Marketing efforts and executed operations lead to growth

By Tracie VanBecelaere
Managing Editor

Sometimes there is more to a story than meets the eye and that’s the case with the story that appeared in The Dispatch last month on the start-up of the Avondale Terminal. It’s always exciting when Watco has a new location starting up but it’s even better when it’s a result of a good relationship that has grown through the years between a customer and the company.

Kemira is one of the leading suppliers of wastewater treatment chemicals in the world and a neighbor of Watco’s Euclid, Ohio, terminal. After years of calling on them to solicit business, the commercial team was able to convince Kemira to distribute their Detroit market products through Watco’s Willis, Michigan, terminal. Jason Miron, terminal manager of Willis and six year team member, worked with Marc Massoglia, senior marketing manager, to design the intricate logistics plan including both loading and unloading services in two different railcars into one truck to create a proper blend for the end user. The complex coordination was handled safely, efficiently, and cost effectively.

When a major supplier of Kemira’s closed unexpectedly and caused a need for transloading operations vice president, and Massoglia called on Al Sauer, vice president of Regional Rail, LLC. Regional Rail operates three short lines in New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania. He was able to work with Massoglia and find a site on the East Penn Railroad that worked out for all three businesses involved.

“After scouting out several sites in Philadelphia which didn’t work out, Brian Spiller, Division A operations vice president, and Massoglia called on Al Sauer, vice president of Regional Rail, LLC. Regional Rail operates three short lines in New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania. He was able to work with Massoglia and find a site on the East Penn Railroad that worked out for all three businesses involved. The best way to grow is with existing customers and the only way that happens is because Watco’s terminal operating team delivers. They continue to provide excellent service and have, in many cases, become our best sales people,” said Massoglia. “By operations doing what they say they’re going to do, the commercial team is able to attract new customers to existing terminals and expand into new terminals with current customers.”

The story gets better. At the same location as the new transload terminal in Avondale, a liquid energy wholesaler, AMERIgreen, was already transloading their own propane from rail to truck. Massoglia and Spiller realized right away that Watco had a great opportunity to expand our Avondale terminal business by performing the transloading for them. After watching their operation, the commercial/operations team pitched the idea of Watco providing the transload service and gained the Customer’s trust by demonstrating that Watco could save AMERIgreen money while improving their safety and efficiency.

The propane transload in Avondale began in January and is growing but the story continues. Now, Massoglia and Spiller are working with AMERIgreen to establish a new terminal in upstate New York on another Regional Rail shortline.

Sauer stated, “We’ve enjoyed a good working relationship with Watco for many years and appreciated them thinking of us when this project was being put together. It was mutually beneficial to combine our resources and neither of us could’ve done this without the other party.”

Another result of both Massoglia’s drive and operation’s efforts is that Watco is actively quoting four additional Watco terminals to transload Kemira’s business.

Massoglia said, “It’s really very gratifying to expand our customer relationships and work with the other commercial team members across our system to provide solutions.”

All Aboard Foundation provides scholarship opportunities

The All Aboard Foundation is pleased to announce its new Scholarship Program that will be available to dependents of Watco Companies team members this year. Applicants for the All Aboard Foundation Scholarship must be a graduating senior who is a dependent of a Watco team member. The recipient must be in good academic standing and plan to attend a post-secondary institution within one year following high school graduation.

Scholarships will be awarded in the amount of $500 each and will be issued in two $250 disbursements for the first two semesters of college and will be credited to the recipients account at the financial aid office of the college of their choosing. The number of scholarships awarded will be determined by the number of applicants with a minimum of two awarded per year.

Applications can be found at https://goo.gl/1UMtNn. Please submit your application to info@allaboardfoundation.com on or before April 30th. A committee will review all applications and the winner(s) will be notified and announced in the June issue of The Dispatch.

The All Aboard Foundation was established to provide funding for a better quality of life in the communities in which Watco serves.
Heart of the Heartlands embraces railroad nostalgia

By Andra Bryan Stefanoni  Contributing Writer

At one time a bustling railroad hub, Carona, Kansas, is now a sleepy little burg with scarce traffic and just a few small houses. However, the town draws thousands of visitors every year. They come because they love trains. And because a group of volunteer railroad enthusiasts are doing all that they can to ensure the history of railroading is preserved.

Formed in 1991, Heart of the Heartlands, comprised of 125 to 150 members scattered from coast to coast, with the assistance of Watco Companies, maintains the Carona museum, historic depots and railroad equipment, a restored steam engine and several times a year provides short passenger train rides and motorcar excursions.

Two depots at Carona make visitors feel as if they’ve stepped into the past. The Carona Depot, built in the 1940s, was used as a passenger depot until the early 1960s. The depot was then sold and moved a quarter mile for use as a hay barn. The John Thompson family graciously donated the depot to the Heartlands organization for restoration, and it was moved closer to its original location near the track and restored with the help of many area volunteers and Heartlands members.

The Boston Depot, built in 1882 in the then-thriving community of Boston, Missouri, was removed from active service in 1932. The Heartlands group acquired it and moved it to Carona in 2005, working

A museum at the Carona Museum Complex is dedicated to Dick Webb and his family. The museum includes numerous displays of railroading artifacts, memorabilia, and historic photos. Photo/Andra Stefanoni

“It looks like quite a few people are very interested in what we do,” Spahn said. “I think Dick would be happy.”

When the group began train rides 24 years ago, he noted, flat cars with bales of hay were used. Today, the rides are in three 1950’s era air-conditioned coaches pulled by a diesel engine.

Upcoming rides and excursions include:

Saturday, April 23, 2016
Hutchinson, Kansas, to Yoder, Kansas, and return. Two, 3-hour round trips, departing Hutchinson at 9 a.m. and 1 p.m. Approx. one hour in Yoder.

Saturday, April 30, 2016
Wichita, Kansas, to Yoder, Kansas, and return. Departs Wichita at 8:30 a.m. and returns at 4:30 p.m. Approximately 3 hours in Yoder to shop or enjoy lunch on your own.

Saturday, May 7, 2016
Cherryvale, Kansas, for the Cherry Blossom Festival. Three, 1-hour round trips at 10 a.m., 1 p.m., and 3 p.m.

Saturday, May 21, 2016
Bartlesville, Oklahoma. Three, 1-hour round trips at 10 a.m., 1 p.m., and 3 p.m.

Apr 23-24, 2016
Oklahoma Railway Museum is hosting a two day trip on the Farmrail System out of Clinton. Total miles for two days will be approximately 205 miles.

For more details, ticket prices and instructions on making reservations, visit www.heartlandstrainclub.org.

Houston duo celebrates three year safety milestone

By Michaela Kinyon  Contributing Writer

Just because a team is small doesn’t mean a Safety Celebration is any less significant, and Watco is proud to honor the Houston Switching Terminal which has gone the three years since startup injury-free. It’s a testament to all the hard work by team members Bernardo Cuevas and Michael Culligan.

The two team members celebrated their achievement on February 25th by going to lunch and receiving a gift card. Cuevas and Culligan have over 35 years of railroad experience combined.

“We take our jobs very seriously and appreciate working for a great company,” said Terminal Manager Cuevas.

Cuevas and Culligan spend their days in Houston switching all inbound and outbound cars for two facilities, Goodyear and Ingenia Polymers, spotting their loading and offloading racks with cars needed for each day. Safety is an important aspect of the work done in Houston.

“Being safe brings us back to our families, and we accomplish our goal of zero accidents and injuries,” said Cuevas. Part of how they do that is by having a job briefing and taking a look at the safest method before starting any task.

Being their brother’s keeper has a special meaning for Cuevas and Culligan.

“We have been working together for over fifteen years,” stated Cuevas. “We treat each other as brothers.”
Terminal team assists with high angle rescue drill

By Kevin Rinear
Assistant Terminal Manager, Ghent, Kentucky

If you have ever been around facilities that have either barge or rail unloading capabilities you have no doubt heard the question “Do you think they could get you out of there if something happened?”

Would your terminal have the ability to retrieve an injured team member if the need arose? Would you have to rely on your local fire department? Tim Bass, Ghent, Kentucky, terminal manager for Watco was interested in the answer to these questions. The goal was to not just get the answer verbally, but to stage a live drill to put to rest any doubts that team members may have had.

The Watco operation in Ghent is a contractor for North American Stainless, a company that employs more than 3,000 people in the surrounding communities and is one of the largest stainless producers in the United States. Watco is in charge of unloading scrap material and various alloys out of barges from the dock as well as unloading scrap from rail cars. Watco handles other duties for North American Stainless as well, but these two areas are of particular concern due to the inherent difficulties any rescue attempt could entail.

Imagine for a moment it’s an average day and you are part of a crew cleaning out a barge. A large ladder is your only exit. Suddenly one of your team members is incapacitated due to injury or illness. What would you do? Well, at North American Stainless they have their own High Angle Rescue Team for just such a scenario as this.

The North American Stainless High Angle Rescue Team was due for some continuing training so the offer was made to perform the drill and the date set. On March 17th, the unloading process was shut down for a time to allow the team to hone their skills with a rescue attempt from out of a barge. Previously they have trained by lowering people from up high to the ground so this would be a new challenge for the rescue team. This ongoing training was being supervised and critiqued by Industrial Safety and Training Services, a company that trains and promotes industrial safety.

The morning started with a barge rescue and debrief, then once everyone came back from lunch the team tackled retrieving a team member from the inside of a railcar. Each scenario presented unique challenges and difficulties due to equipment limitations but these obstacles were addressed and overcome. This group proved that in less than an hour from the time the High Angle Rescue Team arrived on scene that they could stabilize and safely remove a team member from either a barge or railcar.

After everything was said and done, the representatives from Industrial Safety and Training Services did a stand down meeting to assess the performance of the NAS team. There were a few constructive criticisms such as ways to keep the ropes from tangling and ways to save time but for the most part the NAS team received high praise. The ability to work together in a safe manner and communicate effectively as well as each person fulfilling their responsibilities were some of the positives mentioned.

“James Paynter, lead safety coordinator for NAS said his team could pull off a rescue of this type today; they proved it,” said Bass.

We wanted as many Watco team members as possible to see the exercise so there would always be someone around to say they witnessed the skills of this team, these people were present: Terry Gosney, safety; Stan Jepson, safety; Tim Bass, terminal manager; Kevin Rinear, assistant terminal manager; Kevin Dean, supervisor; Mike Stitzel, operator; Rodney Pickett, pilot; Kelly Powers, deckhand; Jamie Hite, deckhand; Sabrina Mounts, office admin.; Katy Lawrence, admin. asst.; Allison Willhoite, admin. asst.

Thanks to all who participated.

Hermiston Team celebrates four years injury-free

By Michaela Kinyon
Contributing Writer

Location Manager Michael Haugen was happy to discuss the recent achievement celebrated by the Hermiston, Oregon, Mobile Repair Team. The location does car repairs for the Union Pacific Railroad, and plans to celebrate their success by having a barbecue with some outdoor activities when the weather becomes warmer.

When asked about the fantastic safety record, Haugen stated, “It’s not just another anniversary of being safe. It’s about being a good teammate and being able to go home at night to be with family and friends.”

Haugen cites their success on the attitude of being their brother’s keeper as well as “having the right tools and resources to get the job done safely and efficiently”.

Safety not only affects the individual team members, but also the health of the business as a whole. “Our job opportunities with new and ongoing Customers look at safety records to ensure that not only are we doing a good quality job, but that we will do it safely at their facility,” said Haugen.

“Safety isn’t just a slogan, it’s a way of life,” concluded Haugen. “Here at the Hermiston site, SAFETY FIRST is SAFETY ALWAYS.”

Members of the Hermiston Mobile Repair team are (l-r): James Acoc, Ernesto Barrera, Saul Madera, Jim Taylor, and seated is Andres Lachino. Not pictured is Location Manager Michael Haugen.

CALENDAR CONTEST

Photographers get ready, Watco is taking submissions for the 2017 Calendar Contest. Submissions must be received no later than September 1, 2016. The four-color high quality printing requires at least 300dpi images at 100%.

Send submissions or any questions to tvan@watcocompanies.com with Calendar 2017 in the subject line.

Entries can be submitted by anyone, team members or not, but the photos must contain Watco properties as the subject matter.
Greens Port Team gets 'Seussed' at Woodland Acres Elementary

By Andrea Bryan Stefanoni
Contributing Writer

Watco Companies is playing a small but important role, educators say, in a Texas elementary school.

In conjunction with National Read Across America Day and Dr. Seuss Day, held annually on March 1, Watco team members visited Woodland Acres Elementary School in Houston to read to students and engage in the celebration.

Educators and administrators there say Watco’s support is much appreciated.

“We’re so glad they’re involved,” said Audra Willis, school librarian, who for six years has been tasked with heading up Dr. Seuss Day.

“The day has a long history, has been a big tradition here at Woodland Acres. I want to turn the school into Seussville, so we decorate from top to bottom, invite local people, our school board, state representatives — we have even had Barbara Bush come and read to our kids. It’s a big deal.”

Those guests sign up for time slots each year to read to students and present snacks and activities related to a Dr. Seuss-inspired theme; this year, it was “One Fish, Two Fish, Red Fish, Blue Fish.”

Watco team members in the Houston Division have participated for a few years, coordinated by Operations Admin. Analyst Jennifer Sévère. Last year, they purchased and donated a collection of new Dr. Seuss books to replace the aging ones that were falling apart in Willis’ library, she said.

This year, in addition to dressing up and reading, they brought fish-related snacks for the children including Goldfish crackers and Swedish fish candies.

“The kids absolutely love it;” Willis said.

“We hope that students can become lifelong learners, lifelong readers,” she added. “I want them to see that grownups also like reading and make time to do so — that’s the big message we try to bring across that day, that it’s important enough for these workers to take time out of their day to come and spend time reading with them.”

Sévère said the Watco team is excited to be a part of the children’s lives, and are thankful to be given the opportunity to give the gift of reading.

Watco also played a role in the first National Elementary School Honor Society induction at Woodland Acres Elementary School in February. The induction recognized the achievement of students who worked hard and excelled. Watco’s contribution was the donation of 25 Honor Society pins and cards that were given to student inductees. Several parents, WAES staff members, students, local business representatives, and Watco team members were in attendance.

Sévère said the Houston Division is eagerly awaiting the next chance to get involved with the school.

Team member answers the call of duty

By Michaella Kinyon
Contributing Writer

On a seemingly peaceful Sunday afternoon in March, Pat McPhillips, general manager of the Cicero Central Railroad, was enjoying a day with his family when he received a call from Koppers Inc., the railroad’s primary Customer. Jeff Senchak, Koppers Director of North American Transportation and Logistics, informed McPhillips that some electrical lines and wires had fallen, shutting down the track and everything at the Koppers plant in Cicero, Illinois. The electrical contractor on sight needed protection from the railroad in order to do any work on the fallen lines.

Upon hearing this, McPhillips leapt into action, pulling together all the resources needed to get everything back up and running.

Koppers Inc. produces polymers, parts for insulators, railroad circuits, track systems, soap for railroad ties, and many other products.

It was incredibly important to get the plant up and running as soon as possible, not only for production reasons, but also because of safety hazards.

McPhillips immediately drove to Hammond, picked up a set of derails, and headed up the toll road to Chicago. He reached the location a little after 5 p.m., where the electrician from the Chicago-area electricity provider was waiting. It turned out the top of a telephone poll had broken off, causing the lines to hit the track and shut the entire Koppers chemical plant down. Only the emergency power at the guard facility was functioning.

McPhillips, the electrician, and Michael Gallagher, the plant manager, went to work, ordering parts, finding a new pole, and doing everything necessary to put the plant back into service. By 10 p.m., they were finishing up removing the dead wires and making sure the track was safely cleaned. Through a great deal of hard work, they were able to restore power around 1:30 a.m.

When asked why it was important for him to respond to this issue so quickly, McPhillips stated, “You can’t just shut down a chemical plant for a power outage. It’s dangerous. I understand how serious it was, and I was free, so I did it.”

McPhillips hopes that this instance will be an example to current and potential Customers of the services provided by Watco Companies and its dedicated team members. “I hope people see how we stepped up and provide by listing them in the May edition of The Dispatch.

If you would like to have your, or a graduate’s information listed, send in the information in the following format:

• The school graduate is attending
• The school list the graduate’s degree
• The school graduate is attending
• Watco team member
• Watco team member’s title and location
• If the graduate is receiving a degree from a college, university or trade school list the graduate’s degree type

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

Watco would like to acknowledge their hard work and show how proud we are of all graduates from our families by listing them in the May edition of The Dispatch.

Announcements

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Watco would like to acknowledge their hard work and show how proud we are of all graduates from our families by listing them in the May edition of The Dispatch.

If you would like to have your, or a graduate’s information listed, send in the information in the following format:

• Graduates name and relationship to Watco team member
• Watco team member’s title and location
• The school graduate is attending
• If the graduate is receiving a degree from a college, university or trade school list the graduate’s degree type

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

Email the information to: tyson@watcocompanies.com and add Dispatch-May Graduation in the subject line.
BLU team members participate in blood and bone marrow registry drives

By Andra Bryan Stefanoni
Contributing Writer

Blue Ridge Southern Railroad (BLU) Trainmaster Nathan Higgins’ son Jackson, 9, is much like many other children his age: He loves the outdoors, loves to read, and loves his family.

But Jackson is different in another regard: He is spending a lot of time in hospitals.

Diagnosed in February with Aplastic anemia, a serious condition that occurs when a person’s body stops producing enough new blood cells, Jackson is susceptible to infection and is easily fatigued. Treatment for aplastic anemia may include medications, blood transfusions, or a stem cell transplant.

“He’s a super gifted young man, but he’s had to be in and out of hospitals and right now is living on blood transfusions,” said BLU General Manager Darl Farris.

The North Carolina family, which includes his mother, Giovana, and younger sister, Josie, has been spending a great deal of time at a Maryland hospital that specializes in such cases.

Higgins has been with the BLU since its startup in 2014, first as an engineer and recently promoted to train master. When the BLU Team Safety & Improvement Committee learned of his son’s struggle, team members were inspired to plan two events that could make a difference in just Jackson’s life, but the lives of many others: A blood drive and to assist Giovana with a bone marrow registry drive.

Farris said Brandon Parham (track gang), Ethen Green (locomotive mechanic), and Aaron Sexton (conductor) organized the blood drive, held March 31st in Canton, North Carolina, and were overwhelmed with the turnout.

“They needed a minimum of 30 pledges, and two weeks prior to the event already had 60 pledges,” Farris said. “We ended up with 90 people showing up and some donors had to be turned away because the Red Cross ran out of supplies. We’re going to plan another drive for May to give some of the others a chance to participate.”

The marrow donor registry drive also was held on March 31st at The Colonial Theater in Canton.

“The next step is matching a bone marrow donor, said Watco People Services Manager Lindsey Alexander. “And that could be anyone, anywhere.”

“People think that parents would be the best match, but that isn’t always the case,” she added.

Those unable to attend the event can join the registry online at join.bethematch.org/Jackson.

To join the Be the Match Registry, you must be between the ages of 18 and 44, be in good general health, and be willing to donate to any patient you may match in the future. Paperwork and a cheek swab is all it takes to determine if you could be the one to save a life.

The Birmingham location is in the planning stages of a drive, too, Alexander said.

“The fact that hundreds of people from all different parts of our industry show up from across the country is a testament to the involvement and ownership we all have in the rail industry’s success,” he said.

Van Schaick noted that the bills that Congress passes, or doesn’t pass, have a profound impact on how Watco Companies and our Customers do business.

“When railroaders show up to tell their stories, it gives great insight to Congress and staff as to how the rail industry works outside of the D.C. bubble,” Van Schaick said.

Watco Communication Director Tracie Van Becelaere, who was among the contingent of a dozen Watco team members to attend this year, said she goes armed with talking points that are important to get across to elected officials.

“We try to get to as many members of Congress as possible,” VanBecelaere said.

“We make sure they know that every railroad job creates 4.5 additional jobs, according to the Association of American Railroads,” she said. “We hand out state sheets for each state Watco is in, and they include fast facts like miles of track, annual payroll, and the commodities we ship.”

“People often don’t think about how much of the stuff we consume every day travels by rail.”

Watco’s Assistant Vice President of Government Affairs Jeff Van Schaich (left) and Vice President of Marketing Ryan Williams (right) were joined at Railroad Day on the Hill by Oldcastle Materials Vice President of Government Affairs Ryan Lindsey and General Manager for Oldcastle Texas Eric Bailey.
Watco women part of a growing industry trend

by Andra Bryan Stefanoni
Contributing Writer

When Sarah Ecret was 9 years old, she set up her own neighborhood bicycle repair shop. By age 13, she had her own set of tools and was assisting her dad on car repairs. At age 15, she rebuilt her first motor.

Five months ago, at age 25, she finally landed a job with Watco Companies — something she'd been after for years — as a South Kansas & Oklahoma (SKOL) locomotive mechanic.

“My love is anything that has a motor in it,” said Ecret, who is based out of her hometown of Cherryvale, Kansas. She's part of a growing number of women to make a career of railroading.

‘Stability and fascination’

Ecret, whose dad, Jeff Ecret, is associate vice president of operations for Watco Transloading in Oklahoma City, is a service tech, which means she services locomotives in the rail yards.

“I’m a mechanic, basically, which means I look at fluids and a checklist of other things when they come into the yard to make sure they are good to go and can get back on the rail,” said Ecret, who graduated from Pittsburg State University with a degree in diesel heavy equipment. Her dad admits being somewhat apprehensive with her decision to join Watco.

“Sarah loves to take things apart and put the back together,” he said, “but she is a minority within Watco at what she does.”

“But she’s stubborn — I mean determined — and I support her efforts. Her mom says she is her father’s daughter!”

Her siblings, including two brothers and a twin sister, are not mechanically inclined.

“If family members have a problem with a car, they call me,” she said.

“To turn a key in something, and have such raw power — that’s what I love. It’s just a fascination.”

While cars are her passion, she considers railroading her career. She appreciates the stability it gives her as a mother, she said.

“I knew I could do this and never get tired of it.”

‘Freedom and flexibility’

Andrea M. Harville, trainmaster for Birmingham Terminal Railway, started with Watco Companies right out of college in 2008. She didn’t grow up playing with a train set nor did she ever consider a job in railroading.

With a degree in supply chain management, she was seeking a company to work for in logistics or operations management.

“But I actually stumbled upon an opportunity in the transportation department, so that’s how I got my start in railroading,” Harville said.

“I like it,” she said. “A lot of people ask me, ‘Why railroading?’ It’s not typically something a woman does. But it’s exciting. It changes day by day. And I really like the people I work with.”

Harville, 31, said she likes the flexibility and freedom the job affords, and the feeling she gets from solving a Customer’s problem.

“It’s different every day. It’s different from other careers. And I can get out and visit with customers, not be in a cubicle each day,” she said. “You can see the end goal, and it’s fun to figure out how to accomplish that.”

She concedes it was intimidating, at first, being among the handful of women at her workplace.

“Some days I’m like, ‘I can’t believe I’m the only woman.’ I do stand out. People know who I am.”

“But I just approached it like, ‘I’m here for a reason. I want to learn as much as possible.’ And I found there were a lot of people who were accepting to mentoring me, to helping me grow as a team member.”

‘The right fit’

Similarly, Lori Vaden, an engineer for the SKOL based in Winfield, didn't grow up longing to be in the railroad business.

“It was the complete opposite, in fact,” she said. “I knew trains blocked highways and sometimes made me mad.”

With a previous career in the oil field, the 39-year-old mother of two girls was seeking a permanent career with a good foundation in which she could retire.

“I always loved doing things outdoors, and a friend mentioned the railroad,” Vaden said. “I had never even thought about it. But then I thought, ‘Why not? I’ve done auto mechanics and other ‘guy things.’”

The more she considered it, the more it made sense.

“I’ve worn high heels and done data entry, but that never really fit me,” she said.

Today, she helps conductors transport trains from one place to another, and does conductor work when there are enough engineers.

She rotates from one job to another every three months, often putting in 10-hour days on routes to and from a rock quarry in Moline, Kansas.

“I love not being in an office,” Vaden said. “Running a train is unique. It’s cool when it’s 200 cars long, or 130 cars long, going up and down big hills with it, and they’re 9,000 tons. Just to keep it together and make it from point A to point B is satisfying.”

“When you get to go to Wichita, that’s an even bigger rush — 45 to 55 mile an hour, compared to 25 to Moline,” she said. “That’s a whole different ballgame.”

Celebrating eight years with Watco this September, she said she has learned a lot.

“You’ve definitely got to have a tougher skin, to be able to be independent, deal with men — you can’t break down and cry,” she said. “You’ve got to have physical toughness, to throw switches, to pick up an 85-pound knuckle and carry one around. You can’t depend on someone to be right there to help.

“You’ve got to be able to handle your own,” she said.

“But this feels like the right fit now — I don’t plan on going anywhere. I don’t hate going to work; I enjoy it.”

-Editors Note: Railroading still remains a male dominated industry with only 10 percent of the workforce being made up of women. A large percentage of that number consists of women who provide support in the office. March was Women in Railroad month and we’d like to thank all the ladies for the contributions made to the industry.
**Focus pays off in Alabama**

By Andra Bryan Stefanoni
Contributing Writer

It’s rare that a month goes by without Watco leadership receiving word of team recognitions, which speaks to the tremendous effort in all facets of the company, they say. This month, The Dispatch features a recognition in Alabama.

Torrance Hendrix, an Alabama Warrior Railway (ABWR) conductor, had just finished serving a Customer and was going to go the opposite direction. Walking toward the switch, he noticed one of the cars rocking in a way it shouldn’t.

“He stopped the car right before a broken rail 10 foot long,” said ABWR Trainmaster Anthony Hoyte. “Just by paying attention on his job, he really made a difference. It could have gotten costly for the company and could have meant lost work time, which would have impacted the Customer with delayed service.”

Having been with the company about one year, Hoyte described Hendrix as “one of the most honest, humble guys you’ll ever meet.”

“He never complains, he gets out, does his job even when the job gets frustrating, he continues to stay focused — he’s a great team member,” he said.

Hoyte said staying focused on the task at hand is the key to success in any job.

“It doesn’t matter what you’re doing, whether you’re in the field moving rail cars, or writing a story — if you’re not focused, you’re gonna mess up.”

Senior Vice President Service Assurance Stu Towner said it demonstrates a “much improved team environment” and “is exactly what has to happen to be successful in that — and any — environment.”

He complimented Hoyte, as well, for his daily drive to bring team members together and drive performance.

Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer Dan Smith also complimented the “outstanding job by our ABWR Team.”

“Thanks for making this happen; please make sure our Team knows how much we appreciate their focus,” Smith said.

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**April Anniversaries**

Congratulations to the following team members celebrating their anniversaries!

1 Year: Jason Bentley, Ryan Bernd, David Boysen, Kenneth Brown, Ryan Burke, Christopher Chiasson, Doug Conway, Shane Cover, Kelvin Davis, Joseph Earls, Dylan Eigenberger, Juan Garza, Jonathan Hall, John Hardcastle, Austin Harrison, Adrienne Hones, Daniel Hooper, Justin Huset, Justin Johnson, Eric Kipp, Shannon Kondrakci, Eric Larson, Tyler Lewellen, Adolfo Medina, Dakota Moreau, Jordan Morgan, Israel Munsey, Thomas Myers, Anand Narine, Daniel Pena, Aaron Robbins, Jordan Seideman, Zachary Shelton, Dhannaraj Singh, Tommy Smith, Lawrence Spradley, Boyd Standley, Angela Stauffer, Nancy Vargas, Renivick Wilkins

2 Years: Marcus Blumer, Brooke Brown, Allen Bushnell, Paul Esparza, John Farrow, Christopher Garrett, Stacy Grad, Antonio Green, Frank Greenough, Lauren Guthrie, Alfie Hutchinson, Steven Iszler, Jaden Jacobs, Kersy Johnson, Mary Lawrence, Toby Long, Patrick McCray, David McIntosh, Justin McLean, Donna Moore, Paul Muzik, Theodore Nicholson, Suzanne Owens, Isidro Palacio, Michael Porter, Roberto Sanchez, Dustin Schillings, Hunter Seawood, Chad Stacy, Johann Sutier, Aaron Tanner, Travis Weddle, Adam York

3 Years: Adam Barrera, Keith Bowman, Michael Crosslin, Andrew Gonstead, Dustin Hammerschmidt, Tyler Hardy, Nathan Henderson, John Honaker, Joseph Lewis, Devan Lynch, James Lynn, Quinchez Marshall, Jacob Nance, Mark Perry, Kyle Ratiiff, Steven Schadler, Jennifer Sever, Noey Sistos, Jerick Staker, Dustin Steger, Terri Turiano, Brittany Turner, Chase Upchurch, Caleb Ussery

4 Years: Scott Ayers, Barry Beasley, Willie Carson, Nicholas Graham, Aaron Greene, Christopher Hammond, Justin Hayes, Stefan Holcomb, Stephanie James, William King, Michael Kruse, James Latham, Michael Mulnix, Jason Randolph, Patrick Stout, Andrew Thompson, Mark Wells, Tyrus White, Jeremy Williams, Tracy Wright, Carlton Young

5 Years: Mark Adams, David Bader, Kraig Blackwelder, Joshua Briggs, Christa Coates, Henery Dannehl, Douglas Delehoy, Allen Hasty, Richard Hudson, Tyler Neesam, Timothy Page, Michael Patterson, Steven Ponio, Dustin Rhodes, Donald Robert, Michael Stofko, Allison Willhoite, Megan Wilson

6 Years: Hayley Becker, William Casey, Kevin Crespo, Waylon Doyle, Allen Godfrey, Anthony Hoyte, Jackie Ogden, Rachael Peterson, David Riley, Kevin Roth, Schulz, Andrew Smith, James Sullins, Roidino Trevino

7 Years: Angela Bunker, Joseph Gruczynski, Mark Moorlag, Michael Murphy

8 Years: Tye Gray, Chris Haddow, Russell Hamm, Robert Hurda, Joseph Magnone, Jose Martinez, Curtis Rice, Arnoldo Sandoval

9 Years: Tony Clark, Rebekah Garner, Joseph Holcomb, Danny Rodriguez

10 Years: Shellee Currier, Timothy Dunn, Cody Gilliland, Christopher Preuc, Mitchel Wilkinson

11 Years: John Bell, Jerad Brunskill, Brandon Eddleman, Travis Fellers, Pat Foster, Brian Fox, Richard Moser, Tracie Van Beecelaere, David Witack

12 Years: Jeffery Greenwood, Gina Lambert, Dennis Meyer, Jason Nix

13 Years: Le Andrea Brasley, Shane Engle

14 Years: Brent Booth, Lisa Butts, Pat Cedeno, John Galloway, Gary Vogels, Joe Watts

15 Years: Robert Heiligenthal, Jeanne Housel, William Kyzer, Byron Marshall

17 Years: Marvin Ellis

18 Years: Tim Bass, Stacey Hurda

19 Years: Tony Ange, Jeremy Findley, David Jena, Alonzo Orta

20 Years: Kenneth Barber

21 Years: Aaron Byle

23 Years: Neal Jacobs

25 Years: Gary Cooley, Gary Sanderson

27 Years: Dwight Browning

31 Years: Thomas Dawson

32 Years: Charles Trimer

33 Years: Michael Murphy

36 Years: Robert Koenig

37 Years: Larry Bohland

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**Births**

**Ella Grace DeYoung**

Aubrie and Steven DeYoung are proud to announce the birth of a daughter, Ella Grace. Ella was born on March 16, 2016, and weighed 7 lbs., 9 oz.

Ella was welcomed home by big brother Bently. Proud grandma is Chicago Heights, Illinois, Terminal Manager, Linda Jordan.

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ABWR Conductor Torrence Hendrix, spotted broken rail and saved the railroad time and money.
BHRR Locomotive Shop Team hits four years injury-free

by Tracie VanBecelaere
Managing Editor

The locomotive team at the Birmingham Terminal Railway (BHRR) recently celebrated their four year injury-free anniversary with a catered barbecue lunch. Each of the team members also received a personalized jacket with the BHRR logo on it.

The majority of the shop’s team members have been together since start up four years ago, and are a very tight knit group.

Locomotive Foreman Ben Tarran said, “Our team is more like a family than a group of workers, and with that type of mentality they watch out for each other and have taught the younger team members to be the same way. The Customer First-Safety Always principles go with each job that is given to them and this is most evident in the last year and half where we have had to send team members to other Watco locations to help out.”

“They are professional and will always ensure the customer is taken care of without sacrificing safety. They take great pride in being injury free four years in a row, and are already working on five years,” stated Tarran.

BHRR Locomotive Shop Team hits four years injury-free

Team members celebrating four years injury-free: (l-r) Ben Tarran – loco foreman, Tim Boyd, Michael Marino – loco electronics supervisor, John Herron – CMO, Howard Green, John Gaither Sr, Kenny Olson, Bobby Garmon, John Gaither Jr., and Chris Hammond.

Ferndale Terminal Team celebrates their 100th train

by Lexi Pierson
Ferndale Team Member

On March 6, 2016, the Ferndale, Washington Watco team welcomed their 100th train with a 15 minute cake-break during the operation. This transloading site has been operational since November, 2015 and provides crude-by-rail offloading services. The 100th successful offload represents the hard work, dedication, and perseverance of the train crew, maintenance, operator, and management team members as they continue to provide safe, accurate, and timely service to the Customer.

Ferndale, Washington, team members celebrated their 100th train with a cake (above). Team members are: (l-r) Kneeling: Jerry Robinson, Andrew Ross, Shawn Miller, and Alexis Pierson. Standing: Kevin Ondeck, Ty Gilliam, Charles Staley, Jordan Williams, Cory Stevenson, Quinn Wiebe, Jered Ruback, and Tom Frey. Not pictured: John Shoup, Rick Bost, Charlie Warner, Parker Helland, and Bryan Meyer.