Mechanical division adds new shop location

by Tracie VanBecelaere
Managing Editor

Watco welcomes 22 new team members thanks to the addition of the Cudahy Car Shop, Inc., (CCS) in early April. Watco can now boast a total of 16 mechanical shops that are available to serve our Customers. The Cudahy shop is located in southeastern Wisconsin and is a great addition to the shops located on the Wisconsin & Southern Railroad.

The CCS began operations in 1977 under the ownership of CNW and was purchased by CCS in 1995. The shop features 12 indoor car spots, 20 working positions and 40 total spots in the plant. More than 140 cars will go through the location each month. The shop is in the Milwaukee switching district on the Union Pacific Railroad and features a storage yard with a 250 car capacity. The shop is also a short 80 miles from the railroad hub of Chicago, Ill.

They are a certified M-1003 facility with a B25 certification, involved in repairs over 85 hours and a B26, performing Rule 88 repairs/modifications.

Grilling skills put to good use for fund-raiser

by Tracie VanBecelaere
Managing Editor

Everyone loves a good barbecue but it’s even better when it benefits the local community. Doug Steed II, engineer and Team Safety and Improvement Committee Leader at the Dow switching facility in Houston, Texas, is on a barbecue cooking team and competes in contests throughout the area. The team is ramping up for an upcoming fund-raiser to benefit the McArthur High School football team in Houston.

Steed’s son, Doug the third, is a sophomore at the school and is starting varsity quarterback for the team and the fund-raiser is being held to help purchase uniforms for the athletes.

Doug Steed II has been a part of the Men in Black cooking team for eight years and just last year formed another cooking team. “Last year we placed second in the open category and fifth in brisket and seventh in the chicken,” said Steed II. “In every cook-off I’ve been in my team has placed at least in the top ten.”

Although the locomotive pit is known for it’s looks, Steed II is working on a new bigger unit that, when completed, will measure 36 by 9 feet and will feature a pit, burner, open-face grill and cooler.

The team of Steed, Miguel Rios and Adam Clark will be cooking for the team’s fund-raiser. This past season Steed III received the school’s Offensive MVP Award and he also received the New Comer Award for their District.
Friday the 13th wasn’t the day you had to be on watch at Watco’s Pittsburg, Kan., offices, it was Friday, April 27th that was interesting. The Pittsburg Team Safety and Improvement Committee (TS&IC) hosted a Halfway to Halloween Costume Contest.

Different groups who participated in the contest were information technology (safety crew), human resources (60’s theme), fleet and car accounting (bedtime theme) and the winners, the invoicing team with their 80’s workout warriors garb.

The winners of the contest won a pizza luncheon.

Trinity Condon, HR coordinator and TS&IC co-captain, said, “The committee members thought the Halfway to Halloween contest would be a fun way to boost moral and we knew a lot of people here are competitive so we thought a contest would be a great idea. The turnout was better than expected, in HR we originally thought we were the only ones dressed up but then when it got time to get together for the contest we saw there were a lot more teams participating as well.”

Not one to rest on their laurels, the TS&IC hosted a trash pickup day on Saturday following the costume contest. Eleven team members met at the local state park and then carpooled and dropped off participants at different spots along the two-mile stretch of Highway 160 that they had volunteered to work on.

Safety being part of the committee’s name, safety vests were worn to ensure good visibility of the workers and gloves were handed out as an additional safety measure.

Team members helping with the trash pick-up were: Trinity Condon, Amanda Brisbin, Michele Howard, Mitch and Hayley Becker, Tyler Davis, John Westbrook, Brad Stroud, Lori and Tony Cox, and Carrie Krebs. Each member who helped out received a Watco “I love trash” tee shirt featuring the iconic Oscar the Grouch. Although rain was in the forecast the team was lucky enough to only get a few sprinkles while completing their task.

The trash pick-up occurs three times a year and is part of a county-wide effort to keep the county’s roadways clean and litter free.

Lori Cox, revenue account specialist said, “We thought it was a good thing to do. It took us a couple of hours and it was nice to get together outside of the office and do something for the community.”

South Kansas and Oklahoma Railroad’s (SKOL) Maintenance of Way (MOW) Team Member Rick Vaughn recently retired from the SKOL. Rick started his career with Watco 15 years ago in 1997, working up through the ranks in the track department to track inspector.

Vaughn said he plans to travel in his retirement and is planning a trip to New Orleans. He also will enjoy raising cattle and working around the house.

One thing Vaughn says he will really enjoy is not having to get up for work every day!

Team members from the SKOL train operations and MOW gathered to send Rick off with a party where we gave him gifts and memorabilia of Watco and the SKOL and also awarded him with a watch.
May is Cystic Fibrosis awareness month: the Kennedy’s story

by Shaina Kennedy
Revenue Auditor, Pittsburg, Kansas

More than 10 million Americans are symptomless carriers of the defective gene known as Cystic Fibrosis and 1 in every 400 marriages involve two carriers. That’s what my husband Tom and I are, carriers of CF (Cystic Fibrosis). Research shows that every child with CF received their genes for this disease from both the mother and father, so an altered CF gene is present on both sides of the family. Tom and I do not know where this gene started on either side and didn’t even know what CF was until our son Brendon Michael was diagnosed when he was two weeks old.

CF is an inherited chronic disease that affects the lungs and digestive system of about 30,000 children and adults in the United States (70,000) worldwide. A defective gene and its protein product cause the body to produce unusually thick, sticky mucus that clogs the lungs and leads to life-threatening lung infections and obstructs the pancreas and stops natural enzymes from helping the body break down and absorb food.

I had a pretty good pregnancy, nothing too out of the ordinary just the usual morning or, should I say, all day sickness for the first trimester and all the same stresses and worries of any first time parent. When we delivered it became a different story. My blood pressure began to increase the closer we got to delivery and when I went into labor on my birthday (September 29, 2011) they put me on a magnesium drip to stop my BP from rising. I think at one point it was well on its way to over 200, but we go through it and I do not know where this gene started on either side and didn’t even know what CF was until our son Brendon Michael was diagnosed when he was two weeks old.

Enginner tells story of finding infant following tornado

by Tracie VanBecelaere
Managing Editor

Shannon Knisley, South Kansas and Oklahoma Railroad locomotive mechanic and engineer works in Cherryvale, Kan., but lives 73 miles away in Joplin, Mo. Following the devastating tornado that hit Joplin on May 22 of last year, he and a friend went out hoping to be able to help those in need. Instead, he ending up finding something totally unexpected, a baby sitting in the middle of a yard.

“He was just sitting there,” said Knisley. “I picked him up and looked him over since he had blood on his shirt but he appeared fine. I took him to Freeman Hospital so they could check him and locate his parents.

“I worried about the baby all week long and then me, my wife and two kids went to see President Obama when he came to town. Believe it or not, a couple walked behind us holding that same baby.

“His name was Skyler and his mom and dad were in the Springfield (Mo.) hospital recovering from their injuries and he was with his grandparents - that’s the way the Lord showed me the baby was okay and eased my worries.”

Shannon Knisley
Locomotive mechanic - engineer
South Kansas and Oklahoma Railroad

Brendon Kennedy, son of Shaina Kennedy, revenue auditor and Tom Kennedy, IT analyst, Pittsburg, Kan.
May Anniversaries

Congratulations to the following Team Members celebrating service anniversaries!

1 Year:  Rachael Anderson, Jay Anthony, Mark Baumgardner, Thomas Baze, Joseph Bradley, Kenneth Bullard, David Castagno, Jeffrey Chadwell, Michael Corbell, Debra Davis, Robert Dixon, Donald Duke, Timothy Fleetwood, Mike Gibson, Michael Gillikin, Steven Gonzalez, Donald Gress, Joseph Hampton, Aaron Henderson, Amy Hopkins, Jennifer Jones, Carrie Krebs, Bryan Lewis, Wesley Lindell, Travis Mason, Leslie McCoy, Chans Miller, Christopher Miller, Magdaleno Monjaraz, Gene Mudd, Frank Nickowski, Dennis Nolen, Chris Ozment, Jeffrey Poole, Kenneth Powell, James Richards, Marty Riedlinger, Gary Roberts, Samuel Rodriguez, Christopher Smith, Lucas Smith, Terence Snell, Joseph Sullivan, Danny Thomas, Noah Torres, Alan Wilmouth

2 Years:  Juan Aguilar, Eloy Alvarado, Dakota Booth, Dwight Castle, Kristopher Colley, Joel Gonzales, Joshua Holt, DeMarcus Hudson, Jason Jansen, Jeff Justice, Wendell Koohn, Gabriel Patron, Derek Penner, Scott Phipps, Timothy Quist, Joseph Robinson, William Rowell, Brian Simpson, Micah Telischak, Jerri Titus, Terry Wall

3 Years:  Kevin Anselmi, Miguel Garcia, Trevor Penner, Edrick Simon

4 Years:  Jovani Aguilar, Mark Bohr, Bryan Colvin, Nakia Jenkins, Joe Kaufman, Benjamin Lewman, Melvin Risenhoeover, Shaun Rodriguez

5 Years:  Juan Aguilar, Elva Cook, Ryan Everhart, Willie Glee, Michael Hubbs, Chris Labrie, Richard Leija, Kenneth McGrady, Danyale Norman, Joseph Olivo, Miguel Osorio, Fredy Ramos, Travis Schnelle, Matthew Smith, Chris Spear, Richard Thomas, Jamie Wheeler, Lajohn Wilson, George Yanas

6 Years:  Randy Bole, Charles Davidson, Lester House, Gregory Lewis, Joshua McKern, Keith Schlotman, Leonard Smith, Alfred Wetklow, Nancy White

7 Years:  Aaron Coester, Steven Conrad, John Gaither, Teresa Gentry, Mark Kuehn, Charles Rogers, James Saeger, Jerrel Whiteside

8 Years:  Debbie Bishop, Nicole Chamberlin, Wendy Hicks, Bruce Masters, Larry Mette, Amy Parady, Kameen Thornton, Bradley Walker, Lance Williams

9 Years:  Matthew Fetzer

10 Years:  Joshua Frame, John Johnson, James Lilly, Kevin Redman

11 Years:  Garth Coleman, Christopher Hamill, Allen Kellar, Robert Snow

12 Years:  John Johnson, Ed McKechnie, Tony Montabana

13 Years:  Bruce Glover, Robert Nelson, David Perault, Casey Thrall

14 Years:  Marlin Hughes, Douglas Marshall, John Watson

15 Years:  Irinoe Basurto, Scott Davis, Tarkertick Holden, Jim Pelton

16 Years:  Terry Andis, Randall Morehead, John Snow, Jose Vidal

17 Years:  Tony Delecce, Thomas Thompson

20 Years:  James Hill, Daniel Rico

22 Years:  Bryant Hodge

23 Years:  Michael Brown

24 Years:  Wendy Wooden

25 Years:  James Smith

26 Years:  Mark McCrlean, Roger Munday

27 Years:  Daniel Bargrington, David Stott

33 Years:  Michael Roberts

34 Years:  Jose Acosta, Frank Jones

37 Years:  Homer Brown

38 Years:  Lott Oesch

41 Years:  Nathaniel Rainey

43 Years:  Larry Snyder

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.

Births

Hadly Lynn Jacobs

Jaden and Jenna Jacobs are proud to announce the birth of their daughter, Hadly. Hadly was born on April 12 and weighed 7 lbs., 1 oz. and was 18 1/2 inches long.

Charlie Conrad Ellis

Christopher and Natalie Ellis are proud to announce the birth of their son, Charlie. Charlie was born on March 18 and weighed 3760 grams (8 lbs., 4 oz.), and was 53 cm. (20.87 in.). Charlie was welcomed home by his big brother Jacob, who turns three this month.

Leila Ramirez

Rafael and Jazmin Ramirez are proud to announce the birth of a daughter, Leila. Leila was born on March 27 and weighed 6 lbs., 2 oz. and was 20 inches long.

Leila was welcomed home by her big brothers Nahim, 20 months old, Obed and Evet, who are 7. Rafael serves as a field inspector and works at the Hockley, Texas mechanical shop.

Finnegan Bodhi Greyson Noriega

Finnegan Bodhi Greyson Noriega was born on November 22, 2011 weighing in at 5 lbs., 4 oz. and is now a whopping 15 lbs. Parents are Kendice Talty and Rain Noriega. Kendice Talty has been with Watco’s Wichita dispatch center for nine years and is the senior dispatcher. Because Kendice has been very busy juggling motherhood and keeping trains rolling safely, time slipped away and he is already 5 months old. This is Kendice and Rain’s first baby and after many years and a bit of a struggle getting him here, he is a blessing to all.

Finnegan Bodhi Greyson Noriega

Finnegan Bodhi Greyson Noriega
Graduations

Congratulations to the following team members and their families!

Zach Baden: Son of Rick Baden, chief operating officer, Pittsburg, Kan.; graduating from Pittsburg High School, Pittsburg.

Blake Borovetz: Son of Michael Borovetz, Central Region financial analyst, Coffeyville, Kan.; graduating from Independence High School, Independence, Kan.


Chase Currier: Son of Shellee Currier, marketing manager for the Kav River Railroad in Kansas City, Kan.; graduating from Blue Valley Southwest High School, Overland Park, Kan.

Clare Davis: Sister of Tyler Davis, financial analyst, Pittsburg, Kan.; graduating from Joplin High School, Joplin, Mo.


Michael Gustafson: Son of Patti Audet, financial analyst, Pittsburg, Kan.; graduating from Roncalli High School in Indianapolis, Ind.

Samantha Guy: Granddaughter of Dave, WTTP driver in Pittsburg, Kan., and Kathy Carr, meeting coordinator in Pittsburg; graduating from Girard Middle School, Girard, Kan.

Michael Hayes: Son of Tom Hayes, associate general counsel, Pittsburg, Kan.; graduating Magna Cum Laude from the University of Dallas, Dallas, Texas, with a Bachelor’s of Arts degree in Philosophy. Michael has been accepted into Phi Beta Kappa, an honors fraternity.

Lydia Beth Herman: Daughter of Linn Herman, Gulf Region Car Repair Manager, Baton Rouge, La.; graduating from Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, La., with a bachelor’s degree in Textiles, Apparel and Merchandise and a minor in business.


Shaina Kennedy, invoice auditor, Pittsburg, Kan.; graduated in December with a Bachelor’s Degree in Psychology and a Minor in Family and Consumer Sciences.


Cinnamon Alexandria Leslie: Daughter of Paul Friedricks, Greens Port Terminal trainmaster, Houston, Texas; graduating from Hargrave High School in Huffman, Texas.

Brecken Larson, legal assistant; graduating Magna Cum Laude from Pittsburg State University with a Bachelor of Science in Education.

Kameryn McCoy: Daughter of James McCoy, lead locomotive mechanic, Oklahoma City, Okla.; graduating from Harrah High School.

Kylie McDaniel: Daughter of Rob McDaniel, SVP human resources, Kingwood, Texas; graduating from Kingwood High School, Kingwood.

Kory Phillips: Son of Keith LaCaze, Gulf Region vice president of switching operations and locomotive leasing; graduating from DeRidder High School, DeRidder, La.

Bryson Spahn: Son of John Spahn, engineer on the South Kansas and Oklahoma Railroad; graduating from Southeast Junior High School in Cherokee, Kan.

Jack Swanson: Husband of Amanda Swanson, data integrity representative, Revenue and Contracts, Pittsburg, Kan., graduating from Pittsburg State University, Pittsburg, Kan., with a Master’s in Business Administration.

Adrienne Dolores Towner: Daughter of Terry Towner, president, Pittsburg, Kan.; graduating from St. Mary’s Colgan High School in Pittsburg.

Brandy Marie Twichell: Daughter of Jerry Twichell, supervisor, Wood River, Ill., mechanical shop; graduating from Alton High School, Alton, Ill.

Shane Underwood: Son of Janet Gordon, HR Coordinator, Pittsburg, Kan.; graduating from Southeast Junior High School, Cherokee, Kan.


Honors

Katie Hayes

Katie Hayes has been named to the 2012 Academic All-Big 12 Team by the Big 12 Conference. Katie is the daughter of Tom Hayes, associate general counsel, Pittsburg, Kan.

Katie is on the rowing team at Kansas University, Lawrence, Kan.

She is one of 13 Jayhawks on the first team. First team members consist of those who have maintained a 3.20 or better GPA while the second team selections hold a 3.00 to 3.19 GPA.

To qualify, student-athletes must maintain a 3.00 GPA or higher either cumulative or the two previous semesters and must have participated in 60 percent of their team’s scheduled contests. Freshmen and transfers are not eligible in their first year of academic residence.

Senior student-athletes who have participated for a minimum of two years and meet all the criteria except percent of participation are also eligible.

Calendar Contest

Introducing Watco’s 2013 Calendar Contest

Photographers get ready, Watco is announcing its first ever Calendar Contest. 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%. This works out to 12.75 megapixel (10.5” x 13.5” @300dpi), far beyond the native capabilities of standard point-and-shoot cameras.

Digital SLR cameras can save photos in the RAW format. This is the format we prefer for the calendar. Send submissions and questions to tvan@watcompanies.com
Watco Companies’ Team Members on The Mission Mountain Railroad (MMT) work hard every day to follow the Customer First Foundation Principles – and every day they endeavor to follow those principles safely.

As a result of their hard work, the Mission Mountain team celebrated working one year injury free on April 26. In celebration of this landmark event, team members held a celebratory barbecue at Lion Lake near Hungry Horse Dam outside of Columbia Falls, Mont., on April 28.

“We always start off everything we do with safety,” Kyle Jeschke, general manager on the MMT, said. “We have a small, close team and they work to always be aware of everything around them. We come to work thinking about safety and we leave work thinking about safety.”

The barbecue celebration included Team Members from the MMT’s operations, track, car repair, locomotive repair and clerking departments. In addition to the barbecue celebration, MMT managers purchased safety gear - including boots and jackets - for team members.

“This is just a fantastic accomplishment,” Rob Thrall, vice president of operations for Watco’s West Region, said. “It takes effort and focus every moment of every day to achieve the goal that the MMT Team has accomplished. I would just like to thank the MMT Team Members for making safety such an important part of their culture and making the goal of working injury-free their top priority.”

Watco began operations on the MMT in December, 2004. Located just a few miles from the Canadian border in northwestern Montana, the MMT’s 40 miles of track are located on two separate lines. The north line begins at Eureka, Mont., and extends south to Stryker, Mont. The south line begins at Columbia Falls, Mont., and extends southwest to Kalispell, Mont. The MMT interchanges with the Burlington Northern & Santa Fe at Stryker and Columbia Falls. The MMT primarily moves forest products and grain. Its primary Customer is Plum Creek Timber Company.

When asked the secret to operating a busy railroad injury-free, Jeschke noted that each MMT Team Member cares about their fellow Team Members and keeping each other safe.

“Everyone going home at night to their families safe is our primary goal,” he said. “Once something goes wrong with safety, it affects everything. The team, the company and Customer service.”