



Connections

The Quarterly Newsletter of The Belt Railway Company of Chicago

Inside CONNECTIONS

“Every employee should be aware that he or she can always address safety concerns to any Belt supervisor or official. This includes all levels of the Belt up to the president’s office itself.”

—Woody Cunningham, acting president, Belt Railway Company of Chicago

- Page 2
President’s letter
- Page 3
Belt replaces lap switches; New Amtrak AC passenger locomotives pass over Belt tracks; New Orleans visitors tour Belt
- Page 4
Billboard draws praise from FRA Administrator



The group gathers in front of the General Office Building. Front row, from left: Jim Cavanaugh, UTU general chairman; Jim Mowery, superintendent car department; Joe Spano, superintendent transportation; Larry Hasvold, FRA regional administrator; Jo Strang, FRA deputy regional administrator; Patti Smith, FRA regional grade crossing manager; V.C. Jackson, BLE general chairman; Joe Russo, TCU general chairman. Back row, from left: Ron Newcomb, BRS general chairman; Tim Coffey, director legal and governmental affairs; Phil Kelso, UTU legislative representative; George Gavalla, FRA associate administrator for safety; Joe Szabo, UTU state legislative representative; Rod Wojcik, manager agency and customer service; Jolene Molitoris, FRA administrator; Woody Cunningham, vice president and general counsel; Ruth Taylor, secretary treasurer; Ken Smith, superintendent motive power.

FRA Administrator Molitoris Visits BRC

Belt employees discuss safety and training with FRA leaders

The Belt Railway was honored to host Federal Railroad Administrator Jolene Molitoris and other FRA officials July 7. It was Administrator Molitoris’ first visit to the Belt and we believe she was favorably impressed with our company.

The meeting, also attended by Belt labor representatives and management officials, was held in the General Office Building Conference Room. Tim Coffey, the Belt’s director of legal and govern-

mental affairs, presented a slide show entitled “About the Belt,” which gave the Administrator a slice of Belt history as well as an overview of our current operation.

Ms. Molitoris led a discussion about the FRA’s philosophy regarding safety in the industry and her strong belief in the team concept—labor, management, and government working together to achieve an injury-free environment. Belt labor representatives and management then discussed

the successful labor/management joint initiatives developed on the Belt over the past few years and the improved training and safety awareness programs that also have been in place.

Ms. Molitoris was driven up to the Hump before her busy schedule required her to leave for another appointment. Before departing, Ms. Molitoris, who expressed an affinity for the nation’s belt railroads, promised to return to the Belt for a full tour of our railroad.

President's Letter

My Fellow Belt Employees:

Notwithstanding the excellent safety record the Belt Railway has achieved in recent years, the two fatalities we have experienced this year serve as a harsh reminder that we can never afford to become complacent about safety on the job.

In response to these tragic accidents, the Belt has been working closely with the Federal Railroad Administration to analyze the facts involved in

We should all bear in mind that no job is so important and no service so urgent that we cannot take the time necessary to perform all work as safely as possible.

these incidents and to develop an improved Belt safety program which will make such serious accidents unlikely to happen in the future.

These efforts will be expanded to include increased participation and input from all Belt employees and their labor representatives. We believe this approach will insure our success in making the Belt Railway the safest possible place to work.

As a result of this labor/management/government collaboration, we anticipate that several initiatives will be developed and implemented in the very near future.

First, intensive efforts have begun to effectively communi-

cate with each individual employee to ensure that working safely is in the forefront of every employee's mind. This is also being done to address individual employee concerns regarding safety and to solicit your input. While this is currently being achieved by means of departmental safety meetings and one-on-one meetings at various work locations, every employee should be aware that he or she can always address safety concerns to any Belt supervisor or official. This includes all levels of the Belt Railway up to the president's office itself.

Second, the Belt will vigorously review its efforts in the area of safety skills training for all supervisors and employees. While our training of new and entry level employees is currently more intensive and exhaustive than at any time in Belt history, we will be taking steps to ensure that this level of time and attention will be extended to the safety training of all employees regardless of their level of experience or seniority with the Belt.

Third, at the same time, the Belt Railway will continue to work to improve its efficiency testing programs in all departments. These efforts are designed to ensure safety awareness and compliance with all government-mandated safety procedures as well as compliance with all Belt oper-

ating and safety rules. Also, special emphasis will be placed on efficiency testing in areas where we seem to be experiencing problems with safe work practices.

Finally, all employees can expect to see an even more vigorous enforcement of all safety rules on the Belt. These efforts will be extended by all levels of supervision in the future and will include, but not be limited to, an increased level of random testing which will be consistent with both the letter and spirit of FRA drug and alcohol regulations.

As we go forward with our efforts to ensure the safest possible workplace on the Belt Railway, we should all bear in mind that no job is so important and no service so urgent that we cannot take the time necessary to perform all work as safely as possible. Needless to say, this effort will only be successful through the efforts of all Belt employees.

We ask that all employees extend their best efforts to make the Belt Railway the safest workplace possible.

Very truly yours,



Woody Cunningham
Acting President



Belt forces replace two lap switches.

Belt Replaces Lap Switches

Belt track and signal forces combined recently for a switch and signal renewal project in the East Yard. In the span of just 13 hours, two 136-pound “lap switches” (two switches in one) were replaced by Belt track employees.

At the same time, our signal employees renewed four switch machines. These infrastructure improvements will make hump operations more efficient. This cooperative effort resulted in only minimal delays to the hump operation.

On May 13, two new Amtrak AC passenger locomotives passed over Belt tracks. The EMD F59PHI locomotives were built in London, Ontario and were en route to Amtrak at 16th & Lumber Street to be placed into service. Ken Smith, superintendent of motive power, photographed the locomotives in front of the Belt’s Diesel Shop at Clearing Yard.



Belt Hosts Visitors from New Orleans Belt Railroad

The Belt played host to four representatives of the Public Belt Railroad Commission of the City of New Orleans. The gentlemen were treated to a presentation about the Belt by Rod Wojcik and also received a tour of the property. Like most visitors to the Belt, they were amazed at the size and scope of our operation.

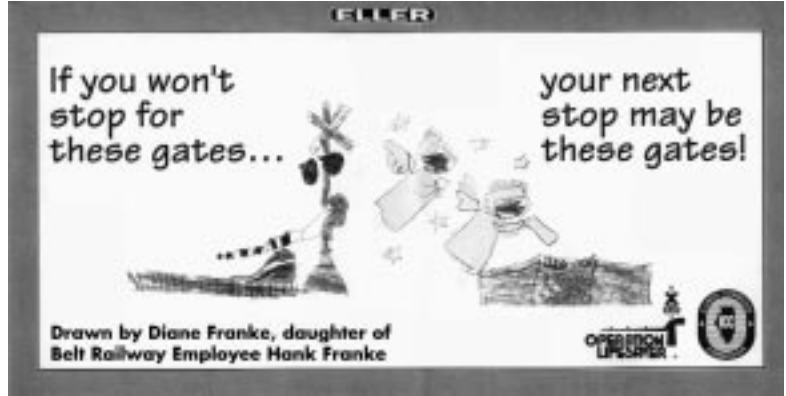
“I want to express my sincere appreciation to you, Diane, and the others who were instrumental in this unique method of assisting in the prevention of highway-rail crossing incidents.” — FRA Administrator Jolene Molitoris



Jolene Molitoris



Hank and Diane Franke



Billboard Draws Praise from FRA Administrator



FRA Administrator Jolene Molitoris visits the Belt. See page 1.

Several months ago, we reported on a new grade crossing safety billboard featuring the artwork of Diane Franke. Diane is the daughter of Linda and Hank Franke, a diesel electrician at the Belt.

This billboard project using Diane Franke’s poster caught the attention of Federal Railroad Association Administrator Jolene Molitoris, who in March wrote a letter to former Belt President Ron Batory about the campaign.

“Among the thousands of pieces of printed materials that cross my desk, one recently caught my eye,” Ms. Molitoris wrote. “That was the cover story in the fall 1997 edition of **CONNECTIONS**, the Belt Railway’s quarterly newsletter, featuring Miss Diane Franke and her poster about grade crossing safety. Not only was the article very well done, but I was pleased to read that the culmination of Diane’s efforts and talent will be displayed on billboards in the City of Chicago for the benefit of hundreds of thousands of people. This is an excellent idea, and I want to express my sincere appreciation to you, Diane, and the others who were instrumental in this unique method of assisting in the prevention of highway-rail crossing incidents.”

Diane’s billboard, erected in several locations around the city of Chicago, was well received, and stories were written about the project by the *Daily Southtown* and *Southwest News-Herald* newspapers.



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Interchange

The Employee Newsletter of The Belt Railway Company of Chicago

Inside INTERCHANGE

- **Page 1**
Belt trainmaster speaks out against negative press coverage; Belt joins in Railroad Daze
- **Page 2**
Blackhawks award hockey scholarship to Aaron Taylor; Belt employees attend Plasser American training; Employee transitions and milestones

Belt Trainmaster Speaks Out Against Negative Press Coverage

Belt Trainmaster Mike O'Donnell became tired of being inundated with negative media coverage of the Belt and the railroad industry in general, and decided to express a much-needed railroader's perspective.

Mike wrote a letter to the *Daily Southtown*, which was published recently in the Public Forum section of the newspaper. In his letter, Mike discussed the importance of our railroad to Chicago and the national economy.

Mike also explained that the Belt's 600 "dedicated,

hardworking employees" feel very strongly when they hear residents, who have chosen to live near railroad right-of-ways, call for injunctions to be placed against railroads.

Mike points out that each 60-foot railcar holds the equivalent freight of 3 ½ truck trailers, and that transporting goods by rail is "the safest and most environmentally friendly mode of transportation."

The final paragraph of Mike's letter says it all: "I believe the railroads have a PR problem. I seldom read positive news on what a tremendous job



Mike O'Donnell

the railroads have done to make this country what it is today. Railroaders, please speak up."

Belt Joins in Railroad Daze

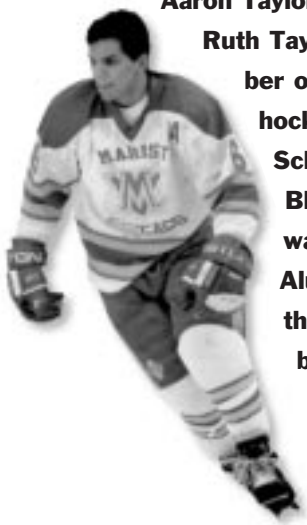
The Belt and six other railroads participated in the Third Annual Franklin Park Railroad Daze on May 16. The Belt's Bicentennial/Operation Lifesaver locomotive No. 534 and caboose No. 126 were on display.

In addition to the rail equipment display, the fair featured children's games, mini train rides, stagecoach and trolley rides, food, a spike driving contest, and railroad memorabilia. The fair has turned into quite an event for the village and places the railroad industry in a positive light.



Families pose for pictures aboard the Belt's Bicentennial/Operation Lifesaver locomotive at Franklin Park's Railroad Daze.

Blackhawks Award Hockey Scholarship to Aaron Taylor



Aaron Taylor, son of Belt Secretary and Treasurer Ruth Taylor and her husband, Chuck, and a member of the Marist High School RedHawks hockey team, received one of four 1998 Scholarship Awards given by the Chicago Blackhawk Alumni Association. The award was presented in March at a Blackhawks Alumni luncheon. Students are selected by the Illinois High School Hockey Association based on their scholastic achievement, community involvement, and leadership qualities both on and off the ice.

Aaron intends to put the \$2,000 per year scholarship to good use. He plans to attend St. Mary's College in Winona, Minnesota, where he has also been offered an art scholarship, and play for its hockey team. Congratulations, Aaron!

Belt Employees Attend Plasser American Training



Top photo: Zack Ziobro (from left), Bob Ward, and Leo DeLeon display certificates from their training assignment at Plasser American. Not pictured: Ken Diemer. Bottom photo: Bob Ward (left) and Leo DeLeon pause while aboard the Roadmaster 2000 Tamper near the LeMoyné Interlocking Plant.

Belt Maintenance of Way Engineer Ken Diemer and Track Department employees Bob Ward, Leo DeLeon, and Zack Ziobro recently completed training at Plasser American Corporation in Chesapeake, Virginia.

These gentlemen were trained in the operation and repair of the Plasser Roadmaster 2000 Tamper, a computerized tamper which lifts and lines tracks. It also possesses a laser alignment system, which helps Belt track forces align tracks between the bridges on the north end of the Belt's system.

Employee Transitions & Milestones

RETIREMENTS

During the past quarter, one employee retired from the Belt Railway. We wish him all the best in retirement.

Cornelio C. Calderon
Track
31 years of service

NEW HIRES

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

Transportation

Brian Erickson
Michael Izzo
Lucius Keys
Kyle McCawley
Neil McCully
Deran Mitchell
Chris Reyes
Richard Rizleris

Signal

James McNeil
Dan Quinlan

Track

Iaracio Ibarra

Mechanical

James Mastny

SERVICE

ANNIVERSARIES

The following employees reached service anniversaries during spring quarter 1998. Our congratulations to them!

30 Years

Miguel R. Martinez
Track
April 25, 1968

25 Years

Glenn D. Hagen
Dispatcher
April 12, 1973

20 Years

Daniel K. Hansen
Mechanical
April 1, 1978

Peter A. Cortez, Jr.
Transportation
April 2, 1978

Wallace J. Harper
Mechanical
April 3, 1978

Larry D. Johnson
Track
April 3, 1978

Jesus C. Carmona
Track
April 7, 1978

Timothy M. Malone
Transportation
May 17, 1978

William R. Foulk
Transportation
May 17, 1978

Melvin E. Smith
Transportation
June 1, 1978

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.