



Connections

Changes bring positive news to the BRC

Employees may have witnessed some extensive changes at the Belt this summer.

It started when CSX Transportation made a series of operating changes on its lines that translated to increased traffic of approximately 350 to 400 cars a day. As a result, BRC began running additional outbound trains for BNSF Railway, Union Pacific and Canadian Pacific.

This additional business, coupled with the new hours of service regulations outlined by the Rail Safety Improvement Act, resulted in a recall of 25 furloughed employees.

On Aug. 3, another significant change occurred with the cutover of the new Trainyard Tech Hump Control System.

"We are expecting increased productivity, as well as a safer operation as a result of the new system," said Mike Paras, general manager-transportation.

The system is expected to perform better than the previous Proyard II because it takes into consideration the grade of the classification yards and adjusts a car's speed accordingly. It builds a history so it can factor in car type, weight and rolling resistance to better control speed with the retarders. With the new system, Paras

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Congressman Dan Lipinski announces \$60 million in state funding has been allocated to the proposed bypass linking Central Avenue to 73rd St. He spoke at a press conference held Aug. 10 at the Belt Railway.

Bypass project **UNDERWAY**

A decades-old plan to relieve vehicle traffic congestion on Cicero and Harlem avenues by creating a bypass over the Belt Railway's Clearing Yard is nearing reality with the allocation of \$60 million toward the project by the state of Illinois.

Congressman Dan Lipinski, U.S. Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood, Illinois House Speaker Michael Madigan and Illinois Secretary of Transportation Gary Hannig gathered with other key officials at the Belt Railway Aug. 10 to make the announcement.

The funds will be added to \$110 million in federal funding already set aside for the project. The combined \$170 million will be enough to cover pre-construction costs, design and engineering. The total cost of the bypass is projected to exceed \$300 million.

"With the dedication of all the key officials that I have brought together today, the Central Avenue Bypass is sure to be a dream that comes true," Lipinski said at the press conference.

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U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood says the project promises to help drive economic growth.

Bypass project UNDERWAY

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The bypass would link Central Avenue between 65th and 73rd streets in Bedford Park. Because Central Avenue ends at the Belt Railway, there is no north-south route in the three-mile stretch between Harlem and Cicero.

“With this three mile roadblock to north-south traffic, Harlem and Cicero Avenues are terribly congested, costing time, wasting fuel and harming the environment,” Lipinski said. “I grew up a couple miles from here and the hope for a Central Avenue Bypass has been an issue for residents of the Southwest Side and South Suburbs since I was a kid coming to Midway Airport to watch the planes land. But because Chicagoland is the transportation hub of our nation, this bypass also has significant economic implications, locally, regionally and nationally. Congestion kills business and kills jobs.”

A bypass was first proposed in the 1970s and has gained support through the years with ever-increasing traffic from Midway Airport.

“This is my proudest day as a congressman,” Lipinski said. “There is no other issue that I hear more about from my constituents than getting a Central Avenue Bypass.”

No decision has been made on whether the bypass will be an overpass or underpass.

The \$60 million in Illinois funding comes from the first capital bill in the state in 10 years. Officials hope to secure funding from another federal transportation spending bill to pick up the rest of the tab, though it is uncertain when such a bill will pass.

AED TRAINING BEGINS

Six Automated External Defibrillator devices have been purchased and will be installed at different points on the BRC property. The first device was installed on the west end of the clerk’s room in the GOB. Others are planned for the hump, east and west yard offices, diesel shop, RIP track and near the Maintenance of Way offices and crewboard.

The purchase of the Phillips AED’s was due largely to the persistence of Kevin O’Malley, clerk, who believed the Belt should have them available. He took a “see it, own it, solve it, do it,” approach to the issue, meeting with vendors and bringing his case to BRC management.



Employees complete CPR and AED training Aug. 25 from a representative of Safety Training Associates. AEDs have shown to double the chances of a victim’s survival when coupled with CPR.

The response time for the fire department lengthened somewhat after the department moved its firehouse, which was until recently only two blocks from the Belt. That prompted approval for the devices, which treat a patient in cardiac arrhythmia through electrical therapy. Coupled with CPR, the devices have proven to save lives if administered promptly.

Although training has been in progress for operating the devices, their automated voice instructions tell a user exactly what to do.

Changes bring positive news to the BRC

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expects a reduction in misroutes, stalls and an increase in hump occupancy, throughput and productivity.

Coinciding with the implementation of Trainyard Tech and directional supervision by trainmasters, hump conductors were relocated upstairs with the hump masters. The new process reduces hand-offs and gaps because of better communication and accountability for processing the building of a train.

“This provides us with a more seamless operation,” Paras said. “Now you have the yardmaster and hump conductor team controlling the train from the arrival to the departure. It emphasizes teamwork and decreases the bottleneck between yards.”

After only two to three weeks of the new yard oversight process, production rates showed improvement.

Paras thanks the dedication of the Signal Department for making the project a success, including Charlie Ridgeway, Mark Ferguson and Abe Gibson.



Increased business from CSX and hours of service changes have brought back furloughed Transportation employees to the Belt.

Goodbye “Pick”

Rich Picken, assistant superintendent of transportation, retired Aug. 31 after 38 years of service.

“Rich is the best ‘car mover’ the BRC has ever seen,” said Tim Coffey, general counsel, secretary and director of HR. “He will be truly missed.”

Picken’s history with the Belt dates to May 1, 1971, when he joined as a switchman/trainman. He served in that role 13 years until becoming an assistant trainmaster and trainmaster. He had served in his most recent job 16 years.

Although originally drawn to computer programming, there was an opening for a switchman and he took it.

“This is a great organization and the people are really remarkable here, its been

a real pleasure to be part of the team,” he said.

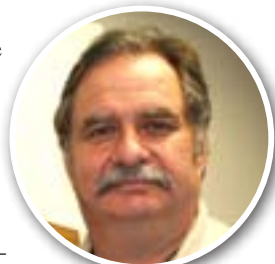
Continuous improvement has been a trademark of operations at the Belt throughout his career, but especially since the 1980s.

“We turned this into one of the premier switching terminals in the country,” he said. “Every day we try to make this a better place.”

As the assistant superintendent of transportation, he has overseen the daily operation of the railroad. The challenge has been adapting to everyday changes, he said, but the reward comes when you reach your objectives.

He will have more time for family, fishing and hunting in retirement. He and his wife of 29 years, Betty, have four children; Rich, Jennifer, Katie and Kelly.

He intends to keep himself busy with remodeling projects and taking college courses that suit his interests.



Rich Picken had 38 years at the Belt before his Aug. 31 retirement.



Rich Picken, assistant superintendent of transportation, left; Pat O'Brien, president; and Jim Ford, superintendent of the CTCO, celebrated the retirement of Picken and Ford at an Aug. 28 luncheon.

BRC recognized by Harriman organization

During an April 20 meeting, the E.H. Harriman Memorial Institute Board of Directors awarded the Belt a Certificate of Commendation for “Most Improved” in safety from 2007 to 2008 in the Group Switching and Terminal category.

An award luncheon and ceremony was held May 20. During the ceremony, the group also handed out their most prestigious award. The 2008 Harold F. Hammond Award winner was Bob Johnson, representing BNSF’s Northtown Diesel Shop.

BRC gets Jake Award

The American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association has again recognized the Belt Railway with a Jake Program Safety Award in 2008. The Jake Award is delivered to railroaders with a frequency severity index better than the industry average. The Belt was among 344 railroads to earn this distinction.

“All of us firmly believe in the importance of establishing a safe workplace,” said Richard Timmons, president of the ASLRRRA. “Your record last year was evidence of the importance you place on safety, and the dedication of your employees and management team is a testament to railroad professionalism.”

Service Anniversaries

Congratulations to Belt Railway employees celebrating these milestones since April:

40 Years

April 23	Jose Guerrero	Mechanical Department
April 23	Luz L. Guerrero	Mechanical Department
April 24	David Carmona	Track Department

35 Years

April 29	Diane Paczkowski	Administration Department
May 1	Leobardo Esparza	Track Department

30 Years

April 4	Stephen Grajek	Mechanical Department
May 1	Leonardo Deleon	Track Department
May 1	Robert Ward	Track Department
May 2	Harvey Williams	Transportation Department
May 10	Stephen Gaal	Mechanical Department
June 4	Ignacio Ibarra	Track Department
June 22	James Ha	Car Operations Department
June 25	Mayetta Cook	Car Operations Department
Aug. 1	Larry Kincade	Mechanical Department

25 Years

April 2	Wallace Murphy	Signal Department
April 14	Lawrence McDowell	Transportation Department
April 15	Michael McManinen	Transportation Department
May 12	Jack Thomas	Transportation Department
June 6	Thomas Leavitt	Police Department

15 Years

April 14	John Lucio	Car Department
April 18	Chales Clarkson	Car Department
April 18	Mark Ferguson	Signal Department
April 18	Edward Jimenez	Transportation Department
April 18	Tracy Johnson	Transportation Department
April 18	Patricia McCann	Transportation Department
April 18	Matt Wilbur	Car Department
April 19	Timothy O'Connell	Signal Department
April 19	Arnold Sikler	Transportation Department
May 10	Bonnie Sergel	Transportation Department
May 23	Alfredo Hernandez	Track Department
May 25	Hector Miranda	Transportation Department
July 11	Carlos Medina	Transportation Department
Aug. 8	Paul Dudzik	Transportation Department
Aug. 8	Timothy Mutzbauer	Transportation Department

Ford leaves lasting

RAIL LEGACY

Jim Ford has worn many hats in his railroading career.

The third generation railroader got his start in 1968 on the Chicago North Western Railway as a switchman. More than 40 years later, he has taken a new role as a retiree effective Aug. 31.

Ford served 20 years on the CNW in various union and managerial capacities before joining the Belt family in February 1994 as manager of operating practices, and later as manager of crew development and performance. For the past three years, he served as superintendent of the Chicago Transportation Coordination Office. The CTCO is comprised of rail representatives from Chicago-based railroads charged with enhancing the efficiency of operations through Chicago. The CREATE program has been a large undertaking for the group and Ford is excited to have been part of it.

"This is the only project of its kind as far as national significance," he said.

In addition to his work with CREATE, Ford has a few other notable projects in which he takes pride. He wrote the first timetable used at the Belt in conjunction with the rule book change in the 1990s. And, as president of the Chicago

Operating Rules

Association, he arbitrated meetings with rail representatives to develop the first CORA publication.

"It is still in use today and is a very valuable part of Chicago operations," he said. "We were very proud to get it done."

When the Belt installed the command center in the GOB in 1999, Ford was again called upon to lend his expertise and take on the role as the first MTO.

Through all of it, Ford has enjoyed the changes and challenges of his railroading life.

"As a manager you are always challenged," he said. "Promoting safe work is always the most important part, but you also have to plug in the responsibility to customers, employees and to the operation."

Mentoring was a key aspect of some of his earlier jobs with the Belt and there was always one thing he advocated for – family.

"I used to tell the new hires you have to make time for your family and relationships because this industry is not a Monday through Friday environment," he said.

Ford and his wife, Terri, will celebrate their 20th anniversary in November with a trip to Hawaii. They have three children, Jack, Kate and David. They have been active in the support community for parents of children with Down syndrome since their Jack, 17, was born with the disorder. Terri was chairman of the UPS for Down Syndrome organization five years. She has served eight years as an advocate for people with disabilities on the governor's advisory board for the education of children born with disabilities. Jim is involved in Sibshops activities, which brings siblings of children with disabilities together.

Although retired, Ford doesn't plan to give up railroading entirely, and will serve as an industry consultant.



Jim Ford spent 35 years as a railroader. He plans to work as a consultant in retirement.

FAREWELL RETIREES

The Belt Railway recognizes the following employees for their many years of dedicated service and recent retirements:

Morgan Austin, chief clerk, retired July 29 after nearly 24 years of service.

William Blonda, shop electrician, retired May 31 after 40 years of service.

David Carmona, truck driver, retired July 1 with 40 years of service.

Jesus Carmona, machine operator, retired July 1 after 31 years of service.

William Helmbold, signal maintainer, retired May 15 after 39 years of service.

Lawrence McDowell, locomotive engineer, retired July 1 after 25 years of service.

Melvin Smith, manager of crew administration, retired June 30 after 31 years of service.

Ronald Strong, chief engineer, retired in April after 39 years of service.



Augie Morgan and his wife



Mel Smith, right, with Mike Paras



Ron Strong with Roy Gelder and Tim Coffey

Retiree saves a life

Rod Wojcik, former director agency and customer service, provided assistance to a man who suffered a heart attack while exercising at the Riviera Country Club and Sports Center in Orland Park, Ill., March 30.

With the man unconscious and not breathing, Wojcik yelled for someone to call 911. Then he and another bystander began administering chest compressions and mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. The CPR was a success and the man was resuscitated before paramedics arrived.

It was the first time Wojcik had put his CPR training received at the Belt to use.



CARMEN TALK SAFETY, SERVICE

Carmen Juan Lopez, left, Israel Soto and Juan Soto have known each since working as managers at the former Cub Foods store in Bedford Park.

Carmen Juan Lopez, Israel Soto and Juan Soto know what it takes to work safely: communication.

And for the trio that has worked together more than 20 years, that comes more easily.

They got their start together working in grocery management. They then each turned to the railroad for a new career path.

Israel has worked for the BRC eight years and his brother, Juan, for five years. Lopez has three years experience. The group says growing up tinkering with personal vehicles got them interested in the



Juan Lopez, carman, enters car information into the computer. The Mechanical car department is injury free in 2009 as of Aug. 25.

Hoye recognized by AARS

The Belt Railway congratulates Steve Hoye, director of agency and customer service, as the recipient of a scholarship for the Michigan State University Certificate Course in Railway Management. The scholarship in the amount of \$15,000 was offered to any railroad employee across the nation from the American Association of Railroad Superintendents.

The course consists of four weeks of classroom, field experiences and on-line sessions with a mentor instructor.

Six courses have been scheduled in various locations throughout the Midwest for 2010. Class size is limited to 30 participants.

Hoye started with the Belt in 2003 as a trainmaster.

mechanical field.

"It's like a game," Lopez said. "You communicate with your team mates and then you do the work."

If they see a hazard or unsafe behavior, they notify their co-worker to avoid injury.

"Even when you are working with someone you have never met, you still have to watch for them," Israel said. "He's a human just like me."

The transition from working in a grocery store, where the only tool they used was a box cutter, to working on the railroad meant the carmen had to understand the consequences of taking an unsafe course.

"We are always learning here," Israel said.

Safety is also about customer service, something they perfected in a retail environment.

"Although we don't see them here, they see us," Israel said.



Operation Lifesaver

The BRC Operation Lifesaver team of Sam Canerday, police officer; John Lucio, safety committee chairman; and Steve Hoye, director of agency and customer service, operated a booth at the Illinois State Fair Aug. 16 in Springfield.

The trio handed out brochures, key chains, pencils, pens, crayons, coloring books and other materials in addition to spreading the OL message of Look, Listen and Live.

Engineering update

Thanks to the coordination between employees in the Transportation and Engineering departments, the capital program was completed on time for the year. Crews installed approximately 26,000 ties and raised/surfaced the east departure and receiving yards.

The schematics have been approved for CREATE EW-1, which is the beginning of the east/west corridor. The project calls for double main tracks from Argo to the East End switches. The Belt has pursued a state rail agreement. EW-1 also involves CSX.

EAGLE EYE MAYS

Joseph Mays was recognized with an Eagle Eye Award for preventing a possible derailment.

At about 9:20 a.m. Aug. 20, while working the 7:30 East Yard Assignment, he observed four loaded tank cars running out of 01ECLS. Mays quickly dismounted his engine and lined all the switches to keep the cars on the track. He demonstrated great situational awareness and commitment to the safety of co-workers.

BRC turntable moved

The Belt's former turntable has a new home in West Virginia.

The West Virginia Railroad Museum in Elkins received the 82-ton, 90-foot-long turntable by rail in July.

The turntable is expected to be the focal point of the up-and-coming museum. Coordinators have searched three years for an appropriate turntable. They will have to excavate four to five feet deep and 90 feet across to set it in place. Installation costs were made possible by a \$100,000 grant from the West Virginia Transportation Department. The museum would eventually like to run a rail heritage tourist line on 122 miles of state-owned track in the area.

The early 1900s turntable was located on the east side of the diesel shop. It has been out of service several years.

HOW HAVE YOU CONTRIBUTED TO THE SAFETY RECORD IN THE DIESEL SHOP?

*"Teamwork."
-Louis Cook,
electrician*



*"Common sense."
-Joe Jimenez,
machinist*

*"For the people here, if you love yourself, you will stay safe. I love these fingers, so I take care of them. You don't have to be unsafe to get your job done. Use your safety equipment and common sense. Don't manhandle equipment and you can avoid a back injury."
-Larry Kincade, foreman, 30 years service*



*"Wear the right PPE, including steel-toed shoes, helmet, glasses and ear plugs."
-Martin Murillo,
laborer*

*"Most employees here are tradesmen and safety is the first thing you learn in this trade. You think about things and discuss them."
-Larry Noyes, machinist*



*"Watch for each other by picking up tripping hazards."
-Tom Weck,
machinist, 17
years service*

This newsletter appears under direction of The Belt Railway of Chicago. To include information, call Stephanie at the newsletter office, 1845 S 11th St., Lincoln, NE 68502-2211. Phone 402-475-6397. Readers also can submit articles via e-mail at stephanie@newslink.com. This material is intended to be an overview of the news of The Belt Railway of Chicago. If there are any discrepancies between this newsletter and any collective bargaining process, insurance contracts or other official documents, those documents will govern. The Belt Railway of Chicago continues to maintain and reserves the right, at any time, to alter, suspend, discontinue or terminate all plans and programs described in this newsletter. This newsletter is not an employment contract or any type of employment guarantee.

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Achievements in safety for MECHANICAL DEPARTMENT

Employees in the diesel shop have set a standard of excellence when it comes to safety. They were more than 1,350 days without injury as of Aug. 25.

The Mechanical car and locomotive department was invited for a safety barbecue celebrating the achievement July 29.

Richard Aranda, Wayne Kizior, Todd Ruddy and Hugh Simon cooked ribs around the clock for the employees.

Mike O'Donnell, superintendent, said all 14 furloughed employees in the car department have been called back to work. The department is injury free so far in 2009.

O'Donnell said the groups' achievement in safety comes from situational awareness and focusing on the task at hand.

The car and locomotive employees hold a safety meeting every two weeks in which a safety-related video is shown and discussed. The meetings are rotated among shifts throughout the year to involve all employees.

A capital program for the hump fleet may begin as early as 2010. Possible vendors are being reviewed to replace the Belt's five mother units. The slug units would be modified. Modernizing the fleet will allow enhanced efficiency in shoving increasingly heavier trains up the hump.

"The distributed power units are coming into the yards more and more, allowing them to pull heavier trains, so we need better tractive efforts from our locomotives," O'Donnell said.