Crew Connect system helps track hours of service

By Tracie VanBecelaere
Managing Editor

What began as an effort to free up our Dispatching Team, has evolved into a new system that addresses hours of service reporting and will lead to future technological developments as well. In June of 2018, Watco updated the dispatching software with a new system that allowed for more flexibility in enhancing the features. One thing that was pointed out during the conversion was that the dispatchers spent a significant amount of time on the phone providing bulletins and verifying crew activity.

SVP of Operations Steve Coomes said, “We had the option of hiring additional dispatchers to handle the call volume or find a way to use the features in the new system to track that information and free up our dispatchers to better utilize their time.”

Most locations are already using a tablet or laptop to sign in, so it was just a matter of getting the devices to communicate and provide the needed information to the crews and dispatch.

“Once we started collecting that information, we were only a few steps away from having an hours of service (HOS) tracking system. One thing morphed into another, and the Crew Connect application was developed,” said Coomes.

“The HOS information is used to meet Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) regulations, and it’s mandated that records be kept for two years. Utilizing this system creates efficiencies, and cuts back on paper and the file cabinets needed to store massive volumes of paperwork. By collecting the information electronically, we can use the data for research and reporting purposes as well.”

Watco IT developers and programmers worked with several team members like Coomes and Brad Walker, director of safety, and the pilot railroad crews to build a working system. Crews from the South Kansas and Oklahoma (SKOL) Pittsburg, Kanawha River (KNWA), Pecos Valley Southern (PVS), Texas & New Mexico (TXN), and Lubbock & Western (LBWR) participated in the testing. Currently, across Watco, crews use handwritten HOS (Hours of Service) and Time and Delay sheets that report the hours and work the team did during that shift. This information is then faxed to administrative assistants or kept for record-keeping. That information is then put in spreadsheet format to report to the FRA and operations. This process is time-consuming and has caused delays and issues because of problems such as not being able to read the writing, incorrect math, or missing information.

To improve this process, the current system, Light Switch, that crews use to go on duty and print bulletins, has been integrated with Crew Connect. The team member will need to log into only one system to go on or off duty and manage their HOS. General managers and trainmasters will be able to view their roads as a whole, based on the dashboard. Managers can also see, per team member, where they stand against the maximum works hours of 276. As a team member approaches 276 hours, a green light in the system will turn to yellow at 200 hours, and it sends out a notification to managers. The light will then turn red at 250 hours, signifying they have limited hours left to work in the month.

LBWR, TXN, and PVS General Manager Todd Trammell said, “While the system is still in its infancy and we are still fine-tuning it, I love it. I’ve been asking for something like this since I’ve been a part of the short line industry because it is so beneficial to everyone who uses it. The system is more accurate and quicker than the paper method of recording hours. It also frees up the administrative assistants so they don’t have to spend their time tracking down team members and filling out sheets to comply with FRA rules.”

Team members now have access to view all their time cards on one screen to see what the month is reporting for HOS, consecutive days, and even break time like training. Watco Go Teamers benefit from the system because they can see their HOS on the same screen regardless of the railroads they have worked on because everything is calculated under their name by month. With standardizing the time and delay activities, teams now can report on activities. Examples are delays at interchange when we are held out of yards, which is currently managed by documenting the information in spreadsheets. By using Crew Connect, crews will be able to add an activity with a time frame and add remarks relating to the issues. Monthly reporting will then be available to provide documentation to counterparts and potentially improve traffic flow.

As the system is implemented on all the lines, Coomes sees several benefits in the future.

“The system is going to help us in the area of crew calling,” said Coomes. “We can identify crews that are available, who’s rested, and who’s available for immediate needs. It will simplify the entire process and make everything more efficient.”

Because the system was built and supported by Watco Team Members, there are unlimited opportunities to improve and grow the capabilities of Crew Connect. The team members who have utilized the system have already come up with a long wish list for future enhancements. One item will be to get Crew Connect to “talk” to the payroll system, Kronos, and remove the additional steps of clocking in and out. Adding a locomotive inspection sheet to report and feed to eMaint is another feature that has been requested.

In order to stay compliant, team members met with the FRA in Dallas to review the system and received positive remarks about the new software they had designed. From the meeting, they were able to create access to any FRA agent needing to review time cards and determine how they will access and search the system.

Rebekah Garner, enterprise application support specialist, said, “We want to thank all the crew members that have been working on the pilot with us. During this time, they are doing dual reporting through paperwork and the system. By using their feedback, we are able to put fixes and improvements into the system for the remaining roads that will be using the system. They have been a big factor in the success of the application.”
Watco railroads receive ASLRRA safety awards

by Tracie Van Becelaere
Managing Editor

The American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association (ASLRRA) recently announced the winners of the 2018 Jake Awards and Jake with Distinction Awards, which recognize regional and short line railroads’ safety efforts.

Of the honorees, 19 Watco short lines earned a Jake Award with Distinction, which recognizes reportable injury-free performance in 2018. Watco lines receiving the Jake with Distinction Award are: Alabama Warrior Railroad, Arkansas Southern Railroad, Austin Western Railroad, Autauga Northern Railroad, Baton Rouge Southern Railroad, Birmingham Terminal Railway, Bo- 
galusa Bay Railroad, Great Northwest Railroad, Louisiana Southern Railroad, Lubbock & Western Railway, Mission Mountain Railroad, Mississippi Southern Railroad, Pacific Sun Railroad, Palouse River and Coulee City Railroad, Pecos Valley Southern Railway, San Antonio Central Railroad, Stillwater Central Railroad, the Swan Ranch Railroad, and the Timber Rock Railroad.

To win a Jake Award, an ASLRRA member railroad must perform better than the Class II and III industry average for injury frequency rate, as reported by the Federal Railroad Administration during a calendar year.

Watco's Wisconsin & Southern Railroad and Watco's Switching Services both received the Jake Award this year.

Peterson speaks on industry panel at American Association of Railroad Superintendents annual meeting

By Jay Benedict
Digital Communication and Social Media Specialist

Watco’s EVP and Chief People Officer Rachel Peterson spoke as part of a panel at the American Association of Railroad Superintendents annual meeting in Norfolk, Virginia, last month.

Peterson was joined by Genesee and Wyoming’s Bill Fountain and Norfolk Southern’s Dan McKay on a panel that focused on how to attract and retain talent in a tight labor market within an industry that has an aging workforce.

This is a large area of interest in the industry, and they discussed recruiting/onboarding strategies, development, and evaluating other compensation and benefits.

Kaw River Railroad celebrates Summer Spike success

by Tracie Van Becelaere
Managing Editor

The Kaw River Railroad recently held a drawing to celebrate those who worked HFI and injury free throughout the first month of Summer Spike. Jareth Nichols walked away with the large cooler. Watco hats and Royals vouchers were also given away to team members.

In addition to celebrating the first month of Summer Spike, team members from the car cleaning crew and the Ingredion crew were treated to lunch to celebrate their safety anniversaries. The car cleaning crew celebrated their third year of injury-free service, and the team providing switching services to Ingredion celebrated going 14 years without an RPI.

Jacob Norman, Andrew Sullivan, and Michael Funk make up the Car Cleaning Team and Jacob Owens, Jonathan Morefield and Myles Black are the members of the Ingredion Team.

Kaw River Railroad Team Members present at the safety drawing are (standing left to right): Jareth Nichols, conductor, Austin Slinkard, conductor; Willie White, engineer; Sharon Sessoms, clerk; Justin Ray, trainmaster; Doug Fleming, conductor/engineer; Rick Carter, track foreman; Sean Jamerson, conductor/engineer; Reggie Holmes, conductor; Jeff Crowther, senior engineer; and Aaron Morris, conductor/engineer. Front row: Keith Schlottman, senior engineer.

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Industry leaders in the field of human resources spoke as part of a panel at July’s American Association of Railroad Superintendents meeting in Norfolk, VA. Genesee and Wyoming’s Bill Fountain, Watco’s EVP and Chief People Officer Rachael Peterson, and Norfolk Southern’s Dan McKay.
Two terminals celebrate July start-up

by Tracie VanBecelaere
Managing Editor

Earlier this month, two new Watco terminals began operations in Pennsylvania and New York. The Crafton, Pa., and Buffalo, N.Y., terminals both began operations on July 1. The terminals are part of the Norfolk Southern Railway Thoroughbred Bulk Terminal (TBT) network. Tiffany Poland is serving as the terminal manager at the Crafton terminal and is assisted by loaders Les Heasley and Bob Lopata.

The team is currently transloading two main commodities at the terminal, peroxide and soda ash. The peroxide comes in tank cars and is off-loaded to tank trailers. The soda ash comes in hopper cars and is transloaded by conveyors into hopper trailers. The facility boasts 82 car spots and can handle products such as dry bulk (plastics, grains, chemicals, flour, cement, fertilizer, etc.), liquids (chemicals, acids, oils, food grade, ethanol, hazmat and non-hazmat) steel, and break bulk (lumber, panel, crane mats).

The Buffalo terminal has the capacity to hold 100 railcars and handles dry bulk flour, industrial corn starch, liquid corn syrup, ferric chloride, crane mats, and liquid refrigerated CO2. Most of the products are brought in by rail and leave by truck. The liquid refrigerated CO2 arrives by truck and the driver fills the outbound railcars. There are four team members manning the terminal in the northern part of the state. Team members include Shawn MacWilliams, Terminal Manager, Anthony Nati, customer service representative, and loaders Tom Kaczynski and Chuck Hudson.

AVP of Operations John Snow said, “We’re proud to have these folks as Watco Team Members. Both of the managers, Shawn and Tiffany, have a vast amount of experience in the terminal industry and do a great job managing their facilities.”

Grand Elk Railroad hosts Officer on the Train event

by Tracie VanBecelaere
Managing Editor

Looking at things from a different vantage point can give you a new perspective on how things look. When State Troopers and local law enforcement officials participate in an Officer on the Train event, they get to see what the engineers and conductors see each day as they deliver their cars to their destinations.

On July 17, the Michigan Operation Lifesaver organization worked with the Grand Elk Railroad to give Troopers in the area an opportunity to see how the public interacts with the railroad, mainly focusing on rail-road crossings.

The locomotive ride began in Kalamazoo and made its way south through 96 crossings with Michigan State Trooper Josh Service on board with Grand Elk Engineer Mark Moorlag, Conductor Martin Mandujano, and Sam Crowl from Michigan Operation Lifesaver. The jurisdictions cooperating were Kalamazoo, Kalamazoo County, Portage, Schoolcraft, Three Rivers, Constantine, White Pigeon, and St. Joseph County. When going through the crossings three trespasser violations were observed in Kalamazoo and two vehicles sped through the flashing lights in Schoolcraft. One of the drivers was stopped and ticketed.

Crowl, Michigan Operation Lifesaver Coordinator, said, “We’re grateful to the General Manager of the Grand Elk Railroad, Chad Thimesch, and his team for their cooperation in the event.”

Members of the Grand Elk Railroad worked with Michigan Operation Lifesaver and Michigan State Troopers on an Officer on the Train event. Pictured (l-r): Nick Manson, trainee; Philip Moorlag, utility conductor; Mark Moorlag, engineer; Trooper Joel Service, Michigan State Police, Martin Mandujano, conductor; and Sam Crowl, State Coordinator - Michigan Operation Lifesaver.

Houston Texas Terminals celebrates six years injury free

The forty plus team members at Houston Texas Terminals not only handle tons of freight every day, they do it safely as well. The team recently hit their six-year injury-free anniversary, and celebrated with a catered luncheon at the facility. Members of the Watco executive team and operations management visited the team members to thank them for all they do and for their focus on safely serving the Customers.

Congratulations to the entire team on hitting the six-year milestone.
You can say that Danny Spangler and his team at Cahokia did a bang-up job in helping a Customer with a very urgent need during the Fourth of July holiday. J&M Displays puts on a fireworks display that runs three consecutive nights for the St. Louis Fair each year, but this year they ran into some trouble due to flooding occurring on the Mississippi River at that time.

In an average year, the company loads barges with the display materials and then a boat pulls the barges down to the area where the displays are set off. Material Sales is on the St. Louis side of the Mississippi River while the Cahokia Terminal rests on the Sauget, Illinois, side. Material Sales has worked with the team on several projects and called them for assistance when they needed help in making sure the fireworks display could still go on.

Danny Spangler, terminal manager, said, “Cahokia was the only dock in the area that could accommodate the loading and Material Sales suggested that we work together to pull this off. There were several city officials, fire departments, and first responders involved from both St. Louis and Sauget.”

If the Cahokia Terminal said no to the project, the only other option would’ve been to shut down one of the bridges to St. Louis from Illinois. With one bridge already out of service for construction work, that option would’ve caused major traffic issues, if it was even approved.

Material Sales provided their boat and barges, and Cahokia provided the docks. The companies were working on a very tight time frame, with only a week’s notice, and there were several Watco Team Members that played a part in making sure the event went off without a hitch.

Spangler said, “They started setting up the two barges two full days before the first display to get the tubes and racks and everything set up on the barge. On the three days they were shooting off the ordnance (explosives) they would arrive in the afternoon to load up the tubes. Security was on-site to guard the barges for a few hours until the sun went down.”

The Cahokia Terminal was used to load the barges that carried the ordnance used for the St. Louis Fair fireworks display (above) along the Mississippi River.

The management from the fair asked if they could view the display from the Cahokia docks. Because of safety issues Spangler and his team came up with a better solution, they cleared an area on the riverbank and put down rock. Tents and chairs were set up, and grills were brought in to make the event more enjoyable to those wanting to watch the fireworks.

Cameron Murray, St. Louis Fair Board chairman, said, “I just wanted to say thanks for being so helpful for the fireworks over the holiday. Fair management is extremely grateful for the assistance you provided and the work you did to create a comfortable spot for us camp out. We really appreciate the relationship and would like to ensure we maintain it going forward, as the J&M team found loading in from your site more favorable that loading on the MO side. We think there could be a good opportunity to work with Watco again next year.”

As a thank you, the Terminal Team received cups, VIP passes, and parking passes to the fair.

Dave Riggs, commercial manager, said, “Danny and the team did an excellent job in facilitating this project even as they continued to recover from the flood impact at the terminal.”

“It is wonderful to work for a company that allows us the freedom to think outside the box to get a job done. We greatly appreciate the way our Risk Management Team worked with us in a flexible and creative manner to protect our company’s interest while still allowing us to provide an important service to the local community,” added Riggs.

Although the assistance that the Cahokia Team provided produced more immediate results, another Watco location moves products for the fireworks industry year-round. The South Kansas and Oklahoma Railroad (SKOL) in Pittsburg, Kansas, delivers plastic resin to Jake’s Fireworks, a leading wholesale distributor of fireworks with more than 400 retail stores across the United States.

For several years, plastics were delivered to a site near the distribution center and then trucked over to the location. Five years ago, Jake’s invested in a rail spur to bring the product right to their back door. The material is used to make launch tubes, approximately four million a year, that will go into the artillery kits sold by the company.

Scott Moutz, production manager, said, “The plastic goes into making the safest launch tubes on the market. We get about two cars of the resin each month in order to fill the need for the kits.”

Tom Addison, SKOL trainmaster, said, “We normally keep two cars in the industrial park and the team is on standby to deliver cars to the Customer as needed. They may not be our largest Customer, but each Customer is important, and it’s important to our team to make sure they get the cars they need and help promote the growth of business in Pittsburg. They’re pretty steady, but they do have a couple of seasons when we move more cars in and out.”

Many people only think of the Fourth of July when they think of fireworks, but it’s a year-round business. There are a few locations where New Year’s Eve is the biggest fireworks season of the year. Louisiana is a prime example of this. Sales begin at noon on December 15 and continue through midnight on January 1.

Moutz said, “The business from the Southern states’ New Year’s sales makes up approximately one-fourth of all their sales.”
#WatcoMoves - Wooden Playsets

By Jay Benedict  
Digital Communication and Social Media Specialist

**Commodity:** Wooden Playsets  
**Customer:** Backyard Discovery  
**Location:** Pittsburg, Kansas Warehouses

If you pass close enough by Watco’s Pittsburg, Kan., Terminal warehouses, there’s a good chance you’ll catch a whiff of what’s being stored inside. Fortunately, it’s the smell of fresh cedar. That’s because the team is transporting and storing cedar swing sets, slides, and other playset components for Backyard Discovery.

Backyard Discovery is the largest manufacturer of wooden swing sets in the U.S., and operates its corporate offices out of Pittsburg, Kan. Products can be ordered directly from them, and they also partner with major retailers like Sam’s Club, Amazon, Lowe’s and The Home Depot to provide thousands of pieces of equipment to homes across the country each year. Storing and distributing all that inventory is a challenge, and that made a partnership with hometown neighbor, Watco, a natural choice.

Watco’s Pittsburg Terminal consists of two separate warehouses. One is located behind the corporate headquarters building near downtown Pittsburg, and the other is on the north side of town, near Pittsburg’s Northeast Industrial Park. Together, they provide up to 85,000 square feet of space.

That space and more is needed. Backyard Discovery has several of their own warehouses in the area. Throughout each year, the company receives nearly 3,000 containers of the playsets at the Port of Long Beach in California. The playsets are moved by rail to Kansas City, where they’re loaded onto trucks and transported to the local warehouses for storage before distribution.

The Pittsburg Team unloads and stores the playsets that come to them, but also provides outbound trucking service from all warehouse locations when orders need to be filled. The Pittsburg truckers deliver nearly anywhere within about a four-hour driving radius, but hope to expand that in the future.

“There are a lot of moving parts to this operation,” said Commercial Manager Chris Goodwin. “Sometimes, we’ll load their trucks for them, but we provide a lot of the trucking services. Someday, we’d like to be able to provide that to places like Dallas or Houston as well.”

Backyard Discovery also uses the industrial park warehouse as a workspace sometimes. They assemble some of the products there, and treat some of the wood as well. This provides a little more flexibility for the Customer.

The photos reveal the amount of space the playset components from Backyard Discovery take up at the Pittsburg, Kansas, warehouse.

dfter next time you’re in the market for a backyard playset and you find yourself looking at a Backyard Discovery product, it may have been transported by the Watco Team.

“Backyard Discovery has been a longtime Customer for the Pittsburg warehouse. The relationship started a long time ago, and (Terminal Manager) Bart (Maransani) has done a great job keeping the relationship going for the past couple years,” said Goodwin. “We’re happy to provide these services to another hometown business and to handle a product that keeps families across the country entertained.

The MDOT Office of Rail oversees approximately 3,600 miles of track which are operated by 26 railroads, with two of them being Watco short lines. The rail system in Michigan carries about 21% of all the state's freight tonnage and 23% of the state's commodities by value.

"The Ann Arbor Railroad is known for the number of automobiles that we handle," said John Vance, Ann Arbor Railroad general manager. "We would appreciate the opportunity to serve both Ohio and Michigan by providing an economical mode of transportation to move their goods through the Toledo gateway.

ANN ARBOR RAILROAD HOSTS MDOT AND ORDC

The Ann Arbor Railroad recently had the pleasure of hosting two very important transportation groups; the Michigan DOT Office of Rail and the Ohio Railroad Development Commission. The entities met in Ann Arbor, Michigan, to discuss using the Toledo gateway to support Michigan shippers.

Toledo would be a key gateway into Michigan as it has connections with three Class I railroads; Norfolk Southern, CSX, and Canadian National. Freight passing through Toledo could be routed up to Detroit, Ann Arbor, and even over to Watco’s Grand Elk Railroad in the western part of Michigan.

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Why Watco - Living life to the fullest in Louisiana

By Jay Benedict
Digital Communication and Social Media Specialist

If you follow Watco’s social media, or read last month’s issue of The Dispatch, you’ve probably seen some of Bobby Baker Jr.’s hard work. Bobby joined the Louisiana Southern Railroad (LAS) as a conductor/engineer around 1-1/2 years ago. Since then, he became the leader of the Team Safety & Improvement Committee (TS&IC), and spearheaded several improvement efforts around the Minden, Louisiana, depot.

“I’m passionate about everything I do, and so I sat down and thought about ways to make this railroad safer at my locations, and hopefully make an impact on the company itself,” Bobby said. “It’s a drive of mine to make sure that we’re being the best and the safest railroad that we can be. We want to go home the same way that we came. That’s been my passion, to make sure that I’m doing the absolute best that I can as a team member, and as my brother’s keeper.”

The projects that Bobby and his team have already tackled include a cooling and hydration station at the depot. The summer heat and humidity in Louisiana are sweltering, and they wanted to provide shade, drinks, and fans help keep the team cool. They also added a second covered area with picnic tables nearby recently. In the past, the TS&IC group has cleaned debris from the yard and installed cones and painted rails to mark close clearance areas. Their next big project involves improving the lighting at the south end of the yard.

“I think that’s huge because we can be shoving or working jobs down there at any given time. We want to make sure we can see all that the switches are lined, if there’s a problem with the rail, or anything. We want to be able to catch it before it becomes traumatic,” Bobby said. “We see our coworkers as much as we see our family, so in a sense, they become family also, and we look out for each other. Working on projects together and doing the best that we can do also builds morale, which makes for a strong team and a better railroad.”

Outside of their projects, Bobby’s day-to-day usually includes providing rail service to Princeton, La., where Calumet Industries has a large facility. Aside from delivering railcars, they also have four tracks in the plant that they switch for the Customer, which requires plenty of communication to make sure everything is in the right place. The crew also serves the BlendStar fuel terminal in Bossier City, La. They mainly haul crude oil and lube oil.

“One of the things that I’ve noticed in my time here is the importance to communicate with the Customer. I talk with the foreman every day before we start work. We have a job briefing so we know what we’re doing and we know what the Customer wants us to do,” Bobby said. “I think that builds a lasting relationship and trust. That face-to-face meeting goes a long way. One of the things that I enjoy about being at Watco is the fact that you can have that one-on-one relationship with them.”

Bobby was already a railroader before joining Watco, but that personal relationship wasn’t something he could always cultivate. He spent 13 years, operating in the same area, with Kansas City Southern. He lives in Shreveport, La., but is originally from Minden and still has plenty of family there. So, coming to work is like coming home for Bobby.

“The unique thing about this job is that I’m from Minden. That’s my home. My mother, father, sister, brother, and grandmother still live there, so it gives me the opportunity to go see them every day,” Bobby said. “Working there also gives me the opportunity to make a difference in my own community where I grew up. Being a part of Watco, and Operation Lifesaver as well. The goal for the upcoming school year is to go around and talk at local schools about the railroad. It gave me the ability to spread the word to people about railroad safety.”

He doesn’t hold any ill feelings toward anyone, but says he didn’t get the chance to fully tap into his potential in the Class I environment. He chalks it up to being part of an operation that large, where you don’t get a chance have input on everything, which can sometimes you feel insignificant. Bobby says the family aspect of Watco is one of his favorite part of the job.

“I got that confirmation when I went to TS&IC training and listened to the owner share his story about family and how important family was. To see that, 30-some years later, still stick, and still be the core of what we do is probably the most rewarding part of being a member of this team,” Bobby said.

Bobby also recently became a Watco “Go Teamer.” Go Teamers are part of our railroad team who volunteer to spend time at other Watco short lines that need assistance with their operations. He volunteered because he wanted to experience more of the Watco network and build relationships with team members from across the company. Bobby told LAS General Manager Blake Smith that he’d like to help out next time something came available, and before long, he was headed to the Kansas & Oklahoma Railroad (KO) in Scott City, Kansas.

He didn’t know where that was, but family enough, Bobby has some roots in Kansas. He was born in Newton. The KO Team needed help during the harvest season. Bobby spent the first couple weeks familiarizing himself with their operations, and he was a full-on member of the team for the rest of the month.

“One of my favorite things about it was seeing a different part of the railroad, seeing how another part of the Watco operations work and how they go about their daily tasks. It was learning experience and I got to build a relationship with those guys who I never, in my lifetime, would have gotten the chance to know. We had a great time and it was really rewarding to me.”

Off the tracks, Bobby has been a freelance sports videographer and photographer for more than 20 years. He travels around the area getting shots of football, basketball, and other sporting events for ESPN, FOX, and NBC and other sports networks. He also golfs and enjoys smoking cigars. He was even featured in Cigar Aficionado magazine recently and is a member of a cigar group in Shreveport.

“That’s another one of my passions. Watching an event live and then coming home and seeing my work in TV is something that I really enjoy,” Bobby said. “Being featured in that article was a big deal for me too. If I’m not shooting football, basketball, or any sporting event, I’m either playing golfing, smoking cigars, or spending time with my family.”

As you can see, Bobby’s passionate about anything he does in life. He shared a little about his outlook and what he plans for the future.

“Hard work pays off and if you’re doing it for the good of anybody, whether it’s Watco, cigars, or anything, if you’re doing good for people and your heart is in the right place, good things come. I firmly believe that. My career goals for this company are off the charts. The sky’s the limit, and I’m determined to be a better person and be better for this company. Whatever I need to do to make this company better, that’s what I’m willing to do, and you guys make it easy,” said Bobby.
Congratulations to the following Team Members celebrating anniversaries this month

1 YEAR: Jack Abbott, Joseph Bellomy, Daniel Brown, Anthony Caban, Mathew Casey, Thomas Causey, Nicholas Clayton, Jason Clute, Nicholas Dabbelt, Thomas Damus, Calvin Davis, Richard Davis, Joshua Dulak, Ryan Edge, Tariq Elias, Jeremy Espy, Heather Finney, Harvey Fischer, Jesse Fish, Jacob Fishnick, Rhonda Francis, Ike Gourdine, Lateef Griffin, Nicholas Guinn, Emily Halder, William Haynes, Camron Henderson, Anthony Hite, Latt Hyde, Jeremiah Jackson, Jaclyn Jenkins, Michael Johnson, Jamal Josiah, James Kane, Chad Livingston, Melissa Lodahl, Travis Louden, Christopher Marklin, Patrick Meagher, Jason Murray, Matthew Nicol, Brian O'Brien, Jalane Olds, Vianca Pacheco, Penelope Pasillas, Kier Patrick, Matthew Peck, Carson Pickard, Jared Powell, Allison Power, Alyssa Price, Ross Respondek, Sabin Reynolds, Aaron Rose, Kevin Sanchez, Mary Sikorski, Michael Terry, Cameron Tillott, Nicholas Vertene, Sean Wananamaker, Carla Watkins, Adam Weir, James West, Cedric Williams, Andy Yague Planes


6 YEARS: Enoch Awejok, Christopher Daddy, Adam Hernandez-Flores, Jared Humphrey, Alberto Rodriguez, Brett Wooldard

7 YEARS: Corey Allen, Nicholas Bennett, Kevin Cook, Cindy David, Robbie Haynes, James Henry, Donald Janda, Kelly Kennedy, Chase Manley, Carrie Middlebrook, Jason Overton, Wayne Roig, Michael Wastchak, Dustin Wible, Mikayla Widick

8 YEARS: Tyler Adkison, Jeff Ecret, Erik Finney, Keith Johnson, Carrie Langston, Joseph Lee, Paul Leonards, Christopher McCready, Carl Petersen, Roman Salazar, Britt Sonnier, Adam Witternauer

9 YEARS: Ryan Dziedzic, Jhirmark Hodge, David Humble, William Jones, Nathan Keitzer, Alvin Maney, Jason Miron, Seth Peterson, Carl Reese, Clifford Rose, Willie Ross, Derrick Sepulvado, Terry Smallwood, John Staples, David Tackett, Nathan Tobey, Dyllan Vincent, Damien Williams

10 YEARS: Luis Ferrer, Christopher Hayes, John Williams

11 YEARS: Angelo Barrera, Raymond Barrera, Justin Dempsey, Raymond Howard, Regan Karl, James Kratky, Kurtis Lindsay, George Mincey, Dennis Sawyer

12 YEARS: Phyllis Angermeier, Marvin Ayers, Andrew Brown, William Buchinski, Ronald Jackson, Kyle Mansfield, Dwight Sayles, Joshua Seefeld, Robert Sua, Nathan Tuzicka, Ulyssees Williams

13 YEARS: William Beighey, Robin Conery, Maurice Davis, Jimmy Dodd, Donnie Gunter, John Harrell, Charles Henderson, Juan Lozano, Jeff Mayfield, Kyle Moody, Alejandro Perez, Matthew Sodergren, Elizabeth Stevens, Alicia Stimpson, Martin Wellmaker

14 YEARS: Adam Hanson, Tim Herman, Leo Hogan, John Korando, Douglas Linscomb, Hector Reyes

15 YEARS: Thomas Erbe, Kyle Finn, Sofronia Howard, Ted Kadau, Steven Kincaid, Marlene Olson, Jimmy Patterson, Delta Wood

16 YEARS: Jason Hislop, Roder Mercado

17 YEARS: John Binkley, David Gromer, Phillip Hedge, Christopher Moore, Albert Olvera, Tricia Underwood

18 YEARS: Mark Bray, Carl Jones, Eugenio Ovalle

19 YEARS: Charles Stanley

20 YEARS: James Brooks, Kari Holloway, Allison Reneau

21 YEARS: Micheal Crowden

22 YEARS: Brian Collier, Timothy Wiseman

23 YEARS: Doug Kerley, Kevin Krueger

24 YEARS: Joseph Brown, Gregory Duffie, Susan Lewis, Charlie Sigley

26 YEARS: Anthony Guy

27 YEARS: James Boyle, Kenneth Dozier

28 YEARS: Maurice McGinnis

29 YEARS: Vincent Felton

30 YEARS: Jose Hernandez, John Lyon, Kevin Sepulvado

31 YEARS: Rodger Isbell, Darryl Marshall

32 YEARS: David Kline, Thomas Master

33 YEARS: Sam Ricci, Gus Sepulvado

35 YEARS: Michael Remedies

36 YEARS: Ellen Demaree

38 YEARS: Gerald Toopes

41 YEARS: Randy Glaze, Lawrence Hamilton

44 YEARS: Judith Hardesty, Harold Winkles

45 YEARS: Willie McMunnels

49 YEARS: Michael Thompson

**BIRTHS**

Olivia Rose Griffin

Kevin and Meredith Griffin are proud to announce the birth of a daughter, Olivia Rose Griffin.

Olivia was born on July 3, 2019. She weighed 9 lbs., 10 oz. and was 20 inches long.

Olivia was welcomed home by siblings Marilaina, 18, Aiden, 5

Kevin is the operations manager at the Osceola, Arkansas, terminal.
CONGRESSMAN VISITS BATON ROUGE SOUTHERN RAILROAD

By Tracie VanBecelaere
Managing Editor

Congressman Garret Graves paid a visit to the Baton Rouge Southern Railroad (BRS) on July 29. The Congressman represents the 6th District which includes two Watco short lines, the BRS and the Geaux Geaux Railroad. Congressman Graves met the team, toured the yard, and was taken on a ride in a locomotive down the mainline about a mile and a half. Graves recently signed on as a cosponsor of the Brace Act, which would permanently extend the tax credit for railroad track maintenance.

The BRS partners with Kansas City Southern to provide vital manufacturing components to the nearby industries north of Baton Rouge, LA, and boasts one of the best safety records in the short line industry.

KAW Mechanical Team bumps up revenue

By Tracie VanBecelaere
Managing Editor

In January, Dustin Rhodes took over the position of Kaw River Railroad mechanical foreman. Since that time, Rhodes and his team member, Curtis Marks, not only went from a three-man crew to a two-man operation, they also were able to increase the revenue for their operations by an incredible one thousand percent by the end of June.

When asked how they were able to accomplish such an amazing turnaround in just a few short months, Rhodes said it was due to the will to want to make changes.

“We were more dedicated,” said Rhodes. “We didn’t sit around waiting for work to show up, we went looking for it. If you just walk the yard you can find a number of repairs that need to be made. We don’t have to wait for someone to tell us that there’s an issue with a car, some things you can tell by looking. It’s much more beneficial to catch the repairs that need to be made while the car is in the yard instead of something happening to it while it’s rolling down the tracks. It can save the Customer transit time and money if defects are caught and fixed at the right time.”

Garrett Bolyard, vice president of operations said, “Dustin was promoted in January and has done a great job. He’s very skilled and talented, and he’s Watco. He thinks about his team members and the Customers, doing the right thing for both. Dustin and Curtis have really taken ownership of their positions and done a great job of creating value for their railroad.”