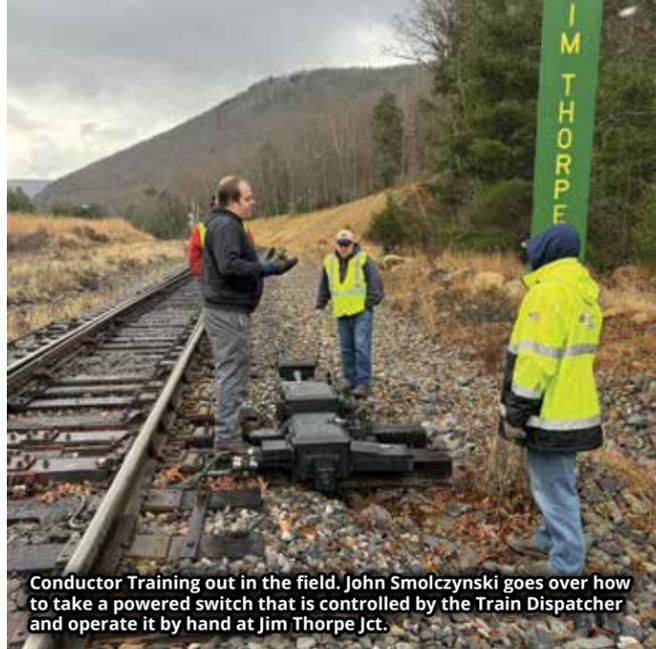
Briar Stern gives a big wave from the Tamaqua Santa Train at Carbon.



Duane Engle, Donald Matter and Darnell Young working together to fix the south power switch at Port Clinton.



Jeff Bavitz pulling and spotting cars at Atlantic Carbon.



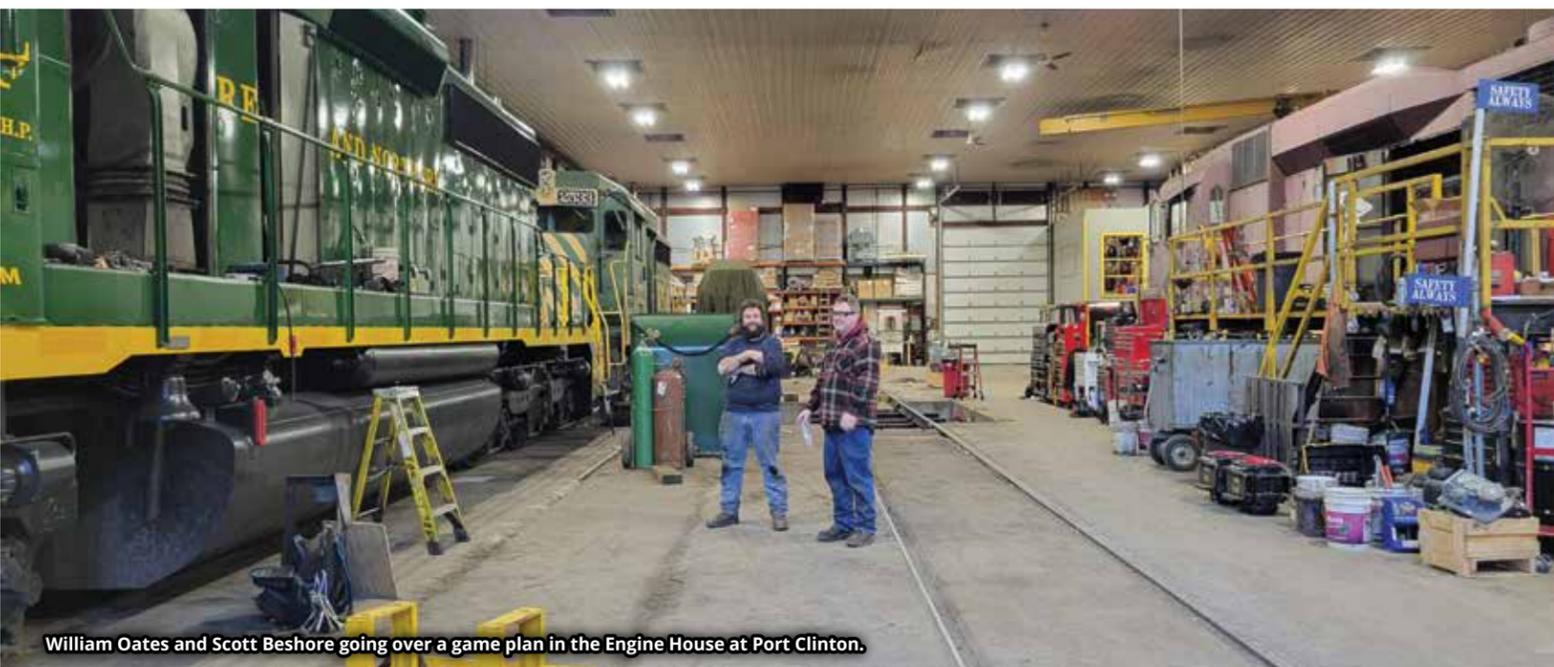
Conductor Training out in the field. John Smolczynski goes over how to take a powered switch that is controlled by the Train Dispatcher and operate it by hand at Jim Thorpe Jct.



Eugene Boyle building his QAJT train. He is putting in order cars for Reynolds in Tamaqua.



Mark Cain and Bretz Fetterolf servicing Locomotives at Port Clinton.



William Oates and Scott Beshore going over a game plan in the Engine House at Port Clinton.



Matt Posthumus coupling cars while conducting QASD at Tamaqua.



Hudson Henry switching the interchange from Spring Street at North Reading Yard.



Josh Rehrig getting some Locomotive Engineer training time in Port Clinton.



Chris Peters is calling out over the radio what signal he has while taking the northbound 11 o'clock LGSR passenger train across the Lehigh River at River Interlocking.
"LGSR, CLEAR, RIVER, JIM THORPE BRANCH WYE TRACK, WEST, OUT!"



Matthew Posthumus walking to his train at Gilberton after getting a taxi ride up.



Alvin Rineer has a job briefing with 1st shift Train Dispatcher, Joshua Rehrig and Chief Train Dispatcher, Kyle Sanders.



Darnell Young checking a crossing in the night rain.



Another Conductor Training class completed and in the books! Bart Crary, Cotton Robbins, Jacob Bittorf and Jason Andreas standing on the new bridge over the Lehigh River near Jim Thorpe. Congratulations!



Madison Nicholls performing switching moves at Panther Creek, Nesquehoning.



Curt Cibello and Steven Schorr starting their day at Humboldt on train WHHB1.



Eastern Box Turtle in the warm water.



Eastern Box Turtle recovering from an ear infection.

Red Creek Wildlife Wintering Over Reptiles

BY: PEGGY HENTZ, PRESIDENT/EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF RED CREEK WILDLIFE



Common toad hanging out for the winter.



Climate controlled reptile room.

Although the outdoor temperatures are cold and icy, there is a room at Red Creek that feels like you are walking into a tropical paradise. This is our new reptile room, a climate-controlled environment with heat and humidity set perfectly for our cold-blooded patients.

There are currently five box turtles and one common toad wintering over at Red Creek. Four of the turtles had been hit by vehicles earlier last year and are recovering from shell fractures, while one turtle is recovering from upper respiratory and ear infections. The toad? Well, he's just hanging out for the winter after being found frozen in a snowbank.

Although winter is a time for Pennsylvania reptiles to hibernate, keeping turtles active and warm aids in healing. External shells are part of the turtle's skeletal system and, just like bones, will heal with time. Keeping the shells adequately aligned, along with good nutrition and the proper environment, is all that is needed, but it does take time. By the time spring arrives and their wild counterparts begin to emerge from their seasonal slumber, these turtles will have healed and will be ready for release.

Releasing reptiles is not as easy as just setting them free. Individual animals need to be returned to where they were initially found. It is believed that land turtles, such as box turtles and wood turtles, have a home territory and specific hibernation area they use. If moved too far from that location, they might not hibernate the following winter and would die. For this reason, we

keep records of the recovery location's GPS coordinates. Often, the original finder will pick up the turtle and take it back to where it was found. If that's not possible, one of our volunteers will make a road trip to take a turtle back to its home.

Another reason reptiles should not be relocated from their original environment is to prevent the spread of disease. Moving a turtle could spread pathogens such as bacteria and fungi to another population that doesn't have resistance to a new infection.

Preventing the spread of disease is also essential while the turtles are in our care. Each animal is housed separately, and sterile gloves are worn while handling each animal and their food, and they are changed between individual animals.

Populations of several species of turtles have declined significantly over the past few decades. Loss of habitat, pet-keeping, and the relocation of turtles have taken their toll. Each turtle that is returned to the wild helps that population recover, and rehabilitation is a valuable service that helps maintain these populations.

Even more, it's vital that we keep foundling turtles safe. Move them off roadways out of harm's way but not too far, keeping them in their territory. Minimize handling so as not to introduce them to human bacteria, leave them in the wild, and call us if you find one sick or injured. ♦

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

BY: MEGHAN FAUST, EMPLOYEE BENEFITS SPECIALIST

It is my privilege to introduce Marie Knadler-Cunningham, Assistant General Manager of Passenger, as our Winter 2024 "Spotlight Employee". Marie has been with the Reading and Northern Railroad since December 2009.

Before coming to the railroad, Marie worked as a Park Ranger for 7 years. In 2007, while she was working as a Park Ranger, she worked as a private contractor for the Reading & Northern Railroad as a Security Officer/Crossing Flagger in Jim Thorpe at the Lehigh Gorge Scenic Railway. After 2 years as a private contractor, Marie was hired as a part-time employee for the Lehigh Gorge Scenic Railway, where she held numerous positions, such as Santa's Helper, Car Host, Ticket Agent, and Part-Time Office Assistant in Schuylkill Haven. Marie became a full-time RBMN employee in 2017 and held positions of Assistant Office Manager and Advertising Specialist/Office Manager to her current position of Assistant General Manager.

Marie was born in Pottsville, PA and grew up in Tamaqua, graduating from Tamaqua Area High School. She has been married to her amazing and supportive husband, Charlie, for 3 years and been together a total of 10 years. They currently reside in Tamaqua, where the train tracks are in their back yard. Together, Charlie and Marie have a Boxer named Miss Molly May, a Blue-Tongued Skink named Henry Ronald SKINKovich that Marie adopted 20 years ago, and too many fish to name. She claims that her boxer is an all-out railfan, running to their porch as soon as she hears a train so she can watch it go by. Reading and Northern Railroad runs in the family for Marie. Her brother, Jeff, is the Senior Director of Passenger Operations and her mother, Maggie, is a Car Host. She has an awesome sister-in-law, Vicky, and is about to become an aunt for the first time this April.

In her spare time, Marie loves to go on adventures with her husband in their RV and take walks in the woods with Miss Molly. She has always loved to visit Gettysburg several times a year, ever since she was a child. Her dad, Jeff, is a huge Civil War buff. Marie grew up reenacting with her family so the history of the American Civil War has always been an interest and large part of her life. Her absolute favorite place to visit is New York City. For the last 3 years, she and Charlie have attended Billy Joel concerts in Madison Square Garden and the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade.

One of the highlights Marie is especially proud of is bringing the Pocono Grill to life, as a souvenir and snack car, on the Rambles Excursions. It always brings Marie so much joy to see people walking around wearing RBMN merchandise and when passengers (and dogs) receive their souvenir tickets and take a photo holding it. Marie is always trying to come up with new, eye-catching ideas for advertising because it is a fun and challenging portion of her career.

Marie commented that "great leadership and teamwork are what makes this railroad what it is today, in all departments. I have many people to thank for giving me the opportunity and having faith in me to be where I am today, especially the Muller Family, Passenger Department General Manager, Matt Fisher, and VP - Government Affairs, Matt Johnson. I am thankful every day and proud to be a part of the Reading and Northern family and I look forward to seeing what the future holds."

This honor was given to Marie by her supervisor, Matt Fisher, Passenger Department General Manager. He noted Marie's many accomplishments in the Passenger Department and knows her hard work and dedication to the railroad is outstanding, saying, "Marie was promoted to Assistant General Manager of the Passenger Department a year and a half ago. She oversees many of the full- and part-time employees and is very helpful hiring new staff. She has done nearly every job in Passenger and is a great person to have as second in command in the Passenger Department."

As our Spotlight Employee, Marie will receive a \$100 gift card to Moya in Jim Thorpe, the restaurant of her choice. ♦



Wellness Corner

BY: MEGHAN FAUST, EMPLOYEE BENEFITS SPECIALIST



Hot Stone Massage

A Knead for Relaxation

Massage therapy was one of the earliest tools to try relieving pain and has been practiced in most cultures throughout history. Today, a licensed massage therapist uses this form of manual therapy to move soft tissues in the body to reduce stress, ease muscle tension, manage a health condition, and promote relaxation and overall well-being. A therapist can customize your massage depending on your age, condition, or special needs or goals you may have. There are about 80 massage therapy styles with a variety of pressures, techniques, and movements.

The most common massage is the **Swedish**, or classical, massage. It can be energizing and may help after an injury. This type of therapy involves kneading, percussion, tapping, rolling, and vibration, as well as soft, long strokes on the top layers of muscles. Along with reducing symptoms of depression, stress, and anxiety, a Swedish massage can also be beneficial to your heart by using strokes that flow toward the heart, improving blood circulation.

A **deep tissue** massage is best for giving attention to particularly painful or stiff trouble areas in your body. It focuses on applying pressure on layers of muscles, tendons, and tissues deep under the skin. Deep tissue massages are not as rhythmic as a Swedish massage, but it can relieve chronic tension and help with muscle injuries.

If you are active in sports or have a child who is, a **sports** massage can be extremely beneficial. This particular massage is meant to help athletes that are in training. When getting a sports massage before an event, it can promote flexibility and help prevent injuries. During or after a sporting event, it can help relieve muscle strains, and speed up healing after an injury.

Lymph is a protein-rich fluid that moves throughout the body and scoops up things like bacteria, waste, and viruses and carries them to your lymph nodes. A **lymphatic drainage** massage is a gentle massage specifically designed to help increase the circulation of these fluids in your body. It is usually done with long, gentle strokes with light pressure along the skin to increase movement of lymph throughout your system.

Sometimes our muscles need applied heat to loosen and become less tense. A **hot stone** massage uses warmed stones placed on certain areas of your body, such as acupressure points, to transmit heat deep into the muscles. The stones can be used as tools during your massage, or temporarily left in place. When used with other massage techniques, the therapist can create a very soothing and relaxing massage.

If you've ever had a migraine, you know that it can be some of the worst pain you've ever experienced and sometimes there is nothing you can do to help ease the pain and pressure. A **cranial sacral** massage is designed to treat headaches, migraines, neck and back pain, TMJ dysfunction, stress-related disorders, and some neurological conditions. The therapist uses light touch and subtle movements to assess and address any restrictions or imbalances in the craniosacral system, the membranes and fluid that surround and protect your brain and spinal cord.

Many of the massages have benefits beyond relaxation, but if you are receiving a massage to help treat a health condition, be sure to ask your doctor before doing so. Some of the health problems that can benefit from a massage are as follows:

- Sleep
- Anxiety
- Constipation
- Nerve pain
- Digestive disorders
- High blood pressure
- Postoperative care
- Sports injuries
- Soft tissue strains and injuries
- Temporomandibular joint (TMJ) disorders
- Osteoarthritis
- Back pain
- Headaches/migraines
- Depression

Whether you had a sports injury, suffer with chronic pain, are feeling stressed, or just want some relaxation, massage therapy has many benefits for each condition. It has been shown to increase range of motion and flexibility, overcome feelings of fatigue, reduce nausea in chemotherapy patients and improve anxiety, depression, stress, and vitality through movement of soft tissues in your body. If you are unsure of how to find a massage therapist, treat it as you would a medical professional. Ask for recommendations from friends and family members or do a search online that includes reviews. Be sure that the massage therapist is licensed and registered to work in your area and set up a consultation so you can meet them and discuss your concerns.



Cranial Sacral Massage

For more information, visit:

<https://health.clevelandclinic.org/benefits-of-massage>

www.nccih.nih.gov/health/massage-therapy-what-you-need-to-know

www.webmd.com/balance/massage-therapy-styles-and-health-benefits

www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/conditionsandtreatments/massage

**Reading Blue Mountain &
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A few of the original Blue Mountain and Reading Railroad employees are pictured at the 2023 Christmas Party in Nesquehoning. Pictured left to right are Therman Madeira, Shane Frederickson, Cal Gerhard, Eric Quimby, Leo Davis, Duane Engle, Bill Bubeck, Kenny Miller, and Christina Muller-Levan. This picture was taken by Jamie Makin and was Eric Quimby's idea.