

Greetings!

This is your Maintenance of Way Team update for May 8, 2016. Your MOW Team was humming right along all week continuing its never-ending quest to build a better railroad. So let's keep the humming going by getting this update started right now.

Tuesday, Chris Carlson provided adult supervision for the MOW Team's evening crew. The Team was able to welcome its newest member, Joe Margucci, a graduate from the recent docent class. Welcome aboard, Joe! It's always a great pleasure to welcome a new Team member. Serving as the welcome committee were Pat Scholzen, Frederick Carr, Antony Filamor, Cliff Hayes, Jose Gomez, Mike Harris, Gene Peck, Frank Werry, and Heather Kearns. Heather gave Joe the "grand tour" then put him straight to work. Cliff and Fred began cutting chain-holes in six 55-gallon drums that will be used to hold spikes. The holes will allow the Team to use a chain to lift and move them with a forklift. Frank and Anthony continued servicing the Kalamazoo tug which is having all of its filters replaced. There was a bit of excitement over in the Boiler Shop where State Parks crews will be working on part of the roof-structure at the south end. In order to facilitate that work, the Team had to clear the area of all our equipment stored there. Jose and Joe traded off time on the forklift moving the section-gang machines, refrigerator, dumpsters, tool-caddy, rail-saw and rail-drill, and the like. By evening's end, the bay was clear. With that, the Team closed down the buildings and headed home. It had been a good evening, indeed.

Operations commenced early on Thursday. Our good friends from the Signal Department, Bill Myers, Dennis Noble, and Dave "Mega-wrath" Megeath dealt with some electrical issues with the bucket controls on the Man-lift. One of the control switches in the bucket was malfunctioning which threatened to strand Dave high above the track with no way down. The Dennis and Bill are electrical wizards and well suited to make the repair – which, of course, they did. They completed the bulk of the work before the sky opened up on them. Fred, Cliff, Anthony, Joe, Frank, Heather, and Harry Voss joined them in the evening. Fred and Cliff worked on the drums. They welded reinforcements above the chain-holes and drilled drain-holes in the bottoms of the drums so they won't fill-up with water when outside. Harry cleaned-out and organized the tool box on the Nordberg Super-B Hydra-spiker. Frank, Anthony, and Joe fueled machines and brought the Rail-Rod over to the Erecting Shop for repairs. Heather worked on the Kalamazoo and changed-out the ignition switch which was had been acting up. By this time, the rain was falling steadily. So, the Team declared, "Quitting-time USA," and headed home.

To the delight of the Train Crew Dispatchers, the MOW Team worked off-site on Saturday. The Team embarked on a great adventure to the Western Railway Museum (WRM) in Rio Vista. Our good friends at WRM had several crates of spikes they wished to give us. The spikes were too big for WRM's track but just the right size for ours. All we had to do was come and get them. But, they were in wooden crates that had rotted away, we'd have to transfer them to something else – ergo the 55-gallon drums. The Team used buckets to transfer the spikes from crates to the drums. So, following a round of fresh doughnuts, Harry, Heather, Steve Nemeth, Fred, Michael Florentine, and Anthony, loaded the six 55-gallon drums onto the Team's trusty Chevy Truck for the trip to Rio Vista. Chris would meet us there. Because a drum-full of spikes can weigh upwards of half a ton, the Team brought a second truck and the trailer to carry them. Chris arrived at WRM before us and managed to fill 10 buckets. Of course, the rain started falling just as we arrived. Unfortunately, our weather shaman, Steve, was unable to prevent it. But, at least we were prepared. Soon, we had a "bucket brigade" going with Harry, Steve, Chris, and Mike F. filling buckets while Heather, Fred, and Anthony carried them to the drums on the trucks and trailer. The folks at WRM were also giving our Signal Department an "interlocking" machine, the type that was frequently used in signal towers in yards and at sidings. They used their "Big Green Machine" to load it onto the truck. Spikes are heavy and, after a couple hours of carrying buckets of spikes from rotted-out old crates to the drums, the Team got in quite a work-out. As we often say, there's no need to join a gym when you volunteer with MOW!

The folks at WRM couldn't have been nicer. After we dug-up the very last spike, they arranged to give us a ride in one of their newly restored street cars, the *Portland Traction #4001* (which was not on regular service for the day). The volunteers at WRM spent nearly four years meticulously restoring the 4001 which made its debut on the WRM tracks in September of last year. They did a magnificent job. It's absolutely beautiful. So, the MOW Team scurried aboard for the special ride to the very end of the line (beyond their normal stopping point). Twice we had to halt for a bouquet of pheasants that managed to get between the rails but had difficulty with the concept of getting out. Eventually, they figured it out and we proceeded on our way. The Team was also given a special tour of the WRM car building which contains some magnificent artifacts. We really appreciated the hospitality of the fantastic folks at the Western Railway Museum!

Meanwhile back at the Shops in Sacramento, load-master Fred, with Mike and Steve's help, removed the spike-barrels from the trucks and trailer. Harry and Anthony spotted them in our materials yard. With everything put away and the Team called it a day.

This coming week, the Tuesday and Thursday Shops crews will gather at or before 5 o'clock as usual. On Thursday, the Mighty Weed Team is heading south of the I-5 Bridge with the man-lift to continue trimming trees on the Sutterville line. Meet by the turntable behind the CSRM at 8:30 a.m. Saturday, we'll be back out on the line tormenting the Crew Dispatchers with a multitude of train order requests. Meet at the Shops at 8 o'clock a.m. sharp. There will be doughnuts. Again, our wholehearted thanks to the wonderful folks at WRM. Not only did they save us a ton of money with the spike donation but, also, they made it a good day for your MOW Team. And, of course, many thanks to the fantastic volunteers and supporters of the MOW Team for helping us in our quest to build a better railroad.

See you out on the line,

Alan, Chris, and Richard.



Cliff cuts holes in 55-gallon drums for lifting chains

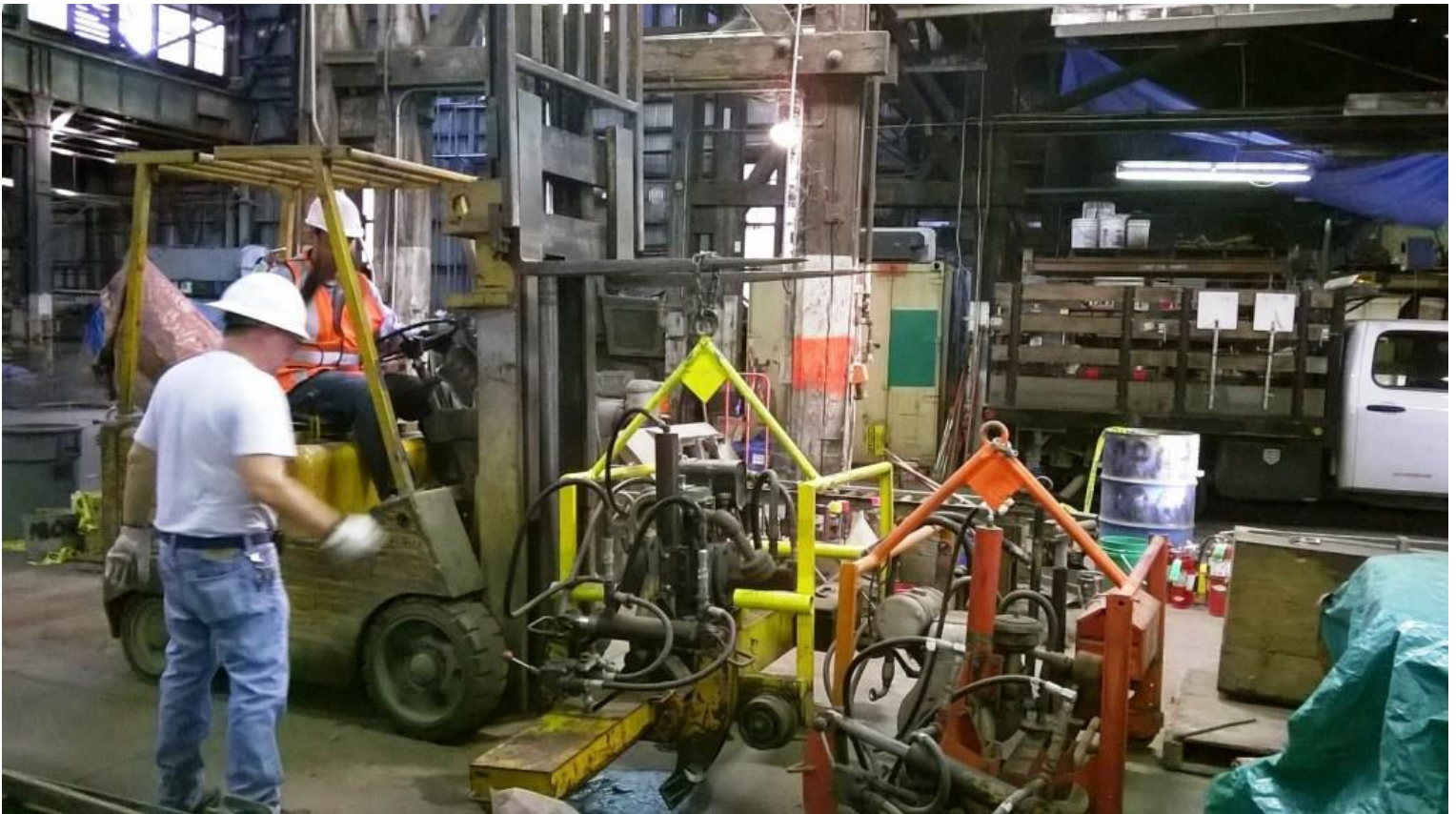


Frank and Anthony work on the Kalamazoo





Joe grabs a dumpster to remove it from the bay in the Boiler Shop where roof-work is to commence



Jose and Mike H. move section-gang machines out of the bay





Bill and Dennis repairing the man-lift's bucket control



Anthony and Frank grab a drum of diesel to fuel equipment





Harry organizing the tool-box on the Super-B Hydra-spiker



Frank, Joe, and Anthony take the "rail-rod" over to the Erecting Shop for repairs





Trucks are loaded and we're ready to roll!



Heather and Anthony grab a 55-gallon drum





Fred and Heather get buckets of spikes in position for transfer to the 55-gallon drums



Mike F., Chris, Heather, and Fred transferring spikes





Harry and Mike F. dig out spikes from the spike pile



Heather on bucket brigade brings spikes for Anthony and Fred to dump into drums





WRM's "Green Machine" loads the interlocking machine onto the truck



Harry, Mike F., Steve, and Chris waded through a crate of spikes





Train time at WRM: the first train of the day passes our work-site as Fred dumps spikes



Harry, Mike F., Anthony, and Fred chain-down the spike drums





The MOW Team's weather shaman, Steve, came prepared for wet weather



Harry gets the chains in place





The MOW Team enjoying their special ride in the Portland Traction #4001



Next, the Team got a tour of the Car Building





Back at the Shops in Sacramento, Anthony, Fred, and Harry prepare to unload the spike drums



Mike F. guides Steve on our Green Machine to grab the interlocking machine off the truck