Outstanding Carman Apprentice students honored

Congratulations to team members Dallas Merritt and Taylor Carter for their outstanding scholastic performance in 2014 in the Locomotive and Carman Apprentice Program. Both Dallas and Taylor are taking courses in the carman program - Dallas works for the South Kansas and Oklahoma Railroad and Taylor works for the Eastern Idaho Railroad. There are approximately 40 Team Members enrolled in the carman program and 12 in the locomotive program.

The apprenticeship programs were designed to assist in promoting and maintaining highly skilled railroad work forces. The curriculum educates Team Members on the proper procedures for the maintenance and repair of railcars and locomotives. Throughout the duration of the program, team members complete training courses via correspondence as well as engaging in on the job training instruction.

Tracy Wright, director of locomotive support, said, “Providing the additional instruction not only helps us serve our Customers better but it also helps us better understand and meet FRA requirements, which in turn allows us to work safer.”

The programs are offered through the Railroad Education Bureau (REB). Supervisors are sent out. This goes on for an 18 month period and courses can range from $150 to $200 per month. The cost is about the same for the carman program but their program is a three-year program and during the first two years they complete one to two lessons each month and then three lessons per month the final year. New carmen without prior experience are required to take the course.

“It’s an investment for both the railroads and the Team Members, but an investment that is well worth it,” said Wright. "Not only are our Team Members more knowledgeable upon completion of the course but they are more engaged and aware of everything that goes on around them because of the additional training."

Watco Founder Dick Webb got his start in the rail industry in a Carman Apprenticeship Program with the Kansas City Southern Railway.

Anyone wishing to participate in the programs should contact their supervisor. Supervisors with questions should contact Stallings at jstallings@watco-companies.com for Mechanical Locomotive questions or Wright at twright@watco-companies.com with Mechanical Car questions.

Watco’s safety record continues to bring great opportunities to the table and the Switching Team recently began switching railcars in McIntosh, Alabama, thanks in part to their commitment to safety. The McIntosh Switching Team brings in empty tank cars to Customer Olin Corporation and places them throughout the plant as needed. The tanks are then inspected and loaded by the Olin employees. After the cars are loaded and weighed, Watco places the cars in the proper shipment order and builds the outbound for Olin. Norfolk Southern is then contacted for interchange of chain of custody forms.

To help keep Olin’s plant running smoothly, the Watco Switching Team switches out the plant 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The team is made up of Manager Artis McGinnis and Team Leaders James Avant, Daniel Turberville, Thearan Page, and Wes Rutherford.

Performing engineering and switching duties at the plant are: Jarus Powell, Antonio Sanders, Edward May, Dennis Taylor, Jeremy Kyles, and Nicholas Murphy.

Artis McGinnis, switching manager, said, "We would like to thank Watco team members Tony Clark, Brandon Eddleman, Ronnie Perkins, and David Hambrick for their assistance and countless hours provided in getting things up and running. McIntosh is located approximately 44 miles north of Mobile, Alabama, and the small town’s claim to fame is for being the location where ex-vice president Aaron Burr was arrested and then taken to Richmond, Virginia, where he was tried for treason and acquitted.

Left to right: Wesley Rutherford, Jarus Powell, Dennis Taylor, Nicholas Murphy and Edward May. Not in photo are Artis McGinnis, Jeremy Kyles, James Avant, Daniel Turberville, Antonio Sanders, and Thearan Page.

MCINTOSH SWITCHING TEAM BEGINS OPERATIONS IN ALABAMA
Austin Western Railroad loses beloved Team Member

by George Yanas, Jr.
Austin Western Railroad Trainmaster/DSLE

The Austin Western Railroad and Watco has lost a truly loved Team Member, who was more like family. Barbara Moore, or as to all of us was known as “MA” passed away on January 23, 2015. She was and will always be the heart and soul of the Austin Western Railroad and everyone that had the blessing of knowing her.

Every team member loved and admired her in their own way. If there is one thing that everyone could agree on, hands down it’ll be the affect she had on everyone who knew her. We all know that she lived for her family and the people she worked with every day.

There wasn’t one day that went by when she was unable to put a smile on your face. All you had to do was walk into the building and immediately her dedication and presence was highly noticeable. The positive vibe she gave off gleamed off her and could light up a room which always made for a positive, vibrant atmosphere.

Although she has passed on to a better place and is now pain free it’ll still always be different. I personally admire her for her strength and hope that if we’re ever put in the same situation, may we all be as strong as she was. Even in one of our last conversations prior to this she was still joking and giving me a piece of her mind. Her words to me were when the time came she was ready. My response to her was “MA, I don’t want to talk about it because I’m just not ready to hear this.”

And just like clockwork in the classic “MA” tone of voice she says to me, “GEORGE stop being a baby… it’s something that just happens in life that no one can explain or answer for.”

So as the conversation went on she wanted me to keep everyone informed that she was going to be just fine no matter what happened. And her exact words to me were to tell the guys she wanted everyone to continue to do what they needed to do to quote… “Get It Done.”

Of course, at a time like this it sounds way easier said than done. One thing for certain is that it’ll never be the same without her. So as a FAMILY and as a TEAM we must strive to stay strong and safe in our lives and our duties cause that’s what she wanted me to pass on.

“MA” was never the type of person to give up which showed till her passing so neither should we. Her presence will always be felt and she will always be loved by all of us still here today. She will always live on through all of us nor will she ever be forgotten.

WE LOVE YOU “MA”…..

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Graduation Announcements

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

Watco would like to acknowledge the 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 graduates degree type

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

Send your graduation information to: Tracie VanBecelaere, Watco Companies 315 W. 3rd Street, Pittsburg, KS 66762

or email them to: tvan@watcocompanies.com and add Dispatch-May Graduation in the subject line.

If you had someone graduate in December and would like to have them listed please send their information and it will be added to the list.

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Oklahoma Terminal Team pays tribute to deceased Team Member

Team Members at Oklahoma City’s WTPS Terminal combined their efforts to write this touching tribute to Theophus (Theo) Williams, who passed away on February 9, 2015.

Theo Williams was a man who dedicated himself to his job and to his family. He was always the first to step up and offer to help in any way he could. Theo was the first to volunteer for the dirtiest of jobs, never once complaining. In the 14 months that Theo worked at Watco Terminal and Port Services in Oklahoma City, he touched the hearts of everyone who knew him, he became family.

Theo never stayed down, he refused to give up or give in, his most memorable statement in times of difficulty was “We got this boss”. Theo was a fierce defender of those who were placed under his control. He had a way of looking out for others. While Theo would be the first to offer someone help, he maintained a sense of independence and often performed work himself before he would ask for help.

If Theo did happen to make a mistake he would never try to shift blame or offer excuses. He took responsibility for all he did. In the end, Theo would leave a person smiling because that was Theo and you could not stay mad at him.

Theo was a diamond in the rough yet shined brilliantly when he was doing what he loved. Theo said many times “Watco for life baby” and you knew when he said that, he meant it.

Theo is gone but will never be forgotten by those that met him. His contagious smile, his way of diffusing difficult times by his wit and humor and his stand-out personality were infectious. He made those around him want to work harder, to succeed, and to be happy while doing it.

That was the essence of Theo Williams. He stood out at any function he participated in. He would make a simple statement or remark and you would shake your head in disbelief or he would make tears roll down your face with the humor he shared. There will never be another Theo Williams; he was one of a kind and his spirit and amicable nature will be missed by all.

Theo, it is time for you to rest. We got this!

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Barbara “MA” Moore

Theophus Williams
Congratulations go out to the Birmingham Terminal Railway Locomotive Team. As of February 1st, they have gone three years injury-free. This is the only department that has been injury free since start up in February 2012. A cook-out was held to celebrate this team’s great accomplishment. Bill Goldsberry, director of operations for the East Region, and Jay Welch, chief mechanical officer for the East Region also attended the cook-out to congratulate the team.

Team members making this happen were: Jacorey Murray, Andre Williams, George Freeman, John Gaither, John Herron, Howard Green, Bobby Garmon, Daniel Caine, Christopher Hammond, Timothy Boyd, Brandon Williams, John Gaither Jr., Joseph Freeman, John Castleberry, Eric Caine, Charles McCarty, Kenneth Olson, and Marty McClendon.

The team at the GBW Coffeyville mechanical shop in Kansas isn’t afraid to take on a challenge and when they began work on two Schnabel cars for Transportation Technology Services (TTS) it looked like it could be just that. The two cars were on Watco’s South Kansas and Oklahoma line and due to their age and the condition of the cars they could not be interchanged. TTS contacted the Coffeyville Shop and asked if they could complete the needed repairs on the cars.

Jake Renfro, plant manager, said, “Because neither the car owner nor the shop had ever worked one of these cars before it was a challenge to say the least. The team worked on the car for five months and put over 900 man hours into the car. Kyle Mansfield, who is the shop supervisor, oversaw the teardown and rebuild of the car. He worked closely with TTS project Manager Chris Payne throughout the five months and did a fantastic job with this project.”

The car separates 75 feet to distribute the weight of the load and is designed to transport large boilers and transformers. When loaded, it can only move 15 mph and requires a crew to travel with the car in a caboose.

Renfro said, “By following the Customer First Foundation Principles we were not only able to successfully complete the car, but more importantly, we were able to build a relationship with TTS that will allow us to work together into the future.”

Team members involved in getting the Schnabel cars back on the rails again include: In order from left to right: Terry Parson, John Hall, Mike Misegases, lead man, Tim Chew, Mike Chew, Dustin Wilson, Josh Schlater, Steve Yates, Jimmie Overall, and Kyle Mansfield, Supervisor.

Team members at the GBW shop in Coffeyville, Kansas, had the opportunity to work on one of the few Schnabel cars that exist in the country. The cars are made to transport large loads such as boilers and transformers.

Although there is plenty of beautiful scenery to look at while running trains along the track in North Carolina, team members at Blue Ridge Southern Railroad (BLU) are always on the lookout for anything that isn’t right.

Engineer Brent Reed credited his conductor, Ethan Green for catching a switch that wasn’t working right.

Reed said, “Today my conductor Ethan Green prevented a possible derailment by spotting a gapped switch point. By being alert and vigilant he was able to quickly report the gapped point to me and I looked at it. When he went to throw the switch for us to go in the track he noticed the points didn’t fit properly because of a gap.”

Once the issue was identified, the team reported the defect to Brock Parham, track supervisor, who promptly left his duties to repair the switch and there was no delay getting the Customer their cars.

Darl Farris, BLU general manager, said, “This is one of the many examples of how the different crafts at Blue Ridge Southern work safely together while providing excellent service to our Customers.”

Darl Farris, BLU general manager, said, “This is one of the many examples of how the different crafts at Blue Ridge Southern work safely together while providing excellent service to our Customers.”
Young students just imagine a real city

by Laura Patriquin
Communications Intern

Just imagine a town created, inhabited, and economically driven entirely by youngsters. The town of Just Imagine, Kansas, is just that. At Lakeside Elementary, fourth grade students created a community they ran themselves, working jobs and spending their paychecks at other businesses during their time off.

The town, designed to help students learn about the state of Kansas and its commerce, featured many Kansas-based businesses, including Watco Companies. To support the endeavor, Watco donated shirts and hats for the Watco workers to wear and then provided funds for the kids to purchase various merchandise to be sold at the model store. Students, with the self-created mission statement of “Watco will provide train related items to the public at an affordable price,” sold their products to other Just-Imaginians, making $5 for preparing their business and an additional $5 for each 30-minute shift worked.

Students who worked at the model store later wrote to the real-life Watco Companies, expressing the impact Watco’s participation had in their town.

Brandon Sipes, whose mother is a former team member at Watco, wrote, “It was the best day ever. Just Imagine, KS was fun, we made signs, we made money and we couldn’t do it without you.”

Ben Shawn, another student, got an unexpected lesson in business, noting that, “Surprisingly, our products that cost the most were actually our best sellers.”

Students worked in a variety of fields, including eateries, banks, law enforcement, politics, and even a Lego company. While aided by adults, the town was regulated and operated by the students.

The program was originally based on one known as Imagine City, which began in the mid-1990’s. After a hiatus in the last few years due to curriculum changes, the program was reignited with a $500 grant from Pittsburg Community Schools Foundation and made possible by the donations of local business like Watco.

With continued support, the students hope that the program will be available for students in years to come.

Jorge, a Just Imagine Watco worker, appealed to Watco to continue to participate in the event in the future, saying, “I hope you can donate next year so the fourth graders can do this… If you do donate next year I would really appreciate it.”

Young students just imagine a real city

Watco Companies Just Imagine City Team Members were (l-r): Ben Shawn, Brandon Sipes, Damian Ebbs, and Cory Clark.

WSOR Team prepares for bridge improvements

Team members at the Wisconsin & Southern Railroad (WSOR) spent some time out in the snow in late January in preparation for rail change on the WSOR Bridge A-532 over the Rock River in Janesville, Wisconsin. The bridge crew was able to change 23 rail lengths and 28 sets of joint bars (without any incidents) over three working days on the Fox Lake Sub in preparation for an upcoming welded rail project. The bridge will also receive a new deck and double walkways in 2015.

WSOR Team Members making up the bridge crew are (l-r): Richard Knilans, David Muth, Jeff Greenwood, Chad Suiter, John Scheehle, Jeff Schroeder, Ken Tober, and Gary Cooley.

Wisconsin & Southern Railroad’s Bridge A-532 recently received upgrades. The bridge is 77’ tall and 464’ long.

The WTPS Glendale, Arizona, Team recently renewed their forklift certification per safety regulations. Back row: Jeff Baum, Joe Sandoval, Rob Sua, Tenos Barajas, Adelita Barajas. Bottom row Esteban Lechuga, Robert Martinez, Ivan Ferrin and Dave Echols.
Congratulations to the following team members celebrating their anniversaries!

**1 Year:** Brandon Ahmann, Jared Baier, Patrick Bowers, Kevin Boyd, Desmond Cartwright, Cory Case, Levi Clouse, Rasheda Combs, Dillon Erickson, Adam Fjelstad, Christian Gomez, Betty Greer, Joshua Hernandez, Michele Hook, Phylaris Hopkins, Justin Hulsey, Philip Jackson, Raymon Kammer, E’an La Salle, Farron Marion, Brindi McGinnis, Zachary Mehus, Andre Moore, James Moore, Brett O’Connell, Erin O’Connor, Jared Oliver, Angel Peyman, Kyle Poss, Bryan Rank, Jose Rivera, Janie Robles, Jared Rowsale, Jason Selzler, Brandon Shaver, Ronald Sherman, Brittany Siegrist, Rashad Sowell, Jarrod Steadham, Jeffrey Szilagyi, Jennifer Tager, Kevin Vahey, Jared Vandal, Martin Young

**2 Years:** Chance Adair, Taylor Albert, Scott Beede, Bryant Boatman, Jacob Bumgarner, Richard Carter, Ryan Getsinger, Tyler Haycook, Michael Hayden, Bryan Payne, Colin Pinson, Mary Reardon, Jeffery Robertson, Javier Santana, Cory Trowe, John Vance

**3 Years:** Anwar Aiken, Edward Appleby, Jacob Bagby, Andrew Boe, Jesse Crouse, Lawrence DesRoches, Kevin Fetzer, Chris Gamblin, Tim Haas, Tammie Hambek, Joe James, Dennis Jensen, Brent Killian, Shane Kunnanz, Jeremy Madsen, Timothy McLachlan, Noelyn Meckle, David Ontiveros, Brad Payne, Christopher Roth, Bradley Seideman, Donald Smith, Wesley Smith, Delores Snead, Duane Stephenson, Micheal Treace, Jeffery White

**4 Years:** Cassie Bicknell, Brock Bjelland, Jamie Bleskachek, Taylor Carter, Evaristo Corona, Lori Cox, Richard Grant, Norman Jones, Daniel Paul, Nickolas Saunders, Jeremy Shepard, Franklin Waun, Scott Wolff, Kathleen Woods, Malcolm Young

**5 Years:** James Blevins, Dustin Coester, James Daly, Brett Golz, Kyle Hitesdorf, Anthony Jones, Jesse Kolosik, Vicki Langford, Andrew McBride, Louis Pena, Dean Schexnayder, Jason Stout, Chadrick Suiter, Cesar Valentín, John Woods

**6 Years:** Jason Atteberry, Gerald Kerns, Timothy Largent, Gerardo Martinez, Bernardino Osorio Vargas, John Rood, Dan Smith, Cecil Taylor

**7 Years:** Sean Corr, Gwen Foster, Robert Gable, Jennifer Johnson, James Maddux, Brett Norris, Judson Rogers, Eva Rokezewski

**8 Years:** Bruce Brewer, Lyman Brown, Patrick Holden, Larry Jensen, Esteban Lechuga, Danny Sims

**9 Years:** Stephen Brath, Marlin Garcia, Barry Karlberg, John Neel, Michael Rogers, Joe Sandoval, Kellie Sisler, Mark Tarr, Gary Westphal

**10 Years:** Patti Audet, Adelita Barajas, Tyler Batley, Robert Boyd, Michelle Fellers, Michael Galla, Adam Harper, Eric Sabatucci

**11 Years:** Kent Ainsworth, Sherry Bulot, Brenda Caruthers, Charlene Huskey, Robert Martinez, Charles Mier, Kevin Watkins

**12 Years:** David Bullion, Frank Davis, Roger Eastering, David Gibson, Ken Lucht

**13 Years:** Bernardo Cuevas, Terry Kudick, Walter Stromberg

**14 Years:** Julie Fortman, Joshua Kramer, Brad Snow

**15 Years:** Kathy Carr, Edward Garcia

**16 Years:** Mark Krause, Ron Martin

**17 Years:** Randy Letner

**18 Years:** Ronald Tapley

**19 Years:** William Carroll

**20 Years:** Dick Fogliasso

**21 Years:** Mark Green, Steven Morgan

**22 Years:** Herb Lamkin

**26 Years:** James Crawford, Charles Layfield

**27 Years:** Bryan Benson

**34 Years:** Steven Lang

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**Events**

Doug Story, vice president of agriculture marketing, had the opportunity to dance with a queen on January 30th. His daughter Alice, a senior at St. Mary’s Colgan High School, was 2015 Basketball Homecoming Queen.

This section is dedicated to Watco Team Members to give you a chance to share what’s happening in your corner of the Watco World.

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**See Tracks - Think Train!**
Alert Aussies find track defects

The rail operations in Western Australia are a bit different than what they are across the pond in the states. Australia’s freight rail network is made up of three different widths of track; standard, narrow, and dual gauge. Unlike many of our locations in the U.S., our Australian Team Members do not maintain the track that they operate on. However, they are tasked with the safe and timely arrival of their trains so when two team members noticed something wrong they immediately notified the track owners, Brookfield Rail, to correct the issue.

David Knight, Network Operations Specialist, Brookfield Rail, wrote in an e-mail, “Brookfield Rail had encountered some track defects on the SG loop road at Avon Yard and due to the alertness of your train crew working train No 4S56, a possible serious accident has been averted.

The crew concerned were David MacKenzie and Greg Bullock and Brookfield Rail would like you to thank them on our behalf and convey to them that due to their vigilance and quick action of reporting this issue when first experienced, has identified a misalignment which has now been attended to.

Their actions are highly commendable and we encourage them, as we do of all train operators, to continue reporting incidents or circumstances that arise on the BR network that don’t feel right.”

Western Australian Drivers Greg Bullock and David MacKenzie located a broken rail in the Avon Yard in Merredin.

Alabama Legislators attend rail orientation

The Alabama Railway Association (ARA) recently hosted their 2015 Legislative Briefing to meet Alabama State Senators and Representatives and visit with them regarding issues currently facing the rail industry.

"Many of the legislators at the event were first term so it was a good opportunity to meet them and provide them with information about Alabama’s railroads," said Amy Parady, Vice President, Business Development and Corporate Liaison, Watco Supply Chain Services.

Parady, who also serves as Vice President of the ARA, said there was a good turnout for the event which was held at Norfolk Southern Railway’s Norris Yard in Birmingham, Alabama.