Over the last several years, Watco has changed in the services we offer and the commodities we handle. In order to better take care of our people the time has come to refocus everyone’s attention on the profit centers and making each one successful.

This can be accomplished by realigning the divisions into like-sized and same-purpose divisions so the locations can benefit from each other’s experiences. This is also true for the terminals that have been aligned based on their operations and the commodities they handle. When they’re grouped in such a manner, the outstanding performers will shine and their best practices can be identified and replicated at other locations.

This refocus will create efficiencies and empower team members to make decisions that are profit center focused. Issues will be resolved faster and improvements will happen quicker.

Meetings were held throughout the month of September to share information between managers and support teams on how best to serve the people who serve our Customers.

David Gibson, Galena Park switching manager, said, "The meeting was one of the most productive meetings I have ever attended. I was blown away with all the information that was shared by all the managers, finance, and people services team members. David Bader and Mike McAllister are a joy to work with, if I need help with anything they don’t hesitate. This shows that the sky is the limit for Watco and I’m proud to be a part of this team.”

Jimmy Patterson, Kansas and Oklahoma Railroad general manager, said, "For me, the most exciting part of the meeting was getting to meet general managers from other areas and listening to them talk about the railroads and seeing how passionate they were about the properties. It was good to be able to trade stories and ideas and tips and tricks that will enable us to better run our railroads and service our Customers.”

Communication is the key element needed to make any organization successful and this was emphasized throughout the meetings. Managers were encouraged to pick up the phone or send an e-mail if there was anything they needed.

"We’re here to make things be the most efficient for you,” Joe King, senior vice president finance, said to the managers at one of the Refocus meetings. "You know what you need and what is and isn’t working, you just need to communicate any issues and we will work together to get them resolved."

An additional piece of the refocus is the emphasis placed on team member growth and development. Team members will be provided with training and experiences to help those who wish to enhance their careers in the company. This structuring of our profit centers will offer tremendous opportunity to advance in the Watco organization. It will provide a pathway to gain experience in a more strategic manner, allowing team members to gain experience at a reasonable and responsible rate.

"We’re doing this for one main reason, it allows us to work together better to serve our Customers,” said Dan Smith, chief operating officer.
U.S. Congressman Paul Ryan tours Wisconsin & Southern Railroad

U.S. Congressman Paul Ryan (WI-1st District) joined Wisconsin & Southern Railroad (WSOR) and invited guests, for a tour of operations in the Congressman’s hometown of Janesville, Wisconsin.

The tour commenced at WSOR’s Janesville Roundhouse where the Congressman, WSOR personnel, and invited guests boarded a passenger theater car for a train ride to a track project that was made possible by the 45G tax credit, a federal income tax credit for track maintenance.

Representatives from the WSOR who organized the event included Road Foreman Justin Cox, Trainmaster Tim Nunley, Superintendent of Maintenance of Way Roger Schaalma, Executive Vice President/Chief Commercial Officer Ken Lucht, as well as representatives from their marketing and maintenance of way departments.

Invited guests included American Short Line & Regional Railroad Association (ASLRRA) President Linda Bauer Darra, Chambers, Conlon & Hartwell, LLC Partner Adam Nordstrom, City of Janesville City Manager Mark Freitag, Rock County Board Member Al Sweeney, and City of Milton City Administrator Al Hulick.

Local WSOR Customers were also in attendance including G.R. and Patrick Lyons from Janesville Sand & Gravel/LYCON, Inc., and Mike Meyers from Universal Forest Products (UFP).

During the train ride Nordstrom discussed the importance of the 45G tax credit to short line railroads such as WSOR. The Short Line Railroad Rehabilitation and Investment Act of 2015, also known as H.R. 721, was introduced in February and already has over 50 percent co-sponsorship in the House with 233 co-sponsors.

Once the tour arrived at the work site, Congressman Ryan had a meet and greet with the rail contractors working on the WSOR, including a once in a lifetime opportunity to operate a spike puller.

For fifteen minutes, Congressman Ryan helped WSOR crews pull spikes preparing the site for upcoming continuous welded rail.

On the return back, Congressman Ryan joined Trainmaster Tim Nunley in the cab of the locomotive to see the inner workings of the 101 E-Unit Locomotive.

“I recently spent some time touring the Wisconsin and Southern Railroad, to learn more about our freight rail system. Wisconsin manufacturers and employees need access to a robust transportation system so they can seamlessly get their products to market” said the Congressman.

Congressman Paul Ryan serves as the Chairman of the Ways and Means Committee and the Chairman of the Joint Committee on Taxation.

Refugio Team Member retires

The Refugio Texas Terminal said good-bye to one of their operators as he left the team to begin his career as a retiree. Albert Perez, or Mr. Albert, to everyone at the terminal, retired on September 30th. Perez began working at the terminal three and a half years ago, in February of 2012.

Hilda Morin, assistant terminal manager, said, “We think that retirement is so far away however, not for Mr. Albert, it is a new beginning. Retirement is an amazing opportunity and we are extremely excited for Mr. Albert and his new adventures. He will be greatly missed and never forgotten. Mr. Albert did say however that this was the best job he has had and will come back and visit his Watco family here in Refugio.”

Perez says he has no major plans as of right now, just to spend time with family and relax. One of his goals during retirement is to go on a cruise.

Greens Port team member assists accident victim

by Tracie VanBecelaere
Managing Editor

Greens Port Team Members Joshua Hawkins and Tim Covington recently turned an everyday tool trip into a rescue mission. On September 22nd, the two men were in Crosby, Texas, heading to pick up some tools when they saw an older man laying in the road.

Hawkins said, “My team member is a skilled firefighter so I turned around immediately to see if we could help.”

“We pulled up and discovered that a van had hit a man who had been riding a motorized scooter (the medical kind). There was a lady on the phone struggling with a 911 call. Tim took the phone from her and then provided the 911 operator an assessment on the injured man to relay to the first responders who were on their way to the scene. He then worked to control the man’s bleeding and spoke with him to keep him alert.”

Two ambulances arrived and immediately loaded the man and drove him to the landing site for life flight.

“Because he was a firefighter, Tim was left in charge of the scene until the Sheriff’s office made it to the site and took over,” said Hawkins. When the Sheriff’s office arrived Tim briefed them on the incident and the scene was taken over by the Sheriff’s office.”

Hawkins said, “I am not sure how the gentleman is doing but he definitely wouldn’t have made it if we hadn’t stopped and Tim hadn’t administered first aid. Even though as a firefighter Tim has run into situations like this before, it was a first for me to see him in action in different capacity than what I’m used to. I’m proud of how he helped out and I’m proud to call him a team member.”

Tim Covington, GCBR operator and Joshua Hawkins, GCBR operations manager, took the time to help a member of the community who was in need of medical assistance.
WATSS IS ROAMING

WATSS is going mobile. WATSS is the rail operating system used to track train movements on many Watco short lines. On September 9th, Watco rolled out a pilot of ROAM, a new tablet-based application for train crews that interacts with WATSS while the crews are out in the field. With ROAM, crews are able to update the location of cars and create several types of moves (arrivals, placements, and intra-plant switches), and they no longer have to wait until they get back to the depot and fax the information to customer service for entry into WATSS.

The first crew to receive the tablet with ROAM was the Wichita Switch Job on the Kansas and Oklahoma Railroad (KO). The conductor for this job is Cody Winkleman. Winkleman likes technology and was happy to be the first to take ROAM out for a spin, although he did admit to being a little nervous about it.

On the afternoon of September 9th, Winkleman, along with Hayley Becker, systems analyst, and Phil Hennessey, IT director of new development, packed the tablet into the locomotive and headed out to switch cars. After a short training session from Becker, Winkleman began using the new tool to move and re-sequence cars. He immediately liked what he saw and commented that this would save him a lot of time.

As the afternoon progressed, Winkleman continued to use ROAM to record the moves they were making, while Becker was checking WATSS to make sure that the information was getting into the base system. By the end of the day, as the crew was tying up, it was clear that ROAM had passed its first test and had been successful on its first day in the field. Moreover, Winkleman had already provided useful ideas on how ROAM could be improved, which is exactly what the IT team hoped would come out of the pilot.

As of this writing, ROAM is now in its 3rd week with the Wichita Switch Job. So far the results have been excellent.

Jimmy Patterson, KO general manager, said, “We are very excited about the implementation of ROAM on the KO and throughout Watco. Not only does it make sense in this technology driven industry we work in, but it makes our team members’ jobs easier and less complicated, which is always a positive step in the right direction.”

The IT team is already planning the next version of ROAM, which will incorporate the feedback and suggestions for improvements provided by Winkleman and others at the KO. With ROAM, reporting is in real-time rather than being delayed until the crew finishes its shift. This has multiple benefits. For example, eWATTS, the Web-based system used by shippers on WATSS roads, will be immediately updated. Likewise information entered into ROAM gets reported immediately to RAILINC’s TRAIN II system and from there on to shippers and connecting railroads. This solves several problems including the common complaint from shippers: when they look out their window, they can see that a car has been placed at their siding, but when they do a search in their tracing system, the same car appears to be still at the receiving yard. Another benefit of ROAM is that the placements that start the demurrage clock for shippers are reported as they occur rather than up to 12 hours after the fact.

For the creation of ROAM, the IT team used a new rapid software development process called Scrum. Unlike traditional development processes, which require getting an exhaustive set of requirements before any coding begins and typically do not deliver anything until all of the components have been coded and tested, Scrum features an incremental approach that starts with whatever requirements are known and then assembles the known requirements into product increments that can be programmed, tested and delivered in condensed cycles (typically 30 to 60 days). The tight focus of the Scrum process quickly gets products into the hands of users and starts delivering business value. In the case of ROAM, the time from the first Scrum meeting to the delivery of the first version of the product to the KO was just two months. Members of the team that developed ROAM were: Josh Braden, Kyle Brown, Jared Hurst, Tom Scheidemantel, and Hayley Becker.
by Michaela Kinyon
Communications Intern

Last month, Watco Companies was privileged to host the annual ASLRA/FRA Safety Seminar. It took place September 1st – 3rd at the Intercontinental Hotel on the Plaza in Kansas City, Missouri. Watco was asked by the American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association (ASLRA) to host the Seminar, and team members Ron Martin, Jason Stutzman, Travis Herod, and Michele Howard immediately set forth to ensure that the event was a success.

Travis Herod, senior vice president of safety and compliance, said of the seminar, “The purpose of the event was to facilitate training from FRA (Federal Railroad Association) Inspectors in various disciplines, to ASLRA member railroads. These events help foster a collaborative approach to safety and compliance, bringing together industry leaders, vendors, and FRA regulators, for the purpose of actively encouraging safety through increased knowledge of regulations we operate under.”

The three days were divided amongst various activities related to the railroad industry. Tuesday consisted of general sessions which covered highly pertinent problems, changes, and regulations to the industry. On Wednesday, there were breakout sessions focused on industry rules and regulations that were broken into time slots that enabled attendees to sit in on multiple classes. Thursday, the final day, consisted of field exercises at the Kaw River Railroad’s Mill Street Yard. Multiple networking sessions took place throughout the seminar, as well as opportunities for door prizes.

More than 120 people from 23 ASLRA short line railroads attended the event, and there was space set up for eight vendors to display their wares and interact with industry leaders. There were three corporate sponsors, all of whom generously helped partner with Watco to facilitate and support the meeting.

National Railroad Safety Services, Inc. (NRSS), a company that provides safety solutions to railroad companies such as Watco, served as a Gold Sponsor for the event as well as a vendor. Representatives from the company, Adam and Tim Shepherd, stated: “We thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to network and meet Watco personnel as well as personnel from other railroads.”

“Conferences like this one will always be beneficial because we as industry professionals are able to talk and discuss our ideas and concerns with the true industry leaders, the ones who actually write the regulations,” said the Shepherds. “There is no better opportunity than getting the chance to ask the source itself.”

People who were also particularly involved with the event include Michele Howard, safety administrative assistant, and Mark McClellan, Kaw River Railroad general manager. Howard was instrumental in planning the details of the seminar, and McClellan helped in setting up the field activities at Mill Street yard, including staging locomotives and equipment for the hands-on training portion of the seminar.

When asked about the benefits of the event, the Shepherds said: “Often times, we as railroad professionals are tasked with the arduous process of deciphering regulations. Some of these are easy to understand, while others can only be interpreted by the lawyers that wrote them. Events like this allow us to get answers to the hard-to-understand regulations, sometimes even shedding light on misconceptions.”

Service Assurance Team gets served

Service Assurance leaders Stu Towner, senior vice president, Jeff Liggett, vice president, and Ron Spencer, director of customer service, credit and collections, all donned their chef’s hats to serve up a big thank you to their teams on September 18th. The Customer Service, Invoicing, Credit and Collections, Fleet, Storage, and Car Hire teams at the Pittsburg, Kansas, office were all treated to a lunch of Caribbean Jerk chicken, beans and salad. Rebekah Garner, manager of revenue accounting, and Kris Bollinger, manager fleet and car hire, worked behind the scenes getting the food ready and then April Summit, manager of revenue accounting, Courtney Burks, manager customer service, Jennifer May, assistant manager customer service, and Bryan Pitts, manager - fleet and storage, set up and helped serve the meal as well.

Jessica Swafford, revenue account specialist, said, “It was nice that the management team took the time to thank us for what we do by serving us as we serve our Customers.”

The departments have undergone some big changes lately, including a move over to the west building.

“We really wanted to thank everyone for the successful move, positive attitudes, and for the great service to our Customers and operations groups that the teams provide on a daily basis,” said Spencer.

Towner added, “This is a very small gesture to show our appreciation to the team for their dedication to the One Watco Team message. They have been very positive with all of the changes that have occurred, and they have really stepped up and built some great relationships with our teams at the profit centers and our external customers. We look forward to continuing the momentum and achieving even greater successes by having One Team all putting maximum efforts in the same direction.”
Western Australia Railroad holds safety exercise

On the August 13th, 2015 Watco WA Rail (WWAR), in conjunction with local Fire and Emergency Services Australia (FESA) Volunteers, held an emergency exercise at the maintenance facility at Avon Yard, Northam Western Australia. The exercise involved the simulation of a level crossing accident in which one of the services struck a vehicle, resulting in the injured driver of the public vehicle being trapped and one of the train crew members being unconscious. The exercise nearly did not happen as the FESA members were called out to an emergency about 5 minutes before the exercise was about to start. Thankfully, the incident was not serious and the exercise was able to commence.

The exercise was undertaken as a part of the regulatory requirement to simulate and test emergency procedures and give the team members real-life exposure to what to expect in the event of a crisis. The exercise included all parties involved in train, track, and public safety management and treated the event as “real life”.

Brian Spratt commented that, “Whilst it simulated a serious situation, it was good to be involved in this exercise, because it demonstrated to me how serious the FESA team takes their job and the intensity of what they do to help people involved in accidents.”

Spratt continued, ‘I was in the car and had to be cutout with the “Jaws of Life”. I now have an appreciation of the team and the structured approach these people take, including the paramedics and firefighters that help people when these incidents occur. It was quite intense, and it was a very worthwhile experience for myself and all others involved because we now understand how important it is to be prepared for these type of events.”

Watco Locomotive Drivers Stephen Rose and Peter Turnbull simulated an emergency radio call to Brookfield Rail train control, who then contacted FESA of the emergency. Within minutes, both the fire brigade and ambulance were on site and swinging into action doing what they do best. Elements of the emergency procedure that were tested were the safety of the team members, preservation of evidence, site control, Alcohol and Drug testing of the train crew, accuracy of critical information communicated between the key internal team members, controlling communications to Customers, government authorities, and the media, and the recovery plan to get operations up and running again.

David Rankine, vice president of safety, said, “The most important part of any emergency management plan was the preparedness of the team and their understanding of their individual obligations to manage an emergency situation. This can only be achieved by regularly testing both the plan and the individuals responsible for executing it. Ironically, the very next day one of our services struck a car at a level crossing. Thankfully it was an abandoned vehicle, though the team was ready to respond and knew exactly what they needed to do.”

Grant Thompson, chief operating officer, stated that one of WWAR’s key identified risks is an incident involving the public, “This was a valuable exercise in not only reinforcing the importance of team work across the various disciplines in WWAR, but it tests the safety management procedures we have in place to mitigate the impact of such an event.”

Furthermore, it also gave WWAR the opportunity to thank the dedicated FESA volunteers who provide their valuable time in regional locations such as Northam, two of which are WWAR team members at our Northam depot, Greg Montgomery and David Oemcke. Volunteers are critical to ensuring these support services continue to operate around the country.

A big thank you goes out to the team members who made this possible and participated in the exercise.

PTTR
PAINT THE TOWN RED

Team members at the Pittsburg, Kansas, office celebrated Paint the Town Red day by decorating the building in Pittsburg State University colors.

Galena Park Safety

The Galena Park Switching Team celebrated their third safety anniversary on September 24, 2015. The team celebrated with a dinner at Houston’s top ten restaurant Pappas Meat Company.

The team contributes their success to strong commitments on safety and the fact that each team member looks out for themselves and others. Every team member, new and old, has contributed to the facility’s success.

David Gibson, location manager, said, “I’m proud of my guys and how they work together as a team. This focus on teamwork is why our safety record is what it is.”

Special recognition should go out to senior team members Rafael Hernandez, Arnold Sandoval, and Dennis Sawyer who have been with the Galena Park Team since it first opened.

Galena Park Team Members celebrated their three year injury-free mark in September. Top left: Juan Picazo, Dennis Sawyer, Johnathon Trusler, and Adrian Richard. Bottom left: Neil Arredondo, Rafael Hernandez, and Arnold Sandoval
Because of the Customer First Foundation Principles at Watco Companies, team members are always looking for new and innovative ways to provide the best services possible. With this in mind, Service Assurance Team members made a four-day visit to the Wisconsin & Southern Railroad (WSOR) in Madison and Janesville, Wisconsin.

The Service Assurance Team is made up of team members from many different departments: Revenue Accounting, Customer Service, Fleet Management, Storage, Car Accounting, Credit and Collections, and Pricing Administration. They offer direct support for most of Watco’s profit centers and interact with crews, Customers, and other team members on an hourly basis most days.

“We work to support anything and everything that is asked of us,” stated Revenue Accounting Specialist Jeffrey Linville.

In an effort to better serve the Customers, members of the Service Assurance Team rode on the G757 Gavilon unit train and visited the Gavilon Grain storage facility.

“We got to see first-hand how the crews serve the Customer as well as experience switching the train in,” said Linville. “It was interesting to see and understand what is happening and where any snags can occur in those situations.”

Brenna Prestholt, senior collections administrator, was also a part of the team that went to Wisconsin. She was happy that they were able to interact directly with the team members and Customers there. “I think that our Customers really appreciate the hard work that our team puts forth for them. There is a difference between hearing about a specific rail car movement and the charges that go along with it, but actually seeing the car move definitely puts things into perspective.”

Along with riding on the train, team members sat in on an operational and marketing meeting to listen in on problems being solved and what sort of issues the profit centers and Customers deal with daily. They also met with Customers and talked face-to-face about current issues and how to resolve them.

Prestholt said of the meetings: “This gave us the opportunity to discuss issues that need attention internally with both marketing and operations. We were able to address problems and work toward solutions. Being able to meet with our on-site team also helped break down communication barriers and build a trusting relationship.”

“We received a lot of positive feedback from the Customers,” Prestholt added. “They were happy with the services we have been providing and the improvements we have made all through the revenue pipeline.”

The purpose of the trip was to help build relationships and improve communication from everyone’s perspective; and moving forward, the team hopes that it will benefit many profit centers.

“This is a model that we hope to continue to support and engage teams in the field with direct understanding of what opportunities are out there for all of us to improve processes,” said Linville.

He continued: “The WSOR was the first profit center, but in the coming year many of the profit centers under Watco will be visited. We hope these kinds of trips will turn into valuable resources to help our team members in the field and our Customers.”

KO Team Members Go Wild

by Michaela Kinyon
Communications Intern

On Saturday, August 29th, team members of the Kansas & Oklahoma Railroad (KO) and their families took an exciting trip to Tanganyika Wildlife Park outside Wichita in Goddard, Kansas. A grand total of 150 people attended the event in order to celebrate the end of the Summer Spike Safety Program.

Jimmy Patterson, KO general manager, planned the event. Two years ago, the KO team went to a baseball game, but last year they went to the zoo and had great feedback from it, so he decided to stick with that theme. This year he booked the event with the Wildlife Park rather than the zoo, because not only can guests see the animals, Tanganyika allows guests to have hands-on interaction with kangaroos, ring-tailed lemurs, giraffes, and others. A bearcat was also brought out for team members to pet, and there were other animals the guests could only admire though, such as white tigers, African penguins, monkeys, and more.

“I think everyone really liked it,” Patterson stated. “Any company event is always better if you can bring your family along and spend time together.”

He went on to say that the best part was the uniqueness of the event in being able to interact with the animals, rather than just looking at them from afar.

The park was open to the team members from 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., and the KO had barbecue catered as a buffet for the families. Luckily, none of the animals present at the park where on the menu.

In conjunction with that, the TSIC committee had a drawing for a Craftsman Cordless Drill, which was won by Jeffrey Robertson, a trackman from Salina.

Jim Blevins, chairman of the TSIC, described Robertson’s surprise at the result, as he was not able to be present that day.

“When I told him he won the drawing, he was surprised and told me he didn’t enter any drawings,” Blevins said. “I told him you entered when you worked all of Summer Spike free of safety incidents.”

When asked what he was going to do with the drill, Robertson stated, “My wife keeps telling me she wants a new ceiling in the house, now I don’t have an excuse not to do it.”

Patterson and the other team members present were quite happy with how the event turned out. He said, “This is a great opportunity for everybody to get away from work for a day and spend some time celebrating our successes.”
Births

Adalynn Grace Meadows

Clinton and Amber Meadows are proud to announce the birth of a baby girl, Adalynn Grace, on August 11, 2015. Adalynn weighed 7 lbs., 12 oz., and was 20 inches long.

Adalynn was welcomed home by big brother Cayden who is five years old.

Clinton is a switchman/crew leader at Houston’s Texas Petro Chemical location. Grandpa is Ron Jackson, who is also a switchman/crew leader at Houston TPC.

Pitts, Salvador Sanchez, Keith Schepp, Robert Sullivan, Derrick Williams
5 Years: Miguel Auces, Timothy Dykes, William Gray, Charles Montgomery, Jonathan Randall, William Sorensen, Brandon Stewart
6 Years: Rebekah Bolton, Merlin Bridge, Joseph Carlucci, Chad Davis, Joseph Degenstein, Kevin Flamang, William Hill, Donovan Hudson, Elvis Johns, Todd Johnson, Gerry Knutson, Peter Pappas, Aaron Pattee, Brian Pitt, Joel Reeder, Stephen Smith, Michael Toler, Dion Weichel
7 Years: Sherrie Baykowski, Bert Clover, Lucas Conrad, James Culbertson, Guy Evans, Troy Forbes, Michael Harris, Jon Johnson, Sharon Novotni, Albert Perez, Justin Ray
8 Years: Russell Antonucci, Jana Austerman, Billy Barton, Ryan Gordon, Duane Hinchliffe, Amanda Santana, James Schneider, Jason Seger, Sterling Teague
9 Years: Gregory Baker, Teni Kinyon, Karl Meyer
10 Years: Christopher Brotzmann, Jeffery Hoagland, Scotty Presley, Thomas Scherzer, Delia Winegarner
11 Years: Galen Dyck, Bo Fox, Travis Herod, Myron Kilburn, Christopher Nielsen, Christian Reid, Debra Spencer, Jereud Uscola
12 Years: Jeff Baum, David Hambrick, Kyle Kozman
13 Years: William Czapla
14 Years: Scott Lynam, James Wren
16 Years: Lisa Berry, Randy Hartley
18 Years: Donald Brau, Becky Fearnormt, Heath Morgan
19 Years: Ivan Ferrin, Silvio Gomez, Phillip Lee, Edward Moore
20 Years: Steven Korell
21 Years: Lori Magee
22 Years: Carl McCartney
23 Years: Brian Daentl, Bruce Huerter, Craig Stansbury
24 Years: Danny Bary, Tony Clark
25 Years: Kevin Welshans
27 Years: Michael Allen, Franklin Miller
28 Years: William Coble, Ralph Ferrebee, Michael Noss
30 Years: Keith Lacaze
31 Years: James Nichols, Mark Turner
32 Years: Phillip Penner
34 Years: David Turner
35 Years: Kimberly Bourgeois
38 Years: Mario Marghella
39 Years: Medric Hayes

Adalynn Grace Meadows

Easton Ray Dickey

Chance and Jordan Dickey are proud to announce the birth of a son, Easton Ray Dickey. Easton was born on September 10, 2015. He weighed 6 lbs., 15 oz., and was 20 inches long.

Grandparents are David and Nancy Dickey, and Jody Lindsey and the late Daniel Henegar. Grandma Nancy works in the Pittsburg office as a corporate AR Coordinator.

Easton Ray Dickey
Anthony's Ride held for Watco's biggest fan

Family and friends boarded a special train on September 5th to honor the memory of Anthony Martinez, 5, who drowned in a kayaking accident in July.

Anthony’s cousin Amanda Warner works in the Watco corporate offices in Pittsburg, Kansas, and helped organize the ride. Her boyfriend, Ethan Reed, works as a train conductor in Cherryvale and Coffeyville, Kansas, and Anthony had looked up to Ethan and always wanted to be with him. The more Ethan and Anthony talked about the railroad, the more excited Anthony became, even saying that someday he wanted to work for Watco Companies and be a train conductor like Ethan.

Ethan had promised that he would ask Watco CEO Rick Webb if he could take Anthony on his first train ride, and every time Anthony saw him, he would ask if he could still ride a train. Little did they know that their lives would change forever with the loss of Anthony on July 25th.

However, Ethan and Amanda did not lose hope, still wanting to give Anthony his first train ride, and on the afternoon of September 5th, a train ride was held in honor of his wonderful life and his enthusiasm for trains.

Warner said, “Even though Anthony was not physically present, he would have enjoyed every second of it, and he was surely smiling down on us all.”

She added, “For those who knew Anthony, every step through life will not be quite as easy now that he is gone, but it can only make them stronger. The outpouring of love and support shown during this difficult time with the loss of Anthony has been incredible, and we will be forever grateful. On behalf of the family, I would like to thank Rick Webb, our Watco family, and every person who has made this possible. I would also like to thank our friends and even strangers who have been here for our family and have continued to offer their prayers. We know when times get rough we need to be ‘Anthony Strong’.”

Roanoke Terminal Team celebrates two years injury-free

by Molly Henneke
Contributing Writer

The Roanoke Terminal Team in Virginia recently celebrated its two-year safety anniversary with a luncheon cookout that included hamburgers, hotdogs, and dessert provided by terminal manager, Bradley Beckner. Beckner believes that the success that the team has as a whole comes from the close working relationship everyone has with each other and the hard work everyone puts in day after day.

Beckner stated, “I believe with the attitude of all team members we can continue into the future with the same success that we have had in the past two years. I believe everyone deserves the recognition for making this success happen, and without all the teamwork and dedication, this would not happen.”

The Roanoke Terminal Team stands out because of its dedication of all team members and their approach to safety in every task that is asked of them. In addition, the team works together and helps out all team members when needed and that’s a big reason that all operations flow smoothly each and every day. Senior members of the Roanoke team include, Danelle Kenny and Daniel Brunk who both have four years of service.