Idaho team reflects Customer First values

There’s that light bulb moment when suddenly you get it, all the stuff that someone’s been pounding on sinks in and bam - things start to happen. The West Region sky must be lit up like the fourth of July because from the things we’re hearing they’re getting it.

Although a derailment is never a good thing, a recent one involving the Eastern Idaho Railroad’s (EIRR) Jerome train crew brought some positive insights to things going on at the railroad. Immediately following the single car derailment, the Customer, Hilex Poly, showed up at the site and told them not to get their heads down, thanked them, and said that they are doing a great job by providing the best service they have ever had.

The Customer also salvaged the load and did not charge EIRR for the loss of freight.

Why would a Customer thank a team for their service during a derailment?

Engineer Thom Glover said it’s because he has built a strong relationship with all of his Customers.

“Communication is one of the key ingredients in building a positive and successful relationship with your team along with your Customers,” stated Glover.

He said they trust him and know he is committed, and he works on building that trust and improving Customer service every day. He also said that the track team has been a big part of their success, through their teamwork and communication.

To help build communication between the crews, joint job briefings are held before each shift begins work. Because of this, both crews know what each other is focusing on and can better understand their teammates. It also helps them be proactive in how they perform their jobs. A perfect example of this is when the Jerome track team repaired a wide gauge defect on an industry siding without being asked, even though it was on a private siding and not within their typical area of responsibility. When the Customer saw them and asked what they were doing they said they had seen cars occupying the track when the track inspector had completed his last inspection, and knew he could not measure the gauge without a spotter. When they noticed the cars had been removed from the siding, they went in and found a significant wide gauge defect that most likely would have resulted in a derailment.

When Rob Thrall, regional vice president of transportation, asked the team why it was important to repair the track their reply was that they are completely committed to Customer service and the success of the operations team. All of them have a commitment to look out for each other. The teams are very proud of the relationship between their track and operations teams.

EIRR trainmaster Jereud Uscola said, “I can say I am truly proud of the entire EIRR team. It shows that our team is dedicated to their Customers as well as their daily task. I strongly feel that we are on the right path to success and I believe Eastern Idaho Railroad has the perfect team to achieve these goals.”

The West Region dispatch duties were recently moved to Kansas as part of a new safety initiative and the result of the move is that there is now more interaction between the train crews and the Customers. What used to pass from the Customer to the Customer Service Representative to the train crew is still touched by Customer Service but the crew is now more involved with the Customer.

Another example of team members following the Customer First values resulted in a call to safety foreman; Gabe Smith, conductor trainee, Greg Bartholomew, track laborer, and Chris Neilson, engineer.

(Continued on page 4)

Greens Port to house crude-by-rail facility

Anyone wanting to get a sample of all the services Watco has to offer would be enlightened by a single trip to our Greens Port Terminal. Enclosed in the 655 acre terminal are the offerings of a mechanical shop, switching services, port services and transload services. A new addition being built adds yet another feature to this already impressive site.

Kinder Morgan Energy Partners L.P. (KMP) and Watco have joined forces in a venture named KW Express, L.L.C. KW Express has entered into a long-term agreement with Mercuria Energy Trading Company Inc. to construct a crude-by-rail facility at the Greens Port Terminal in Houston, Texas. Watco’s Terminal and Port Services (WTPS) Team will be operating the facility.

The facility will be designed to handle 210,000 barrels of crude oil per day. The project will enable Mercuria to source crude from various origination locations, including Cushing, Okla., west Texas, the Bakken Shale area and western Canada. Crude will be delivered by rail into the Houston ship channel for distribution to various refineries via pipeline and barges. It will have the capacity of unloading and loading up to three unit trains per day of crude oil and condensate, as well as feature up to 100,000 barrels per day of barge loading capacity.

Dan Smith, senior vice president of WTPS, said, “The development of this Terminal will make GPIP a primary destination and origination for crude and condensate shipments in the Gulf Coast Region. Several members of the Watco Team played a significant role in this accomplishment. The Project Management Team, WTPS Commercial Team, and WTPS Operations Team should all be very proud of this achievement. Our focus now must be on executing during the build-out phase and then delivering Safe, efficient service to our Customer, Mercuria.”

March 2013, Volume 14, Issue 3

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

A Letter from the Vice President of Transportation Safety

Safety in our company is the most vital part of every operation/job. Without question, safety of all team members, contractors, vendors and the environment is every team member’s responsibility. This responsibility is shared at all levels, from entry level to the executive level. We will maintain our safety culture by engaging our team and conforming to the best safety practices of our industry. To be successful we must all have the proper mind set, embody the proper safety attitudes toward injury and incident prevention. This must be communicated in every department with all managers, supervisors and team members. It also requires cooperation of all of our teams in all safety matters, not only between management and team members, but also between team members and their co-workers. Only through over-communication, commitment and such cooperative effort can an effective safety culture be established and maintained. Remember, this is an ongoing process and safety is never truly fixed, it has to be managed every second, hour, day, week, month and year.

The safety and health of every team member is the highest priority for our company. Management accepts responsibility for providing a safe working environment and all team members are expected to take responsibility for performing work in accordance with our safe standards and practices. Our Safety Culture will only truly be achieved through our teamwork and over-communication. Everyone must join together in promoting safety and health and taking every reasonable measure to assure safe working conditions within the company at all times. We as a team truly believe that ZERO accidents, injuries, are attainable. Please understand there is just US and we are in this together.

Our/Your safety is no doubt our first priority! While cost and quality service to the Customer is part of our core business values, we will not compromise your or your team’s safety. Our core safety culture values are: constant safety communication, zero incidents and injuries, protection of others through self-awareness, safety commitment and ownership. We will support these values with the following principles:

1. All accidents are preventable and all hazards controllable.
2. Working safely is a condition of employment.
3. Safety is everyone’s responsibility.
4. Our team will be trained to perform their jobs safely prior to being assigned their task.
5. Each location will have an active Safety Management Plan that is equivalent to those for production, quality, audits and efficiency testing. These are essential for maintaining our safety performance/culture.

Communication lines are open and please contact myself or the confidential safety hot line at 1-866-2826 if you have concerns or issues to report. Safety is here for your support and we thank each one of you for working safely.

Never forget, with all of us working, pulling and pushing together in the same direction:

“We will be the safest, most respected railroad company and lead our industry with world class safety.”

Michael Gibson

Michael Gibson, Safety stops transportation service

When Michael Gibson, vice president of transportation safety, says he will stop at nothing to ensure our team members operate in a safe manner he wasn’t kidding. He literally stopped service on February 12 and 13 at 9 am and 7 pm at all railroads and switching locations to discuss safety.

“I wanted to be positive that the safety message was reaching all levels,” said Gibson. “I felt there were pockets of team members not hearing our strong safety message and wanted to address them directly and let them know that their safety and their teammates safety comes first and foremost.”

With the stop production call there was the potential of reaching 1,000 team members on each call. Regional and location managers were charged with ensuring that each team member schedule allowed them to listen to at least one of the 15 minute messages regarding team safety.

Gibson said, “Stopping production was the best way to show our team members that safety comes before everything. They are our best asset and we need them to understand that and they need to take ownership of protecting our greatest assets.”

In addition to safety procedures, team members were also given the direct phone numbers of the safety management team and the safety hot line number so they could contact someone in person or anonymously to report safety concerns and ideas.

Aaron Smith, trainmaster for the Swan Ranch Railroad said, “If we truly are following Watco’s Customer First Foundation Principles we are being safe.

What I got from the stop production call was: ‘Safety is the keystone of Watco’s Customer First Foundation Principles’. If we derail cars or are getting hurt we aren’t able to give the Customer the right service at the right time. The stop production call drove the point home about safety and how important it is not only to our external Customers but more importantly to our internal Customers that are on the ground doing this every day.”

Justin Rhodes, general manager of the Arkansas Southern, Mississippi Southern and Vicksburg Southern railroads, said, “It’s important for everyone in the field to know that the company cares about their well being.”

The stop production call accomplished this goal and reached out to everyone. These types of messages from the safety department drive home the message of teamwork and personal responsibility on each level.”

Gibson plans to hold more of the calls as the Safety Team kicks off special initiatives such as the Summer Spike and Winter Freeze programs.

Some of the highlights Gibson has pointed out for 2013 are: human factor incidents have been reduced by 13%, the transportation ratio is 1.10 and the railroads is 1.29 which are both lower than last year. Switching, Gulf and East Regions have not had an RPI all year. The East Region has not had a human factor incident in 63 days, what a supreme example of owning the safety message.
March Watco U Sessions:
101 – March 5-7
201 – March 12-14
TS&IC – March 26-28

By Bob McElwee
Watco University
Training and Development Specialist

“Decision Making: The Fundamentals”

Working for Watco, like everything else we do in life, is a choice. Each day we choose to do report to work. Each day we choose to be a member of the Watco Team. Each day we decide how much energy we are going to spend doing our job. Each day we decide how well we are going to do our job. In a similar way, following the Watco Customer First Foundation Principles is a decision we must make. Looking at the world, our jobs, our lives and our relationships through the lens of these principles will have positive effects in all aspects of our lives. When we choose to make our decisions, direct our actions, and define our relationships according to these principles we discover that we become better people, parents, spouses, and neighbors as surely as we become better Watco Team Members. Deciding to treat our Customers (both internal and external), our resources, and our community with respect, responsibility, care, honesty, stewardship, and servant-hood over “the long term” is a daily decision we are all supposed to make at Watco. And, as we all know, great and amazing things happen when we do business that way.

Equally great and amazing, however, is when we do make those choices day after day at work we discover that we have created a habit. When we choose to behave that way at work, before long we discover that we behave the same way, use the same principles, and see the same results in our personal and private lives as well.

When we choose to develop the “Customer First Foundation Principles” as a habit or way of being, we find that all aspects of our lives improve. Great things happen in our families, our neighborhood, and in our personal relationships. Serving others, teaching others, coaching and helping others, quickly becomes a way of life. The choices we make at Watco, the principles Watco teaches us to use, will make our lives and the lives of those we love and care about, better in ways that we cannot imagine. To paraphrase Mr. Rick Webb: “Keep deciding to make great things happen.” It is a good habit to make.

About Bob

Bob has worked in the training and development division of Watco’s Human Resource department for almost four years. He has been married to Ginger for 46 years and helped to raise their seven children. Bob and Ginger currently have 13 grandchildren. He has earned a bachelor’s degree in English education, master’s degrees in medieval literature, theology, and clinical psychology. He also has an associate’s degree in motorcycle technology.

Bob is a retired Catholic priest who says the Traditional Latin mass and fills in for priests on weekends. He was the sixth married Catholic priest in the United States. A jack of all trades, he has worked as a painter for Boeing aircraft, a business reporter for Dun and Bradstreet, a technician for Harley Davidson, a veterinarian assistant, a busboy, a cook, a dishwasher, a policeman, a hospital laboratory technician, a back hose operator, a psychologist, a marriage and family therapist, an English teacher, a theology teacher, a sociology teacher, a carpenter, a GED/Adult Ed teacher, an Episcopal minister, a handyman, the Associate Director of Religious Education for the Catholic Diocese of Wichita, a hospital chaplain, a Newman Center chaplain and a parish priest.

He currently teaches classes in general and developmental psychology at a local community college. He is a Licensed Clinical Marriage and Family Therapist in the state of Kansas.

Bob’s hobbies include scuba diving, motorcycles, sky diving, carpentry, model trains, shooting hand guns, bicycle riding, and music.

Team Safety & Improvement Committee is developing tomorrow's leaders

The Team Safety & Improvement Committees (TS&IC) are making a difference, not only for team members in the workplace but for team members personally as well. Many team members who have stepped up to serve as TS&IC leaders have been promoted to serve in leadership roles. Managers select someone from their team(s) that they think show leadership qualities to become the TS&IC leaders. If that person feels comfortable taking on the role, they are then sent to Watco U classes in Pittsburg, Kan. The classes teach the leaders how to conduct meetings, prioritize goals, conduct cost benefit analysis, application of the Customer First Foundation Principles for projects and how to identify details needed to complete projects. They are also taught team building and how to work with different personalities.

When the leader gets back to his or her team their success is dependent on three things; the support from management, the support of their team and the individuals abilities to motivate others to join in to make their workplace a better place to be. So far approximately 22 TS&IC leaders have been promoted up because of their ability and attitudes. When a leader is promoted, a different team member is selected to fill that persons shoes because TS&IC leaders are required to be front line team members. Former TS&IC leader Nathan Champion was promoted to trainmaster last month for the Alabama Southern Railroad (ABS).

"Becoming the TS&IC leader at the Alabama Southern, made me step out of my comfort zone and realize my potential to be a manager," said Champion. "It makes you concentrate on safety at the highest level. It also answered any concerns or questions that I had of even going into management. Being the TS&IC leader makes you look at your job and responsibilities in a new perspective. Whether it is communicating closely with fellow team members on safety, or location improvement, or talking with Customers about how their needs can better be met through the committee, the TS&IC has prepared me for the next chapter in my professional career. The TS&IC program is a valuable tool that not only can help the leader but is a blueprint for team members to strive for success in their locations. Being the TS&IC leader was a great training tool for me and I would recommend it to anyone thinking of going into management."

Anwar Aiken, ABS general manager, said the classes are a great tool to develop team members. “It gives team members who are thinking about management positions the opportunity to get a feel for what it all entails. The classes teach the TS&IC leaders how to listen and formulate solutions. The best ideas come from the team members and the TS&IC leader needs to be able to translate that to paper. Nathan has been a tremendous asset. He hit the ground running when he came back from the class. The team members respect someone who has been where they are and they are more comfortable approaching them with issues if they need to. It takes some of the pressure off of them knowing the manager knows where they’re coming from.

"I’d encourage anyone thinking they want to go into management to join the committees, become involved and then visit with their managers during evaluations and let them know they have an interest in taking on the responsibility."
Work can be a pain in the neck

Team members out in the field doing physical labor are taught the proper way to lift, bend, and perform their duties in a safe manner that will keep them from straining or pulling muscles. However, neck, shoulder, and back problems are common issues for those who are working office jobs. These pains create tension that can last a few hours, days or even years and it all can start at a desk.

The discomforts can correlate with how people’s desks are set up; from placement of the computer, mouse, papers, and phone location. Bad posture when sitting can also affect shoulders and backs.

Watco was contacted by their insurance broker, Marsh, about instructing team members on ergonomics in the workplace. The instructor selected two locations, Twin Falls, Idaho and Pittsburg, Kan., to visit based on the number of team members with office positions at those locations.

The thirty minute training taught team members how to set up their chairs, computers, and desks with an added perk of receiving a visit from Rachel Marsh, instructor of the course. She showed the team members how to set up a productive and comfortable work space. She adjusted team members’ chair heights, removed items from under the desk to give team members more leg room, altered computer monitors to reach eye level, and gave other helpful tips to reduce strains on the neck, shoulders, back and wrists.

Anne Elrod, accounting and purchasing administrative assistant at the Pittsburg location, felt this class directly related to her. The fifteen minute session with the instructor improved her work space by adding a hand rest at the end of her keyboard, putting the monitor at eye level, sitting straight in front of the computer, and adjusting her chair.

“I was really glad that it immediately made it more comfortable and made such a big difference” said Elrod. “I felt this was Watco’s way of saying, ‘Yes, you are important’ and showing it by helping make my workspace a physically better place to be.”

Recommendations by the instructor include putting the top of your monitor at eye level and squared in front of you so you’re not twisting or turning your head to see it. Keep your keyboard close enough to reach without stretching and the same with your mouse. If you need to adjust your mouse settings, you can adjust the pointer and scroll speeds using the control panel on your computer so you get more range with less movement.

It’s a good idea to get a clip for the side of your monitor to put your paperwork on if you are spending a lot of time looking down and back up at your monitor throughout the day. Not only is it more ergonomically correct, it’s more efficient as well. Your legs and hips should be at a 100 to 120 degree angle and most smaller people will need to find a foot rest to accomplish this. Other tips for office workers to reduce strain include:

- Changing body positions and stretch frequently throughout the day to increase blood flow and decrease muscle tension.
- Every 20 minutes take 20 seconds and look away from the monitor, focus on an object and blink.
- Use your allowed breaks to step away from your workstation.

If you would like to view a flyer on proper workstation arrangement one has been placed on the Watco web site. Go to the Watco Team page and find it under Important Links.

Idaho team reflects Customer First values

(Continued from page 1) list. After reviewing the information the inspector was surprised when he asked the conductor, Dallon Gardner, how long he has been a conductor. Gardner said he had been a conductor trainee for six months and just marked up as a conductor three weeks ago.

The inspector said it’s rare that someone that new would do as well as he did during the inspection and that the railroad should keep doing what they’re doing to prepare our team members.

Already the hard hitting safety messages that the team is sending out is paying off; team members young and old alike are being more conscientious and following the Customer First Principles of safely providing service to our Customers.

Bill Goldsberry, general manager of the EIRR, said, ‘Being bought in, living the management process and driving it to the field level to the newest team member is how we are being successful on the EIRR. Knowing that the team can speak to any level of management and be heard while be treated with dignity and respect. Living by the philosophy that ‘Railroaders don’t quit railroads, they quit managers’. Another very successful tool that has helped tremendously is the TS&IC Team. We have four on duty locations with four TS&IC leaders and the buy in from having this committee has rallied the safety culture with peer accountability.”

Waxman 4031 leads the Hutchinson, Kan., local west-bound through Andale, Kan., after bucking some large snowdrifts. Photo by Kyle Moody

Wrestler takes 6th at State

Congratulations to Tyler Lamkin, son of Herb Lamkin, who recently took sixth place at the Kansas Class 4A State Wrestling Tournament in Salina, Kan. Tyler, a junior, wrestled in the 195 pound division and is the first wrestler from Wellington High School to place in state since 2010.

Herb serves as a roadmaster for the Kansas and Oklahoma Railroad.

Birmingham Terminal Railway MOW Safety Cookout 2013
Congratulations to the following team members celebrating their anniversaries!

1 Year: Anwar Aiken, Edward Appleby, Jacob Bagby, Luis Baltazar, Christopher Bates, Richard Bates, Andrew Boe, Justin Brown, Salvador Camacho, Jesse Croul, Lawrence DesRoches, Chad Easterling, Kevin Fetzer, Christopher Gamblin, William Gibbs, Daniel Golden, Tim Haas, Tammie Hambek, Charlie Harris, Joshua Harris, Jordan Hawkins, Michael Hogan, Joe Howell, Nolan Hunt, Joe James, Dennis Jensen, Russ Jones, Johnnie Keller, Lawrence Kienstra, Brent Killian, Shane Kunnanz, Steven Lewis, Jeremy Madsen, Timothy McLachlan, Noelyn Meckle, Terrence Montalvo, Marvin Morris, Roger Noel, David Ontiveros, Brad Payne, James Potts, Jeremy Pruett, Jesus Resendiz, Christopher Roth, Bradley Seidenman, Donald Smith, Wesley Smith, Delores Snead, Duane Stephenson, Michaele Treace, Norman Turner, Justin Ventry, Jordan Wells, Jeffery Womack, Scott Wolk, Kathleen Woods, Malcolm Young


3 Years: James Blevins, Dustin Coester, Zach Collingsworth, Trinity Condon, James Daly, Brett Golz, Kyle Hittesdorf, Timothy Housel, Anthony Jones, Jesse Koloski, Vicki Langford, Andrew McBride, Louis Pena, Kevin Robertson, Dean Schexnayder, Jason Stout, Chadrick Suitier, Cesar Valentin, John Woods

4 Years: Jason Atteberry, Gerald Kerns, Timothy Largent, Gerardo Martinez, Jacob Meyers, Bernardino Osorio Vargas, John Rood, Daniel Smith, Cecil Taylor

5 Years: Sean Corr, Kevin Duncan, Devod Faison, Green Foster, Robert Gable, Rodney Gordon, Jennifer Johnson, Scott Keener, James Maddux, Brett Norris, Judson Rogers, Eva Rokezewski, Adam Shaffer, Marreyon Thomas, Lloyd Wilson

6 Years: Sergio Arratia, Keith Barksdale, Mitch Becker, Bruce Brewer, Lyman Brown, Frank Estep, Patrick Holden, Larry Jensen, Esteban Lechuga, Robert Monahan, Israel Santos, James Shomo, Danny Sims, Brandon Welch

7 Years: Stephen Brath, Marlin Garcia, Robert Gilbert, Barry Karlberg, James Mayfield, John Neel, Michael Rogers, Joe Sandoval, Heather Sepulvado, Kellee Sisler, Gary Westphal, Douglas Williams


9 Years: Kent Ainsworth, Sherry Bulot, Brenda Churchward, Alvin Dorn, Anthony Gill, Keith Goodsell, Charlene Huskey, Robert Martinez, Charles Mier, Rocky Ramage, Kevin Watkins, Kevin Wills

10 Years: Mike Balls, David Bullion, Frank Davis, Roger Easterling, Wayne Ghan, David Gibson, Kenneth Lucht, James Macin, Tanya Macnab, Catherine Neel, Thaddeus Oepke, Kevin Plass, James Price, Steve Rowland, Sheila Schexnayder, Randy Stone, Bryan Stier, Tim Welker, Rick Williams, Katie Wood

11 Years: James Avant, Bernardo Cuevas, Terry Kudick, James May, James Napier, Judy Schumacher, Walter Stromberg

12 Years: Julie Fortman, Joshua Kramer, Brad Snow, Joe Welch

13 Years: Kathy Carr, Edward Garcia, Carlotta Guiles

14 Years: Mark Krause, Ron Martin, Terry Parsons

15 Years: Randy Letner, Brian Waters

16 Years: Dee Anderson, William Coffman, Richard L Berry

17 Years: William Carroll, Anthony Jernigan

18 Years: Steven Coleman, Dick Fogliasso, Dexter Reeves

19 Years: Mark Green, Steven Morgan

20 Years: Herb Lamkin, Jeffrey Lievers, John Stepien

21 Years: Silas Whitley

22 Years: Dan Linden

23 Years: James Crawford, William Langley

24 Years: Bryan Benson, Bernard Kezler

25 Years: Billy Eddington

26 Years: Jim Herman

27 Years: Daniel Malignani

32 Years: Jane Harden, Steven Lang

36 Years: Daniel Fetzer

37 Years: Ronnie Hargrove

38 Years: Timothy Wombacher

The sudden death of Steve Swafford, pump operator, was a shock to his team at the Stroud, Oklahoma transfer station. They were provided information on the Employee Assistance Program and told that a professional counselor would be available to help them through their grief if they needed it. The team met and shared a lot of memories and the room was filed with laughter many times recalling Steve's antics and his trait of not beating around the bush but getting straight to the point.

Robbie Aucoin, one of Steve’s friends at the location said, "There was a lot of good wrapped up in that rough and scruffy exterior. You could see it when he was talking about his nephews, Hunter and Garrett. He was so proud of those boys and was bursting with pride when he spoke of their accomplishments. He was one of the first ones to agree with our team when deciding to help out foster kids at Christmas."

"The best word that comes to mind to describe Steve would be ‘steady’. When he got on a task he kept at it until the job was done, he may not have been the fastest but when it was done, it was done right."

"We accepted Steve as a valuable member of our Watco Family, and he accepted us as family too. He will be missed."
St. Patrick's Day in America

By Kersee Currier  
Communications Intern

St. Patrick’s Day is a thousand year-old Irish holiday that celebrates the anniversary of Saint Patrick’s death in the fifth century. Traditionally, families would go to church in the morning and then celebrate in the afternoon by drinking, feasting, and dancing with friends.

The United States has adopted the celebration and with it’s 34.7 million residents with Irish heritage verses Ireland’s 6.3 million residents, one could argue that the U.S. is as much Irish as Ireland.

Along with the drinking and eating, parades have become a big part of the celebration. Now more than 100 parades take place each year in the United States. Chicago has even been dying their river green for the past 52 years.

Mark Gaynor grew up in Ireland and is here visiting for a few months. His father, Roddy Gaynor, came to Pittsburg State to run track in the early 80’s. Mark has returned to his father’s stomping grounds to visit old family friends, many who are Watco Team Members. Mark grew up in Sligo, Ireland and this will be his first year to celebrate St. Patrick’s Day away from home.

Some would believe this holiday in Ireland would be different than in the States but this isn't entirely true.

"All big towns have a parade but it’s not like people are going wild. A lot of people go to a parade then pubs or night clubs," said Mark. "Ireland weather is not fun. Last St. Patrick’s Day it rained all day."

One of Ireland’s myths is about the Saint Patrick himself and why this celebration color is green.

"In elementary school teachers would say the myth was that Saint Patrick banished all the snakes from Ireland," said Mark. "Gaynor is currently making plans for the big day but has enjoyed his experience here in America, "I like American people and the feeling here."

Fitzgerald Scout earns Eagle Award

Safety is a word that is used and practiced so often with Watco Team Members that our families often absorb the message as well. Brigham Keys, son of Joe Keys, plant manager of the Fitzgerald, Ga., mechanical shop, was thinking of safety when he decided to take on replacing a local foot bridge that was unsafe for public use as his project for his Eagle Scout Award.

The bridge was used for foot traffic on a daily basis to get from the high school’s football field to the school. Not only did the football team use the shaky bridge but many members of the community as well.

Brigham was responsible for the design of the new bridge, organizing the construction, the removal of the old bridge and the placement of the new bridge. He had to present this plan to the city council and the school board for approval and then to the local scout office before he began.

Fastenal donated bolts, washers and nuts, Hempel donated the paint and Standard Supply donated the lumber. the Watco mechanical shop constructed the metal frame and supplied equipment to place the bridge in place.

Following the project Brigham had to get a sign off from the city council and the school board as well as the Boy Scouts.

Brigham follows in his brother’s footsteps and is the second son to receive his Eagle Award. Brigham is a member of Troop 333 and is sponsored by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Left photo - front row l-r: Lee Doeset, FHS football coach; Joe Keys, plant manager; Louis Keys, Cub Scout, Brigham Keys, Eagle Scout; James Keys, Cub Scout and Spencer Keys, Boy Scout. Back row l-r: Gerald Miller, Scout Master; Reggie Baker, Fitzgerald Team Member; Demichael Hill, Boy Scout; Shane Clark, Missionary; Colin Dorset, Boy Scout, and Jonathon Norton, Missionary. Middle photo: the original bridge. Right photo: the new and much safer bridge.