February 28th marked the one year accident-free anniversary for the Coffeyville, Kansas Mechanical Repair Shop and team members enjoyed celebrating the milestone with a cookout. The Coffeyville location has been repairing railroad cars since 1985 and is Watco’s first Mechanical Repair Shop. The shop has several industry veterans who have been at the location since its start.” These vets all took part in the one year safety celebration.

The veterans of Watco at the Coffeyville Mechanical shop are: Dion Wilkens who started at the Neodesha, Kansas shop in 1982 and became Coffeyville shop manager in April 2012, Terry Johnson (1985), Tim Benson (1987), Rick Mansfield (1991), Randy Garretson (1985), Bryan Benson (1988), and David Bidlman (1985). The years of service from these veteran team members shows the dedication and hard work that Watco strives for. Each team member has experiences that they will remember forever.

David Bidlman, fabricator, said, “As the years went by I’ve watched the company grow and improve. I think the success is from the leadership and knowledge that Dick Webb (Watco founder) showed us. I have been here for 28 years and I know I won’t forget the experiences and things that I have learned from the other team members. I’m proud to be a member of the Watco Team.”

Rick Mansfield, supervisor, remembers going up the old house (office) by the front gate to get paid. “Dick would be hand signing the checks and telling us to work harder so he could buy a rubber stamp so he wouldn’t have to sign his name so much.”

Back in the old days, team members wore many hats. Randy Garretson, carman, recalls riding the train from Coffeyville to Chetopa on rails that he had helped work on just a month before.

The celebration was held in conjunction with the quarterly town hall meeting and team members discussed our Customer First Foundation Principles, safety, and quality. Wilkens provided smoked brisket and team member Jeremy Veley smoked a pork roast. Baked beans, potato salad, and German chocolate cake were also served.

The Coffeyville management would like to say thank you to our team for all they do, especially for working safely.


The South Kansas and Oklahoma (SKOL) Railroad Team held safety feeds in the Kansas locations at Pittsburg, Cherryvale, Coffeyville, and Winfield and at Owasso in Oklahoma the last week of March.

The feeds were held to spread the importance of safety and to prepare the SKOL Team Members for the spring and summer busy seasons. There were great turnouts at all locations and very positive, proactive safety discussions. The SKOL Transportation Team has gone 495 days injury free and the SKOL Car Department Team has gone 1,013 days injury free!

Managers cooked at each location and the menu varied at the different facilities depending on the chef’s choice.

Randy Letner, assistant trainmaster - Pittsburg, said, “All the crew made it to the meeting and we enjoyed discussing safety items and reviewing upcoming projects on the SKOL.”

Team members from the SKOL’s Owasso, Okla., transportation, transload and track crews enjoy a sunny day for their safety feed. Trainmaster Trevor Pool took on the duties as barbecue master and SKOL general manager Matt Despos and assistant trainmaster Robert Balzer were on hand to help out.
A Letter from the Vice President of Transportation Safety

2013 must be the year in which we understand and believe that getting injured, being involved in a human-factor incident or failing to abide by the rules is unacceptable.

We won’t achieve this goal through threats or intimidation. Rather, it is accomplished through believing in and living our Watco safety culture. We must actively make safety our number #1 value instead of just saying that safety is a value. We have to walk the talk not just talk the talk.

Our safety culture has four characteristics:

• Safety is held as our number #1 value by our leaders and all team members.
• Individuals feel a sense of responsibility for the safety of co-teammates and themselves.
• Team members are willing and able to go beyond the call of duty on behalf of the safety of others and our teams.
• Everyone actively cares and routinely performs safety behaviors for the benefit of others.

Striving toward the common goal of zero injuries, zero human incidents and complete rules compliance will lead us to the success we all hope to achieve.

Never forget, we have the best team in the industry and we can accomplish every goal we engage and focus on together! If we don’t eliminate personal injuries, we have not done our best for our peers, teams, Customers and the Watco family.

Our results define the perception of us. Regardless of how big or small, every activity, action and response defines our safety commitment to the overall success.

We are asking every team member to help us make Watco safer today than we were yesterday and every day after that keep building on our Safety culture success and growth. Please join us in making the following commitment:

“I commit to myself, to our Watco family/team, and fellow team members that in 2013-2014 I will, to the best of my ability, work without experiencing a personal injury or human-factor incident, and I will abide by our safety rules.”

Each of us shapes the safety culture of Watco every day. Everything we do, everything we say, everywhere we go in the organization leaves a footprint on the company’s safety culture. Let’s strive to affect the culture — and the people in it — in a positive way every single day. Please make this safety commitment and we will not be successful without all of your buy in. We are in this together!

Michael Gibson

Safety Team Member heads for the hills

by Kersee Currier
Communications Intern

Safety Team Member John Teglovic is saying goodbye to years of a railroad lifestyle and retiring after a long career. After witnessing three generations of railroaders before him, getting his start in rail came natural to him when he joined the B&O Railroad in 1967. However, his career took a detour in 1968 he was drafted into the US Army. John served two years of active duty and a year of combat tour to Vietnam in Field Artillery and Intelligence.

John returned to the United States to go back to the industry he loves and in 2006 joined the Watco Communications Intern Team as the Regional Safety Manager, West Region.

“I loved training new team members and watching them grow and teaching them how to be safe,” said John.

Getting to experience start up projects and developing a new generations of railroaders have been a couple of the highlights in his career.

His practice and knowledge as an engineer and safety manager has provided him the tools to teach others the importance of safety, which has led him to love his job and to stay passionate about safety. John says he isn’t worried for the future of safety at Watco, “I feel good about turning it over to the next generation. The safety culture is changing for the better.”

Handing off the reins to the next generation allows him to begin his next chapter in life by spending more quality time with children, grandchildren, and his motorcycle. A planned move to Colorado Springs, Colo., is in the works for John and his wife.

Travis Herod, safety director, said, “John’s leaving left a big hole to fill, he’s been with us a long time and takes with him an abundance of knowledge that’s hard to come by,” said Herod.

Watco wishes John the best and is grateful for all this hard work and dedication to the company and team members.

John Teglovic, Regional Safety Manager, West Region, takes WAMX 3829 for one last run before his retirement on March 28.
Despite being loaded down with homework, she still was able to sit up and win his first buckle at the age of elementary school and has about the same love for team. At 14 years he stands 6 feet tall and plays football and is on the power lift. Trent is a freshman at Kirbyville High School and has younger brothers that also help support him. himself and his horse in shape and ready puts in countless hours practicing to keep in the steer wrestling (bulldogging) and it’s his has qualified for the state finals again this year to go due to the death of his grandpa. Kaleb in Abilene, Texas in calf roping but was unable to find time to go to the games, or power lifting meets. But what Kaleb Smith, 17, son of Mitchell Smith, location manager in rodeos since he was five years old. He has won several buckles and other prizes in his rodeo career and is looking forward to winning more. Kaleb qualified for the state finals last June in Abilene, Texas in calf roping but was unable to go due to the death of his grandpa. Kaleb has qualified for the state finals again this year in the steer wrestling (bulldogging) and it’s his first year ever to compete in this event. Kaleb is a hard working young man and puts in countless hours practicing to keep himself and his horse in shape and ready to make it happen this year. Kaleb has two younger brothers that also help support him. Trent is a freshman at Kirbyville High School and plays football and is on the power lifting team. At 14 years he stands 6 feet tall and weighs in at around 265. Youngest brother Wyatt is six and a kindergartner at Kirbyville Elementary School and has about the same love for horses as Kaleb does. He has been riding since he was able to sit up and won his first buckle at the age of four. The boy’s mom, Theresa, is in nursing school and despite being loaded down with homework, she still finds time to go to the games, or power lifting meets and the rodeos. She sits in the stands with her laptop and books and studies until it’s time to video or take pictures of the boys competing. Mitchell said, “My wife and I are very blessed with the boys that the Lord gave us to raise. Watching them grow and work hard for what they want in life and encouraging them to go for it is a true blessing.”

About Mark

Mark began his career at Watco in March, 2011 as a Training and Development Specialist for Watco U. He has a diverse background, with experience in education, coaching, law enforcement, sales and marketing.

Mark has been married for 22 years, all to the same woman, Marta. He and Marta have three children; Taylor, 18, Andrea, 16, and Garrett, 12.

Mark spends most of his free time watching his children’s sporting activities and coaching on occasion. But what Mark really enjoys is football, working out, guns, barbecue, and spending time with his family and friends.

Watco Family Member Rounds ‘Em Up

Watco Team Member Mitchell Smith has plenty to do during his off hours as location manager of mobile railcars services in Silsbee, Texas. Mitchell’s 17-year-old son Kaleb is a junior at Kirbyville High School and has been competing in rodeos since he was five years old. He has won several buckles and other prizes in his rodeo career and is looking forward to winning more.

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Rail proponents take on Washington

by Tracie VanBecelaere
Managing Editor

Each year railroaders converge on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C., on a given day to tout the benefits our industry has to offer the nation. What made this year different was the appearance of President Barack Obama at the Capitol. The meeting was with Senate Republicans in an effort to end political gridlock with Congress. There weren’t any reports from the railroaders of seeing the President but the visit did effect the meetings because of increased security.

Railroad Day on Capitol Hill is an operation which is vital to the short line railroads in our country. More than 600 railroaders and industry colleagues such as shippers, suppliers, and rail advocacy principals, participated in the event. The rail supporters visited a total of 352 congressional offices, meeting directly with senators, representatives or their key staffers. Some railroaders took the opportunity to teach their children about the legislative process. Liz Hayes, 15, Dalton VanBecelaere, 12, and Jackson McKechnie, 8, were able to join their parents and other Watco representatives as they visited with congressmen and their staffers.

Railroad Day began early at the hotel base where the group prepped for the day’s activities. They were presented “talking points” for congressional visits. The talking points included railroad regulation, extension of the 45G short line tax credit and the opposition of bigger and heavier trucks.

Anyone who remembers the railroad system prior to the 1980 Staggers Act, will remember a system that was in disrepair - bankrupting many railroads because of excessive governmental regulations. The Staggers Act transformed the industry - improving safety, enhancing productivity, spurring innovation, generating $480 billion in reinvestment, and lowering average rates for rail customers by 51 percent. This system has greatly benefitted railroads, their employees, American businesses competing in the global marketplace and our economy at large. For railroads to continue to be one of America’s private sector success stories, we must keep the regulatory framework that has made it all possible.

With 550 short line and regional railroads linking 13,000 customers to the rail system it is essential to maintain and upgrade the infrastructure to continue to provide them with service. In 2004, Congress enacted the Section 45G tax credit to reduce the federal tax burden to help small, local, and entrepreneurial businesses create growth in private sector infrastructure improvements that benefit thousands of communities. This allows short lines to create jobs and provide safe and efficient service to their customers. Each and every one of Watco’s short line railroads benefited from the tax credits, which means 18 different states saw improvements to the infrastructure, which can attract commerce to the area and provide better service to existing Customers. Railroads are on average. Our country demands more affordable, efficient, and environmentally-responsible transportation and our railroads provide it. A study is being conducted to predict the impact of heavier and larger trucks being allowed on the roads and the rail industry was urging the legislatures to hold off on any decisions until the findings from the study have been released.

With the talking points in hand, the rail supporters began making their way to their first appointments at the Capitol. Several got to experience riding the Metro for the first time while others hauled cabs or headed on foot to the D.C. landmark. The meetings lasted from 15-30 minutes each, depending on the congressman or congresswoman’s schedule. Some meetings were held in the new Capitol Visitors Center, located in the plaza at the east front of the U.S. Capitol Building.

By late afternoon, most congressional visits had concluded and participants returned to the hotel to prepare for the legislative reception and dinner. Speakers at the dinner included Watco’s Ed McKechnie, who is the ASLRRA Legislative Policy Committee Chair. Other speakers were ASLRRA President Rich Timmons, and AAR President Ed Hamberger. The speakers welcomed the several congressmen and other key federal transportation officials who were in attendance.

Twelve Watco Team Members participated in the event to advocate for our short lines.

Stefan Loeb, Vice President Business Development
explains items on a railroad map to rail supplier Nick Miazza, Nebraska Machinery and Nebraska Congressman Lee Terry.

Representative Spencer Bachus (l), meets with Watco marketing managers Jeff Smith, (center) and Shellee Currier (r) and others from the rail industry. Representative Bachus has numerous trains on display in his office.

Dalton VanBecelaere, son of communications director Tracie VanBecelaere, visits with Oklahoma Representative Markwayne Mullin and Thor, the garden gnome named after the God of Thunder, which is the name of Oklahoma City’s professional basketball team.
April Anniversaries

Congratulations to the following team members celebrating their anniversaries!

1 Year: Jose Acosta, Cristian Alvarado, Tyrone Armstrong, Scott Ayers, Stephan Baker, Barry Beasley, Jason Brockman, Jeffrey Butler, Willie Carson, Miguel Casarea, Manuel Castillo, Brian Dokken, David Drake, David Garcia, Joseph Giordano, Nicholas Graham, Aaron Greene, Christopher Hammond, Justin Hayes, Stefan Holcomb, Michael Hooper, Joseph Hubbard, Jason Hughes, Stephanie James, Timothy Jenkins, Arthur Johnson, Randall Johnson, Bryson Kandle, William King, Michael Kruse, James Latham, Michael Lawson, Joseph Mays, Shamaron McPherson, Gregory Mosby, Michael Mulnix, Troy Nicholas, Charles Padgett, Dustin Perkins, Jason Randolph, Marvin Smith, Patrick Stout, Ronaldo Tercero, Andrew Thompson, Joe Towlas, Oscar Trevino, Gary Truex, Matthew Tucker, Gary Tyner, Lorna Walcott, Mark Wells, John Westbrook, Tyrus White, Jeremy Williams, Keith Williams, Wade Wilson, Trever Winchell, Tracy Wright, Carlton Young

2 Years: Joshua Allphin, Justin Bamberger, David Bader, Artrina Barber, Jose Bautista, Karlis Binns, Craig Blackwelder, Joshua Briggs, John Conner, Henery Danneshi, Douglas Delehoy, Dillon Dutcher, Kieran Foster, Herico Garcia, Megan Gwin, Axel Herrera, Brian Hickerson, David Holt, Richard Hudson, Craig Kalk, Kris Kinsall, Tyler Neesam, Derek Nielson, Timothy Page, Matthew Parker, Michael Patterson, Zachary Pittman, Steven Ponio, Dustin Rhodes, Marty Robbins, Donald Robert, Hugo Silva, Tyler Springman, Christa Steege, David Stimer, Scott Teel, Gerald Tiejkmeca

3 Years: Hayley Becker, Randall Bennett, William Casey, Shon Christensen, Robert Cockman, Waylon Doyle, Bennie Ellison, Allen Godfrey, John Hargis, Antonio Horacio, Anthony Hoyte, Houston Knight, Robert Large, Jordan Merritt, Benjamin Nordlof, Rachael Peterson, Jesus Ramirez, David Riley, Kevin Roth, Owen Schulz, Andrew Smith, Luis Soto, Nicole Stevenson, James Sullins, Dino Trevino, Thomas Twichell

4 Years: Angela Bunker, Joseph Grupczynski, Dee Lautner, Billy Moore, Mark Moolrag, Michael Murphy, William Richmond, Troy Sickle

5 Years: Drew Drewneski, Steven Everett, Tye Gray, Chris Haddow, Russell Hamm, Robert Hurda, Jerred Jackson, Jason Lloyd, Joseph Magrone, Jose Martinez, Steven Mattaz, Curtis Rice, Arnoldo Sandoval, Jeff Smith

6 Years: Joel Aguilar, Richard Brady, Tony Clark, Nickol Corr, Rebekah Garner, Ray Green, Arthur Gurney, Joseph Holcomb, Matt McKennie, Anthony Williamson

7 Years: Jeffrey Allred, Shellee Currier, Timothy Dunn, Cody Gilliland, Gerardo Horta, Christopher Preuc, Grant Rasmussen, David Tinnon

8 Years: Jerad Brunskill, Brandon Edleman, Travis Fellers, Pat Foster, Brian Fox, Carl Hauk, Michael Reifsneider, Justin Rhodes, Travis Tholen, Tracie VanBeccelaere, Patrick White, David Wilczewski, David Witzack

9 Years: Jeffrey Greenwood, Valerie Kahley, Dennis Meyer, Loren Parr

10 Years: Shane Engle, Judith Johnson, Keith Kitson

11 Years: Brent Booth, Lisa Butts, Pat Cedeno, Jason Ebarb, Al Finn, John Galloway, Darren McComic, Mark Richter, Kenneth Sauter, Terry Towner, Gary Vogels

12 Years: Shane Collins

13 Years: Robert Heilgenthal, Jeanne Housel, Sue Immel, William Kyzer, Byron Marshall

14 Years: Darby Destromp, James Walton

15 Years: Stacey Hurda

16 Years: Anthony Ange, Brandy Etheridge, Jeremy Findley, David Jena, Roger Kitzmiller

17 Years: Kenneth Barber

18 Years: Aaron Byle, Donald McCallum

20 Years: Neal Jacobs

21 Years: Michael Hill

22 Years: Gary Cooley, Gary Sanderson

24 Years: Dwight Browning, Joseph Lidwell

28 Years: Thomas Dawson

29 Years: Larry Bray, Harel Harrison, Larry Thomas

30 Years: Anthony Decapio

31 Years: Larry Vail, Dion Wilkins

32 Years: James Bass

34 Years: Carl Leone

35 Years: Robert Neal

36 Years: Donald Droboeck

38 Years: Richard Duncan

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

Emma Marie Faught

James and Jenny Faught are proud to announce the birth of their daughter, Emma Marie. Emma was born on February 19, 2013 and weighed 7 lbs., 15 oz., and was 20.5 inches long.

James is the Accounting Manager for Transportation Services and works out of the Stillwell, Kan., office.

Colt Matthew Repka

Blake and Sarah Worthington are proud to announce the birth of their grandson, Colt Matthew Repka.

Colt was born on March 6, 2013 and weighed 8 lbs., 4.7 oz., and was 20 inches long.

Colt’s parents are James Repka Jr. and Laceyce Worthington.

Jackson Allen Booth

Blake and Sarah Worthington are proud to announce the birth of their grandson, Colt Matthew Repka.

Colt was born on March 6, 2013 and weighed 8 lbs., 4.7 oz., and was 20 inches long.

Colt’s parents are James Repka Jr. and Laceyce Worthington.

Jackson was born on March 14, 2013 and weighed 8 lbs., 3.4 oz., and was 20 1/2 inches long.

Jackson’s father is an engineer for the South Kansas and Oklahoma Railroad (SKOL). Grandparents Brent Booth, locomotive mechanic supervisor, and Melinda VanBuren, administrative assistant and Jeff VanBuren, engineer are team members of the SKOL as well. Jackson’s uncle, Dakota Booth, is a conductor for the SKOL.

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West Region TS&IC Committee holds quarterly raffles

West Region Team Members have the opportunity to experience the joy of giving and receiving at the same time. The West Region Team Safety and Improvement Committee (TS&IC) Team is focusing on community development and to raise money they are holding quarterly raffles. The first quarter raffle was for a 40 inch Sony Bravia LCD television. Quale’s Electronics worked with the committee and offered them a good price for the television.

The committee had 100 tickets available at $10 each and 97 tickets were sold. After expenses were paid for, the team was able to raise $570.00. Patti McCaslin, mother of purchasing clerk Misti Lewis, was the winner of the April Fool’s Day drawing.

The committee plans to donate the proceeds from the raffles to Paint Magic and to sponsoring a local family at Christmas. Paint Magic, through the use of volunteers, paints and beautifies the exterior of senior citizen’s homes throughout the Magic Valley area.

Over the years, the Paint Magic program has consisted of a picnic crew, 15 to 20 paint teams, one or two paint professionals, and many other special contributors. Over 500 volunteers work together to paint homes in the Magic Valley area.

Nickol Corr, TS&IC Member said, “The TS&IC Committee would like to thank all the team members who bought tickets and didn’t win. We also wish them better luck in the next three quarters.”

Watco gets beached

The lucky Watco backpack pictured below spent Spring Break traveling around Costa Rica with its owner, Penny Wood. Wood, P-Card/cell phone administrator and corporate purchasing assistant in Pittsburg, Kan., went to Costa Rica as a chaperone for students from Pittsburg High School’s Spanish 2, 3 and 4 classes. There were 20 in the group who left on March 14 and traveled across the country, staying in five different hotels during their nine day trip.

For many students in the group it was their first chance to immerse themselves in another culture, learn to exchange currency, and understand the differences in the dialects that are used in the different parts of the Spanish speaking world. The students made new friends with fellow travelers from Arkansas and British Columbia, Canada during their adventure. They got to see local wildlife such as iguanas, white-faced monkeys, macaws and toucans. Plants that they normally see in pots at home in the summer were growing wild along with many beautiful flowers. They also had the opportunity to go zip lining, bungee jumping, horseback riding, kayaking on Lake Arenal, and swimming in the Pacific Ocean. On the last night of the trip they had dinner above the skyline with a view of the city of San Jose. They dined at an old coffee plantation and experienced folk art dancing and songs traditional to Costa Rica.

However, it wasn’t all sun and games. The students also planted trees while on their trip. Costa Rica is a very green country and has set a goal to be carbon free by 2015. This means they recycle everything, making things quite interesting at times. The students also bought school supplies while in Costa Rica and delivered them to a local school they visited.

“I’m really glad I was able to go with the students and my daughter Emily. It was a once in a lifetime experience,” said Wood.

Above: the beautiful La Paz Waterfall in Costa Rica. Right: Who wouldn’t want to be this lucky Watco backpack hanging out on the beach at Terrazas del Pacifico, on the Pacific side of Costa Rica.