



Happy holidays!

Third Edition
December 2011

connections

BRC keeps children safe on 67th Street

The Belt Railway Company of Chicago is never satisfied when it comes to safety. After all, keeping employees and the public safe is the company's No. 1 goal.

When employees are not teaching children about safety on school grounds, they are keeping them safe in the neighborhoods near the yard. Case in point: a five-week grade crossing project alongside the yard at 67th Street wrapped up Nov. 4.

The BRC, with help from the Illinois Commerce Commission, put in place new gates along the tracks to ensure safe crossing for pedestrians. This was especially important for children who attend the nearby Mariano Azuela Elementary School.

About 30 employees from the

Belt's Engineering Department worked on the job, which was completed safely and on time.

"Having up-to-date crossing gates along with pedestrian crossing gates ensures the safety of the children," said Mike Romano, director of police and risk management. "Everyone in the neighborhood seems very grateful."

Each weekday morning and afternoon during the project, for a full hour, Romano along with policemen and flagmen were outside to guide children across the tracks. He appreciates everyone's efforts.

"We had cooperation at every turn," he said. "Engineering Department employees and police did everything I asked of them to ensure the safety of everyday crossing."



Tim Coffey, general counsel, secretary & director of human resources, records a commercial on WBBM Newsradio 780 and 105.9 FM to promote the village of Bedford Park and The Belt Railway Company of Chicago.

Coffey promotes Bedford Park, The Belt

Imagine a park where opportunity blooms. But this park isn't for play; it's a sprawling community for business — the village of Bedford Park. Businesses are popping up to take advantage of the close proximity to Midway Airport, interstate highways, rail yards and huge water capacity. The village of Bedford Park is an enterprise zone, which means the potential for substantial tax savings.

This spiel is the beginning of a village of Bedford Park radio commercial on WBBM Newsradio 780 and 105.9 FM designed to attract new business. Later on in the one-minute commercial, Tim Coffey, general counsel, secretary & director of human resources, promotes The Belt Railway Company of Chicago, which has been operating in Bedford Park since 1914.

"The Belt is the world's busiest switching terminal railroad and connects with every freight railroad in North America," he said. "Bedford Park provides a very friendly and proactive business climate and is quick to respond to the needs of its businesses and the people they employ. Additionally, the village's police, fire and emergency response services are second to none."

Listeners are encouraged to visit villageofbedfordpark.com for available opportunities.



Employees work on a new grade crossing at 67th Street near Mariano Azuela Elementary School.

Operation Lifesaver continues working with schools

Working with local schools is a long-standing endeavor on railroads, and The Belt Railway Company of Chicago stands as one of the leaders among short line railroads in this effort.

Six years ago, Mike Romano, director of police and risk management, took over duties associated with Operation Lifesaver. And thanks to assistance from other OL volunteers, local police, firefighters and other colleagues, the program has been taken to new heights.

“The project turned into one of the best there is,” he said. “The interest has been great.”

Carman and Safety Chairman John Lucio has been particularly helpful. Along with BRC Police Officer Sam Canerday, Switchman Joe Chacon and Romano, they visit various neighborhood schools and businesses located near the railroad tracks



ABOVE: Switchman Joe Chacon, left, and BRC Police Officer Sam Canerday prepare to give an Operation Lifesaver presentation to Mark Twain Elementary School students. LEFT: Carman and Safety Chairman John Lucio takes questions during an Operation Lifesaver presentation at John C. Dore Elementary School.

to reinforce the importance of safety.

The gentlemen especially enjoy presenting to students, mainly those in kindergarten through eighth grade. They address students in individual classrooms or entire schools via presentations in auditoriums, stressing a variety of strategies for the

public to be safe around railroad property such as “Stop, Look and Listen,” “Don’t cross the tracks when the gate is down,” and “Never try to outrun a train.”

They often tell children it takes at least 15 football fields to stop a train, which really brings the message home.

Results, rewards over discipline

The Belt Railway Company of Chicago is pioneering a new program aimed at eliminating run-through switches. Instead of a formal investigation and potential discipline, transportation employees, through their own free will, can choose to attend a meeting hosted by the organization. This was started as a 90-day trial program in August, and it has been very successful.

The meetings involve a diverse group of younger and more seasoned employees in order to gain perspective from various age groups on what is causing run-through switches.

In lieu of discipline, run-through switch violators serve as ambassadors after the meetings. They go out and talk to peers and empower other employees to look for ways to enhance safety.

Mike Paras, general manager transportation, is pleased with the program so far.

“I’m excited because you have people who are involved for the right reasons,” he said. “They’re engaged and committed to it,

“I’m excited because you have a group of folks that are involved for the right reasons. They’re engaged and committed to it, shown by conveying information to fellow members.”

– Mike Paras,
general manager transportation

shown by conveying information to fellow members.”

The proof of the program’s success is in the numbers. During the first evaluation period, the BRC saw run-throughs drop by more than half.

Performance is improving and the groups are working to be proactive by determining primary factors that cause incidents. They have been painting high-frequency run-through switches to bring more attention and awareness to them.

“The first step is for peers to correct their own behavior,” Paras said. “This can then carry on to other injury areas, as they concentrate on situational awareness.”

Mini townhall meetings, which began Nov. 2, serve as a way to continue to promote the program. All three shifts participated, which constituted approximately 60 to 70 employees.

Subject matters included:

- RTSC (Run-Through Switch Committee) initiative
- Safety and service update
- Future projects being reviewed
- General Q&A

Participants included:

- Chris Votteler – UTU general chairman; RTSC Committee member
- Jeff Votteler – UTU local president and legislative representative; Safety Committee member
- Tony Marchi – UTU local treasurer; safety committee member
- Mike Paras, general manager transportation
- Chris Gorski, assistant superintendent transportation

If Paras and the committee can continue to enhance the program, it may be used as a benchmark for other railroads.

“I’ve rolled it out to a lot of my counterparts in Chicago because everybody’s struggling with the same issue,” Paras said. “Other roads are going to see what’s happening.”

Martinez instrumental during Spanish delegation visit



Mike Martinez, assistant director of agency operations, second from the left, made the Spain Freight Railroad Delegation feel welcome when they visited The BRC Sept. 16 by conducting the meeting in Spanish and translating a PowerPoint presentation for them.

The Belt Railway Company of Chicago frequently receives visitors, but not all of them come from 4,000 miles away.

Such was the case Sept. 16 when BRC hosted the Spain Freight Railroad Delegation in conjunction with the Federal Railroad Administration. Mike Martinez, assistant director of agency operations, eliminated a language barrier between BRC and the attendees, who spoke limited English.

Martinez conducted the whole meeting in Spanish and translated a PowerPoint presentation to the language for the delegation.

“The delegation was ecstatic,” said Mike Paras, general manager transportation. “The effort taken by the BRC in doing this was looked at as an act of extra hospitality by our company in welcoming these folks to the United States.”

Paras and staff thank Martinez for his initiative and work he put into the presentation.

New hump locomotive mother units to arrive soon

Motive Power Industries’ plant in Boise, Idaho, is remanufacturing five 3,000-horsepower locomotives for The Belt Railway Company of Chicago to serve as new hump locomotive mother units.

The BRC also sent its five traction slugs to MPI to be remanufactured and upgraded so they can work with the new mother units, which previously were in coal service for BNSF Railway.

“This is by far the largest single order for locomotives of any kind ever placed by the Belt,” said Hugh Simon, superintendent mechanical.

Different than a rebuild, these units have been completely disassembled and reassembled with brand new, restored and re-machined components to the Original Equipment Manufacturer specifications.

Electrical components have been restored to new OEM standards, with completely new component gear. Exane low- and high-voltage wire was installed and linked with a new state-of-the-art electrical, traction and emission control system. Cabs have been restored to pristine condition with new seating and insulation.

Rusted steel was cut out and replaced, and all sheet metal surfaces were sandblasted. The slugs have been similarly stripped and rewired with a new pressurized high-voltage cabinet installed

to enhance reliability, a new consolidated air rack to lengthen air equipment life, and expanded sand carrying capacity.

In addition to being fuel efficient and having excellent traction, these units are 10 percent heavier than previous hump units.

“We will see incremental improvement in tractive power at hump speed, but more importantly, we look forward to a significantly improved reliability, in service performance and ride,” Simon said.

The first set should be on the property by the end of the year, and the final set delivered by February 2012.



BRC’s new hump locomotive mother units, left, and three of the five slugs, right are under remanufacture at Motive Power Industries’ Boise, Idaho, plant.

New hires join the Belt

The Belt Railway Company of Chicago extends a warm welcome to employees who joined the team during the fall. In all, nine new employees bring their talents to the BRC in the Maintenance of Way and

Transportation departments. They include:

- Ernesto Antillon, switchman
- Michael Battiato, trackman
- Kevin Chladek, switchman
- Jack Gibertini, switchman

- Terry Hartwig, switchman
- Michael Kelley, switchman
- Sean Mateczak, switchman
- Kevn O’Shea, switchman
- Matthew Roberts, switchman

Guerrero's son has high aspirations

BRC Track Inspector Feliciano Guerrero is one proud dad — and for good reason. His oldest son, Lucio, is excelling both on the collegiate football field and in the classroom.

A freshman at Knox College in Galesburg, Ill., Lucio splits time between playing offensive guard and aiming for a career as a doctor.

Feliciano attended four games at the NCAA Division III school this fall. Although the younger Guerrero only started once, he plans to become a starter during his sophomore year, which is quite impressive considering most starting positions at Knox are reserved for upperclassmen.

After being accepted to numerous selective enrollment high schools, Lucio attended Walter Payton College Preparatory High School on Chicago's near north side. He was voted most improved player during his senior year, which piqued his interest in taking his abilities to the next level.

Lucio also excelled in the high school classroom, with solid grades, high SAT

scores and advanced class work. The Guerreros could not be more proud that Lucio is the first member of the family to attend college.

"He tested as high as anyone, and the colleges took an interest right away," Feliciano said. "My wife always said he has gifts, and as years have passed, he always received high compliments from everyone."

Lucio majors in pre-medicine and hopes to become an orthopedic surgeon or work in pediatrics.

"The education will stick with him for his entire life," Feliciano said.

In addition to Lucio, the Guerreros have three other children, a 15-year-old daughter and two sons ages 9 and 2.

Feliciano has worked for the BRC 17 years. He began as a laborer, then moved to machine operator and track foreman. He



Lucio Guerrero, son of Track Inspector Feliciano Guerrero, plays offensive guard for Knox College while studying to be a doctor.

has been a track inspector three years.

He appreciates the opportunities he has been afforded with the BRC.

"I thank everybody, especially the supervisors, for giving me the opportunity to do the best I can," Feliciano said. "They have been really helpful in providing me the tools I needed to learn."



Employee Assistance Program

Many people experience personal problems at some point in their lives. While some may be able to work through many of these on their 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 employees and their families to help solve problems that affect their personal life and work performance. Helping employees and their families maintain healthy, balanced work and personal lives is what this program is all about.

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

Eagle Eye Awards

As professional railroaders, The Belt Railway Company of Chicago employees keep a watchful eye on their surroundings. Recently, Switchman Robert Strejc received an Eagle Eye Award for his efforts in doing just that.

Strejc was pulling pins on 11 East Receiving Track during an East Hump assignment Oct. 13 when he noticed that railcar CN622371 lost its pin and the drawbar was almost completely out.

He stopped movement at the crest of the hill, averting a potential derailment had the car gone over the hill and through the main retarder. He has been commended for practicing good situational awareness of his working environment and keeping himself and co-workers safe.



Service anniversaries

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

35 YEARS

- John Campbell, Transportation Department, Oct. 2
- James Romanowski, Maintenance of Way Department, Oct. 14
- Mark Rossetti, Mechanical Department, Aug. 6

25 YEARS

- Wayne Monken, Signal Department, Sept. 8

15 YEARS

- Richard Katterman, Transportation Department, Aug. 2
- Ruth Kestler, Accounting Department, Oct. 14
- John Mankowske, Transportation Department, Aug. 2
- Michael Morrison, Transportation Department, Aug. 2



BRC employees mourn the loss of Retired Switchman Bill McLaughlin, a 47-year employee who died Aug. 18 at age 82. He is pictured with his wife, Patricia.

McLaughlin will be missed

Retired Switchman Bill McLaughlin will be missed by friends and colleagues at The Belt Railway of Chicago.

McLaughlin died Aug. 18 at the age of 82. He joined the BRC in May 1950. Just months later, the Chicago native left to serve his country during the Korean War. He returned home in 1953 and went back to work until his 1997 retirement.

Growing up near Chicago Midway International Airport and the Belt Railway, McLaughlin naturally became interested in planes and railroads from a young age. His first love, however, was baseball, and he remained a devoted Chicago White Sox fan throughout his life.

“He’d watch games all night, starting on the East Coast, finishing with the West Coast,” his youngest son, Kevin, said.

McLaughlin also enjoyed golf and yard work and was especially proud of the home and life he provided for his family of five. He and his wife, Patricia, who died in 2006, had three children and three grandchildren. All offspring still reside in Chicagoland.

“He probably worked a few more years than he had to, because he wanted to take care of us,” Kevin said. “Providing for his family was his main priority, and he worked his whole life to give us the educations we needed. Even his retirement revolved around his family.”

Kevin’s fondest memory is going to the fence beyond Midway with his dad to watch planes take off and land. It had a lasting effect on him, as he has been an airline pilot six years.

Ecological enhancements abound at BRC

The Belt Railway of Chicago cares about the environment and the citizens who live and work where the BRC does business. Being environmentally responsible is important. New programs take the BRC’s efforts further.

A new oil drop-off site, located by the diesel shop, provides a place for employees to bring oil from home after they change their car, snowblower or lawn mower oil. The railway has a company pick up the oil, which is recycled. This program was put together by Assistant Superintendent Mechanical Wayne Kizior and his shop employees.



The BRC has a new oil drop-off site where employees can dump their old oil to be recycled.

Batteries from lanterns also can be dropped off at sites around the BRC to be recycled. Employees can even bring their batteries from home to be taken to recycling sites.

Employees are encouraged to support the troops by bringing old cellphones to work. They will be taken to Bell West Community Credit Union, who mails them to an organization called Cell Phones for Soldiers. This group collects used cellphones, sells them to recycling firms and uses the money to buy calling cards for soldiers overseas.

Printer cartridges are being collected and given to the Village of Bedford Park to be recycled. Proceeds will benefit some of the village’s programs.

Recycle bins are placed throughout the BRC’s property to collect aluminum cans, cardboard, paper and plastic bottles. These separate recycling containers are collected by a waste company.

Lastly, the E-Scrap recycling program moves along well. Earlier this month, the BRC filled four dump trucks with old computers, monitors, tapes and other electronic devices from the BRC and its employees to be recycled.



Greg Drozd, dispatcher, retires after 40 years of service. He is pictured with his wife on his last day of work.

Drozd, Barnat bid farewell

Greg Drozd worked almost every job possible at The Belt Railway Company of Chicago — or so it seemed anyway.

From accounting and dispatch to custodial and car operations, he truly was a “Jack of all trades.”

Drozd, who began his BRC career Sept. 18, 1970, retired as a dispatcher Nov. 1 after 41 years of service.

Also within the Transportation Department, Chief Clerk of Transportation Ray Barnat called it a career this fall, effective Oct. 28.

Barnat’s tenure with the company dates back to December 1978.

This newsletter appears under direction of The Belt Railway of Chicago. To include information, call Ari at the newsletter office at 402-475-6397. Readers also can submit articles via mail to 1845 S. 11th St., Lincoln, NE 68502-2211, or email ari.kaufman@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 everyone who contributed to this newsletter, including but not limited to, Sam Camerday, Roy Gelder, Guerrero family, Hoye family, Wayne Kizior, Dennis Nott and Mike Romano. Anyone who submits a photo retains all rights to the image. However, by submission you give the newsletter permission to use your photo(s) in all related media.

In memoriam

Tight-knit groups form throughout years of service at The Belt Railway Company of Chicago, allowing employees to view one another as good friends; even family.

The BRC family recently mourned the passing of four retired employees: James Bertucci, locomotive shop electrician; Thomas Earnest, carman; Paul Hajek, diesel shop electrician; and David Higans, carman welder. These men were dedicated employees who will be missed.

James Bertucci, Oct. 29

Bertucci joined the BRC in October 1999, and he worked through July 2004.

“Jimmy was a talker,” said Richard Aranda, general locomotive foreman. “He liked to know what was going on in the shop with different crafts.”

Bertucci is survived by his wife and daughter.

Thomas Earnest, Nov. 3

Earnest joined the BRC in February 2000. His last day he worked was Oct. 5, 2009. He will be remembered as a positive person who made coming to work enjoyable for colleagues.

Paul Hajek, Nov. 1

Hajek, an electrician in the diesel shop since March 1984, retired in July 2004. He loved to fish, camp and travel, and had been to Germany a few times.

“Paul was a good guy and a good electrician,” Aranda said. “When I needed him, he always got the locomotive going.”

David Higans, Nov. 5

Higans began his career in September 1974. He retired May 1, 2007. A big Cubs fan who enjoyed golf, Higans moved to Florida after leaving the BRC.

“He was good guy to work with,” said Dave Skocik, carman. “I always had a fun time with him.”

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.

Hoye achieves goal

Two years ago, Superintendent CTCO Steve Hoye and his wife, Natalie, decided to enhance their health. What began as better food choices and increased physical activity eventually led to the Chicago Marathon.

“We began to see nice improvements on the scale, in our increased energy levels and overall health statistics,” Hoye said.

In January 2010, the Hoyes decided to step up their health regimen a notch by enrolling in a 5-kilometer beginner runner training program.

“The program educated and inspired us to continue running, and we learned to appreciate the benefits of running,” Hoye said.

They have completed several 5K and 10K races this past year, and Oct. 9, the famous Chicago Marathon.

The Hoyes began training for the 26.2-mile race in May 2011 by running between 10 and 38 miles per week. This was a somewhat difficult time of year to begin marathon training.

“Training in 100-degree temperatures and high humidity really strains the body and forces one to pay attention to any physical challenges,” he said.

Hoye, who said the marathon was an incredible experience, ran in remembrance of

his father, who was paralyzed in a boat accident in July 1991.

“It was the most exhilarating time of my life and also the most painful time of my life,” he said. “Running through the different areas of Chicago was incred-

ible, since there were so many spectators lining the route from start to finish. The experience was truly one of a kind.”

This was the Hoyes’ first marathon, but definitely not their last. They continue to train and even coach beginner runners about the sport, which has transformed their lives.

“Nothing is more rewarding than seeing people break through their mental, emotional and physical limitations as their confidence soars,” he said. “The running programs change people, period.”

A second-generation railroader, Hoye has been with the BRC eight years. He started as a trainmaster and went on to work as a manager of terminal operations and director of agency and customer service before his current role.



Steve Hoye, Superintendent CTCO, and his wife, Natalie, ran in the Chicago Marathon Oct. 9.