Marketing Summit brings team together

by Michaela Kinyon
Communications Intern

Amidst all the recent acquisitions Watco has made, it can be challenging to ensure communications and that everyone stays in step. With this in mind, the Marketing Team organized a gathering to help everyone get to know one another and the company.

Stefan Loeb, executive vice president and chief marketing officer, was the driving force in organizing the event. “We’ve grown the Marketing Team tremendously,” he said. “Many people from different locations hadn’t met each other and had only a vague idea of what Watco is all about.”

The goal of the Marketing Summit was to assemble the team members from all the different locations and branches of Watco, educate them about the history and mission of Watco, as well as give them time to generate new ideas and team build. The event included team members from rail, Supply Chain Services, port services, and bulk terminals.

“The room where we held the Summit was a little tight,” stated Jana Austerman, senior marketing analyst at the corporate offices in Pittsburg, Kansas. “However, there was always great communication between the team members, and there was laughter from every table, which was a great thing to see.”

The Summit was held from the afternoon of July 29th to the 30th at the Marriott in Overland Park, Kansas. More than 50 people attended the event, which included a seafood dinner and team building time at Top Golf.

“We wanted to get everyone together and discuss what exactly Watco is all about, with its history and the Customer First Foundation Principles,” Loeb said. “We wanted everyone to understand what we can do to create value for Watco and our Customers, as well as learn about the different groups we have within the Marketing Team and what their expertise is.”

Loeb continued, “It’s important to understand that we don’t need each individual to be an expert. Everyone has their own unique talents, and that’s what a team is for. We make each other stronger.”

President Rick Baden, CEO Rick Webb, and EVP and Chief Operating Officer Dan Smith all spoke at the Summit. They described the mission of Watco Companies, as well as the attributes necessary in order to create value and drive the company forward. Baden’s speech, in which he went completely without slides or prompts, received a great review.

“People learned about our assets and services in a detail that was never there before,” Loeb said. “It was appreciated both by the people who have been with Watco a long time, as well as people who have recently become a part of our team. Doing this generated a lot of ideas of how we could work better that we wouldn't have had before.”

“We wanted to learn how we could better cross-sell our services to our Customers,” Austerman stated. “This really helped us do that.”

Pacific Sun Railroad shines during military trial

by Tracie VanBecelaere
Managing Editor

There are few things more stressful than having a group of officers from the US Marine Corps (USMC) judge your work, but that didn’t phase the team at the Pacific Sun Railroad (PSRR). The team recently and successfully completed a trial load out at Camp Pendleton in Oceanside, California.

The team assisted in loading out 23 cars by indexing (switching) six cars at a time. They loaded cats, Humvees, armored personnel carriers, and tanks. Although this is a move that has been done before, it’s been a long 20 years since the last one. The trial was set up so the Marines could see if it could be completed in a timely manner. Several civilians within the logistics departments, numerous Colonels, and other officers were on hand to determine the feasibility of loading the large amount of cars.

“They were all extremely satisfied with the results and expressed their gratitude for the work completed by the Pacific Sun,” said, James Moore, PSRR general manager. “This was a huge success for the railroad.”

The move is called a “round robin” because the cars will be shipped out, and when the training is complete, they’ll be shipped back in, doubling the carloads. The USMC would like to do a 30-50 car train about every 2-3 months.

In addition to gaining the USMC as a Customer, the PSRR added Composite Materials to the lineup. Composite Materials will be shipping an average of 12 cars per month.

Moore said, “We’re working on growing our business, and I’m excited to bring on these two new Customers. One of our current Customers, Plastic Express, is adding a 15-car track at their location, so there are some very positive things happening here.”
Industry Team celebrates four years injury-free

by Molly Henneke
Contributing Writer

Team members at the Industry Terminal in Pennsylvania recently celebrated their four-year anniversary on August 7, 2015, with a Safety Luncheon. Featured at the lunch was a pig roast catered by J&J Catering Company. During the lunch, team members were given shirts in commemoration of their four-year safety performance.

The team contributes their success to many things such as constant training, planning, safety and hazard awareness, safety programs, procedures, and positive interaction between teammates. The team is also fortunate to have members with high levels of experience throughout several departments. There are two members at the facility who have more than thirty years of experience. They include Superintendent Chuck Faraone, who has had over thirty-one years of experience, and Equipment Operator Chuck Trimer, who has worked at the facility for thirty years.

Terminal Manager Gregory Hoffman said, “Everyone at the facility is focused on their own safety, as well as the teammates they’re working with. The facility opened in 1981 and the team is proud that this safety anniversary is the longest safety milestone they have reached to date. Industry is always looking forward to continuing this record.”

“The terminal has a high volume of barge, truck, and rail transfers for bulk materials servicing the steel industry. Many of the jobs at the facility are very labor intensive and require working in extreme weather conditions. Hoffman stated, "The team has always done an excellent job practicing safety in this demanding environment and industry."

Congressman visits WSOR

by Ken Lucht
Director of Government Relations

Out of a total of 435 U.S. Congressional Districts, the 6th Congressional District of Wisconsin stands out amongst the rest, as it contains the highest number of manufacturing jobs per capita across the entire nation. Congressman Glenn Grothman is proud of that distinction and was in Sheboygan Falls, Wisconsin, to see how the Wisconsin and Southern Railroad (WSOR) and local industries continue to make his district a great place to manufacture local products.

Congressman Grothman was welcomed by two local mayors: Sheboygan Falls Mayor Randy Meyer and City of Plymouth Mayor Don Pohlman. Also joining the group was Michael Stelter of Bemis Manufacturing and Jason Culotta of Wisconsin Manufacturer's and Commerce. From the WSOR team were Joe Via, Roger Schaalma, Brad Peot, Andy Laurent, and Ken Lucht.

After a brief presentation on Watco Companies, the Congressman toured portions of the railroad corridor between Plymouth and Sheboygan Falls which is currently under construction and scheduled to be operational by November of 2015. As background, over half of this railroad line has been sitting idle for more than two decades, while a small section (Kohler to Sheboygan Falls) had been in service as recent as 2006. After service on the easterly section of this rail line was discontinued in 2006, the line was subsequently acquired by the State of Wisconsin and a public/private partnership was formed to bring this line “back to life”. The parties involved included: the State of Wisconsin, Sheboygan County, City of Plymouth, City of Sheboygan Falls, Bemis Manufacturing, Morrelle Warehouse & Transfer, Kettle Lakes Cooperative, and the WSOR.

The visit concluded with a tour of one of WSOR’s biggest Customers in Sheboygan County – Bemis Manufacturing. Bemis is a manufacturer of customized plastic products for bathroom and health facilities and they also build shopping carts for large chain stores.

Watco’s People Services Team is always on the hunt for ways to make being a Watco Team Member even better. They are constantly looking for bargains and discounts on everything from cell phones to water parks. If you haven’t checked out the discounts on the Watco web site you need to - there’s something for everyone and all you need to do to take advantage of the discounts is be a Watco Team Member.
Refugio Team Member in a league of his own

by Michaela Kinyon
Communications Intern

Working on the railroad isn’t the only thing that Watco Team Members do all the livelong day, certainly not team member John Solis, journeyman electrician, who spends his time off work as a volunteer umpire in the Refugio, Texas, area. Because of his 19 years as an umpire, Solis recently had the privilege of working at the Little League Southwest Region Tournament in Waco, Texas.

“This was a good experience for me. I’ve been doing this for a long time, and I love to volunteer and give back to the kids,” Solis stated.

According to Refugio’s Terminal Manager John Wiebelhaus, Solis not only volunteers his time by umpiring; “He has taken the lead on several projects, including our back-to-school supply drive and upcoming Breast Cancer awareness fundraiser.”

Solis also serves on the Booster Club at his local high school.

“John has been a great addition to our team in Refugio,” said Wiebelhaus. “I was proud to see him on ESPN and tell my son ‘I work with him.’”

Solis likes to tell the story of how he first became an umpire, laughing as he does so. On leave while he was in the Air Force, Solis went to watch his brothers’ baseball game. His brother Abel was the coach, and two of his brothers were playing.

“They asked me to bring the uniform to the field, and I thought I was just helping out,” Solis said. “When I got to the field, my brother told me to put it on and said, ‘It’s all yours now!’”

“I had never umpired before in my life, but they told me to just call balls and strikes. Afterwards, they told me I did a good job, so I just kept doing it.”

Solis not only umpires in Refugio, but also in many of the surrounding towns throughout the district. “I’m fortunate that my supervisors Rick Wheeler and John Wiebelhaus allow me some flexibility to be able to do this,” he said.

It was Solis’s willingness to give back to his community and share his enthusiasm for baseball that led to him being asked to umpire for the Southwest Region Tournament, which took place in Waco from August 7th to the 13th.

“It was a really cool experience,” said Solis. “The kids at the Southwest Tournament were really good ball players, and while I was staying in the hotel, I met some pro ball players and hung out with some people from ESPN. We chatted about baseball the whole week.”

Solis also said: “I was very humbled to know that my team members watched and kept up with my games.”

Solis hopes in the next year or two that he will be able to umpire at the Little League National Tournament in South Williamsport, Pennsylvania, and as Wiebelhaus said, “We will be proud to support him along the way.”

Loving Team Members support community

by Michaela Kinyon
Communications Intern

Few people understand the importance of giving back to the community, or do it with quite so much enthusiasm, as the team members at the Watco Terminal and Port Service (WTPS) location in Loving, New Mexico. Their continued support of this village has made the team there an integral part of the community.

Their most recent efforts to help the community led them to participating in Loving Municipal School’s annual Golf Scramble. The Scramble is one of the many ways community members come together to support Loving’s athletics program.

This year, WTPS gave $250 to sponsor a hole for the course, as well as gathering a group to play a round of golf to help Loving’s young athletes. The money will go towards equipment such as football pads, shoes, or anything else that may be needed.

“Community involvement is very important to us,” said Team Captain and Terminal Manager, David Elizalde. “We are always looking for ways to support the young people in our neighborhood. The Golf Scramble was not only a great show of support for our neighbors, but it was also a positive way to spend the morning with our fellow team members.”

This is not the first nor the last time the team in Loving has come forward in support of the community. This past Easter, they did an Easter Basket Drive that allowed them to buy an Easter basket for every child in the elementary school.

“Those kids were just jumping for joy when we delivered it to them,” said Elizalde.

This month, the team has also done fundraisers that allowed them to buy much-needed school supplies for the elementary school, and in the coming months, they are also planning a coat drive and a Christmas Angels project to give children in need presents.

“This is a poor community, and everyone tries to get involved in helping,” said Maintenance Technician Jake Welsh, who also participated in the Golf Scramble. “The community likes it, and we enjoy doing it.”

Albert Ornelas, an operator at the location, is more than happy to give back to the community in which he was born and raised. “It’s a very heart-filling experience for all of us here,” he said. “We’re able to share what Watco does as a company, and the opportunity to give back is amazing.”

In regards to the Golf Scramble, Ornelas said that some of the coaches present were his own coaches while he was in high school, and he was also able to see a lot of his old schoolmates while he was there. The WTPS team ended the tournament three under par and placed fourth. Lead Operator Blake Thomas made up the fourth member of their team.

In addition to their other efforts for the community, the team members at Loving also give five dollars out of every paycheck for the schools in the area.

“We want to help out as much as we can… and still get our work done,” Elizalde laughed.

Team Watco members (l-r) – Jeremy Welsh, David Elizalde, Alberto Ornelas, and Blake Thomas at the Watco sponsored hole during the annual Loving Athletics Golf Scramble.
Blue Ridge railroad celebrates one-year and safety anniversaries

by Molly Henneke
Contributing Writer

Blue Ridge Southern Railroad (BLU) recently celebrated both its one-year and safety anniversary. The team celebrated with a cookout for all team members and their families at the historic Cataloochee Ranch in Maggie Valley, North Carolina. The ranch is nestled atop a mountain just outside of Grand Smoky Mountain Park. More than sixty-five people attended, including members of the Eastern Region Team from Birmingham, Alabama, whose anniversary coincided with Blue Ridge’s anniversary.

General Manager Darl Farris said, “Blue Ridge takes great pride in their work and they have a personal commitment to succeed. Every team member deserves equal recognition for a fantastic job. They each have their own unique way of contributing to the success of the team each day they come to work. Special thanks needs to be given to the families of the team members who support their team members at home and on the job.”

Farris added, “The team is keenly aware that to be successful, we must be able to serve our Customers safely. We’d all like to thank everyone on the East Region Team for their continued support and helping make that possible.”

The mountainous territory of the BLU brings some unique challenges to the rail industry and the team members rise to those challenges each day with a positive and cheerful attitude. They are proud to be an important part of the beautiful communities that they serve and recognize their service is important for the economy and environment they live in.
Kaw River Railroad Team hits a home run with Customer Service

It must be a Kansas City thing. Not only are the Royals hitting home runs but the team at the Kaw River Railroad (KAW) is doing the same, if only figuratively. Joe Weigel, manager of outbound transportation at Advantage Recycling, was very pleased with how the team stepped up to ensure that metals he had going out would leave on time prior to an anticipated drop in the market.

"I contacted Mark McClellan (general manager) and Shellee Currier (marketing manager) to let them know what was going on and that there was a need to expedite the tonnage going out last month," said Weigel. "Jena Duesi (Watco Custom Service Representative) always orders railcars for us and has a hand on what we’re doing so she was aware of the need to ramp things up as well."

Weigel added, "The trainmasters, Robert Sullivan and David Dawson, have worked hard to learn our business and understand what we do. They go that extra mile to meet our needs."

Not only did Weigel send the team members notes thanking them for their service but he also made a trip to one of Kansas City’s favorite barbecue spots, Joe’s Kansas City Barbecue, and provided a lunch of ribs, pulled pork, brisket and sides for the team.

"The team does a great job each month," said Weigel. "There was just some added urgency due to the market conditions, and they helped us meet an important deadline."

"In addition to the regularly scheduled trains, the KAW also handles 2-3 unit trains a month. The trains are sent to Nucor Steel in Arkansas and Advantage Metals Recycling was the first in the Industry with the help of Watco to make this happen," said Weigel. "We appreciate the effort Watco puts forth in making us the leading scrap supplier in the Midwest."

Stroud Team ramps up and helps team member

by Tracie VanBecelaere
Managing Editor

Although Watco often uses the term "team" when describing the people that work together at a location, more often than not "family" would be a more appropriate. Such is the case at the terminal location in Stroud, Oklahoma.

Roy Killman is a utility operator at the location and has been working there for almost five years. On August 8th, Roy’s 10-year-old daughter Dani received a diagnosis of Osteosarcoma (malignant bone cancer) on her left leg below the knee. Tumors were also found in both lungs but doctors are feeling positive about Dani’s prognosis following surgery and chemotherapy. After a few days of medical testing and the initial chemo treatment, Roy realized that he had no way of getting his now wheelchair bound daughter into his house.

"I expressed my concern to a family member and some of my teammates," said Roy. "We then made plans to get together that weekend to build a deck with a wheelchair accessible ramp."

That’s when Roy’s Watco family stepped up and instead of waiting for Roy to return home with Dani so they could assist him, the guys went to Terminal Manager Derek Mooy and said they wanted to go ahead and build it prior to her coming home.

“I got a call from Derek informing me that nearly every teammate on both shifts had volunteered to come build the deck before my family’s return from the hospital,” said Roy. "We arrived home a day early to find not only a completed deck and ramp but they had also mowed and weed-eated the lawn as well."

"I’d like to take this opportunity to thank Watco and my teammates for their unending generosity and the compassion they have shown my family," Roy added. "I have come to realize in a very short time you are only as strong as God, family, and friends allow you to be."

Not only are team members at the Refugio, Texas, Terminal their brother’s keepers during work, some are their brother’s keepers off the job as well. After spending around eight hours a day working together, a few team members at the terminal thought it would be fun to get together and do something that didn’t involve sand. So they went kayaking.

Jeffery Sanchez, operator; Nicholas Bingham, operator; James Chinowith, locomotive engineer; and Evan Klaevemann, switchman, spent a day off on the Guadalupe River at Riverside Park in Victoria, Texas.
The senior class from Southeast High School in Cherokee, Kansas, had a unique prop to use for their Fall Sports Program: a locomotive with their name on it. With some creative photoshopping, the gold on the locomotive was changed to Lancer blue and lightning was added to the sky.

The students showed up at the Carona Depot where the locomotive is kept on a Sunday evening for the planned photo shoot. The property is owned by Heart of the Heartlands (HOH) Rail Club and Larry Spahn, HOH president, provided a brief speech on rail safety before the photographer began taking pictures.

“It’s important that all photographers know the rules when taking pictures near railroads,” said Spahn.

Safety is the number one rule when it comes to railroad photography, and no picture is ever worth taking a risk for. Railroads are all on private property so if you don’t get permission to be there you’re trespassing.

“We’d like to thank the school’s sponsor Carla Paasch, who contacted us to get permission for the shoot,” said Tracie VanBecelaere, Watco Communications Director. “They did it the right way and the result turned out wonderful.”

Ghent Team pulls together to fight flooding

by Tracie VanBecelaere
Managing Editor

Earlier this year, the team at the terminal in Ghent, Kentucky, battled flooding brought on by a double threat: melting snow and ice from the winter and the beginning of heavy spring rains. Although there were several challenges, the team kept the fleet secure and one Customer supplied with barges to keep them from shutting down production.

The terminal is located on the Ohio River and normally the water level at the dock sits at around 15 feet, but with the excessive flooding, water levels rose about 25 feet.

Terminal Manager Tim Bass said he knew of the threat, and once the water level reached 38 feet, he was monitoring it on a daily basis. He said, "NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration) sends out predictions twice daily flood or not and I used those predictions to determine when to move material and assets to higher ground. The way water levels are determined can be confusing as measurements also consider how far out of the banks the water goes and that makes it hard for a layman to envision the depth.”

Ghent’s 56 team members serve two Customers at the terminal, North American Stainless (NAS) and DOW Chemicals. Once the flood levels hit 46 feet, they began building up the road in order to continue to provide service to NAS.

While some team members were working to build up the road, others were moving non-essential materials and equipment to higher ground. The team also moved their fuel tank 1/8 mile up the road to prevent any environmental issues that would arise.

“Our Customer brought a large forklift over and helped us move the fuel tank,” said Bass. “At times like this, you really get to see the relationships you’ve built in action. Everyone was pitching in and doing what we could to minimize the effects of the flooding.”

Bass stated, “When the level hit 48.6 feet, we had to stop service. At that point, we are no longer able to safely provide service to our Customer. On March 15th, six days after the flooding began, the river crested at 53.2 feet, and it was more like a swift moving lake than a river.”

Before shutting down, the team was able to provide an additional barge to DOW so that they could continue production.

Flooding wasn’t the only problem the team had to deal with; receding water also caused some major problems at the terminal. As the river level began to drop, the dock could not wick the water out fast enough to keep up with the falling river level which caused the upper river dock wall to fail. When the tie backs on the upper river wall started to give way, stress cracks started to appear on the down river dock wall. They shut down all operations until the dock could be assessed by engineers. After 14 days of the dock being flooded and down for safety reasons, the team was able to resume discharging materials.

Bass said, “During that time there were many challenges: equipment failure, the flood itself, and the collapse of our dock, all in the middle of a transition. I can not express the amount of appreciation for the great people that make up this great team.”
Congratulations to the following team members celebrating their anniversaries!


2 Years: Shane Alexander, John Baumann, Dennis Beckham, Christopher Butler, Jacob Cahill, David Callan, Michael Church, Brian Davis, Jace Fisher, Susan Giertych, Donald Held, Stanley Jepson, Richard Juarez, Joy Lavoie, Mario Leal, Russell Mallory, Douglas Manuel, Arden Martinie, William Mayberry, Jason Meng, Rosa Mosby, Gloria Mount, Dan Perry, Mackenzie Peterson, Wiley Phillips, Juan Picazo, Carmen Tilton, Erin Thorne, Michael Urness, Russell Wix

3 Years: Neil Arredondo, Randy Blackwell, Jason Calhoun, Kim DePratt, Leslie Dodd, Billy Edwards, Matthew Fellers, Laramie Gahman, David Giertych, Daniel Gorseth, Kevin Harris, Stetson Haverkamp, Christopher Hughes, Ashlee Kobylinski, Don Latimer, James Mobley, Kory Phillips, Craig Rasmussen, Gilberto Rivera, Lori Sharp, Amber Shouse, David Sparks, Kris Winkels, Clint Woods, Rito Zertuche

4 Years: Robbie Aucoin, Roy Boussouw, Mark Cendejas, Ernie Farrand, Justin Hoggle, Linda Jordan, Albert Merritt, Donald Myrick, Matthew Nelson, Frederick Parsons, Steve Sheldon, Nathan Weber, Adam Weddle

5 Years: Willie Ackley, Dawna Baker, Benjamin Beers, Laurie Caler, Damien Cantrell, Bobby Garmon, Cedric Graham, Andrew Johnson, Steven Johnson, Matthew Kerns, Michael Kerns, Andrew Moots, JaCorey Murray, Jeffery Nadeau, Bradley Shows, Shane Smith, Benjamin Tarran, Dusty Tenney, Peter Tietjen

6 Years: Lewis Barlow, Marcus Curran, Duane Helms, Troy Johnson, Mark Miller, Michael Reeves, Chadd Thimesch, Cody Winkleman

7 Years: Daniel Archer, Robin Combs, Jeffrey Dick, Michael Hawks, Milo Jackson, Kevin Kennison, Michael Stitzel, Lori Vaden

8 Years: Bryan Bornath, Dale Cross, Sergio Delgado, Timothy Dykes, Claude Lamb, Brian Robinson, Jamie Wilson

9 Years: Cale Burton, Thomas Campbell, Nancy Dickey, James Hagans, Bill Miller, Michael Pyeatt

10 Years: Aubrey Berguin, Christopher Boatman, Jonas Colley, Matthew Davis, David Gallien, Annetra Garcia, Matthew Hare, Mark Harrington, Allan Roach, Kari Stephens, Reynolds Vargas, Steve Westfall, Thomas Williams

11 Years: William Balzen, Charles Clay, Brandon Craddock, Stacy Grant, Artis McGinnis, Thomas Ritchie

12 Years: Randal Lewis, Gary Vaughn

13 Years: Daniel Rodriguez

14 Years: Chuck King, Gary Rosenow, Stacy Smith

15 Years: Theron Pope

16 Years: Kara Bowman

17 Years: Donald Browder, Eric Davison, Bradley Vaughn

18 Years: Paul Conner, Richard Gruber, Alforenza Ray, Nathan Trejo

19 Years: Larry Smith, Jesus Victoria

20 Years: William Benson, Brad Hayes

24 Years: David Tarwater

26 Years: Joseph Wagner

29 Years: Steven Fox, Timothy Goeden

31 Years: Timothy Seitz

37 Years: John Chipala, Robert Watson

38 Years: Joey Johnson

39 Years: Daniel Duvall

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

Births

Benjamin Scott Hampton

Scott and Chasty Hampton are proud to announce the birth of a son, Benjamin Scott. Benjamin was born on July 1, 2015. He weighed 8 lbs., 4 oz., and was 20.5 inches long.

Benjamin was welcomed home by his big sister Olivia, who is three years old.

Scott works for the Blue Ridge Southern Railroad as a conductor.

Olivia, Scott, Chasty, and Benjamin Hampton.

Emmett Michael Crowe

Sean and Whitney Crowe are proud to announce the birth of a son, Emmett Michael on August 4, 2015. Emmett weighed 7 lbs., 3 oz., and was 18.5 inches long.

Sean is the southern track inspector for the Eastern Idaho Railroad.

Emmett Michael Crowe

Parsons, Steve Sheldon, Nathan Weber, Adam Weddle

5 Years: Willie Ackley, Dawna Baker, Benjamin Beers, Laurie Caler, Damien Cantrell, Bobby Garmon, Cedric Graham, Andrew Johnson, Steven Johnson, Matthew Kerns, Michael Kerns, Andrew Moots, JaCorey Murray, Jeffery Nadeau, Bradley Shows, Shane Smith, Benjamin Tarran, Dusty Tenney, Peter Tietjen

6 Years: Lewis Barlow, Marcus Curran, Duane Helms, Troy Johnson, Mark Miller, Michael Reeves, Chadd Thimesch, Cody Winkleman

7 Years: Daniel Archer, Robin Combs, Jeffrey Dick, Michael Hawks, Milo Jackson, Kevin Kennison, Michael Stitzel, Lori Vaden

8 Years: Bryan Bornath, Dale Cross, Sergio Delgado, Timothy Dykes, Claude Lamb, Brian Robinson, Jamie Wilson

9 Years: Cale Burton, Thomas Campbell, Nancy Dickey, James Hagans, Bill Miller, Michael Pyeatt

10 Years: Aubrey Berguin, Christopher Boatman, Jonas Colley, Matthew Davis, David Gallien, Annetra Garcia, Matthew Hare, Mark Harrington, Allan Roach, Kari Stephens, Reynolds Vargas, Steve Westfall, Thomas Williams

11 Years: William Balzen, Charles Clay, Brandon Craddock, Stacy Grant, Artis McGinnis, Thomas Ritchie

12 Years: Randal Lewis, Gary Vaughn

13 Years: Daniel Rodriguez

14 Years: Chuck King, Gary Rosenow, Stacy Smith

15 Years: Theron Pope

16 Years: Kara Bowman

17 Years: Donald Browder, Eric Davison, Bradley Vaughn

18 Years: Paul Conner, Richard Gruber, Alforenza Ray, Nathan Trejo

19 Years: Larry Smith, Jesus Victoria

20 Years: William Benson, Brad Hayes

24 Years: David Tarwater

26 Years: Joseph Wagner

29 Years: Steven Fox, Timothy Goeden

31 Years: Timothy Seitz

37 Years: John Chipala, Robert Watson

38 Years: Joey Johnson

39 Years: Daniel Duvall
BLU Team keeps focus on safety

by Michaela Kinyon
Communications Intern

Good news hails from two Blue Ridge Southern (BLU) team members. On August 4th, while working in the Norfolk Southern Railway’s (NS) yard in Asheville, North Carolina, Engineer Dennis Cain identified a broken rail in an adjacent track.

Rather than just moving on, Cain promptly briefed his conductor, Phil Roberts, about the defect. Phil then notified the NS yardmaster about the broken rail so the NS crews who work in the area could also be notified.

To show his gratitude the NS trainmaster, Rodney Poff, invited Dennis and Phil back the next day to share in an NS safety celebration, which included a catered lunch.

“I am not at all surprised by the actions of Dennis and Phil,” stated BLU General Manager Darl Farris. “They live the Customer First Foundation Principles every day and recognize we are partners with all of our Customers, including the NS.”

For their attention to detail and focus on the safety of the NS crew, both Cain and Roberts were awarded a letter of commendation and ten Blue Bucks, part of a local safety program that allows team members to exchange safety tokens for Watco or BLU merchandise.

Cain has been a part of the Watco team for four years, and Roberts worked for the NS for seven years before becoming a team member. Both have been a part of the BLU team since start-up in July 2014.

Farris also said of his team members, “Their willingness to speak out when something wasn’t right reaffirms my belief that these North Carolina railroaders are among the best in this industry. This is not the first time Dennis and Phil have been commended for their safe actions and I am sure it won’t be the last.”

The newsletter for Watco Companies, LLC and Watco Transportation Services, LLC
September 2015, Volume 16, Issue 9

315 W. Third Street
Pittsburg, KS 66762
www.watcocompanies.com

Stockton Fertilizer Team celebrates 11 years injury-free

Many people have the mind-set that everyone in California is more laid back and relaxed. One look at the Stockton Fertilizer Team’s 11 year injury-free safety record and you definitely don’t think laid back. It takes a lot of effort and attention to detail to hit such a milestone.

“Even in the safest environment, 11 years is a big accomplishment. In our industry, 11 years is huge,” said Robb Johnson, terminal manager. “I’m very proud of our team here.

“There are many factors that have contributed to the length of the team’s safety record but one fact that stands out is that of the 11 team members, 9 of them have been on the team the entire 11 years.

Johnson said that he thinks a big factor in his team’s safety habits is that they are more of a family.

“We don’t each bring our lunches every day,” he said. “We do a pot luck, where everyone contributes. That’s how safety works, everyone contributes. It may sound corny but we’re just very down home and family oriented here.”

The team had a catered lunch to celebrate the event and plans are in the works to celebrate a little bigger and better in the near future.

“When I joined the team several years ago I was really impressed with the safety record,” said Johnson. “Year after year they just keep rockin’ it!”

Left to right: Jesus Sanchez, Lupe Rameriz, Tina Castro, Doug Duncan, Fernando Almanza, Robb Johnson, Roder Mercado, Jesus Victoria, Sambo Sam, Cesar Gutierrez and Rob Adams.