The end of January saw record low temperatures set across the U.S. When these extreme temperatures hit, it’s no longer safe for Watco Team Members, or any other occupation that requires workers to be outside for long periods to time, to perform their jobs. So, when the temperatures on the Grand Elk Railroad (GDLK) plummeted to -16 degrees Fahrenheit with 30 mph wind gusts on January 30, on top of about 14 inches of snow, operations were shut down for the team’s safety.

In total, the shutdown lasted about 18 hours. The next day, the sun came out, the wind died down, and temperatures, while still in the negatives, were warm enough to restart operations. Four trains couldn’t make it back to GDLK yards before the weather hit, so top priority was getting them back into yards so the locomotives could be serviced.

The locomotives couldn’t be shut down in the cold weather. The locomotive team revved the idle up a notch due to the extreme temperatures and monitored them throughout the time operations were suspended. When operations resumed, the team confirmed good airbrake tests, and the locomotives were ready to move.

“They’re pretty hearty pieces of equipment. They handle the cold better than I do,” said GDLK Chief Mechanical Officer Jason Stout. “The track department, they’re the real heroes when it gets cold and snowy.”

Pre-planning played a vital role in resuming operations. Much of that was led by the track department and Roadmaster Adam Robillard. Coordinating with operations, they knew where the trains were stranded and where they needed to go. They also worked with the mechanical team to make sure they could safely reach the locomotives to check on them so they’d be ready to go. After clearing the parking lots and work areas of ice and snow, it was time to get the wheels rolling.

“The day we restarted was a limited schedule. We didn’t bring everybody back,” Robillard said. “In fact, because of the weather, that day was voluntary for my guys. Everybody ended up coming in anyway.”

There was a work crew with each train that ran ahead of each move. Two of the biggest hazards during these events are frozen switches and ice buildup in flange ways at grade crossings, and these were the main things crews looked for and fixed before the trains came through. Three of the trains needed to come into the Kalamazoo, Michigan, yard and that means running over some Amtrak line. Amtrak had frozen switches as well, and worked hard to get their line back in service.

“They had to use fire and flames to get it running. Then we worked with Amtrak to plan the train moves,” Robillard said.

The first train to get rolling was the Kalamazoo local. It was a few miles from the yard and was the first to be brought in for servicing. After the others were brought in, the team sent two small trains out; one to Grand Rapids, Mich., and one to Elkhart, Indiana. Robillard rode one train and an inspector rode the other, assisting as needed along the way and walking grade crossings.

“Essentially, we ran these to open up the line. They were essentially plow trains, and we were on them looking for any issues, busting snow drifts, and anything like that,” Robillard said.

The first day back in service was dedicated solely to bringing the trains in and then opening up the line. The next day is when the team was able to get back up to full speed. The challenges railroaders face in these conditions are some of the toughest they see in their efforts to bring service back to our Customers, and it takes a full team effort to do it. The Grand Elk is just one of several Watco properties that experience this extreme cold and weather and they all do a great job of safely getting operations back up and serving our Customers.

“They did an outstanding job and I’m incredibly proud of them. I’m proud of the transportation guys that came in and the mechanical guys that kept the engines running. We had no incidents and no mechanical failures and there’s a lot to be said about that,” Robillard said. “It was all the coordination. We briefed with every crew and knew exactly where everyone was going. We made sure the work was structured ahead of time because it was a unique day for them. They weren’t doing their normal job. We were doing unique moves that we needed to make sure got done.”
The Deer Park, Texas, Switching Team is getting quite a reputation - for safety. The team celebrated their nine year injury-free safety anniversary mid-January and at the end of the month they were recognized for their safety at the Dow Chemical Contractor Safety Banquet.

Watco’s three-man crew, Pilot Jeremy Stegner and Deckhands Christian Breek and Mike Walker, work at the Ghent Terminal in Kentucky and they were out on the river early on January 23 when they received the distress signal.

At approximately 5:45 a.m. that day, the MV Dan L was northbound on the Ohio River at mile marker 516 with four empty red flag (hazmat) barges. The wheelman noted engine room alarms and dispatched a crewmember to investigate.

Approaching the engine room, the crewmember observed flames and smoke and could feel the heat from a growing fire. Ultimately, the suppression system extinguished the engine room fire, but the MV Dan L lost propulsion during the fire and afterward was floating downriver with the current.

The MV Red Lightning was working a short distance upriver and immediately responded to the MV Dan L’s incident notifications. The MV Red Lightning crew worked to stabilize MV Dan L and the barges against the banks of the river while they waited for assistance to arrive about eight hours later. The MV Red Lightning’s fast response and quick action was instrumental in preventing secondary casualties.

“The Captain and crew of the MV Dan L did an excellent job of handling the situation. I’m glad we were in a position to provide assistance. Fortunately, everything worked out as well as can be expected,” said Pilot Jeremy Stegner.

Timothy Moss, president of Enterprise Marine Services, sent in a Letter of Appreciation acknowledging the crew for their quick actions. He wrote, “The selfless actions of the MV Red Lightning’s Pilot Jeremy Stegner and Deckhands Christian Breek and Mike Walker were critical in stabilizing an extremely dangerous situation and are in keeping with highest traditions of the inland towing industry.

“I appreciate the quick response that Jeremy Stegner, Christian Breek, and Mike Walker had in assisting MV Dan L. Their quick response stabilized M/V Dan L from having a secondary casualty. This shows the dedication of our team members service to our customers and community,” said Ghent Terminal Assistant Manager Steven Kincaid.
All Aboard Foundation provides scholarship opportunities

The All Aboard Foundation is pleased to announce its Scholarship Program is now open for applications. The scholarship will be available to dependents of Watco Companies Team Members. The recipient must be in good academic standing and plan to attend a post-secondary institution within one year following high school graduation.

Scholarships will be awarded in the amount of $500 each and will be issued in two $250 disbursements for the first two semesters of college and will be credited to the recipients account at the financial aid office of the college of their choosing. The number of scholarships awarded will be determined by the number of applicants with a minimum of two awarded per year.

Applications are available at http://allaboardfoundation.com/scholarships/

Please submit your application to info@allaboardfoundation.com or mail it to:

All Aboard Foundation
315 West 3rd Street
Pittsburg, KS 66762

Applications need to be submitted no later than March 30, 2019.

A committee will review all applications and the winner(s) will be notified and announced in the June issue of The Dispatch.

The All Aboard Foundation was established to provide funding for a better quality of life in the communities in which Watco serves.

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JUNCTION CITY SUPERVISOR GLAD TO BE HOME

By Jay Benedict
Digital Communication and Social Media Specialist

When a freight car arrives at Watco Mechanical Services’ Junction City, Kansas, shop, one of the first faces it sees is Eric Franco-Velez’s. It’s also one of the last faces it will see.

“Basically, I deal with the very front end of the car when it comes in and the very back end of the car before it goes back out to the Customer,” Eric said.

He started at the Junction City shop in 2015, when it was a GBW Railcar Services shop at the time. Eric joined the team as a coatings supervisor. That includes overseeing the blast room, exterior painting, and applying the interior lining to freight cars. Shortly after coming aboard, he was asked to supervise the cleaning rack as well. At the cleaning rack, cars undergo an initial inspection. Then, the team removes all the commodity from the interior of the car. About 90% of the cars Junction City services are food-grade, so most have carried commodities like flour, corn, and grain. Another inspection of interior of the car is done before its sent off to the mechanical shop.

“We want to make sure we’re not putting anything in a flame’s way, if they’re going to weld and torch it on,” Eric said.

He also oversees the final assembly shop. Some of the cars that come in have to have piping, gauges, hatches, and gates removed either before or during the mechanical process. This team is dedicated to putting the car back together and is usually the last department to see the car before it goes through quality assurance and back to the Customer.

Eric is a NACE-certified coating inspector and, prior to joining the Watco team, he worked for a coatings manufacturer. His job took him all around the world to places like Israel, China, and South America managing coatings projects, but kept him away from home for weeks at a time. As his girls got older, he wanted to be home more.

“I decided to try and find a job where I could still deal with coatings and be at home every night,” Eric said. “When I had the opportunity to come to Watco, I jumped right on it and it’s worked out great. I get to go home every night.”

Being close to home isn’t the only benefit of the job for Eric.

“I love coatings. I’m a coatings guy by trade. And I love the production environment. Nothing is the same each day. You run into different challenges every day and I look forward to those. It keeps you from becoming complacent,” Eric said. “My job as a supervisor is to make sure we have what we need here and are able to get these cars through and able to meet our Customers’ needs. When challenges arise, we have to figure out what we can change or do differently to make sure we’re still providing the service to our Customers and meeting their deadlines, and I get a kick out of that.”

Last year, Eric expressed his interest in advancing his career with Watco to Director of Operations Neil Heerdink and VP of Mechanical Services-Freight Kevin Stewart. They saw potential in Eric and sponsored him to enter Watco University’s Leadership Development Program. The months-long program combines classroom and online learning with training in the field to prepare Watco team members to take the next steps in their careers.

Team members who recently completed a Team Safety and Improvement Committee class are (l-r) : Ann Arbor Railroad (AA) Team Members Mark Adams, Ian Gray (back), Matt Sprayberry, Bryant Boatman, Max Tunison, Will Richardson, and Bob Trevino. Scott Shafer, Kanawha River Railroad, Heather Jackson- WTLL Nitro, and Art Perez, Ann Arbor.
Stay In The Game...Take Your Shot(s)
by Anwar Aiken
General Manager, Alabama Southern Railroad

Let’s be honest. Life can get a little crazy. It never seems to slow down and appears to get more complicated every day. In the midst of all the distractions, we can sometimes lose our sense of purpose. At times like this it’s all too easy to go into shutdown mode. There are times when it feels like the day is attacking us, instead of us attacking the day. Then, instead of fighting back, we retreat and begin to unplug. We pull ourselves out of the game and become spectators of our own lives. All around us people seem to be winning at life. We admire and envy their success while growing more tired and frustrated every day. never realizing a simple truth: You can't score if you don't shoot, but life can't pass you the ball if you're not in the game.

So how do we overcome the impulse to withdraw?
1. Stay Engaged: Remember that disengaging is never the answer. Not for you or for the people who are watching you. Yes, someone is always watching you. For me, it's my son. He watches every move I make and wants to be just like me. He's only five but it still counts. Everything I do or don't do is teaching him a lesson. I can pass on the mind-set of a CHAMPION or the excuses of a quitter.
2. Live With Purpose: Learn to live your life with Intention. Grow and build relationships that matter. Find someone or something to pour into. There are people who need what you have to offer, even if you haven't created it yet.
3. Remember What’s Really Important:

Management cooks for Coffeyville safety celebration
by Tracie VanBecelaere
Managing Editor

The management team at the Coffeyville mechanical shop in Kansas worked hard to show their team members how important all their hard work and focus on safety is. The team recently celebrated their one year injury-free safety anniversary and to show their appreciation, Kyle Mansfield, superintendent, Cody Bell, supervisor, Jake Renfroe, director of operations, Charlie Spencer, rail coordinator, and Jeremy Veley, plant manager, cooked for the entire team. The menu, cooked and served on-site, consisted of ribs, bologna, pulled pork, hot links, potato salad, and macaroni and cheese.

Each team member also received a t-shirt for going one year injury free.

Additional attendees at the celebrations included Nick Coomes, chief operating officer, and Chris Spear, vice president of People Services.

Plant Manager Jeremy Veley stated, "This is an outstanding accomplishment from a great team here at Coffeyville. Their hard work and dedication has definitely paid off and we are looking forward to going two years injury free!"

Special guests visit traveling Team Member

Locomotive Mechanic Mike Lawver had some special guests last month when he was on the road at Watco's newest short line, the Ithaca Central Railroad. Mike's wife and four kids, Mason, Zach, Tyler and Charlotte, made a trip up from their home in New Jersey and paid him a visit. Because Mike had a heavy traveling schedule, during that time, he arranged for his family to spend a weekend with him at the location so they could spend some time together.

"I was happy to get to spend some time with them," said Mike. "I've been busy with the addition of the Ithaca Central, getting things inspected and working right, so it was nice to have them come up and get to spend some time together with them."

Mike joined the Watco Team in June of 2018 and provides mechanical services to locomotives at the Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Bayway and Linden, New Jersey; and the Ithaca locations.

Locomotive Mechanic Mike Lawver and his wife Jess with their four children (l-r) Tyler, Charlotte, Zach, and Mason in front of one of the many locomotives that Mike services.
Moore retires from Scottsville mechanical shop

By Tracie VanBecelaere
Managing Editor

Almost anyone who was old enough can remember what they were doing on September 11, 2011. Joan Moore was in the Scottsville, Texas, mechanical shop office on that day being interviewed for a new job. At the time, the shop was owned by Millennium Rail.

"While I waited for my interview, news of the terrorist attack played on the TV in the office," said Joan.

Joan also remembers what she was doing the day after 9-11, she was starting the job she had been interviewed for the day before. That was the beginning of her long career at the Scottsville shop.

Throughout her years at the shop, Joan has filled the positions of accounts payable clerk, payroll, human resources, purchasing, and a few others. Her favorite role, though not an official one, is Mother Hen. While a few plant managers have come and gone in her time at the location, Mother Hen was in for the long haul.

"I've seen a lot of changes in my time here," said Joan. "Millennium was a good company to work for, but when Watco purchased the shop they just seemed to be more personable. It's been a good ride, it's been interesting, fun, and I've worked with some really good people. Some bad ones too," she laughed. "Just a few, but that's just life."

While her roles changed at work, so did her roles on the home front as well. She was a mother to two boys and then took on the role of grandmother. She has a grandson in Arkansas and a thirteen-year-old granddaughter who lives in Minnesota. After raising two boys, having a little girl in the family is something Joan has always wanted, she's just a little far away right now.

Joan is looking forward to having the extra time to make the trip up to the "Land of 10,000 Lakes" to spoil her granddaughter, but says she's going to wait until it gets a little warmer up that way before making the trip. Joan is also going to be taking a cruise with some school friends this fall to celebrate her retirement.

Plant Manager Joe Welch said, "Joan will be greatly missed to say the least. Over the years we have spent about 50,000 hours together here in Scottsville, and that's probably more than I have spent with my wife LOL. Joan was always kind, courteous, and professional when visitors would show up at her desk to sign in no matter how she felt or how bad her day might be going. Joan had a shrine of pictures of George Strait on her wall so everyone knew she liked her country music man! It was an ice breaker to spark conversation with our visitors, and she didn't mind taking the time to talk about George. This is one of the things I will miss the most."

Kansas and Oklahoma Railroad provides good neighbor solution

by Tracie VanBecelaere
Managing Editor

The Kansas and Oklahoma Railroad (KO) recently had a resident in the Wichita area reach out and request help with an issue she was having with some property she owned near the railroad and rented out. Teresa Resko emailed Vice President of Operations Jimmy Patterson and let him know that ATV drivers had been using the railroad’s right of way to access the alleyway, and her adjoining property. Riding on the right of way close to the tracks not only causes a safety issue but was also a nuisance to the neighbors. Because of the amount of rain the area had received at the time, it created deep ruts in the ground, making it difficult for the tenants to reach their driveway.

Herb Lamkin, KO roadmaster, was handed the project of finding a solution that would be beneficial to both the resident and the railroad.

The solution that Lamkin came up with was to block the access to the right of way using large cement blocks with warning posts. This would keep the trespassers off the right of way and any other public property. If they would go around the blocks, they would be on private property and then law enforcement officials could get involved and issue citations for trespassing.

Resko sent in an email after the work was completed thanking the team for all their efforts.

Resko wrote, "I just wanted to let you know what a positive experience we had working with you and your team, specifically Herb Lamkin. After your email, Herb reached out to us right away and met with us later that day. Together we came up with a game plan and Herb’s coworkers came out right away to start work. It turned out better than we anticipated. I really appreciated Herb’s follow up phone call to be sure everything was to our satisfaction."

"I can be pretty persistent when it comes to protecting our tenant and our investment and came into this prepared for bureaucracy and delays. My experience with your team could not have been any further from that. You were all polite, responsive, and cooperative at every point in this process."

"I just want you, Herb, and the team to know how much we appreciate all your help in resolving this issue. We couldn’t ask for better neighbors!"

Lamkin said, "As always, the K&O tries to be a good neighbor with the communities we travel through. We can’t always meet the needs as requested, but we can sure try, or come to a compromise."

Lamkin credited the Wichita track crew of Irineo Basurto, Travis Weddle, Colten Genz, and Sam Winegarner for the work that was completed.

"I was just the guy who met the land owner, they were the ones who did the real work," added Lamkin. Before and after shots of the area where a safety hazard and nuisance to the neighbors was resolved with the addition of some cement blocks and warning signs. Four-wheelers had been using the spot as a short cut to access the road and in the process, creating deep ruts and driving too close to the railroad tracks.
The Watco Mechanical Team is looking for qualified applicants for openings in their division. If you are interested, or know someone that is, go online to watcocompanies.com/careers/join, fill out an application, and apply for jobs in the areas of interest. Applicants can search openings according to location or job type.

AVAILBLE OPENINGS INCLUDE:

EHS Manager – Hockley, Texas
EHS Manager – Junction City, Kansas
EHS Manager – Omaha, Nebraska
Plant Manager – Hockley, Texas
Quality Assurance Manager – Hollidaysburg, Pennsylvania
Supervisor/Inbound Inspection – Cudahy, Wisconsin
Congratulations to the following Team Members celebrating anniversaries this month.


2 Years: Chacoy Aguayo, Amy Andrews, Jason Braning, Rodney Burns, James Crider, Justin Cunningham, Brent Eggers, René Garza, Billy Gathright, Spencer Gray, Capus Hendrix, Timothy Huse, Bobby Irvin, Michael Jackson, William Lester, Albert Lierz, Curtis Marks, Angela Meales, Larry O’Neal, Kory Phillips, Victor Rainey, Brad Rampsy, Antonio Reyes, Joshua Sammons, Jeffery Sanchez, James Smithson, Joshua Theis, David Tuskey, Dakota Vincent, Matthew Watts, Ordla Webster, Bobbie Wright

3 Years: Maurice Acklin, John Bates, Myles Black, Robert Briley, Micheal Elias, Jesus Hernandez, Anwar Jenkins, Chase Kinard, Joshua Knisley, Dorminick Lampkin, Cameron Leighton, Jeffery Leone, Delmer Lydick, Jennifer Morgan, Howard Noland, Jared Rahmn, Franklyn Roldan, Zachariah Wilson

4 Years: Zachary Barajas, Christopher Blackman, Ronni Boston, Gavin Burrell, Corey Corrick, Michael Dally, Christopher Foxhuber, Gabriel Garmon, Joely Guth, Kenneth Green, Natalie Ham mond, Neil Heerdink, Andrew Kimsey, William King, Benjamin Langan, Alishia Mitchell, Seth Morris, Austin Norris, Victor Rivera, Gerald Robinson, Shannon Rodgers, William Rowell, Daniel Slade, Hayden Slade, Jonathon White

5 Years: Aloysius Blair, Cody Brooks, Rashida Combs, Jason Doane, Christian Gomez, Homer Imel, Raymond Kammer, Nathan Kuykendall, James Moore, Jared Oliver, Victor Prosolov, Jason Selzer, Jared Vandal

6 Years: Chance Adair, Bryant Boattman, Travis Bost, Jerry Bruce, Rene Cantu, Richard Carter, Ivan Casarez, Matthew Criswell, Jan Dibert, Ronald Duke, Ryan Gossens, Michael Hayden, Miles Maher, Jerry Morris, Bryan Payne, Colin Pinson, Michael Price, Jeffery Robertson, Joselito Santiago, Corey Sepulveda, Cory Trowe, John Vance

7 Years: Anwar Aiken, Jacob Bagby, Salvador Camacho, Tammie Hambek, Brent Killian, Jeremy Madsen, Marc Massoglia, Brad Payne, Bradley Seideman, Wesley Smith, Duane Stephenson, Jeffery White, Scott Wible

8 Years: Cassie Bicknell, David Brown, Taylor Carter, Evaristo Corona, Richard Grant, Norman Jones, Daniel Paul, Gerard Sybert, Malcolm Young

9 Years: James Blevins, Dustin Coester, Brett Goll, Kyle Hittesdorff, Anthony Jones, Vicki Langford, Michael Reeves, Shelly Rustad, Dean Schexnayder, Jason Stout, Angela Sylvia, Kenneth Thomas, James Trammell, Cesar Valentín, John Woods

10 Years: Kenneth Cathell, Richard Chadwell, Skip Hastings, Timothy Largent, Gerardo Martinez, Bernardino Osorio Vargas, Johnny Rankin, John Rood, John Rowland, Cecil Traylor

11 Years: Tina Castro, Sean Corr, Gwen Foster, Robert Gable, John Glover, James Maddux, Brett Norris, Judson Rogers, Eva Rokezewski, Adam Shaffer, Lloyd Wilson

12 Years: Sergio Arratia, Kelvin Banks, Lyman Brown, Mandi Favalora, Esteban Lechuga, Paul Minnis, Danny Sims

13 Years: Frederick Blondiau, Stephen Brath, Michael Colburn, Vincent Frazier, Marilyn Garcia, Michael Rogers, Joe Sandalvo, Heather Sepulvado, Mark Tarr, Gary Westphal

14 Years: Patti Audet, Adelita Barajas, Tyler Batley, Robert Boyd, Michael Galla, Kim Van Royen

15 Years: Kent Ainsworth, Brenda Caruthers, Charlene Huskey, Bartolome Marrero, Robert Martinez, Rocky Ramage, Kevin Watkins, Kevin Wells

16 Years: David Bullion, Frank Davis, Roger Easterling, Kenneth Lucht, George Spencer

17 Years: Sherrie Kaufman, James May, James Napier

18 Years: Robert Bradfield, Joshua Kramer, Brad Snow, Joe Welch

19 Years: Edward Garcia

20 Years: Sunil Bangari, Woodrow Jackson, Mark Krause, Terry Parsons, Cheryl Pollo, Robert Triebsch

21 Years: Micheal Davis, Bridget Liden, Brian Waters

22 Years: Ronald Tapley

23 Years: William Carroll, Anthony Jermigan

24 Years: Fernando Almanza, Dick Fogliasso

25 Years: Mark Green, Steven Morgan, Billy Morris

26 Years: Mike Broussard, Herb Lamkin, Jeffrey Lievers

27 Years: Silas Whiteley

29 Years: Sherrı Leport

30 Years: James Crawford, Michael Howarth

31 Years: Bryan Benson

33 Years: Billy Eddington, Paul Oppel

35 Years: James Herman

36 Years: Steven Lowther

38 Years: Steven Lang

41 Years: Thomas Beverly

42 Years: Daniel Fetzer

44 Years: Jeffery Brown

Births

Beau Wayne White

Michael and Crystal White are proud to announce the birth of their son, Beau Wayne.

Beau was born on February 21, 2019. He weighed 7 lbs., and was 19.5 inches long.

Beau was welcomed home by his sisters Larissa, 21, and Madysin, 14, and brother Colin, 13.

Michael is a valve man at the Scottsville, Texas mechanical shop.

Leeah Grace Osterhout

Taylor and Brit tany Osterhout are proud to announce the birth of their daughter Leeah Grace Osterhout.

Leeah was born February 14, 2019. She weighed 7 lbs., 10 oz., and was 20 inches long.

Taylor is a rail car repairman on the Eastern Idaho Railroad.

Graduation Announcements

As the school year’s end is quickly approaching, many family members of the Watco Team will be crossing stages across the continent (and ocean) to receive their diplomas.

Watco would like to acknowledge their hard work and show how proud we are of all graduates from our families by listing them in the May edition of The Dispatch.

If you would like to have your, or a graduate’s information listed, send the information in the following format:

• Graduates name and relationship to Watco Team Member
• Watco Team Member’s title and location
• The school graduate is attending and location of that school
• If the graduate is receiving a degree from a college, university or trade school list the graduate’s degree type

An example would be: Billy Doe: Son of John Doe, locomotive mechanic in Oklahoma City, OK, graduating from Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK., with a Bachelor of Science in Accounting.

Email the information to: tvan@watco.com, and add Dispatch-May Graduation in the subject line.
WALKING: A STEP TO A HEALTHIER LIFE

by Molly Henneke
Contributing Writer

Exercise is an essential component to healthy lifestyle. Unfortunately, today’s busy lifestyle often makes exercise and other healthy habits take a backseat. However, there are some small steps that you can take to improve your health.

Smart devices such as watches and phones now allow people to keep track of their steps throughout the day. This is a great way to keep track of your progress and to set fitness goals based off of the walking data. For example, you can increase your step count by taking the stairs or parking out further. However, as great as these devices are, sometimes the best motivator to increase exercise is actual human interaction.

Walking clubs are a great way to get exercise and meet new people. By joining a walking group you have actual human interaction and accountability when it comes to meeting fitness goals. Also, it makes a droll and solitude experience a little more exciting and fun. The American Heart Association’s website has some great tips and resources on how to start and plan a walking club. Walking clubs can be tailored to people’s fitness needs, location, work schedule, levels of fitness, and other factors. As well as individual goals, a walking club can make group goals. Club members could even have competitions amongst themselves and other walking clubs, a great idea for the different Watco locations!

It’s important to consult with a physician before starting on any new fitness regime. However, walking in general is fairly a low impact physical impact activity and is a good way to start moving.

Go Green - get those unused subscriptions cancelled

At one time, many of us have expressed an interest in a certain product only to end up receiving countless amounts of junk mail and catalogs. Take what you get at home and multiply that by at least 100 and you’ll see what Charlene Huskey, Watco’s corporate receptionist in Pittsburg, Kansas, gets to sort through on a monthly basis. The Kansas office isn’t the only one receiving massive amounts of catalogs that will go unread so you can imagine the amount the company sees as a whole.

Huskey said, “When I started working for Watco in March of 2004 we only had about 650 team members, now we have approximately 4,900. All the locations that are ordering items and supplies have the Pittsburg office on their cards so the catalogs often end up here. That adds up to quite a bit.”

Here are a few tips to avoid that avalanche of junk mail.

1. Be sure to read emails and websites thoroughly and look for options to "OPT OUT" if you don’t wish to receive mail from the business. This can be when you’re ordering or just requesting information on a product.

2. Take the time to send a cancellation notice to companies who are sending you materials you are no longer interested in. In the long run it will save you (or someone else), time having to sort through it and/or toss it. It will also help conserve our natural resources.

3. When ordering items on the phone, remember to let the representative taking the order know that you prefer not to receive any materials from their company other than emails regarding that particular order. This not only cuts back on the paper just mail but electronic garbage as well.