

# R & N Magazine

Official Magazine of the Employees and Customers of the Reading & Northern Railroad

WINTER 2026 | VOL. 28, ISSUE 1



**2025 Year in Review!**

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## COVER PHOTO

RBMN Locomotive 1776 unveiled Fall 2025.

## EDITORS

JOLENE BUSER • KATHY GIPE • SIERRA LEVAN

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*“The Road of Anthracite”* FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

# Reading & Northern Breaks Freight & Passenger Records Again!

Port Clinton, PA – January 6, 2026

Reading & Northern Railroad (R&N), the largest privately owned railroad in Pennsylvania, had another year of record freight revenues and record passenger ridership.

Nationally freight traffic was basically flat as freight customers dealt with the twin impacts of tariffs and overseas economic slowdown. Despite these trends, R&N was able to achieve modest growth in freight carloads, which led R&N to its highest revenue level in history.

Anthracite coal remains a bright spot for “THE ROAD OF ANTHRACITE.” R&N exceeded one million tons of anthracite shipped over our lines for the third straight year. R&N growth is led by anthracite shipments to the domestic steel industry. To support this growth in business, R&N purchased additional covered hopper cars in December.

One bright spot for R&N was in frac sand carloadings. Although Marcellus Shale drilling activity remained soft, R&N, in partnership with our terminal operator Texas Sands, was able to increase our business to 2000 cls in 2025. Most of that growth was in the fourth quarter and R&N expects 2026 to be our best year ever at our Tunhannock transload facility.

Traffic diversity is one of R&N’s strengths and R&N also experienced carload and revenue success moving plastic resins, various forest products, metals, and food and ag commodities. The result of this diverse traffic base led R&N to have its most successful year ever. And the future looks even brighter. Based on preliminary forecasts R&N expects to increase both carloads and revenues significantly in 2026.

On the passenger side R&N eclipsed 400,000 riders in 2025 for the first time ever. And as always, R&N keeps expanding the number of facilities and adding equipment and more trains.

In order to continue accomplishing all of this R&N invested in equipment, track and people. R&N spent over \$8 million purchasing 117 freight cars, numerous vehicles and track equipment, and track and signal materials. R&N also continued to grow the company by hiring many new employees and giving raises and benefits to its staff.

In 2026 R&N hopes to finalize its acquisition of the Luzerne County railroad operations. Under public ownership rail freight traffic has fallen. R&N has pledged to rebuild the freight franchise. And R&N has committed to bringing its award-winning passenger service to Wilkes Barre. Towards that end, R&N has already purchased centrally located property for its passenger station. And R&N made an aggressive offer in September of 2025 to purchase the properties for \$10 million.

Finally, in 2025 Union Pacific made an agreement to purchase R&N’s only direct freight rail connection, Norfolk Southern. This proposal is before the Federal Surface Transportation Board where it has already received strong opposition from other large railroads, shipper groups and labor. R&N will monitor this proposal closely as the impacts of the Norfolk Southern acquisition of Conrail in 1999 caused consternation and chaos for years.

Andy Muller, Jr, R&N Owner and CEO said, “Thanks to our customer-focused staff, R&N continues to enjoy growth year after year. We continue to invest in our railroad to make sure we bring first class service to our freight customers and our passenger riders. Reading & Northern will continue to thrive and work with our communities and neighbors to expand our offerings.”

Reading & Northern Railroad, with its corporate headquarters in Port Clinton, is a privately held railroad company serving over 80 customers in nine eastern Pennsylvania counties (Berks, Bradford, Carbon, Columbia, Lackawanna, Luzerne, Northumberland, Schuylkill, and Wyoming). It has expanded its operations over the last 40 years; and projects 40,000 carloads of freight in 2026 (which removes over 220,000 trucks from the highway), while its Passenger Department welcomed over 410,000 happy customers in 2025. Reading & Northern operates its freight and steam- and diesel-powered passenger excursions over 400 miles of track, owns almost 2,000 freight cars, and employs over 400 dedicated people. Reading & Northern has been repeatedly honored as one of the premier railroads in the nation, including being named Regional Railroad of the Year in 2020 by Railway Age magazine.

# KEEPING ON TRACK

BY: WAYNE A. MICHEL, PRESIDENT

Recently my wife Ronda and I celebrated our 25th wedding anniversary with a special train ride along the RBMN main line. This was a very special trip for us as we were married on Andy Muller's private rail car, car #1, 25 years ago to the day.

Andy was kind enough to let us take his private train out for the day and we chose a simple route from Reading Outer Station north along our Main Line towards Hazleton. The train turned on the wye at Haucks for the return trip. All in we were onboard for 4 1/2 hours.

Kudos to the passenger department team and the train crew for giving us a wonderful ride.

We sat at the rear of car 1 facing out behind floor to ceiling glass windows leaving us with wonderful views. It was a cold crisp winter day and the bright sun and excellent heating system left us warm and cozy. We chose to bring a picnic lunch so we could just sit and enjoy.

Riding in Andy's private car offered all the amenities including a railroad radio so we could hear all train activity with our crew as well as our dispatcher talking to other train and maintenance crews working on a busy Monday morning.

In fact it was so busy that morning that as we pulled out of Outer Station the multiple tracks on both sides of the Main were filled with cars ready for interchange to NS. I called our EVP Transportation Eric Peters who explained those cars were getting ready to go into interchange later that day.

Seeing the railroad from that vantage point was amazing. As most of you know I am not, and never have been, a rail fan. But, that experience made Ronda and I hungry for more train trips Andy-style.

Later, when we thanked Andy, he remarked how 100-150 years ago the rich were able to own private rail cars and travel the county. This was a time before planes and automobiles, all we had was trains.

Car 1 is a reminder of those days as it was built by one of the original robber barons, Jay Gould, for his daughter's wedding. As huge fans of HBO's The Gilded Age, we truly appreciated the opulence of the fixtures on Car 1 as well as the beautiful way Carol Muller designed and decorated the parlor car.

From my work perspective the trip let me sense the railroad from the ground level. And I do mean sense. When you ride a train you use all your senses. Your sense of touch is alive with the gentle rocking and the sense of movement as you sweep around curves. Your sense of hearing is serenaded by the clickety clack and train whistles. And on this trip repeated warnings telling us our dragging protection indicators were working, our gates and flashers were keeping the public and train crews safe, and the dispatchers frequent communications let us know we were firmly in the heart of a safely working technologically modern train network. Our sense of smell even worked when we stepped out on the rear platform for a few minutes and smelt some of the diesel locomotive exhaust that hung low and trailed the train for short periods of time in the cold winter air.

And of course the views were spectacular. Not only are we blessed to live in a scenic area as the train trip ran over and adjacent to the Schuylkill and Little Schuylkill Rivers through beautiful foothills and surrounding Appalachian Mountains but we also could see a wonderfully maintained track with evidence of new ballast, new ties, and even old ties stacked up beautifully to be picked up and later discarded. For one who rode many trains along Conrail lines that were scheduled for sale, it was an eye opening sight to see how clean the right-of-way was.

I would be remiss if I didn't close my column with some thoughts about the year in review. Our press release and the fine articles that follow do a great job telling the story. But beyond the headlines about record freight and passenger revenues and record passenger ridership there's a bigger story about how RBMN is actually run day in and day out, year after year, and decade after decade.

Riding the rails in car 1 tells that story beautifully. It is a story of constant investment and constant reimagining of railroading. Recently my brother in law went up in space on the Blue Horizon. Ronda and I watched the entire proceeding from pre launch to landing and recovery. Whatever else one might say about Jeff Bezos you gotta admit that he runs a spectacular first class space operation. Thankfully the mission was flawless. And you might have caught it on the news as it marked the first time a wheelchair handicapped person flew in space.

Afterwards, in congratulating Neal on his successful voyage, I remarked that I was sending a message as one immersed in a 19th century industry talking with a true 21st century man. And as much as my recent train trip was a trip back to a different time when the rich traveled the American countryside in private cars, it was also evidence of how Andy keeps upgrading the railroad with new technologies to make it safer for our crews, our guests and the public.

So, behind the headlines about our record passenger ridership and record freight revenues, think about the millions of dollars Andy spends every year to keep the railroad working, growing, and staying ever safer. In 2025 RBMN spent in excess of \$8 million as we purchased over 100 railcars, tens of thousands of ties, MOW machinery, vehicles for our growing transload business, etc. And think about how we are constantly hiring, 67 new hires, and promoting in order to grow the railroad.

When you think about everything Andy has built, and I have been by his side for the last 26 years with as good a seat and view as Ronda and I had from Car 1, you understand that whatever comes our way, even with Union Pacific seeking to acquire NS, RBMN will do just fine. At the end of the day, RBMN will be where we have always been... keeping on track. ♦

Reading Blue Mountain & Northern Railroad 1 Itinerary for Passenger Train Movement

## ITINERARY for Private Car Special, Friday, January 12, 2001.

Port Clinton will be the location of a wedding on Friday, January 12. The groom is Wayne Michel, RBMN Executive Vice President. The bride is Ronda Marinello. The ceremony will take place aboard Private Car #1, followed by a short train ride.

### PN Dispatcher:

- [1] arrange to have PN lead (track #500) clear, not later than first thing Friday morning. O.C.S. crew will spot Car #1 at the brick walkway next to the train shed, as per standard practice for boarding O.C.S. trips.
- [2] arrange to have one locomotive, started, inspected, and ready to roll, head-out on one of the shop tracks, not later than 09:30 Friday.
- [3] wedding special will depart PN at 14:45, northbound on Main Line for short ride. Special is due to return to PN by 15:25, and will clear-up on PN lead.

Consist: to be Private Car #1 and one locomotive.

Engine Crew: S. Gilbert, E. Heck, on duty at 08:30. Conductor: W. Bubeck, on duty at 12:00.

### DETAILS:

TIME	MOVE	LOCATION	MILEPOST	NOTES
09:30	locomotive	PN	78.3	Move power from shop track to shed track, couple to car-1, move to boarding spot on lead.
09:45 to 11:45	prep car	"	"	load supplies, rearrange car as needed. Make sure generator is working.
12:00-?	Bride and Groom arrive.			Will use car #1 to prepare for wedding.
13:45	Others in wedding party report to car #1			
14:00	Wedding Ceremony, followed by photographs.			
14:45	O.C.S. Depart	PN	78.3	Proceed North not beyond RING, reverse to PN.
15:25	O.C.S. Arrive	PN	78.3	Park train on lead at boarding spot.
15:30	Wedding Party depart PN by car, travel to reception.			
17:00	Wedding Party return to PN.			
17:15 to ?	Move car-1 to shed track, move power to shop track.			

ITINERARY OF WEDDING DETAILS AVAILABLE FROM ED HECK.

S. Gilbert, Director Passenger Service. 01-11-01.

Original wedding itinerary from Friday, January 12, 2001.

# Operations | 2025 Year in Review

BY: TYLER GLASS, EVP OPERATIONS

Thirty five years. That is how many years ago I started on this railroad as a conductor trainee. A lot has changed and many things have stayed the same. I've seen a lot of great people come and go. Many customers are still the same, some have changed names and some have faded into the past. The locomotive roster has certainly evolved. The system has grown immensely.

It is the people that stand out the most. As I look back into my memory rolodex the names and faces are there. The good, the bad and all in between. I've been fortunate to have so many great role models, especially early on. I remember what many have taught me. I also remember discounting excellent advice when I was a young dude that knew better.

Andy Muller has been a constant during that time and Wayne Michel has been here for twenty five years. Between the two they offer so many different leadership and management skills. Listen to their advice and philosophies, and you can learn a lifetime of knowledge.

Eric Peters and his team have just about perfected the Transportation operations. I say "just about" because I know it can never be perfect BUT it has excellent structure and is nimble when needed. Railroading involves perpetual change; I've seen many people fail over the years because they had a difficult time adapting.

I could write a book on all of this, but the main goal of this article is to talk about 2025 so let me move on.

The year 2025 is behind us and we are already well into the new year. We achieved a 99% on-time arrival rate with our customers last year. This statistic is one of the most essential. After all, we are here to serve the customer. These levels of satisfaction are expected and not always as easy as many think. We perform many extra switches in a day if the business calls for it, one customer we even had four shifts per day during a busy couple of weeks.

Anthracite coal continues to be a large piece of the operations focus. The amount of equipment and work it takes to support the business is incredible. We must make sure that the different types of equipment get to the proper customers for loading, which creates some additional logistics. We have train crews dedicated to loading at the customers, who wait and reposition the train as the cars are loaded. We weigh the cars before interchanging them and again upon their return to our railroad. Certain equipment is not used as much as other equipment, so we need to store some equipment for months at a time in an out of the way location.

Our Passenger operations expanded greatly and that requires hiring, training, and promoting employees. Our training is intense, rewarding and second to none. We train new employees how to safely do their job, the physical characteristics of the railroad, and the essentials of customer service. We were busy hiring and training again this year resulting in four trained new-hire Conductors, four trained and promoted Locomotive Engineers, and two trained and promoted Dispatchers.

Our Diesel Shop has done a wonderful job of ensuring the locomotive fleet is in top shape. Year after year we add more locomotives to our in service fleet. Giving the engineers the best possible tool to do their job is what it is all about. Our Restoration Shop continues churning out wonderfully repainted locomotives, a morale booster.

The Car Shop has been extremely helpful providing inspections and repairs to our equipment as well as anything that pops up on foreign railcars. They are very quick to respond to unforeseen issues that are bound to pop up in our day-to-day operations.

The Communications and Signals Department completed several crossing enhancements, including flashers and gates, which give our crews some extra comfort with the additional warning devices. We've added more dragging equipment detectors and are well on our way to completing the wayside signals on our Main Line between Carbon (near Hometown) and Nesquehoning. We've also added new locomotive plugs and lighting to Tamaqua Yard, no small project!

Maintenance of Way (MOW) also provided great support, but, more importantly, they are constantly upgrading our branch lines and adding track where necessary. The M&S and St. Clair Running tracks saw miles of track upgraded from 10 MPH to 25 MPH. That means instead of taking 6 minutes to go one mile we can now do it in 2.4 minutes, a huge efficiency gain! They added several tracks in Tamaqua Yard, including two dedicated locomotive tracks.

We anticipate more volumes in our freight and passenger networks in 2026, so we are making sure we have the right resources in place to handle the business. We have proven we rise to any occasion, so I look forward to reporting on another successful year in 2027.

I want to end this article where I started, the people. The pictures in the magazine are one of the best features of our magazine. Showing the fine people that get the job done day in and day out. Check it out! ♦



After a long, snowy night on train QANR, Fredrick Kindler makes his way back to the office to finish up.



Lucas Reichard & Conductor Trainee Landon Eichelberger working on the Lehighton Branch at Jim Thorpe.

# Coal | 2025 Year End

BY: BILL CLARK, SVP COAL MARKETING

Life is complicated and so is the RBMN coal business. 2025 was a year of good news. 2025 was a year of not so good news. But most importantly, 2025 ended up with RBMN exceeding one million tons shipped for the third year in a row, a significant achievement under any circumstances.

To better explain our business, we separate our market into three discrete areas; Export, Domestic, and River.

**General** – In 2025, the coal business at RBMN remained our largest commodity segment by revenue; representing over 37% of freight revenue. Total shipments were down 10% compared to 2024. Export shipments represented the entire loss, with domestic and river shipments up YOY.

**Export** – Our export traffic declined 30% last year. Reduced demand for steel in Europe and Asia caused a significant decline in prices and production. This impacted shipments of US Anthracite into the foreign steel market. For 2026, we expect to see continued decline in export shipments. Steel demand will continue to suffer from low economic output in Europe and Asia. In addition, increased coke supply into Europe will eliminate export coal shipments into the European industrial market.

**Domestic** – Domestic shipments of Anthracite represent the largest source of coal revenue. Our domestic traffic has grown consistently since 2017; averaging slightly over 10% growth per year. 2025 volume continued this trend; growing 10% over 2024. To date, most of this increase has been caused by our diversion of truck shipments to rail. Investing in rail cars, helping establish rail-truck transfers, and working with our Class I partners to develop competitive logistics packages, have all contributed to a 236% increase in shipments since 2017.

Going forward, we expect to continue to see incremental volume increases. Future growth will be focused in two areas; new steel mill construction, and conversion of existing Electric Arc Furnace (EAF) steel mills from alternate carbons to Pennsylvania mined Anthracite. While the EAF market is the largest domestic consumer of Anthracite, we expect to see more coal shipped into the Zinc recycling segment. Some of the increase in domestic shipments will be offset by losses in the sugar beet segment due to refinery closures. This should be nominal (at least in the short term).

**River** – Our river traffic is the smallest market segment RBMN serves. While the final destinations are similar to our domestic business (EAF steel mills), our river market segment has some unique differences. We use alternate car types, larger shipment sizes, and the revenue generated is different. For these reasons, we separate this segment from our other “domestic” business.

In 2025, shipments to the river increased significantly. We saw a 77%+ increase in shipments into this segment.

A few factors impact this increase:

- As new and increased EAF production capacity has come online, demand for carbon has increased.
- The cost of US Anthracite has decreased, making PA mined coal more competitive.
- Customers in the Southeast are beginning to adjust to reductions in alternative carbon supplies.

We expect to see continued growth in the river segment (albeit not as significant as 2025). One caveat would be the possibility of diversions of river shipments to rail direct. There is some interest in this happening. Regardless, whether it is via the river, or rail direct, we expect to continue to see increased shipments to domestic consumers of US Anthracite.

In summary, 2026 and beyond will be challenging for our export business. In the short and medium term, we expect to see continued strain on foreign steel markets with soft pricing and demand reducing the need for PA anthracite. What happens in the longer term with exports is anyone's guess at this point, largely dependent on the global economy and geopolitics. Regardless of the headwinds on the export side, shipments into the domestic market will continue to increase as new steel production comes online and existing carbon consumers look to shift from alternate carbons to domestic Anthracite. We expect 2026 to largely be a transition year with many existing mills just starting to test a transition to domestic anthracite as a carbon alternative and new EAF mills slowly coming online throughout the year. In 2027 and beyond we expect significant growth in our domestic business as the new mills ramp up production and mills currently testing anthracite complete their transitions.

Our shippers are adjusting to these new realities and made significant investments throughout 2025 to prepare for the expected growth on the dried coal and domestic side. Lehigh Anthracite constructed a state-of-the-art dryer facility at their complex in Tamaqua, PA in 2025. This project included the construction of 3 new switches and nearly 2500' of new tracks to support rail loading operations at the dryer. We expect rail shipments to start in the early part of this year, opening additional capacity and supply opportunity into the domestic steel market. In addition to Lehigh, many of our other anthracite producers are making significant investments and plans to maintain higher production levels to feed continued growth in the domestic steel market.

Our producers are not the only ones making investments in the future, Reading and Northern continues to invest capital in expanding our fleet of railcars to meet the expected demand. 2025 saw the purchase of additional covered hoppers in preparation for growth in the dry coal business. We also took advantage of a favorable purchase opportunity to pick up an additional 87 Rapid Discharge cars in 2025. Although we don't have an immediate need for this car type, this sets us up well for added flexibility and capacity in our future open top fleet. We expect to continue to buy more covered hoppers this year and beyond as we grow our 2,000 car coal fleet. While we may be experiencing some “trying times”, particularly on the export side, there remains much room for optimism for domestic anthracite. Reading and Northern will continue to invest capital living up to our name as “The Road of Anthracite”. ♦

*“The Road of Anthracite”* **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

## RBMN Exceeds One Million Tons of Anthracite Coal Shipped for 3<sup>rd</sup> Year

**Port Clinton, PA – December 31, 2025** – Reading & Northern Railroad (R&N), the largest privately owned railroad in Pennsylvania, has shipped more than one million tons of Anthracite coal for the third straight year. This was an impressive feat considering the downturn in export volume in 2025.

The backbone of R&N's Anthracite business continues to be the booming domestic market, which mainly supports American steel production. This business segment grew nearly 20% in 2025 with most of the shipments going to electric-arc furnace (EAF) steel mills located across the country.

To support this growing market, R&N purchased additional covered hopper railcars in mid-December with delivery expected in January or February. This equipment will be added to a fleet of nearly 2,000 railcars owned by R&N. With continued growth expected in the domestic market in 2026, R&N will continue to purchase additional equipment to support the demand.

Reading & Northern Railroad, with its corporate headquarters in Port Clinton, is a privately held railroad company serving over 80 customers in nine eastern Pennsylvania counties (Berks, Bradford, Carbon, Columbia, Lackawanna, Luzerne, Northumberland, Schuylkill, and Wyoming). It has expanded its operations over the last 40 years; and projects 40,000 carloads of freight in 2026 (which removes over 220,000 trucks from the highway), while its Passenger Department welcomed over 410,000 happy customers in 2025. Reading & Northern operates its freight and steam- and diesel-powered passenger excursions over 400 miles of track, owns almost 2,000 freight cars, and employs over 400 dedicated people. Reading & Northern has been repeatedly honored as one of the premier railroads in the nation, including being named Regional Railroad of the Year in 2020 by Railway Age magazine.

# Petro Chemicals & Minerals | 2025 Year in Review

BY: JIM RAFFA, SVP PETROCHEMICALS & MINERALS

As a whole, the customer accounts that I oversee were up a total of 577 cars in 2025. That's a healthy 8.7% increase over our 2024 carload numbers.

The single largest increase this year was in the Frac Sand market where we handled 2017 carloads in 2025 vs. 1,616 carloads in 2024. Frac Sand was a railroad roller coaster of a ride this year. The months of January, February, and most of March were a bust with no carloads. Then on March 23rd, we received our first unit train of sand for the year. Sand continued to pour in until June, but then all sand operations when silent again as our customer was not Fracking. Fracking resumed in September, but the sand started landing in a different location. Thanks to aggressive marketing we started to see sand pour in at end of September. Two wells being Fracked simultaneously in December 2025 into January 2026 made for busy times at Tunkhannock and we were able to cross the 2,000 carload mark for the year. As of this article, I anticipate a strong 2026 in terms of Frac Sand currently estimating that we may hit 8,000 carloads of “Northern White Sand”.

PFN in Hazleton continues to be one of our cornerstone customers. RBMN saw a 5% growth in carloads. Further, we were excited to hear that PFN recently expanded by purchasing the Cargill Facility which closed earlier this year. PFN purchased this facility with the knowledge of it being rail served, and will utilize the rail once set up. Expect to see rail into this facility in 2027.

Alpha In North Park, Hazleton was another shining star. RBMN saw a 74% growth in their business in 2025. Additionally, we have been discussing a track expansion plan combined with some plant upgrades with them. Those improvements would enable them to receive additional commodities via rail. This would be a 2027 project.

As I write this, I am shivering. It is a cold windy day in Port Clinton. Cold is good though, at least for my next mention. Koppys Propane had a 6% increase in carloads. We sincerely appreciate Koppys business and enjoy not only providing their rail service, but buying propane from them at many of our facilities.

High & Wides came into play in 2025. There is a lot of activity in the Hazleton area and we saw two High & Wide shipments come. High & Wide Shipments are one off type shipments, however, require special train handling and offloading and therefore shipments like this are on the higher revenue end. I expect at least 3 shipments in 2026 going to Hazleton with the first one being in May.

And I would be remiss if I didn't mention that Atlas Roofing will become a rail customer in Humboldt this year. Atlas is no mystery to me personally. They have been a customer of mine in Mississippi for over 25 years at this point.

Now just imagine my excitement when they told me they wanted to be on RBMN in Hazleton. A company that prefers rail, that I already know and deal with coming to my home turf. This facility will make an insulation / wallboard product. The project is in the engineering stage with Earthwork to begin as soon as March of this year and track work to begin around June. They would like to have the rail end of things completed by third quarter and we are crossing our fingers to start seeing rail by end of 2026. This project has been on the fast track (pun intended) with the first mention of it being in June of 2024. Most Industrial Development Projects take 5 or more years. If all stays on course or plan, we will see this project take 18 months from beginning to end. That is quite an accomplishment!

I finally want to mention Azek, I2M, Jack Rich Inc., Koremart, Mauer & Scott, Mitsubishi, Poly Plastics, Schuetz, Tredegar, and Versum which all had growth years. Their commitment to rail, along with all of the Reading & Northern Rail customers, contribute to our continued traffic growth through the years. ♦



A Unit Train of Northern White Frac Sand Prepares to Leave Dauberville Yard on 12/12/25. Andy Muller, CEO of RBMN will be running the train to Pittston with the Semiquincentennial Locomotive # 1776 in the lead.

*"The Road of Anthracite"*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

## Reading & Northern Promotes Jim Raffa to Chief Marketing Officer

Port Clinton, PA – February 10, 2026 – Reading & Northern Railroad is pleased to announce that Jim Raffa has been promoted to the position of Chief Marketing Officer.

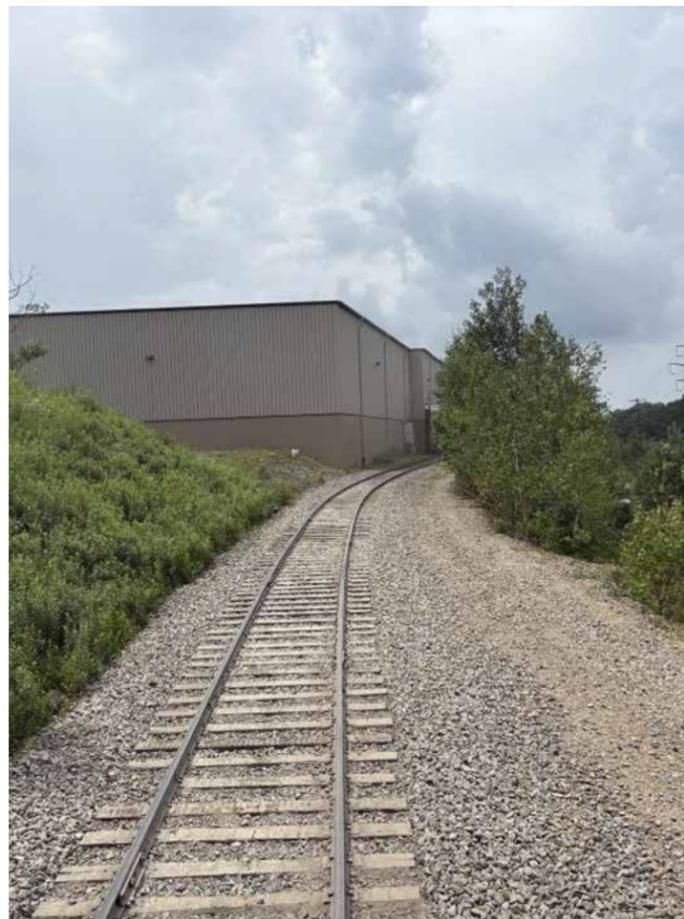
Raffa began his railroad career in 1989 with Reading & Northern's predecessor, the Blue Mountain & Reading Railroad, as a trackman. After the Reading & Northern Railroad was formed in December 1990, he transitioned to Coal Traffic Manager and Real Estate Manger. In 2007, Raffa accepted an ownership position with Lehigh Railway and Luzerne & Susquehanna Railway. In 2020, after the sale of those rail lines to R.J. Corman, Raffa returned to Reading & Northern to manage the petrochemical and minerals accounts, including the natural gas and Marcellus Shale business. He was named Executive Vice President of Marketing & Sales last year. In addition to the petrochemical and mineral business Raffa assured management of Reading & Northern's industrial development department. In his new capacity, Raffa will be assisting CEO Andy Muller, Jr., Executive Vice President, Christina Muller-Levan and President Wayne Michel on strategic and commercial issues, including railroad acquisitions and the potential Union Pacific/Norfolk Southern merger. Raffa will continue to report to Wayne Michel.

When Raffa was hired, Michel said, "Jim brings a wealth of knowledge and experience from his time serving at the Lehigh Railway and Luzerne & Susquehanna Railway. His knowledge of the region and his experience handling frac sand opportunities are critical to s as we continue to grow our railroad and business."

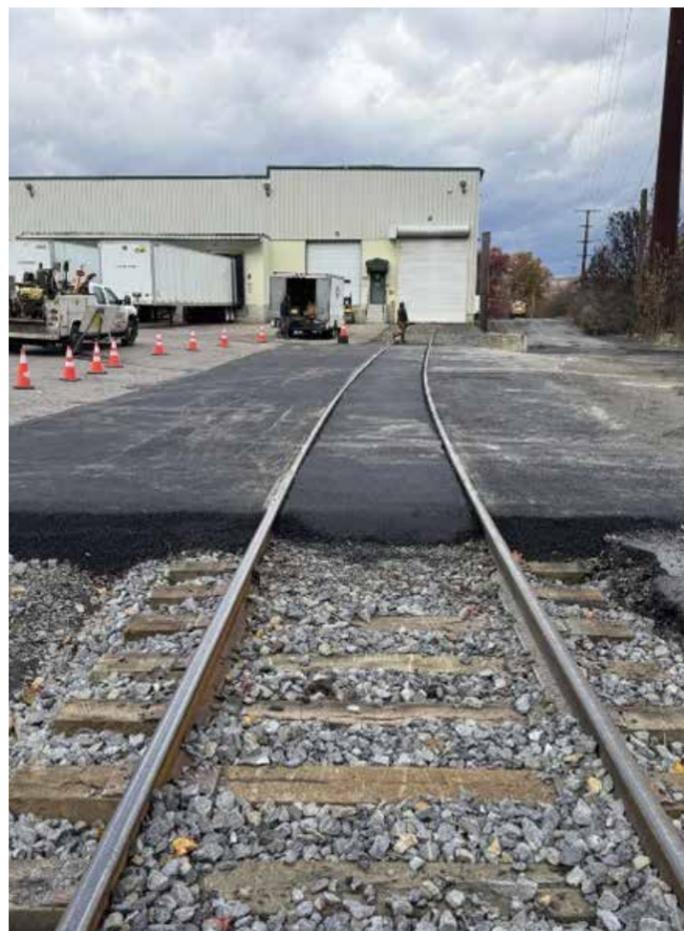
Today, CEO Andy Muller, Jr. noted that, "Jim has done an amazing job in growing our frac sand business, as he oversaw the creation and building of our Tunkhannock transload operation, which will handle over 4,000 carloads of sand this year. As we embark on expansion opportunities, including in Luzerne County, Jim is the perfect person to ensure that we offer exceptional service to the new Reading & Northern customers as well as continuing our focus on service to all our existing customers."

Raffa has over 35 years of railroad experience, specializing in business development, project management, marketing and operations. He was born and raised in Schuylkill County and has a passion for railroads, especially around his hometown of Schuylkill Haven. Jim graduated from Penn State University in 1988 and has a B.S. in mathematics with a minor in secondary education. He has also completed some graduate courses, working towards a master's degree in education.

Reading & Northern Railroad, with its corporate headquarters in Port Clinton, is a privately held railroad company serving over 80 customers in nine eastern Pennsylvania counties (Berks, Bradford, Carbon, Columbia, Lackawanna, Luzerne, Northumberland, Schuylkill, and Wyoming). It has expanded its operations over the last 40 years; and projects 40,000 carloads of freight in 2026 (which removes over 220,000 trucks from the highway), while its Passenger Department welcomed over 410,000 happy customers in 2025. Reading & Northern operates its freight and steam- and diesel-powered passenger excursions over 400 miles of track, owns almost 2,000 freight cars, and employs over 400 dedicated people. Reading & Northern has been repeatedly honored as one of the premier railroads in the nation, including being named Regional Railroad of the Year in 2020 by Railway Age magazine.



Freedom Siding Rehab



IP Siding Rehab

# Consumer Products | 2025 Year in Review

BY: RIAN NEMEROFF, SVP CONSUMER PRODUCTS

Given the overall year in business, Reading & Northern had a pretty good year, all things considered. Despite having three businesses closing down on us, we managed to keep our business mostly steady.

### What Went Right in 2025?

1. R&N is blessed with five corrugators at four locations (both box and sheet plants) that need what railroads call pulpboard, see photo below on the right. These four receivers have not been in sync all Up at the same time, since the Amazon Effect days of Covid, and that mismatch continued in 2025. Excluding the loss of the corrugator at International Paper Company, we ended the year at 59 cars positive.
2. Corrugated Supplies Corporation-PA exceeded expectations with carload growth over the past two years. A record was achieved with 2024 carloads, and a still higher, new record was achieved in 2025!
3. Progressive Converting is a paper converter as its name implies and converts paper rolls into sheets (sheeter), or big paper rolls into smaller rolls (rewinder). They get raw material from two companies that both increased their shipments.
4. Retaining existing customers and keeping them happy is key to our success. In 2025 we worked with International Paper to improve the rail infrastructure at their Mount Carmel, PA plant. This involved installing heavier 136RE welded rail, new railroad ties, macadam paving and rubber flangeways to both the railroad and privately owned spur. This work was guaranteed to provide IP with a seven-year warranty to allow worry free rail operations, see photo on bottom left. We did a similar track improvement job for Freedom Corrugating in Hazleton, PA with the same guarantee, see photo on top left. My friends in the industry tell me that this is unheard of guaranteeing work for that term and therefore another benefit to site your business on R&N!
5. Groundbreaking at our Cressona Yard to construct a building to house panels and lumber products at our public Reload. We are looking forward to graduating from a pre-sold facility to an inventory placement operation in 2026.

### Events worthy of a mulligan:

- Santa was not kind dropping the news that Patton Warehouse was vacating their rail-served operation in Humboldt Industrial Park. Earlier in the month of December, we were informed that Millennium Warehouse would no longer be receiving carloads of olives from California. Combined, this will be an annual loss of over 200 boxcars.
- Earlier in the year I got the call from International Paper Company corporate that IP was closing their boxplant in Hazleton, PA in 2025 in

conformity with IP's new CEO's announced "80/20 Plan." If we had to lose a boxplant, this facility would have been my choice due to years of red warning lights flashing and chronic decay of carload volume. The good news is that the 186K square foot facility on 18 acres just went on the market for sale and redevelopment!

- The realization among CSX, Norfolk Southern and R&N that we could not be competitive against trucks from Virginia to Hazleton, PA. The volume is hundreds of tractor trailers that are instead traversing the highways of I-64 and I-81.
- National wine consumption declines were felt in our adult beverage carloads. California wine sales in the northeast are delivered by rail to ID Logistics, formerly Kane is Able, in Scranton, PA, and contributed 8% fewer carloads in 2025. High Noon cocktails are a fairly new product shipping by rail that showed a volume improvement of 23%. Drink up! See center photo below.

### Events I'm looking forward to:

- A. Railroad Merger – Union Pacific has filed paperwork and plans to acquire Norfolk Southern. This is a big \$85 billion dollar deal and not a fait accompli. We are very early in the process, and this will continue into 2027 when the Surface Transportation Board will rule.
- B. The advertised improvement in paperboard cut-up. 2025 was supposed to be the year and R&N experienced it at only one of our corrugator receivers. Looking forward to the euphoria from all R&N paper receivers consuming more paper in 2026. Remember, packaging is a leading economic indicator!
- C. Off the chart growth at one of our integrated boxplants that has installed new equipment to ramp up production of corrugated boxes.

I'll close with some benchmarking. In the containerboard sector, there was a historic year-over-year decline in North American production capacity of nearly 10% as reported by Packaging Dive on Dec 30, 2025. Compared to R&N we were essentially flat discounting the closure of the IP boxplant. For the year, our pulp & paper (P&P) was down 1.1%. By comparison, the North American Class I railroads report through the American Association of Railroads that P&P was down 4.0%. Compared to the ASLRR composite of 461 reporting Class II and III railroads show P&P down 4.5%.

The R&N is open for business. We have sites and land that are listed on our webpage [www.rbmnr.com](http://www.rbmnr.com). You will find that we answer the phone, respond to emails, and are eager for business. We look forward to working with both existing customers and attracting new customers. ♦



High Noon Image



Pulpboard Image

# Transload Breaks Carload Record for 2<sup>nd</sup> Year in a Row

BY: DAREN GESCHWINDT, VP DISTRIBUTION SERVICES

In 2025 Transload exceeded 2000+ carloads for the 2nd year in a row. I am pleased to say that we saw increases at the Ransom, West Hazleton, and Cressona Transloads. Not only did we exceed 2000 cars again, but we also beat last year's record by 3.4%. I would also note that the transload business that I am referring to is separate from our frac sand transloading that is handled by Jim Raffa and also handles 1000's of carloads each year.

The Ransom Warehouse led the way in carloads, accounting for over 1800 carloads this year. At Ransom we have a proven product that customers have come to know they can rely on. Over the years, we have developed relationships with multiple suppliers, who have made Ransom a key warehouse for storing safety-stock for Procter & Gamble. The success of Ransom is evidenced by the reduction in emergency trucks that the suppliers needed to ship over the course of the year. Our data indicates that by keeping a supply of safety stock at Ransom, suppliers were able to reduce the amount of emergency trucks that they shipped last year by 76% vs the prior year.

2025 was also our second full year of the car-to-car transfer program at Ransom, and has been a key factor in our carload growth. This program enables shippers to utilize the 60 ft cars that are supplied to them by the Class I railroads and ship them to the Ransom Warehouse for transfer into a 50 ft RBMN boxcar for delivery to P&G. In this case, receiving product in 50 ft cars is important to P&G due to the boxcar door spacing at their plant.

At West Hazleton, our steel business saw some major changes resulting from the tariff pressures from the Trump Administration. In prior years foreign steel mills provided the majority of the steel that came into the transload. However, in 2025 we saw a shift away from foreign steel, and a surge in orders from domestic steel mills to meet their needs. One of these domestic mills had actually closed in 2024, but reopened in 2025 and is providing a steady supply of steel as a result of the switch to US made steel. We also added a new receiver who is using this transload to bring in carloads of steel coils. Early in the year we worked with the receiver and their supplier to educate them on our equipment and material handling capabilities at West Hazleton Transload. Our extensive experience in handling this type of product allowed them to see that our transload would be a good fit for them. They shipped several test cars through the summer months and as we headed into Q4 it became clear that they would become a regular customer.

At Cressona our carload increase is the result of our work with a new customer who started receiving lumber in 2025. This project began with a cold call that Rich Majorino and I made to a company in our region. Rich and I worked with the customer and their supplier to develop a program to bring in carloads of wood panel products via the Cressona Transload. This project has been a win-win for all parties by putting more product on rail and saving the customer money on the delivered cost of their raw materials.

The future is bright as we look toward 2026 and beyond. We are working on projects that, if they come to fruition, could see us expanding the Ransom facility in order to handle even more business. The West Hazleton Transload continues to be strong. At Cressona we began construction in December on a 200 ft by 35ft 3-sided lumber shed. This shed will complement our boxcar dock and will provide covered storage for panel products such as plywood and OSB. When completed, the shed will have the capacity to store up to 10 railcar loads of lumber under roof. The shed is schedule to open in early 2026. With all of these things in the works, I expect 2026 to be another strong year for the Transload Dept. ♦



Two truckloads of panel products being delivered to a new receiver. This product arrived in boxcars at the Cressona Transload.



Ray Chippa loads a 50-ft boxcar with wood pulp at the Ransom Warehouse as part of the Car-to-Car Transfer program.



Two of our trucks delivering the first coils of wire rod to a new receiver in 2025.



Construction began in December on a 200 ft by 35 ft lumber shed at the Cressona Transload. This shed will complement our boxcar dock and will provide covered storage for panel products such as plywood and OSB.

# Customer Service 2025

BY: SUSAN LUDWIG, VP CUSTOMER SERVICE

Once again 2025 was a busy year for RBMN and Customer Service. In 2025, RBMN Customer Service managed the scheduling for over 33,500 carloads and supported more than 7,300 customer shifts. Our crews consistently delivered within the two-hour service windows, achieving a 99% on time performance.

In May 2025 Michele Daub and I attended the Car Hire Conference in Jacksonville, FL. This was our first time attending and we received great information to help with the task of tracking car hire. Car Hire is the compensation that is paid by a user to an owner for use of a car. Such compensation may include, but need not be limited to, hourly and mileage rates.

In October Justine Berger and I attended the annual Wabtec Users Group Conference in Atlanta, GA. It always provides a great networking event to meet and discuss the systems with other users from other railroads. The conference provided us one on one time with several Wabtec programmers to help us with setting up new reports and streamlining our processes. In 2026 we are working towards automating more processes and reports out of our Rail Management system to better assist everyone and streamline the workload.

RBMN closed 2025 with strong results, surpassing 1,000,000 tons of coal shipments once again and positioning ourselves for a productive year in 2026. Although General Merchandise traffic declined slightly due to several customer closures in 2025, overall performance remained strong, and the outlook for the future is highly promising.

I want to extend my sincere appreciation to the Customer Service team for their outstanding efforts in 2025. Thanks to Lori Chinchar, Director of Customer Service; Michele Daub, Senior Customer Service Manager; Kristen McGowan, Director of Fleet Management; and our Customer Service Managers—Leanne Moser, Justine Berger, Sherry Primrose, Amy Brobst, and Chrissy Martin. Their commitment to putting customers first has been instrumental to our success, and we look forward to continuing that success in 2026. ♦

# 2025 Year-End Reflection

BY: RICH MAJORINO,  
DIRECTOR MERCHANDISE MARKETING

As 2025 comes to a close, I reflect on the beginning of my journey working directly with customer accounts at Reading & Northern, a role I stepped into this past October. While the time has been short, the experience has been rich with learning and relationship building. From meeting with some customers for the first time, to gaining a deeper appreciation for the long-term partnerships we have, this year reinforced the philosophy I was taught on my first day: 'take care of your customers.'

Each interaction this year has been an invaluable opportunity to deepen my understanding of our customers' businesses and experience their impressive facilities firsthand. I am truly grateful to my new customers for welcoming me, taking the time to meet, and sharing insights into their operations.

One of the most rewarding aspects of my role is the incredible diversity of customers I have the privilege to serve. From agricultural producers to breweries and beyond, I work across a wide spectrum of industries and commodities, each with its own unique challenges and opportunities. This variety not only keeps my work exciting but also broadens my perspective on how different businesses contribute to the larger supply chain.

While 2025 presented its share of economic headwinds, with fluctuating demand and market uncertainties for certain commodities, our focus has remained on resilience and growth in carloads. The lessons I've learned this year will serve as a strong foundation for future success. I look forward to building on these experiences, strengthening relationships, and continuing to deliver value in the years ahead. ♦

# Safety Always Continued Success in 2026

BY: ERIC PETERS,  
EVP TRANSPORTATION & FLEET MANAGEMENT

We kicked off 2026 with a Safety Summit that included 28 supervisors representing all departments at our Nesquehoning Campus. The summit provides a great environment for collaboration on how we can improve safety company wide. While we already do an excellent job, there is always room to improve. Getting together helps prevent us from becoming complacent. The number one goal of the railroad remains that all employees return home in the same or better shape than when they came to work and with some money in their pockets.

Our Safety Always culture is based on the pillars training and education. Now this takes many forms with a balanced approach of specific on-the-job training, classroom, and field/shop group sessions. We leverage the vast experience that our workforce brought with them from previous experiences, what we have learned internally over the last 42 years, and when appropriate we bring in outside experts to share their knowledge and skills. This approach allows us to continue to evolve and improve as a team. Knowledge is power.

The railroad continues to grow. The other articles in the magazine highlight some of the growth we experienced last year. And all this growth is back to back to back with the previous years of growth. It is hard for me to remember where the railroad was when I hired in 2020 vs. where we are now. The growth encompasses not only carloads and revenue, but huge increases in employees, railcars, heavy equipment, vehicles, locomotives, passenger coaches, track and signal improvements along with added infrastructure. With explosive growth comes some challenges. It has been amazing how every member of the company has stepped up to overcome those challenges while keeping safety in the forefront.

Andy Muller is the catalyst to not only growth, but also the safety of the railroad. We are continuing the push he started with emphasizing slowing down and doing it right. You don't have to sacrifice productivity to do it safely.

In the Safety Summit and rules classes the method of pause-process-proceed is reviewed. It is a simple method that reduces errors and accidents, heightens awareness and clarity, reinforces safety culture, and improves decision making. The 3Ps focusses on taking a pause before acting to afford an opportunity to assess the situation, identify hazards, check equipment, examine environment, and ensure personal readiness. Then the individual or team can process the information to evaluate risks and consider consequences. Once the first two steps have been completed then you can proceed with informed and deliberate action. This method can be done efficiently. As I write this, we are in football playoff season, so a football analogy seems fitting. A good quarterback uses this method on every play and the better they are at it, the better the results. On a pass play the quarterback pauses in the pocket to assess the field, he processes what he sees and then he proceeds to pass. If the results aren't what was intended, he will use what he learned when he processes the information on the next play. All this is done quickly in a high-pressure situation proving it can be applied to railroading without slowing down progress.

I am very excited to be a part of helping navigate the challenges the railroad will face in 2026 to make it another successful year. Thank you to all the RBMN family for what you do to keep yourself, coworkers, and public safe every day. SAFETY ALWAYS. ♦

## THE FIVE LIFESAVERS

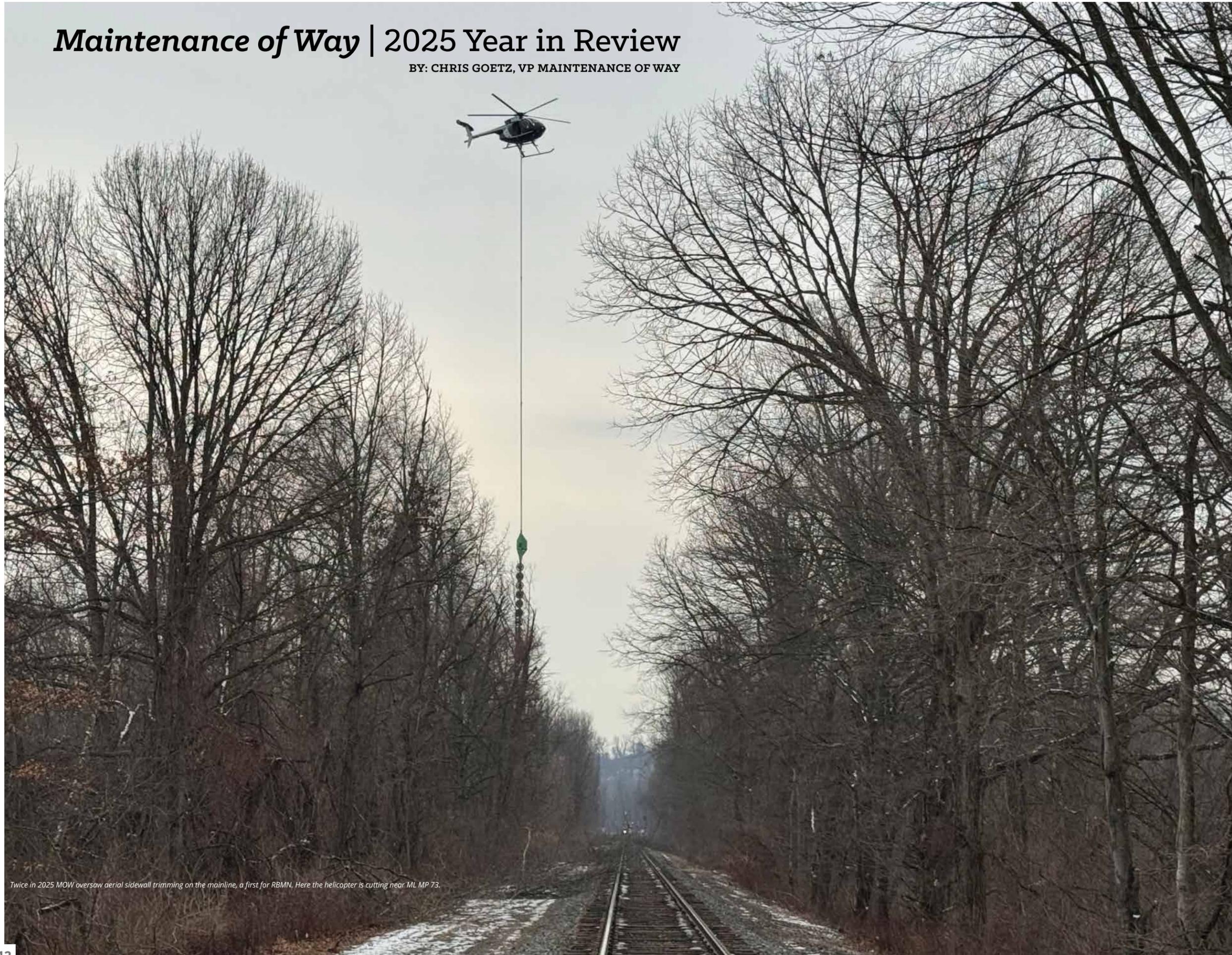
1. DISCUSS SAFETY AT THE BEGINNING OF A JOB OR WHEN A PROJECT CHANGES.
2. COMMUNICATE BEFORE ACTION IS TAKEN.
3. SECURE EQUIPMENT BEFORE ACTION IS TAKEN.
4. PROTECT EMPLOYEES AGAINST MOVING EQUIPMENT.
5. MENTOR LESS EXPERIENCED EMPLOYEES TO PERFORM SERVICE SAFELY.

**PAUSE - PROCESS - PROCEED**

To help reinforce the safety expectations, Director of Safety John Smolczynski created the 5 Lifesavers to coincide with Pause-Process-Proceed. These will be made on stickers as reminder to employees.

# Maintenance of Way | 2025 Year in Review

BY: CHRIS GOETZ, VP MAINTENANCE OF WAY



Twice in 2025 MOW oversaw aerial sidewall trimming on the mainline, a first for RBMN. Here the helicopter is cutting near ML MP 73.

In 2025, we completed another year where we have chartered new waters for Reading & Northern. We set our goals based on working closely with our customers, and the result was great success completing massive projects. During the course of 2025 we built infrastructure to support a new coal dryer coming online, upgraded multiple customer sidings across the system, and improved storage and operational efficiency at major hubs. We also developed some locations into double track mainline for the passing of both freight and passenger trains.

Our newest customer construction project was constructing a 1,217-foot runaround and 1,286-foot siding track along with three switches for a new coal drying facility on the Greenwood Running Track. This facility will load dried coal for supply to domestic steel mills. To help further support the increased traffic for this dryer, MOW installed approximately 2000 ties along the first 3 miles of the Greenwood Running Track up to the location of the new coal dryer.

In many of our customer heavy areas such as the Humboldt Industrial Park and Mt Carmel, we have completed track upgrades to help prevent time and material loss from derailments and service disruptions. This work includes upgrading rail from the lighter 100lb profiles to the 130lb profiles to accommodate increased plastic pellet business. We also completed 4,200 feet of gauging to protect against wide gage derailments in the effort to constantly afford customers the most reliable service possible.

With our passenger business rapidly expanding each year, there is a constant need for more efficient storage and operation of trains. At times in our Jim Thorpe yard, there are as many as three or four train crews occupying the same location while loading and unloading passengers. To aid in this effort, MOW completed construction of multiple additional storage tracks. The goal of these tracks being to allow the pre-staging of passenger train cars to avoid the need for shifting and multiple moves in an already busy and congested space.

In Tamaqua, we have constructed additional 375 feet of storage space and multiple engine tracks to better accommodate the storage of engines and freight. The two new engine tracks have been outfitted with engine block heaters to preserve fuel in the cold winters as auto-start equipped engines can stay shut down overnight. In addition to storage, we have upgraded track two to act as a second main line and allow the opportunity for both passenger and freight trains to pass each other during periods of heavy traffic.

In Nesquehoning, we completed construction of a new Crossover to allow traffic to enter Nesquehoning Track 2 from either side. This provides our Operations Department another location for main line trains to pass each other or the ability to keep trains moving while a passenger train loads. Track 2 also has had a few switches and tracks built off it to service our Nesquehoning facilities shops.

When we build for the future, we build together. This trend will continue throughout 2026 as we begin to offer a one-stop shop for all our customers' needs. If any customer needs track rehab or repairs, our MOW team can handle it and guarantee the work. Year after year we build upon ourselves and grow, we look forward to 2026 to see what growth and further opportunities await. ♦

Images continued on page 14.



Working along the Delano RT continuing the 2025 rehab, a gaging gang works on the curve near MP 2. (Nate Clark, AJ Barth, Sebastian Hess, Dylan Newton, Berenger Hess, Keith Yurkonis).



Following the redecking of the Tunkhannock Creek Bridge at Susquehanna BT MP 24.9, Mike Lojewski, Matt Mizikoski, and Ryan Rupprecht are logging down J-Bolts.



Foreman Chris Garcia photographs the IP Mt Carmel customer rehab project, a new crossing is seen as well as new ties and plates.



G.W. Peoples early in the mainline tie install project at ML MP 64.



Another 2025 switch rehab begins at Carbon ML MP 105.3 (Shawn Himmelberger, Keith Yurkonis, Steve Shanton, Chris Garcia, Jared Edmonds, Danny Webber, Matt Nestor, Dennis Rosohac, Cody Henn).



Working in an overnight storm, Berenger Hess, Sebastian Hess, Cody Henn, Corey Hamm, and Jason Witner thermite weld in the new rails at the Bernhard Road crossing ML MP 104.8.



AJ Barth, Nate Clark, Dylan Newton, and Jake Botto put rails together on the new Nesquehoning Shop Lead.



Foreman Matt Minnich photographs a nearly complete new crossover at Valley ML MP 116.9.



Tartaglia crews knock clips on the freshly installed ties on Tamaqua Track 2.



Sebastian Hess, AJ Barth, Blake Handling, and Berenger Hess nip and spike new ties for the new IP MT Carmel Crossing.



John Hicks, AJ Barth, Sebastian Hess, and Nate Zeigler install timbers at the new Valley Crossover ML MP 116.9.



Nearing completion of the crossing and East Runaround switch construction at Lehigh Anthracite's new coal dryer at Seek.



Steve Shanton and Jared Edmonds seal the final line on the new IP Mt Carmel crossing.



Chris Garcia photographs new ties going into the IP Mt Carmel lead.



After completion of the East Runaround switch at Seek.



Matt Nestor and Ash Himmelberger plate the timbers for the new crossing at Seek.



Keith Yurkonis and AJ Barth finish the installation of the Dryer Track switch at Lehigh's new coal dryer.



After photo of dryer track construction and the silo under construction at Seek.



Dave Hutton photographs a freshly finished new South Station Switch at Reading Outer Station.



Beginning work on the Jim Thorpe Yard 6/7 switch, Justin Fetterolf, Jason Moyer, and Keith Yurkonis install a new rail on Track 5. Tracks 6 and 7 can be seen already constructed to the right of the frame.



Following ballast & rail install featuring direct fixation, track is nearing completion through the dryer's silo.



Operator Hughes photographs a freshly broomed Dryer Track for the Lehigh Anthracite Dryer.



Matt Mizikoski photographed the Riverside Yard 2/3 Crossover rehab nearing completion.



Another 2025 bridge rehab project at ML MP 86.12 is underway as Nate Zeigler removes timbers.



Following grading, the Tamaqua Lite Yard is prepped for later track construction following construction of the first engine track (left of photo).



Tartaglia continues the mainline tie project now up to ML MP 130.8.



Tartaglia also completed ties on the Greenwood Running Track from MP 0-3, photographed here working on the loading ramp at Arlington Yard.



At M&S RT MP 119, Jared Edmonds and Sebastian Hess move the final insulated joint needed to increase speeds on the M&S RT to 25 MPH.



Rebecca Engle photographs the new engine track and Lite 2 track in the expanding Tamaqua Lite Yard.



A large gang plugs and preps ties for a rail change at ML MP 92.3. (Derek Reber, Matt Nestor, Jared Edmonds, Danny Webber, Zach Schwalm, Noah Brown, Dylan Newton, Abe Kemmerer, Dale Homm, Ben Nelson).



Blake Handling, Dakota Reber, Danny Webber, Nick Alberswerth, Steve Shanton, and Brandon Kalbach plate ties for a new rail install during the Freedom rehab in Humboldt.



Gaging on the Mainline at MP 94.8 is Justin Fetterolf, Blake Handling, Zach Schwalm, Nate Clark, Matt Nestor, and Dennis Rosohac.



Brian Van Blargan photographs a completed switch and lead rehab at Freedom Corrugated.

# Locomotive & Passenger Mechanical 2025 Year in Review

BY: DUSTIN BERNDT, VP MOTIVE POWER

As I reflect on this past 2025 year, and years just before it, I can easily realize how much we have grown throughout each year. This really speaks volumes for a company to continue to increase its growth each consecutive year in multiple departments. The Mechanical Departments can easily point to this growth through increased locomotive usage with less time spent out of service even with more maintenance performed throughout the year. In the Passenger department, we can notice this growth through increased ridership throughout 2025 which in turn led to the rising demand of coaches needed on a daily basis.

In Passenger Mechanical, we have a few multi-skilled mechanics and electricians working hard to take our 50 plus coaches to the next level of improvement while they continue to remain in active service. While this includes many small interior comforts such as replacing door closers to repairing and upgrading interior lighting, there is also the large items we include on our job lists. Throughout 2025, we have turned an exceptional amount of wheels to all coaches for regular maintenance adding to the smooth ride they offer, but on a larger scale we also overhauled the Dome 4 trucks with the conversion of new roller bearing wheel sets. We also plan to do the same wheelset replacement work to the Dome 6 Car in the springtime as the dome cars gain a lot of mileage throughout the year. These cars remain very popular in service as they create the most beautiful views along the Lehigh Gorge Scenic Railroad and other stretches along the rails. Our last Dome Car 5 has also been an asset to the railroad this past year, therefore, we have decided to take the winter months to upgrade this car to be the equivalent of the other two. So, with the help of the company HVAC technicians, we ordered a brand-new custom-built HVAC system for the car that we are currently installing to modernize this comfort system. This will create reliability to use this car throughout the seasons and have a comfortable interior for the views out the windows no matter what the weather brings.

Next, this past year brought the creation of the stationary 1170 Café car used at Jim Thorpe to sell concessions throughout the year. This car was obtained in 2025 and quickly went through a huge interior overhaul to fill the need of selling concessions at Jim Thorpe all year long. The new 1170 was designed and

completed in a short time with the help of multiple departments to provide their specific skills sets and bring it to fruition. In addition to 1170, we also have perfected the mobile 1167 car to provide concessions in moving trains. This has also been a wonderful asset in the past year to provide these amenities to the customers while the train is rolling along the tracks.

The year 2025 also brought large amounts of Locomotive maintenance to the forces at the Port Clinton Engine House. With another group of talented men and women working as a team, we spent the year doing our usual routine maintenance in the form of 92-day inspections to the entire active fleet of about 50 diesel locomotives and a few complete wheel changeouts along the way. We also spent the first part of the year reassembling the 5021 after the engine was removed to have a new crankshaft installed. We received the engine block back in the spring and went to work to also install the same rebuilt alternator to once again mate with the engine. Returning to service wasn't far behind for the locomotive after it got its well-known Fast Freight paint job completed. After that, we spent the latter part of the year reassembling the 5020 after it stripped the crankshaft coupler off the engine. We replaced the coupler and rebuilt the front end of the engine to also return that unit back to service right at the end of 2025.

Speaking of Locomotives, I am also excited to mention another successful year from the 2102 steam engine performing the Ramble trains throughout 2025. The skilled men maintaining this Locomotive know how to keep the engine in tip top shape to be ready for any excursion that comes its way. The guys are looking to do some needed heavy maintenance in the near future, but for now keep your eyes out for a Valentines Day special for the next time the Locomotive emerges from the Steam Shop. So, while the 2102 is continuing to answer the call of the trips, keep in mind the 425 is not far behind being ready for service later this year. It's had some heavy work being done in 2025 and continuing well into the new year but expect to see the 425 once again in late 2026!

So, after highlighting all this work being accomplished, I think it's necessary to mention the wonderful facilities where we spend all our time upgrading

the rolling stock. We have made great strides with the amount of tasks we can complete since the Nesquehoning facilities joined the Port Clinton Shops as there has been large continuous investments into the property throughout 2025 and this will continue into 2026. We can now work on more large projects in both departments and I'm excited to mention in late 2025 we purchased a second set of hydraulic railroad jacks to have at both locations! This will provide the ability to jack up more than one coach at a time at each location to keep things rolling along!

In summary, as the calendar years seem to always move swiftly along, I'm sure we will be involved in many more projects joining the routine maintenance throughout the year to Locomotives and Passenger cars that we have not foreseen yet. I can say that even though there are always surprises that pop up, we will be positioned to tackle anything that comes our way. I am proud to mention that with all the diversity of mechanical challenges that arise, we will always be ready to handle the repairs to get our Locomotives and Passenger cars right back to service for our customers! ♦



Shawn Frederickson in the process of machining parts for all types of equipment at the Railroad.

# Mechanical Department 2025 Year in Review

BY: DAN PUKSAR, VP MECHANICAL

The past year marked a period of steady growth and strategic investment for the Mechanical Department. Through increased production, enhanced shop capabilities, and focused training initiatives, both the Car Shop and Equipment Shop successfully met rising demands while strengthening long-term operational reliability.

The Car Shop experienced increased activity across repairs, inspections, and field work. Total shop repairs increased to 1,553 in 2025, up from 1,503 in 2024. Field repairs also rose significantly, reaching 651 in 2025 compared to 522 the prior year, demonstrating improved responsiveness and support outside the shop environment. Inspection volume followed a similar trend, with 22,473 cars inspected in 2025, up from 18,976 in 2024. This increase reflects both higher traffic levels and the team's ability to maintain efficiency while meeting regulatory and safety requirements.

Key repair activities completed during the year included:

- 188-wheel changeouts.
- 19 draft gear changeouts.
- 105 5 YABT repairs.

These figures highlight the wide range of mechanical work performed to keep equipment safe and serviceable.

Andy continued to make investments in our rail fleet with the purchase of 16 Canadian covered hoppers, currently enroute for delivery. In addition, 19 new boxcars were acquired and designated as our 85000 series, the acquiring of 100-ton capacity cars will position the fleet to be more versatile for current and future business needs. We also took possession of 87 RD's that were purchased from TVA.

To support increased volume, the Car Shop made several key upgrades:

- Added an additional auto tester to meet growing air test and four-port installation demands.
- Purchased two 150-ton jacks to improve lifting capacity and production flow.
- Implemented a 5S program to improve organization, reduce downtime, and increase overall efficiency.

Training and safety remained a priority, with employees completing side-bearing and truck training through A. Stucki, as well as a hydraulic jack safety seminar. A Carman also traveled to Colorado, Wyoming, and British Columbia to inspect railcars to ensure we are getting the best quality cars that the used railcar market has to offer.

On the Equipment side of things, it was another extraordinary year. One major milestone this year was the establishment of a fully functional Heavy Duty Truck Shop in Building #5 at the Nesquehoning Campus. Staff was expanded with the addition of two mechanics to support increased demands.

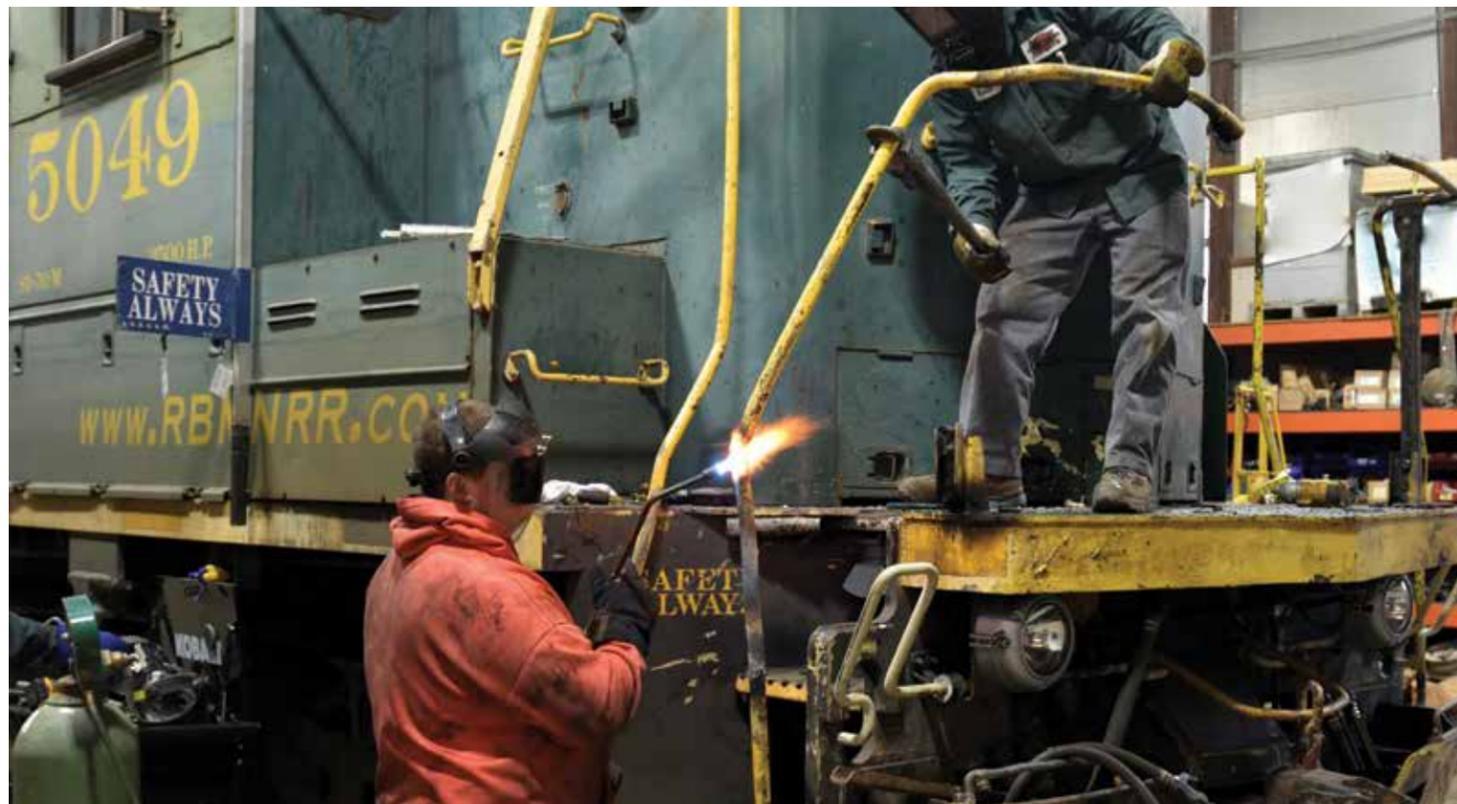
Equipment upgrades included:

- A new service truck.
- Expanded diagnostic equipment at Port Clinton and Nesquehoning.
- An upgraded air compressor at Nesquehoning to support additional tools.
- A drive over pit was installed for repairs, maintenance, and diagnostic use.

These improvements increased in-house troubleshooting capabilities and reduced reliance on outsourcing. The facility also achieved approval to upgrade its State Inspection Certificate, allowing for Class 8 vehicle and trailer inspections to be completed internally.

Meanwhile in our Vehicle Shops, our team continued to keep our vehicle fleet in top working order, meeting the high demand throughout the railroad. With the company growing, that means department needs grow as well, and so do their vehicle needs. Our team was able to purchase new diagnostic equipment, along with tools to assist with repairs, whether that be a computer to flash new transmissions, or bulk oil tanks to be more efficient, we are continually looking at ways to better improve to keep our departments happy and back on the road faster and safer. We also had the pleasure of welcoming Colton Levan to the Vehicle Shop, the grandson of Andy Muller and the son of Christina Muller-Levan, continuing the legacy within the company.

This year's progress reflects a strong commitment to efficiency, safety, and continuous improvement. With increased production, new equipment, expanded capabilities, and skilled mechanics, the Mechanical Department is well positioned to support future growth. ♦



Seth Bednar, left, and Kieth Baily, right, working on repairing the handrailing on the RBMN 5049.

# Communications & Signal | 2025 Year in Review

BY: MATT COLLINS, VP COMMUNICATIONS & SIGNALS

This year, our primary initiative focused on upgrading railway crossings to enhance safety and visibility. At several critical locations, we replaced traditional crossbucks with modern gates and flashing signals. Notable upgrades were made on the Main Line at Allen Street and Tippetts Road in Nesquehoning, PA, where we installed new systems to better alert drivers and pedestrians to approaching trains. These improvements aim to reduce the risk of accidents and ensure a safer transit experience for the community.

We are focused on upgrading several safety systems at train crossings to enhance the detection of train movements. Instead of relying on basic track-circuit technology, we have implemented new motion-detection circuits. These upgrades benefited both train crews and local communities by improving the management of vehicle traffic at crossings. With the new system, trains can stop before a crossing, which deactivates the warning signals. Once the train is ready to move again, the signals activate once more. As a result, drivers experience less waiting time when the train is stationary. The crossings that have received these upgrades include the Pottsville Branch at Route 183, Cressona, as well as Pottsville and Jackson Street on the St. Clair Branch in Port Carbon, PA, and Morea Road on the Morea Running Track in Mahanoy Township.

In addition to focusing on crossing upgrades, significant efforts were made to upgrade electrical services throughout the year. One of the most substantial projects involved the complete restructuring of the primary and secondary three-phase electrical systems for buildings 5, 6, and 7. We also enhanced the main power feed to Jim Thorpe Yard, including installing new engine heaters and yard lights. Furthermore, we undertook a significant expansion of the engine-heater capacity at Tamaqua Yard to minimize locomotive idling and added new yard lighting.

In 2025, despite only a few signal changes, we undertook a significant project to enhance our signaling infrastructure. We successfully rebuilt the 122 East Signal in the picturesque town of Jim Thorpe, a crucial step in ensuring the reliability of our operations. Additionally, we installed the new 111, 113, and 115 signals, laying the groundwork for the future expansion of our signaling system stretching from Haucks to Jim Thorpe Junction. This development promises to improve rail transportation efficiency and safety, bringing us one step closer to a more connected signal network of the entire Main Line.

During these projects, the department conducted essential signal and crossing tests to ensure safety and efficiency. Additionally, a dedicated team provided thorough Maintenance of Way support at each crossing, overseeing crossing operations and making timely repairs during MOW's tie and surfacing projects. With the remarkable achievements of the 2025 projects, 2026 promises to be an exciting year, featuring significant upgrades to crossing systems and enhancements to the signaling infrastructure. Expect a transformative leap forward as we invest in safer, more efficient travel, ensuring smoother connections and stronger safety measures for everyone. ♦



Signal Supervisor Jesse Tuckett (Left) and Signal Maintainer Zack Baker (Right) installing a new dragging equipment detector (DED).



Mike Friday, Equipment Operator (Right), operates a BH-2 for engine heater plugs in Tamaqua, PA. At the same time, Signal Maintainers Matt Kunkle (Center) and Connor Raymond (Left) work as the ground guides.



Jake Haeseler finishing up two engine heater plugs that were installed at our West Hazleton Office area.



Electrical Supervisor Ryan Boyer testing engine plug heater circuit.



Matt Kunkle, Signal Maintainer (Left), operates the trencher; Ryan Boyer, Electrical Supervisor (Right), oversees the trenching. While Mike Friday, Equipment Operator (Center), operates a backhoe to trench the other side of the track for engine heater plugs in Tamaqua, PA.

# Real Estate Department 2026 Look Ahead – Public Crossing Practices

BY: JOLENE BUSHER, VP REAL ESTATE

One of the functions of the Real Estate Department is coordinating construction projects with State and local municipalities, with some projects requiring a few days to weeks of planning, with others a few years of planning before PennDOT and local municipalities along with the railroad are ready for boots on the ground. These projects are as large scale as highway bridge reconstruction projects that will last years, to shorter term road and at grade paving projects. And there's unique opportunities for the railroad to partner with these agencies on special projects as well, such as at grade crossing removal or upgrade projects.

The Reading & Northern takes the industry position that at grade crossings are inherently dangerous. Because of this, we constantly seek opportunities to remove crossings or upgrade the automatic crossing protection at public at grade crossings. To formally close (remove) a public at grade crossing, we partner with the local municipality where the crossing is located to come under an agreement to remove the crossing. This will involve the borough or township getting residential support to remove the crossing and voting to remove the crossing. A recent example of this was the removal of the Vine Street crossing on our Mainline in Tamaqua, where the Borough was in agreement with us to remove one of their crossings in town, Vine Street. Once the Borough voted in favor to remove the crossing, the Real Estate Department had the go ahead to apply to the Public Utility Commission (the State agency who governs public utilities and crossings) to formally remove the crossing. The Reading & Northern especially enjoys partnering with local townships and boroughs to remove public crossings, because it is an opportunity for conversation with the local communities on the dangers of crossings. Other ways we will partner with local communities at public grade crossings is to upgrade the automatic crossing protection at crossings. This can come in the way of upgrading a crossing with just crossbucks to gates and flashers, to upgrading the existing automatic crossing protection. An example of this was our partnering with Nesquehoning Borough to upgrade the crossing protection at the Allen Street crossing on our Mainline, as well as partnering with both Nesquehoning Borough and Carbon County on the Tippetts Road crossing on our Mainline. In 2026, we are hopeful to partner with more municipalities on crossing removals and upgrades.

A program that the Reading & Northern is pleased to partner with PennDOT on is the Rail-Highway Crossing Program (Section 130). This is a federal-share program administered by PennDOT that provides funding for the elimination of hazards at railway-highway crossings. Per the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), the Section 130 Program has attributed to a significant decrease in fatalities at public at grade crossings – a decrease that comes despite the increase of motor vehicles on public roads. In my tenure at the Reading & Northern, we have partnered with PennDOT on many occasions to participate in the Section 130 program. The SR 54 and Grier Avenue crossings on our Mainline that were recently upgraded with new automatic crossing equipment was a recent Section 130 program project. And in 2026, we are pleased to be working with PennDOT on more. This year will see the completion of a "corridor" Section 130 project – where multiple crossings in sequence of each other will be upgraded a part of a Section 130 project. This corridor will be on our Hazleton Line, with the upgrades of Blaine Street, Sisack Drive and SR 424. In the near future, we will be working on crossings in our Lehigh Division, Main St Scranton ML MP 172.30, McAlpine St ML MP 173.37, and Luzerne St Scranton RT MP 8.61 will be upgraded under the Section 130 program, in addition to other crossing corridors we have petitioned to PennDOT for eligibility in the Section 130 program. The Real Estate Department facilitates working with PennDOT as well as the PUC to get crossings into the Section 130 program for upgrades, and coordinates internally once these projects are ready to begin.

Whether working directly with local municipalities or with the State in Section 130 programs, these crossing projects are a multi department effort. From building good relationships with local townships and boroughs in our Community Relations department, to construction of the upgraded crossings in the Signal and Maintenance of Way departments, there is a strong team of Reading & Northern employees who see these important crossing projects through. Every department understands the importance of removing crossings or improving the safety at crossings.

In 2026 and beyond, the Reading & Northern seeks to make traveling by rail or by automobile to Pennsylvania destinations safer! ♦



Plowing snow at Port Clinton.



Pavillion being built at Nesquehoning Campus.



Restrooms being installed at Pittston.



Restrooms being installed at Pittston.



Repairs being done to the wall to Building #5 at Nesquehoning Campus.



Before restoring the Café car.



In the middle of restoring the Café car.



Broken tree at the south Hamburg station.



Before supporting the staircase that was eroded under at the outer station (Ben Balthaser pictured).



After supporting the staircase that was eroded under at the outer station (Ben Balthaser pictured).



Before an incident involving the header of the Car shop.



After an incident involving the header of the Car shop.

# Facilities Department Dozens of Properties and Year-Round Challenges

BY: RAYMOND SCHWENK, AVP FACILITIES

As we wrap up 2025, it feels like the perfect time to shine a light on the incredible work our Facilities Department has accomplished this year. Whether it was patching a tiny hole in the wall, handling a surprise plumbing issue, installing radiant floor heat, or taking on fullscale construction projects, this team has done it all.

This is a crew of just seven men managing several dozen properties across our growing railroad. Their work is nonstop—often behind the scenes—but absolutely essential to keeping everything running smoothly.

### A Year Packed With Responsibilities

Spend even a single day with the Facilities team and you'll see how wide their workload stretches. This year, they kept our properties clean and safe with regular trash removal, tackled plumbing repairs before they became larger issues, assembled and moved furniture for new office setups, and maintained heating and cooling systems through every season. They handled electrical, structural, and mechanical repairs, assisted with setup and teardown for company events, and responded to emergencies at all hours. Their work also included demolishing old spaces and building new ones, clearing snow and keeping sidewalks safe in winter, cutting grass, trimming weeds, removing fallen trees, pouring foundations, completing concrete work, and partnering with Passenger on café car construction and train heating and plumbing systems.

There truly is no "typical day" for this crew, and that's part of what makes their work so unique.

### Teamwork Across the Railroad

Collaboration was a major theme this year. The Facilities team worked closely with Operations, Passenger, Administration, Signal, and Maintenance of Way

to keep projects moving and minimize disruptions. Whether coordinating office moves or supporting major initiatives, they were always ready to jump in and help.

### Challenges Through the Seasons

Each season brought its own set of challenges. Winter required constant snow removal and attention to icy sidewalks. Spring rains led to leaks and flooding that demanded quick responses. Summer heat pushed cooling systems to their limits, while fall storms scattered debris and brought down trees.

No matter the weather, the team adapted and kept everything running.

### Meet the Crew

- Brad Auman – HVAC Tech
- Ben Balthaser – Facilities Tech
- Tim Billet – Facilities Tech
- Frank Dennis – Facilities Manager, Nesquehoning Campus
- Nick Faust – HVAC Tech
- Bill Keim – HVAC Tech
- Randy Reber – Contractor, Concrete

Each member brings a unique skill set, and together they form a team you can always count on.

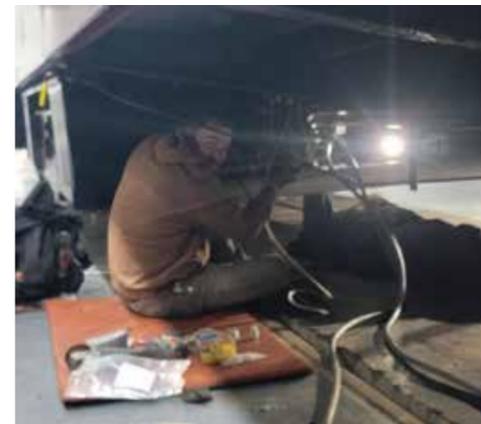
### Looking Ahead to 2026

With our company continuing to grow, the Facilities Department will no doubt face new challenges in the coming year. But if 2025 proved anything, it's that this team is more than capable of rising to the occasion.

I am grateful to have such a varied combination of experience, talent, and dedication in the employees of the Facilities Department. ♦



Bill Keim repairing the heater at the Wheel Truing shop.



Brad Auman and Nick Faust work on the heating system of Car 1170.



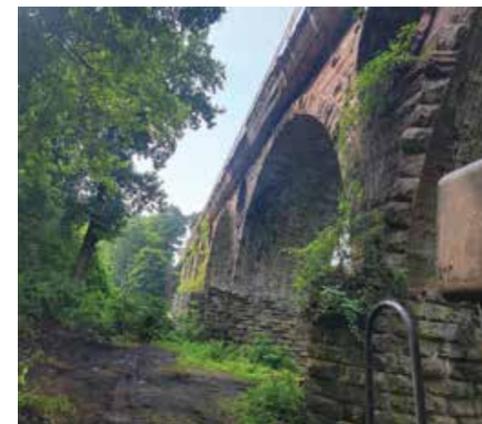
Frank Dennis inspecting a roof in Nesquehoning.



Roof repairs from a fallen tree at the Steam shop.



Tim Billet repairing a roof at Ransom.



Clearing vines from the Peacock bridge.

# *Scenes Along the Reading & Northern Railroad*

*Glen Onoko rock cut on the Lehigh Division Mainline, milepost 122. Photo by Jamie Makin, Mapping Specialist.*





RBMN #1776 leading the OCS on November 20, 2025.

## 2025 – Reading & Northern Passenger Department's Most Successful Year Ever

BY: MATT FISHER, SVP/GM PASSENGER & RUSS SCIANNA, JR., DIRECTOR OF PASSENGER ADMINISTRATION

For the third straight year, overall ridership on the Reading & Northern and Lehigh Gorge Scenic Railway passenger trains surpassed 300,000. More accurately, over 410,000 riders were welcomed in 2025! This represents an incredible 21% increase over the prior record of 340,000 which was set in 2024. Several other single-day and weekly records were broken on the way to this milestone. The highlight was on Saturday, October 11, 2025, when the Lehigh Gorge Scenic Railway hosted 8,277 riders, eclipsing the previous mark of 6,619 set exactly one year prior. To support this exponential surge in ridership, three new Standard Coaches were added to the fleet, and many newcomers joined the department.

Along with the historic first of reaching the 400,000-rider mark, several other firsts were witnessed by the railroad in 2025. On February 8, 2025, the very first wintertime Reading & Northern Iron Horse Ramble departed Reading Outer Station, led by 4-8-4 T-1 steam locomotive #2102. This round-trip excursion between Reading and Jim Thorpe hosted over 500 riders who were eager to get a taste of cold-weather steam passenger railroading. For many, the highlight was the opportunity to visit the cab and meet the crew of the hulking coal-fired engine as it was being serviced in Jim Thorpe, a hallmark of the Iron Horse Rambles. Given its success in 2025, this trip will encore on February 14, 2026.

Another first came in the form of a partnership forged between the passenger department and a unique on-line destination. The Village at Housers Crossing, located just south of Tamaqua, became the very first "flag stop" on the Reading & Northern in 2025. An overnight lodging retreat created by Carolee Smith in 2021, The Village teamed up with the railroad to allow its guests to purchase round trip train tickets to Jim Thorpe as part of their getaway. Serviced by the popular Reading to Jim Thorpe passenger route, the train stops at The Village only if there are guests waiting to board. A specially designed depot building, featuring signage created by Reading & Northern's own Jamie Makin, was erected on the site providing passengers with a clean, well-lit shelter in which to wait for their northbound train.

Following the enormous success of the 2024 introduction of the King Coal Café onboard the Lehigh Gorge Scenic Railway trains (the brainchild of Passenger AVP Jeff Knadler), a new stationary version of the café was established in Jim Thorpe right behind the ticket booth. Boasting an even wider array of food and drink options for guests, the café is housed in car #1170, which was completely overhauled inside and out. Under the leadership of Kathie Kramer, the new King Coal Café has become a great favorite among visitors and employees alike. The freshly prepared made-to-order food and the friendly service provided by its staff are highlights of the café's ever-evolving menu and experience.

Speaking of food (a favorite subject of many at the Reading & Northern), dining car and parlor car services were added to the regular season Reading to Jim Thorpe excursions during the peak season of summer 2025. The dining car offered a clean, air-conditioned spot where riders could enjoy their snacks and beverages purchased from friendly attendants such as Larry Curvey, Rebecca Dauber, or Bob Lynch to name a few. The parlor car was added to present a touch of luxury to the weekend Jim Thorpe-bound trains coming from Reading. Only thirteen seats per trip were sold to correspond with the number of plush swivel rockers found in the car. Parlor car passengers also received complimentary beverages and snacks as part of the fare but were also welcome to visit the dining car if they wished. All trains originating from Reading were and are overseen by director Sabrina Kennedy.

Up north, at the Wilkes-Barre/Scranton Regional Railroad Station at Pittston, director Tim Wright led his part of the railroad through a third successful passenger season. Pittston to Jim Thorpe excursions operated most weekends in 2025 through what is arguably the most spectacular scenery on the railroad. Visitors experience the climb up and over the rugged Penobscot Mountain before descending through Lehigh Gorge State Park on their way to Jim Thorpe. These trips featured lounge observation car #7, which saw all twenty of its premium seats sell out on a consistent basis during the spring and summer months.



Sabrina Kennedy boarding the JTOS on January 4, 2026.



Station signs - Mahanoy City Yard completed. Pottsville Junction and Kocher ready to be cut from the vinyl sheet and applied to sign blanks. All this work is done at the Nesquehoning Campus.

The Reading & Northern passenger experience begins with the customer either navigating our user-friendly website to order their tickets online; or by calling our Schuylkill Haven office, which is staffed seven days a week and anchored by Shelby Frederickson and Evan Getzey. Many of our guests are repeat customers. However, we saw many new faces come from far and wide to ride the trains in 2025. These guests were undoubtedly enticed by one or more of our many colorful and eye-catching ads designed by advertising and marketing coordinator Jen Frederickson. With the massive increase in ridership seen in 2025, numerous part-time employees stepped up and learned the "business side" of the operation to assist the full-time office staff. Folks like Tiffany Howell, Ronda Chivinski, Joanne Kitsock, Rebecca Dauber, Angela Potts, Bob Lynch, and Kathleen Gipe (to name a few) proved invaluable in keeping the phone lines staffed and the ticket sales flowing.

There are several other faces that our guests may see in train service, but who also work diligently behind the scenes to keep everything in top operating condition. Ally McGinley serves as quality control coordinator for the passenger department. In addition to working as a ticket agent, car host, and passenger conductor, Ally oversees the crew who work daily to ensure that our passenger coaches are fresh and clean inside and out. Ally also manages the inventory for both the onboard and stationary locations of the King Coal Café. Talented young men such as Ryan Frederickson, Colin Gipe, and Alec Humes also serve in various front-line roles for the passenger department but handle the bulk of the unseen "grunt work" that it takes to keep the railroad operating fluidly. At any time, often early in the morning or late at night, you may find them switching out cars, servicing bathrooms, or making repairs to our diverse fleet of passenger rolling stock. Of course, the backbone of the passenger department is our part-time staff – the car hosts, ticket agents, mascots, narrators, conductors, café attendants, and more – all of whom contribute mightily to our sustained success. Take a bow, every one of you!

Elsewhere, the paint & restoration department completed one of its most ambitious and unique projects in November 2025. Reading & Northern

SD40-2 diesel locomotive #3061 was converted to #1776, resplendent in its red-white-and-blue paint scheme celebrating the 250th anniversary of the United States. The one-of-a-kind paint scheme was designed by Evan Kerr, a freight conductor, engineer, and dispatcher at Reading & Northern. Kerr himself, along with several representatives of the railroad, including AVP – Passenger Special Projects, Meg Pursel, and paint & restoration shop manager Zach Frye, were on hand that chilly Veteran's Day morning when #1776 was brought out of the paint shop for the first time. It was placed in service the following week and made appearances on the Lehigh Gorge Scenic Railway and the Pittston-to-Jim Thorpe excursions in December. With the semiquincentennial of our country forthcoming, #1776 will be making numerous more appearances in passenger service on the Reading & Northern.

The Signs & Graphics department, led by Jamie Makin, completed its first full year of operation. Her graphic design and vinyl production capabilities supported projects for nearly every other department including the aforementioned Housers Crossing signage and locomotive #1776. Based at our Nesquehoning Campus, the department handles work such as rail equipment stencils and decals, building and trackside signage, equipment lettering, merchandise design, mapping, and even videos for the railroad's social media channels.

Amidst this past year of historic firsts and achievements, the passenger department had already gone to work on plans for 2026. The new year brought the introduction of year-round weekend passenger service to Jim Thorpe from Reading Outer Station and Pittston with new lower January fares. The Lehigh Gorge Scenic Railway has expanded its usual Saturday/Sunday winter schedule to include Fridays. Customer reception has been positive thus far. This will surely set the foundation for another record-breaking year as Reading & Northern's passenger service continues to elevate and evolve. ♦

# 2025 Signs & Graphics Recap

BY: JAMIE MAKIN,  
MAPPING SPECIALIST

The year 2025 marked the first full year of operation for the Signs & Graphics shop. A year ago, we had just set up shop in Nesquehoning Building 6, and every project came with a steep learning curve. A year later the shop is running like a well-oiled machine, and we are cranking out a wide variety of projects.

This year we completed close to 200 projects using a combined 2,500 pieces of vinyl. This included signs and decals for nearly every department including the Car Shop, Engine House, Facilities, MOW, Police, Operations, Passenger, Paint & Restoration, Real Estate, Signals, Transload, and the Vehicle Shop. These projects ranged from trackside and building signage to vehicle and freight car decals. Noteworthy is the first of our new signal bungalow ads at Allen Street in Nesquehoning featuring a young Andy Muller, Jr. wearing an engineer's overalls. Expect to see more of these ads pop up along our lines in 2026. In addition to those vinyl projects, we produced more than 5,000 merchandise stickers in several designs. These have been very popular with our passengers and railfans.

In 2025 we also collaborated with the Paint & Restoration Department to refurbish more of our rail equipment. We produced stencils and decals for four of our ex-DL&W coaches, #301, #302, #304, and #309. We gave our ex-CSX SD50-2 locomotive #5021, and caboose #94849, the Fast Freight Service treatment. Budd RDC #9166 received an exterior refresh with Reading and Northern taking the place of Reading Company on the letterboards, and historically accurate orange and black safety stripes were painted on each end.

Our biggest project this year was producing decals and signs for the new King Coal Café in car #1170. The exterior features one-off Lehigh Gorge Scenic Railway letterboards as this car is located near Jim Thorpe Station. The interior replicates the birds-and-sky ceiling from our Open-Air cars and RDCs, along with other King Coal Café branded graphics. On the exterior we fabricated a new drumhead for the end near the parking lot crossing, along with signs and exterior decals directing people to the café.

Late in 2025, we completed a project even more exciting than the King Coal Café – the stunning SD40-2 locomotive #1776. Designed by engineer and dispatcher Evan Kerr as a patriotic tribute for next year's semiquincentennial, we designed and produced vinyl to bring his vision to life. This included the vinyl stencils for the numbers, letters, and stars, and the "The Road of Anthracite" nose decals.

We are looking forward to continuing 2025's momentum into 2026 with several unique and exciting projects already in the pipeline. ♦

# King Coal Café

BY: DENNIS SHAFFER,  
RBMN RETIRED VICE PRESIDENT BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

One of the newest additions to the Lehigh Gorge Scenic Railway's expanding fleet of passenger equipment is the "King Coal Café", a restaurant on wheels providing food and beverage services, and is stationed adjacent to the ticket office in Jim Thorpe. This car, acquired in January, 2025 from Jeff Pontius' Penn Valley Railroad, has a unique history.

It began life in August of 1940 as a Pullman sleeper / lounge car named the "Chicopee Falls" and was assigned to the New York Central Railroad (NYC). At the end of the Great Depression many of the nation's major railroads began replacing their aging fleet of passenger cars with new, streamlined, air conditioned equipment for their premier passenger trains. The New York Central Railroad was in the forefront of this movement. The Chicopee Falls was one of a large group of cars built in 1940 to re-equip its premier trains which it operated under the banner of the "Great Steel Fleet"; a group of overnight trains operating between the major cities on the railroad's system which extended from New York City and Boston on the East and Chicago and St. Louis on the West, and serving every major city in between. The Chicopee Falls would have operated in overnight sleeper trains all over this vast system

The Chicopee Falls was part of a group of 12, six double bedroom / lounge cars built by Pullman Standard, and initially owned by the Pullman Company which operated the nation's sleeping car service for the railroads. It was assigned by Pullman to the New York Central and painted in NYC two tone gray. In 1945 the NYC purchased the car, however the Pullman Company continued to operate and maintain it. Each double bedroom was a private room with two berths, and the wall between two adjacent rooms could be folded back to make a four berth facility, ideal for families. The lounge section served beverages and light snacks in the evening and a light breakfast in the morning. A small kitchen room with storage space for beverages and food items was located between the bedrooms and the lounge. This configuration provided beverage and light meal service on overnight trains that did not have sufficient patronage to justify a full lounge car.

During the 1950s the growth of airline travel and automobile ownership caused railroad passenger revenues to plummet, and the railroads had little choice but to significantly downsize their operations. By the early 1960s, cars were being scrapped in large numbers, including almost all of the sleeper cars in the group of 12, of which the Chicopee Falls was a part. In 1962 the Chicopee Falls escaped this tragic fate when it obtained a new life, being converted by NYC into a dynamometer / research car and renumbered NYC X 23417. The car was a rolling laboratory equipped with sensitive electronic data collection equipment. It was attached to freight trains to test, measure and collect data on train dynamics, drawbar pull, fuel efficiency, ride quality, and other operating characteristics. The data collected was analyzed to improve operating and maintenance procedures and evaluate equipment. A diesel generator was installed in two of the bedrooms to provide power, and another bedroom was converted to a tool and storage room. Two bedrooms remained to provide sleeping accommodations for the technicians who accompanied the car, which often would be on the road for extended periods of time. The kitchen area was retained where the technicians could prepare meals for the long trips on the road, however, the wall between it and the lounge area was removed. Windows were cut into the rear of the car to allow the technicians to observe track conditions from the rear of the train. The high-tech electronic equipment installed in the car was very sensitive and much of it was mounted on a special platform with rubber shock absorbers to protect it against the normal vibrations and shocks experienced with freight train movement.

Car X 23417 became a Penn Central car when the NYC merged into the new company in 1968. In 1976 it was transferred to Conrail, renumbered to Conrail # 20, painted blue and officially named "Technical Service Laboratory". In 1983 it was further upgraded, repainted to a dark green with gold lettering, and renamed "Research and Test Car". The car operated all over the Conrail system and occasionally on other railroads. Unfortunately, in 1992 the car was damaged while on the rear end of a Santa Fe Railroad intermodal train enroute to Los Angeles, after which Conrail put it in storage. Norfolk Southern inherited the car when it acquired part of Conrail on June 1, 1999, and sold it to Jeff Pontius in June, 2000.

The Chicopee Falls now had a new lease on life as part of Jeff's Penn Valley Railroad excursion train. Jeff overhauled the car including repainting the exterior and interior, and restoring the lounge area of the car to its original purpose with tables and chairs. The diesel generator provided power for his entire 8 car train, and the tool/storage room continued in that function. The exterior was painted and lettered to Pennsylvania Railroad's "Tuscan Red" color scheme, and the car was named the "Spirit of Sunbury". Jeff later changed the name back to its original "Chicopee Falls." The Chicopee Falls served in Jeff's excursion train operation for 25 years, ironically a period longer than it was used by the NYC in sleeping car service.

This 85 year old car now begins a new phase in its long history as part of the best passenger train excursion operation in the county. ♦

**NOW-World's Largest Fleet**  
**OF NEWLY EQUIPPED TRAINS**

... bringing you the  
**NEW in New York Central!**

LEADERS OF NEW YORK CENTRAL'S GREAT PASSENGER FLEET

**20th CENTURY LIMITED**—New York, Chicago. *World's Most Famous Train.* All-room sleeping cars; raised level observation car, club car with train secretary, radio telephone, valet and barber shop.

**EMPIRE STATE EXPRESS**—New York, Buffalo, Cleveland, Detroit. Reserved reclining seat coaches, tavern observation car, coach attendants, parlor car.

**JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY**—Chicago, Indianapolis, Cincinnati. Reserved reclining-seat coaches, observation-lounge car, coach attendants.

**SOUTHWESTERN LIMITED**—New York and Boston, Indianapolis, St. Louis. Sleeping cars, observation-lounge and lounge sleeping cars; through reclining-seat coaches.

**THE DETROITER**—New York, Detroit. All-room sleeping car train, two lounge-sleeping cars.

**THE NEW ENGLAND STATES**—Boston, Toledo, Chicago. Sleeping cars, observation-lounge and lounge-sleeping cars; reserved reclining-seat coaches, coach lounge, coach attendants.

**THE MERCURY**—Chicago, Detroit, Toledo, Cleveland. Reserved reclining-seat coaches, buffet lounge, coach attendants; parlor car, parlor-observation car.

**TWILIGHT LIMITED**—Chicago, Detroit. Reserved reclining-seat coaches, tavern-lounge coach, coach attendants; parlor car, observation parlor car.

**THE PACEMAKER**—Chicago, Toledo, Cleveland, New York. Reserved reclining-seat coaches, diner lounge, observation-lounge, coach attendants.

**OHIO STATE LIMITED**—Cincinnati, Dayton, Columbus, New York and Boston. Sleeping cars, observation sleeping car; reclining-seat coaches.

**COMMODORE VANDERBILT**—Chicago, New York. All-room sleeping car train, lounge car, observation lounge.

**CLEVELAND LIMITED**—New York, Cleveland. Sleeping cars, two buffet-lounge cars.

**SLEEPING CAR PRIVATE ROOMS!** See cutaway views of various types and sizes. PAGES 42-43

**NEW YORK CENTRAL SYSTEM**

This advertisement from New York Central's passenger time table advertises its extensive fleet of post WW II streamlined trains. The Chicopee Falls most likely was part of the consist in all of these trains throughout its career as a bedroom/lounge car from 1940 until 1962. Originally appearing in New York Central Time Table.



Car painted in Conrail Blue. Originally published in Conrail Business & Research Trains, The Special Equipment Fleet, Brock Kerchner and Wes Reminder.



Car painted Conrail Pullman green with gold lettering. Originally published in Conrail Business & Research Trains, The Special Equipment Fleet, Brock Kerchner and Wes Reminder.



Interior view of the lounge section as it appeared in 1940. The kitchen is behind the rear wall, and the hallway on the left leads to the bedrooms. The curved fluorescent lighting fixtures is an element that survived through all of the car's rebuilds. Originally published in New York Central Lightweight Passenger Cars, Trains and Travel, Geoffrey H. Doughty.



Car repainted in Pennsylvania Railroad colors in Jeff Pontius's Penn Valley Railroad excursion train.



Interior of the car as used in Penn Valley Railroad's excursion train. Originally published in Conrail Business & Research Trains, The Special Equipment Fleet, Brock Kerchner and Wes Reminder.



King Coal Café Car as it sits now in Jim Thorpe.



King Coal Café Car as it sits now in Jim Thorpe.

## Reading & Northern Railroad Unveils its First Semiquincentennial Locomotive

Port Clinton, PA – November 12, 2025 – Always looking to the future, the Reading & Northern Railroad is proud to present its first diesel locomotive dressed in a patriotic scheme celebrating the forthcoming 250th anniversary of the United States of America in 2026. The company is even prouder to announce that the paint scheme was conceived by one of its very own.

Reading & Northern engine #3061, a General Motors model SD40-2 diesel locomotive, was selected by the company to be repainted into the colors of our country to celebrate the coming year's monumental occasion. Taking advantage of the car body's length, the 3,000-horsepower locomotive's long hood is dressed in red and white stripes to resemble the American flag. The cab is blue and adorned with thirteen stars on the nose. It has been fittingly renumbered 1776. The paint scheme was designed by Evan Kerr, a six-year veteran of Reading & Northern who serves as a conductor, engineer, and dispatcher.

The SD40-2 is widely regarded as one of the most reliable, and therefore best-selling, diesel locomotives in history. Hence it is well-represented on the Reading & Northern roster, with a total of twenty units. They can be seen all over the railroad, hauling everything from unit coal trains to general merchandise. As with SD40-2 #1983, which was painted to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the railroad in 2023, #1776 is sure to be a popular sight among train enthusiasts and the public. With the passenger department already planning several special events centering around the Semiquincentennial, #1776 may even make appearances on excursion trains in 2026.

Perhaps most fittingly, the locomotive was unveiled on Veterans Day. Paint Department Manager Zach Frye said "This engine is one of the most beautiful and passionate projects ever taken on by the paint shop. Our crew of five people were able to turn this engine into a masterpiece in just one month's time. We are very proud to introduce locomotive #1776 for all to see."

Reading & Northern Railroad, with its corporate headquarters in Port Clinton, is a privately held railroad company serving over 80 customers in nine eastern Pennsylvania counties (Berks, Bradford, Carbon, Columbia, Lackawanna, Luzerne, Northumberland, Schuylkill, and Wyoming). It has expanded its operations over the last 40 years; and projects 40,000 carloads of freight in 2026 (which removes over 220,000 trucks from the highway), while its Passenger Department welcomed over 410,000 happy customers in 2025. Reading & Northern operates its freight and steam- and diesel-powered passenger excursions over 400 miles of track, owns almost 2,000 freight cars, and employs over 400 dedicated people. Reading & Northern has been repeatedly honored as one of the premier railroads in the nation, including being named Regional Railroad of the Year in 2020 by Railway Age magazine.



Paint Shop Crew on 1776.



Right side view.



Front view.



Evan Kerr in cab.



Bill Bubeck on 1776.

## Reading & Northern Railroad Announces its 2026 Bike Train Schedule

Port Clinton, PA – January 7, 2026 – Already off to an auspicious start welcoming over 10,000 riders in the first week of 2026, the Reading & Northern Railroad passenger department has unveiled its much-anticipated slate of Bike Trains for the new year. Operated by its Jim Thorpe-based Lehigh Gorge Scenic Railway in partnership with Pocono Biking, these popular offerings have become a mainstay of the railroad's spring and summer schedules.

The Bike Train schedule has expanded from its 2025 schedule of eleven dates to thirteen in 2026. Bike Trains will begin Saturday, May 16, 2026, and run select weekends each month through September. After a year's hiatus, a November date will once more be offered in 2026. Saturday, November 14, 2026 will close out the year for Bike Trains. Demand for tickets has been high, even before the 2025 season concluded. The railroad's ticket office began receiving calls requesting 2026 Bike Train tickets as early as September 2025!

Bike Trains offer something for all ages and ambitions. The most popular ticket is the "one-way", where guests have their bicycles loaded onto specially constructed railcars at the Jim Thorpe Station. Bicyclists enjoy a live-narrated, hour-long scenic ride in Standard Coach passenger cars twenty-five miles north through Lehigh Gorge State Park to White Haven. This affords them a chance to survey much of the terrain that they will be riding over back to Jim Thorpe, as a majority of the railroad route tightly follows the hiking and biking trail. Upon arrival at White Haven, they are assisted off the train by the railroad's friendly car hosts and receive back their pedal-powered conveyances. The trail is located merely steps away from the White Haven depot. There, at their own pace, they begin their southbound journey over the winding (yet gentle downhill) path back to Jim Thorpe. No time limit is imposed to complete the trek; yet most visitors report on average a three-to-five-hour ride. "One-way" tickets remain priced at \$39.00 each as they have since 2023.

Those who do not have their own bikes, yet wish to experience this unique offering, may purchase a ticket that includes a rental bike from Pocono Biking. A limited number of rental bikes are allocated to the railroad for each Bike Train weekend. Upon arrival in White Haven, rental customers are directed to Pocono Biking's convenient location right at the start of the Lehigh Gorge trail. They receive their rental bikes and are on their way through the Lehigh Gorge State Park seamlessly. At Jim Thorpe, rental bikes are easily returned to Pocono Biking's building across the street from the Lehigh Gorge Scenic Railway ticket booth. As with the "one-way" tickets, pricing of "rental" tickets stands at \$66.00 for a fourth consecutive year.

Train ride enthusiasts who wish to partake without the bicycling element have two unique options themselves. Round-trip train ride tickets are offered for \$39.00 per adult and \$19.00 per child aged 3-12. Children aged 2 and under receive a free ticket as is standard with any Lehigh Gorge Scenic Railway train. Again, this pricing remains unchanged since 2023. Riders experience a 2-hour, 50-mile round trip train ride through the entirety of Lehigh Gorge State Park. Despite not participating in the train's namesake feature, round-trip passengers are invited to briefly disembark at White Haven to stretch their legs while bicycles are unloaded before riding the return trip to Jim Thorpe. This is a popular option with returning visitors who have experienced the standard 16-mile Lehigh Gorge Scenic Railway trip and want to see even more.

The other non-bicycling option is often chosen by the biggest rail buffs. A round-trip diesel locomotive cab ride on the Bike Train is the ultimate railroading experience. For \$65.00, a price that has not changed since the turn of the decade, cab riders can witness the scenic splendor of Lehigh Gorge State Park from the best seat in the house alongside the engineer. This one-of-a-kind experience is limited to two cab riders per trip. Tickets for this exclusive offering sell quickly and make great gifts.

All Bike Train tickets must be ordered by phone at 570-325-8485. Reading & Northern's friendly reservation specialists are on hand seven days a week, 8:30am – 5:00pm, to take customer orders. All major credit cards are accepted. As with any Reading & Northern passenger train ticket, any unused tickets do not expire and may be exchanged for any future date. This feature proves handy when inclement weather strikes.

Reading & Northern Railroad, with its corporate headquarters in Port Clinton, is a privately held railroad company serving over 80 customers in nine eastern Pennsylvania counties (Berks, Bradford, Carbon, Columbia, Lackawanna, Luzerne, Northumberland, Schuylkill, and Wyoming). It has expanded its operations over the last 40 years; and projects 40,000 carloads of freight in 2026 (which removes over 220,000 trucks from the highway), while its Passenger Department welcomed over 410,000 happy customers in 2025. Reading & Northern operates its freight and steam- and diesel-powered passenger excursions over 400 miles of track, owns almost 2,000 freight cars, and employs over 400 dedicated people. Reading & Northern has been repeatedly honored as one of the premier railroads in the nation, including being named Regional Railroad of the Year in 2020 by Railway Age magazine.



# Building Our Future Together

## A Year in Review

BY: JACK MCCOY, AVP HUMAN RESOURCES

As we look back on 2025, it is clear that the Reading and Northern Railroad is defined by the strength and dedication of its people. Under the leadership of the Muller family, our company has seen significant growth over the past twelve months. In the HR department, our focus remained simple: investing in our current staff, finding the best new talent, and ensuring every employee has the support they need to succeed.

### Professional Development and Education

In 2025, we prioritized expanding learning opportunities by partnering with the Northeast PA Manufacturers & Employers Association (NEPA). This partnership allowed us to bring hands-on, onsite training directly to our teams.

In May, ten employees at our Nesquehoning location completed a Basics of Supervision course. Following positive feedback from that session, we hosted another onsite class in November titled Dealing with Different Personalities and Managing Stress. Additionally, we sent staff to offsite NEPA training to master Effective Communication. These programs were highly successful, and we look forward to offering even more educational opportunities in 2026.

### Strengthening Our Ranks

Our recruitment efforts took us to Penn College and Schuylkill Tech throughout the year. We have found great success in our internship and co-op programs, which serve as a direct pipeline to full-time careers.

For example, we hired two as full-time Locomotive Mechanics following their successful stints as interns and students. We also welcomed a third as a conductor after meeting him at a spring career fair. The word has spread that RBMN is a place where students can transition directly into rewarding careers, and we already have a strong group of potential interns lined up for the coming spring.

To manage this growth, we held 11 major hiring events across Nesquehoning, Ransom, and Port Clinton. This year, we also began a new "group onboarding" process to help new hires integrate into the company culture more effectively.

### Growth and Wellness by the Numbers

The statistics for 2025 highlight a company that is moving in the right direction:

- **67 New Hires:** We welcomed dozens of new members to the RBMN family.
- **50 Internal Promotions:** We take great pride in promoting from within and investing in our existing workforce.
- **80 Wellness Participants:** Our first-year Wellness Reimbursement program encouraged 80 employees to prioritize regular check-ups. We will continue this program in 2026 to encourage early intervention and long-term health.

### A Growing Support System

To better serve our expanding workforce, the HR department grew to eight full-time employees this year. We have consolidated the Employee Relations and Payroll divisions into one team to improve our overall effectiveness.

We have also increased our efforts to check in with employees across all locations. By actively listening to your concerns and suggestions, we have been able to implement real improvements to our daily operations. Thank you for your hard work and for making 2025 a landmark year for the Reading and Northern Railroad. ♦



The HR team! (From L to R) Top Row: Jack McCoy (AVP) & Kim Reed (Director of HR), Second Row from Top: Bev Hess (Director of Employee Relations) & Meghan Faust (Employee Benefits Specialist), Third Row from Top: Tammy Debkowski (Payroll Manager) & Bonnie Frederick (Payroll Clerk), Bottom Row: Melinee Wilson (Receptionist) & Megan Whitney (Administrative Support Specialist)

# Congratulations!

ON YOUR NEW ARRIVAL



Please join us in congratulating Heavy Equipment Mechanic, Adam Stump, and his wife, Skyler, on the birth of their first child, Stetson Willis. Stetson was born on December 23rd at 6:25 P.M., weighing 8 lbs. 6 oz. and measuring 19 ½ inches long. Welcome to the Reading & Northern family, Stetson!

## EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

BY: MELINEE WILSON, RECEPTIONIST

### Congrats Phil!



Phil Schaeffer and his wife, Cynthia, are pictured here off the Pacific Coast Highway in Monterey, California, during a trip a few years ago.

It is my privilege to introduce Phillip Schaeffer, Real Estate Inspector, as our Winter 2026 "Spotlight Employee". Phil has been with Reading and Northern Railroad since October 2018.

Phil was born in Allentown, PA, and was raised in Kutztown, PA, where he graduated from Kutztown Area High School. After high school, he attended West Chester University.

Phil is currently married to his wonderful wife, Cynthia, and together, they share three children: Kaley, Holden, and Hayden. Holden, his second child and oldest son, tragically passed away in 2023. He is also the proud g-paw of Raelyn, the family's bundle of joy, who just recently turned 8 months old. After dog sitting for his daughter's pups, he was given the very appropriate nickname "g-paw," but he is interested to see what Raelyn refers to him as when she begins to talk. In addition, the couple have two cats, Kira & Pennsy, & a chinchilla named Aries.

In addition to spending time with his family, Phil enjoys playing golf. In the past 40 years, he has played over three quarters of all golf courses in southeastern PA. Phil notes that his favorite golfing trip and #1 course that he's played on was the historic Pebble Beach golf course in Pebble Beach, California. Phil also loves to play the guitar and has learned many different styles, stating, "My first influences were The Beatles and, pretty much, classic rock bands from the 60s & 70s." He was in a punk grunge band in the 90s.

Before coming to work at the railroad, Phil was a UPS driver for 17 years. Phil describes himself as being naïve when he first started at the railroad: "I thought you laid the track down and it was there forever." Phil is extremely fortunate for the time he has spent at the railroad, "I have learned a lot in my 13 years here. I've been fortunate enough to have coworkers and management that have been helpful and patient with me." He noted that he has met, "some of the best people in his life at the Reading and Northern," and has the upmost respect and admiration for what the railroad does.

Phil was nominated for this honor by his supervisors, Jolene Busher, Vice President – Real Estate, and Joseph Matuella, Assistant Vice President – Right of Way Management. Jolene and Joe both said that Phil was selected "because of his positive personality, willingness to help his team, and our dependence on his experience and knowledge in the field and our operating rules." They continued to say that "Phil takes his duties seriously, and with a trustworthiness that we know our team and outside contractors are safe in the field under his direction."

As our Spotlight Employee, Phil will receive a \$100 gift card to the restaurant of his choice, Madeline's. ♦

# Rescue, Adopt, Love



Landon Trutt, a Conductor in our Operations department, adopted Honey, formerly Joanna, from Cuddles Rescue. She is a Doll Face Persian who enjoys cuddling. Cookie, Honey's cat sister, took some time to warm up to her, but the two are united and inseparable! We think Honey is an extremely photogenic cat – what do you think?



Jamie Makin, a Mapping Specialist in our Passenger department, rescued and adopted two kittens named Martin & Vince. Martin loves to explore the house and watch music videos with Jamie. Vince loves to play with toys and acts as Martin's shadow. In their spare time, Martin and Vince love to take naps together – how's that for a cat nap?!



Susan Ludwig, VP of Customer Service, adopted Inky from the Animal Rescue League. She is described as energetic, playful, and extremely lovable. She has been a great addition to Susan's family and brings a lot of love! Pictured in Inky's water bowl is her favorite toy!



Todd Rehrig, a Conductor in our Operations department, adopted Nova, formerly Lovey, from Pep's Pals Rescue. Pep's Pals rescued her from Texas and brought her all the way to their facility in Maryland. She is truly "eye-catching" as she has one crystal blue eye. She is adjusting quickly to her new home and relaxing at every chance she gets!



John Brinich, a Conductor in our Operations department, adopted Maddie from DAWGS Prison Program. Maddie was one of three lab mixes featured on our 'Pet of the Week' post in October. She was saved from a junkyard in Alabama. Maddie the Baddie, as they like to call her, is the best sister to her three cat siblings. She loves to play with her chew toys, but if you ask her to go on a car ride? Well, that's a different story...



Walter Stocknick, a Service Representative in our Passenger department, adopted Milly, named after the Allman Brothers song 'Sweet Melissa,' from Blue Chip Animal Farm Refuge. She is a three-year-old mixed breed that was the last pup of her litter to be adopted! She is described as a "very sweet young lady." Milly joins her three other rockstar siblings Geezer (Geezer Butler/Black Sabbath), Gracie (Grace Slick/Jefferson Airplane), & Layla (Eric Clapton song), in perfect harmony as they enjoy their forever home.

## A Little Help for my Furry Friends

BY: MELINEE WILSON, RECEPTIONIST

2025 saw a vast increase in philanthropic efforts - specifically for local animal rescues. The Muller family has always had a deep connection to the world and protecting all organisms that live within.

### Building Relationships

This year, the railroad formed two new relationships with local shelters: **Ruth Steinert Memorial SPCA** in Pine Grove, PA, and **DAWGS Prison Program**. Jack McCoy, AVP of Human Resources, and I had the opportunity to visit both organizations at different points throughout the year. At the end of February, we met up with Becky Worth, shelter manager of Ruth Steinert, and had the chance to tour their facility and discuss the future of their shelter. Once we approached warmer weather, Jack & I met Amy & Steve Eckert, founders of DAWGS, at a scheduled meet and greet at SCI Mahanoy with two of their adoptable pups.

We also continued to strengthen our relationship with **Hillside SPCA**, who we have had the honor of working with for the past couple of years. They were hit with a bunch of different hardships, but through it all, we were able to stay connected with Sherrie Schafer, shelter manager, and her team to make sure they had the necessary supplies they needed while they navigated through these rough patches. Whether it was kitten food, throw blankets, or laundry detergent, it felt incredible to tell the staff, "The Mullers saw that you needed help, and they were eager to provide the items you needed to keep your animals comfortable."

### Employee Involvement

Throughout 2025, we were ecstatic about sharing with our employees the different fundraisers that the three shelters hosted. Whether it was a raffle or a food fundraiser, employees were eager to get their families involved with supporting these local shelters!

On Sunday, October 5th, the railroad participated in **DAWGS Mutt-ster Mash** event at Bubeck Park. Reading & Northern, along with 21 other vendors, had the chance to come together and raise money for their program. There were many events for people, and dogs, to attend – including Bark or Treat, basket raffles & auctions, and the highly-anticipated dog costume contest. At our RBMN stand, we held another raffle for a second set of Lehigh Gorge tickets, which the Passenger department was enthusiastic about donating.

As the Christmas season approached, we were enthusiastic about teaming up with **Hillside** once again to host the 2nd annual Home for the Holidays event – a sponsored adoption fee event to get the animals adopted & into their forever homes in time for Christmas. The event gained more recognition throughout Schuylkill County and its surrounding areas. We teamed up with our Passenger department to send out a press release, which was picked up by Skook News, Coal Region Canary, & Times News (to name a few) and continued sharing updates through our Reading & Northern Facebook page. In total, we were able to give over 36 animals a new home.

### Animal Rescue Squad

During the second half of 2025, you may have seen the debut of dark green RBMN t-shirts worn by a select few employees. This is because they are a member of the Animal Rescue Squad. To acknowledge the selfless nature of our employees who help wildlife on the railroad, we have provided a token of our appreciation – Animal Rescue Squad t-shirts!

There have been so many amazing stories to come out of 2025, but there are two separate instances that come to mind:

- Greg Zelinsky, Class 1 Locomotive Mechanic, was on his way home one evening, when suddenly he came across a box of seven kittens (approximately 4 weeks old). Unfortunately, he was unable to keep them, but after a week and half, we were able to get all of them adopted – some of them were adopted by our employees!
- A skunk had fallen into the turntable between the Steam Shop and Wheel Shop. Three of our mechanical employees (Keenan Cook, Gavin Seip, and Steven Kolbe) jumped straight into action and helped the skunk who, surprisingly did not spray anyone, and returned it back to the safety of the woods.

These t-shirts are a reminder of their kindness and humility for going above and beyond to save these critters who could have had a different experience. We truly hope that our employees feel a sense of joy when sporting these one-of-a-kind shirts.

### Pet of the Week

Social media has continued to play a huge part in spreading the stories of shelter animals searching for permanent homes. Working with Jen Frederickson, we have a set schedule of posting adoptable pets every Friday morning. We go through a rotation every three weeks with the shelters we have developed strong bonds with to get their long-time residents the homes they deserve!

These are just a few ways Reading & Northern is committed to promoting animal welfare. We anticipate 2026 to be another successful year of adoption stories, wildlife rescue missions, and giving back to no-kill shelters who are committed to seeing their animals live out their lives. ♦



Melinee Wilson pictured with Holly Kowalishen, cat manager of Hillside SPCA, with an abundance of kitten food.



Reading & Northern's stand at DAWGS Prison Program's Mutt-ster Mash.



(From L to R) Steven Kolbe, Gavin Seip, and Keenan Cook were also honored with an Animal Rescue Squad shirt for saving a skunk in the turntable.



Greg Zelinsky was honored with an Animal Rescue Squad shirt after saving seven kittens on his way home from work.

# Adoptable Pets



Croissant is a young dog with a fun and playful personality! He is sure to put a smile on anyone's face. Just like the dessert he's named after, Croissant is charming, witty, and a total crowd-pleaser. He may not be a professional comedian, but this joker is always ready with a hilarious face. If you're looking for a furry friend who's both snuggly and funny, look no further than Croissant! However, do note that he would be best suited in a home where he is the only furry star of the show. Croissant can't wait to find his forever home!



Carson is a 1-year-old beagle mix estimated to be around 35 pounds. This friendly and outgoing young pup loves to go on walks and car rides! Carson would need to be the only pet in the household.



Heidel is our handsome and sweet 8-year-old Rottweiler with a heart as big as his smile. Heidel first came to us four years ago as a stray. After some time in our care, we were able to place him with a loving family—but life took an unfortunate turn, and through no fault of his own, Heidel found himself back with us. The good news? The family that cared for him invested time, love, and training into this wonderful boy. Today, Heidel is an easy-going, affectionate, and loyal companion who just wants a peaceful home where he can relax and be loved. Heidel thrives in a calm environment with older adults and seniors. He would do best with no other pets, a fenced-in yard, & no small children.

**Interested in any of these wonderful pets? Reach out to the following shelters:**

**Croissant**  
**HILLSIDE SPCA**  
 51 SPCA Road, Pottsville, PA 17901  
 Open daily from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.  
 (570) 622 - 7769

**Carson**  
**DAWGS PRISON PROGRAM**  
 E-mail: muttlover25@yahoo.com

**Heidel**  
**RUTH STEINERT MEMORIAL SPCA**  
 18 Wertz Drive, Pine Grove, PA 17963  
 Open daily from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.  
 (570) 345 - 3540

# Red Creek Wildlife

## What a Band Can Tell Us: Uncovering the Story of Bald Eagle Y94

BY: KALEY EGAN,  
 CLINIC MANAGER OF RED CREEK WILDLIFE

When animals arrive at Red Creek Wildlife Center for treatment, we usually know very little about them. Often, all we have knowledge of is the moment of crisis that brought them to us—sometimes not even that. But this eagle's story turned out to be different.

Many species of birds show feather coloration changes as they age. Young bald eagles are no exception and can be aged by their feather coloration for the first four and a half years of life. Once they gain their adult plumage, however, determining age becomes nearly impossible. We can sometimes guess their sex based on size (females are typically larger) but beyond their injuries and treatment plan, their past usually remains a mystery.

This large eagle arrived in full adult plumage, so we knew she was at least 4.5 years old and we suspected based on her size that she was a female. Normally, that's where our knowledge would end. But then we discovered something rare: she was banded.

Over the years, we've cared for a few banded birds, and each time we eagerly enter their information into the national database. This time, the results left us stunned. The eagle before us, strong and alert, had hatched in 2004—making her 21 years old. In the wild, bald eagles typically live 20 to 30 years, placing her beautifully within that upper range.

From the online database, we learned she hatched and was banded in New York State – yet she was brought into our care after being found in Lebanon County, PA, unable to escape a reservoir spillway. We don't know when she journeyed south, or whether she now calls our region home. But knowing even a small part of her long life story felt like a rare gift.

With clear X-rays, no injuries, and remarkably low lead levels, she received a clean bill of health from our rehabilitators. Less than a week after arriving, she was released—soaring once again into the wild. To watch a senior eagle, more than two decades old, take wing with such strength was a powerful reminder of the resilience and beauty of our wildlife.

After her story was shared online, one of our followers reached out to acquaintances who might know more. That connection led to Peter Nye, former Endangered Species Unit Leader at NYSDEC, who offered even deeper insight:

"So, I just looked up Y 94. She came from a nest we call New York 20, one of our early and very productive nests along the Delaware River in... a place called Tusten. She was the only chick we banded, meaning there was only one in the nest in 2004. The interesting thing is that I put a solar powered radio transmitter on her back at the time. She was a large nestling, approximately 9 weeks old, so could easily handle the backpack transmitter. These transmitters are designed to drop off eventually..."

Though her age didn't change her treatment plan, learning her history made her time with us feel even more meaningful. Bird banding remains an invaluable tool, helping us understand dispersal, migration, behavior, lifespans, nest success, and so much more. And for this extraordinary eagle, it allowed us a glimpse into a life lived far beyond what we could see—one long journey that we were honored to be part of, even for a moment. ♦



These identification bands on her ankles allowed us to learn more about this eagle's history.



Photo taken June 16, 2004 shows Peter Nye holding Y94, who is two months old at the time



Restrained for an examination, the eagle's fully white head indicates adult plumage.



With a clean bill of health, we sent her back on her way, wondering where life would take her next.

# 2025 Beverly Hess Scholarship Award



Jillian Gipe, daughter of Kathleen and Joel Gipe. Kathy is the Office Assistant in the Real Estate Department. Jillian is majoring in Nursing and will be entering her sophomore year at East Stroudsburg University in Fall 2025.



Kali Van Blargan, daughter of Brian and Carrie Van Blargan. Brian is the Reading Division Forman in the Maintenance of Way Department. Kali is majoring in Nursing with minors in child maltreatment and advocacy, and human development and family studies. She will be entering her sophomore year at PSU Main Campus in Fall 2025.



Dominick Somers, son of Jim and Germaine Somers. Jim is a Class 1 Carman in the Mechanical - Car Shop Department. Dominick will be majoring in Mechanical Engineering and will be entering his freshman year at Penn State in Fall 2025.

## Congratulations to Jillian, Kali, & Dominick!

We wish you all the best in your upcoming academic year.

# RBMN Anniversaries

## 35 YEARS



DECEMBER 11, 1990  
TYLER GLASS  
EXEC. VP OF OPERATIONS - OPERATIONS

## 25 YEARS



NOVEMBER 27, 2000  
JAMES COOK  
ENGINEER 6/DISPATCHER/DSLE - OPERATIONS

## 20 YEARS



NOVEMBER 28, 2005  
EDWARD PHILBIN  
ENGINEER 6 - OPERATIONS

## 15 YEARS



NOVEMBER 9, 2010  
KYLE SANDERS  
AVP OF OPERATIONS/OPERATIONS

## 5 YEARS



NOVEMBER 30, 2020  
CHRISTOPHER NEFOS  
SR. TRACK INSPECTOR  
MAINTENANCE OF WAY



JANUARY 25, 2021  
LUKE WEIGHT  
MACHINE OPERATOR, CLASS 1  
TRAINEE - MAINTENANCE OF WAY



JANUARY 29, 2021  
BRIAN VAN BLARGAN  
DIVISION FOREMAN  
READING - MAINTENANCE OF WAY

## 10 YEARS



NOVEMBER 16, 2015  
CHARLES TRUSDELL II.  
CLASS 1 STEAM MECHANIC/  
ENGINEER - PASSENGER  
STEAM SHOP



JANUARY 18, 2016  
BENJAMIN MEISER  
CLASS 1 LOCOMOTIVE  
ELECTRICIAN - MECHANICAL -  
ENGINE HOUSE



JANUARY 25, 2016  
JOSEPH MATUELLA  
AVP OF RIGHT OF WAY  
MANAGEMENT - REAL ESTATE

## 3 YEARS



NOVEMBER 28, 2022  
KELSEY BUECHLE  
VET TECH  
MOON LAKE RANCH



NOVEMBER 28, 2022  
KATHLEEN GIPE  
REAL ESTATE - ADMINISTRATIVE  
COORDINATOR - REAL ESTATE



DECEMBER 13, 2022  
JAGGER GRADWELL  
CONDUCTOR  
OPERATIONS



JANUARY 3, 2023  
WILLIAM RICHMOND  
CLASS 1 VEHICLE MECHANIC  
MECHANICAL - VEHICLE SHOP

## 1 YEAR



NOVEMBER 4, 2024  
JESSE TUCKETT  
SIGNAL MAINTAINER SUPERVISOR  
COMMUNICATION & SIGNALS



NOVEMBER 11, 2024  
ERIKA SCHAEFFER  
ADMINISTRATION (PART TIME)  
MULLER RARE COINS



DECEMBER 3, 2024  
JENNIFER FREEMAN  
ACCOUNTS PAYABLE/PAYROLL CLERK  
FINANCE



DECEMBER 9, 2024  
COREY STETLER  
REAL ESTATE INSPECTOR  
REAL ESTATE



JANUARY 20, 2025  
MATTHEW MAGER  
CONDUCTOR  
OPERATIONS

# HAPPY BIRTHDAY

FEB. 3.....	ANDREA COLLER	MAR. 3.....	MEGHAN FAUST	APR. 3.....	DAREN GESCHWINDT
FEB. 4.....	NICHOLAS FAUST	MAR. 3.....	DAN PUKSAR	APR. 3.....	DEVIN OSWALD
FEB. 4.....	MATTHEW KUNKLE	MAR. 3.....	DARNELL YOUNG	APR. 5.....	DAVID HIGHT
FEB. 6.....	STEVEN SHANTON	MAR. 5.....	ADAM BROWN	APR. 5.....	ADAM STUMP
FEB. 8.....	JAMES CERULLI	MAR. 7.....	WALTER STOCKNICK	APR. 7.....	JARED COLLER
FEB. 9.....	JAMES COOK	MAR. 13.....	JOHN DANKO	APR. 9.....	MIKEAL GEOGHEGAN
FEB. 9.....	AMY MILLER	MAR. 14.....	DAMON DOUGAL	APR. 11.....	WILLIAM YANOSHIK
FEB. 9.....	WILLIAM RICHMOND	MAR. 14.....	JAMES GARRAWAY	APR. 12.....	BRADLEY AUMAN
FEB. 11.....	MICHAEL KOHL	MAR. 14.....	EDWARD MOUL	APR. 12.....	AARON CASSEL
FEB. 12.....	BRAD KLEIN	MAR. 15.....	ROBERT KEMPES	APR. 14.....	GENE BUECHLE
FEB. 12.....	BENJAMIN NELSON	MAR. 16.....	HUDSON HENRY	APR. 15.....	JOSEPH BROWN
FEB. 12.....	SUSAN RUNDLE	MAR. 17.....	JACK MCCOY	APR. 15.....	JOSEPH GARELLI
FEB. 13.....	PHILIP SCHAEFFER	MAR. 18.....	MARK HARRIS, JR.	APR. 15.....	JOSEPH GARELLI
FEB. 15.....	AMY BROBST	MAR. 20.....	NATHAN BISSEY	APR. 16.....	JEFFREY BAVITZ
FEB. 17.....	ANGIE GREBNER	MAR. 20.....	MATTHEW MIZIKOSKI	APR. 16.....	JARRED STROHL
FEB. 18.....	KIETH BAILEY	MAR. 22.....	RICHARD BERNHARDT	APR. 16.....	TIMOTHY WRIGHT
FEB. 19.....	TIMOTHY BILLET	MAR. 24.....	RYAN RUPPRECHTT	APR. 17.....	COREY STETLER
FEB. 20.....	JOYCE "JAMIE" MAKIN	MAR. 27.....	JOHN HICKS	APR. 18.....	MATTHEW MAGER
FEB. 20.....	COTTON ROBBINS	MAR. 27.....	WILLIAM KEIM	APR. 18.....	EDWARD PHILBIN
FEB. 20.....	JACKSON SNYDER	MAR. 28.....	NIKOLAS RIDGLEY	APR. 19.....	AARON MULLER
FEB. 21.....	KENNETH MILLER	MAR. 29.....	ELIZABETH HARTMAN	APR. 20.....	JAKE HAESELER
FEB. 22.....	TYLER GLASS	MAR. 29.....	COLTON LEVAN	APR. 21.....	GREGORY ZELINSKY
FEB. 23.....	ANTHONY FALCONE	MAR. 29.....	GAVIN SEIP	APR. 22.....	KATHLEEN GIPE
FEB. 24.....	JONATHAN BARKET	MAR. 29.....	BRANDON WAGNER	APR. 23.....	CHARLES BIBIK
FEB. 26.....	TAYLOR HAUPT	MAR. 31.....	JOLENE BUSER	APR. 23.....	ROBERT MCHALE
FEB. 26.....	CAROL MULLER	MAR. 31.....	CARL REICHART	APR. 25.....	ADAM BOAK
FEB. 29.....	JOHN SMOLCZYNSKI	APR. 2.....	SAMUEL HOLLOCK	APR. 26.....	ELIJAH JOHRI
MAR. 1.....	MATTHEW FREDMONSKI	APR. 2.....	CONNOR RAYMOND	APR. 30.....	BART CRARY
MAR. 2.....	JAMIE MATYJEVICH	APR. 3.....	KELSEY BUECHLE		



Conductor Trainee, Todd Rehrig is surrounded by tank cars while putting away storage cars at Coal.



Michael Jamicky and Matt Mager making moves near the new dryer.



Xavier Robinson having fun as first shift train dispatcher.



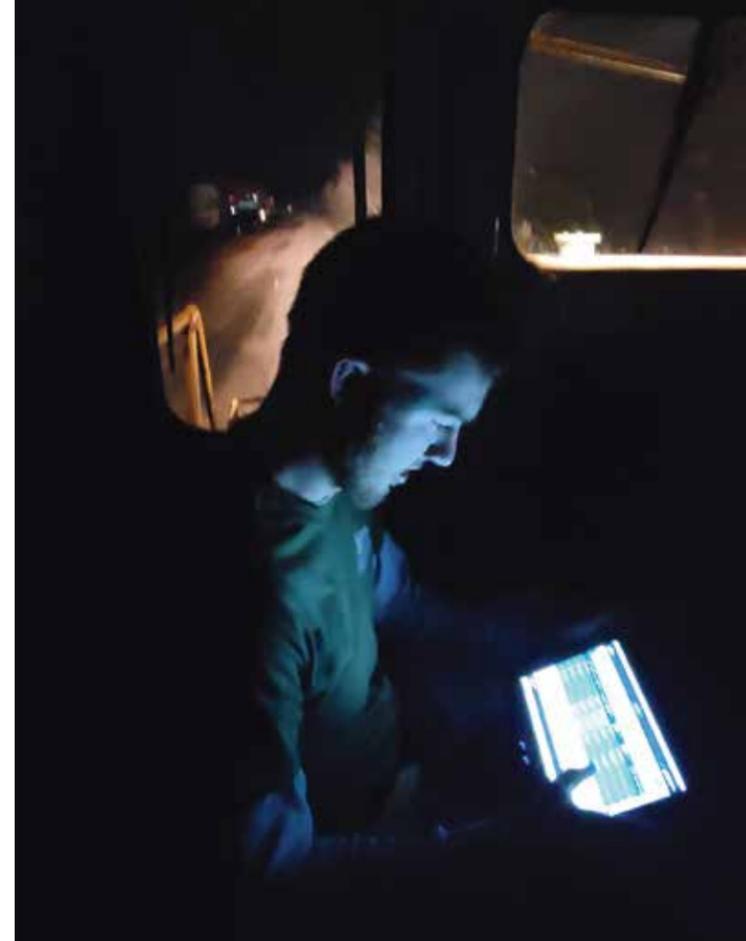
Dispatcher roster growing with Lucas Reichard training with Andrew Zehner.



Jeffrey Bavitz brings train QAJT, northbound through Nesquehoning.



Jamie Makin shows Andy Muller a part of the sign making process. Jamie's skills are second to none.



With the train built, air tested and ready to go at Mahanoy City Yard. Hudson Henry moves his cars in the tablet so they can make trip to Tamaqua on train SDQA.



Jamie Makin shows Andy Muller a part of the sign making process. Jamie's skills are second to none.



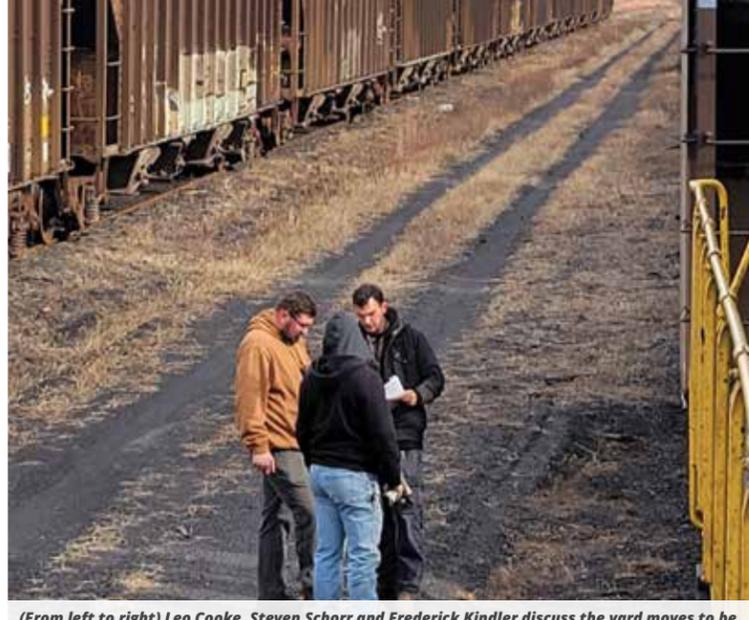
Engineer Trainee Andrew Zehner enjoying some seat time.



Carter Jones and Jim Cook going over the moves at Middle Yard, Tamaqua.



YJPI with Travis Prevost at the throttle heading towards Ransom Transload.



(From left to right) Leo Cooke, Steven Schorr and Frederick Kindler discuss the yard moves to be made at Mahanoy City Yard.



Port Clinton yard job spotting an engine over the pit at the Engine House with conductor John Jennings and conductor trainee Daniel Jackson.



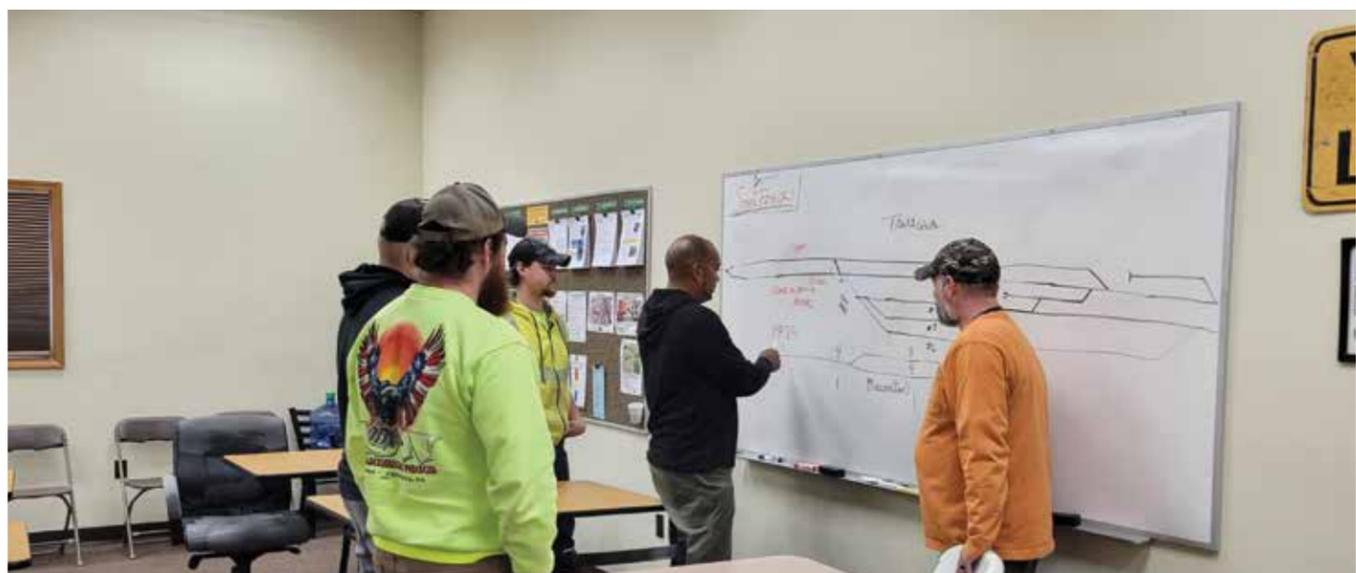
Jason Andreas shoves the first train into the new dryer at Lehigh Anthracite. This was a ballast train to finish up the track work into the new facility that will be online soon



Transportation manager, Ryan Trexler discusses some scheduling items with Carter Jones at Arlington.



Conductor Brock Regnier staying warm while doing the Car Shop shift.



Communication and Signal employees discussing rules while in their yearly rules class. Seen from right to left are Don Matter, Darnell Young, Charles Trusdell III, Conner Raymond and Jake Haeseler.



Jim Cook teaching Conductor Trainees Jackson Synder and Damon Dougal at Nesquehoning on their 2nd day of class.



Jim Donley putting in the air into the train while working at Tamaqua.



Eugene Boyle copies a Form D over the radio from the Train Dispatcher on train MCQA.



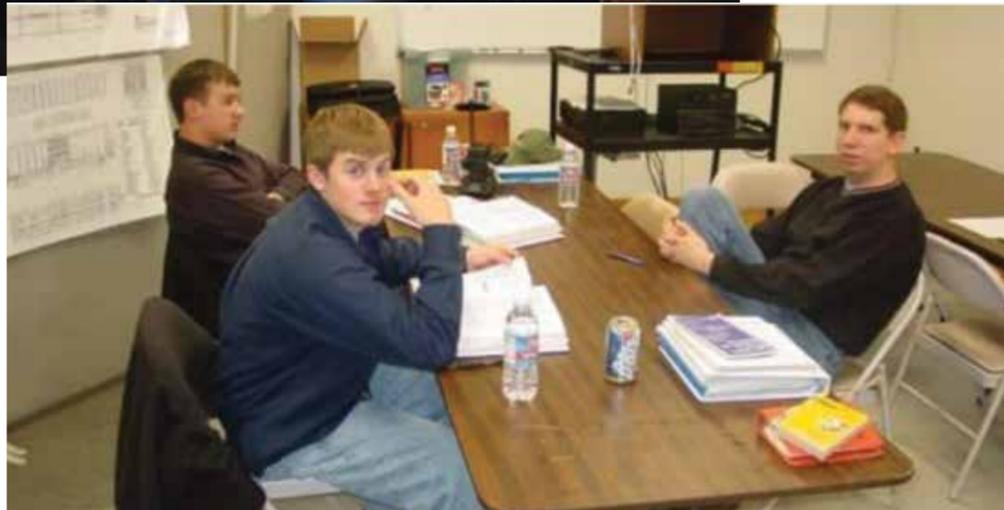
Tom Skrutski training a student engineer at Humboldt Industrial Park.



Michael Kolbe is performing a leakage test on his train while he and his conductor perform a Class 1 air test before they depart Port Clinton.



A difference in 20 years. First day in class with Daren Geschwindt to now for Aaron Schlosser and John Smolczynski.



# WELCOME ABOARD

## New Employees!



### Todd Rehrig

Todd Rehrig was recently hired as a Conductor in our Operations Department. He attended Lehigh Area High School. Prior to working at RBMNR, Todd was a Conductor and Train Master at Norfolk Southern for five years. In his spare time, Todd loves to travel.



### Nicholas Faust

Nicholas Faust was recently hired as a HVAC Technician in our Facilities Department. He attended Gateway Christian School and Berks Career & Technology Center's Journeyman program. Prior to working at RBMNR, Nicholas was an install tech at UGI HVAC for ten years.



### Austin Schwenk

Austin Schwenk was recently hired as an Equipment Mechanic in our Mechanical Department. He attended Blue Mountain High School. Prior to working at RBMNR, Austin was a mechanic at Penn Equipment for seven years. He can be very funny.



### Colton Levan

Colton Levan was recently hired as an Auto Mechanic in our Mechanical Department.



### Martin Boucher

Martin Boucher was recently hired as a Carman in our Mechanical Department. Prior to working at RBMNR, Martin worked at Boucher Overhead Doors.



### Landon Eichelberger

Landon Eichelberger was recently hired as a Conductor in our Operations Department. He attended Central Dauphin High School. He graduated 6 months early to work at Reading & Northern.



### Andrew Riccardi

Andrew Riccardi was recently hired as a Conductor in our Operations Department. He was homeschooled. Prior to working at RBMNR, Andrew worked at Weaver's ACE Hardware for 5 years. In his spare time, Andrew enjoys rollerblading. He is also a self-taught pianist and is currently learning to play guitar and accordion.



### Jared Charkaway

Jared Charkaway was recently hired as a Track Inspector in Maintenance of Way Department. He attended Tri-Valley Jr./Sr. High School and Penn State University. Prior to working at RBMNR, Jared was a track foreman at Norfolk Southern for 17 years.



### Braden Tringone

Braden Tringone was recently hired as a Locomotive Mechanic in our Mechanical Department. He attended Tamaqua Area High School and Schuylkill County Technology Center for Diesel Technology.



### Sierra Levan

Sierra Levan was recently hired as a Real Estate Assistant in our Real Estate Department. She attended The King's Academy. Prior to working at RBMNR, Sierra was an animal caretaker on a farm for 4 years. In her spare time, Sierra loves to read, live on a farm, and travel a lot.



### Mitchell Solomon

Mitchell Solomon was recently hired as the Director of Mechanical in our Mechanical Department. He attended Pattonville High School and New Horizons Computer Learning Center. Prior to working at RBMNR, Mitchell was a Carman/Locomotive Engineer/Conductor at Amtrak for eight years. In his spare time, Mitchell enjoys fishing, hiking, and hanging out with his Great Danes.



### Daniel Jackson

Daniel Jackson was recently hired as a Conductor in our Operations Department. He attended Coatesville High School and Reading Area High School. Prior to working at RBMNR, Daniel was a Store Manager at Five Guys for 8 1/2 months. In his spare time, Daniel loves to work outdoors and is very energetic.



### Michael Walsh

Michael Walsh was recently hired as a Conductor in our Operations Department. He attended Countryside High School and St. Petersburg College. Prior to working at RBMNR, Michael was a Digital Associate at Walmart for 5 years.

# Wellness Corner

BY: MELINEE WILSON, RECEPTIONIST

## When the Snowing Gets Tough

It's the most wonderful time of the year – below freezing temperatures, snowstorms, and black ice are all starting to make their annual appearance. It's all too easy for us to get wrapped up in our cozy blankets and heated spaces while waiting for warmer weather, however, it's important to think ahead about the potential dangers during the snowy season. Heavy snowstorms can lead to overwhelming effects on many neighborhoods, including travel limitations, power outages, and safety hazards. Amid these mighty storms, do you know how to protect yourself, your family, and your belongings when mounds of snow pile up?

Let's start with your personal protection. There is the possibility that, yes – we may need to venture out of the comfort of our homes and clean off our driveways, sidewalks, cars, and anything else covered in snow. It's important to always dress in loose, lightweight layers that will keep you warm, such as hats, gloves, and scarves. In addition, a waterproof coat and insulated boots will keep you dry and prevent heat from escaping. Speaking of footwear, wearing shoes with good treads can help you from falling over. Walk flat-footed, take short steps and shuffle when you know there's a chance of slipping. If you feel your body temperature decreasing, allow time for breaks to warm up inside, especially in extremely cold weather. It's also important to take breaks when engaging in strenuous physical activity to reduce the risk of hypothermia, frostbite, and even a heart attack. Your safety is the number one priority; taking your time is the best piece of advice you can follow!

You may not think about it, but your house is susceptible to dangers as well. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, cases of carbon monoxide poisoning heavily increase during the winter season. This is dangerous because it is odorless, colorless, and gives little to no warning of its presence (this can come with a headache, lightheadedness, or nausea). Installing multiple carbon monoxide detectors throughout your house can aide in preventing carbon monoxide poisoning. Always double check that your heating systems are up to date, clean, and ventilating correctly, as gas furnaces can also give off carbon monoxide poisoning. Keeping up with appliance maintenance could save you from imminent danger.



Driving in the snow, especially in big snowstorms, is not usually recommended. If anything, it is important to stay home if road conditions are unbearable and risky to navigate. According to The Zebra, key statistics & insights state the following regarding snowy weather and travel:

- More than 150,000 (156,164) auto crashes occur annually due to icy roads, federal data shows. (FHWA)
- Driving on snowy roads can take your car 10 times longer to stop completely. (AAA)
- Over 1,800 people die per year in a car crash due to driving in snowy and icy conditions. (FHWA)
- 35% of all respondents claim that the ice scraper is the most valuable tool to keep in a winter driving safety kit. (The Zebra)
- Slushy or snowy pavement causes a 30% to 40% speed reduction on major roads. (The Weather Channel)
- Around 70% of the population in the United States lives in places that have snowy and icy conditions during the winter. (FHWA)
- About 17% of vehicle crashes occur in snowy conditions. (NHTSA)
- 70% of roads in the United States are in snowy areas, which increases the threat of an accident SIGNIFICANTLY. (FHWA)

In specific circumstances, we may need to drive for emergencies, so it's important to winterize your vehicle. Always double-check your local news station for updates on winter weather advisories and traffic conditions before making the trek to your next destination, and always avoid travel when advisories are in place. If you need to drive, ensure that your vehicle is full of gas to keep fuel lines free of ice. Check out your tire treads to ensure they have proper traction when driving on slick roads. Avoid distractions, such as electronic devices, and keep a safe driving distance between you and the car in front of you in the chance that your car slips on wet roads.

As we continue to navigate these treacherous winter conditions, let's remind ourselves of the potential issues that can occur in households and in our vehicles. In the event that something dangerous happens, always call 911. Do what you can to keep yourself safe as well as your family, friends, and neighbors.

### For more information, visit:

<https://www.thezebra.com/resources/research/winter-driving-statistics/>

<https://www.redcross.org/local/georgia/about-us/news-and-events/press-releases/red-cross-offers-winter-weather-safety-tips.html>

[https://mercyurgentcare.org/news/winter-safety-tips/#:~:text=Here%20are%20some%20winter%20safety%20tips:%20\\*,running%20while%20parked%20in%20an%20enclosed%20space](https://mercyurgentcare.org/news/winter-safety-tips/#:~:text=Here%20are%20some%20winter%20safety%20tips:%20*,running%20while%20parked%20in%20an%20enclosed%20space)

**Reading Blue Mountain &  
Northern Railroad Company**  
PO Box 218  
Port Clinton PA 19549



RBMN Locomotive 1776 unveiled Fall 2025.