Watco Team members improving Birmingham business

By Andra Bryan Stefanoni
Contributing Writer

When a steel company shut down its blast furnace at its plant near Birmingham, Alabama, 18 months ago, it didn’t just impact the 1,100 employees that lost their jobs. It impacted Watco Companies, as well: the Customer comprised 80 percent of Watco’s business on the 96-mile Birmingham Terminal Railway.

The nearly 100-year-old plant, located in the suburb of Fairfield, once thrived as it provided steel to ship builders during World War I. But in recent years, cost and efficiency had proved challenging.

With the closure came no more need for the railroad to move raw materials, like ore from Minnesota and coke from the port that came in from China and Japan.

“It was pretty tough,” recalled David Tarwater, now general manager and a 27-year veteran of the railroad.

It meant reducing forces.

“A lot of our Team found homes in other Watco properties — we did our best to take care of them,” Tarwater said.

It also meant looking at how Watco does business.

“We started looking at Birmingham as a whole and we knew we needed to diversify our revenue so we were not dependent on one source,” Tarwater said.

An immediate solution was to add storage to put our minds together. And if we have a need to bring in our supplies, that void into a way to make a lasting positive impact in their community: After hearing a mom, “she said.

When Paula Tarwater’s younger son, Joshua, turned 16, she felt a void.

“He and our older son, Matthew, were pretty much done with me mothering them, and it was hard,” she said. “I wasn’t through mothering yet.”

She also still felt a void from the death of their middle son, Garrett, who died of SIDS as an infant.

“When I was grieving, the Lord just laid it on my heart, that I was a mother who lost a child, and one day there would be a child who needed a mom,” she said.

It wasn’t long before she, with the support of her husband David, general manager for the Birmingham Terminal Railway and the Alabama Warrior Railway, figured out how to turn what void into a way to make a lasting positive impact in their community: After hearing a commercial about foster care, the couple took classes and became foster parents.

The need is great in Jefferson County: There are 1,000 foster children.

The need is great in Jefferson County: There are 1,000 foster children.
Jake Webb goes from Pittsburg to Pittsburgh

By Andra Bryan Stefanoni
Contributing Writer

Jake Webb, son of Watco CEO Rick Webb and his wife, Stacey, is going from Pittsburg, where Watco is headquartered, to Pittsburgh — the one with the “h.”

But he’ll still be wearing Watco colors: Webb was chosen in the draft last month by the Pittsburgh Pirates. (Fun fact: His grandpa, Dick Webb, chose Watco’s colors, black and gold, based on his favorite football team, the Pittsburgh Steelers.)

“It was an amazing feeling,” Webb told the Pittsburg Morning Sun newspaper in an interview after the draft. “It was crazy to listen to the draft and then hear my name called. It was really exciting.”

As a child playing in youth baseball leagues, his dream was to join the Major League. “It’s been a dream for forever,” Webb told the Sun. “I think it’s the dream of every baseball player, but it’s hard to believe that it will ever happen to you.”

For the past four years, the right-handed pitcher played for the Pittsburg Purple Dragons, where he finished his senior season with a 2.31 earned run average in a team-high 39 1/3 innings. At 6-foot, 5-inches and 185 pounds, his two-seam fastball has been clocked as high as 91 mph. He also pitches a cut fastball, a changeup, and a curveball.

Webb had committed to college at Kansas State University in Manhattan. But MLB scouts began attending his games this past season, tipping off Webb that his dream just might become reality.

Soon after the draft, he was invited by the Pirates to attend a pro-style workout session in Bradenton, Florida, where the Pirates have a newly constructed state-of-the art training facility called Pirate City Complex.

In addition to his teammates, Webb said two people helped him attain his dream: his pitching coach Brian Helman and his friend, Dan Smith, a former professional right-handed baseball pitcher who played MLB from 1998-2004 for the Texas Rangers, Montreal Expos and Boston Red Sox, and now works as the chief operating officer at Watco.

Webb will begin his professional baseball career in Bradenton playing rookie ball.

WSOR hosts industry tour and train excursion

By Tracie VanBecelaere
Managing Editor

A window to the railroad world is what passengers riding the Wisconsin & Southern (WSOR) business train got to experience recently as they traveled along the Reedsburg Subdivision in Wisconsin and viewed the tracks from the theatre car. The rail excursion and industry tour demonstrated what the railroad does, how it works with Customer Lycon, Inc., and the opportunities and challenges the railroad faces.

Passengers included members of the Wisconsin River Rail Transit Commission and the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, Special guests included State Senator Janis Ringhand (District 15) and Representative Don Vruwink (District 43).

Guests toured the Lycon, Inc., facility in Oregon, Wisconsin, a family owned and operated ready-mix concrete company. The WSOR ships loads of sand from a Lycon-owned quarry near Janesville, Wisconsin, to the Lycon facility in Oregon, Wisconsin.

Following the tour, they boarded the train for a ride over the Merrimac Bridge and through Devils Lake State Park. The 1,729 ft. long bridge is scheduled to be upgraded in 2019 and 2020. The upgrades will be paid for with state, local, and operator funds. This trip allowed the guests from the different agencies to see how tax dollars are put to use to benefit the state’s economy.

A discussion was held during the ride through Devils Lake State Park about safety concerns that are a result of trespassing on the railroad corridor. Looking out the big window on the theatre car allowed guests to see for themselves exactly what dangers trespassers can face and cause.

WSOR Trainmasters Justin Cox and Jason Danz worked as the engineer and conductor for the day, operating WSOR’s 35th Anniversary Engine 3928 that pulled the passenger cars.

“The WSOR is pleased to be partners with the Wisconsin River Rail Transit Commission and the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, now going on 37 years,” said Ken Lucht, Watco’s director of government relations. “Our strong partnership has preserved and enhanced nearly 300 miles of freight rail corridors throughout Southern Wisconsin while meeting the growing needs of Wisconsin business and industry.”

At Watco’s Terminal and Port site in Chicago Heights, Illinois, Operator Bob Cronch is preparing steel bundles for shipment for Summit Steel. He’s been at Chicago Heights for 18 years and enjoys coming to work each day with the great Team there. Together, they have the ability to grind, band, and coil those bundles to help meet the needs of Customers.

Photo by Angela Bunker
If you own a stainless steel appliance in your kitchen, there’s a chance the materials used to make it were moved by Watco.

At the Ghent Terminal on the Ohio River in Ghent, Kentucky, we have 58 Team members, working in four crews 24/7, who offload barges that arrive loaded with recycled stainless steel scrap or alloys, including chrome.

That scrap is bound for North American Stainless, a Watco Customer whose mill is just across the highway from the terminal.

There, the mill works around the clock. The steel is formed into coils sent to the manufacturers to be used in the making of appliances, as well as rebar, pipe, and wire used for screws, nuts, and bolts.

Terminal Manager Tim Bass said the operation unloads anywhere from 23 to 27 scrap barges in a good month — or nearly one per day — as well as 10 to 15 alloy barges per month.

"The mill doesn’t stop, so we don’t stop," Bass said. "Although we did shut down one day last year for Christmas."

Each one takes six to 10 hours — although sometimes it takes the entire 12 hours they’re given.

"There are a lot of moving parts," Bass said.

Crews take covers off of the barges, unload the materials, and use skid steers to push the remaining scrap into a pile; the excavator removes the remaining scrap so all product is weighed and accounted for.

The scrap is loaded into trucks contracted through a third party, then taken to the mill.

At the mill, material handlers stack the scrap and operators use front end loaders to push the scrap into bays or on an overflow pad.

From there, as if baking a cake, various grades of stainless steel scrap and alloys are added to the charge basket — a large steel pot. It’s transferred to the furnace, in which it is melted and formed or cast for many different uses in the stainless steel industry.

The Teams unload scrap rail cars, too, at a rate of 5 to 10,000 metric tons.

Despite the risk associated with such a job, the terminal has a total recordable injury rate of 1.05 for Watco WTPS and 0 for Ghent, and was among the terminals that together were recognized by The American Equity Underwriters last month with a national safety stevedoring award.

The award brought the terminal recognition not just from the AEU, but from North American Stainless: Bill Long, assistant to the president of NAS, came to the terminal to take a photo of the award to send to his own team.

“That makes you feel good, for our Customer to be as proud of what we accomplished as we were,” Bass said.

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Have a suggestion for a product to be featured in #WatcoMoves? Email astefanoni@watcompanies.com.

Watco Discount$ If you’re packing up and heading on vacation you might want to take a quick trip to Watco’s web site and look at the discounts offered to our Team.

Travel related items such as hotels, car rentals, and tourist attractions can be found by going to watcompanies.com • Careers/Team Members • Team Members. On the Team Members page, listed as the last item on the right hand column under Watco Team Resources is the Team Member Discounts link.

In addition to travel related items, there are cellular, computer, gym, and a variety of other discounts available.

Continued from page 1 • in the system; statewide there are 5,000.

Now, after adopting two of their foster children and with plans to adopt twins soon, the Tarwaters are setting their sights on helping even more: They’re preparing to open two shops to help those in foster care gain a sense of normalcy and work skills.

“I know loss, from losing Garrett,” Paula said. “And foster children are feeling loss, too — they’re pulled from homes, often late at night, with just what they can fit into a garbage bag.”

“It kills me, because I just hate for children to have to feel that.”

Paula wanted them to have luggage, and clothes, and the ability to have a bit of control over their own lives.

“I wanted them to have a little bit of dignity,” she said. “It’s what everyone deserves.”

She found the solution across the street from the social services office: two empty storefronts with a warehouse, all for sale. Perfect, she said, to fill with racks of clothing, toys, books, and other items for children.

There would be no cash register; children in foster care would be invited to go to the “store” to shop for themselves, picking out what they want and need to take to their new homes.

With social services on board supporting the project, and with people throughout the community already prepared to donate, the Tarwaters filed for 501c(3) status and hope to achieve it by summer’s end.

And David, who has been on the railroad for 27 years, cashed in his 401K retirement fund to buy the buildings.

“He is such a good man,” Paula said. “He told me he couldn’t think of anything better than this to do with it.”

The couple already has a name picked out for the store: Garrett’s Place, named for that middle son they lost.

Anna Smith, a social worker and a member of the Tarwaters’ board of directors, said the impact will be “huge.”

“This will give kids a sense of normalcy, and that sometimes makes or breaks how well they do in a home. To not feel like they’re getting something second-hand, to actually be able to go pick it out like they’re shopping, can keep them from feeling like a foster kid,” she said. “And if they feel insignificant, if they feel like a foster kid, it can be very negative.”

Smith said the project has the potential to be a model to other communities, and likely will inspire community members in Birmingham to get involved.

“They’ll be leading by example,” she said.

As for the other storefront, the Tarwaters’ sons, Matthew, now 25 and an engineer on the Alabama Southern (ABS), and Joshua, now 22 and a conductor on ABS, have an idea for a project they’d like to support: Garrett’s Railroad Coffee Company, which would employ only foster children ages 18 to 21 who are about to leave the system.

“That was such a proud mom moment. Foster kids are pulled away from everything they know, then they are given a support system, then they hit a certain age and it’s time for them to go again.” Paula said.

“There’s a huge number that run away.”

“My sons’ idea is to provide jobs to these kids so they learn to work for themselves, learn how to do paperwork and to serve Customers like they’ve been taught to serve them on the railroad,” she said. “Our hopes are that then businesses come get them as employees, because then we can put another one in their place to help them learn skills. We want to give more kids a fighting chance.”

“There are a lot of moving parts," Bass said.

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GBW taps into technology

By Tracie VanBecelaere
Managing Editor

When visiting the 35 GBW Railcar Services shops across North America there are things that make each one different such as the services they offer and the Customers they serve. However, there is one thing at the locations that is exactly the same, the use of INTELEX software.

GBW Team members Shannan Penrod, EHS manager, Scottsville and Zwolle; Billy Eddington, QA manager, Zwolle; and Marshall Spero, QA manager, Scottsville recently presented a demonstration of the INTELEX system function and capabilities to Rick Webb, CEO, Cheryl Balkenhol, CFO, Marcia Olds, IT Team Lead – Quality/EHS, Wesley Arthur, EHS support manager, and Ray Morgan, vice president of quality.

The software is something that is currently being used at all of the locations for a variety of purposes. Safety, quality control, and behavior based safety reporting are the three main functions it is primarily being used for. However, it is also being looked at as a way to control volatile organic compounds (VOC) released by the shops.

Penrod said, "The sky is the limit for what we can use this for in the future. This is just a start in all the uses we can get out of the program." The EHS managers at each of the shops input the information into the program and are able to determine the trends for injuries, where weaknesses exist in training, policies and procedures, and if there are issues being caused by equipment.

"The advantages we have now are being able to pinpoint problem areas in a more timely manner, being able to access reports anytime, from anywhere and being able to conduct behavior based safety inspections in real time," stated Penrod.

On the Quality Control side, it creates uniformity in the billing and information that a Customer receives from any of the shops. Customers don’t have to waste their time trying to decipher different information when looking at audit and inspection reports from the various shops.

Billy Eddington, quality assurance manager at Zwolle, said, "The responses sent to Customers from our shops are templates generated in INTELEX, that way no matter which shop sends a response, they will all look the same from shop to shop."

The software helps the Teams when rework data (labor and material) is generated and used by the plant managers, foremen, and team members to create efficiencies and cut out rework. It also directs their attention to processes that need to be made stronger.

Spero wrapped up the INTELEX presentation with a quick review of the dashboard and many of the reporting features that are available to the users.

"Once we have the data populated, there are a number of ways to view the reports, such as bar graphs and charts to get a better understanding of the information provided," said Spero.

Another behind the scenes Team member who deserves a lot of credit is GBW Business Analyst Kelli Pereschuk.

"Kelli is a programmer and she used her skills to teach me a lot of tricks and shortcuts in INTELEX," said Eddington.

"It was really a Team effort."

RRAILROAD FESTIVALS

Railroad enthusiasts from coast to coast have plenty of options when it comes to celebrating the railroad heritage and origins of American towns. Starting in April and extending through October, railroad festivals offer residents and visitors everything from crafts and music to train rides and talent shows. Here, a sampling of what’s coming up next:

**August 18-20 Snoqualmie Railroad Days Snoqualmie, Washington**

An annual festival in Snoqualmie celebrates the town’s spirit and origins as a railroad and logging town, and the home of the Snoqualmie Indian Tribe. The event is held in Historic Snoqualmie, in and around the Northwest Railway Museum. Volunteer firemen and their wives organized the first festival in 1938, and the popular event still is going strong. It includes train excursions, entertainment, vendors, a parade, model trains, children’s activity areas, timber sports demonstrations, food, a beer garden, art, and more. Details: www.railroaddays.com

**October 21-22, 28-29 Hinton Railroad Days Hinton, West Virginia**

Each year for two weekends in October, the streets of Hinton are filled with vendors selling unusual crafts like rings made from coins, coal scrip and old coins, handmade wooden banks with old post office doors, wooden furniture, and more. Food and special events abound, and the New River Train arrives each afternoon. Details: www.hintonwva.com/railroaddays

WHY WATCO?

Editor’s note: This year, we began sharing in print the #WhyWatco stories we’ve been also sharing in video via Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn.

Team Member: Andrew Jones
Title: Supervisor
Location: Elizabeth, New Jersey

Since beginning his career as a Watco Team member in January 2014, Andrew Jones has seen numerous job changes, but he’s grateful for the way he was treated every step of the way, he said.

"I love Watco because of the ample career opportunities and even in the grand size of Watco, we strive for a smaller family company vibe," Jones said. "I have always said I would rather make less money and work for a small family-run company because of how altruistic many smaller family companies are towards their Customers and employees."

"Watco wants to utilize their Team members and watch them succeed," Jones said. "Watco has many paths to help us reach our potential through Watco U, various job positions with on-site training, and my personal favorite of trying to promote and hire from within."

Jones began in Tampa, Colorado, as an operator loading crude tankers.

"When we started biting our nails as we watched the crude prices drop, many of my Team members looked for other opportunities elsewhere and relocated to other terminals," Jones said.

General Manager Brad Hayes reached out to inform him of an advancement opportunity in a new location: Waverly, Virginia.

"It was nice to counsel with my supervisors to help me prevail through the low oil prices and take the next step in my career," Jones said. "Watco really does like to see their own take these opportunities and in my case, even helped financially in my family’s relocation."

The Team did such a great job in Waverly that they completed the contract earlier than expected; the downside was that Jones was in a similar situation as before.

"Scott Rudolph, senior vice president, didn’t just say ‘bye,’ or ‘sorry about your luck,’ but rather offered me another management position to continue my career growth in Elizabeth, New Jersey," Jones said. "This was great, but it is another new contract and wasn’t up and running yet. Scott knows no one can just take a few months off to wait for the new gig, but also cares about his Team members so he told me ‘You’ve been terrific, don’t worry, give me a few days and trust me’.

Rudolph found a temporary job for Jones in Roanoke, Virginia, until he was able to begin in Elizabeth.

"Watco has shown me that I am much more than an employee ID number by taking care of my family and by steering me in a direction to reach my potential," Jones said. "Watco to me isn’t just a job to pay my bills or a stepping stone to build my resume; they’ve treated me like family and that’s Why Watco."

To hear more #WhyWatco stories, follow us on social media! If you have a #WhyWatco story to share, email astefanoni@watco-companies.com.
Watco has been recognized as being one of the safest in the industry when it comes to marine cargo handling.

More than 300 Team members are celebrating this news after receiving an elite stevedoring safety award given by the insurance carrier The American Equity Underwriters last month in a ceremony at the terminal in Jeffersonville, Indiana.

In attendance were terminal managers, representatives from the Port Authority of Indiana, and Watco leadership.

Jimmy Burgin, senior vice president of loss prevention for the AEU, said the award was given on criteria evaluated by AEU that included not only incident frequency and severity but also measured the accident prevention controls the company has in place.

"To achieve this, we were one of six companies, out of nearly 1,000, chosen by the AEU for their safety award," said Watco Risk Manager Steven Renn.

"It goes to every location where we have marine cargo handling — where we have United States longshore and harbor workers exposure, or the loading and unloading of large vessels."

Watco stevedoring operations during 2016 included: Dravosburg, Greens Port Crude By Rail, Houston TTX, Houston Ferro, Ghent, Industry, New Johnsonville, TN, Vicksburg, Port Birmingham, Pine Bluff, Louisville River Road, Jeffersonville, Dravosburg, Decatur River Port, Columbus, Amory, West Memphis, Guntersville, Port Arthur, Baton Rouge, Louisville KY, and Brooklyn Junction, WV.

Each location mentioned will get an individual plaque and each Team member who was with Watco during that time and continues to work for Watco also will receive a certificate of achievement at individual profit centers.

"We won it for our first year in the program," Renn said, "and we want to be in the running each year. That means we are operating safely while serving Customers and doing it in an efficient manner."

Renn praised the Team members and managers at each location for their role in winning it, for what they do every day.

"It's a group effort, and they should be very proud of it," he said. "I think they can do it every year."

Renn also credited Jeff Baum, Watco’s director of occupational safety and health, for developing a safety culture and programs specifically associated with stevedoring, and terminal managers for driving home the value of operating safely.

But Baum downplayed his role in the award, saying instead that "it was a Team member win for everyone who takes part in what we do on a day-to-day basis."

"They're the ones who strive to be the best out there," said Baum, who utilizes several strategies including input from Team members to ensure safety.

"I'm ecstatic for the Team," he said. "Each person played a part in it."

One of those people was Tim Bass, terminal manager at Ghent, Kentucky, who said it was nice for his Team to get national recognition for the effort they put in 365 days a year. He oversees four crews of 58 individuals on a 24/7 operation.

A Customer, North American Stainless, was so pleased, a company representative stopped by to take a photo of the award to share with his own team.

Bass plans to put each certificate in a frame and display them at a breakfast or lunch, hand them out in an informal ceremony.

"The guys who go out and put forth and do the work, they're the reason we got this," he said.

From the Ohio River, the crews offload barges full of stainless steel scrap or alloys, including chrome, destined for the North American Stainless mill across the highway.

The more you handle something on the water, the greater chance you have going wrong," he said. "Our deckhands are hooking barges up, moving around, things are shifting — it's a lot of moving parts."

Watco Senior Vice President of Operations Nick Coomes said there’s no better way to value Customers and Team members than through safe service every day — a sentiment that Watco Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer Dan Smith said he echoed.

"This incredible honor is a testament to the Watco Team and the commitment they have made to safety," Coomes said. "They backed that commitment up with focus, attention to detail, and sound decision-making each and every day. Congratulations to each of our Watco Team members who service our great Customers!"

Burgin said Watco has “excellent management commitment and supervisors and employees that know accident prevention is paramount to the company.”

"All Team members are on board with safety and this AEU Safety Award proves it," Burgin said. "Watco is truly a leader in safety in the marine cargo handling industry."

Watco Senior Vice President of Operations Nick Coomes said the award was given on criteria evaluated by AEU that included not only incident frequency and severity but also measured the accident prevention controls the company has in place. 
Watco Team members have a knack for finding better ways to serve their Customers and in 2012 the WATSS transportation management system was created to support the wide variety of railroad-related services Watco provides. WATSS offers an extensive range of automated operational and administrative capabilities such as yard and railcar inventory control, car and train scheduling, waybill control, GPS integration and automation, car ordering, and operating metrics reporting. These features allow the Customer to have more timely and accurate information on their railcars.

On June 3, the SKOL became Watco’s 33rd railroad to use the WATSS system. According to John Harrigan, SAP director, the SKOL was the most complex conversion to date with 40 plus Team members working to make it all come together.

“We had a dual conversion on the SKOL, we switched from our former system to WATSS and also switched from the former mobile platform to ROAM, another program developed by the IT Applications Development Team,” said Harrigan.

Corey Corrick, vice president, applications, added, “One big benefit of switching to WATSS will be an estimated $13,000 savings per month.”

The first step of the project was to get the SKOL Customers put into the Customer master list that feeds WATSS. The Customer Master Team put in approximately 330 hours into getting the information transferred over with intern Stephanie McCabe playing a key role in getting the data added.

April Summit, manager of revenue accounting and collections, said, “It was worth the hard work and extra time to ensure Customers wouldn’t feel it when the conversion was made.”

One change Customers will see is a change in the interface they use to access their information and Ron Spencer, director of Customer service and collections, worked with Customers to prepare them for the change.

Spencer stated, “We sent out a user guide along with user IDs and passwords. Once a Customer was logged in to the system they had access to online video tutorials that can train them on how to use the system. We also sent them phone numbers and email addresses they could use for assistance if needed.”

Harrigan was impressed with how the different Teams worked to complete the project. He said, “The communication between the groups was impressive. The Teams out in the field helping with the testing were very supportive of the process.”

Brad Bourbina, application support technician, was the lead field technician and trained the crews and showed them how switching to WATSS would benefit them.

Others who were part of the “Traveling Team” were Penny Wood, purchase card & cell phone manager; Hayley Becker, systems analyst; Larry O’Neal, systems analyst; Gregg Robbins, director technical services & security; and Phil Hennessee, director new development.

“Having these folks out in the field was a real game changer,” said Harrigan. “They were a tremendous help in moving the project along.”

Aaron Coester, assistant vice president enterprise application support, said switching the SKOL over is just a part of a regional conversion with the Stillwater Central next in line.

“This will allow for some new synergies between the sister railroads and data will be faster and more accurate, giving our Customers a better experience.”

Mississippi Southern Railroad celebrates 12 years injury free

The Mississippi Southern (MSR) Team recently celebrated 12 years of being injury free, and is looking forward to keeping their record intact.

The MSR began operations in 2005 and was one of five railroads leased from the Kansas City Southern Railway, which are referred to as the Five Pack. Throughout the years, MSR has dealt with challenges and difficulties caused by weather and the economy but has been able to succeed by cutting costs where needed and developing new Customer business.

General Manager Jeff Buck, stated that the Customer First Foundation Principles have played a large role in the operation and success of this 30 mile short line.

Collaboration and communication have paved the road for the Team’s strong safety record.

“Keeping in constant contact with our Customers, holding Town Halls on a regular basis, and getting involved with the community are all important factors in working together as a Team,” said Buck.
Blue Ridge Southern Railroad shares safety culture

By Andra Bryan Stefanoni
Contributing Writer

From Customers to volunteer firemen, our Team on the Blue Ridge Southern Railroad (BLU) is helping to ensure the safety of others.

When the Balsam-Willets-Ochre Hill Volunteer Fire Department had questions about responding to railroad emergencies, the BLU Team was happy to provide instruction.

With a turn-out of 18 firemen, BLU Chief Mechanical Officer Jamie Miller led a session that provided hands-on training.

“We went over what these guys can do in the event of something happening along the right of way, how to shut down a locomotive, and possible hazards they might encounter,” Miller said. “It was a great opportunity for them to learn something new.”

Miller is no stranger to volunteering, having retired from the U.S. Coast Guard with 20 years of service before beginning his railroad career.

“Jamie and his wife, Michelle, have been with the BLU since November 2014 and have been great additions to our team,” said BLU General Manager Darl Farris. “While I hope these firemen never have to exercise their new found skills, I am thankful to Jamie for taking the time to share his knowledge with them and for his dedication to continued safe operations.”

The training wasn’t the first time the BLU Team had reached out to help others learn safety.

An employee of Evergreen Paper in Canton, North Carolina, recently sprained an ankle while getting off a rail car, and the BLU Team was happy to help prevent a recurrence.

Evergreen switches their own cars inside the paper mill, using their own locomotive and switch crew. Trainmaster Cain Greene shared Watco best practices in regards to safely mounting and dismounting a rail car.

“My schedule is always open when it comes to helping our Customers when they are in need, especially when it comes to safety,” Greene said. “If we work as a team with the Customer, we all get closer to our goal of an injury- and incident-free work environment.”

Greene praised Evergreen for reaching out to the BLU in an effort to grow knowledge of safe work practices.

“Cain and the rest of the BLU team members recognize how closely the railroad’s success is connected to our Customer’s success,” Farris said. “This is just one example of the relationships we have with our Customers.”

“They help us as much as we try to help them. When our Customers are hurting, we are hurting with them. Likewise, when they celebrate successes, we are able to celebrate right along with them,” Farris said.

The BLU Team shares safety best practices with Customer Evergreen (l-r): Boyd Burgin, Evergreen switch crew; Cain Greene, BLU trainmaster; Slade Henry, Evergreen switch crew; Robert Gerard, Evergreen rail operations and maintenance coordinator; and Brandon Carter, Evergreen locomotive engineer.

Five easy steps can reduce human factor incidents

By Andra Bryan Stefanoni
Contributing Writer

The goal of Watco’s new “Take 5” initiative is simple: to drive a huge reduction in human factor incidents resulting from failure to properly protect shoves to zero.

The premise is simple, says Senior Vice President of Safety and Training Travis Herod: keep the five basic steps of a shove on everyone’s mind at all times. Failure to do so can result in switches being run through, cars shoved over derails or off of the ends of tracks, or equipment contacting other equipment inadvertently. Worse, they could result in severe injury or a fatality.

Herod’s initiative will feature Take 5 reminders showing up on properties in many forms: posters, stickers, and more. The Take 5 reminders are:

1. **Direction** — which way is the equipment going to move?
2. **Distance** — how far can the equipment be shoved safely?
3. **Switches** — are all switches properly lined for your movement?
4. **Deraills** — are there any fixed, or portable derails, and are they all in the off position?
5. **Point protection** — how will the move be protected?

While the initiative is directed rail incidents, the same premise can be adopted easily to any kind of backup move of other vehicles and equipment, Herod said.
While many people travel across the country to see the famous St. Louis Gateway Arch, the Team members at Watco’s Cahokia Terminal just have to look upriver to see the historic landmark. Located in Sauget, Illinois, and a part of greater St. Louis, the 84 acre terminal offers a variety of services for the Customers it serves.

Six smokestacks from the former Monsanto power plant can be seen from a distance and the landmark now serves as a warehouse for the supersacks of cement from Croatia that are delivered to the facility by barge. The cement is either shipped by bulk in railcars or taken to the packaging warehouse where a robotic machine rebags the cement into smaller units to be trucked out to locations across the U.S.

Other commodities that are handled at the Cahokia Terminal include coal, activated carbon, coke, caustic soda, crude base oil, and liquid fertilizer. To accommodate its 13 Customers, the facility is operated 24 hours a day, seven days a week by its 42 Team members.

Trucks roll into the terminal at various times during the day, to pick up and drop off coal, transport bags of cement, move the carbon, and transport liquids. A weigh station is located just inside the entrance of the facility to ensure all liquid commodities brought in and out of the terminal are accurately measured.

The Gateway Arch makes a scenic backdrop for the Cahokia Terminal in Sauget, Illinois.

Railcars also roll through the terminal, bringing in activated carbon, shipping bulk cement, and unit trains of coal are shipped out along with cars of coal and liquids as needed.

The Mississippi River borders the west side of the terminal where a large crane unloads barges of coal by the bucketful onto a conveyor which drops it by type into one of the many piles in the coal yard. One piece of equipment that helps facilitate the movement of coal at the terminal is the reverse conveyor. This conveyor brings in the coal from the barges to load into trucks or it can also be used to move coal out to the barges to ship out to Customers.

Another piece of equipment that helps with the movement of the coal is the 2 ton CAT D 10 bulldozer. Although there are couple of other bulldozers at the facility, this one features a bucket large enough to fill an entire railcar with coal.

“We take pride in handling the products our Customers trust us with,” said Terminal Manager Scott Schweitzer. “We had one Customer come out to inventory his product and didn’t believe the pile of coke was his because the coke had retained its size (and value) where other providers had handled the product in a manner that broke it down into smaller pieces.”

The terminal also has a liquids barge that is adjacent to the Mississippi River. Liquids are brought in by barge and stored in one of five tanks at the facility. Three of the tanks contain caustic soda, one liquid fertilizer, and one stores crude base oil. The crude base oil is pipelined to a Customer across the street from the terminal based upon their need.

Interestingly, a special guest visits the location annually to give a blessing to the KA Steel tank. This tank holds a food grade product used to clean food processing plants and a rabbi is required to bless the product to ensure that the food in contact with it remains Kosher.

However, Schweitzer said he feels blessed every day.

“I have the safest, hardest working Team members in the company,” stated Schweitzer. “We have some that have been here 30 years and some 3 months, and I’m proud to get to work with each one of them.”

**Watco Team members improving Birmingham, continued**

Continued from page 1 - credit to the Team for sticking with Watco, trusting leadership and maintaining morale during adversity. Vice President of Operations Bill Goldsberry praised Tarwater for his style of leadership:

“When the downturn took place, he had relationships with a lot of these guys from the steel company — 20 to 25-year relationships, to where they were considered part of his family,” Goldsberry said. “So there were pretty tough conversations we had. He had to run Watco like it needed to be run to get costs under control, to focus on efficiency. Now, he’s doing more with less, regaining revenue but keeping costs to a minimum.”

On the safety side, derailments and human error incidents are now few and far between.

Goldsberry says the BHRR is doing better than when revenues were higher: “Because we’re not solely dependent on one Customer,” he said. “We have the security of knowing we can touch a lot more people and grow the business for the long term.”

**The ABWR**

Similarly, the Alabama Warrior Railway, of which Tarwater also is general manager, has bounced back.

The 24-mile stretch of railroad began as a Watco shortline in August 2009. But in 2015, Customer Walter Coke, which provides coke for blast furnaces, filed for bankruptcy. At 95 percent of ABWR’s revenues, the loss was felt immediately.

Last year, ERP bought Walter Coke and signed a 10-year contract with Arcelor Mittal, the world’s leading integrated steel and mining company, to provide coke to their facility. This opened the door for Goldsberry and Tarwater to meet with the new owners and negotiate a new — and better — contract.

As a result, revenues have increased by 35 percent from 2015. Tarwater said ABWR Trainmaster Anthony Hoyte played a huge role in keeping the ABWR Team members focused.

“At a time when the Team was worried about having a job, Anthony assured them that Watco would provide them. Although there are couple of other bulldozers at the facility, this one features a bucket large enough to fill an entire railcar with coal.

“We take pride in handling the products our Customers trust us with,” said Terminal Manager Scott Schweitzer. “We had one Customer come out to inventory his product and didn’t believe the pile of coke was his because the coke had retained its size (and value) where other providers had handled the product in a manner that broke it down into smaller pieces.”

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However, Schweitzer said he feels blessed every day.

“I have the safest, hardest working Team members in the company,” stated Schweitzer. “We have some that have been here 30 years and some 3 months, and I’m proud to get to work with each one of them.”
Congratulations to the following Team members celebrating anniversaries this month.


2 Years: Kelvin Appanna, Justin Avey, Antenogenes Barajas, Bruce Barlow, Benjamin Bullock, Brandon Buckholst, Matthew Buda, Brandon Burle, Sean Cochran, Kellby DeBerry, Joshua Elder, John Escobar, Carl Foster, Claybourn Foster, Aaron Freeeland, Michael Funk, Colin Genz, Zachary Hagan, Charles Hamilton, Jason Harrison, Scotty Higginbotham, Jeffrey Infinger, James Kelly, Charles Lee, Jacob Lewis, Richard Long, Jared May, Dustin McClanahan, Terri McCombs, Alton McCoy, Herbert McKinney, Cameron McKinstry, Keith Mitchell, Wellington Murdock, Keith Myles, Dmitriy Nefedov, Brandon Perry, Keith Pittman, Jose Quintero, Hunter Richardson, Joe-Anthony Rios, Brien Runyon, Charles Snyder, Brett Strickland, Taylor Stricklin, Joshua Tarwater, Jordon Taylor, Jewell Watson, Nicholas Wayman, Stephen Wilson, Sarah Wingard, Michael Wujcik

3 Years: Bryan Adkins, Alec Altenhofer, Dustin Andrus, Eddie Atkins, Justin Ayala, Michael Beck, Brett Burright, George Cabrera, James Carnes, Joshua Clifton, Kevin Cloward, Chantz Conlin, Robert Curtis, Timothy Demery, Brandon Douglas, Darrl Farris, Michael Fields, David Garris, James Gibson, Raoul Gonzalez, Ethen Green, Anthony Hampton, Joseph Harris, Cameron Hawkins, Joey Haynes, Otis King, Todd Krydmyski, Jeffrey Linville, Vancell Lucas, Brittany Mays, Jacky Miller, Casey Mills, Carlton Moody, Lawrence Neimoyer, Thomas Nicholsons, Joseph Onuskauncky, Brock Parham, Lynda Patterson, Angel Pequeno, Rajendra Ramesh, Bridig Rich, Philip Roberts, Kenneth Sexton, Joshua Smiley, Shelia Stice, Steve Varden, Kevin Waite, James Welch, Anthony Wine, David Woody

4 Years: Brenda Antle, Christopher Bauder, Alan Beggs, Luis Del Rosario, Shawn Galens, Yelbi Gutierrez, Michael Hanna, Timothy Hassell, Nathan Holmes, Richard Juarez, Jacob Kleckner, Jacob Lipinski, David McCloud, Samuel Reinholz, William Richardson, Cody Rickman, Dané Rowe, Toni Scroggins, John Stovall, Bryan Waldon, David Wastak, Drew White, Billy Williams

5 Years: Dustin Bain, John Gaither, Thomas Glover, David Grice, Lucinda Grimes, Henry Howard, Ronnie Jackson, Wayne Matthews, Jowy Lee May, Michael McAllister, Mark McGee, Jessica Mitchell, Michael Newton, Jeffrey Pacheco, David Pacholski, August Pappas, Ronald Perkins, JeVar Robertson, Ryan Roos, Charles Schilling, Andrea Stouffer, Charles Teeters, Joe Via

6 Years: Bryan Barney, John Brown, Reginald Burks, Ed Diezert, Kelly Frazier, Tom Hayes, Douglas Hicks, Casey Irvan, Jacob McCullough, Thomas McMullan, Ronald Miller, Travis Phillips, Missy Rains, Leon Steege, Stacy Swindord, Darren Taylor

7 Years: Gary Alms, John Bradner, Joseph Bristow, Brian Cosby, Joe Fells, Jon Hadley, Matthew Hutcheson, Patrick Kinney, Crystal Lancaster, Stefan Loeb, Andrew Mitchell, Robert Smith, Tammy Springer, John Worthington

8 Years: Joseph Babineaux, Ryan Corder, Matthew Jackson, Amanda Pequin, Sherrill Ramey, Steven Tucker, Gary Wagenseller

9 Years: Susan Blake, Garrett Bolyard, Carla Ewing, Ty Fuller, Timothy O'Shell

10 Years: Tandi Colibert, Bobby McCadden, Michael Milligan, Travis Thorpe, Jeremiah Williams, Joseph Wilson

11 Years: Frances Benallay, Chet Clasen, Kyle Jeschke, Matt Lewis, Jennifer Muckala, Cesar Oglesby, Dianna Peak, Sambo Sam, Kenneth Tober, Jeremy Tyler

12 Years: Antenogenes Barajas, Bruce Christie, Carl Fanello, Dylans Guthrie, Mitchell Hood, Cornelius Jones, Colby Jordan, Michael Redden, Bridget Smith, Toby Wampler

13 Years: Robert Bailey, Laura Bolt, Bradley Bowden, Doug Story, Stu Towner

14 Years: Beau Embry, Royce Price

15 Years: James McHaffie, Don Rudd, Douglas Tank

16 Years: Brian Arnold, Jeffrey Schrader

17 Years: Derek Danielsworth, James Dwire, Robert Hasheider, Steven Landis

19 Years: Scott Rudolph, James Taylor

20 Years: Joseph Bennett, Gregory Johnson, Bart Lawrence

22 Years: Bryan Brooks, James Riley

23 Years: Giselle Brown, Harold Cornelius

24 Years: Tona Townzen

25 Years: Joseph Leport

26 Years: Jeffrey Adams

28 Years: Donald Dowlin

30 Years: Joseph Pichelli

31 Years: David Bierman

32 Years: Stephen Thornton, Jeff VanBuren

33 Years: Gary Skelton

34 Years: Mark Blazer

37 Years: Steven Groth, Stephen Reames, William Toper

40 Years: James Johnson

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**Births**

**Adley Dawn Workman**

Tyler and Carrera Workman are proud to announce the birth of their daughter, Adley Dawn Workman, born on June 8, 2017.

Adley weighed 7.5 pounds at birth, and she is the first addition to the Workman family. Tyler has been a locomotive mechanic at the Kanawha River Railroad in Belle, West Virginia, for just under one year.

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**Layla Mae Fox**

Terri Turiano is very happy to announce the birth of her new granddaughter Layla Mae Fox.

Layla was born May 24, 2017. She weighed 7 pounds and 8 ounces and was 19 inches long.

Layla is the daughter of Terri’s son and her daughter-in-law, Stephen and Angela Fox.

Terri works at the Hollidaysburg GBW / Millennium Rail location in Pennsylvania.

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**Watco voted Pittsburg’s Best Place to Work**

By Andrea Bryan Stefanoni

Contributing Writer

The votes are now in and with all your support, Watco Companies has been voted the Best Place to Work in Pittsburg, Kansas. Each year, The Morning Sun Newspaper holds a reader-based contest, seeking nominations online and in a printed ballot in the paper. This year, Watco was honored to be among six other wonderful companies nominated for the award: Via Christi Hospital, Pittsburg State University, Pittsburg School District, Names & Numbers Phone Books, and New Hope Services.

Thanks to motivated Team members who took time to vote, Watco won!

But Chief Executive Officer Rick Webb said the award should be called not the Best Place to Work, but the Best People to Work With, because our Team members are truly the best in the industry, in Pittsburg and around the globe!

“All I can say is you are amazing. What you do every day to improve our service to our Customers is humbling and inspiring,” Webb said. “Thanks for being the reason we are successful. Keep making great things happen.”
Team member remembered for his positive influence

Larry Milton, Sr.

Chicago Heights Team member Larry Milton unexpectedly passed away on June 20 at the age of 56. His manager, Linda Jordan, provided this tribute to a man that will be missed by family, friends, and co-workers.

It’s an honor to write this tribute for Larry Milton, a Team member at the Chicago Heights Terminal for 30 years.

Larry was a man of many skills, he was able to operate all of the terminal equipment and had experience with various commodities that the terminal handled over the years.

He received compliments from carriers and drivers about his extreme precision in loading any sized load of steel onto their trailers.

He always displayed a positive attitude, even when a task may have been a challenging one. He motivated and encouraged our team along. He worked above and beyond by taking on terminal projects that would require maintenance or an innovative approach. An example would be when he recently worked on our idle man lift and was able to get it running and put it into operation at the terminal.

Over the years, Larry had traveled to other facilities to help provide service to our Customers. Whether it was flooding, start-ups, or just a terminal needing an extra hand, Larry would be there to help out, spending time away from his family to do so.

Larry has been a co-worker, mentor, and someone that others could lean towards for advice and direction.

He encouraged everyone that he worked with to take a step back and assess the situation before the task began and he always asked the question, “Do you feel safe doing it that way?”

One of his famous lines was, “Find your center.” He always marked the product in the center in order to handle it the safest way. He encouraged others to do the same.

One comment shared during the Summit that everyone should remember is that our system does not end where the rail or terminal property ends. With our access to ports, barge, truck and rail, our system is nationwide…scratch that, we are global.”

Service groups gather for Commercial Summit

Watco’s Commercial Team recently gathered for a summit that was different from previous meetings: This one was attended by Commercial Team members at Watco’s four service areas transportation, terminals and ports, mechanical, and supply chain.

Senior Vice President - Commercial, Watco Terminal & Port Services Marc Massoglia said, “Months prior to the Commercial Summit, we created cross-functional teams to work on a project explaining ‘Who is Watco and what can Watco do for its Customers?’ The goal of the project was to develop our leaders, create stronger relationships between commercial groups, learn more about the Watco services we provide, and build a sense of being One Team.”

The Summit was held in Kansas City, with meetings on the first day held at the perfect transportation venue, Union Station. The focus of the Summit was to bring together the various Commercial Teams to collaborate, share success stories, and strengthen communication between these services.

The presentations were a key part of the meetings and showed a variety of creative ways to engage Customers and tell the Watco story.

Pat Cedeno, senior vice president - Commercial, said, “The teams provided us with great ideas and ways to present Watco to our Customers so they may truly understand our culture and our desire to meet all of their logistics needs through our various service offerings. The creativity we saw was fun and impressive and an example of the great people that make up our team - truly the Best in the Industry!”

Cedeno added, “One comment shared during the Summit that everyone should remember is that our system does not end where the rail or terminal property ends. With our access to ports, barge, truck and rail, our system is nationwide…scratch that, we are global.”

The newsletter for Watco Companies

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Senior Vice President - Commercial, WTPS Marc Massoglia addresses the Team members gathered at Kansas City’s Union Station for the Commercial Summit.

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