Chicago is home to a number of teams, the Bears, Blackhawks, Cubs, Sox, and Bulls. On November 23rd Watco added a new team to the mix: the Cicero Central Railroad Team. Watco’s 35th short line is delivering railcars from the Koppers, Inc., Stickney, Illinois location to the Canadian National Railway (CN).

Team members serving the facility are Mike Galligan, Jason Thurman, and Greg Anderson. Mike serves as the site leader with Pat McPhillips, PCS Hammond terminal manager, serving as the general manager. The CERR’s responsibilities will include switching, spotting railcars, minor railcar repairs, and track inspection services. Any mechanical services that are needed will be provided by Watco as well.

Brian Cosby, vice president of operations, said, “This railroad is unique in that we will be providing diversified services from many of our different areas. We will all work together to provide the best Customer Service experience to our Customer.”

The Stickney Plant is just 16 minutes from the center of Chicago, one of the biggest rail hubs in America. The plant was engineered and constructed in 1920-21. The Stickney Plant is capable of converting various crude tars into liquid pitch and other liquid products such as creosote, refined tars, chemical oils and various grades of coal tar pitch.

John Gogniat, vice president of sales and marketing, worked with Koppers and CN on the opportunity. He said, “Our partnership with the Customer is another example of Watco working to satisfy a Customer need and doing so in a win-win manner.”

With this in mind, Aspen Transportation was the perfect company to acquire in order to assist in the services WSCS already provides. Aspen provides domestic transportation management services, including multi-mode freight brokerage, dimensional, and project cargo coordination. The business will continue operations under the name of Aspen Transportation.

In a recent press release, president of WSCS Eric Wolfe stated, “Aspen Transportation is a great company, and their success has been achieved because of the experienced and professional team members who have a track record of providing unparalleled service to their valued, long-standing Customers.”

Stephanie Mize, the Branch Manager at Aspen Transportation admits she was scared, as most are during an ownership transition, however she had this to say, “Our team members are in complete awe of the warm reception from Watco Leadership and Team Members that we have met thus far. Having been quickly introduced to the Customer First Foundation Principles, it is evident how they permeate the entire culture and way of business. The Aspen Team is grateful and proud to have been adopted into the Watco Family!”
Ribbon cutting held for opening of WSOR's Sheboygan Sub

By Ken Lucht
Director of Government Relations

Wisconsin & Southern Railroad’s (WSOR) commitment to Customers and Community Partnerships was celebrated as more than 150 community members, local and state officials, and representatives of private businesses officially “re-activated” the railroad corridor between Plymouth and Kohler, Wisconsin, which is now called WSOR’s New Sheboygan Falls Subdivision. As part of the celebration, special remarks were made by Secretary Mark Gottlieb of the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, Mayor Don Pohlman of the City of Plymouth, Mayor Randy Meyer of the City of Sheboygan Falls, Vice-Chairman Tom Wegner of Sheboygan County, and Michael Stelter representing Bemis Manufacturing. Following, was an official ribbon cutting and photo op with WSOR 3928 in the background ready to kick-off her maiden voyage to Sheboygan Falls.

After the ceremony, WSOR 3928 headed to Sheboygan Falls to deliver its first load of plastic to Bemis Manufacturing in Sheboygan Falls in almost 10 years. Prior to that, Bemis Manufacturing would receive its inbound plastic from the Union Pacific Railroad from the east. However, in 2006 the line from the east was embargoed and service discontinued indefinitely.

After the western section of this railroad line had been sitting idle for more than two decades, the line was acquired by the State of Wisconsin in 2008. Due to the adverse socio-economic impacts of loss of rail service, a public/private partnership was formed including the State of Wisconsin, Sheboygan County, City of Plymouth, City of Sheboygan Falls, many local businesses, and the

A crowd of dignitaries led by Secretary Mark Gottlieb gathered to “cut the ribbon” to kick-off the reopening of the Sheboygan Falls Subdivision.

WSOR 3928 and 3804 spotting the first loads of plastic to Bemis Manufacturing in 10 years on the reopened Sheboygan Falls Subdivision.

“Have a Safe and Happy New Year!”

Watco Terminal & Port Services Receives 2015 Best of Rockford Award

by Tracie VanBecelaere
Managing Editor

Congratulations to the Watco Terminal and Port Services Team in Rockford, Illinois on being selected for the 2015 Best of Rockford Award in the Railroad Company category by the Rockford Award Program. Each year, the Rockford Award Program identifies companies that they believe have achieved exceptional marketing success in their local community and business category. Rockford is the third largest city in the state of Illinois. The winners are local companies that enhance the positive image of small business through service to their customers and the community.

A press release sent out by the Rockford Rewards Program states, “These exceptional companies help make the Rockford area a great place to live, work and play.”

Bob Cunningham, terminal manager, said, “The WTPS Rockford team is honored to be the recipient of this award. We are dedicated to providing safe and reliable services to Watco, our Customers, and the City of Rockford at all times.”

The team at Rockford unloads, stores, and reloads building materials from railcars to trucks and vice versa. Lumber, steel, agricultural products, and crane mats are common products handled at the facility.

The Rockford area is home to some of the largest companies in the country and has a diverse economy. The Rockford Award Program recognizes these companies for their commitment to their customers and the community.

“I want to specially thank Brent Marsh, Dave Bierman, Todd Mulrooney, and Matt Meekma for providing the leadership necessary for a project of this scope,” he added.

The primary commodities hauled on the Sheboygan Falls Subdivision will include inbound plastic and fertilizer, with service being provided two to three days per week based on Customer demand. The 10-mile line will operate at maximum track speed of 25 mph and is capable of hauling 286,000 lbs. gross weight on rail.

Joe Via, WSOR general manager said, “The WSOR is honored to be part of this effort to meet the continuing demand of Wisconsin’s economy and looks forward to providing other transportation solutions in East Central Wisconsin.”

Members of the Rockford, Ill., Team are (l-r): Bob Cunningham, Carla Wilson, Will Sorensen III, Carla Wilson, and Ryan Roos.

Each category. The 2015 Rockford Award Program focuses on quality of service, not quantity.
San Antonio Central Railroad assists in strong performance of East Kelly Railport

by Tracie VanBeceelaere
Managing Editor

When Watco started up the San Antonio Central Railroad (SAC) in 2012, the goal was to make an investment in infrastructure at the East Kelly Railport in the Port of San Antonio to help grow the business. Almost immediately the investment paid off, and for the last three years, the railroad has moved more than 9,690 railcars per year. The Railport’s 2015 fiscal year concluded on September 30th, and the numbers reflect a fourfold growth at the Railport since its first year of operations in 2008.

Watco Companies played an essential role in the Railport’s growth when beginning operations at the Railport by doubling track at East Kelly from four to eight miles, and adding a new spur that allows the handling of unit trains (approximately 100 railcars at a time)

Refugio Team helps provide a safe Halloween

by Jessica Cancino
WTPS Refugio, Administrative Assistant

The Refugio, Texas, Terminal Team has made it an annual event to go downtown to the Refugio County Safe Zone for Halloween. To keep Halloween safe, the Refugio Police Department blocks off a section of road downtown, and local businesses hand out candy to the youngsters.

This year the Refugio Team put together 200 candy bags to hand out. The team members that handed out candy were Hilda Morin, assistant terminal manager, Jessica Cancino, administrative assistant, and Evan Klaevemann, switchman.

It was so much fun and we really enjoyed seeing so many creative kids with their parents. One of my favorites was a little boy dressed as a Lego! His outfit was made from cardboard boxes and blue solo cups, it was adorable.

We can’t wait to see what next year’s holiday brings out in these kids that participate in the event.

Loving Angels Club shares its bounty with Loving families

by Barbara Blankenship
CSR, Loving, New Mexico

Once again, Watco’s Loving Angels Club opened its arms to benefit its neighbors. This time ten families in Loving, New Mexico can be assured that a traditional Thanksgiving feast will grace their tables. The Loving Angels was founded to provide an outlet for members of Watco Terminal & Port Services in Loving, to help make a difference in the lives of residents in the nearby village of Loving, New Mexico. Community efforts so far have included gifts of Easter Baskets to the students at Loving Elementary School, participating in a golf scramble to benefit Loving sports, and, just in time for the students to return to class this past September, The Loving Angels presented containers filled with classroom supplies to each teacher at the Elementary School.

November’s project consisted of ensuring ten families had all the ingredients needed to create a traditional Thanksgiving feast.

“I have a truly great group of team members who are willing to help with The Loving Angels projects,” said Loving Angels leader, David Elizalde, “It is truly a blessing to be able to share with our neighbors, and I really appreciate the Team Members stepping up and helping the community and making this project a real success.”

“Just knowing that 10 families will be able to celebrate a truly American holiday makes our efforts worthwhile,” Elizalde continued.

Club member, Barbara Blankenship adds, “The Loving Angels is a tremendous outlet for our efforts to give back to the community, something that is so very important for any enterprise. Through the club, we are able to coordinate our efforts to really make a difference in our neighbors’ lives.”

The sense of community involvement has spread to area businesses as well. B&R Trucking, Inc., and Bobeaux Trucking and Oilfield Services opened their hearts with financial contributions, enabling Loving Angels to expand efforts from a handful of families to ten.

“We couldn’t have accomplished this without the generosity of our business friends,” said Elizalde. “They really stepped up to the plate when we asked them for help. Our business friends are simply the best!”

Alberto Ornales setting up a station in side the Loving, NM Elementary school gym to hand out the turkey baskets.

Alberto Ornales and his brother Cruz Ornales (who works at the Elementary School) bringing in the turkey baskets in to the gym.

Vickie Martinez, the Principles assistant, Cruz Ornales, employee of the school, and Lea Meza, CSR at Watco and a Loving Angels event coordinator.
Positive Train Control testing begins on the Pacific Sun Railroad

by Michaela Kinyon
Contributing Writer

This past month, testing on the new Positive Train Control (PTC) system began on the Pacific Sun Railroad (PSRR). This comes in the wake of The Rail Safety Improvement Act of 2008, which requires all railroads to install this system by December of 2015, inciting some controversy in the rail world.

The Act was passed after a tragic accident in Los Angeles, in which a MetroLink passenger train collided with a freight train, killing 25. The act requires all trains to put in the PTC system, a computer that enters the information about a particular train into an advanced algorithm. If the system shows that an engineer is driving the train too quickly or something is wrong, it will slow or stop the train entirely.

The government mandate stated that all locomotives need to have this system installed by December 2015. Recently an extension was granted, given that most railroads would not be able to meet the deadline. Class 1 railroads are to have the PTC system installed by December 31st, 2018, and short line railroads have until December 31st, 2020.

However, Class 1 railroads expect that the short line roads they intersect with to meet the 2018 deadline as well, forcing smaller railroads to equip the system prior to the mandated date. Due to this, the PTC system has been equipped and tested on three PSRR locomotives, with two more being installed on the Kaw River Railroad.

However, there is a lot of controversy surrounding the mandate and whether or not it will actually prevent accidents. Jeff Liggett, vice president of Service Assurance, isn’t sure the implementation of this system is a good idea, as it requires a great deal of capital and little proven benefit.

“Watco’s current expenditure for this system is under 10 million, but it will increase operation expenses by at least seven figures per year,” Liggett said. “Industry analysts also think the velocity of railroads will drop by 17% when PTC is fully operational.”

The issue at hand is whether the PTC system will actually prevent accidents and increase safety, an integral part of Watco’s mission. Liggett does not think so.

Others see some hope in the PTC systems. Larry Jensen, senior vice president and CMO of Watco Transportation Services, says of the system, “Overall, the future of PTC will improve safety in areas where railroads have the highest risk, which is on Class 1 railroad tracks.”

When asked about the most challenging part of the transition, Jensen stated, “The installation is the easy part, but the communications behind the scenes is harder, because short line railroads need to interface with the Class 1 carriers. We have to be able to communicate to them, then they send us the information we need for the locomotives about their tracks, the breaking algorithms, and the tracking details for each specific territory.”

“Perhaps the money could be put somewhere else to better ensure safety,” Jensen continued. “However, we want to do everything we can to ensure the safety of team members and the public on our railroads. Time will tell whether this will reduce risk to the public.”

Jensen, along with the rest of the railroad industry, hopes that it will.

WSOR Team Members perform quarterly bridge repairs

by Michaela Kinyon
Contributing Writer

Nothing is more important to ensure safety than the maintaining of tracks along the various lines that Watco Companies operates on, and the team members at the Wisconsin & Southern Railroad (WSOR) are doing an excellent job of keeping this in mind. This past month, the team members went to work on the Spring Green Bridge, which at 2,197 feet long, is the railroad’s longest bridge crossing over the Wisconsin River.

In order to combat the expansion and contraction of the bridge due to changing temperatures, the WSOR Team Members have to adjust the bridge four times a year by either adding or subtracting the rail length as needed throughout the seasons. The Spring Green Bridge, having been built in the early 1900’s is nearing the end of its usable life; however, the team members are doing what they can in order to extend its usefulness for as long as possible.

“The WSOR track and bridge crews have worked diligently over the last few years to extend the life of this bridge for the safe passage of our Boscobel and Prairie du Chien Customers,” stated Roger Schaalma, Superintendent of MOW. The process of repairing this bridge is simple in theory, but challenging in practice, requiring a great deal of attention from those who participated. “First, we push the rail west, closing all the gaps between the rail,” said Bridge Inspector Evan Groth, “When we get to the east end of the bridge, we reverse the pusher and then pull the rails back together, placing wood shims in the open rail joints to slow the movement of the rail.”

The bridge connects the west side of Wisconsin to the Madison, Wisconsin area and moves a great deal of sand and grain along its line. “Track and bridge inspectors watch the bridge all year, and when they see signs of trouble, we all get together and push the rail back to the west,” said Groth. According to Schaalma, the bridge will probably need replacing in the upcoming years, a project that is estimated to cost $13 million. In the meantime, however, the crew at the WSOR is doing an excellent job of ensuring that the engineers, goods, and Customers are safe along the bridge.
Austin Western Railroad hit by floods

by Tracie VanBecelaere
Managing Editor

Texas is not a state that is known for its massive amounts of rainfall, but on October 30th, the skies opened up over the Austin area and the downpour began. The rain resulted in devastating flooding throughout much of the Austin area, with rain measurements at 11.6” to almost 13” in just a six-hour period. Weather reporters stated it was the most rain recorded in Austin in such a short time period. The Austin Western Railroad (AWRR) fell victim to the flooding and suffered from several washouts and service delays. The East Subdivision was out for seven days and Customers impacted were Oldcastle, Darling International, Plain States Commodities, Balcones Recycling, Century Asphalt, and Hanson. The 32-mile sub runs from Austin Junction to Butler. Watco’s largest Customer on the line, Oldcastle, came to the rescue with truckloads of rock from their quarry to help build back up the areas where the washouts occurred.

Marketing Manager Tim Enayati said, “It was great to see the team work together with the support of our Customer Oldcastle and get the line back in operation so quickly with more than 20 washouts.”

General Manager Kevin Harris added, “I would like to thank Oldcastle, contractors, and our MOW Team for all of their hard work getting the East Sub back into service as quickly as they did. Everyone worked safe and put in long hours in order to get the track back in service ahead of schedule.”

AA Team Member receives Customer "BEST" recognition

by Tracie VanBecelaere
Managing Editor

Watco can say without a doubt that there are some pretty amazing people working for the company. However, it’s icing on the cake when a Customer validates that by recognizing one of our team members for their outstanding service. Rhonda S. Slough works in rail administration for Marathon Petroleum Company LP and sent a note to Rick Kelly, Ann Arbor trainmaster, letting him know that she was very appreciative of the assistance he provided with some billing issues that were occurring.

Slough wrote, “I want to express my sincere appreciation for your help...”Above and Beyond” with the problems/errors we have experienced recently with our billing to the Ann Arbor Railroad. You have stepped up twice recently, going the extra mile, to get billing corrected so that our cars would not be delayed. Thank you! Thank you! THANK YOU!”

Right: Ann Arbor Railroad Trainmaster Rick Kelly. Far right: The "BEST" filled out for Kelly on his exceptional service.

Slough added, “In my organization at Marathon Petroleum we have a recognition program. We have the opportunity to hand out “BEST” cards that are redeemable for prizes. I realize you are not at Marathon, but wanted to recognize your support and contributions to a culture of being the “BEST”. Attached is a scanned copy of the BEST card I am passing on to you!”

Ron Chadwick, Ann Arbor general manager, said: “Rick Kelly displays this type of dedication in everything he does and is just one example of the Great Team we have helping the Ann Arbor Railroads commitment to our customers.”

Support is the key to Swan Ranch growth

by Tracie VanBecelaere
Managing Editor

The team at the Swan Ranch Railroad (SRRR) saw an increase in revenue in September when they began repairing railcars for our Customer Vestas, a wind energy company. That increase was due in part to the support they received from their director team. Keith Green, SRRR general manager, said, “The help and support we received from our director team has been tremendous in helping us get the equipment and training needed to do the job. It’s made a huge difference in our ability to serve the Customer.”

Dan Paul, director of corporate railcar services, went to the SRRR and provided training to the team who had formerly worked on light repairs. They are now able to provide additional services due to the training Paul provided.

Steve Coomes, senior vice president of operations, said, “What makes the work the Swan Ranch Team has done even more impressive is the enthusiasm they exhibited in making it happen. They have placed Watco in a very favorable position to grow as a business partner in the future.”

There are two full time team members dedicated to the car repairs at the Swan Ranch, Jonathan Brady and Heidi Clites, supervisor.

Vestes is a new Customer who will be using unit train service and switching along with the car repair piece.
TPC Dick Webb Yard undergoes expansion

by Tracie VanBecelaere
Managing Editor

Just four short years ago, a ribbon cutting was held in Houston, Texas, for the TPC Dick Webb Yard. Watco's Customer, TPC Group, dedicated the yard at their location in honor the founder of Watco Companies. Recently, like Webb's company, the yard has seen increased growth and Watco's Project Management Team assisted in the expansion project to increase the yard's capacity.

The Project Management Team consists of three different divisions: Engineering, Estimating, and Construction. The Engineering Team of John and Drew White designed the expansion and then handed off the project to the Estimating and Accounting Team of John Ostrander, Paul Leonards, and Alicia Stimpson. Once the financial side of the project was in place, the Construction Team of Marcus McCalman and Chance Adair took over and completed the project. From start to finish, the project took five months.

Chance Adair, project manager, said, "Thanks to the operations team, everything went very smoothly. They accommodated for all of our needs, and we were able to get in and out in order to meet our deadlines."

The project started with a conversation between the Customer and David Bader, Watco's regional manager for switching. Gary Henneke, TCP Group's logistics and transportation contracts manager, met with Bader to discuss the increased traffic at the current facility and the need to expand to accommodate for the growth. Once they had determined the basic plan, the Project Management Team was called in to complete the process.

The Dick Webb Yard expansion included the addition of three storage tracks, one bad order track, rehabbing the existing lead track (Bayer Lead), the replacement of an existing crossing at the plant's main entrance at Goodyear Drive, and adding lighting to the yard.

The different aspects of the project included:

**Yard Expansion:** Dirt work was performed in the portion of this project. This included cutting the existing area down to sub-grade, hauling in sub-ballast to create a stable track bed, cutting out and grading drainage ditches, installing drainage pipes and inlets, and the demolition of pre-existing concrete foundations.

**Storage Tracks:** The track portion of the project was adding three new storage tracks, adding three new switches and one bad order track. The Storage tracks were added to help the Customer bring in more product to expand their business and product output. Adding the bad order track allows Watco's rail repair team to perform repairs on cars to allow the Customer to get the cars unloaded and shipped back out.

**Bayer Lead:** Watco's Project Management Team was able to expand the project under the original budget to rehab the existing lead track off the UP mainline to the existing yard and new expansion tracks. Ties were replaced, gauge was checked and corrected, gauge rods were added in the curve sections, the track was lifted 10" to allow for proper drainage, and regulated to finish up the rehab.

**Crossing Replacement:** At the intersection of Goodyear Drive and Bayer Lead, there was a need for a new crossing. The Project Management Team prepared a plan of action and presented this to the TPC Group in order to replace the crossing at night in order to provide the Customer with an updated crossing that could better handle their increase volume of truck traffic bringing product in and out of the facility.

**Yard Lighting:** The Project Management Team received a request for better lighting from the switching team that switches the Dick Webb Yard for the TPC Group. The Project Management Team worked out some savings with in the original budget to allow LED lighting to be added to the project to make the yard safer for the Watco team members that switch the yard at night.

With the new addition, the capacity of the Dick Webb Yard is 182 tank cars with the new tracks. There are a total of 13 tracks including one repair track. There is enough room to almost double the size of the yard if the Customer would ever require this capacity increase.

Ron Close, Watco's senior vice president of strategic sourcing, said, "All of our projects are unique but this one was very special to us, as it was named after our founder. We take pride in all of our projects, but this one was special because of the connection to Dick. It was a great example of how Watco works together; operations, business development, and the project management teams all worked together to make this project a success for our Customer. "There are too many to name but I'd like to thank everyone who played a part in this endeavour."

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Port Arthur Team celebrates safety milestone

By Molly Henneke
Contributing Writer

The Port Arthur, Texas, Terminal Team recently celebrated their four-year safety anniversary with a luncheon at Outback Steakhouse. The team chose the location, and they will also be receiving jackets and hats for their achievement. The Port Arthur Team attributes their success to being a close-knit team with good communication skills.

Terminal Manager Brad Bowden further explained, "Communication is very important at our site. We use a crane with a clam bucket and other heavy equipment where flagging is essential. Because the operators cannot see certain aspects of the jobsite and are basically working blind, you have to know specific terminology so the operator knows exactly what, when, and how to operate. Teammates need to be aware of words that can be interpreted differently by different people and not use them. Everything must be deliberate, clearly communicated, and properly executed to prevent injury or damage."

"There needs to be good communication between our teammates and our Customer as we work with them during the unloading process. It is especially important because everyone's safety training, procedures, and skill levels differ, which is why jobs need to be discussed and hazards and areas of confusion identified. A plan to mitigate must be applied until everyone involved with the job understands the plan and knows that if something becomes unclear, or some new or unthought of hazard presents itself, to shut the job down and re-evaluate the situation."

The team is also blessed to have many team members with several years of experience in field work.

Bowden said, "I think being able to retain quality team members with a lot of years of service is the biggest driver of our success. Most of our team has seven to ten years of continuous on-site experience."

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A part of the TPC Dick Webb Yard's expansion included these four completed tracks. The bad order track is on the left with the three storage tracks to the right.

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Port Arthur Team members celebrating their four year safety anniversary (l-r): Richard Farley, Lawrence Spradley Jr., Nandia Holmes, Ty Fuller, Brad Bowden, and Willie Ackley. Not pictured are Doug Linscomb and Geron Crotwel.
Deaths

Martin David Whittaker
18th January 1964 – 15th October 2015

Martin was born and raised in the North of England, UK. It wasn’t until October 1990, at the age of 26, that he embarked on a trip to Australia with a good friend. Martin ended up settling in Western Australia and found himself working for several different engineering firms in and around Perth – the last company being his own venture where he gained good local recognition for his quality workmanship. He married Rebecca in October of 2001 who, in May 2008, gave birth to baby Emily Rose.

Having always had a love for everything ‘rail’ from a young age, Martin secured his dream job as a Trainee Engineman with Watco WA Rail in October 2012 – not long after the company formed. He fulfilled his dream by being passed out as a qualified Engineman on June 22nd, 2014. Every time we spoke, he couldn’t believe that someone was actually paying him to drive trains for a living – “…it was an absolute dream come true,” he would say, in his thick and welcoming Northern English accent. Martin took pride in everything he did and was highly thought of amongst the WWAR Team.

Unfortunately, he fell ill in October of 2014 which was followed by an intense treatment program. Almost daily return trips from the family home down to Perth (some 200kms) would have been enough to drive anyone to despair, but Martin remained positive throughout his battle. He would visit the depot occasionally and tell us he would be good to come back soon – always looking on the bright side and getting back to the job he loved. Unfortunately, his return never eventuated, and Martin lost his battle on October 15th, 2015.

Martin was laid to rest in Northam a week later to be with his close family, friends, and colleagues in the depot occasionally and tell us he would be good to come back soon – always looking on the bright side and getting back to the job he loved. Unfortunately, his return never eventuated, and Martin lost his battle on October 15th, 2015. Martin was laid to rest in Northam a week later with his close family, friends, and colleagues in attendance.

Births

Ryder McCray Woody

David and Magen Woody are proud to announce the birth of a baby boy: Ryder McCray. Ryder was born on October 16, 2015. He weighed 8 lbs., 12 oz., and was 21 inches long.

Ryder was welcomed home by big sister Rae-gen, who is four years old. David is part of the Blue Ridge Southern Railroad MOW Team.
Tuscaloosa Team wins Championship

by Tracie VanBecelaere
Managing Editor

There have been many stories in the news lately about prayers at football games being taboo, but when Tuscaloosa Christian Warriors played the Tabernacle Christian Torches in the Christian Football Association State Championship, prayers were expected.

Todd Johns, manager of Safety and Operating Practices, has two sons that play on Tuscaloosa team, and he said, "One important thing is we still pray before the games. We gather at midfield after shaking hands and then after the game to pray together. It's a value that many have lost sight of, but we are proud that our boys still think it's important."

The Warrior's were down at half-time 22-14 to the undefeated Torches but came back to win the game 49-36. This was a well earned victory by the Warriors who lost to the Torches in the regular season 48-42.

Johns said, "We had lost to them 3 out of the last 4 times we have played them before this game. We won the state title in 2013 and returned to the Championship game last year but lost. So this was our third State Title game appearance in three years with us now winning two of the last three."

BLU Team Member ensures safety

by Michaela Kinyon
Contributing Writer

Team Members of the Blue Ridge Southern Railroad (BLU) are proud to report that one of their fellow team members is always on the lookout for their safety. Thomas Nicholson, locomotive engineer, identified a defective frog on the tracks in the Canton Yard on Thursday, November 4th. Nicholson felt it as he went over the tracks and immediately reported the error, thus allowing it to be fixed within 24 hours.

Trainmaster Jonathan Thompson, known as JT, said of Nicholson, "He could've easily gone over it and decided to go on, but he didn't even wait till the end of his shift. He just reported it."

Thompson said that it was a prime example of the company's vision of building a future that protects the Customers, the team members, and the environment.