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The newsletter for Watco Companies, LLC and Watco Transportation Services, LLC

The winter months and holiday season has arrived and this is a time for us all to focus our energies on our daily functions and jobs. It's easy to lose focus at this time of year worrying and thinking about family issues, decorations to put up, holiday bills, gift purchasing and increased family time together. It's easy to let your attention drift a bit, thinking of all those things.

The jobs we all do everyday require planning and execution. Performing our jobs according to the rules requires us to stay focused, alert and attentive to the task at hand. Even a small, short lapse in concentration puts us and our co-workers at risk of an injury or accident.

Watco again is bringing in the “FREEZE” Winter Safety Program (Following the Rules Everyday Ensures Zero Errors) to help us all stay focused through these winter months. This program is to help promote awareness and focus our concentration on the job at hand. Not only do we need to increase our focus but also to be alert to hazards.

(Continued on page 2)
Silver bells and train whistles sound in Christmas

by Tracie VanBecelaere
Managing Editor

The Christmas season brings back many memories and traditions that have been passed down through generations of families. Surprisingly enough, several of the stories involve trains. How did this connection between trains and the holiday get its start?

It is believed that it got its start in the days of the steam engines when trains were a means of transportation, a way to get back home for the holidays. Meeting family members at the train station was often the start of a long Christmas celebration.

Not only did trains transport family members but railroads also moved mail, packages and brought in fresh fruit from the coast. Every year people waited for the Pacific Fruit Express to bring them oranges from California and they would stand out on the freight docks and watch the steam engines roll in with this much craved citrus. For many, that piece of citrus was the most special item to be found in their stocking on Christmas morning. It’s also popular belief that Santa had his coal brought in on trains to give little boys and girls who were naughty instead of nice.

Of course, what little boy didn’t want to find a Lionel train waiting for him under the Christmas tree? Many little ones still hope to find a train wrapped under the tree, some bearing the name of Thomas the Tank Engine. Not only did children like to have trains under the tree but it was also part of decorations throughout the country. While unwrapping bulbs and hanging tinsel, the tracks were carefully arranged around the tree so the train could circle around blowing its whistle in welcome of the Christmas season.

A book written in 1985 by Chris Van Allsburg brought a new generation to associate trains with Christmas. The Polar Express, was written about a little boy living in Grand Rapids, Mich., (home of Watco’s Grand Elk Railroad) who rides a magical train to the North Pole to visit Santa Claus. The book was made into a movie in 2004 and was the inspiration for the start-up of numerous Christmas-time trips aboard passenger cars aptly named Polar Express rides.

Holiday trains often go about the country from the first of December to near Christmas featuring railcars decked out in Christmas glory. Some such as Kansas City Southern’s Holiday Express features cars based on different themes and are combined with charitable giving. The Holiday Express train includes a smiling tank car “Rudy”; a flatcar carrying Santa’s sleigh, reindeer and a miniature village; a gingerbread boxcar; the elves’ workshop; the reindeer stable; and a little red caboose. At each stop a donation of gift cards is given to the Salvation Army.

Visiting the holiday trains has become a new tradition for families with young children and even “big” kids enjoy viewing the beautiful displays.

Although cars have replaced trains as a method to get to grandma’s house for Christmas, there are stops along the way that express the spirit of Christmas.

Train often make an appearance under the Christmas tree during the holidays.

“FREEZE” Winter Safety Program

(Continued from page 1) that are presented due to the changing weather conditions. The winter wonderland created by a blanket of snow may be beautiful but it can also hide many obstacles so be sure to clean up anything at your locations that could be a tripping hazard.

It is critical that we all be aware of the consequences of our actions or inactions while on the job. Errors in the jobs our Watco team performs everyday can lead to serious, even fatal consequences.

Our families depend on us so we need to make good decisions while at work. We can continue to provide for their well-being and return home to them each day. An injury to any of us will not only affect our families, our ability to provide, but it will also affect the company we work for and our co-workers who have to “fill the gap” left by an out-of-work or injured employee.

We must all “FREEZE out” injuries to keep ourselves and our families’ safe — especially through these hectic winter months.

Thanks Watco Veterans

Last month we posted the names of the Watco veterans in The Dispatch to honor all the team members who have served in the military to preserve our freedom. There were some names missing from the data base and if your name wasn’t listed please notify our human resource department so that we can have an accurate listing of those who have served our country.

Thomas Kennedy, WTS, Pittsburg, KS, Army, Ft. Huachuca, AZ, Ft. Hood, TX, Iraq;
Tim Herman, WMS, Pittsburg, KS, Navy; Frankie Carpino, WMS, Pittsburg, KS, Navy; Robert Castellani, WMS, Pittsburg, KS, Coast Guard; Randy Bole, WMS, Pittsburg, KS, Army National Guard.

“FREEZE” Winter Safety Program
**Watco group visits Kansas Customers**

by Tracie VanBecelaere  
Managing Editor

Just like the politicians were making whirlwind stops during the first part of November, so were members of the Watco Team. Instead of campaigning though, they were visiting the Kansas and Oklahoma Railroad (KO) Customers. 

Team members Ron Spencer - Customer Service manager, Jimmy Patterson - KO assistant general manager, Sherry Bulot - KO Customer Service Representative, and Brant Littrell - KO marketing manager, made stops in the Kansas towns of Conway, McPherson, Sterling, and Lyons.  

“It was a great opportunity for us to visit with our Customers and learn more about what they do and how they do it,” said Spencer. “Providing service and solutions to our Customers is easier with the knowledge that we have of their business.” 

The team visited Williams Energy, Oneok, North American Salt, Jacam Chemicals, McKinnis Iron, and Johns Mansville. While at the North American Salt plant the team was treated to a tour of the facility and had their photo taken in one of the boxcars that the product is shipped out in. 

Littrell recently took the position of marketing manager for the KO and so the trip was the perfect chance to get to meet face-to-face with his Customers and get to see first hand what they do and how the KO serves their needs. 

“North American Salt will be there for a very long time, the goal is to help them find ways to stay competitive and increase the traffic going in and out of the plant,” said Littrell. “Seeing the facility and visiting with them has helped me get a better feel for how they operate and what their plans are and how we can help them grow.” 

The team found out that the salt caverns are also used by other industries as well. Because of the density of the walls, salt caverns make an ideal spot to store fuels underground. Williams Energy uses this storage method and then ships the product out by railcar as they receive orders from their customers. 

“Another interesting thing we learned on the trip was that propane doesn’t have an odor naturally, by law it is added at the plants so that if there’s a leak people will be able to tell,” said Spencer. While visiting Jacam the team learned more about how the products are used in the drilling industry and how what they do helps our other Customers in other regions who are busy extracting fuels from the shale reserves that are being discovered. Williams Energy and Oneok take the fuels that are extracted from the drilling and use them to make a variety of fuel blends to ship out to their customers. 

“It’s interesting to see how what so many of our Customers do is intertwined,” said Spencer. “If we can find ways to help one Customer grow it often helps many of the others as well.” 

The team also visited the McKinnis Iron, who ships out scrap iron and Johns Mansville, a leading producer of fiberglass insulation. John Mansville ships in raw materials to make the insulation at their McPherson plant. 

“Overall, it was a very educational experience,” stated Spencer. “Not only did we learn more about our Customers but we also took away some knowledge regarding the industries that they serve as well as some fun facts and historic information.”

**WWAR Team steamed up**

Not one to stand around and be idle, these great team members in Western Australia work hard to make sure that the locomotives that are in for servicing look good on the outside as well. With the adjacent line closed for track work, Albany drivers, Bob Harrison and Chris Van Antwerp, had a safe place to work while they steamed the locomotives to make them ready to roll. 

Darrell Thompson, WWAR director of operations said, “I have never been more proud of a team than what I have now. In 21 years of railroading I have never had a driver ask me to buy rubber gloves so “they could clean toilets”. They vacuum the locos and clean the cab routinely. Now that is pride!”

**Black Thunder Team seeks to adopt family for Christmas**

by Tracie VanBecelaere  
Managing Editor

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Wanted posters were quite common back in the days of the “old west” and often had a negative connotation as the ones wanted had often committed dastardly deeds to warrant such advertisement. The Black Thunder Switching Team is putting up a few wanted posters of their own, but the deed involved is the opposite of dastardly. 

The location’s Team Safety and Improvement Committee (TS&IC) is wanting to help out a family that could use some help bringing holiday cheer to their Christmas. 

“We want to buy them dinner and make sure the kids have presents under the tree,” said committee member and general manager Dave Ruggles. “We would like to make this an annual event, a way for our team to give back to the community each year.”

After the requests come in, a family will be chosen by the team, who will then go about seeing what the family’s needs are. Once the needs are accessed, the team then has the fun task of shopping for the chosen family. 

“We would like to speak with the family about what they need. What the kid’s likes and dislikes are, their ages, and genders, so we have a better understanding as to what the family specifically needs or wants,” explained Erin Flocchini, a Black Thunder Team Member who is eager to help with the project. 

She understands asking for help is hard, so if the family would like to remain anonymous they can but they hope they can meet with the family in person if possible. Flocchini said that when she was growing up she had an opportunity with her family to bring joy at Christmas time to those in need. 

“It was special, helping someone with a need is heartwarming. It’s amazing! It makes you feel all warm and fuzzy — especially when kids are involved,” she admitted. 

The feeling of giving to others is exactly what Ruggles wants the members of his team to experience.

“I am looking at this as a general manager. You are not just helping a family, the team gets just as much, if not more, out of it,” Ruggles acknowledged. 

The team put an ad in the local newspaper requesting names or referrals for families that can use some help this Christmas. 

Anyone wanting to nominate a family in the Gillette, Wyo., area can contact David Ruggles at druggles@watcocompanies.com.
Switching Services adds two new sites

by Kersee Currier
Communications Intern

Two companies, Central Louisiana Electric Company (CLECO) and Kinder Morgan, have turned to Watco to help them with their switching needs of safely moving railcars in the Southern Region. The CLECO switching operation is in Lena, La., and the Kinder Morgan switching team is working out of Galena Park, Texas.

**CLECO - Lena, Louisiana**

The long-term relationship between CLECO and Watco began with CLECO’s now retired Bill Stewart and Watco Founder Dick Webb. CLECO was the second Customer at the Coffeyville Kansas Railcar Repair Shop in 1985 and Watco is now assisting CLECO in Lena, La., through a different division - switching services.

Coal unit cars are loaded by CLECO and team members Matt Frugé and Garth Coleman are responsible for placing the cars. CLECO will spot up to 135 cars in the coal unit train.

“We will average ten coal trains a month” says Regional Switching Manager Tony Clark. “All of the hard work pays off by meeting the Customer’s needs.”

CLECO is based in Pineville, La., and currently serves 279,000 customers. They supply energy fuels such as western coal, petroleum coke, lignite, and oil and nature gas to their customers.

The long partnership with CLECO demonstrates how important the Customer First Foundation Principles is and how it can help to stimulate more long term partnerships.

**Kinder Morgan - Galena Park, Texas**

Kinder Morgan is the third largest energy company in North America and has 180 terminals. Many of their customers are major oil companies, energy producers and shippers, local distribution companies and business across many industries.

Although Kinder Morgan has been an equity investment partner since December of 2010, Watco’s relationship with Kinder Morgan at Galena Park in Texas began on September 18 and has continued to grow. There are two crews working on this project and each crew consists of three members including a crew leader, engineer, and a brakeman. The members on this team are: crew leaders, Arnold Sandoval and Roshan Robinson; engineers, Raphael Hernandez and Neil Arredondo; and brakemen, Joel Gonzales and Chris Boudin. These team members face the challenge of providing switching seven days a week to the Customer.

“Tank car racks are spotted twice daily which consist of twenty-five to thirty-five cars. The challenges we face are sufficiently switching the facility in a safe and timely manner. In the short time that Watco has been in the Kinder Morgan Galena Park facility we have broken two records for cars being shipped in September and October,” said location manager David Gibson. “Watco crews shipped 617 cars in the month of September and 766 in the month of October.”

Gibson added, “The Customer was very happy with the service and they acknowledged that we were doing an excellent job. We look forward to a long and prosperous partnership with Kinder Morgan.”

Kinder Morgan also stores and handles several products at the Galena Park Terminal which holds 175 cars. Kinder Morgan uses pipelines, ships, railcars and tractor trailers to transport things such as natural gas, refined petroleum products, crude oil and a list of other things.

These two projects are fulfilling the Customer First Principle of building long-term relationships and doing a great job safely.

**Former TS&IC leader receives kudos**

When the Team Safety and Improvement Committee leaders complete their training courses the instructors can only hope that they will do well and lead their teams in positive directions. Dave Ruggles is one leader who has exceeded those expectations and then some. Ruggles attended the training in May of 2011 when he was an assistant trainmaster with the Eastern Idaho Railroad. After putting the what he learned into practice Ruggles is now serving as the general manager for the Black Thunder switching location in Gillette, Wyo.

Recently Ruggles received a letter from Russell Dial, vice president Global One Transport, Inc. for CoalCap, LLC. Dial wrote, “Your attention to detail in the operation of the CoalCap in and around the mine has been over the top and much appreciated. You certainly have a great sense of how to put the customer first.”

Dial added, “I had the fortune of growing up around Mr. Webb (Watco CEO) and knew his father (Watco founder) and wanted to let you know that I think they would be proud of your effort. I look forward to working with you and your company for years to come.”

Webb received a copy of the letter as well and said, “Dave is one of our best so it is no surprise that he is providing that type of service. We are very proud of Dave and his team and know there are many great things to be accomplished under Dave’s leadership with good Customers like you.”
Births

Stiles Grant Stroud
Brad and Charli Stroud are proud to announce the birth of a son, Stiles Grant. Stiles was born October 12 and was 21 1/2 inches long and weighed 8 lbs., 6 oz. Stiles was welcomed home by big brother Frankie, 3. Brad is the assistant manager of invoicing out of Pittsburg, Kan.

Arlette Pedraza
Transito and Erika Pedraza are proud to announce the birth of their daughter Arlette. Arlette was born October 26 and was 20 inches long and weighed 9 lbs., 1 oz. Big brother Javen, 2, welcomed his new little sister to the family. Transito is an engineer on the Austin Western Railroad in Texas.

Lincoln Gage Foster Gwillim
Joshua Gwillim and Cara Shauncey are the proud parents of a baby boy born Oct. 24. Lincoln Gage Foster Gwillim was 21 inches long and weighed 8 lbs., 6 oz. Joshua is an engineer/conductor on the Stillwater Central Railroad (SLWC) in Oklahoma City.

Piper Di Bicknell
Kody and Cassie Bicknell are proud to announce the birth of their daughter Piper Di. Piper is their first child and was born on Oct. 16. She was 19 1/2 inches long and weighed 5 lbs., 15 oz.

Congratulations to the following team members celebrating their anniversaries!

1 Year: Michael Antoine, Jason Behenna, Wendy Bent, Kristi Bolcik, Dexter Cahill, Jason Cathey, Christopher Corpe, Ralph Davis, Hector DeHoyos, Tom DeLafosse, Charles Engels, Ronald Good, Kyle Gould, Brian Grewing, Dana Hartleib, Jeremiah Herman, Warren Jones, Kurt Koontz, Ryan Krull, Alfredo Lopez, Sherene Metoxen, Travis Muscha, Brent Nettleton, Jesse Nickell, Steven Peterson, James Rader, Samuel Savelkoul, Ronald Solander, Ryan Stroik, Paul Sweeney, Joseph Vallie, Terry Valverde, Jerrod Walls, Christopher Walther, Steven Wisniewski, Jeffery Yon

2 Years: Noland Bailey, Hector Barrientos, Spencer Batton, Rogelio Bernal, John Bowers, Jeffery Davis, Lee Dempsey, Archie Fields, William Gardner, Mike Gonzales, Josiah Gonzalez, Michael Hancock, Joshua Huskins, Miguel Jimenez, Jared Knee, Austin Lepoglow, Josef Maier, Jennifer May, Lisa Powell, John Ray, Sharon Sexson, David Showalter, Jesse Victoria, John Wedgeworth

3 Years: Robert Aldredge, Timothy Eccles, Earl Evans, George Freeman, Daniel Giacalone, Luke Houston, Donyelle Newton, Charles Price, Shawn Romine, Eugene Stevens, Robert Taylor, Montez Tedford, Dillon Thibodeaux, Ted Thoroman, Joel Wilmuth

4 Years: Charles Boyd, Robert Brown, Randy Canada, Ernest Gonzalez, Weston Hamilton, Steven Harmon, Johnny Jones, Esteban Robles

5 Years: Pedro Balensia, Trae Best-Taylor, Jeffery Bland, Misael Cervantes, Kurt Kilgore, Steven Reida, Jeff Washington, Penny Wood

6 Years: Eddie Arredondo, Daniel Brewer, Thomas Hall, Joshua Hargis, Rick Hensley, Peter Mars, Bruce Martin, Transito Pedraza, Rafael Ramirez, Jorge Solis, Jon Tavernaro, Nathan Van Buren

7 Years: Cedric Bonner, Matt Drake, Michael Kissie, Joe Mercer, Joshua Williams

8 Years: Gilbert Anguiano, Rafael Hernandez, Mica Hiebert, Zee Van Becelaere, Barry White

9 Years: Johnnie Brown, Tony Clark, John Edwards, Ismael Mondragon

10 Years: Craig Richey, Calvin Turner

11 Years: Roy Buckhalter, Denver Conley, Ernesto Elizondo, Johnny Johnson, David Larch, Larry Lever

12 Years: Larry Brown

13 Years: Thomas Cooper, Joel Estermeyer, Charles Karamales

14 Years: Ricky Absher

15 Years: Gardner Cole, Samuel Greenfield, Jason Stutzman, Anthony Tillman

17 Years: Bryan Miller, Roger Schaalma

18 Years: Mike Carr

20 Years: John Byrd, Jean Kincade

21 Years: Danny Anderes, Robert Washington

22 Years: Jimmy Horner, Claude McGuff

25 Years: Leonard Anderson, Charles Jackson, Rodney King, Sammy Marks, Mike McGinn, Redd Nelly, Allen Oljifenbruns

33 Years: Henderson Carmichael, Joseph Escott, John Herron

38 Years: Phyllis Dickerson

42 Years: John Cole

December Anniversaries

Piper Di Bicknell
Kody and Cassie Bicknell are proud to announce the birth of their daughter Piper Di. Piper is their first child and was born on Oct. 16. She was 19 1/2 inches long and weighed 5 lbs., 15 oz.

Cassie is the marketing coordinator for Watco Transportation Services.

Piper Di Bicknell

Weddings

Dillman-Staudinger
Matt Staudinger and Tammy Dillman were united in marriage on October 19, 2012. The ceremony took place at the Doublewood in Bismarck, N.D.

Matt works for Watco at the Stanley, N.D. location as a pumper operator and Tammy is employed by Bismarck State College. The couple honeymooned in Las Vegas and then returned home to their children; Chase, Ivy and Deegan.

Tammy and Matt Staudinger

This section is dedicated to the Watco Team members to give you a chance to share what’s happening in your corner of the Watco World.
Calendar contest winners named for 2013

by Tracie VanBecelaere
Managing Editor

A dark stormy June morning near Collinsville, Oklahoma was the setting of the winning entry in Watco’s first calendar contest. Jay Hastings of Bartlesville, Okla., left his home early in the morning to try to catch a photograph of the newly painted South Kansas and Oklahoma Railroad (SKOL) locomotives. Hastings is a Captain at the Bartlesville (Okla.) Police Department and has been with them for 27 years.

"I’ve always been interested in railroads and railroad history," said Hastings. "I’ve combined that with my photography hobby and have come up with some pretty neat shots."

Hastings has been active in preserving rail history not only through his photographs but through his membership in the Heart of the Heartlands rail preservation group. He also worked on the community project to move the Santa Fe 940 steam locomotive caboose next to the historic Bartlesville depot.

"I’ve been photographing Watco trains for the past 25 years and worked the passenger trains as a volunteer. I was also employed by Watco for a short period of time as a switchman in Bartlesville, Okla., switching the local Zinc Corp plant. I enjoy researching old railroads in Kansas and Oklahoma and hope preserve history through photographs. To me it’s not just about taking photos of trains but understanding and capturing the work that a railroad does."

Second place winner of the calendar contest was Kyle Moody. Moody has worked for the Kansas & Oklahoma (KO) Railroad for a little over six years.

"I’ve been taking pictures of trains for about 16 years. In early 2009 I met a publisher of a locomotive magazine and he told me about taking roster photos (roster shots are a 3/4 angle from the front of the locomotive to show the best view), he has since published some of my photos in his magazine."

Moody said there was a bit of work involved to get the shot that was selected for the calendar. It involved the police, a crowd and lots of luck.

"When I first set up a Wichita police officer stopped me and asked if I worked for the railroad. I said yes, I work for the KO and she then asked which one is that I told her it was the one with the black and yellow locomotives, then she knew which one I was talking about. After the police left, a carload of trespassers taking senior pictures came by and went down to the other end of the old platform, then a white car with an older railfan showed up he parked by the tracks to the left side of the photo. On top of all that, BNSF was running a train north bound on the track nearest to me, I could see the headlights of our train coming thru the passing trains cars. With a little work and a lot of luck, I moved to a spot to hide the trespassers behind the platform pillers and not get the other railfan in the photo just in time for the BNSF train to pass and the KO train to come into view."

Six judges selected the photos based not only on quality but on how they represented Watco as a whole. Moody’s photo represented what Watco does perfectly said one judge. "The railroad is bringing back empty cars from our grain Customer who is in the background on the right hand side of the picture. It combines the history with the new, something Watco has done well."

Other photographs in the calendar were taken by Murray Rowe, Pat Foster, Mike Yanish, Glenn Anderson, Tracie VanBecelaere, Paul Swanson, Frank Orona, Stefan Loeb, Kyle Moody, and Brian Kemp. The calendars will be available for purchase at www.shopwatco.com for $10.00 each.

Get your cameras out and start shooting for the 2014 Calendar Contest!