



# Connections

The Quarterly Newsletter of The Belt Railway Company of Chicago

## Inside CONNECTIONS

**“BRC’s assistance to both Locomotive Leasing Partners and my customer, CP Rail, bailed us out of a significant problem.”**

**— Jim Wierdak, director of mechanical services, Locomotive Leasing Partners**

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## A Job Well Done

*Belt’s locomotive forces receive highest grade for repair services*

**T**he recent agreement between the Belt Railway and General Electric Transportation Systems to provide locomotive maintenance and renewal parts services for their common customers at Clearing Yard has provided a real challenge to BRC’s Mechanical Department. These Belt employees have met this challenge head-on with tremendous results.

During the first quarter of 1997, CP Rail, which was experiencing unusually heavy traffic conditions on the Western region of its railroad during some of the worst weather conditions ever seen in that region, was required to put 27 leased locomotives into service.

General Electric furnished the Belt with 10 Norfolk & Western GE C30-7 locomotives and Locomotive Leasing Partners (LLP) gave to BRC 17 EMDX SD40-2’s—all in need of servicing. Belt forces handled this work flawlessly.

In a letter to Belt Superintendent of Motive Power Ken Smith, LLP’s Director of Mechanical Services Jim Wierdak wrote: “On behalf of LLP, we thank you and your entire staff for their emergency assistance to us. You provided high quality work in a very timely manner and at a fair price.”



Photo by Marie Buckingham

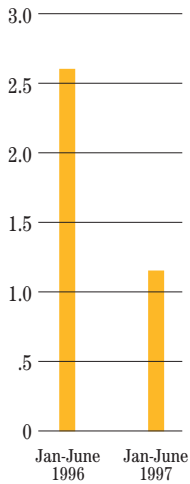
**Top left: J.C. Ayala, machinist, at work. Top right: The Belt’s Mechanical Department changed out traction motors in 34 Amtrak locomotives in only 36 days. Bottom: Amtrak’s Dave Haffner (from left), Mary Rose Barbara, and Mark Antomez review the Belt’s work with Keith Taylor (back to camera) of the Belt and Harold Booth of General Electric.**

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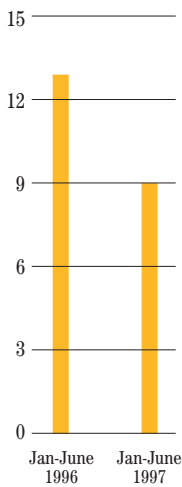
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## President's Letter

My Fellow BRC Associates:



**Employee Safety Performance:**  
A 57.6 percent decrease in reportable employee injuries per 200,000 man hours.



**Derailment Prevention Performance:**  
A 30.2 percent decrease in derailments per 50,000 cars handled.

How you think, communicate, work, and treat people will define your level of motivation for being a leader at The Belt Railway Company of Chicago.

Making a difference in lieu of just doing a job allows us to focus on productive change rather than just follow wandering priorities. At our railroad we must continue to shift our thinking from control to growth issues, analysis to vision, slow decision-making to progressive action, and fighting change to promoting change for a better company.

Safe service will always be our master key to opening the daily doors of ongoing success. Managing your own personal behavior to ensure safe service will effectively manage the positive interest of our long-standing customers. Nurturing this type of relationship can facilitate a desired future for our railroad family of Belt employees. Please take advantage of this opportunity every day. I assure you that although this daily opportunity may not look big coming at you, it will look very big if it were ever to leave.

The challenge to change continues to confront us. During the past six months of this year, we have collectively improved our operation in various areas of casualty prevention. Similar strides are being made in the service arena despite some brutal winter

weather conditions that affected the entire Chicago gateway.

In the area of individual employee safety, we have improved 57.6 percent, while derailments have decreased by 30.2 percent (*see graphs at left*). The combination of these leading results by Belt employees has allowed us to continue our overall business growth of 2.37 percent. Our interline terminal scheduling performance of right car to right train is now reporting a 93.5 percent consistency ratio. Our ability to deliver safe work practices in conjunction with a competitive service product of unprecedented value is beneficial not only to the switching carrier, but more importantly, to the entire rail industry it serves within our nation's largest gateway.

In order to continue providing safe service with high rates of asset utilization, we must concentrate on both maintaining and improving the physical infrastructure for tomorrow. For example, we are now entering our second year of a program to exchange lighter rail for heavier rail for both our mainlines and yards. In addition, cost-effective track layout changes are being made to increase the fluidity of train movements while pursuing aggressive programs for cross tie and out-of-face surfacing work throughout the property.

We have now engaged a locomotive resizing program that will reduce the size of our locomotive fleet while simultaneously lowering its average age. Our business plan intentions are to continue this program, so as to reduce our motive power maintenance expenses and better utilize our facilities and talented workforce for business outsourcing opportunities such as the GE initiative announced last year (*see page 1*).

Our company will continue to be a multiplex receptacle for the needs of its customers. Our operation will always insist on efforts of detail to collectively accommodate the extremes posed by these individual needs. We must learn to consistently adapt while building for the future if we are going to succeed into the next millennium. The instructions to this road map are simple: straight-forward communication and fulfillment of all commitments of understanding. It will assure a trend of transitional changes in lieu of a stagnant era of ill-fated turmoil.

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. © 1997 Belt Railway Company of Chicago. Design by Mainline Publications Inc., Chicago.**

## Belt's Locomotive Forces Honored

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BRC's assistance to both LLP and my customer, CP Rail, bailed us out of a significant problem. LLP was able to get these locomotives on rent and making money, and the CP received much needed power much quicker."

In February, GE approached the Belt and asked if we would change out traction motors on 34 Amtrak locomotives. A commitment was made and thereafter, through the combined efforts of GE furnishing materials, Amtrak scheduling locomotives and Belt employees performing the work, 34 Amtrak passenger locomotives had their traction motors changed out in just 36 days!

These two projects required a tremendous effort by Belt Mechanical Department employees. Dedication such as this makes the Belt very proud of its work force. Congratulations on a job well done!



**Top: Larry Noyes, machinist, at work.**  
**Bottom: Belt forces serviced 10 Norfolk & Western GE C30-7 locomotives to be leased to CP Rail.**

## Community Activities at the Belt

**The BRC's Locomotive No. 604**, an Alco Century 424 model, was an "honored guest" at the Village of Franklin Park's second annual Railroad Daze in May. The 604 was joined by other classic motive power from local railroads in a rail parade through the village. **The Belt**

**was a proud sponsor** of Field Fun Day at the Benjamin O. Davis Developmental Center in South Chicago, a preschool for children in special education. Field Fun Day is an annual event that encourages the physically challenged children to participate in competitive games that recognize their achievements in overcoming obstacles. More than 200 people attended this special event. **The Belt and its employees** received a Campaign Citation from the United Way/Crusade of Mercy stating: "For an inspiring show of support to help others less fortunate. Collectively, as a team, your contributions will enable thousands of people to lead a better life. You have shown generosity and spirit which will long be valued. Thank you." Belt employees contribute almost \$20,000 per year to this fine organization.



**The Belt's Alco Century 424 locomotive at Franklin Park's Railroad Daze.**

## Industry News

Several stories in the railroad trade press have praised the Belt's operations during the past few months.

The April 21, 1997 issue of *Rail Business* contained a story on the Belt. "After enduring a brutal winter of long delays, the Belt Railway Company of Chicago has traffic moving more efficiently than it has in almost a year. A car now leaves the BRC yard an average of 19 hours after entering it—which is better than a 30 percent improvement from the 30-hour delays encountered in December and January."

The February issue of *Railway Age* lauded the Belt's 1996 performance. A blurb entitled "BRC On a Growth Curve" stated, in part: "Less than a decade ago, the Belt Railway Company of Chicago was practically out of business. Now, it's handling record volumes of traffic. ... BRC's turnaround began under President Jim Martin and has been accelerated since Ron Batory became president. Batory said the 1996 performance reflects 'the hard work and dedication of a rail industry committed to service-driven growth.'"

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A "Railroad School," sponsored by Arthur Andersen and co-hosted by the Belt, was held in May. In addition to Arthur Andersen and Belt employees, attendees included officials from other railroads. The group toured the Belt's Clearing Yard, the Hump Tower, Car Repair Facility, and Locomotive Repair Shop.

# Words of Wisdom

The Belt's 1997 Safety Slogan Awards have been announced. The entries included the following words of wisdom:

*"Look both ways, it really pays."* — Billy Foulk, age 4

*"Never go across the train tracks when a train is coming."* — Matthew Graziano, age 5

*"Safety means watch your step."* — Sarah Foulk, age 5

*"Please wait for the gate."* — Caitlin Ziarko, age 7

*"Safety gear—wear it all year."* — Allison Foulk, age 7

*"Be alert so you don't get hurt."* — Nicole Graziano, age 7

*"Railroads deliver goods for you and your family. Please be smart and safe. Don't let the railroads deliver bad news about you to your family."* — Lauren Litteriello, age 9

**"Down the tracks around the bend  
the safety train just has no end."**

*"Stand in the clear or hold on tight, these trains move daily  
and through the night."* — both slogans from Diane Franke, age 12



**The Belt Railway  
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# Interchange

The Employee Newsletter of The Belt Railway Company of Chicago

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## Time To Be Alert

Is there an increased chance of injury working afternoons and nights? Unfortunately, yes. According to a recent study of rotating shiftworkers, employees had 15 percent more injuries on afternoon shifts and 23 percent more

injuries when they worked the night shift than the day shift.

Why? It isn't from sleep deprivation. The study found that day shift workers sleep the least (about 6 hours of sleep compared with 7.5 who work the afternoon shift and 9

for those who work nights).

Instead, it appears to stem from a reduction in alertness and concentration. As 7-year-old Nicole Graziano's safety slogan says: "Be alert so you don't get hurt."



## Retirees Send News to the Belt

The Belt periodically receives correspondence from its retirees, who are, for the most part, living the good life. Some samples:

**Rich Rubino:** "Keep up the good work on the BRC and say hello to all!"

**Bob Small:** "As still the young kids in the Belt retirement family, we are enjoying our 'altered lifestyles.'"

**Bill Erkelens:** "Say hello to everyone on the GOOD OLD BELT. Everything O.K. around here."

**Ray Heger:** "Thanks to the Belt Railway, life is good."

**Art Hillman:** "Still RVing. Have traveled in 50 states ... Retirement is fun!!"



## Wanted: Belt Photos

A book is being written on the history of the Belt Railway. The author is very interested in seeing any old or recent photos that our current employees or retirees may possess of the Belt—both its places and its people—for possible inclusion in the book. If you have any photos, please contact Tim Coffey or Ruth Taylor at (708) 496-4000.



## Life Goes On ... Be an Organ Donor

Through organ and tissue donation, thousands of people in Illinois live longer, healthier, more productive lives. Without it, many will die. Find out how you can share the gift of life with someone else by calling the Illinois Secretary of State's office at 1-800-210-2106.



## EMPLOYEE PROFILE DAVID JOHNSON

**Occupation:** Switchman

**Hometown:** Chicago

**Years with BRC:** 2 ½

**Personal:** Married, 1 daughter

**Primary Duties:** Putting together trains as efficiently and safely as possible. I try to work as many different jobs as I can, including transfer and industry jobs.

**Favorite Things About Working at the Belt:** Working outside, the freedom and flexibility of being able to work assorted jobs with different people at different times. The work atmosphere is, for the most part, quite good.

**How Other BRC Employees Can Help Me Do My Job:** Be more conscientious. Trim misclassified cars before humping rather than after.

**Hobbies:** Sports, music, comedy.

**Favorite Vacation Spot:** Any of the islands—Jamaica, Bahamas—and Rio de Janeiro.



## Belt Welcomes Visitors

The Belt recently welcomed Ms. Ros Warburton, general manager of Tranz Link, the Wisconsin Central's New Zealand affiliate, and Ms. Katherine Mart, WC's director of marketing. Both women were given a briefing on the ins and outs of the Belt's operation and received a tour of the property. As with most of our foreign visitors, Ms. Warburton was impressed with the size and efficiency of the facility.



Railroad engineering students from the University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana, recently visited the Belt. Their tour included both our hump operation and the freightcar inspection/repair processes. The students found this "real world" experience to be a valuable supplement to their formal education.



In May, Señor Carlos Bastias, chief mechanical officer of the Antosagasta Chile & Bolivar Railway toured the Belt's Locomotive Maintenance Shop with Belt Superintendent Motive Power Kenneth Smith. Señor Bastias' railroad handles more than 600,000 tons of refined copper annually.

## Ready to Roll



Truck drivers Leo DeLeon (at left) and Mario Gonzales pose in front of the new Track Department extra gang crew bus, placed into service in early May.

## EMPLOYEE TRANSITIONS & MILESTONES

### Retirements

*During the past months, six employees retired from the Belt Railway. We wish them all the best in retirement.*

**Willie Box**  
Carman  
27 years of service

**William Mc Laughlin**  
Transportation  
47 years of service

**James H. Piper**  
Yardmaster  
37 years of service

**Ronald B. Shimkus**  
Switchman  
41 years of service

**Rodolfo Martinez**  
Maintenance of Way  
26 years of service

**Richard Cobb**  
Carman  
30 years of service

**Service Anniversaries** *The following employees reached service anniversaries during the first half of 1997. Our congratulations to them!*

### 40 Years

**Ivory Bennett**  
Transportation  
Feb. 23, 1957

**Albert Cook**  
Transportation  
Mar. 9, 1957

**Edward D. Pollard**  
Accounting  
Apr. 24, 1957

**William F. Flinn**  
Transportation  
Apr. 27, 1957

**Michael J. Karr**  
Transportation  
May 4, 1957

**Jerome H. Slowinski**  
Clerical  
May 10, 1957

**Freddie G. Elam**  
Transportation  
May 11, 1957

**Louis Carter**  
Transportation  
May 21, 1957

**Willie H. McDonald**  
Transportation  
May 21, 1957

**Mathis Whitaker**  
Transportation  
June 23, 1957

### 35 Years

**Ruth A. Taylor**  
Administration  
Apr. 17, 1962

**Gerald A. Krashak**  
Bridge & Building  
Mar. 8, 1967

**Giuseppe Samperi**  
Bridge & Building  
Mar. 13, 1967

**Ramundo L. Zavala**  
Bridge & Building  
Mar. 21, 1967

**Gary D. Timmerman**  
Signal  
Mar. 27, 1967

**John W. Hudson**  
Transportation  
Apr. 14, 1967

**Salvatore C. Ramirez**  
Bridge & Building  
Apr. 21, 1967

**Victor I. Cross**  
Transportation  
May 11, 1967

**Cornelio C. Calderon**  
Track  
May 16, 1967

### 25 Years

**Salvatore Distefano**  
Bridge & Building  
Jan. 13, 1972

**Dennis M. Cisarik**  
Transportation  
Feb. 24, 1972

**Rodney C. Wojcik**  
Administration  
Apr. 2, 1972

**Christopher W. Votteler**  
Transportation  
Apr. 24, 1972

**Joseph Russo**  
Clerical  
Jun. 8, 1972

**Anthony J. Ciciora**  
Mechanical  
Jun. 29, 1972

**William J. Schmeier**  
Car  
Feb. 17, 1977

**Alan M. Oswald**  
Transportation  
Feb. 22, 1977

**Jeffrey P. Berry**  
Transportation  
Feb. 22, 1977

**Naji Zegar**  
Transportation  
Feb. 22, 1977

**Donald J. Roth**  
Transportation  
Mar. 2, 1977

**Larry O. Conwell**  
Transportation  
Mar. 2, 1977

**Charles D. Kreft**  
Transportation  
Mar. 3, 1977

**Joseph M. Quinlan**  
MIS-Comm  
Mar. 3, 1977

**Purvis Morris, Jr.**  
Transportation  
Mar. 3, 1977

**Keith N. Halvorsen**  
Transportation  
Mar. 4, 1977

**James P. Hansen, Jr.**  
Signal  
Mar. 24, 1977

**Jaime Olivares**  
Track  
May 5, 1977

**Oscar J. Rodriguez**  
Track  
May 19, 1977

**Timothy T. Weston**  
Bridge & Building  
May 19, 1977

**Timothy P. Kelly**  
Track  
Jun. 1, 1977

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