



April 2011

Connections



Hump yard operations

Take One:

Railroads are stagehands in a major producer-consumer production. They ship products around the country in a largely behind-the-scenes effort and ensure products reach their final destination on time.

Whether lumber, peanut oil, paper or any of the millions of products shipped by rail every day, consumers see and purchase products that traveled by rail. Many don't realize the magnitude of or intricacy involved in getting products from Point A to a shelf near them.

Last November, Belt Railway Company of Chicago aided the Discovery Channel in its effort to explain railroad operations by opening the doors to a film crew.

Discovery Channel was attracted to BRC because of the double hump, size of the yard and amount of cars daily running through the yard.

Peter Sturgeon, trainmaster, was asked to ensure the safety of the film crew, while Stel Paras walked the crew through his everyday tasks of a hump yard switchman.

Other BRC employees played an integral role in demonstrating hump yard operations.

The crew spent a day and a half filming. They followed one tank car from the receiving yard, over the hump and into the classification yard where cars are sorted and outbound trains are built. They also filmed a wheel change on the RIP track.

Together, BRC and Discovery Channel put together a behind-the-scenes show that will enlighten people around the world.

Action:

Right: The Discovery Channel film crew depicts a day in the life of Switchman Stel Paras, right.



Take Two:

Safe perspective



Action:

Above: The film crew prepares their camera equipment for a long day of shooting.

Safety isn't just a saying or a slogan, it's a lifestyle for BRC employees. Visitors to BRC are welcomed into that lifestyle, and employees look out for their safety as if they were part of the family.

To start each day, the film crew received a job briefing before filming. Peter Sturgeon, trainmaster, then escorted the crew around the property to ensure their safety throughout the entire day. He also helped explain the operations.

"Film crews always want to get the best shot," Sturgeon said. "It was my job to make sure they were safe and staying out of harm's way while getting the shots they needed for the show."

Though the crew was not familiar with railroad or hump yard operations, Sturgeon said they were excellent to work with.

"They were a hard working group and crammed what they could into a short amount of time," Sturgeon said. "They seemed very interested and took safety seriously."

"They were interested in everything, even down to the little details like coupling a tank car — something we do hundreds of times a day. They were excited to get the shot and it was fun to see that enthusiasm."

Sturgeon enjoyed the opportunity to work with the crew. He said it was something he will always remember.

"It definitely makes me feel good to know that I helped show the outside world about what we do here at the BRC," Sturgeon said. "I was proud to show the quality of work we do and how safe and efficient our employees are."

New kids on the block

Belt Railway Company of Chicago welcomed the addition of three new ultra-low emitting GenSet locomotives this year.

"The GenSets are a big upgrade and definitely will improve the reliability of our fleet," said Wayne Kizior, assistant superintendent mechanical. "We expect to see huge fuel savings and reduced emissions because of the technology."

GenSet technology replaces the large diesel engine and generator with two or

three smaller engines and generators. Computer technology allows for the control of each of the engines, starting and stopping them as needed, to provide the horsepower required for the task at hand.

GenSet locomotives run on diesel fuel like existing diesel locomotives, but use considerably less amounts of fuel because of the ability to shut off engines. This allows for fuel savings of 30 to 40 percent compared to existing diesel locomotives.

The locomotives are more environmentally friendly than traditional diesel locomotives and reduce air pollution.

BRC received nearly \$3 million from a grant given to the municipality of Bedford Park that covered approximately 65 percent of the cost for the three locomotives.

"There are emission standards we have to meet with our existing fleet and any new power," said Hugh Simon, su-

perintendent mechanical. "It's a combined effort to reduce emissions."

Mike O'Donnell, retired superintendent mechanical, and Simon researched manufacturers during the first quarter of 2010 and selected National Railway Equipment Co.

"We submitted seven bids, but ultimately decided to go with NREC because they had the most experience in the field," Simon said.

BRC selected two of the 3GS21B, 2,100 horsepower, three-engine, four-axle and one of the 2GS14B, 1,400 horsepower, two-engine four-axle locomotives.

Todd Ruddy, locomotive foreman and machinist, completed extensive training on mechanical maintenance and safe operation of the new locomotives. Kizior said Ruddy will be instrumental in training fellow employees on how to maintain and operate the locomotives.

The GenSets will primarily be used for yard switching and transfer jobs, and are being tested for possible use on the hump.



Service Awards

Congratulations to employees celebrating service milestones. Thank you for your dedication to the Belt Railway Company of Chicago.

25 years

- Dec. 9 Tim Coffey, Administration
- Jan. 8 Tod Bogard, Signal Department
- Feb. 19 Pat O'Brien, Administration

20 years

- Feb. 25 Jeffrey Jane, Signal Department

15 years

- Dec. 30 Matthew Davidson, Transportation Department
- Dec. 30 Matt Pfeiffer, Transportation Department
- Jan. 19 Russell Eilken, Transportation Department
- Jan. 19 Martin Taron, Transportation Department
- Jan. 19 Christopher Votteler, Transportation Department
- Jan. 20 Joseph Chacon, Transportation Department
- Jan. 22 Christopher Chladek, Mechanical Car Department
- Jan. 22 Konrad Harris, Mechanical Car Department
- Jan. 22 Mark Walztoni, Mechanical Car Department
- Jan. 23 Diane Rhoads, Transportation Department
- Feb. 23 Patrick Campbell, Transportation Department
- Feb. 23 Frank Mrugala, Transportation Department
- Feb. 24 John Lesnicki, Transportation Department
- Feb. 24 Nicholas Pehlke, Transportation Department
- Mar. 9 Phillip Maranda, Transportation
- Mar. 9 Andrew Thomas, Transportation

New Hires

BRC extends a warm welcome to all new hires.

- Justin Liston, clerk, Oct. 1
- Kevin Salkeld, carman helper, Nov. 8
- Mark Meyers, carman, Nov. 15
- James Mellon, carman helper, Dec. 1
- Keith Hendriks, laborer, Feb. 1
- Fredrick Moreno, laborer, Feb. 1

Retirements

Congratulations to BRC employees who recently retired. Thank you for your dedication, and have a safe and happy retirement.

- Mario Gonzalez, trackman
Hired Dec. 2, 1974 — Retired Feb. 1
- Kenneth Lindsey, switchman
Hired Oct. 21, 1970 — Retired Nov. 26
- Lawrence Noyes, machinist
Hired Feb. 6, 1995 — Retired Oct. 31
- Quentin Ravizza, shop electrician
Hired July 6, 1981 — Retired Nov. 30
- Ross Sprenkle, carman
Hired Oct. 22, 1969 — Retired Oct. 31
- Zachary Ziobro, utility carman
Hired June 16, 1980 — Retired Oct. 31



BRC thanks employees for their safe efforts to remove snow.

Snow doesn't slow BRC

A massive winter storm, now recognized as the 2011 Groundhog Day Blizzard, swept across the country Jan. 31 through Feb. 2. The storm affected an estimated 100 million residents across the nation.

Winds in excess of 60 mph and up to 22 inches of snow paralyzed cities from Tulsa, Okla., to the coastal towns of Maine. Chicago received its third largest snow total in history, as 20.2 inches were recorded at Midway Airport. An arctic chill set in behind the storm, producing nearly half a week of single-digit temperatures and negative-degree wind chills.

Approximately 100 Engineering employees braved the blizzard and worked diligently through the night to clear walkways and parking lots.

David Cargill, manager engineering, noted that BRC employees from all departments pitched in to ensure everyone's safety and should equally be commended for their safe efforts.

"Snow removal efforts went well, considering the amount of snow we got," Cargill said. "I'm truly amazed with what was done in a short amount of time. Everyone did a great job."

Efforts from the snow removal did not go unnoticed by employees.

"The Engineering Department did a fantastic job and should be commended," said Mike Romano, director of police and risk management. "Everything was cleared in less than 24 hours."

Day-to-day operations continued relatively smoothly considering the magnitude of the storm.

"From a locomotive and car shop standpoint, our employees did a great job of staying focused," said Wayne Kizior, assistant superintendent mechanical. "We appreciate how they performed all their tasks efficiently and, most of all, safely."



BRC roads and walkways are cleared in less than 24 hours.

Eagle Eye Awards

One doesn't have to look far to see Belt Railway Company of Chicago employees making a difference.

They routinely make contributions that demonstrate situational awareness of their working environment and safety of co-workers. Many go the extra step and lend a hand when needed to ensure the efficiency of operations.

Above-and-beyond efforts make BRC the safest and most efficient railroad in the country, and are much appreciated by BRC leadership.

These employees were recognized for their Eagle Eye efforts:

- **Kenneth Lindsey, Oct. 15**
Lindsey was recognized for his commitment and dedication to BRC during his 40 years of service. He always is willing to assist where needed, and his efforts are appreciated.
- **Joshua Windsor, Nov. 6**
Windsor noticed the south rail on Track 08 West Receiving was broken and reported it immediately.
- **Rolando Cantu, Nov. 6**
Cantu noticed the south rail on Track 08 West Receiving was broken approximately 35 car lengths into the track and reported the condition.
- **Brian McCarthy, Nov. 10**
McCarthy took immediate action and used a fire extinguisher to put out a fire in the engine room of locomotive 573.

- **William Foulk, Nov. 26**
Foulk identified low-hanging chains on the south end of the second railcar on the inbound South Chicago Train. He notified the car department immediately, keeping the chains from interfering with a switch or getting stuck in a frog.
- **Stel Paras, Nov. 30**
Paras was recognized for his professionalism and accuracy in representing BRC employees during the Discovery Channel filming.
- **Wayne Monken, Dec. 1**
Monken prevented a collision between a railcar entering East Class Intermediate 1 Retarder and a pickup truck across the track.
- **John Hartford, Dec. 27**
Hartford discovered the north rail on Track 43 East Class was broken approximately three car lengths to the east end of the track.
- **Thomas Karas, Jan. 19**
Karas noticed cars on the 37 East Class jumping over a frozen skate and immediately notified the hump conductor.



Employee Assistance Program

All of us experience personal problems during our lives. While we may be able to work through many of these on our own, there are personal concerns that require outside help to find true resolution.

The Employee Assistance Program is a prepaid employer benefit that provides voluntary, confidential counseling to you and your family to help solve problems that affect your personal life and work performance. Helping you and your family maintain a healthy, balanced work and personal life is what this program is all about.

To make an appointment or to receive more information, contact EAP directly at 800-905-0994. Evening sessions are available by appointment. An online library can be accessed at www.metroeap.com. Username and password are both **belrailway**.

Distracted Driving

Stand on the corner of a busy intersection for 10 minutes and watch drivers as they fly by. You might be surprised by what you see.

You might spot a driver behind the wheel with a cup of coffee in one hand and a doughnut in the other, while other drivers have their eyes fixed on the rear view mirror trying to fix their hair. Some drivers might be reaching to the back seat of the car to find something in their briefcase, while others are talking or texting on a cellphone.

Regardless of the action, these are all distractions that reduce awareness of the road and increase risk while driving.

According to the American Short Line & Regional Railroad Association, a study showed that 80 percent of car crashes involve driver

inattention. For example, drivers talking on cellphones had a reaction time 18 percent slower than those with their undivided attention on the road.

Like any other task, when behind the wheel driving becomes the primary focus — regardless of whether driving across tracks, sitting at a stoplight on the way to work, or weaving through the Rocky Mountains on a family vacation.

Before turning the key over in the ignition, give thought to potential distractions in the car and eliminate the risk. This will reduce the potential for a serious incident to occur.

Reducing distractions allows you to be alert and ready to avoid a distracted driver.



A message from Pat O'Brien

Dear Fellow Employees:

The BRC finished the year 2010 with nine reportable injuries versus 12 the previous year and a Frequency-Severity Index (FSI) of 2.17 versus 3.29 respectively. Our safety performance continues to be strong, having achieved a 1.87 FSI based on the injuries through March 2011. As of the date of this note, we have not had a reportable injury through April. I applaud your efforts given the increased traffic volumes we have experienced since the blizzard in early February. It is incumbent on all employees to work safely, and I appreciate everyone's commitment.

Traffic volumes continue to be strong with intermediate traffic averaging 2,655 per day for the month of March. I expect

strong volumes for the remainder of the year as the general economy continues to accelerate. Our Board of Directors approved a record 2011 capital budget of approximately \$24M with the major items being continued investment in the physical plant and the acquisition of five hump sets to replace our aging locomotive fleet. The continued support of our Board ensures the long-term viability of the BRC.

This year, the Company Safety Barbecue will be Sept. 1, and I look forward to seeing everyone there!

Very truly yours,
Pat O'Brien

Mourning loss of friends

Many at Belt Railway Company of Chicago view fellow employees as more than just co-workers. They see them as family.

Tight-knit groups have been formed throughout the company, much like those between siblings. The BRC family recently mourned the deaths of three employees: Raul Gomez, mechanic; Bill Kontrimas, carman; and Joe Romanowski, journeyman carman.

All three were dedicated employees and considered family to many at BRC, and will be missed.

Raul Gomez

Gomez, mechanic, had nearly 40 years of dedicated service to BRC. During that time, he touched the lives of many and was well respected by co-workers.

"There were a lot of BRC employees at the wake service; it really showed how important he was to our team," said Jeff Gingrich, maintenance foreman. "We are going to miss him and send our condolences to his family and friends."

Gomez was remembered by most for his friendly actions, knowledge of equipment and work ethic.

He is survived by his wife and three children.

Bill Kontrimas

Kontrimas, carman, joined BRC in 2006. He last worked as an inbound and outbound yard inspector for the car department.

"Even though he was here for a short time, Kontrimas made a lot of friends," said Wayne Kizior, assistant superintendent mechanical. "He was a great employee."

Juan Soto, carman, worked with Kontrimas for five years at a local grocery store. Both joined BRC around the same time.

"Bill was a great friend, and I miss him," Soto said. "He loved animals and old GTO cars."

Kontrimas was survived by his wife, Sue, and two stepchildren.

Joe Romanowski

Romanowski, journeyman carman, joined BRC in November 1974. He spent his career in the car department. He was very knowledgeable in AAR billing.

"Joe was a stellar employee, one of the best," said Wayne Kizior, assistant superintendent mechanical. "He truly loved the Belt, his job and his co-workers. He was a key component to our team."

Kizior worked with Romanowski 33 years. He recognized him as a good family man and friend.

"We send our best to his wife, Darlene, and his family," Kizior said. "We miss having him here at the shop."



Joe Romanowski, journeyman carman, back row third from left, is missed by co-workers.

This newsletter appears under direction of The Belt Railway of Chicago. To include information, call Joe 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 joe@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. Thanks to Mike Romano, Director of Police & Risk Management, and Sam Canerday, Police Officer for contributing photos to the newsletter.

BRC Dispatchers Second to None

Effective communication, cool under pressure, an ability to think outside the box and a knack for strategic planning. These are all qualities a good dispatcher must display in order to safely and efficiently route trains through Chicagoland.

Frank Izzo, Director of Train Operations, is convinced the BRC is home to some of the most talented dispatchers on the railroad.

“It’s a very experienced group; seven of the 10 have 15-plus years of experience,” he said. “I’d take this team any day of the week.”

Two dispatchers are on the job 24/7. The group handles approximately 60 inbound and outbound trains each day — more than 3,000 cars.

“It’s a nonstop environment,” Izzo said.

Many of those trains range in length from 9,000 feet to more than 10,000 feet.

“There are a lot of crossings that we have to keep open for emergency reasons, and we want to be friendly neighbors to the surrounding communities,” he said. “We keep traffic moving by using our strategic planning skills.”



Frank Izzo, Director of Train Operations

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

FIRST CLASS
PRSRT
U.S.
POSTAGE
PAID
MAIL U.S.A.

Mastny more than a co-worker

Many Belt Railway Company of Chicago employees gathered March 30 to say farewell to a co-worker, mentor and friend. Dispatcher Jake Mastny retired after 35 years of injury-free service.

As employees celebrated Mastny’s retirement with his family and friends, many reminisced about old times and discussed what Mastny meant to the BRC Dispatch team.

“He broke me in as a train dispatcher,” said Frank Izzo, Director of Train Operations. “Everyone has the utmost respect for Jake, and he’s well liked by his peers. He will be very hard to replace.”

Mastny began his career in 1976 as a tower operator and became a full-time dispatcher in 1981. He enjoyed the challenging nature of his job and looked forward to coming to work every day.

“When you had a

good day, you felt like you accomplished something and moved a lot of cars,” he said.

Chief Dispatcher John Campbell worked with Mastny for more than 20 years. He said Mastny brought a zest for life and a passion for dispatching to work every day.

“Jake is one of the best dispatchers I’ve ever had the pleasure of working with,” Campbell said. “He enjoyed what he did, and it showed in his work. His attitude brought out the best in everyone around

him. We are all going to miss having his great sense of humor and one liners.”

Mastny looks forward to spending time with his wife, Debbie, two children and five grandchildren. He plans to travel and work on his car, motorcycles and snowmobiles.

“I’m not quite sure how to act, I’ve never had this much free time,” he said. “I just plan on enjoying it with the people I love.”

