

Greetings!

This is your Maintenance of Way Team update for March 4, 2018. Another week and month are in the history books as your MOW Team strives to build a better railroad. So, let's build a better update by getting this thing started right now.

Despite Daylight Savings Time being still a week away, the evening sun was teasing us on Tuesday, enticing the Team out from the Shops and onto the line. Heather Kearns, Joe Margucci, and Dave Wolf couldn't resist the western glow and set course for Baths where they marked bad ties and pulled spikes all in preparation for more tie changing on Saturday. This exercise would give the Saturday crew a big head-start. Many of the ties were in such bad condition that Heather could just pull the spikes out by hand. For the others, Dave and Joe utilized claw-bars to pull spikes. Bad ties were marked well north of Switch 17 as our tie-changing trajectory clears Baths. Alas, the teasing twilight faded dark and the Team retreated to the comfortable surroundings of the Shops where they joined Pat Scholzen, Gene Peck, Chris Howard, Kyle Blackburn, and Mike Harris. Kyle is again working on the wide wheel-tread flatcar getting it ready getting it ready for installation of standard wheels. Mike H. and Chris H. went to work reassembling the tamper's wonky work-head. You may recall that its hydraulic squeeze cylinder and vibrator motor were sent out for repair. Well, they're back and ready to go in. Mike and Chris H. managed to restore the tamper to operation quite quickly. Indeed, one could claim – and accurately so – that Tuesday was an evening of much accomplishment. As Fred Perry used to say, "Yea us!"

The first "storm of the century" of the year passed through Sacramento Thursday leaving the Boiler Shop without power and the Erecting Shop a bit cold and damp. But that didn't slow down Chris H., Matt McCracken, Frank Werry, Heather, and Mike H. The goal was to get the tamper over to Old Sacramento now that the new vibrator motor and repaired squeeze-cylinder were in place. But first, equipment needed to be rearranged to get the tamper out. Chris H. lined-up the transfer table. The ballast hopper car, which was in for repair to its draw-bar connector, was moved to the temporary track at the north end of the building. Next, the A-6 motorcar had to be moved. While this was going on, Joe and Heather were testing the tamper to make sure everything was working just fine. Well, things weren't. For some reason, no power was getting to the work-heads. Joe opened the electrical panel and began trouble-shooting the problem. It soon became apparent that it was a bigger problem than initially anticipated which ended the plan to move the machine Thursday night. Meanwhile, Matt and Frank did staging for Saturday by loading the tool caddy in the truck. Although the new problem with the tamper was disappointing, once it's fixed – and it will be – everything is set and ready for it to roll back to Old Sac.

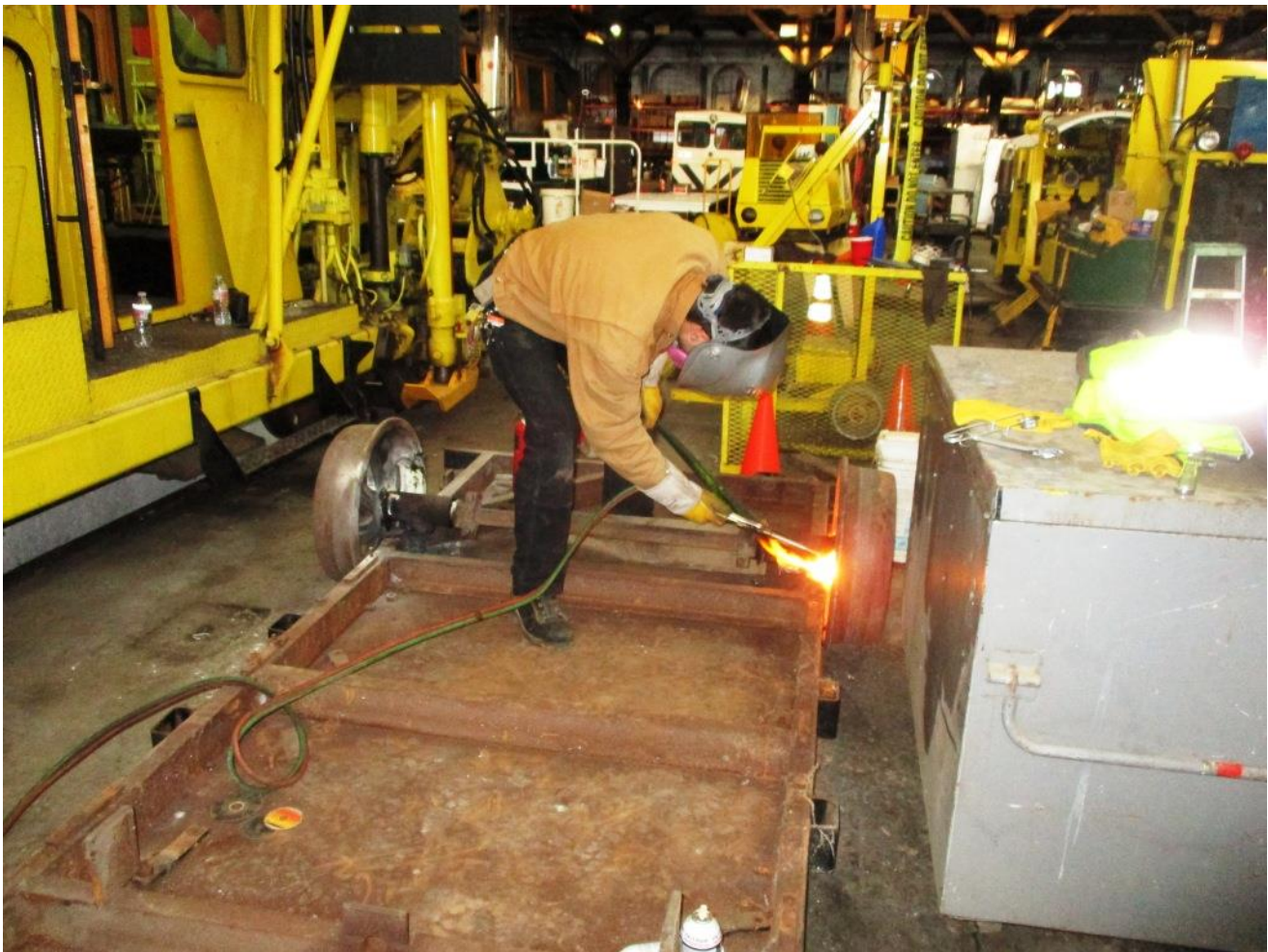
Saturday was the second iteration of the exciting, stimulating, thrilling, rousing, and exhilarating Part 214 Roadway Worker Safety Training. Fortunately, Heather, Joe, Michael Florentine, Chris H., Mike Willis, Art Fluter, and Frank had had passed the grueling and in-depth 214 exam, already, and were able to enjoy doughnuts before heading out on the line to continue tie replacement at Baths. Again, this week, Heather was EIC of the operation. First, the Team needed to deal with a tree that had fallen on the line at Mile Post 2.65. It had fallen thank to this week's "storm of the century." Mike W. fired-up the gas-powered chainsaw-on-a-stick and, with Art and Joe's help, managed to cut the tree back far enough from the track to clear the line. With the tree removed, the Team started pulling old rotten ties at Baths. Joe, on the Jackson 125 tie-exchanger, whipped through the marked ties with alacrity. Mike F., Art, Chris H., and Mike W., moved the old ties out of the way and placed new ties for insertion. Then, the Joe on the 125 pulled the new ties under the rails. Following Part 214 Training, Mike Taylor, Matt, and Weston Snyder joined the fun at which point a second round of tie-replacement began. As the ties came out, Mike T. lined the new ties for insertion. Frank took a turn on the 125, working with Matt and Weston, and pulled the new ties in. Mike F. headed back to the Shops and brought Green Machine 2 (GM2) to life. Soon, Mike F. and GM2 arrived at Baths, and with Art and Chris H.'s help, loaded all the dead-ties on its forks. Mike F. then headed to Setzer to deposit his cargo in the ever-growing dead-tie pile. Meanwhile, as Frank used the 125's track-jacks to lift the rails slightly, Matt, Weston, Mike W., Art, and Chris H. got tie-plates installed on all the new ties the Team pulled-in on Saturday. For the most part, the rain held off while the Team was out on the line but, by late afternoon, gray skies turned ominous so the Team packed-up and headed back to Old Sacramento. Just as the Team arrived in Old Sac., the skies opened up and drenched everyone. It was raining so hard that a plan to move the equipment currently stored in the Central Pacific Passenger Station to make room for the El Dorado, which is coming over from the Shops later in the week, was abandoned. But, not to fear. The equipment will be moved on Tuesday evening. It had been an exceeding successful day thanks to Heather's incredible leadership and a Team that is dedicated to building a better railroad. Indeed, it cannot be denied that your MOW Team is the backbone of the Railroad!

Despite all our progress, it was a sad week for the MOW Team as Chris Carlson announced his decision to resign as co-Manager of Maintenance of Way. Chris is a 20-year MOW veteran. Since 2008, Chris has served as a Manager of the MOW program initially as part of the original "management troika" along with Sandy Coots and John Chandler. Chris often made the drive to Sacramento from his home in Vallejo four times a week. He is an expert and natural machine operator as well as an incredibly skilled mechanic. His knowledge of track engineering is second to none. The entire Railroad owes Chris a debt of gratitude for all he's done over the years. Chris was an outstanding manager and everyone on the MOW Team – I, in particular – will miss him tremendously. We all wish him the best of luck with all his future endeavors and hope to see him amongst us again at some point in the not too distant future.

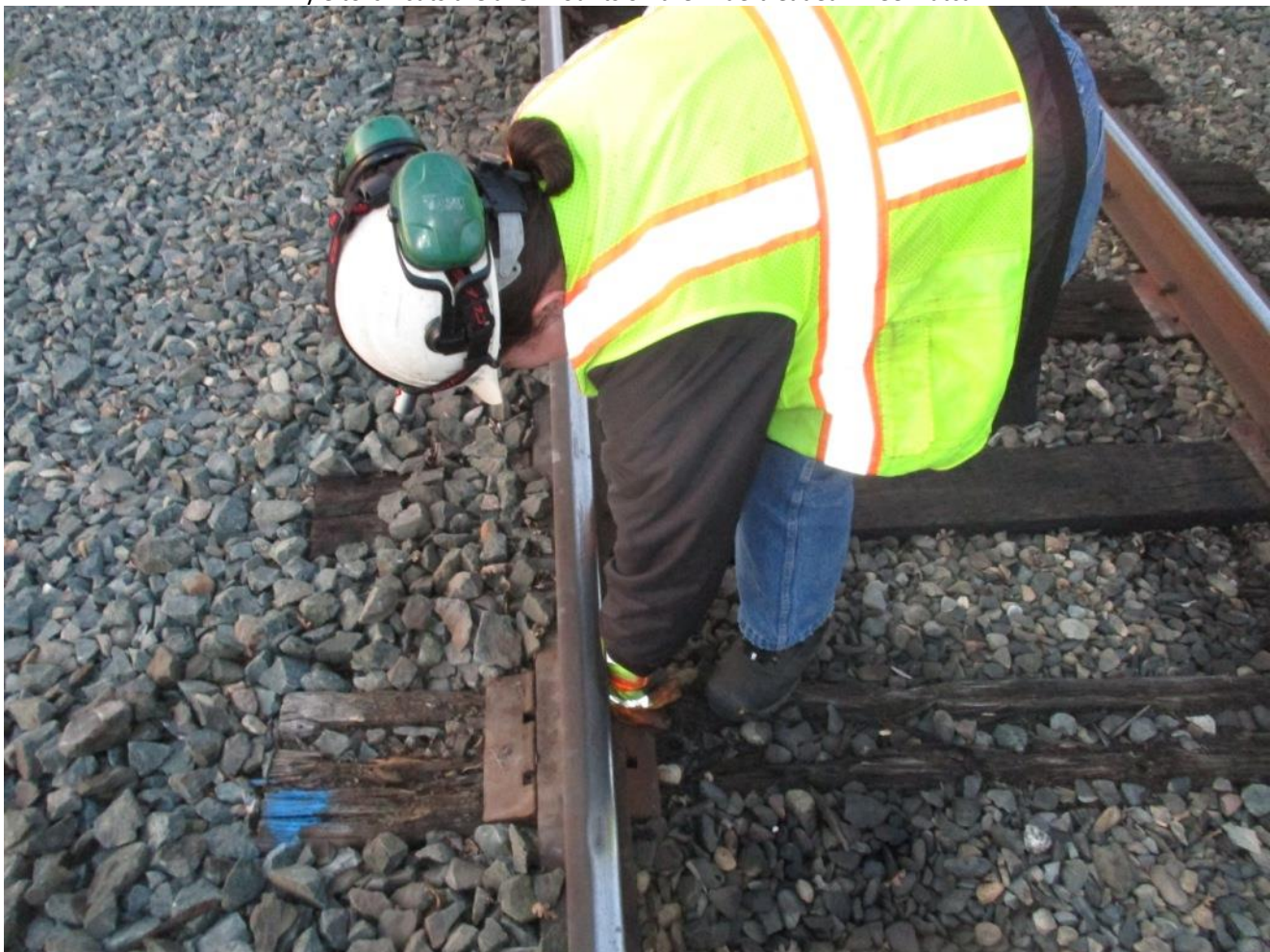
This coming week, the MOW Team will gather at or before 5 o'clock p.m. on Tuesday and Thursday in the Erecting Shop. The Weed Team will be weeding on Tuesday starting at 8:30 a.m. Saturday, the MOW adventure continues. We'll meet at the Shops at 8 o'clock a.m. Thanks to everybody for your continued support and dedication to the MOW program as we strive to build a better railroad.

See you out on the line,

Alan and Richard.



Kyle torch-cuts the axel mounts on the wide-treaded wheel flatcar



At Baths, Heather pulls spikes by hand



For those spikes that wouldn't come out by hand, Dave uses a claw bar to pull spikes



Chris H. brings in the transfer table as Frank pushes the ballast hopper car out of the Erecting Shop



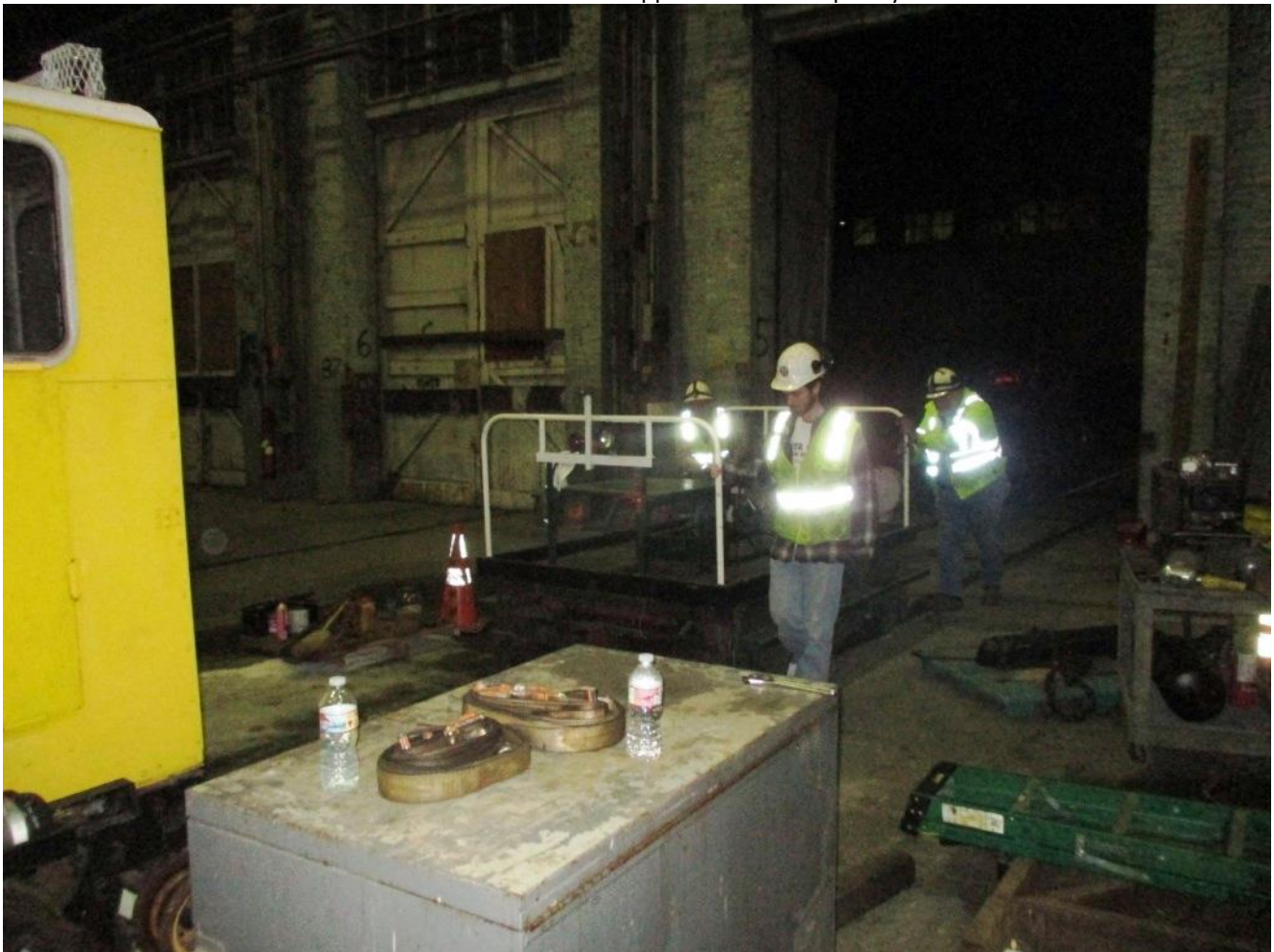
At the north end of the Erecting Shop, the temporary track needed to be relined so Frank hooks a strap to the forklift for Mike H. to move it



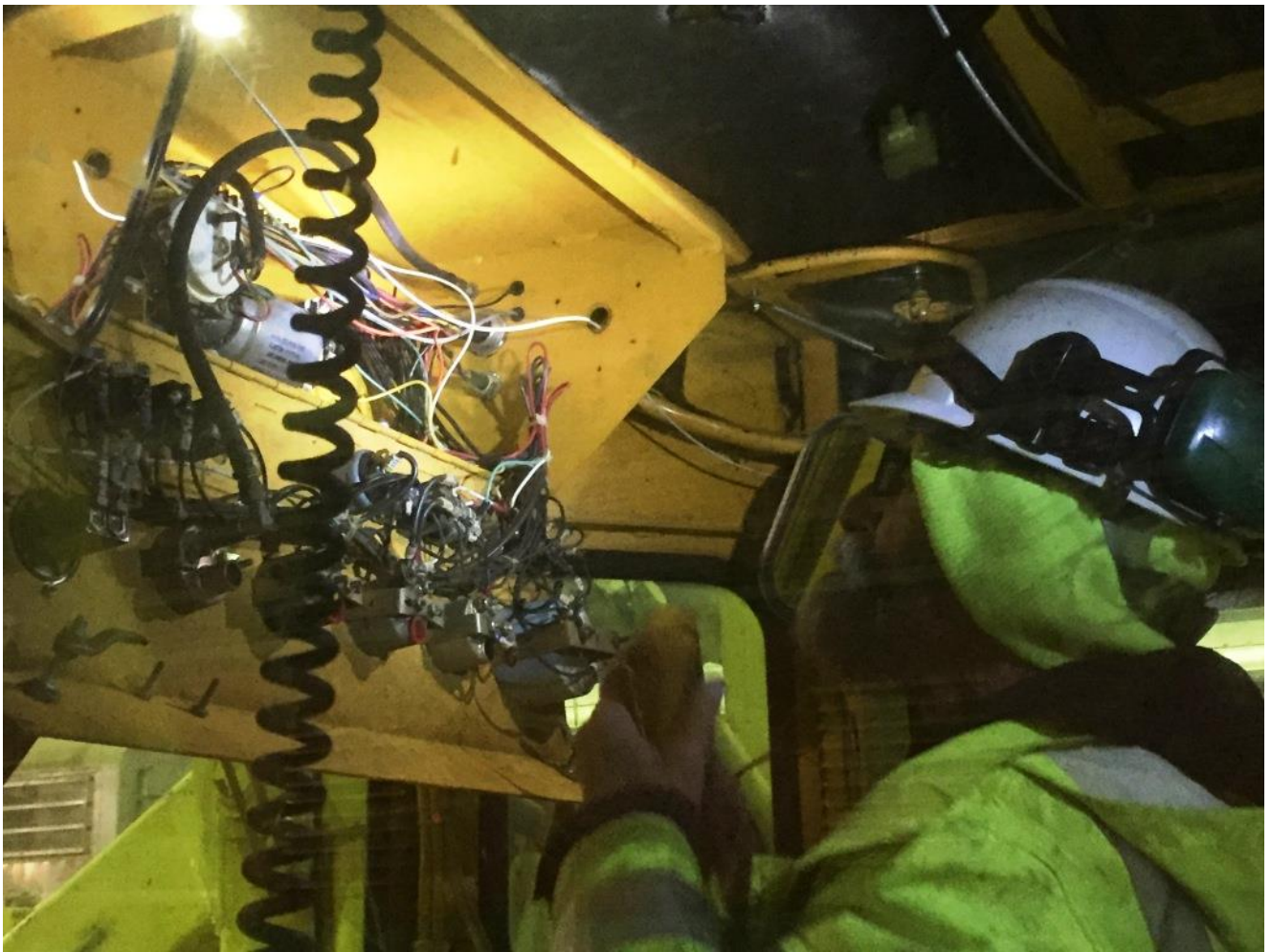
Frank verifies that the rails line up as Mike H. moves the track with the forklift



Frank and Chris H. move the hopper onto the temporary track



Matt, Frank, and Mike H. move the A-6 motorcar onto the track at Bay 5



Joe works to troubleshoot the problem with getting power to the tamper's work heads



At Part 214 Training, Mike T. presents the Pesticide Hazard Communication Program to the assembly



At Mile Post 2.65, Mike W. and Art plan their attack on the fallen tree



Mike W. starts cutting away at the intruder



Mike F. pulls spikes at Baths



Joe, on the Jackson 125 tie-exchanger, pulls old rotten ties out from under the rails





Mike T. rolls a new tie off the flatcar...



...Then lines it for insertion...



...Which Joe pulls into place



Matt and Weston work with Frank to insert tie-plates as the Jackson 125 lifts the rails with its jacking system



Art and Chris work with Mike F. on GM2 to load dead ties for disposal



Your MOW Team at work: Joe, Frank, Matt, Weston, and Mike W. plate ties; Mike F., Art and Chris H. load dead ties; Mike T. fills in holes