Texas terminal team ramps up to meet Customer needs

by Tracie VanBecelaere
Managing Editor

Usually it’s EMTs that respond to emergency calls, but in a particular situation it was Watco’s Harwood, Texas Team that was called for assistance. Customer EOG Resources was out of storage at their active facilities, and shipping by rail was the best option to get their oil to additional EOG storage facilities. EOG was needing to get this extra oil into tank cars in a short amount of time.

The Harwood facility has eight transloaders on site, but they normally operate with six of them, keeping two there for backup in case of mechanical issues. The transloaders at the facility pump crude oil from tank trucks into tank cars to be shipped by rail to their various destinations. EOG Resources needed to find a way to have all eight of the transloaders at the facility in operation to accommodate their capacity needs without having to hire extra personnel.

Phillip Penner, senior vice president of business development for the terminal division received a phone call from EOG operations manager Greg Thornton with regards to helping him solve the problem in the Harwood area. Penner contacted the Harwood terminal manager, Ronnie Starling, to see if Harwood could remedy the situation. Starling and Charles Freerich, assistant terminal manager, worked together to come up with a viable solution. The solution was to bring three teams together to make two teams but still have sufficient days off as well.

Starling said, “At the drop of a hat the crews were more than happy to make this happen for our Customer in a time of need. The crews off-loaded amazing numbers during this time. The numbers of trucks, railcars and barrels of oil nearly tripled the previous months’ totals. The Harwood Team operated in this manner from May 16 through June 9. This amazing feat did not go unnoticed. Greg Thornton with EOG was exceptionally pleased in the little time it took for Watco to pull together for him in this time of need.”

The teams have now split into four shifts made up of six crew members in each. This allows for 24/7 operations and has cut back on overtime as well. The teams were rewarded with three separate parties to be sure that each team member would be able to attend. The events were held at Independence Park in Gonzales, Texas with a fish fry consisting of red snapper, shrimp, french fries, cole slaw, hush puppies and cold drinks.

Safety prizes were drawn and the teams received much praise and appreciation for their true dedication to the Customer First Foundation Principle of improving Customer satisfaction.

“I’m very pleased with the Harwood Team and how they pulled together with no complaints and limitless dedication in showing what Watco and their team members are all about,” said Starling.

Harwood Team member Marvin Morris pumping oil from the truck to the railcar.
Congressman visits Port San Antonio

by Logan Falletti
Communications Intern

Congressman Francisco “Quico” Canseco (R-Texas) visited the Port of San Antonio and East Kelly Railport on July 9 to meet with constituents in the transportation industry. He was invited by the Port for an overview of the facility and discussion of the jobs being added by rail expansion and an area auto-motive plan and.

The informal meeting included a tour of the site, including the maintenance facility, the warehouses, and a meeting with the Port’s board of directors. Ironically, it didn’t include a look at the water – the Port of San Antonio is actually removed from the river as ports are thought of. This port is a place where goods transfer through. The 1,900 acre aero-space, industrial complex and international logistics hub is strategically located between the East and West coasts. It includes an airport, access to three interstate highways and two Class I railroads. It primarily services the Kelly Air Force Base and the Customers such as Boeing operating out of the base. The Eagle Ford shale movement and the relocation of recruiting offices of the Air Force promotes a higher demand for consumer goods than before. The increase in food purchases and affordable housing materials are increasing the rail loads.

Ryan Williams, marketing manager for the Gulf Region, estimates that the additional tracks will double the capacity to generate jobs for Watco and future Customers coming into the port. “[Con. Can-seco] was very supportive of rail; both passenger and freight. It was great to see political support for the rail industry. As the population growth continues in Texas, increased rail volumes will offset interstate congestion caused by tractor trailers.”

The 300 acres of the port have some rail, but are waiting on the official filing to become a short line. For now they provide switching. They move 4,500 cars annually but will soon expand to fifteen to twenty thousand.

“It’s a joint effort between Watco, Port of San Antonio, our Class I partners and the state to make this operation successful,” says Williams.

East Peoria mechanical shop celebrates four years and zero injuries

by Tracie VanBecelaere
Managing Editor

The Watco car repair shop in East Peoria, Illinois celebrated four years since their last OSHA reportable injury on July 20. After lunch team members took a little time to enjoy cake and ice cream, peanuts and pretzels. Gift cards and T-shirts sporting the “4 Years 0 Injuries” logo were handed out to each team member in honor of their achievement.

The team has also won the Dick Webb Excellence Award for the second year in a row since its creation.

Plant manager Jim Meyer said, “I am very proud to be a part of this team and I thank every member of the team for their focus on safety. No one person is responsible for an achievement like this, it takes every member of the team working together and that is what we do. I am looking forward to doing this again next year.”

One factor in the shop’s outstanding record is the fact that they have very little turnover and an extremely low absentee rate as well. The team has a combined total of 145 years of service starting in 2004 when the mechanical services group began providing car repair for the Tazwell and Peoria Railroad.

The Tazwell and Peoria Railroad (TZPR), which is owned by Genesee and Wyoming, is on the site of the former Peoria and Pekin Union Railway which was started up in 1881. They have tracks on both sides of the Illinois River at Peoria and a rail bridge over the river.

Watco acts as the mechanical department for the TZPR, inspecting and repairing railcars and conducting initial terminal air tests on the Class I railroads that interchange in their yard. These include the NS, UP, CN, BN and Iowa Interstate. Other railroads that interchange there are the TPW, KJRY and IM.

Although they enjoy flying under the radar and quietly performing their duties without notice, after four years injury-free they definitely deserve some time in the spotlight. Great job to the East Peoria Team!

2013 CALENDAR CONTEST

Photographers get ready, Watco is announcing our first ever Calendar Contest. The contest is open to any and all photographers not just those on the Watco Team. Railfans - now’s the time to show your stuff!

Requirements for the contest are that the photographs must include Watco properties as the subject matter. They can include trains, mechanical shops, terminal facilities and ports. When sending in your entry include where and when the photograph was taken. Newer photos are preferred but historic photos will be considered as well.

Winners will be selected by the Executive Team and awards are as follows:

- First place (cover) $500
- Second place: $250
- Ten additional prizes to include photo for each month - $100 each

Submissions must be received no later than September 30, 2012.

For digital photography, 4-color high quality printing requires 300dpi images at 100%. Digital SLR cameras can save photos in the RAW format. This is the format we prefer for the calendar and if you are able, send the photo in both RAW and JPG files.

Send submissions and questions to tvan@watcocompanies.com.
Tioga terminal moving Bakken crude and gas products

by Logan Falletti
Communications Intern

Unit trains of crude oil from the Bakken formation roll into Tioga, N.D. to be loaded at the TRT (Tioga Rail Terminal) according to Mike Yanish, terminal manager. Watco is an embedded contractor to Hess Corporation, handling the switching and transportation of the oil products.

Hess is the largest gas producer and the third-largest oil producer in North Dakota. Oil was first discovered in North Dakota in 1951 and now forty-one team members currently work in Tioga. They load unit trains with a 21-station loading rack, and they load 104 car unit trains. Their truck off-loading can move approximately 1,000 trucks a week. Since its opening on Oct. 17, the TRT has been expanding. The team member count will increase as more oil production is brought in, and the TRT will begin operating 24 hours a day to match the needs of Hess.

Watco also facilitates the LPG rail loading at the Hess TGP (Tioga Gas Plant) where Hess processes gas from production, turning it into butane, propane, and natural gas.

The demand for workers is so high that there are more workers than housing. Most of the team members drive 80 plus miles per day to get to work, and five team members are living in modular homes and trailer housing in nearby Williston, and they’re the lucky ones. Many people who head north for the jobs find themselves living in their cars and church basements. Construction has started in many places on apartments and hotels to house all of the workers brought to the area because of Bakken shale and new job opportunities.

Birthday celebrated on the road

David Hambrick, regional switching manager, Houston, Texas, celebrated his 60th birthday on July 24th while on the road assisting with operations at the Birmingham Terminal Railway.

While unable to celebrate this occasion with his family at home, his Watco family wanted to make sure that he wasn't forgotten on his special day and bought him a cake to celebrate the event. He has been part of the Watco Team since 2003 when he started as a safety manager for the Gulf Region. He has since held the positions of regional manager and then regional switching manager.

"Dave is a great team player. He does whatever needs to be done to meet our Customer needs. His knowledge and background in safety puts him right on top and he’s definitely a proven leader in the industry,” said Michael Gibson, vice president of transportation safety and interim Gulf Regional vice president of operations. “I wish him a very happy belated birthday.”
Greens Port part of capping drill in the Gulf of Mexico

by Tracie VanBecelaere
Managing Editor

On the evening of April 20, 2010, a gas release and explosion occurred on the Deepwater Horizon oil rig working on the Macondo exploration well. This led to the loss of 11 lives and started a massive oil spill, now considered the second largest environmental disaster in U.S. history. On July 26th and 27th Greens Port Industrial Park (GPIP) was buzzing with activity as the Marine Well Containment Company (MWCC) conducted a drill to test the performance of a new containment system designed to respond to deepwater well control incidents like what happened on the Macondo in the Gulf of Mexico.

At the direction of the Department of the Interior and the Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement (BSEE), MWCC initiated mobilization of its containment system, including the physical deployment of the capping stack, the centerpiece of the system. The single ram capping stack stands roughly 30 feet tall, 14 feet wide and weighs about 100 tons. The heavy equipment was loaded onto the Laney Chouest at the GPIP dock on the Houston ship channel and then deployed to a simulated well in the deepwater Gulf of Mexico. Once offshore, the capping stack was lowered approximately 6,900 ft. on a wire and latched to a simulated wellhead, where all necessary functions were completed and pressure testing confirmed the ability to control a well.

"Through this demonstration, we effectively validated our ability to safely and effectively respond to a well control incident in the deepwater U.S. Gulf of Mexico," said Marty Massey, MWCC Chief Executive Officer. "This demonstration is further proof that we have the right people, processes and equipment in place to be continuously ready to respond."

The mobilization, function and pressure testing performed as expected and were within the anticipated timeline.

BSEE inspectors and engineers monitored the demonstration from MWCC headquarters, Unified Command and the two vessels transporting the equipment offshore. Throughout the demonstration, BSEE Director James Watson met with MWCC and Shell to witness the various phases of system deployment, and participated in daily Unified Command briefings with the Department of Interior.

"BSEE’s focus is safety at all levels and all times for our country’s offshore oil and gas program," BSEE Director James Watson said. "The successful completion of this deployment demonstration is significant to the safe advancement of deepwater exploration. Through our regulatory program, BSEE continues to help ensure that industry operates safely."

The success of the demonstration is the result of a strong collaboration that began in 2010 between government and industry, particularly MWCC members. MWCC has 10 member companies. To date, more than 55 deepwater drilling permits that cite the MWCC system have been approved.

There were more than 40 media personnel at GPIP to cover the event as well as a camera which was set up to overview the operation via a live stream to the internet for access by the Department of Interior and White House and other federal officials.

Following the drill, the materials were returned to Greens Port where they will be ready for deployment if ever needed.

"Watco’s Greens Port Industrial Park was pleased to facilitate the successful mobilization of specialized equipment required to demonstrate the abilities of Marine Well Containment Company (MWCC), Shell Oil Company and the BSEE. This operation resides in Greens Port as a result of our Customer ASCO. Watco is proud to support their efforts to assure safe drilling operations in the Gulf of Mexico," said Tim Holan, Watco’s vice president of port services.

Grand Elk wins NS Award

by Tracie VanBecelaere
Managing Editor

The team members who attended the Norfolk Southern Short Line Conference in July came out winners all-around, or at least the Grand Elk Railroad (GDLK) general manager Joe Forchione did. The conference was kicked off with a golf tournament to allow the attendees the opportunity to network. While working on their networking, Forchione and his team managed to take first place in the tournament. Pam Blakeney, Norfolk Southern safety coordinator; Harry Shugart, marketing services RailAmerica; Will Etheridge, RMI; completed the foursome that took the first place title.

A Short Line Sand House Session followed the golfing and then it was time for the Welcome Reception and Dinner, showcasing the NS band, The Lawmen.

On Thursday the General Session was held followed by a luncheon with NS Chairman, President and CEO Wick Moorman as featured speaker. Breakout meetings were held in the afternoon. Forchione said the meetings were very productive and some new opportunities have opened up because of the one-on-one discussions.

The grand finale for the Grand Elk was attending the award ceremony and being recognized for the increase in carload growth with the NS.

"The NS Short Line Conference was a great success for us this year," said Forchione. "We made several contacts, won a short line award, and brought home a win in golfing as well. The NS Conference is so well organized and the NS group are great hosts."
**CBH Group brings team members to U.S.**

by Tracie VanBecelaere
Managing Editor

After months of trading e-mails and phone calls many members of Watco’s Pittsburg, Kan., team recently had the opportunity to finally meet their counterparts from CBH. The group visiting Pittsburg included Colin Tutt, general manager operations and his wife Vicky; Andrew Mencshely, logistics manager; Sean Hamilton, program manager-operations; Mark Neo, corporate lawyer; Iwan Susanto, freight modeling analyst; and Sam Francke, advisor marketing communications. Jim Griffiths, Watco WA Rail COO and his wife Kathleen accompanied the group on their visit to the states.

Prior to their arrival in Pittsburg, the CBH Team went different directions and visited either New York or Chicago and were able to enjoy the theater and a very long twelve inning Mets vs. Dodgers baseball game.

Upon their arrival in Kansas on Monday, July 23, the group was able to relax at the T&C Wildlife lodge outside of Arcadia. The group arrived at Watco headquarters in Pittsburg on Tuesday morning where Colin Tutt provided the leadership team with an overview of the progress of the WA operations and what the objectives for the future are.

"This trip is to give the CBH Operations Rail Team the opportunity to meet personally with the many people on the other side of the world who have made this project successful to deliver vital changes in our supply chain. The support we get is amazing, and that gives us a lot of confidence," said Tutt.

Two videos were shown to the team as well; one thanking the American teams (Watco and Motive Power) for their partnerships and another showing the progress of the first CBH train as it made its way across the beautiful Australia countryside.

Following the presentation the individuals had the opportunity to meet one-on-one with their counterparts.

"It was a pleasure to finally get to put faces with the names," said Craig Richey, Watco’s general counsel. "Although we’re an ocean apart, the similarities between both groups was apparent, especially our mutual belief in Customer relationships and value.”

At dinner the night before leaving Kansas, the group from CBH listed off a number of things they’ve enjoyed during their trip so far. Wal-Mart was a big hit along with the Broadway play and baseball game they attended.

Vicky Tutt said of the trip, "It’s nice to come to visit and immerse ourselves in the culture and see how things are done here. There are many similarities, and there are also many things that are done differently.”

Everyone enjoyed getting to meet with the CBH Team and having the opportunity to connect on a personal level. The hardest part was saying good-bye to new friends as they continued their adventure to the Western states.

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Watco WA Rail supports area netball teams

The Watco WA Rail Team is proud to put their support behind another team, The Wheatbelt Flames, a State League Netball Team. Watco WA (WWAR) agreed to a three-year sponsorship deal for the organization which has three teams in their system; the League Team, the Reserves and the Under 18 Development Squad.

When approached by the head coach Adele Simmons for sponsorship WWAR thought it was a great deal because all the young ladies who are selected for the Wheatbelt Flames come from the wheat belt towns and farms. So, in effect, they are our Customers’ daughters and this was seen as another great way to support our Customers in Western Australia and be involved in the community.

Netball, for those not familiar with the sport, is a ball sport between two teams of seven players, derived from early versions of basketball. All WWAR Team Members have an open invitation to attend the Flames home games at the new $12 million dollar recreational centre in Northam which is the biggest town in the central wheat belt region. This is the first year in 15 years that the Flames have been able to hold their home games in Northam as the old centre did not meet the required standards, so the town and the netball community are all very excited.

Kasey Abel, top row left, is the daughter of Wayne Abel, Senior Operation Zone Manager for Kwinana North. She is the youngest ever to get onto the squad, joining the team at 14.

Wayne Abel, Senior Operation Zone Manager, Kwinana North; Greg (Monty) Montgomery, Operation Zone Manager, Kwinana North and Russell Griffins, Operations Zone Manager, Kwinana South with the Watco WA and Flames banner.
Watco sponsored teams do well in local tournaments

by Logan Falletti
Communications Intern

Watco’s local sponsored softball team has brought home the big trophy home this year, taking first in tournament play. The Watco softball team was part of the Pittsburg, Kan. Fastpitch Association’s Junior League. The players not only had Watco on their jerseys, they had it in their families. Faith VanBecelaere, pitcher, is the sister of Crezentia VanBecelaere, data entry, and niece of Tracie VanBecelaere, communications director. Center fielder Peyton Guiles is the daughter of Carlita Guiles, mechanical accountant.

This was the girls’ second year together. Last year, they finished second in league play. “When it came time for the tournament, those girls came to play,” said Guiles.

The girls were not alone – Watco also sponsored the Nationals, a 12-year-old boys baseball league team, who took second in league and contributed players to the National League All-Star Team. The NL All-Stars edged out the American League for a win of 15-14. The game came down to Joey Biggs crossing home plate on a base hit by Jake Webb in the final inning. Webb was named MVP. Jake Webb, pitcher, is the son of CEO Rick Webb and nephew of Gary Lundy, executive vice president of support services. James Richey, son of general counsel Craig Richey, also had extra base hits for the NL win.

Vernon American team plays in World Series

The Vernon American 7-8 year-old Little League team recently went to the World Series in Searcy, Ark. The team placed sixth in the state of Louisiana tournament with a 5 and 1 record. Three communities make up the team and it’s the first team to ever go to a world series tournament in the 7-8 year old division. Braden Trull is the stepson of Beau Emery, car repairman at the DeRidder, La., switching location.

Vernon American team plays in World Series

Births

Payten Joseph Culver
Jac McNamah is proud to announce the birth of a son, Payten Joseph. Payten was born on June 6 and weighed 7 lbs., 6 oz., and was 20 1/2 inches long. 

Grandparents are George and Debra McMahon of Navasota, Texas. George is a track inspector working out of Oklahoma City, Okla., for the Stillwater Central Railroad.

Wyatt Manuel Ramirez
Michael Ramirez and Ramona Herrera are proud to announce the birth of a new son, Wyatt Manuel. Wyatt was born on July 9 and weighed 7 lbs., 7 oz., and was 20 inches long.

Wyatt was welcomed home by brothers, Michael, 2, and Cody, 1.

Michael is a shift supervisor at the Harwood, Texas, terminal facility.

Nicholas Paul Oliver
William “Billy” and Amanda Oliver are proud to announce the birth of a new son, Nicholas Paul.

Nicholas was born on July 3 and weighed 7 lbs., 13.5 oz., and was 20 inches long.

Nicholas was welcomed home by sisters Donna Jean Tadlock, 12; Kadi Lynn Quiggins, 6; and Nathaniel Floyd Quiggins, 4.

Billy is a track foreman for the Yellowstone Valley Railroad.

August Anniversaries

Congratulations to the following team members celebrating their anniversaries!


2 Years: Wayne Anderson, William Bollinger, Graigey Chatman, Travis Combs, Michael Darlington, Cristaffer Davis, Martin De Leon, Ryan Dziedzic, Skip Gunning, Jhirmark Hodge, Peter Jones, William Jones, Nathan Keizer, Gabrielle Koehler, Alvin Maney, Jesse Parrie, Seth Petersen, Carl Reese, Josh Rivers, Clifford Rose, Willie Ross, Derrick Sepulvado, Doyle Sepulvado, Terry Smallwood, Dylan Vincent, Damien Williams, Justin Yakes

3 Years: Chad Arneson, Florentino Borjas, Brian Bout well, Ty Gatlin, Carl Legg, Doug Whalen

4 Years: Angelo Barrera, Raymond Barerra, Thomas Bonar, Michael Brown, Justin Dempsey, Jason Good son, Ryan Haverfield, Raymond Howard, Brian Jarrett, Philip Legerksi, Kathi Lunday, Robert McMullan, George Mincey, Dennis Sawyer, Lloyd South, Chad Thomas, Anthony Vail, Andre Williams

5 Years: Phyliss Angermeier, Marvin Ayers, Andrew Brown, Keith Cadwell, Ricky Cobb, Ronald Jackson, Kyle Mansfield, Dwight Sayles, Joshua Seeleld, Lawrence Sperier, Robert Sua, Nathan Tuzicka, Ulysses Williams

6 Years: Donald Brown, Robon Conery, Maurice Davis, Jimmy Dodd, Julie Fields, John Harrell, Adam Higgs, Antonio Law, Juan Lozano, Allen Lyles, Jeff Mayfield, Kyle Moody, Matthew Sodergren, Alicia Stimpson, Terrell Westbook

7 Years: Steven Beske, Arturo Camarena, Adam Hanson, Tim Herman, Leo Hogan, Paul Schiefelein

8 Years: Thomas Erbe, Jose Estrada, Kyle Finn, Jesus Grano, Sofrona Howard, Ted Kadou, Joe Keys, Brad Maier, Jimmy Patterson, Kenny Rowell, Delta Wood

9 Years: Bob Devillier, Johnny Gary, Jason Hislop, Charles Mullens, Kendice Talty

10 Years: Dave Groman, Jason Jean, Garrett Kourtney, Joshua Mitchell, Albert Olivera, Tricia Underwood, Joseph Wagner

11 Years: Mark Bray, Timothy Dyer, Stephen Gordon, Carl Jones, Cody Midkiff, Donald Ryan

12 Years: Dennis Frappier, David Ireland, Michael Kuffman, Mark Lynn, Keri Palmer

13 Years: James Brooks, Jay Setzer

14 Years: Mary Muddiff

15 Years: Brian Colier, Eve Culley, Chad Davis, James Lloyd, Randel Thomas

16 Years: Mitchell Adkins, Doug Kerley, Kevin Krueger

17 Years: Gregory Duffie, Susan Lewis, Charlie Sigley

18 Years: Jeri Miorandi, Donald Pinel

19 Years: Kenneth Dozier, Juan Ramirez, Bobby Reeves

21 Years: Maurice McGinnis

22 Years: Vincent Felton, Michael Sackett

23 Years: Jose Hernandez, John Lyon, Kevin Sepulvado

24 Years: Mary Abbott, Rodger Isbell, Robert Roberts, Jerry Wilson

25 Years: David Kline, Thomas Master, William Welch

26 Years: Robert Green, Sam Ricci, Gus Sepulvado

27 Years: Randy Garretson, Terry Johnston, Herbert Pol lard, Darrell Webb

28 Years: Michael Remedries

31 Years: Gerald Toopes, Guy Zabel

32 Years: David Brown, Allen Ebarb

34 Years: Randy Glaze, Lawrence Hamilton, Robert Love

35 Years: Stanley Behfer, Steven Prokopich

36 Years: Raymond Barroner

37 Years: Harold Winkles

38 Years: John Clemens, George Kociola

Chase Richard Gotz
Brett and Christy Gotz are proud to announce the birth of a new son, Chase Richard.

Chase was born on July 20 and weighed 5 lbs., 2 oz., and was 19 inches long.

Brett is a locomotive engineer for the Wisconsin & Southern Railroad in Horicon, Wisc.
Wisconsin & Southern Railroad upgrading bridge

by Tracie VanBecelaere
Managing Editor

Thanks to some creative construction, Bridge B-190, is open for business and at the same time undergoing some upgrades to make it 286k compliant. The bridge is on the Madison Subdivision of the Wisconsin & Southern Railroad and in a unique process called “under traffic,” the construction crew is given a ten-hour window each weekday to drive the piles and work on the structure. After that time, crews put the deck and rails back in place so that the trains can make their runs for the day.

About 80 Customers receive and ship their commodities directly over the bridge, and it would cripple the service plan if the bridge were out of service for a month or so while being worked on continuously. Some of the primary commodities shipped across the bridge include corn, soy beans, plastic, lumber, steel, paper, fertilizer, and canned goods. Two to four trains traverse the bridge each day with a count of 75-125 cars per train.

“Upgrading our structures, system-wide, is critical to providing safe and efficient rail service to our Customers throughout Wisconsin & Illinois,” stated Ken Lucht, manager of community development. “This project is just one example of our long-term commitment to our infrastructure and to our valued Customers who depend on the WSOR as their primary service provider.”

In June of 2012, WSOR awarded a competitive bid contract to Lunda Construction in the amount of $773,900.00. The structure is publicly owned by the State of Wisconsin, and the project is being financed cooperatively by the State of Wisconsin and the Wisconsin & Southern Railroad. The Wisconsin & Southern Railroad has a long-term operating contract to provide freight rail service to 20 Wisconsin Counties, and the Madison Subdivision is a key corridor connecting central Wisconsin rail users to the Chicago market via the Belt Railway Company.

View looking west towards Downtown Madison, Wisc. WSOR and contractor forces setting the vibratory pile hammer in place to drive the next steel “H” pile. Photo taken by David Bierman.

Group warns drivers to stop, look, and listen

This sassy group of nine year old girls looks like they could be the new spokespersons for Operation Lifesaver. When spreading the message to stop, look, and listen at railroad crossings these girls certainly get the message across!

The girls are (l-r) Payton Wells, Brooke Thompson, Maeli Simpson and Jessie Gray from Caney, Kan. The girls were in Coffeyville, Kan., for a photo shoot, and when they saw the train crossing the road Maeli thought it would be a perfect opportunity to get a picture for a keepsake for Maeli’s aunt, Monica Simpson. Monica moved to Birmingham, Ala., to serve as senior clerk for the Birmingham Terminal Railway.

“Shesaid she didn’t want me to forget her,” said Simpson, “like that’s possible.”

Monica previously served as the administrative assistant for the transportation services division team in Pittsburg, Kan., but had visited the Birmingham location on business and liked the South. When the opportunity arose, she signed up for the move South and new adventures.

As senior clerk Monica is responsible for managing the clerks, adding organization and structure to the operations department and acting as a liaison between the BHRR and the corporate office.