



Connections

Family Fun IN THE SUN

Family Day was a rollicking success. The June 15 event attracted 300 guests who enjoyed treats and amusements galore.

“We had a really good time,” Manager of Human Resources and Labor Relations Caitlin Kerney said. “The weather cooperated and people were in good spirits.”

Some visitors enjoyed the ice cream truck before Nicky V’s food truck, which served classics such as hot dogs and hamburgers. As has become tradition, Safety

Manager John Christensen served up fresh-squeezed lemonade — shaken, not stirred — and popcorn. An attendant was on hand to serve cotton candy.

A new basketball game saw competitors face off, shooting at back-to-back backboards. The loser of the dual was sprayed with water. A dunk tank was a way for volunteers to end up all wet.

Team members enjoyed an exciting cornhole tournament.



An artist gave guests henna tattoos.

Laborer Michelle Corona won Chicago Bears tickets during a drawing. Dispatcher Bruce West also won a prize.

“We do Family Day because we want to celebrate employees and their families,” Kerney said. “Railroading isn’t easy, and our employees need the solid foundation their families provide.”



2024 Family Day volunteers



GREATER CHICAGO - FOOD -

Management team members come together to give back.



Charitable event focuses on feeding those in need

The tradition of giving back continues at the Belt.

Management team members visited the Greater Chicago Food Depository on June 27 and volunteered to help the organization feed the hungry. The charity has been doing so since 1979. Last

year, the nonprofit provided more than 77 million meals.

The Belt team's mission was to take pallets of frozen breakfast sandwiches and sort them so they could be shipped to food pantries across Cook County. Belt managers repacked more than 3,000

meals during the daylong event.

"We get super into these volunteer days," Manager of Human Resources and Labor Relations Caitlin Kerney said. "We dive into it and give 100%. It gets competitive, and I think that's just our spirit. We have a blast."



Winning design named

The Car team hosted a t-shirt design contest to promote safety, and Carman Mike Mittler's entry was chosen as the winner.

His t-shirt features a welding electrode and the slogan "Stick to Safety." He won a \$250 gift certificate to the establishment of his choice.



Safety role offers greater perspective to Mateyack

After building a career in Engineering, Safety Manager Jeff Mateyack is excited about broadening his horizons.

“I get to interact with all three departments and meet every employee,” he said. “I contribute to ensuring that they all go home safe. Coming out of Engineering and learning more about the other crafts definitely opened my eyes. Now, I see how it all comes together. It’s important to work together and plan well.”

Mateyack started as a laborer in 2009, became a lead carpenter in 2011, an assistant roadmaster in 2019 and assumed his present role in 2023. Now, he performs field evaluations and promotes rules compliance. Mateyack views safety management as an outlet for training and “talking through the process” with craft professionals.

“I make myself available to help them understand rules,” he said. “I enjoy being around people and helping. It’s important for employees to feel comfortable talking to me, because it makes them more likely to engage.”

Mateyack credits Senior Director Safety and Regulatory Compliance Jason Charbonneau, Assistant Director of Safety Mark Labbe and Superintendent of Safety Terry Hartwig with aiding his development.

“They’re all great people and always available to share info,” he said. “I love working for the company; it’s given me the opportunity to learn a lot and go home every night to my family.”

He and his wife, Kailey, have children Matthew, 14, and Ava, 11.

Away from work, Mateyack spends a lot of time rooting for his children in their sports activities, such as hockey, baseball and basketball.

*Safety Manager
Jeff Mateyack*



Scenes from the latest Belt videos

Chacon creates valuable new content

Digital Media Coordinator Joe Chacon always has irons in the fire.

He has numerous recent projects in the can and is currently producing multiple others.

Many of the videos, which include training topics and celebrations of the Belt and its people, can be found on Belt social media, including Facebook and LinkedIn. The videos also are played on monitors around the Belt facility.

As a third-generation railroader, Chacon was inspired to produce a video about multigeneration railroading families. He saw it especially fitting given the recent Family Day.

“These families helped build the railroad,” Chacon said.

Some of his present projects focus on rules compliance. He described one as “dissecting a rule” so employees can better understand it and the importance of situational awareness.

Another video, which Chacon describes as a short documentary, features Signalman Tim O’Connell and is entitled “After the Fact: Insights into an Incident.” In the video, he recounts an incident he experienced in 2019.

“It takes you deeper into the mindset of a person who experienced an incident,” Chacon said.

He believes that by openly discussing incidents and destigmatizing those who experience them, employees can learn valuable lessons.

Chacon has plenty more to come. He described a video of an engine rebuild as a “big project.”

“Our Facebook and LinkedIn are ways to stay on top of current events,” he said. “It’s a big thing for family members to see what their loved ones are up to at work.”

*Access the Belt’s
Facebook page*



*Access the Belt’s
LinkedIn profile*



Visitors and teammates gather to honor Director of Police/Risk Management Gerald "Jerry" Conoboy.

Conoboy honored by TSA for contributions to safety



Deputy Administrator Holly Canevari of the TSA flew in from Washington, D.C., on June 12 to take a tour of the BRC rail yard and recognize Director of Police/Risk Management Gerald "Jerry" Conoboy.

She presented him with a certificate of appreciation for his remarkable contributions in improving the safety of the American transportation system.

Regional Security Director Tony Metcalf also attended; several TSA administrators and agents were present for the tour, which Superintendent of Safety Terry Hartwig helped lead.

Canevari and Metcalf were able to get a bird's-eye view of Belt operations by riding through the yard in a locomotive.



Director of Police/Risk Management Gerald "Jerry" Conoboy, right, is congratulated by the TSA.



From left, TSA Regional Security Director Tony Metcalf and Deputy Administrator Holly Canevari take a ride on a BRC locomotive.

First day on the job for 291

The Belt's newest locomotive, 291, went into service July 18.

It was the first day of field testing for the EMD GP33ECO, which involved being coupled with the 290, the second newest locomotive in the fleet.

General Foreman-Locomotive Projects Nate Smith said once testing is complete, the 291 can be used on its own.

The new 12-cylinder, 3,000-horsepower locomotives were built and delivered by Progress Rail.



Great job, Ray!

Carman Ray Owens found a roller bearing adapter missing during an inspection of an inbound train on April 22.

“His attention to detail saved a possible derailment and injury to others,” Assistant Superintendent Mechanical Robert Perham said. “Thanks to Ray for leading by example.”

Carman Ray Owens



President/General Manager Percy Fields discusses safety with a teammate.



Teammates mingle during the cookout.



The grill is fired up.

Third shift event focuses on C3RS

The management team hung out with employees on July 18 during third shift.

Together, they enjoyed a cookout.

President/General Manager Percy Fields said events like the cookout will be a regular occurrence as they allow managers to connect with employees whose schedules don't coincide with the business office's hours. *Safety is discussed.*

with the business office's hours.

A point of emphasis at the cookout was Confidential Close Call Reporting System (C3RS). Superintendent Safety Terry Hartwig reiterated to employees that reports are completely anonymous and the program's sole purpose is gathering data to help drive enhancements to safety.



See something, say something

April 20: Safety Manager Jeff Mateyack observed two youth trespassers walking through the yard by the Cicero Street Bridge. He contacted the BRC Police and was able to detain the two until their arrival. BRC Police escorted both youths off property with a warning.



Safety Manager
Jeff Mateyack

May 4: Switchman Rodney Haynes observed a suspicious subject walking on the tracks in East Receiving. He suspected the subject was trespassing and immediately notified the West Yardmaster, who then called BRC Police. As a result, the subject was stopped, identified and escorted off BRC property.



Switchman
Rodney Haynes

May 19: Dispatcher Anthony Marchi observed two trespassers at the Archer Avenue Crossing. The trespassers were seen possibly tampering with a switch box and then the switch points while carrying two boxes. Marchi immediately notified the BRC Police and gave police a description of the subjects while they were en route, and he advised that they had left the area. Armed with a detailed description and direction of travel for the subjects, they were located a short distance away and advised of the dangers associated with trespassing on Belt property.



Dispatcher
Anthony Marchi

May 22: While working in the area of the 68th Street “Y,” employees Mark Okon along with Raul Pizano observed a trespasser on BRC property under a tree. They immediately notified BRC Police and kept an eye on the subject until officers arrived. Officers cited the subject and escorted him off of BRC property.



From left, employees Raul Pizano and Mark Okon

May 23: While working near Cicero Avenue Bridge, B&B employee Mike Lewis observed trespassers under the structure. They were hanging off the side of an embankment and acting in a reckless manner, causing a safety concern. BRC Police, with the assistance of Bedford Park Police, cleared the subjects from under bridge and sent them on their way. They also were given homeless shelter information.



B&B employee
Mike Lewis

May 29: Carman Richard Swade found a suspicious bag hanging from a hopper car. It was determined that the bag was placed there by the shipper and held a sample of the car’s previous contents; the bag was not removed.



Carman Richard
Swade

June 4: Manager of Human Resources and Labor Relations Caitlin Kerney observed an adult male and a juvenile male walking south on 65th Street at the entrance to the yard. From a safe distance, she asked them where they were going. The adult replied, “To look at trains.” Kerney then notified Belt Police, who responded but found the duo already had vacated the area, likely due to Kerney politely and safely challenging them.

June 19: Carmen Chase Stephens observed a trespasser in the West Yard adjacent track 35WDEP. He contacted Belt Police giving a description, location and direction of travel. The trespasser was quickly located and escorted off Belt property by BRC Police after being identified and advised of the dangers associated with trespassing on Belt property.



Carmen Chase
Stephens

June 20: Employee Mark Okon observed suspicious objects on the Kenton Line near Archer Avenue. The items were a gas can next to a slow cooker. Okon immediately notified BRC Police, who arrived on scene and safely removed the objects from BRC property.



Employee Mark
Okon

June 23: Switchmen Danny Vargas and Jerome Beasley observed two trespassers under the Cicero Avenue Bridge. They radioed the East Yardmaster who contacted Belt Police, giving a description, location and direction of travel. The trespassers were located quickly and escorted off Belt property by BRC Police. They were advised of the dangers associated with trespassing on Belt property.



From left, Switchmen
Danny Vargas and Jerome
Beasley

June 26: Track employee James Kula observed a suspicious person lying on ballast next to the tracks along the Kenton Line near Archer Avenue. He immediately notified BRC Police, who arrived on scene. The subject, who was not in need of medical attention, was cited for trespassing and escorted off BRC property.



Track employee
James Kula

Thanks to all! Your efforts may have prevented injury or an incident. Keep up the great work!

Network migration to boost security and more

The Belt was cyber attacked on June 19, 2023, spurring an overhaul of the network that has now progressed to the testing phase.

Systems are being migrated to the new network of servers that are housed in the Data Center and under Belt control.

“We are easing people onto the

new network,” Director of IT Bob Whitlock said. “It’s being stress tested. It will be more secure and robust.”

In addition to being more secure, the change will give him and his teammates more control over how the network functions and the ability to respond to issues directly, as opposed to waiting for a contractor to respond,

which had been the case. Whitlock said this will help IT do its part to keep the yard fluid.

About half of the new network will be cloud-based, including Belt Apps. But legacy systems, such as the one used by dispatchers, cannot.

BDO, the company that helped build Belt Apps, is assisting the project.

Training effort helps secure Belt

When it comes to the how people imagine a typical cybersecurity criminal, many might conjure a teenager in their mother’s basement.

Director of IT Bob Whitlock advises employees to think again.

“These cybersecurity criminals are intelligent,” he said. “Their job is to get into systems. They can steal data and cripple a company’s ability to work.”

Whitlock notes that these criminal enterprises are often housed in respectable office buildings. An increasingly common technique the thieves use is to send spoof emails or texts — messages that look as if they are from a trusted source — to install ransomware — malicious software designed to block access to a computer system until a sum of money is paid.

To fight the ne’er-do-wells, the Belt began

cybersecurity training July 9.

All 198 employees with a Belt email will undergo the training, a 15-minute video they can access on their own device. The video focuses on how to identify components of emails and texts that help determine if they are fraudulent. Employees will view the video individually and be tested on its content.

Testing data will help identify what additional training is necessary.

Whitlock said additional cybersecurity training will be administered regularly and may be added to annual rules training.

“We’re still building culture,” he said. “Attacks are an inevitability for which we have to prepare.”

He expects the present training to be completed by the end of August.

This newsletter appears under direction of The Belt Railway Company of Chicago. To include information, call Tom at the newsletter office at 402-475-6397. Readers also can submit articles via mail to 122 S. 29th St., Lincoln, NE 68510-1403, or email tom.johns@newslink.com. This material is intended to be an overview of the news of The Belt Railway Company of Chicago. If there are any discrepancies between this newsletter and any official documents, those documents will govern. The Belt Railway Company of Chicago continues to maintain and reserves the right, at any time, to alter, suspend, discontinue or terminate all plans and programs described in this newsletter. This newsletter is not an employment contract or any type of employment guarantee. Thanks to everyone for taking the time to contribute to this edition of the BRC Connections newsletter, including, but not limited to, Gerald Conoboy, Joe Chacon and Caitlin Kerney. However, by submission you give the newsletter permission to use your photo(s) in all related media.



Machines are used to place a track panel.

Planning, teamwork drive Engineering project

A crucial part of the Belt’s infrastructure was reinvigorated by Track on July 17-18.

The throat between the West Classification Yard and the Departure Yard was the site of the action. Assistant Chief Engineer Tom Lyons said working safely and efficiently was vital to ensure the work was completed during two nine-hour outages.

“We did a great job planning the outage,” he said. “A lot was accomplished in two days.”

The job entailed installing six 80-foot track panels, a new No. 9 turnout and 250 ties. A crossover that was no longer necessary was removed, which will simplify future maintenance. The team’s efficiency allowed for additional surfacing work.

Lyons thanked Transportation and a contractor for their cooperation.

“We have different roles, but we’re all one team,” he said.

Lyons praised Track for working together and keeping safety first.

Members of Track work on the project.



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From left are Assistant Chief Engineer Tom Lyons, Foreman Mike Heikes and Machine Operator James Kula.

What are the keys to staying safe in the summer?

Make sure you stay hydrated. If you’re starting to feel overheated, take a break and cool down when necessary. Looking out for fellow co-workers is always important, but especially when it’s hot.

– Machine Operator James Kula