



Connections

The Quarterly Newsletter of The Belt Railway Company of Chicago

Inside CONNECTIONS

“Being president of the Belt Railway Company of Chicago has been a living dream that I will never forget.”

— Ron Batory, outgoing president, Belt Railway Company of Chicago

- Page 2 President’s letter
- Page 3 Belt debuts industry’s first automated car inventory system; Belt Engineering Department works to prevent derailments, improve signals; Belt names Stickney winners
- Page 4 Good-bye to the Green Building; Words to live by

Belt Increases Emphasis on Switch Safety

Engineering Department focuses on switch lubrication

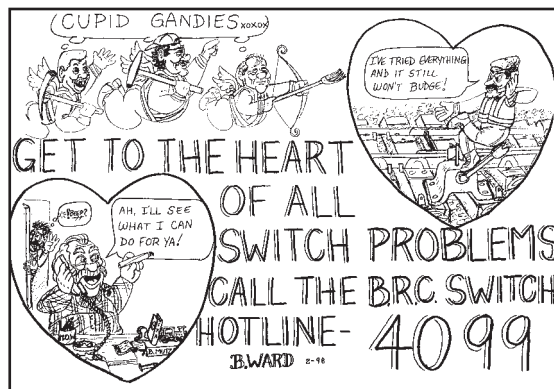
Over the past several years, The Belt Railway Company of Chicago has made major changes and improvements to its infrastructure in order to increase safety and to help improve train movement. The Belt’s Engineering Department works hard to maintain the infrastructure so that everything runs smoothly.

One important maintenance item is switch lubrication. With more than 1,600 hand-operated switches on the property—most of which get thrown by switchmen many times a day—maintenance is an ongoing process. Lubrication is necessary to facilitate an easier throw for personal safety, to prevent wear and tear on the mechanical components of the switch, and to provide compliance with Belt standards.

Switches are inspected regularly. When a switch requires maintenance, an Engineering Department gang is dispatched to provide the necessary work above and beyond the deficiencies noted by the inspector. The gang will clear the cavity between the cross ties and the switch rods and clear debris from the switch plates. Oil is then applied to the switch plates and to the switch stand so that the steel slides easily along its intended path. Adjustments are made so



Above: Track Department employees Leo DeLeon (left) and Adolfo Calderon apply oil to a switch. At left: Machine operator and artist Bob Ward created this Valentine-themed illustration to promote the Switch Hotline.



the switch points fit properly against the rail. Finally, the gang will test the switch to make sure that the throw is according to Belt standards.

In order to help the Engineering Department continue its efforts with switch lubrication and maintenance, everyone needs to be involved. All garbage—especially water bottles—needs to be thrown into garbage cans so it does

not get caught between the switch rods and the cross ties, prohibiting the throw of the switch.

Any time a problem with a switch is observed, please call the Switch Hotline at 496-4099, and the Engineering Department will take prompt action. Ask for Bill Mutzbauer or leave a message which includes the time, date, location, and your name.



Strategic Accomplishments 1994–1997

- ✓ Installed the first in-yard Automatic Equipment Identification based rail car inventory system.
- ✓ Established main-line route structure as a full clearance route to accommodate handling of loaded double-stack cars.
- ✓ Achieved the record handling of more than 1 million cars in both 1996 and 1997, representing the greatest utilization of capacity based on equivalent car lengths.
- ✓ Entered into partnership with G.E. Transportation to provide a virtual locomotive shop and renewal parts base Customer Service Center for all railroads serving the Clearing Yards complex.
- ✓ Designed in-house interline terminal scheduling system to accommodate the ISM industry initiative. Use of this system has recorded a 93 percent adherence to right car/train/day since implementation.
- ✓ Initiated motive power fleet upgrade with the acquisition of previously owned, second-generation EMD motive power.
- ✓ Introduced an annual A.B. Stickney Award to recognize those Class I and Class II carriers executing the best outbound freight car service design performance based on average terminal dwell hours.
- ✓ Paid off outstanding balance of all previous advances lent to the Belt Railway by its owners prior to 1990.
- ✓ Initiated an accelerated infrastructure improvement plan, systematically addressing physical plant, signal system, and facility needs of the switching carrier.

President's Letter

My Fellow BRC Associates:

When I first came to The Belt Railway Company of Chicago in July 1994, I outlined my goals and strategies for improving our operations. More than three years ago in this space, I wrote: "Becoming a better company is not a choice. We must learn to see our company as our customers do. This means logistics must prevail by pro-actively sharing information to meet customer needs. Freight cars handled on the BRC will soon be scheduled. Our information systems will become more interfaced through use of electronic data interchange. Saving time and becoming more efficient will enable us to strengthen customer relations and expand our business as a properly priced, high-quality producer.... Expressed innovation and demonstrated improvement will determine our business role within the railroad industry."

This challenge has been met with considerable success. Comparing 1997 to 1994, we have seen a 19 percent increase in total revenue units and a 27.6 percent increase in total switching units. Even with the rise in traffic, our car cycle time has dropped 35 percent to 24.8 hours. The derailment/incident rate also has decreased 35 percent. Our employment has grown nearly 15 percent, and our continual efforts to emphasize safety have resulted in a 75 percent decrease in the employee injury rate.

During the past three years, we have held to the idea that we must drive change, not be a victim of it. We have made strategic improvements to our property and operations, as outlined at left. The combination of these enhancements will allow us to facilitate more through-train traffic and consistent switching activity for the trunk lines as they patronize the Chicago Gateway into the 21st century.

I am proud to say that the Belt Railway is a better company now than it was in 1994, and I credit all of you for this achievement. I also want to formally thank you for your support while I served as president of The Belt Railway Company of Chicago. As you know, I am headed to Philadelphia to fill a key managerial post with Conrail Inc. if the pending CSX and NS applications to operate Conrail are approved by the Surface Transportation Board later this year.

March 6 will be my last day as president of your railroad. It has been a living dream that I will never forget, and I thank each of you for allowing it to happen.

Very truly yours,

Ronald L. Batory
President

The Belt Railway Company of Chicago welcomes your comments. Send all correspondence to: CONNECTIONS, The Belt Railway Company of Chicago, 6900 South Central Ave., Bedford Park, IL 60638. For service inquiries or more immediate assistance, call (708) 496-4000. © 1998 Belt Railway Company of Chicago. Design by Mainline Publications Inc., Chicago.

Belt Debuts Industry's First Automated Car Inventory System

The Belt Railway recently made headlines with its new automated car inventory system—believed to be the industry's first automated system of its kind.

Science Applications International Corp. developed the car inventory system, building on a video system SAIC installed at the Belt in the mid-1980s. To create the new automated inventory system, SAIC added 23 remote Automatic Equipment Identification Reader sites and a central computer system to the original set-up.

Railway Age magazine publicized this achievement in its February 1998

issue. In the story, Virgil Jones, SAIC group vice president-transportation technologies, called the installation “a showcase ... capturing movement of inbound trains, class yard switching, outbound train activity, and overhead movements.”

Belt President Ron Batory said the system showed “SAIC’s ability to use proven technology in original applications to solve the unique problems inherent in railyard environments.”

The Belt estimates that the automated car inventory system will save the Belt more than \$200,000 annually.

Belt Engineering Department Works to Prevent Derailments, Improve Signals

Our Engineering Department continues to explore the latest technological advances to improve the safety and efficiency of our railroad.

Check Point Fit: After open check points were determined to be the cause of three recent derailments, Track Supervisor Bill Mutzbauer and Machine Operator (and artist) Bob Ward came up with a humorous way to alert Belt employees of the importance of double-checking point fit.

Bob’s illustration (right, top) features familiar likenesses and the slogan “Just Cause It Throws, Doesn’t Mean It’s Closed.” Copies were posted around the Belt property.

Chief Engineer J.Q. Anders said, “I’m proud of the Engineering Department for attempting to educate the work force as to this derailment prevention measure.”

Bob’s most recent effort has a Valentine’s Day theme and promotes the Belt’s Switch Hotline at extension 4099 (see page 1).

Signal Improvements: The Belt’s Signal Department recently completed two noteworthy projects. The first involved the erection of new cantilevers to improve the signal protection at the Belt’s Columbus Avenue Crossing



Bob Ward, machine operator and artist, drew this Engineering Department sign.



Cantilevers were added to signals at the Belt’s Columbus Avenue crossing at Southwest Highway.

(above). Also, Belt signalmen installed the first ever solar-powered switch under the Hump.

Belt Names Stickney Winners

The Belt is proud to announce that CP Rail and I&M Rail Link have won the 1997 A.B. Stickney Award for having the fastest freight service last year through the Belt’s Clearing Yard. The award, which had its inception in 1995, is given to the Class I and Class II railroads that have the best throughput time of all the railroads using the Belt’s Classification Yard.

In the Class I category, CP Rail has won the award for three consecutive years. The average CP Rail railcar traveled through the Belt in 22.42 hours last year.

In the Class II category, I&M Rail Link became a first-time winner of the award. It had a throughput time of 24.18 hours, bettering all other smaller carriers using Clearing Yard.

The award is named for Alpheus B. Stickney, president of the former Chicago Great Western Railway who pioneered the concept of a central classification yard at Clearing to speed the movement of freight cars through Chicago.



The Green Building in its final days



The first blow



Demolition complete

Good-Bye to the Green Building

The Belt said farewell to a familiar institution in December with the demolition of the venerable Green Building. This building had a long and distinguished history, and if the walls could talk, they would certainly have stories to tell. The Green Building was constructed in 1915 to house the Agency, Personnel, and Car Accounting departments as well as the Mail Room and Pay Station. In 1954, Data Processing moved in.

In 1963, the General Office Building was built across the street from the Green Building, and the Executive and Office Personnel previously housed at Dearborn Station in downtown Chicago moved to Clearing. Car Accounting then moved from the Green Building to the General Office Building.

In 1969, the Belt added a west annex to the General Office Building, and Data Processing moved there from the Green Building. In 1983, the interior of the Green Building was renovated for the remaining Agency, Car Operations, and Transportation staff.

Last year, the Belt reconfigured the General Office Building layout to accommodate the Car Operations and Agency clerical forces. These last occupants of the Green Building moved across the street into new surroundings in November of last year.

The land upon which the Green Building sat will become a parking pen for Company vehicles.

Words to Live By

The dangers of ignoring crossing protection sparked an anonymous reader of Ann Landers' column to author the following poem.

He tried to cross.
A fast train appeared.
Death didn't draft him.
He volunteered.



**The Belt Railway
Company of Chicago**
6900 South Central Ave.
Bedford Park, IL 60638



Interchange

The Employee Newsletter of The Belt Railway Company of Chicago

Inside INTERCHANGE

- **Page 1**
Belt doubles value of years of service award; Belt veteran Helmut Wurm retires; New hires
- **Pages 2-3**
Memories of the Belt's 1997 Christmas party
- **Page 4**
Belt troop droops in hoops; Employee transitions and milestones; Wierzbicki and Yanak receive village honors

Belt Doubles Value of Years of Service Awards



The employees who have worked injury-free during their careers at the Belt will now receive double service awards under the Belt's improved Years of Service Program.

The following policy is currently in effect covering Years of Service Awards:

- 50 years of service: \$600 in U.S. Savings Bonds
- 40 years of service: \$500 U.S. Savings Bond
- 35 years of service: \$400 in U.S. Savings Bonds
- 30 years of service: \$300 in U.S. Savings Bonds
- 25 years of service: \$200 U.S. Savings Bond

- 20 years of service: \$150 in U.S. Savings Bonds
- 15 years of service: \$100 U.S. Savings Bond

If an employee has been injury-free during his entire employment with the Belt Railway, the service award earned will double. For example, an employee with 15 years of service and no personal injury on record will receive not one but two \$100 U.S. Savings Bonds.

If you have any questions regarding service awards, please contact the Treasurer's office at extension 4108.

New Hires

The following individuals joined the Belt last quarter. Please welcome them aboard.

Track

Joseph M. Hernandez
Ismael Huizar
Bruce Rutkowski
Lino Villafuerte

Mechanical/Engine House Laborers

Mark Karwaczka
Edwin Rochacz
Robert Rogers
Scott Senese
Keith Stanford

Mechanical/Machinist

Todd Ruddy

Switchmen

William Fletcher
Richard Giffey
Todd Kincade
Joseph Lucio
Philip G. Matejek
Ronald Moten
David Pomonis
Thomas Vrchota

Belt Veteran Helmut Wurm Retires

Helmut Wurm, a 42-year Belt Railway locomotive engineer, retired recently. Helmut was one of the Belt's most proficient and dedicated employees. When the Belt's Board of Directors went for a train ride last year along the Belt's rails, Helmut was the engineer chosen to man the controls.

Helmut was also known for his safety consciousness, having worked his entire career without a single personal injury! The Belt will miss Helmut and wishes him a long and happy retirement.



Left: Helmut (center) poses with trainmen Chris Votteler (left) and Bobby Whitaker (right), who served as Helmut's last crew at the Belt. Above: Chief Engineer J.Q. Anders (left) congratulates Helmut on his retirement at the Belt Christmas party.

Christmas Party

Almost 900 people celebrated the holidays at the Belt Railway's Labor/Management Safety Committee Christmas Party, held Dec. 14, 1997 at Nikos' Restaurant in Burbank. This annual event for Belt Railway employees and their families featured a buffet dinner, Santa Claus, gifts, and a G-scale model train display.

The Electric Bluze Brothers and Magician Dave Fleming provided entertainment. Kudos to all those who worked so hard to make this holiday bash a success. The 1998 party has been scheduled for Dec. 20, 1998 and will be moved to a larger facility, the Lexington House in Hickory Hills.







The competitors (left to right, standing): Roy Gelder, Mark Hansen, Rod Wojcik, Jim Ford, Chuck Allen, and Bill Walztoni. (Middle) Ken Denby, Bud Hall, Charlie Ridgeway, Jan Tyrrell, and Ron Batory. (Kneeling) Scott Winterfeldt, John Szamatowicz, Mike O'Donnell, Dale Packard, Fred Eberhardt, and Dave Glidewell.

Wierzbicki and Yanak Receive Village Honors

Two members of the Belt's Labor/Management Safety Committee received honors outside of the Belt recently.

Diesel Machinist Bill Wierzbicki was named the city of Burbank's 1997 Fireman of the Year. Bill has been a fireman with the village for 25 years.

Accounting Clerk George Yanak, who also teaches hazardous materials classes to Belt employees, was recently elected as a trustee for the New Lenox Fire Protection District. George worked as a New Lenox fireman for 20 years before retiring recently.

Congratulations to these two gentlemen, who are two of the most knowledgeable and active members of the safety committee.

Belt Troop Droops in Hoops

Ron Batory, player/coach of the Belt non-contract forces basketball team, recently challenged the Indiana Harbor Belt's management group to a basketball game. The Belt Bullies squared off against the Harbor Hammers at the Union League Club in Chicago following the November 1997 Western Railway Club Meeting.

The Hammers, looking as if they had practiced for weeks, swept three games from an undersized and undermanned Belt squad. "We gave up too many easy baskets," said the Belt's Fred Eberhardt, who led the Belt team in scoring.

The Bullies are considering asking the Hammers for a rematch, but in a less strenuous sport like bowling.

EMPLOYEE TRANSITIONS & MILESTONES

RETIREMENTS During the past quarter, seven employees retired from the Belt Railway. We wish them all the best in retirement.

Ramon L. Medina Maintenance of Way 28 years of service	Matthew A. Juris Engineer 41 years of service	Nick J. DelPriore Engineer 42 years of service
Joseph M. Kozlowski Switchman 38 years of service	Helmut A. Wurm Engineer 42 years of service	
Ralph O. Raines Switchman 41 years of service	Jerome Bonkowski Switchman 46 years of service	

SERVICE ANNIVERSARIES The following employees reached service anniversaries during winter quarter 1998. Our congratulations to them!

30 Years

Thomas M. Johnson
Transportation
Feb. 25, 1968

20 Years

Philip K. Kelso
Transportation
Feb. 28, 1978

Ronald E. Shackleton
Transportation
March 15, 1978

25 Years

Maximino Cintora
Track
March 23, 1973

Robert L. Hicks
Transportation
March 7, 1978
No personal injuries for entire career

Thomas P. Pociask
Transportation
March 28, 1978
No personal injuries for entire career

Kenneth D. Filipiak
Transportation
March 14, 1978

Wayne W. Kizior
Car
March 6, 1978