

Greetings!

This is your Maintenance of Way Team update for July 15, 2018. The lazy days of summer are upon us and you MOW Team's week kind of reflected that. But, don't you worry. There'll still be plenty of words for this update. No laziness there. So, let's get the words flowing right now!

Pat Scholzen, Chris Howard, Cliff Hayes, Mike Harris, Jack Shrive, Heather Kearns, and Gene Peck faced a very unusual and unsettling situation on Tuesday when they came to the realization that, for all intents and purposes, all the MOW Team's machines are working. There's nothing broken down and in need of repair. So, without any major shops projects to occupy their time, Team members decided to take on some of the small projects that tend to get put off. Heather and Jack took on cleaning out and organizing the MOW Team's truck. Cliff and Mike H. sought out and cut strips of metal for making some modifications to the tie-racks that hold ties on flatcars so they won't fall off when being transported. Chris hopped on the forklift and pulled a 110-pound switch-kit off the pallet-racking. These kits contain switch parts organized by rail-size. We needed different heel-blocks for the switch the Team is building behind the Museum. Mike H. then took the forklift outside to grab the wing-rails for the frog at Switch 19. Restoring that frog has been a back-burner project for some time because the incessant hand-grinding necessary to shape the rails to fit in the frog structure. It burns out people and grinders. So, Al DiPaolo and Jim Bays of the SSRR Mechanical Shops have volunteered to use the big milling machine to shape them properly. If it works, we'll be able to restore the East Siding (Auxiliary Track) at Baths to service (YEA!). So, that sort of sums up your MOW Team's lazy summer Tuesday evening.

Thursday, Ed Kottal arrived extra early and fired-up the back-hoe to do some more ground work up between the 150 Track and 560 Track where the new switch and storage track are being built. Alan Hardy took the heel-blocks that Chris uncovered on Tuesday and cut them using the big band-saw in the Boiler Shop to fit better with the 10-foot switch-points on the switch we're building. Heather, Chris, Jack, Frank Werry, Samantha Houck, and Mike H. realized that we do have machine in need of repair: "Ol' Yeller" – the little yellow tractor. We wanted to use it to help grade the roadbed for the new storage track behind the Museum. Alas, it broke down and was left in the compound behind the Museum's parking lot. So, the Team set off for Old Sac. Jack took out the truck. Mike H. used the propane forklift to lift Ol' Yeller into the back of the truck which Jack, Ed and, Chris strapped it down. While in Old Sac., the Team added diesel and oil to a couple machines. Jack filled the Kalamazoo's tank and Chris topped-off the Jackson 125. Then, the Team returned to the Shops where Ol' Yeller was extracted by the Big Green Machine (Big Green). Samantha and Mike H. got it over to the Erecting Shops. And thus, another lovely summer MOW evening came to a close.

Joe Margucci, Michael Florentine, and Heather arrived extra early on Saturday morning to deploy the MOW Team's work train. Then our good friend, fellow MOW Team member, Weedie, and *Assistant Designated Supervisor of Locomotive Engineers*, Dave Megeath, celebrated his promotion to steam engineer by supplying doughnuts for the MOW Team! Although it wasn't in a pink box, Heather, Joe, and Mike accepted Dave's kind offering on behalf of the entire MOW Team and thus demonstrating the axiom that the best way to commemorate a major milestone in one's life is to provide doughnuts for the MOW Team! Thank you and congratulations, Dave! Mike, Heather, and Joe got the Dave's offering back to the Shops forthwith where Alan, Bill Hastings, Mike H., Ed, Samantha, Bev Ratzlaff, John Rexroth, and Weston Snyder quickly devoured the contents. The Team was then briefed on the day's plan which was to get the mechanics of the switch put together. Mike H., Samantha, Alan, Bill, and Joe began by removing the old heel-blocks and fitting the modified heel-blocks. Installing heel-blocks is always a bit tricky and even more so with this switch as, due to the confined space, we're using 10-foot points rather than standard 16-foot points. This requires a greater "arc" in the movement of the points at the heel of the switch (the pivot point). Joe prepped head-blocks for the fitting of the switch-machine. Bill and Ed then shimmied the head-blocks a bit to center switch points over the gauge plate. The connecting rod was attached to the transit-clips and testing began to see if we had enough pivot in the heels to provide sufficient arc at the points. Further modifications and adjustments were made. Then, Bev, Mike H., and Alan lined up and bolted the closure rail to the west heel-block. It was then measured and marked so it could be cut to fit into the frog at the other end. Samantha and Joe found a nine-foot tie and carried it to the empty crib just south of the switch-points proving that they "don't need no stinkin'" machine to insert a new tie! Mike H., Bev, Ed, and Bill set up the rail-saw and began cutting the closure rail to length. Meanwhile, Mike F. on Big Green, and John were working their hearts out to move and organize the piles of ties and rail up near the fence along the UP Main in order to clear the space for the construction of the storage track. With the closure rail now cut to size, Mike F. and John came in and removed the extra piece.

Following lunch, Weston arrived for the afternoon shift. That's when the really hard work began: curving the closure rail. This required the strong-backs of the entire Team. Using lining-bars and track-jacks, the Team would shove the rail one way, then push it the other to curve and gauge it at the same time. Spikes were driven to hold the curve. With the curve set, the rail-drill was brought in. Heather, Mike F., and Mike H. set it up and drilled the bolt holes in the closure-rail to attach it to the frog. Nipping, plating, and spiking the closure-rail were next. While Bev and Joe deployed the hydraulic spike driver, Weston and Mike F. couldn't help themselves. They deployed spike-mauls and interpreted good, old fashioned track-gang railroading by hand-spiking as many as they could. Well, we are an *interpretive museum* after all. To make a long story short, the Team created a beautiful and perfectly in gauge curve in the closure rail – and they did it all by hand, just like a Rolls Royce. By 4 o'clock, it was cresting 100 degrees and the Team was getting a bit pooped. So, they packed up their wares, put everything away, and headed back to the Shops. Things are really starting to come together on this switch project thanks to your highly dedicated mighty MOW Team!

This coming week, the MOW Team will meet on Tuesday and Thursday starting at or before 5 o'clock p.m. Saturday, we'll continue our efforts to make the Railroad great again starting at 8 o'clock a.m. Thanks to all the MOW Team for your extraordinary efforts on behalf of the railroad.

See you out on the line,

Alan and Richard.

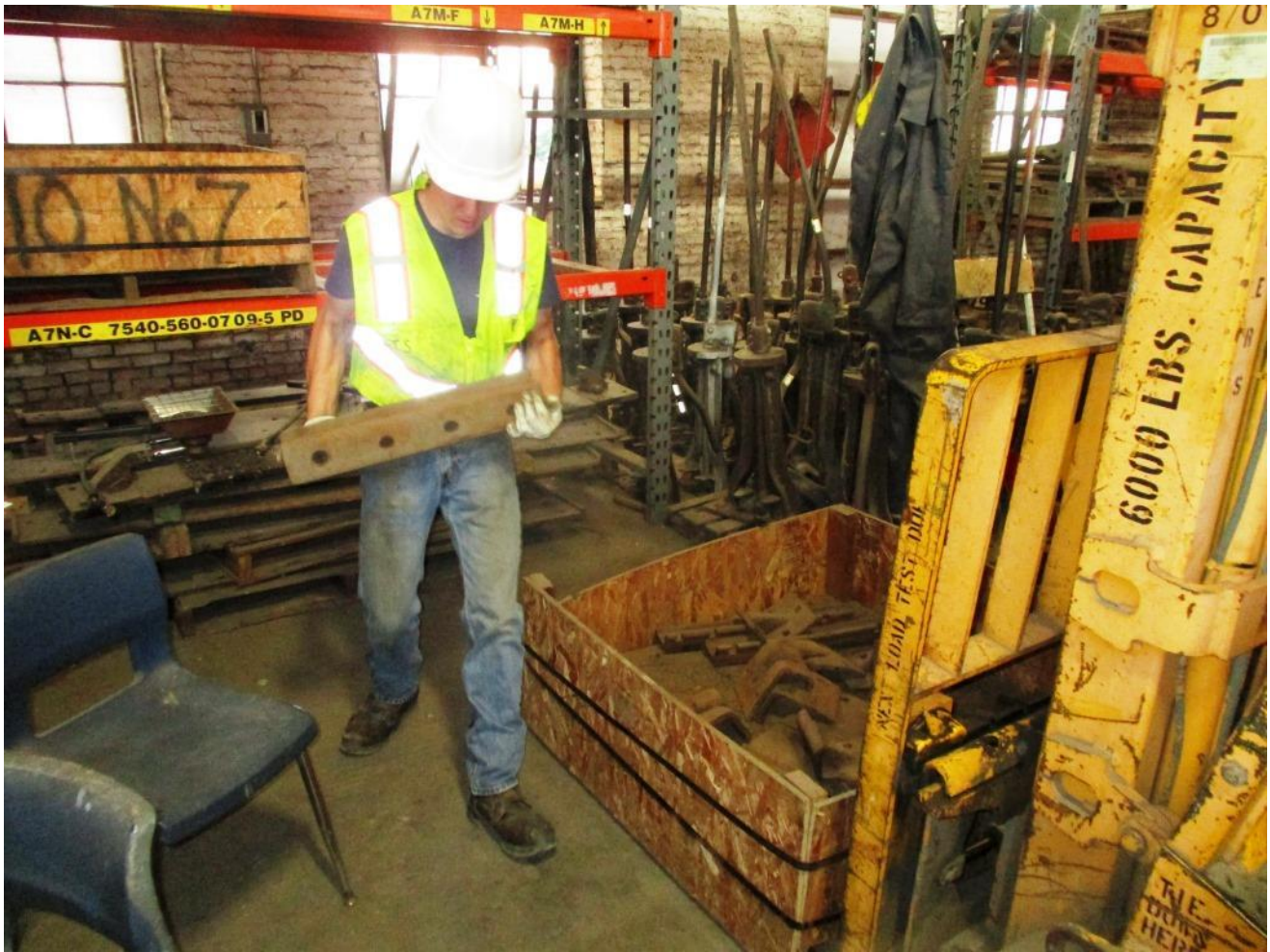


Mike H. and Chris set up the little band-saw to cut strips of metal for the flat-car tie-racks

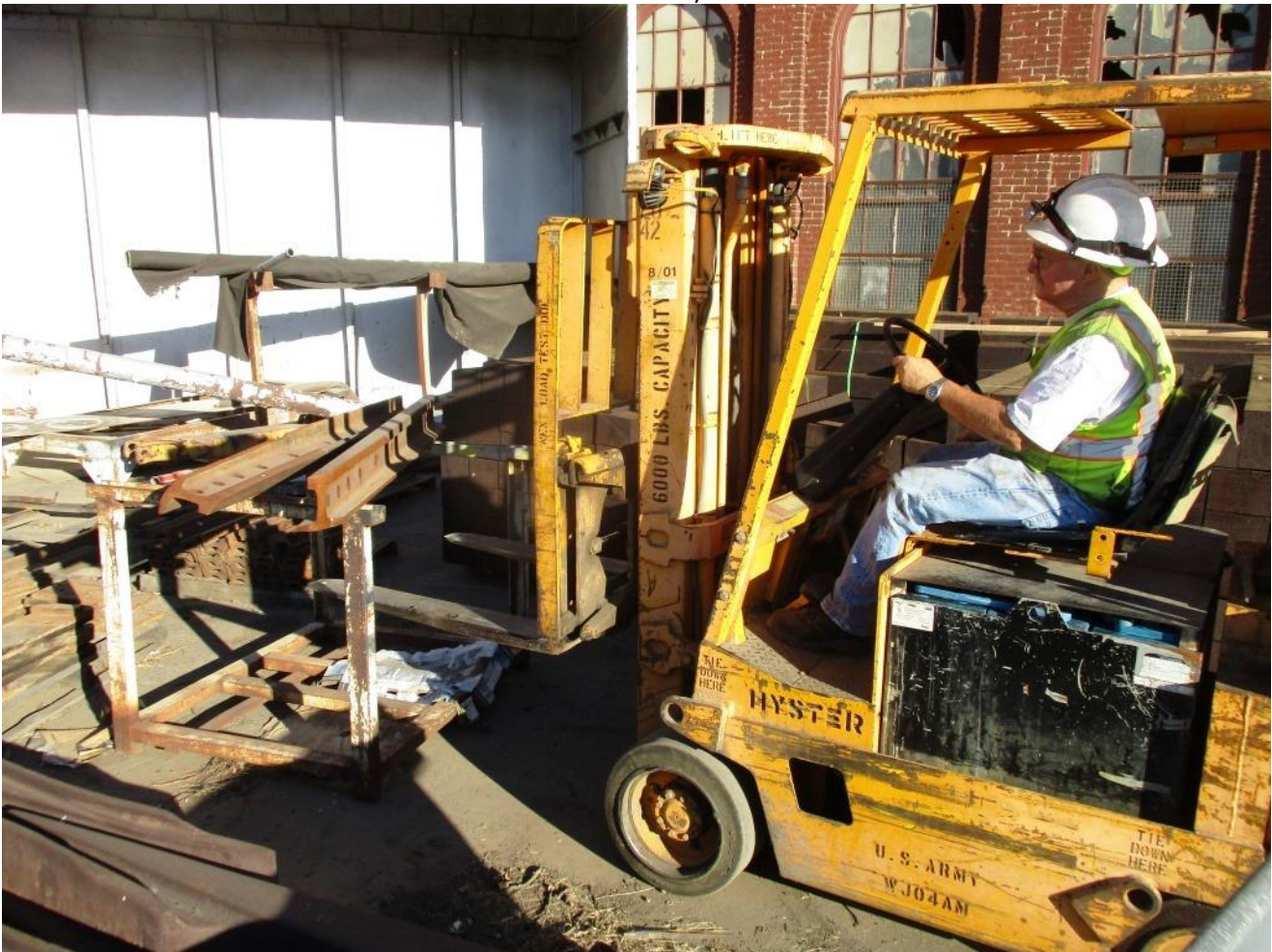


Chris grabs a switch kit with the forklift





Jack finds the necessary heel-block



Mike H. takes the wing-rails for the Switch 19 grof into the Erecting Shop





Mike H. loads "Ol' Yeller" onto the MOW Team truck



Jack tops-off the Kalamazoo's fuel tank





The Big Green Machine removes Ol' Yeller from the back of the MOW truck



Mike H. works with Samantha on the forklift moving Ol' Yeller into the Erecting Shop



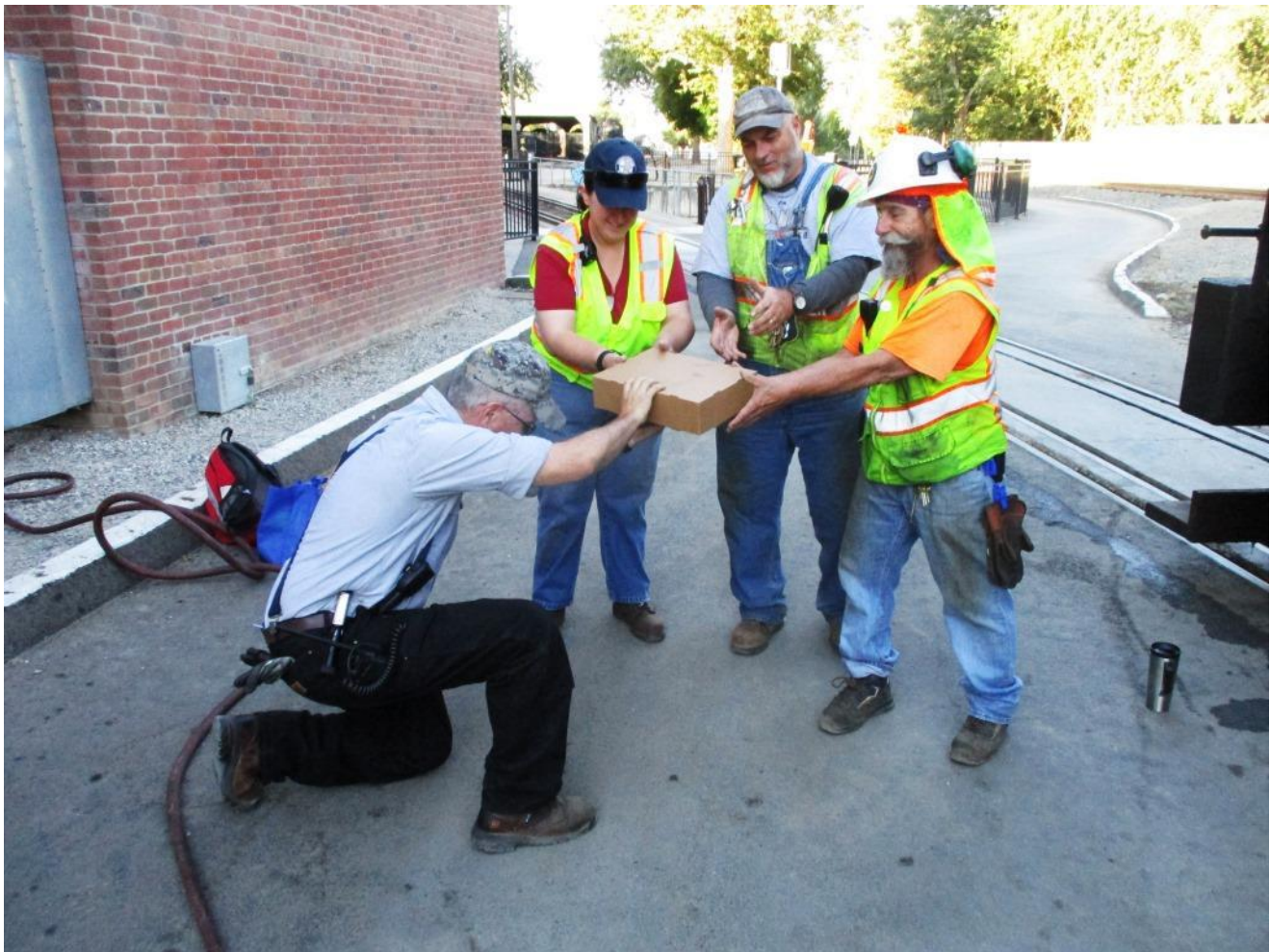


In the pre-doughnut hour, Heather, Mike F., and Joe deploy the MOW Work Train



Joe spins the MOW Work Train on the turntable





Newly promoted steam engineer, Dave, genuflects and properly presents doughnuts to his MOW Team brethren



Meanwhile, back at the Shops, initial confusion was clarified...





Mike H. directs Mike F. on Big Green as a pallet of switch components is brought into the tight confines of the work-site



Mike H., Samantha, Alan, Bill, and Joe remove the heel-blocks installed last week to replace them with the modified blocks





Bill, Joe, and Ed work on moving the head-block to center the switch-points over the gauge-plate

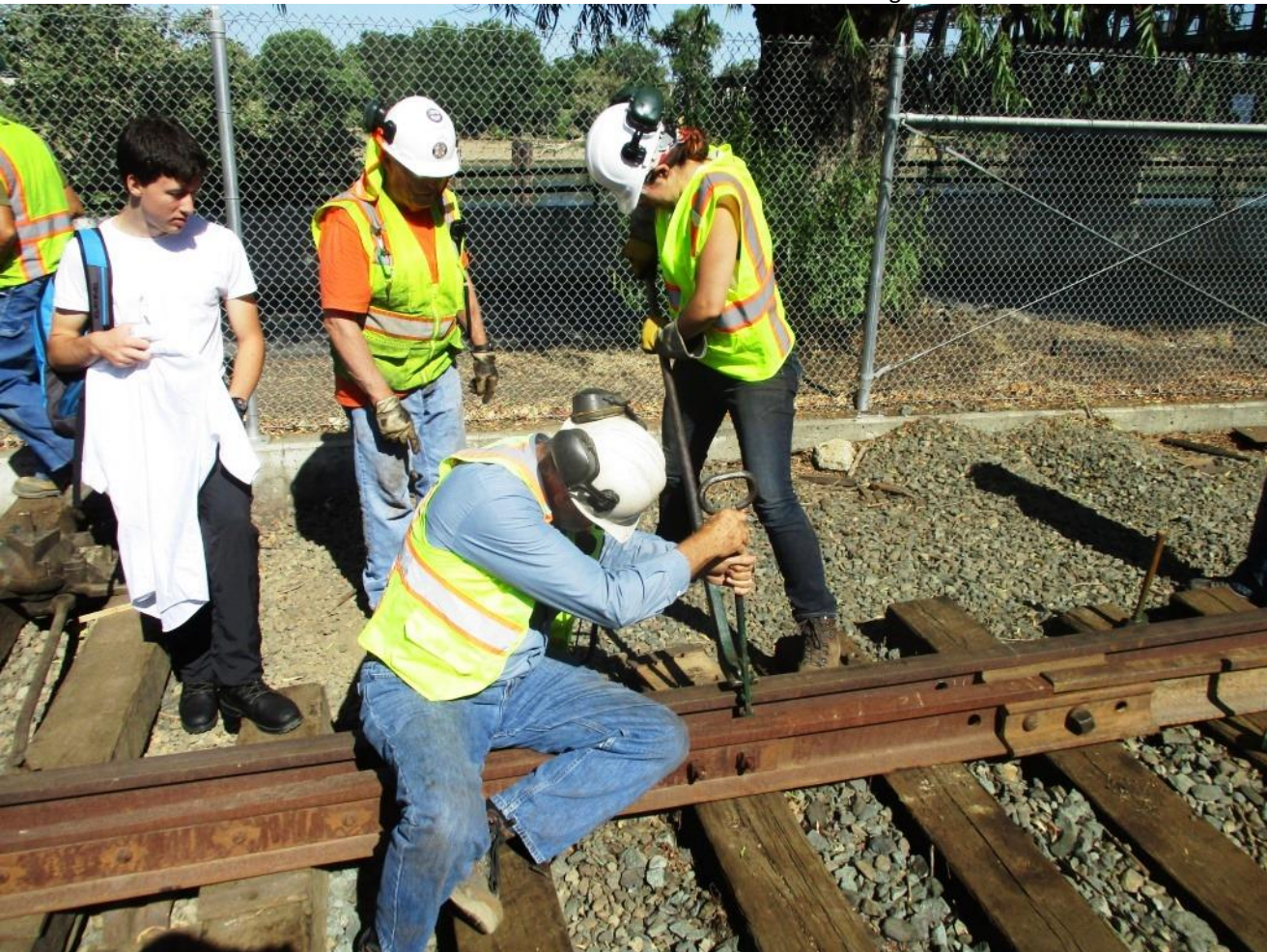


Alan, Bev, and Mike H. reassemble the heel-block on the west rail





Bev and Bill and connect the closure-rail to the heel-block and tighten the bolts



A wayward spike was blocking the point from moving so, Alan uses the road-master to grab it while Samantha pulls it with the claw-bar





Samantha and Joe prove that they don't need a machine to move and insert a tie



Samantha and Joe get the tie under the rails without mechanical assistance





Ed shields sparks as Mike H. cuts the closure-rail to fit with the frog and Bill stands ready with the water pump



Meanwhile, Mike F. on Big Green and John reorganize the piles of ties and rail which were sitting right where the new track will go





John directs Mike F. on Big Green as rail is moved in preparation for building the storage track



Holy moly, Batman! In one of the oddest things ever to happen out on the line, a bat lands on Heather's safety glasses! Yikes!





Next, Bev takes over on the rail-saw and slices away at the closure-rail

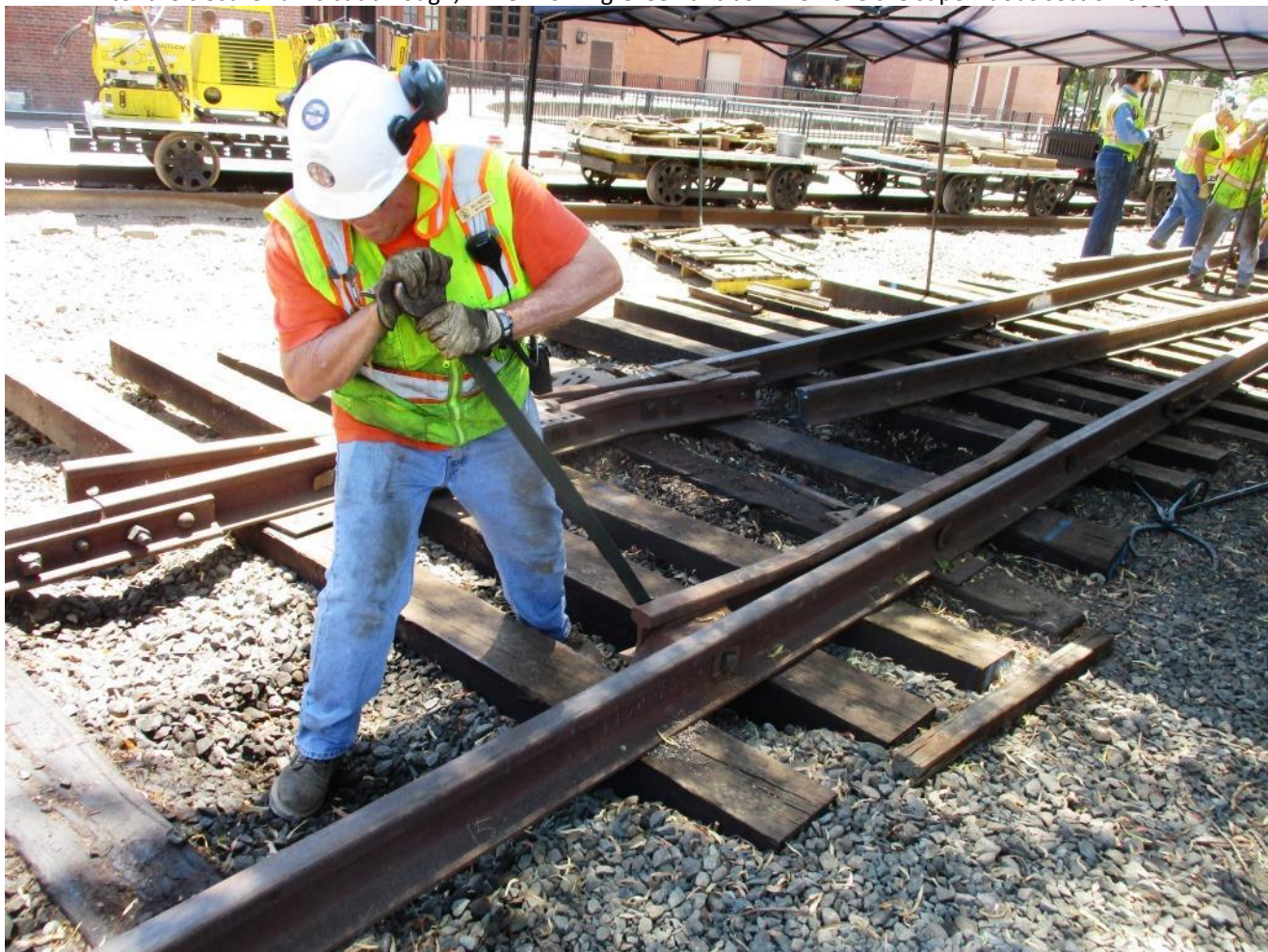


Bev shields sparks with the shovel as Mike H. makes the final cut



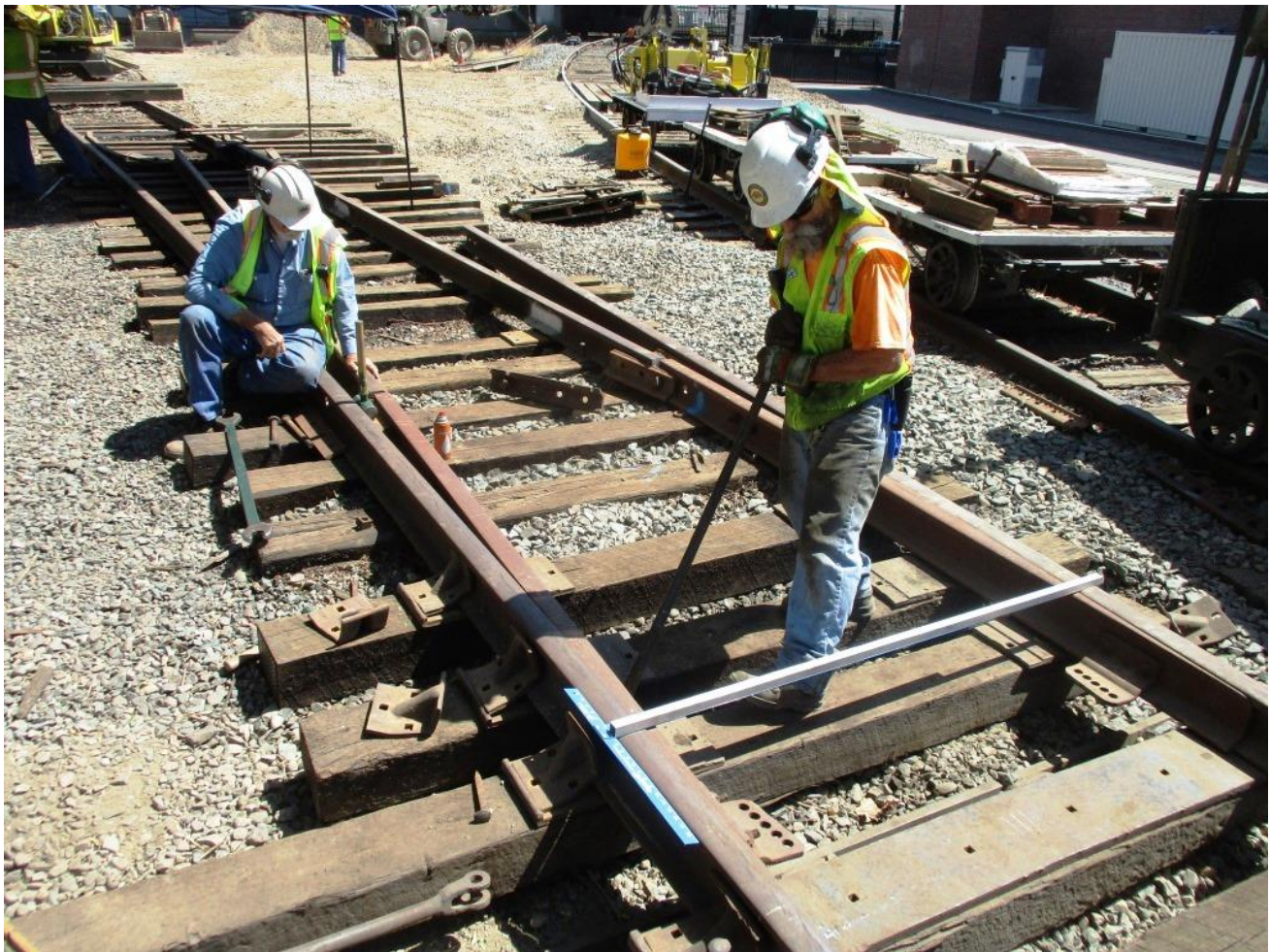


After the closure-rail is cut through, Mike F. on Big Green and John remove the superfluous section of rail



Bill tightens bolts on the guard-rail



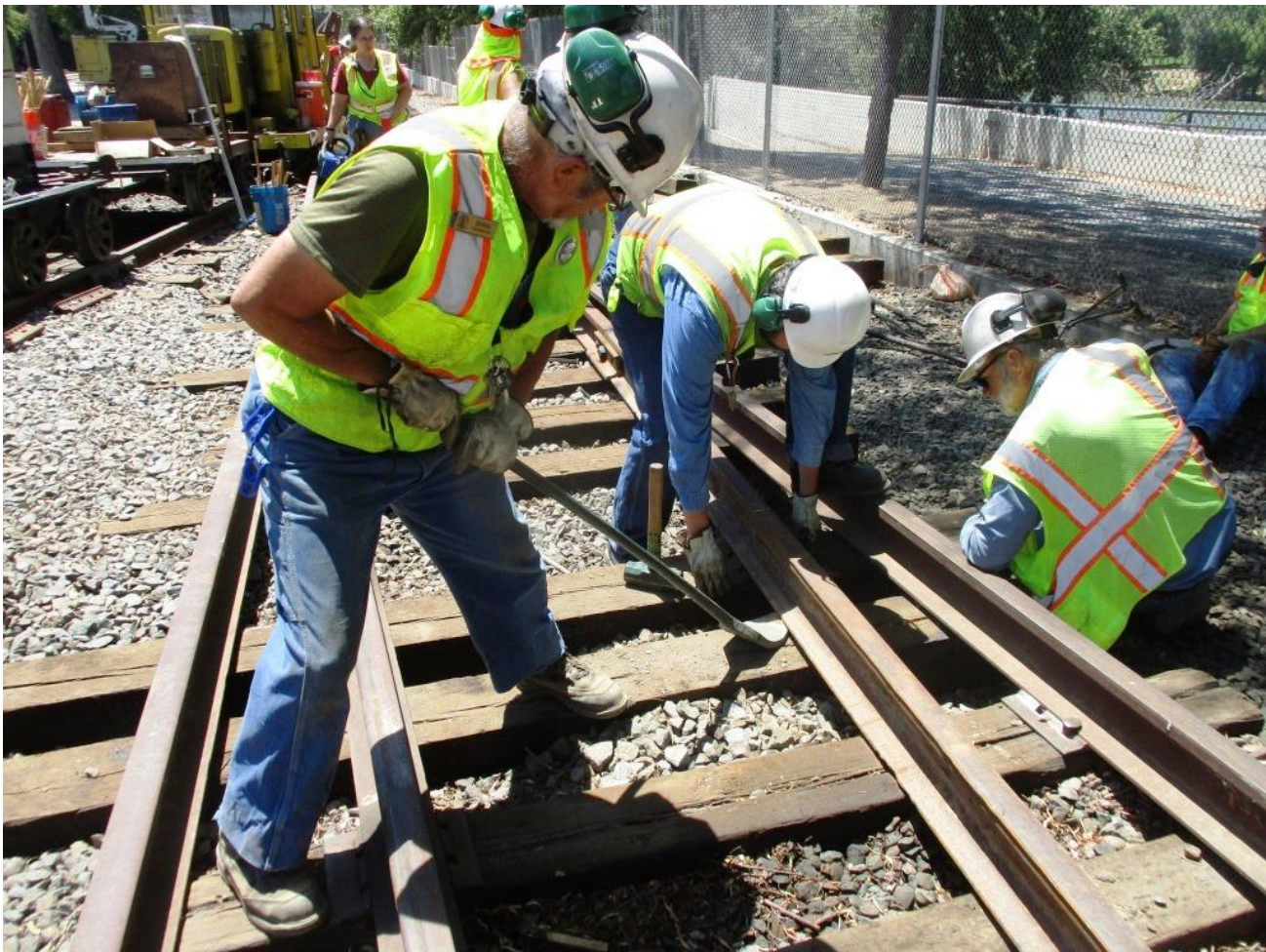


Alan and Joe make precision measurements in furtherance of adjusting the proper movement of the points



When it gets near 100-degrees out, a track-wrench makes the perfect leaning post



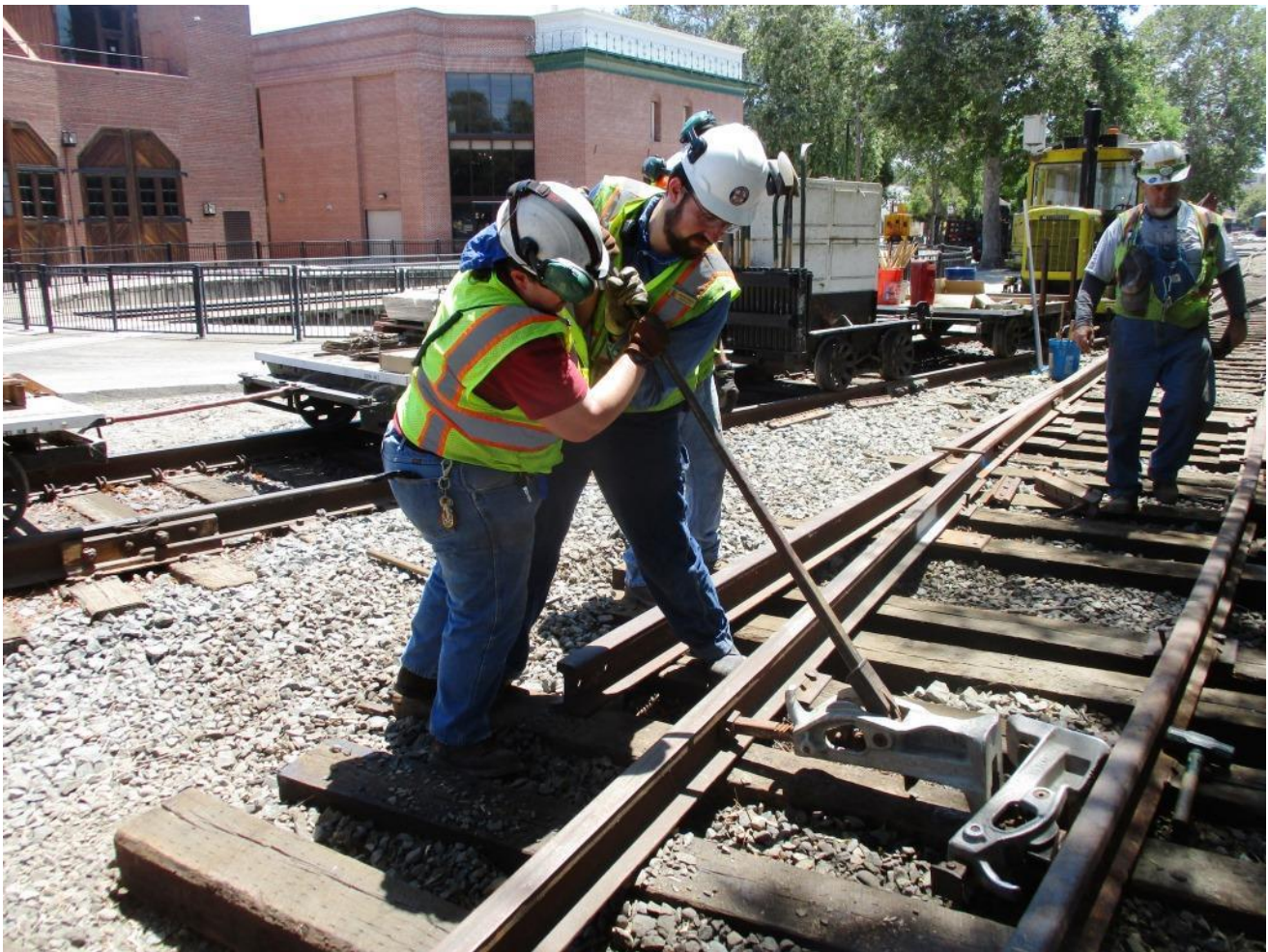


As they start putting the curve in the closure-rail, Ed nips it up for Weston to place a tie-plate



With the curve progressing, Joe nips the tie as Mike H. drives a spike with the hydraulic spike driver





Heather and Weston combine effort on a track-jack as they press more curve into the closure-rail



Bev drives spikes with the hydraulic spike-driver to hold the newly formed curve in the closure-rail





With the closure-rail sufficiently curved, Heather, Mike H., and Mike F. deploy the rail-drill to drill the bolt holes for connecting it to the frog



Despite the availability of modern technology, Weston and Mike F. interpret old-fashioned track-gang railroading by driving spikes by hand





And now Mike F. takes-up the spike-maul as Bill nips up the tie

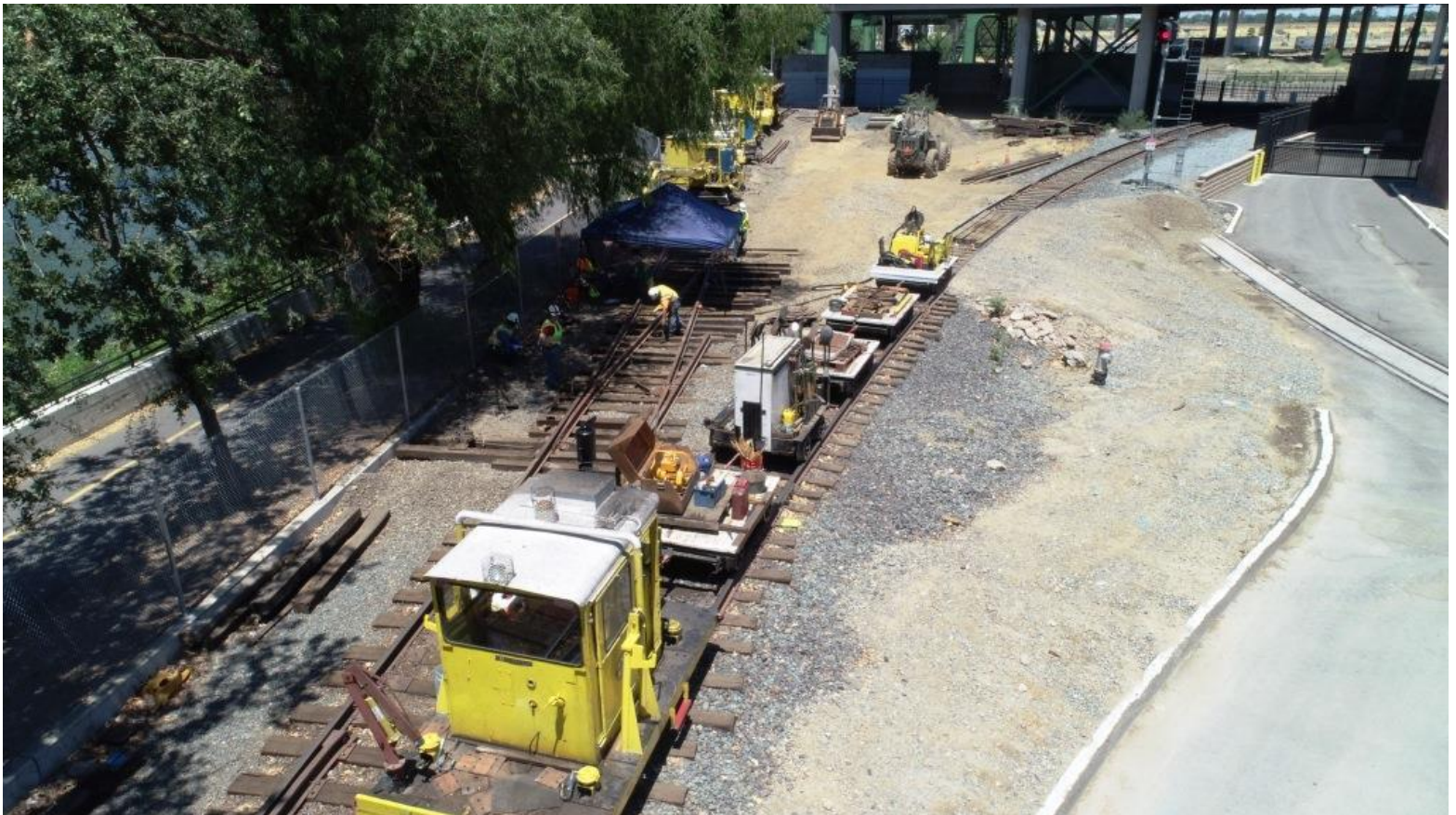


Yep, it's really coming together nicely





Ed uses his whirly-bird drone to capture some overhead shots of MOW Team's work-site



The Work Train sits on the 560 Track providing the Team with great access to its equipment for building the new switch off the 150 Track





Big Green grabs the pallet containing the rail-drill off the flat-car



Bill, Weston, and Heather (center left) work on curving the closure-rail as Joe and Mike H. (lower right) deploy the rail-drill