

Greetings!

This is your Maintenance of Way Team update for August 26, 2018. A milestone week for your MOW Team as it completed principle construction on the storage-track switch behind the Museum. So, let's get the principle construction of this update underway right now.

Tuesday, Joe Margucci, Heather Kearns, Pat Scholzen, Cliff Hayes, Chris Howard, Alan Hardy, Mike Taylor, Kevin Hecteman, Mike Harris, Harry Voss, Gene Peck, and Frank Werry were all on hand for an evening of MOW fun. The principle job of the evening was to get the Kalamazoo and two flatcars over to Old Sacramento for the Weed Team to use on Thursday. Conductor Kevin lead the Team of Heather, Mike H., Chris, and Frank. After getting their train all set-up, Conductor Kevin conducted a smooth crossing of the UP Main to Old Sacramento. The Team then secured everything up on the 150 Track all ready for use by the Weedies. Back in the Shops, Pat, Cliff, Gene, and Harry continued to build anti-vandalism shields for the ride-on spike-driver. Joe worked on the A-5 motorcar building shunts for its wheels that will trigger the grade-crossing warning systems along the line. Indeed, your MOW Team had the progress train running on time this last Tuesday.

The Weed Team continued its grand tree-trimming adventure on Thursday with a trip down to Miller Park. After a slight delay to deal with the "Chaos of the Keys," an ancient ceremony resulting from mass bureaucracy, Mike T., Dave Megeath, Steve Wilson, Dave Wolf, and Ed Kottal set off for Miller Park with their full complement of implements to take on the green invasion. The Weedies employed their gas-powered chainsaw on sticks to make quick work of those lengthy limbs daring to grow into the right-of-way. They then pulverized the debris by sending it through the chipper. Yes, it was a productive day at the south end of Miller Park with great piles of chips created and expertly scattered to complete a job well done. Many thanks to the hard work and dedication of the mighty Weed Team, without whom, we couldn't run trains.

Thursday, Jim Bays and Toby Easterbrook of the SSRR Mechanical/Restoration Shop continued working on milling new wing-rails for the frog at Switch 19. Our sincere thanks to Jim and his team. They are doing amazing work on a very complicated and complex project. Over in the Erecting Shop, Joe, Chris, Matt McCracken, Jack Shrive, Kyle Blackburn, Samantha Houck, Mike H., Alan, and Frank kept the MOW Team rolling. It was garbage night at MOW – so Mike H. fired up the Big Green Machine and brought the big dumpster around to the north end of the erecting shop. Kyle, Matt, and Jack fulfilled childhood dreams of being garbage men and took out the trash. Joe and Samantha finished up building and installing the shunts on the A-5's wheels. Chris and Frank continued work on the Rail-Rod, adjusting the brakes and clutch which they identified as issues when they took it out last week. Hanging over the MOW end of the Boiler Shop is a large sign that says, "SSRR Maintenance of Way: Safe and Proud." Matt felt it would be appropriate to move it to our headquarters in the Erecting Shop. So, Kyle strapped on a harness and used the man-lift cage on the forklift to retrieve it from the rafters. They'll clean it up and hang it in our Erecting Shop home.

Team Early Bird – Heather, Joe, and Mike Florentine – got the MOW Team's work-train set up and over to Old Sacramento on Saturday morning in the pre-doughnut hour. At the morning briefing, Mike F., Joe, and Heather were joined by Alan, Bill Hastings, Pam Tatro, Ed, Matt, Mike Miller, Kyle, Steve Nemeth, and Weston Snyder for a lively round of doughnuts. Saturday, the Team would complete work on the switch behind the Museum. But first, Ed, Heather, and Joe would head down to the Circle of Lights on the SSRR Mainline to deal with an issue at a rail joint identified by our trusty track inspectors. Of course, they made quick work of it and restored the railroad to safe operation. At the switch behind the Museum, Mike F., Steve, Bill, Pam, Matt, and Mike M. got right to work inserting tie-plates and setting spikes where needed. Then focus shifted to the switch machine which needed to be hooked up to the switch-points and adjusted to make the switch full functional. Alan, Mike M., Mike F., Bill, and Steve worked through the challenges of getting the thing to function properly. It took a majority of the morning to adjust the proper placement of the connecting rod on the transit clips as well as setting the control (switch) rod on the machine. But, as you can imagine, this team of experts got the job done. The points now fit tightly against both stock-rails when the switch is thrown. By now, Heather, Joe, and Ed were back from their adventure and anxious to get to work plating and spiking of the stock-rails, closure-rail, and frog. Matt and Pam nipped ties and set spikes. Jack stopped by on his way to his paid-gig and set a few spikes just to add a little fun to his day. With the switch machine now functioning, Mike F., Steve, Ed, Bill, Weston, Joe, Mike M., joined Pam and Matt driving spikes. Weston, Steve and Mike F. had to do some spike driving the old-fashioned way – by hand. It's just in their natures. But, sanity eventually prevailed and soon the hydraulic spike-driver was driving spikes the new-fashioned way. Kyle joined the Team after lunch. The afternoon project was to correct a cross-level issue. The east rail was about seven-eighths of an inch lower than the west rail. Kyle, Heather, Joe, Ed, the Mikes, Matt, Weston and Steve set up track jacks and lifted the east rail. Alan used the track level to determine the amount of raise. Once level, the Team used lining bars and hand-tampers to shove rock under the ties to hold level. With that, the switch was declared done. Now, once the ground work is complete (by outside contractor), the diverging rail can be built later this fall. Your MOW Team built this switch by hand – just like a Rolls Royce. Except, the switch will be more reliable. What an amazing job by an incredible group of volunteers – the best group of people you'd ever want to know. Many thanks to everyone who worked on this project and supported our efforts.

Editor's Note: As many of you have heard by now, I have been afflicted by a rather virulent form of cancer. This week, I start an aggressive chemo-therapy regime. As such, I am forced to take a leave of absence from Railroad for about four months. Unfortunately, that means **this is the final MOW Team update of 2018**. In the meantime, MOW will continue its grand adventure and heroic quest of building a better railroad every Tuesday and Thursday evening starting at or before 5 o'clock in the Erecting Shop. Somebody, I'm sure, will take over providing doughnuts every Saturday morning starting at 8 o'clock a.m. It's truly been the honor and privilege of my life to have the opportunity to spend so much time with my wonderful friends of the MOW Team and Sacramento Southern Railroad. Godspeed to you all.

I will see you out on the line again soon,

Richard.



Chris works on the Rail-Rod



The Weed Team takes on South Miller Park



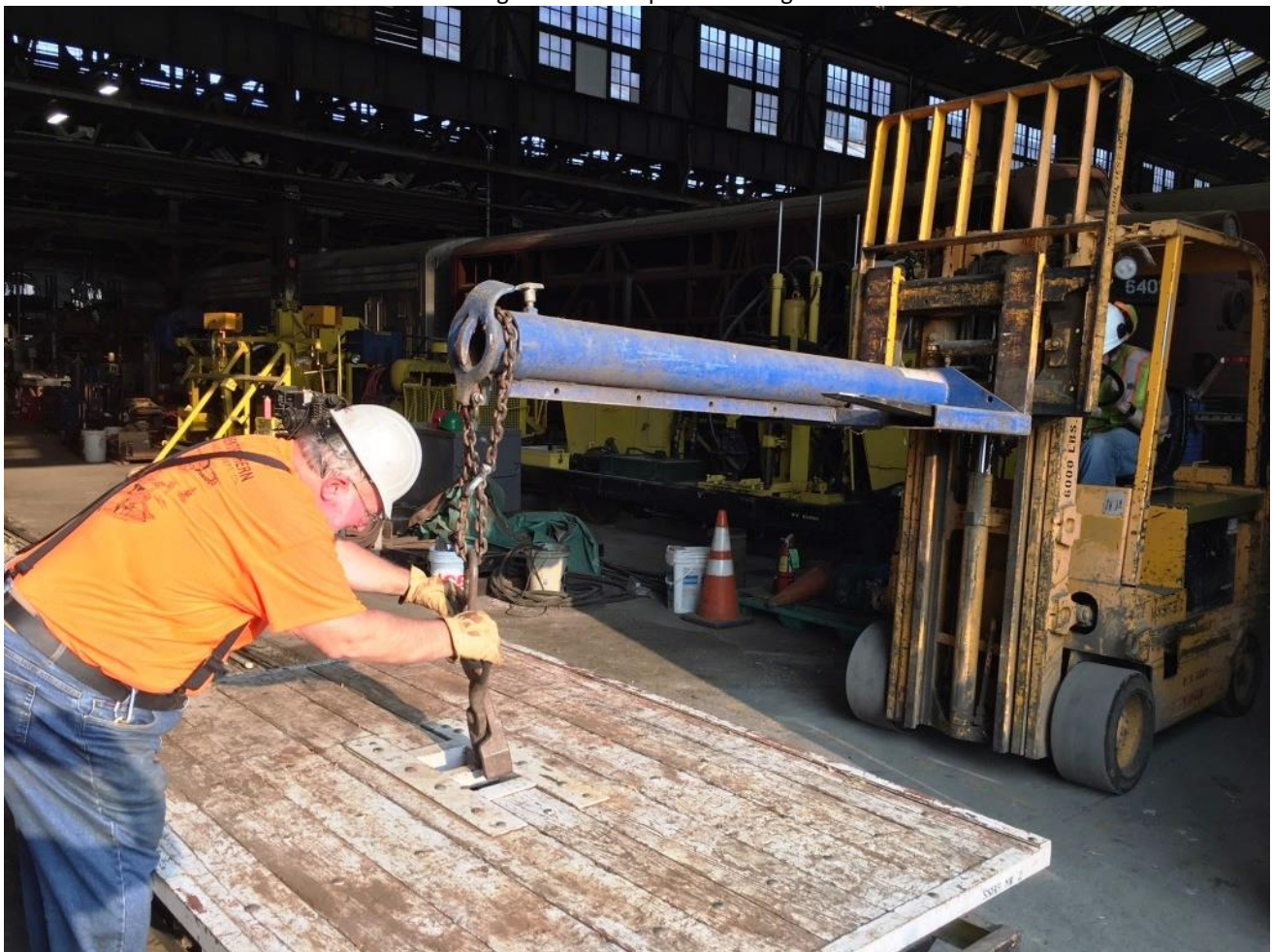
Toby and Jim work on the wing-rail for the Switch 19 frog



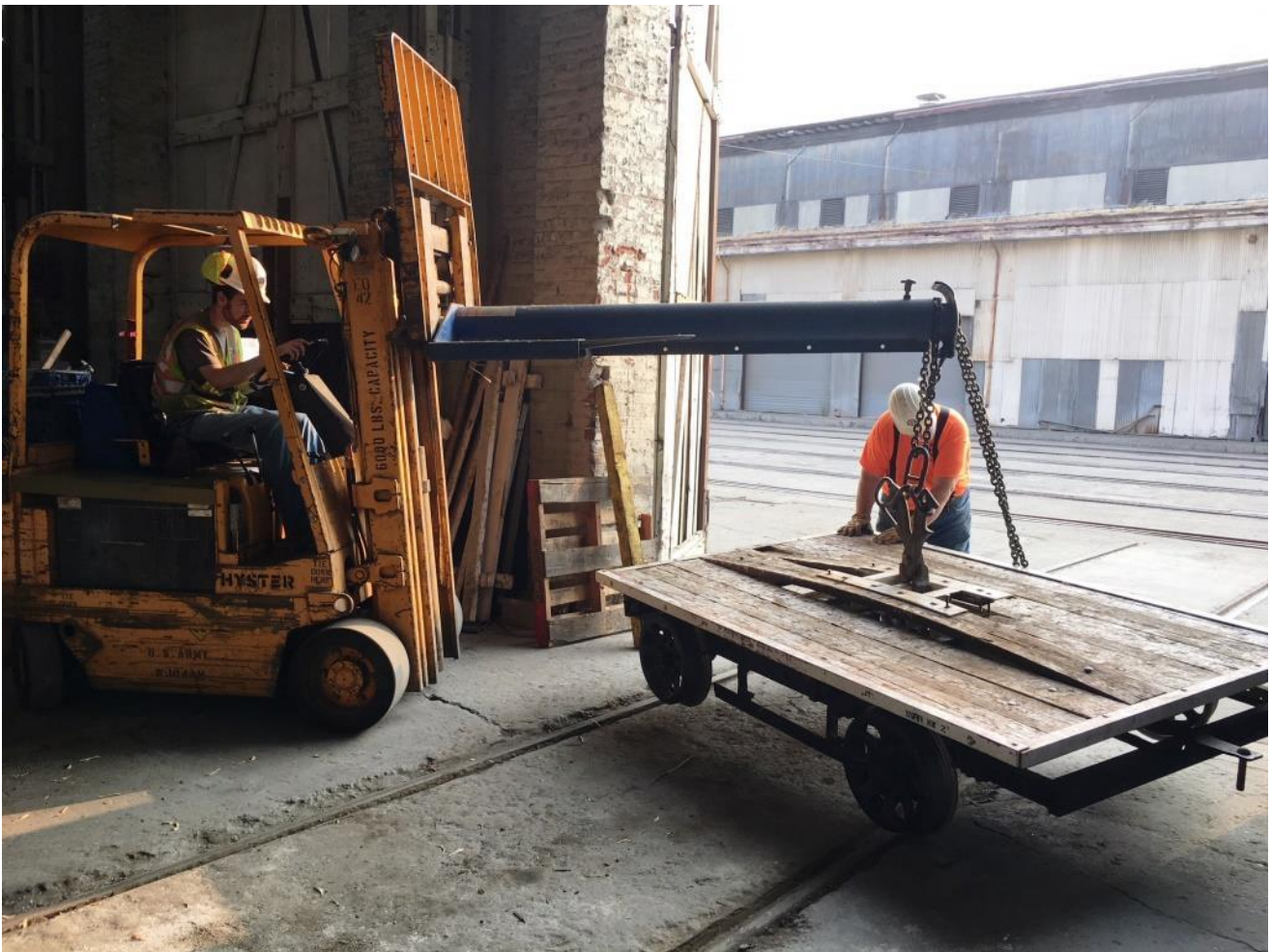
Toby monitors the big Lucas milling machine as it cuts away on the rail



Mike H. grabs the dumpster with Big Green



Frank and Matt remove an empty flatcar from the MOW Team's work-train



And take it to the storage track at the north end of the Erecting Shop



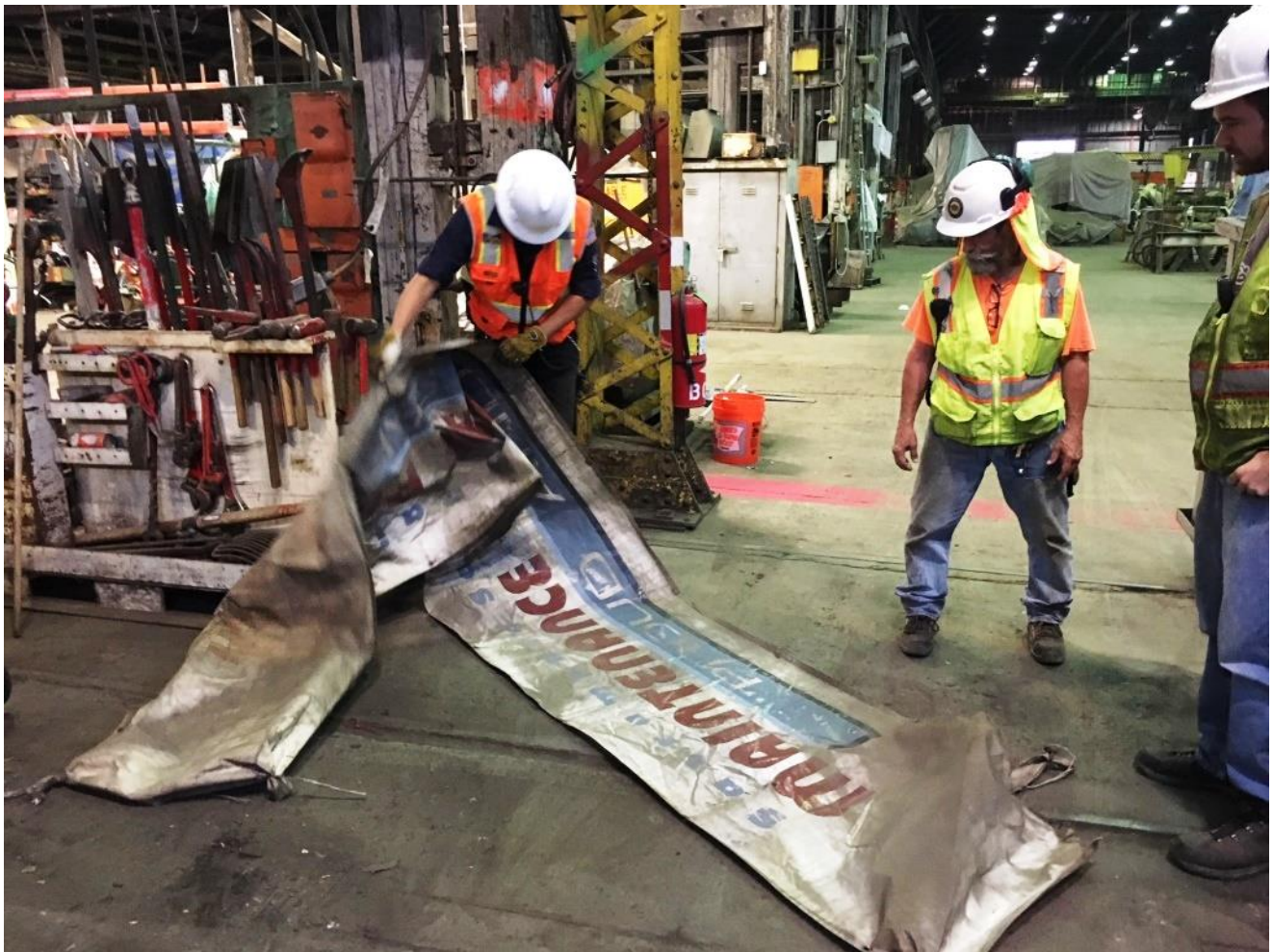
Kyle and Matt move the old section-gang machine out of the way



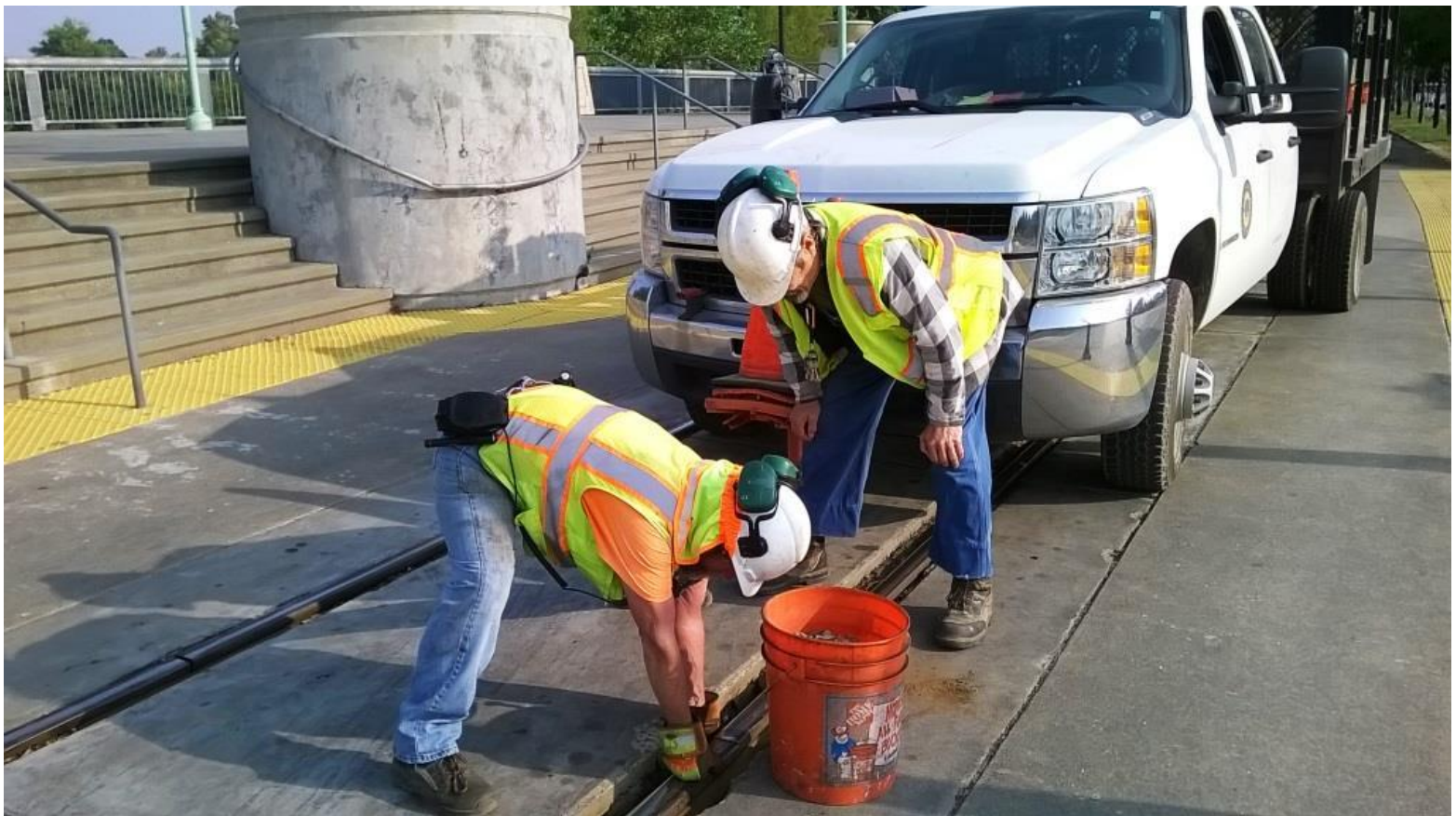
The Maintenance of Way sign in the Boiler Shop will be relocated to the MOW Team's Headquarters in the Erecting Shop



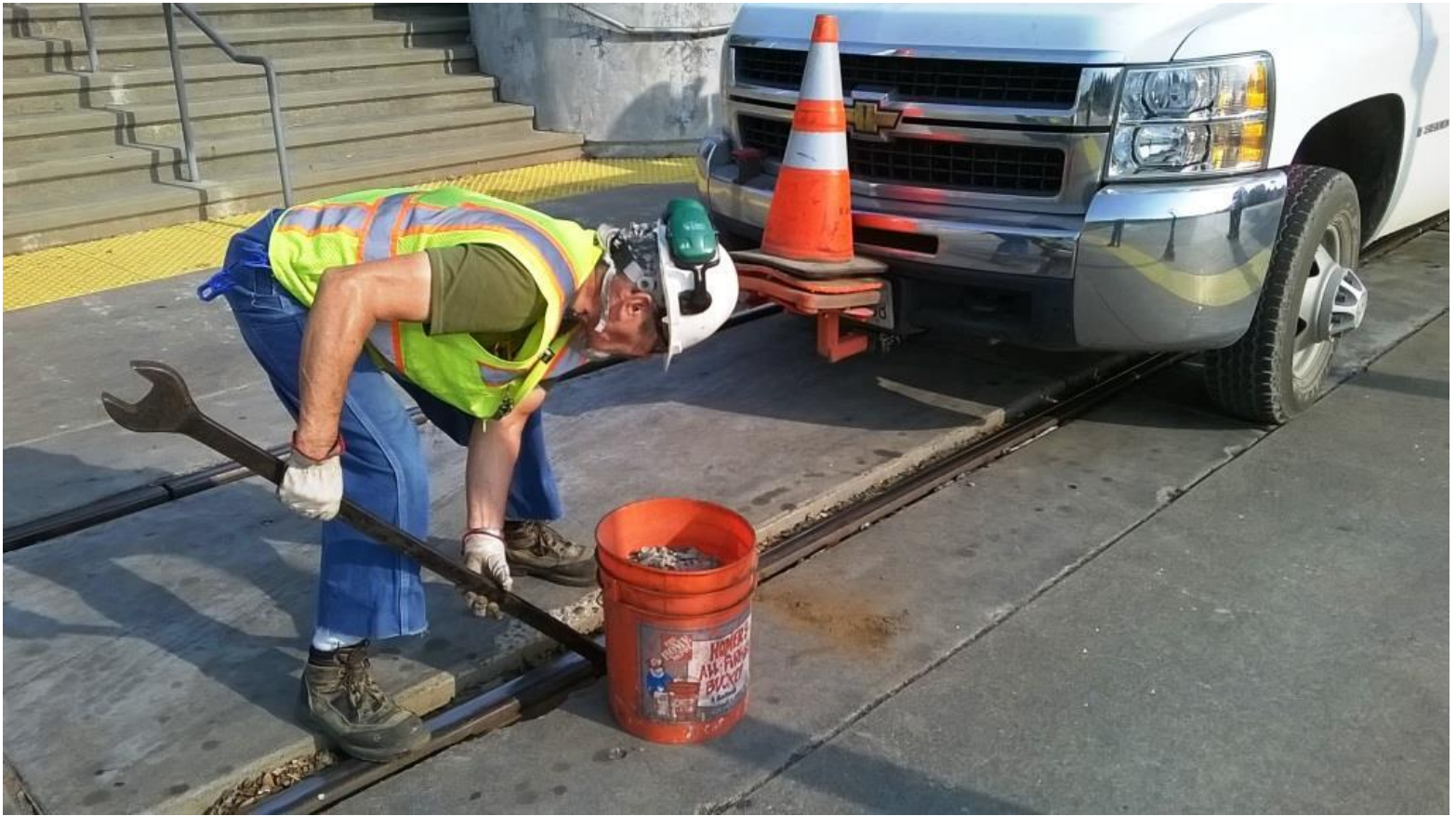
Kyle carefully removes the sign that's been hanging in the Boiler Shop for 20 years



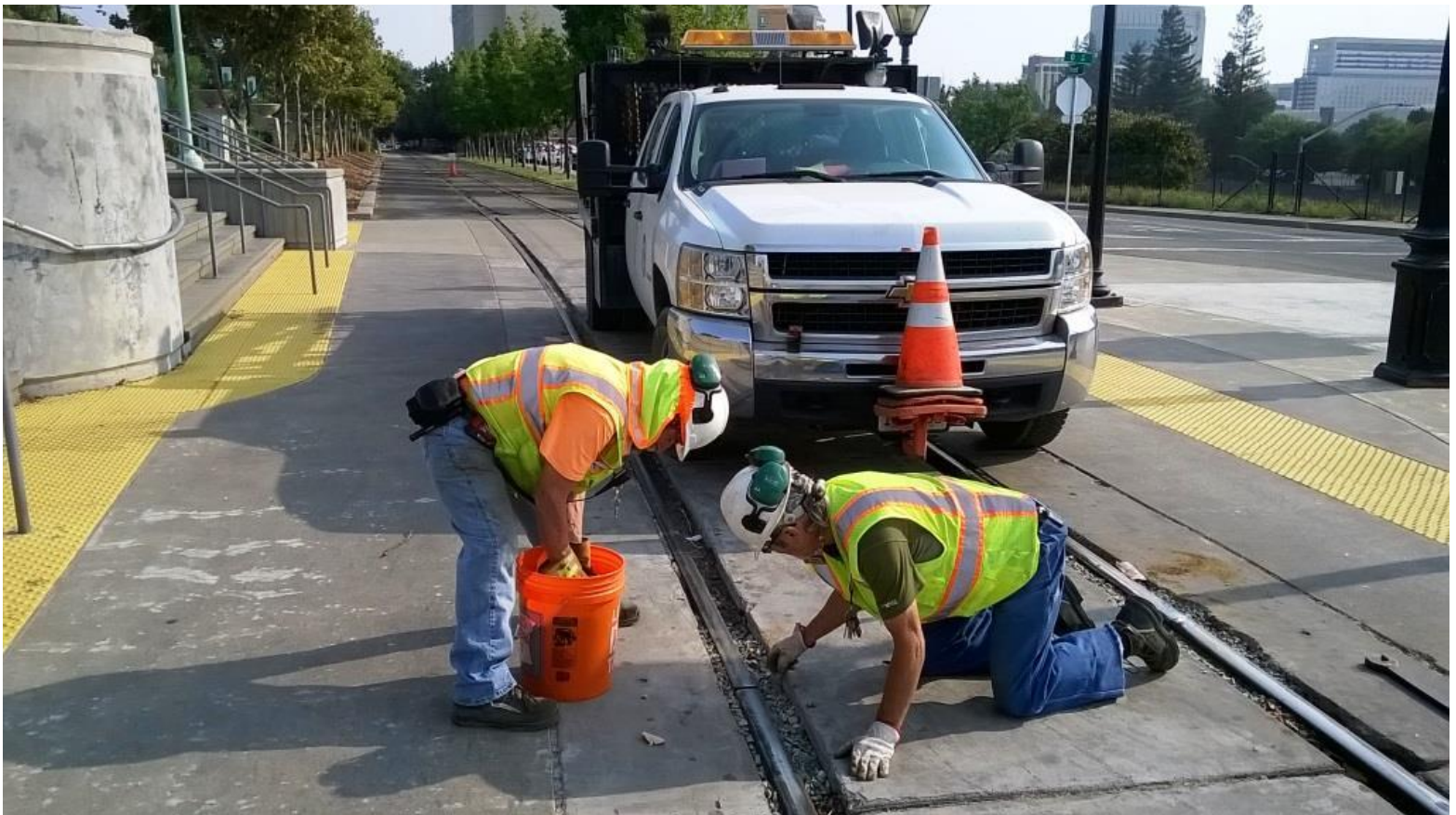
Yeah, it's going to need a little bit of a clean-up



Joe and Ed repair a rail-joint at the Circle of Lights



Ed tightens the bolts down



Joe and Ed fill in the gap with some small rock



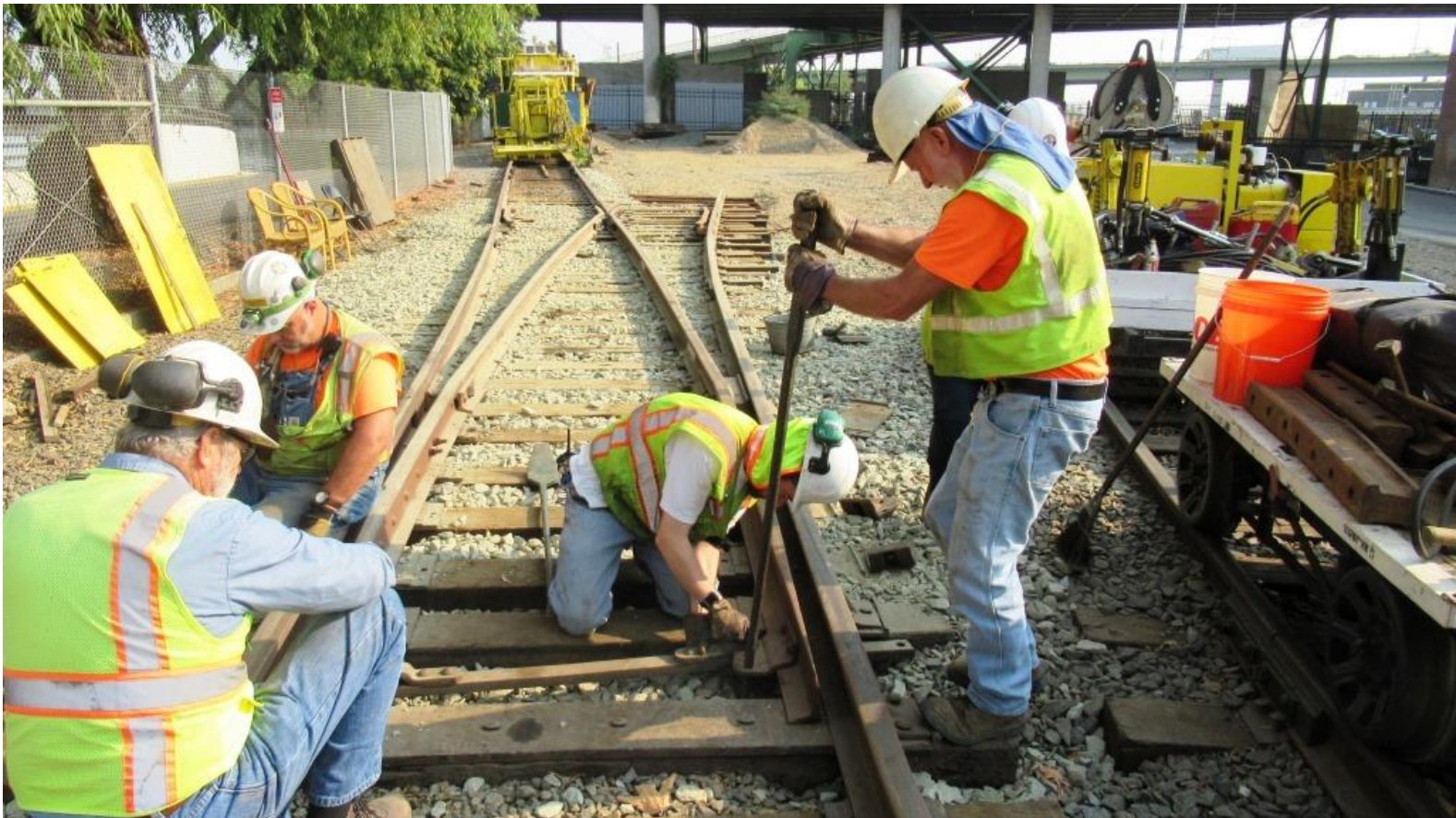
Pam and Bill place a plate under the closure rail



Mike F., Alan, and Mike M. begin adjusting the connecting rod's placement on the transit clip



Bill and Mike F. tack-down the switch machine as they begin the adjustment process



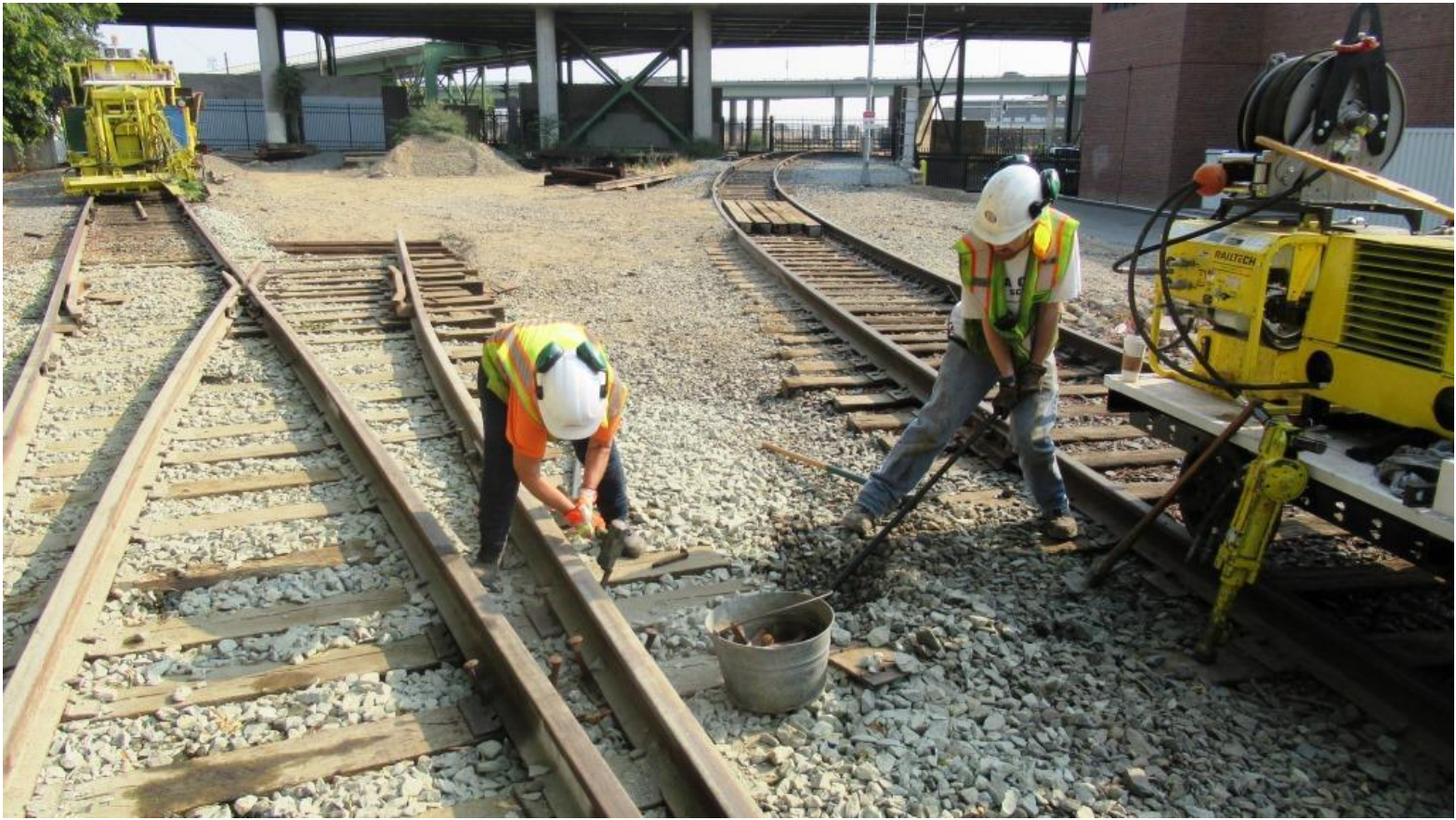
Mike M. shimmies the point around so that Matt can get the bolt through the transit clip



Well, the switch machine is not working because the control rod is on the wrong side. So, just move it to the correct side, right?



Easier said than done. The rod would not come off



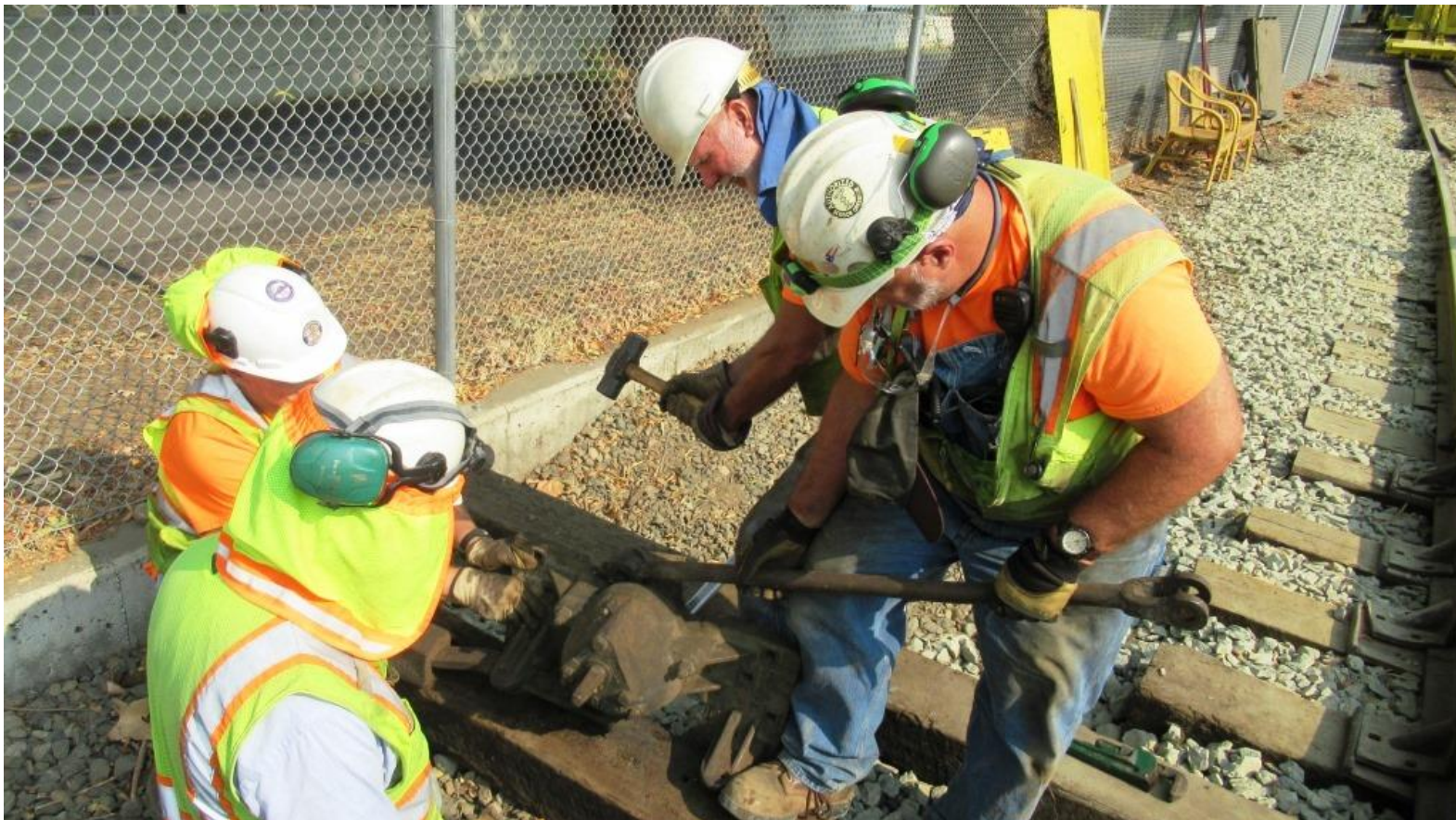
Pam and Matt continue plating and setting spikes



Steve uses a file to file down some protruding metal blocking the removal of the control rod



Jack showed up for a little MOW fun before heading off to his paid-gig



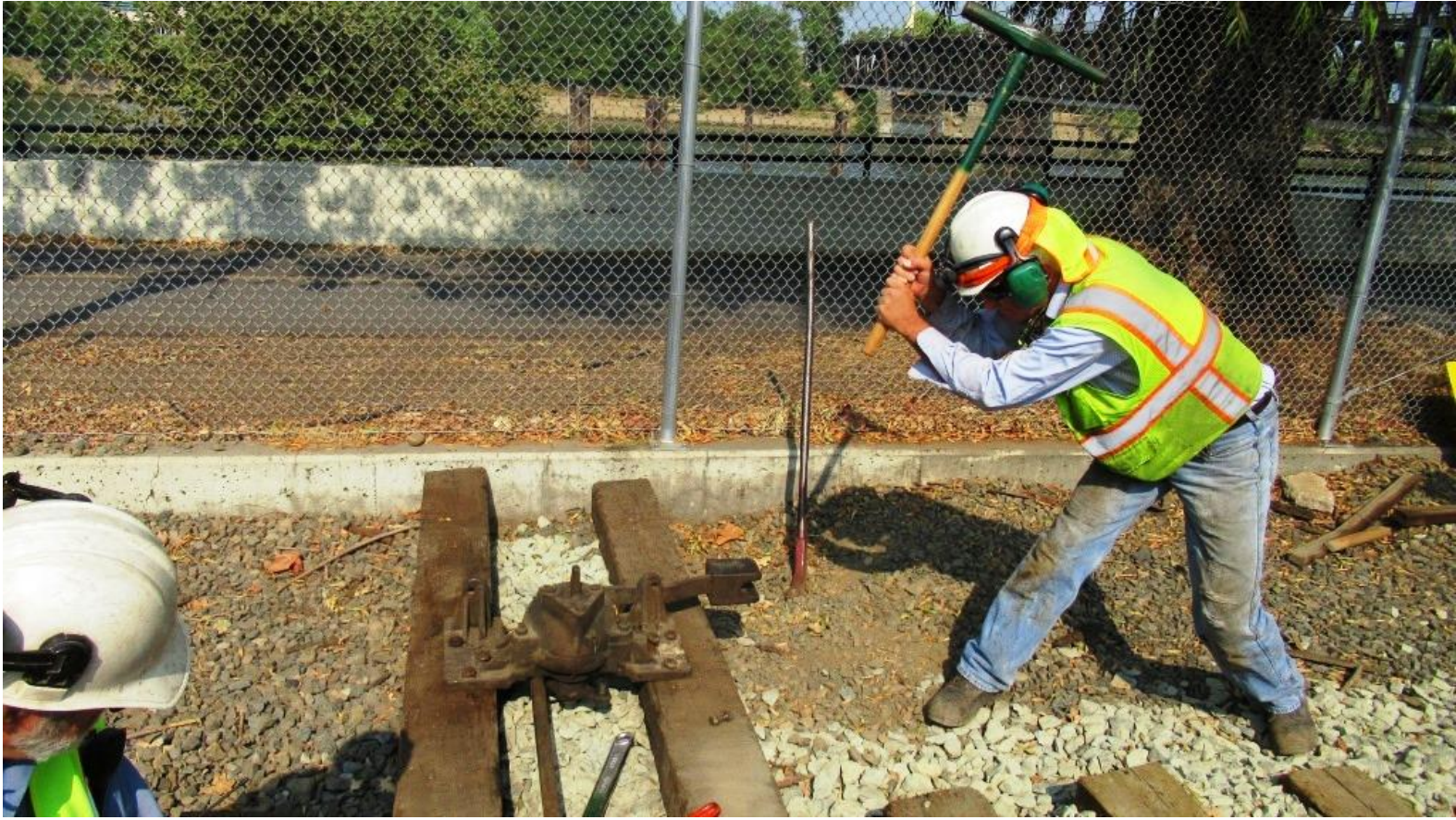
If at first you don't succeed, force it. Finally the control rod is removed from the switch machine



With the control rod now in the correct position, it can be hooked up to the connecting rod



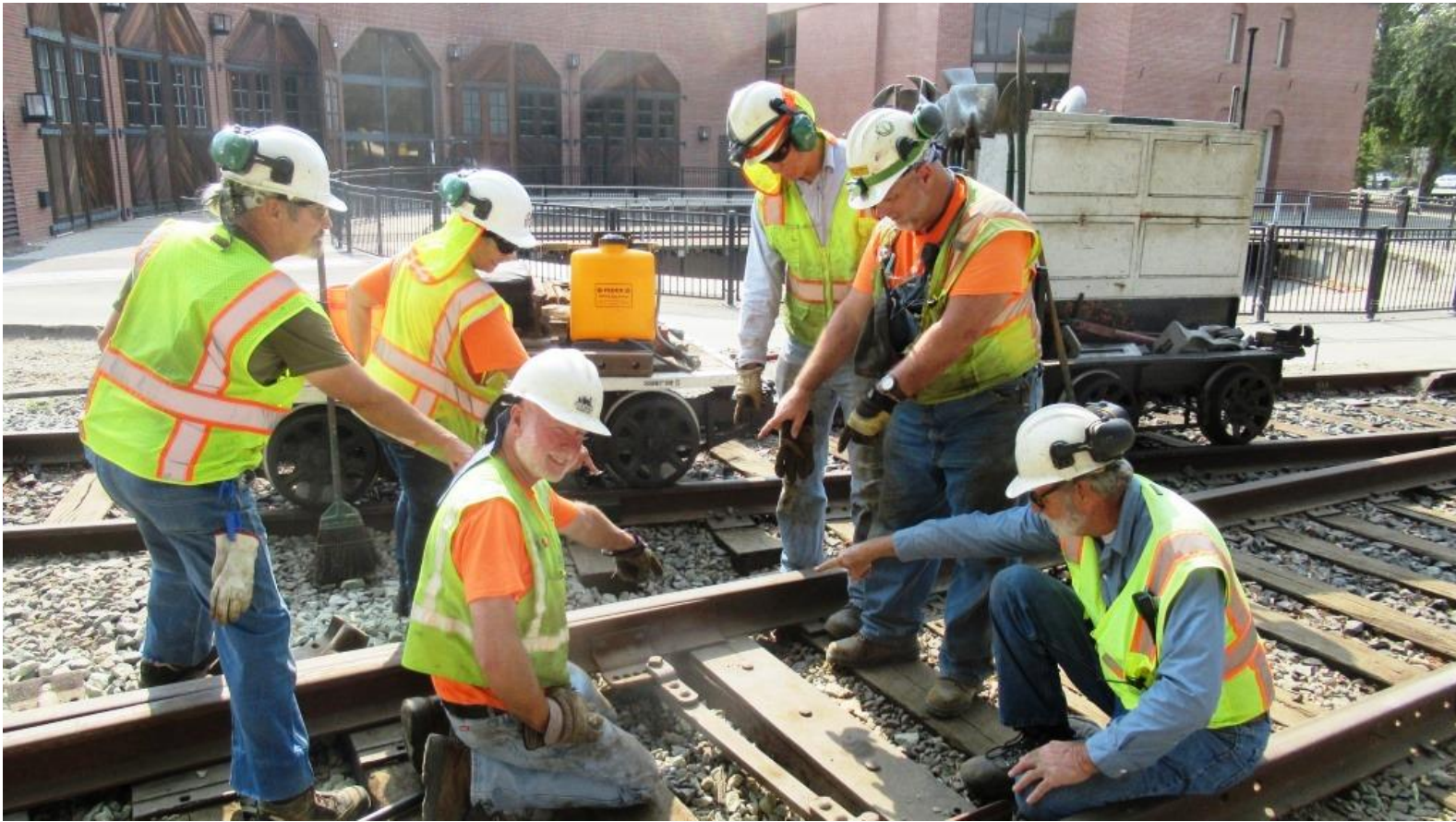
Mike M. levers over the points so that Steve, Bill, Mike F., and Alan can set the final placement of the machine



Spike 'er down! Steve drives the spikes on the switch machine the old fashioned way



Bill throws the switch for the very first time



Why, lookie there! Snug against the stock-rail. Mike M., Ed, Pam, Steve, Mike F., and Alan all point at the point!



Mike M. nips the tie as Mike F. sets spikes on one of the rattle bracket plates



Mike F. now interprets old fashioned, track-gang railroading by driving the spikes by hand



Meanwhile, Joe and Matt have set spikes along the diverging rail and closure rail



The insanity spreads: now Weston takes up the spike maul as Joe nips-up the tie



Steve demonstrates his world-famous, as seen on TV, windmill spike-driving technique



Ed brings sanity back to the operation by deploying the hydraulic spike driver



Steve nips-up the tie as Bill drives spikes with the hydraulic spike-driver



Bill nips as Steve uses the Steve-Tool to set a spike for Matt to drive with the hydraulic spike-driver



Joe now takes on the hydraulic spike-driver challenge



With all the spikes driven, it's time to bring some "levity" to the track – ha, ha! Levity. Get it?



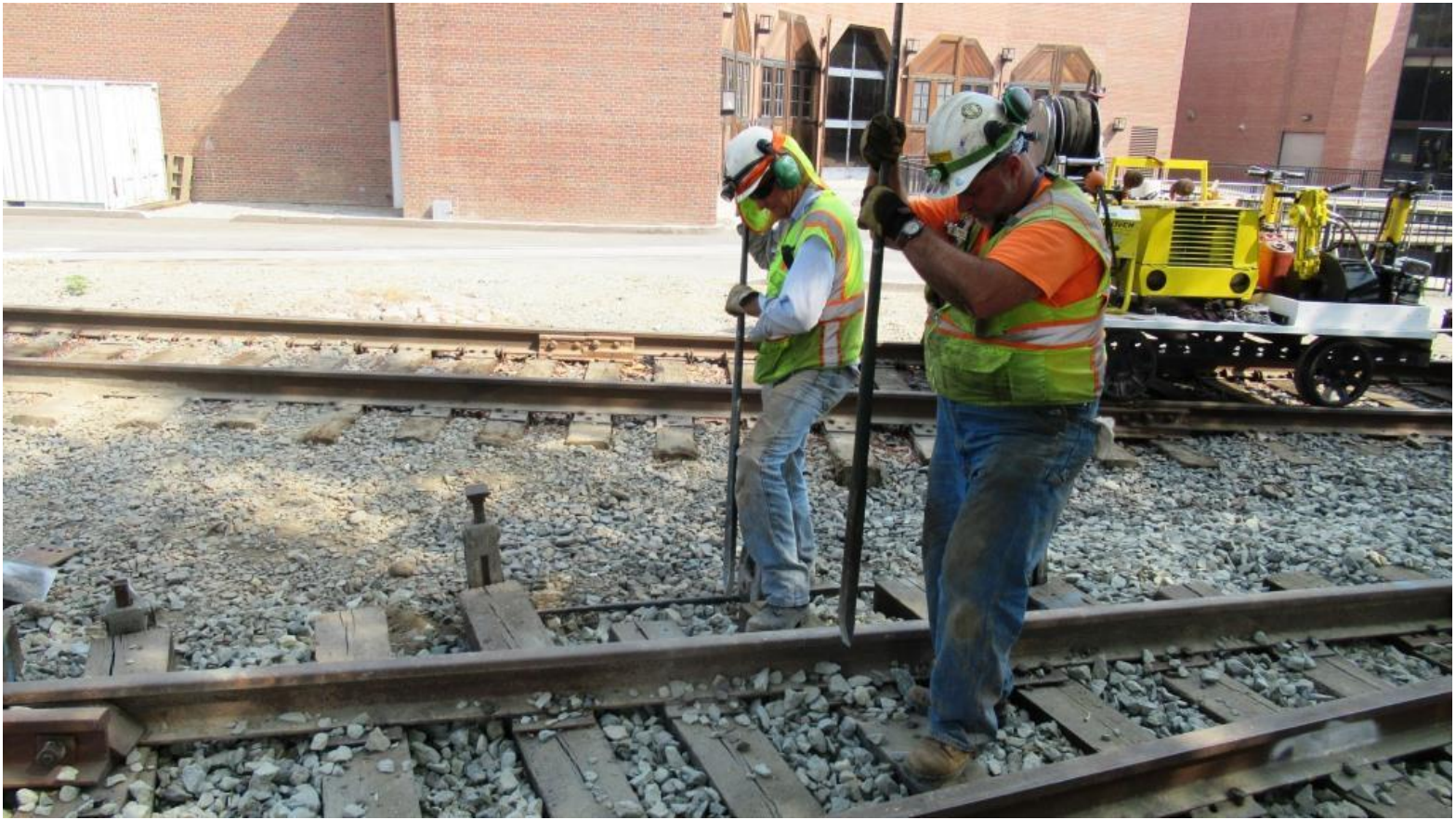
Team Track-Raise: Alan monitors the track-level as Ed, Matt, Bill, Mike M., and Weston all crank on the track-jacks in unison



With the track now level, Samantha joins the Team on her break from work to help shift rock from the west to east side of the track



Steve and Mike F. do a little tandem spike-driving on the very last spike to be driven on the project



Steve and Mike F. hand-tamp the newly leveled track



And, with the project now down, it was time to put our toys away. On to the next project!