



# connections

THE BELT RAILWAY COMPANY OF CHICAGO

## Belt Board Members Praise Property Clean-Up

### INSIDE

- 2 President's letter;  
News briefs
- 3 Benefits update;  
Retirees luncheon
- 4 Remembering Luigi Blonda;  
Service anniversaries
- 5 Belt helps fund new YMCA;  
Students say no to guns
- 6 Employee transitions

**A**s Belt Railway employees have undoubtedly noticed, the Belt property has undergone some major improvements in recent months. The Belt's management contracted for a \$2 million clean-up effort, resulting in the removal of debris, scrap steel, and weeds, and the addition of white stone landscaping and lighting at the entranceway to the property.

President Tom Shurstad and Chief Engineer Ron Strong made this clean-up effort a top priority. "By eliminating hazardous debris, we create a safer work environment for all employees and a property we can take great pride in," Shurstad said.

Visitors to the Belt property also have noticed these improvements. After the latest Belt board of directors meeting on Sept. 2, the directors toured the property and many commented on how clean it looked.

The board members also noticed an outstanding new safety billboard with the slogan, "Pulling Together for Safety." Carman Ed Kopinski created the illustration, which features renderings of the locomotives of the Belt's six owners "pulling together."



Belt officers and directors pause in front of the new safety billboard following a tour of the property. Pictured (from left) are Tim Coffey (Belt), Art Schoener (Schoener Consulting), Joe Spano (Belt), Pat O'Brien (Belt), David Wilson (NS), Pat Pender (CP), John Manetta (NS), Tom Shurstad (Belt), John Rathbone (NS), Greg Stengem (BNSF), and Ron Strong (Belt).

Kopinski's artistic talents first came to light when he designed some well-liked company T-shirts. At the request of Belt's management, he developed some ideas for a billboard, then created his marker illustration and coordinated the manufacture of the sign.

## Belt Rolls Out Red Carpet for Engineering Students

**F**ourteen engineering students from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign donned hard hats and ear plugs for an up-close look at a railroad in action.

The Railroad Engineering class visited the Belt in April and returned to campus thrilled by the Belt's "red carpet" treatment.

"The hospitality and friendliness that you and the rest of the employees of the Belt Railway afforded us was unparalleled in my academic experience," Professor Donald R. Uzarski wrote in a thank-you letter.

"Everything, ranging from the tour of the yard tower to the tour of the car shop, was

professional and informative. The students gained a valuable insight that could only be gained from such a trip. We had quite a discussion later. They were especially awed by the fact that you would take the time to turn a locomotive—for us!"

Thanks to all Belt employees who assisted with the visit.



**My Fellow Belt Employees:**

As we approach the end of what has been a very eventful 1999, I thought this would be an appropriate time to review some of what has occurred this year both on the Belt Railway and throughout the rail industry.

**Safety**

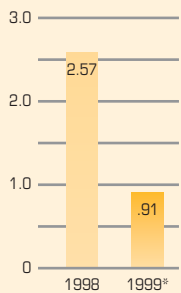
Through October, the Belt's injury frequency ratio is .91. This places us not only in first place in the Switching/Terminal Railroad classification, but also ahead of all Class I railroads. If we can continue to work safely, we have an excellent chance of winning our second gold Harriman Safety Award.

I told you when I came to the Belt that safety was my No. 1 priority, and that we would spare no expense in cleaning up your work environment. Thus far in 1999, we have spent \$2 million on clean-up projects.

I assure you that we will continue to maintain the clean work environment to which you have become accustomed. We will carry forward this commitment to safety, and I ask that you continue to do likewise. Safety is a partnership, and our performance this year shows that. By working together, we can continue to achieve great results in all areas of safety. Thanks to all Belt employees for their continued cooperation and commitment.

Also, the former Labor/Management Safety Committee is undergoing a transformation. The new name of the committee is the Belt Railway Safety Committee. The committee will be led by Belt contract employees and will be given responsibility and a budget to promote safety on our railroad. More information about the committee will be forthcoming.

INJURY FREQUENCY RATIO



\*Through October 1999

**Capital Projects**

In September, the Belt's board of directors approved a year 2000 capital budget of more than \$15 million, thereby indicating a continued commitment to this railroad by Belt owner lines. Over the past four years, more than \$75 million has been invested in Belt track and signal infrastructure. These projects ensure that our railroad will be ready and able to accept the rail transportation challenges of the new millennium.

**The Chicago Project**

As we all know, Chicago is the hub of the railroad industry. To address Chicago's operational and infrastructure needs, the industry has convened an industry-wide planning group to study how to improve and upgrade the area's rail service, both in the long and short term. Because of the important role the Belt plays in the day-to-day train operations in Chicago, we have a place at the table and will be a part of the decision-making process. This also bodes well for the future of railroading in Chicago and at the Belt Railway.

Finally, I wish you and your families a safe and enjoyable holiday season, and health and happiness in the coming year.

Sincerely,

C.T. (Tom) Shurstad



**The April 5, 1999 issue of *Industry Week*** magazine ranked Chicago as the No. 1 manufacturing center in the United States, saying that the city's "solid air, rail, and truck network is a distribution plus." The article also mentioned that Chicago has been the top U.S. location for new manufacturing sites for

two of the past three years. These statistics indicate a strong future for Chicago railroads and the Belt.

**French journalist Laurent Bromberger** followed up on his visit at the Belt by sending copies of his articles on U.S. freight railroading. The Belt received ample coverage in a two-page French magazine spread.

**The Belt also hosted a visitor** from the Austrian national railway. Alfred Neiderkofler-Pesendorfer from Osterreichische Bundesbahnen runs an Austrian freight hump yard and took lots of notes on Belt operations. He also presented the Belt with a new idea about how to retard cars in a hump facility.



# interchange

THE BELT RAILWAY COMPANY OF CHICAGO  
EMPLOYEE NEWSLETTER

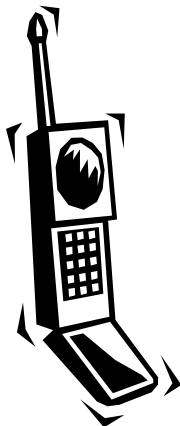
## Belt Benefits Update

### Find an Eye Doctor—Fast!

It's now easier than ever to find a Vision Service Plan eye doctor. You can use a touch-tone phone or the VSP Web site to locate a doctor by ZIP code.

To use the touch-tone phone service, follow these steps:

- 1 Using a touch-tone phone, call toll-free 1-800-877-7195.
- 2 Enter your VSP identification number, which is usually the Social Security number of the covered member (the person whose group provides VSP coverage), and hit the "pound" (#) sign.
- 3 If the name spoken back is that of the covered member, press 1 to continue on the system.
- 4 Press 2 for VSP doctor information.



- 5 Press 2 to locate a doctor by ZIP code.
- 6 When asked, enter the ZIP code.

To find a doctor online, go to [www.vsp.com](http://www.vsp.com). Click on "Doctor Directory," then enter your VSP identification number in the box next to Member I.D. and your ZIP code. Click on the Submit button and a list of doctors in the selected ZIP code will appear.



### Another Choice for Safety Shoes

The Belt has added Lehigh Safety Shoe Company as an approved vendor to our safety shoe program. Red Wing Shoes also continues to be an approved vendor. Through the safety shoe program, the Belt pays 50% for up to two pairs of safety shoes per year and allows employees to pay for the remainder through payroll deduction.

## retirement luncheon

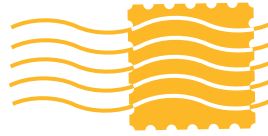
The Belt hosted a luncheon at Mama Luigi's to thank its most recent management retirees for their years of service. J.Q. Anders, Woody Cunningham, Mike McCarthy, Ken Smith, Ruth Taylor, and Bill Walztoni received their retirement watches and 1998 safety awards.

The luncheon gave about 20 members of the Belt's current management team an opportunity to meet and talk with the retirees. All retirees appeared to be well rested and enjoying retirement.



Belt's recent management retirees (from left): Mike McCarthy, J.Q. Anders, Ruth Taylor, Bill Walztoni, Woody Cunningham, and Ken Smith.

# remembering Luigi Blonda



Dear Readers,

I am writing this letter in response to your outpouring of sympathy and grief from the loss of my father, Nozzio (Luigi) Blonda.

All of you who knew him understood what he meant to the BRC in the last half-century. He started for the Belt in 1949 and learned the job from the ground up, putting in rail and later becoming foreman in charge. He taught many of his supervisors their jobs, had much input in the company's structural decisions, and had the respect and admiration of many different BRC presidents and department heads.

I can honestly say he helped shape and build this railroad with his hard work and devotion to duty. He retired in December of 1980 and enjoyed many good years in retirement until his passing April 25, 1999. Although he was retired, he never stopped giving my brother William (electrician, 30 years) and me advice on railroad matters and policy, and pleasure with his many stories.

I just want to thank all of you for the reminiscing of stories about my father and the sincerity of your grief. He would have been so happy to be remembered with such high regard.

Your co-workers and his sons,  
Rich, Bill, and Mike Blonda

## Questions about your Railroad Retirement?

The U.S. Railroad Retirement Board has made it easier for railroad employees to get their questions answered.

You can find addresses and phone numbers for all the Board's field offices on the Railroad Retirement Board's Web site at **www.rrb.gov** or by calling the toll-free Railroad Retirement Board Help Line at **1-800-808-0772**. This is an automated telephone service available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

**1-800-808-0772**

## Service Anniversaries

Congratulations to the following Belt employees on their recent service anniversaries.

### 40 Years

Sammie L. Smith  
Transportation  
April 13, 1959

Rommie L. Arnold  
Transportation  
May 5, 1959

William R. Cislo  
Transportation  
July 4, 1959

Ranza Morris  
Transportation  
July 22, 1959

### 35 Years

Billy G. McKinney  
Car  
May 15, 1964

Manuel Lopez  
Track  
May 28, 1964

### 30 Years

Antonio Gonzalez  
Track  
April 1, 1969

Jose Guerrero  
Mechanical  
April 23, 1969

Luz L. Guerrero  
Mechanical  
April 23, 1969

David A. Carmona  
Track  
April 24, 1969

James A. Grannes  
Transportation  
May 3, 1969

Ronald P. Hodel  
Transportation  
May 10, 1969

Thomas Luckett  
Transportation  
June 5, 1969

David Nicholes  
Transportation  
July 7, 1969

Thomas J. Thomas  
Transportation  
Aug. 19, 1969

Roderick Brunson  
Transportation  
Aug. 27, 1969

Clarence Whalum  
Transportation  
Sept. 6, 1969

John W. Sanford  
Transportation  
Sept. 10, 1969

### 25 Years

John P. Lawrence  
Track  
April 9, 1974

Aurelio S. Breceda  
Track  
April 26, 1974

Jose L. Jimenez  
Track  
April 26, 1974

Diane M. Paczkowski  
Administration  
April 29, 1974

Leobardo Esparza  
Track  
May 17, 1974

Nicholas D. Lopez  
Track  
June 10, 1974

Jose S. Gonzalez  
Track  
June 21, 1974

Rocky Lee Jones  
Transportation  
Sept. 4, 1974

Pamela S. Hagen  
Administration  
Sept. 16, 1974

David A. Higen  
Car  
Sept. 16, 1974

Jerome R. Selvage  
Police  
Sept. 16, 1974

### 20 Years

Stephen L. Grajek  
Mechanical  
April 4, 1979

Leonardo DeLeon  
Track  
May 1, 1979

Robert J. Ward  
Engineering  
May 1, 1979

Harvey L. Williams  
Transportation  
May 2, 1979

Stephen G. Gaal  
Mechanical  
May 10, 1979

Brian O. Edgeworth  
Track  
June 4, 1979

Ignacio Ibarra  
Track  
June 4, 1979

James X. Ha  
Clerical  
June 22, 1979

Mayetta Cook  
Clerical  
June 25, 1979

Michael Kelly  
Mechanical  
July 1, 1979

Joseph K. Gibaszek  
Mechanical  
July 27, 1979

Larry W. Kincade  
Mechanical  
Aug. 1, 1979

Robert H. Fick  
Transportation  
Aug. 15, 1979

Elizabeth M. Wojcik  
Clerical  
Sept. 19, 1979

### 15 Years

Wallace R. Murphy  
Signal  
April 2, 1984

Tedder G. Carden  
Transportation  
April 14, 1984

Larry J. McDowell  
Transportation  
April 14, 1984

Michael J. McManimen  
Transportation  
April 15, 1984

Timothy G. Robinson  
Transportation  
April 22, 1984

Jack E. Thomas  
Transportation  
May 12, 1984

Roshell Coleman, Jr.  
Transportation  
June 5, 1984

Thomas M. Leavitt  
Police  
June 6, 1984

Michael J. Downing  
Mechanical  
June 13, 1984

Robert J. Kennedy  
Transportation  
June 17, 1984

Harry L. Burdett  
Transportation  
July 17, 1984

Ronald B. Tomasek  
Transportation  
July 22, 1984

Mark R. Dillon  
Car  
Sept. 12, 1984

# giving back to the community

## Belt Helps Fund New Southwest YMCA

**T**hanks in part to the Belt Railway, employees will be able to pump iron, shoot hoops, and learn more about their health—all close to their workplace. The Belt Railway has invested in the community by pledging \$25,000 over five years toward the construction of the new Southwest Chicagoland YMCA.

The YMCA plans to build a 23,000 square-foot facility at the southeast corner of 67th Street and Cicero Avenue with state-of-the-art equipment and health programs.

"There is a definite need in the Bedford Park-Clearing area for a facility through which our many companies can offer their employees the opportunity to enroll in fitness, health promotion, and wellness programs," said Tim Coffey, the Belt's general counsel, secretary, and director of human resources, and a former YMCA board member. "All indications are that the new Y will be a cost-effective way of meeting that need."

The Belt, along with Nalco and Cole Taylor Bank, made early gifts to the project, giving the

campaign a boost and demonstrating their commitment to the idea.

"As a result of Belt Railway's generous commitment, we are moving closer to construction of a much-anticipated new YMCA for the southwest side," Tino J. Mantella, president of the YMCA of Metropolitan Chicago, wrote in a letter of thanks to the Belt. "This gift will have a strong impact on other corporations in the Bedford Park/Clearing district and for this we are deeply appreciative."

The new YMCA will feature a 4,500 square-foot fitness center; a Mega Family Sports Center for basketball, volleyball, soccer, and other sports; a 24-foot climbing wall; a 17-element ropes course; a Healthy Café; and a Hospital/YMCA joint program space.

Because of successful fund-raising efforts, the Southwest Chicagoland YMCA is almost one year ahead of schedule and should be in use by 2001.



**The Belt also reached out to children by making a donation to the National Child Safety Council and its fight against drugs. The Belt's contribution was used to produce drug and alcohol awareness publications, which were distributed to area schoolchildren.**

## Students Say No to Guns

**T**he Belt Railway demonstrated its support for local schoolchildren during the Day of National Concern about Young People and Gun Violence, held on Oct. 21.

Belt Police Chief Mark O'Donnell and General Counsel Tim Coffey visited St. Mary Star of the Sea Grammar School, located about a block from the Belt's tracks, to congratulate the 800-plus students on their pledge against violence. About

a dozen other business, political, police, and fire representatives from the community also attended the assembly.

As part of the Day of National Concern, the students pledged to never play with guns, carry guns to school, or use guns to settle arguments.

O'Donnell and Coffey also used the opportunity to remind the students to obey grade crossing signals and not play near railroad tracks.



© 1999 Belt Railway Company of Chicago. Design by Mainline Publications Inc., Grayslake, Illinois.



**The Belt Railway Company of Chicago**  
 6900 S. Central Ave.  
 Bedford Park, IL 60638  
 www.beltrailway.com

**The Belt Railway Company of Chicago welcomes your comments.**  
 Send all correspondence to: CONNECTIONS,  
 The Belt Railway Company of Chicago,  
 6900 S. Central Ave., Bedford Park, IL  
 60638. For service inquiries or more  
 immediate assistance, call (708) 496-4000.

North America's Premier  
 Switching Terminal Railroad

# employee transitions

## Retirements

Thirteen employees recently retired from the Belt. We wish them all the best in retirement.

**Rommie L. Arnold,**  
 Transportation,  
 40 years of service

**Harold A. Miller,**  
 Transportation,  
 39 years of service

**Johnny Cunningham,**  
 Transportation,  
 34 years of service

**James W. O'Connell,**  
 Transportation,  
 43 years of service

**Leroy D. Finley,**  
 Transportation,  
 43 years of service

**Alfonso Orona,**  
 Track, 34 years of service

**Alvin Harris, Jr.,**  
 Transportation,  
 40 years of service

**Giuseppe Samperi,**  
 B&B, 32 years of service

**Michael J. Karr,**  
 Transportation,  
 42 years of service

**Carl G. Strnad,**  
 Transportation,  
 42 years of service

**Nicholas D. Lopez,**  
 Track, 25 years of service

**Alfred E. Vaughn,**  
 Clerical, 39 years of service

**Robert L. Zahorcik,**  
 Clerical, 43 years of service

## New Hires and Promotions

**NEW HIRES** — Since April 1, the following employees have been hired by the Belt. Please make them feel welcome.

### **Car**

Allen R. Anderson  
 Joey L. Byrd  
 Rolando Cantu  
 Borys Filinowicz  
 John F. Franco  
 Louis L. Jackson  
 Samuel E. Klein, III  
 Jason P. Mayne  
 Joe Pantalena  
 Thomas P. Puzas  
 Francis S. Rakoczy

### **Mechanical**

James Bertucci  
 Louis Cook  
  
**Signal**  
 Lance T. Pack  
 Jason Senodinos

### **Track**

Dwayne Carter  
 John D. Oliver

### **Transportation**

Anthony D. Allen  
 Thomas C. Coco  
 Frank W. Coffey  
 Norman J. Dujka  
 Robert M. Ellam  
 Farrol W. Jackson  
 Antwon D. Jones  
 Daniel F. Keiner  
 Anthony J. Marchi  
 David P. Morphew  
 Sean P. Murphy  
 Corey D. Webster

### **Administration**

James P. Bearden  
*Manager Terminal Operations*  
 David S. Cargill  
*Roadmaster West*  
 Ryan B. Pancoast  
*Management Trainee*  
 Michael R. Shore  
*Manager Terminal Operations*

**PROMOTIONS** — Please congratulate these employees who have received promotions to the management team.

Thomas S. Cichon, *Trainmaster*  
 Joseph J. Giacobelli, *Manager Revenue and Car Accounting*  
 Christopher L. Gorski, *Trainmaster*

Michael R. Haddix, *Assistant Trainmaster*  
 Mark A. Houser, *Assistant Trainmaster*  
 Shane D. Nail, *Assistant Trainmaster*