

Connections

The Quarterly Newsletter of The Belt Railway Company of Chicago



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“Employees of the Belt should be proud of their improvements in the physical plant and the service you are delivering to our customers. Remember, all we have to sell is service.”

—C. T. Shurstad, president, Belt Railway Company of Chicago

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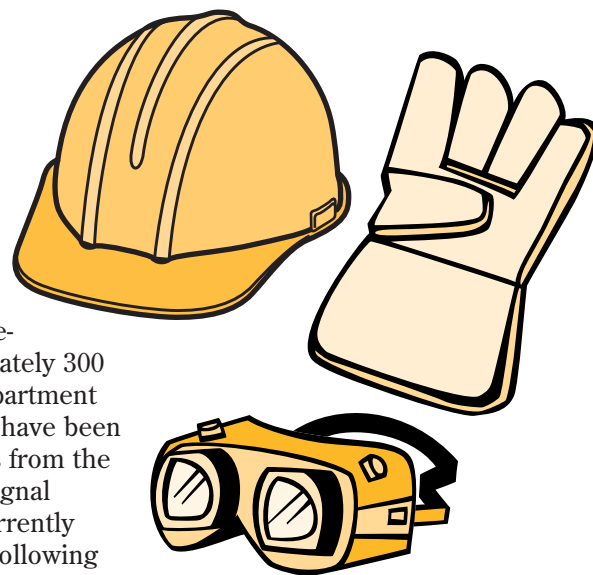
Safety on the Job

Belt revises Safety Rule Book

As part of the Belt Railway's continuing effort to improve employee safety awareness and reach our goal of providing consistently safe transportation, the Belt Railway's Labor/Management Safety Committee has rewritten the Belt's Safety Rule Book. This collaborative effort has resulted in clearer and more pertinent safety rules. The new rule book also highlights Cardinal Safety Rules, which are groups of safety rules that, if violated, result in severe personal injuries.

All employees are being

trained in these new rules, with particular attention being paid to the Cardinal Safety Rules. Approximately 300 Transportation Department employees already have been trained. Employees from the Engineering and Signal Department are currently attending classes, following which Mechanical Department (Car and Locomotive) employees will be trained. The classes also include videos pertaining to safe work practices and conclude with general safety discussions.



These rule amendments have been well-received, and Belt employees are to be commended for the positive attitudes they have exhibited in accepting these changes.

Belt Hosts Board of Directors Train



Conductor Harold Miller is on the right front point of the Conrail passenger engine 4020, leading a special train for the Belt Railway's Board of Directors.

The Belt recently played host to a special Belt Railway Board of Directors train. This train, led by Conrail locomotives 4020 and 4021, was manned by a special train crew consisting of Belt employees Conductor Harold Miller, Engineer Chuck Wagner, and Supervisor of Locomotive Engineers Tom Ruddy.

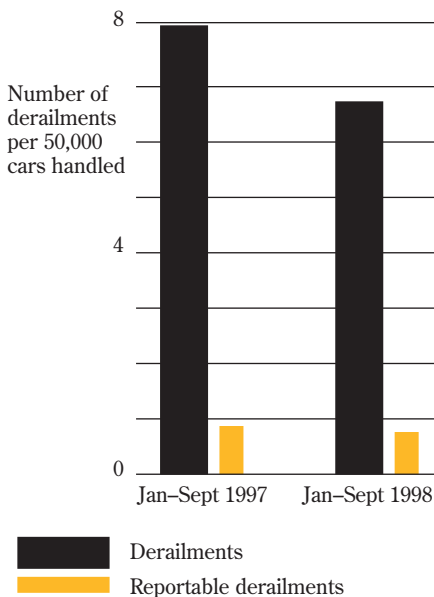
Our Board toured the Belt's facilities, including the Car Repair Facility, Dispatcher's Center, and the new West Yard Office.

President's Letter

Belt Railway Welcomes New President

C. T. Shurstad joined the Belt Railway Company of Chicago as its new president effective September 1. Mr. Shurstad was formerly president of the Terminal Railroad of St. Louis, a similar operation to the Belt Railway. Most recently, Mr. Shurstad was working with the government of Malaysia in an attempt to privatize that country's railroads.

Decrease in Derailments



Between September 1997 and 1998, derailments at the Belt Railway decreased 17% and reportable derailments decreased 13%. A reportable derailment is one requiring repairs exceeding \$6,600 in labor and materials.

My Fellow Belt Employees:

As most of you know, I started at the Belt Railway September 1 of this year. Let me outline for you a brief history.

- Since 1882, the Belt Railway Company has been an integral part of the Chicago and transcontinental railway system. However, in the 1980s, the Belt Railway developed a reputation as being the "Black Hole of Chicago." In 1989-1990, the Belt Railway was on the verge of closing down. In 1991, the Belt started turning around to become the property you see today.
- The BRC today is in good financial condition and the service meets our customer expectations.

Employees of the Belt should be proud of their improvements in the physical plant and the service you are delivering to our customers. Remember, all we have to sell is service and you have made significant improvements in that area.

The biggest concern we should all have today is the safety of the employees at the Belt. As of this date, we have had 15 reportable injuries, with two fatalities in 1998. We *must* improve our safety record.

You may have noticed that we are cleaning up all the

scrap and debris from the property. Safety is an attitude and this must begin with a clean environment. We have changed some of the rules regarding hard hats and safety glasses. We will be reviewing all work processes of all departments looking for unsafe work practices. We need all hands on deck to turn our safety performance around.

The future of the Belt looks bright. We are currently reviewing the locomotive fleet. The average age of the fleet is over 40 years old. We are looking at retiring/selling the older units and replacing them with newer, higher horsepower, six-axle locomotives. We will continue the track/signal rebuild program through 1999. A couple of the other improvements will be a new hump computer system and new dispatching system.

I am honored to be part of the Belt Railway and look forward to making the Belt Railway the safest place in the world to work.

Very truly yours,

C. T. Shurstad
President

Two Belt Cabooses Reach the End of the Line

The Belt recently said goodbye to old cabooses 220 and 223, donating them to the Illinois Railway Museum in Union.

Nettleton Transport used a front end loader to position rail and ties to create temporary ramps onto each truck, and then rolled and secured each

caboose onto the beds of low-boy highway trucks as shown at right. State permits had to be procured due to the height of the loads.

The route from Clearing Yard to Union, usually a 90-minute drive, became a 21-turn four-hour trek to avoid height restrictions along the route.



ASLRRRA Visitors Tour the Belt

A working tour of the Belt's Clearing Yard highlighted the American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association's (ASLRRRA) Summer Operating and Maintenance Meeting in Chicago. Over 85 attendees saw all

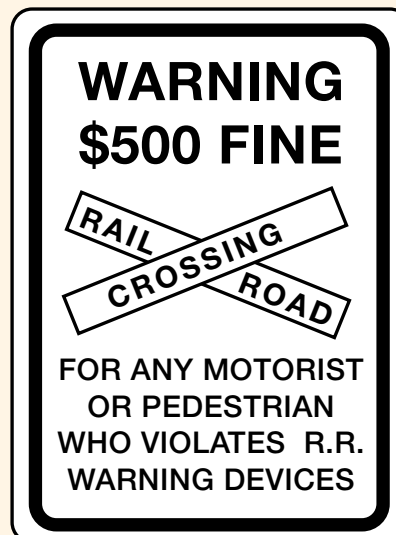
aspects of the operations of the 115-year-old Belt Railway.

More than a few jaws dropped when the visitors were told that the Belt handles more than 2 million freight cars each year through the Chicago Gateway.

CPR Certification Class



In a class presented in the Belt's Training Room, nine Belt employees recently completed training in cardiopulmonary resuscitation and emergency cardiac care. These employees are now certified by the American Heart Association as healthcare providers. Pictured at the training class are (top row, from left) Billy Jones, Joe Russo, Joe Giacobelli, Jan Tyrrell, Fred Eberhardt, Linda Rorem, Hank Franke, (bottom row, from left) Kim Zabinski, and Kevin O'Malley. Rob Olszowka, inspector with the Canadian National Railway, taught the class.



Belt Posts Warning Signs

The Belt recently acquired 10 crossing signs warning motorists and pedestrians of the current \$500 fine imposed for violating railroad warning devices. These signs were produced by the Illinois chapter of Operation Lifesaver.

Bedford Park Police Chief Leo Dubois allowed the Belt Railway to post these signs at our crossings at 65th and 63rd Streets, near Harlem Avenue, to enhance the safety of all who travel through the village of Bedford Park. As Operation Lifesaver's motto states: "Look, Listen and Live."

Belt Police Increase Visibility in Community

The Belt Police Department recently hired Mark O'Donnell as its Chief of Police. Our police will now be patrolling our property in new marked police cars and uniforms to increase the visibility of our police presence.

"We want to make not only our employees aware of the protection that we can afford them, but the public needs to be aware of the presence of

railroad police officers patrolling throughout their neighborhoods where railroad property is located," says O'Donnell. "We will be there if they need our help or have input to protect our assets. Our main goal is to protect Belt employees first, protect the property second, and to maintain a good working relationship with local police and residents who are located

around the Belt Railway's property."

The Belt Police will be meeting with local school officials and speaking to all age groups about railroad safety and crime prevention issues.

The police department is located in the east annex of the General Office Building, below the training room, and can be contacted at 496-4076.

The Belt Railway police force has added new police cars and uniforms to increase its visibility in the community.



**The Belt Railway
Company of Chicago**
6900 South Central Ave.
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Interchange

The Employee Newsletter of The Belt Railway Company of Chicago

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Belt Holds Safety Appreciation Day



The Belt Railway held its Third Annual Safety Appreciation Day for employees and their families on July 17. The group had a great meal, the Red Wing Safety Shoemobile was on

hand, and personal protective equipment was available. Each employee received a Belt safety cooler with an enclosed ice pack, which many employees are now using to carry their lunches.

Entertainment was once again provided by the Pullman Hobos. The Texas Madman, self-proclaimed Grand Duke of the Hobos, presented us with his new song entitled "The Chicago Belt Line" (see below).

"The Chicago Belt Line"

by the Texas Madman

In the great Chicago Land,
A good friend have I found,
Amid the stress and huddled mass,
It's a great way out of town.

The Chicago Belt Railway,
With such a friendly crew,
Switchmen, dispatchers, and carmen,
And even a bull or two.

An employee appreciation picnic,
I attended with some friends,
To sing some songs, tell a poem,
And chew down in the end.

Twas a warm and breezy day,
As I walked from the eastern side,
Old habits crept up as I stayed out of sight,
Though I didn't need to hide.

I walked up to the head office,
And announced why I was there,
And soon most all believed me,
Though I still got quite a few stares.

With me was Old King Luther,
A quiet and mellow man,
Who gave an oratory like I haven't heard,
Since Lord Open Road lived in the land.

Also there was Mr. Bojangles,
A little worn out from the road,
But his playing and singing were special,
As every 'bo and angel knows.

Also Mr. Tom Schaeffer,
Whose playing and songs brought to life,
The spirit inside every working man,
Of railroads and days gone by.

And finally skinny, ugly old me,
With the corny poetry I know,
And after awhile we all wondered,
Where did the time all go.

The four of us were invited,
To come back next year if we will,
We made a promise to do so,
We were paid with a hundred dollar bill.

Luther took a plane to Pennsy,
Tom stayed in Chi Town,
Mr. Bojangles in his beat up car,
Headed out eastbound.



The Pullman Hobos (clockwise from top left) include Charlie Penn, Tom Schaeffer, Mr. Bojangles, and song-writer The Texas Madman.

Me, after visiting Train Doc,
Headed back to the Belt Lines West End,
And with the help of a friendly brakeman,
I was on the road again.

Belt Letter Jackets For Sale

Belt Railway logo jackets are now available for purchase. These are "letterman" style jackets similar to high school and college jackets. They are black with black leather sleeves and have the Belt logo on the left lapel. If you wish, your name can be embroidered on the right lapel.

Orders for jackets will be taken through December 15, 1998. Payment is to be made in cash, money order or cashier's check made payable to Horizon Screen Print, Inc. No personal checks will be accepted. Payment in full is expected when the order is placed. Sizes and prices are as follows: Small, Medium, Large and XL - \$147; XXL - \$158; and XXXL - \$169.

If you are interested in purchasing one of these beautiful jackets, call Ruth Taylor at the Treasurer's office at Extension 4108 to make an appointment for sizing (we have samples of sizes S to XXL) and payment.

How I Spent My Summer Vacation ...



This past summer, 15 sons and daughters of Belt employees worked in the Belt's Summer Help Program, in which they cleaned, painted, and improved the appearance of our railroad. This popular program allows students to gain work experience in the railway industry and earn money to advance their education.

Pictured with Diesel Foreman Rich Aranda (far left) and Enginehouse Laborer Bob Manypenny (far right) of the Mechanical Department are summer helpers Brett Rorem (son of Clerk Linda Rorem), Tim Tyrrell (son of MIS Department Programmer Jan Tyrrell), and Josh Brazda (son of Clerk Ken Brazda).

Other summer helpers not pictured were Mike Mowery (grandson of Car Superintendent Jim Mowery), Christine Wagner (daughter of Locomotive Engineer Chuck Wagner), Carrie Wojcik (daughter of Manager-Agency Rod Wojcik), Lyndsey Anders (daughter of Chief Engineer J.Q. Anders), Tim Cruse (son of Clerk Regina Cruse), Al Kopinski (brother of Carman Ed Kopinski), Aaron Taylor (son of Secretary-Treasurer Ruth Taylor), Jennifer Catron (daughter of Clerk Rich Catron), and Antonio Maldonado, Jr. (son of Trackman Antonio Maldonado).

Employee Transitions & Milestones

RETIREMENTS

During the past quarter, 10 employees retired from the Belt Railway. We wish them all the best in retirement.

Dolphus Williamson
Clerk

42 years of service

James J. Garrett

Transportation

42 years of service

Edward Pollard

Clerk

41 years of service

Freddie Elam

Transportation

41 years of service

Louis Carter

Transportation

41 years of service

Willie McDonald

Transportation

41 years of service

Bennie Lewis

Clerk

39 years of service

Eugene Pratcher

Transportation

37 years of service

Michael R. Tierney

Transportation

33 years of service

James A. Nalls

Car

31 years of service

SERVICE

ANNIVERSARIES

The following employees reached service anniversaries during summer quarter 1998.

Our congratulations to them!

35 Years

Luther L. Harmon

Transportation

September 25, 1963

25 Years

James M. Gallagher

Mechanical

July 3, 1973

Ricardo L. Zavala

Track

July 3, 1973

Patricia M. Trudeau

Clerical

July 16, 1973

Raul M. Gomez

Track

July 24, 1973

20 Years

Artemio S. Santoyo

Track

August 11, 1978

Oscar Lugo

Track

August 25, 1978

Daniel S. Woodrich

Car

September 22, 1978

15 Years

Ricky A. Steczo

Signal

September 1, 1983

INTERCHANGE is published quarterly for the employees of The Belt Railway Company of Chicago. Employees are encouraged to submit ideas, photos, and suggestions to Tim Coffey in care of the General Office Building. © 1998 Belt Railway Company of Chicago. Design by Mainline Publications Inc., Chicago.