

Greetings!

This is your Maintenance of Way Team update for September 17, 2017. Thanks to the innovative and out-of-the-box thinking, the Team managed to overcome some significant challenges this week. So, let's keep the innovation coming by getting this update started right now.

The Shop was just a full of activities on Tuesday as Pat Scholzen, Dave Wolf, Joe Margucci, DJ Mandella, Kyle Blackburn, Taka Blackburn, Mike Harris, Cliff Hayes, Frank Werry, Weston Snyder, Gene Peck, and our special guest-EIC for the week, Heather Kearns, arrived for an evening of MOW fun. Gene, Pat, and Mike H. kept up their steady progress with quality work on the Big Green Machine. Folks, this valuable yet 50 years-old all-terrain forklift is suffering from several age-related issues. Valves are sticking and injectors aren't injecting. But, there's no better team than Pat, Gene, and Mike T. to take on this challenge. Joe scored another victory by fixing the alternator on the Jackson 125 tie-exchanger. Dave, DJ, and Heather got the MOW Team's trusty Chevy Truck all loaded with the necessary accoutrements in preparation for the man-lift's annual inspection by a crane inspector. Cliff and Kyle worked on fabricating a better system of securing the chipper to its rail-mounted cart. Frank, Weston, and Taka, took on the job of loading bundles of new ties on to flatcars for the Zoo Line project. Frank fired up the front-end loader and put the fork attachment on the bucket. The way the ties were bundled – four deep and eight high – caused them to become unstable as they were transported. So, Frank hopped off the loader and brought out the back-hoe. Joe climbed in the loader. Between the two of them, the bundle was re-stabilized. Weston, Taka, Dave, and DJ then chained the bundle to the loader's bucket and Joe hauled it over to load on the flat car. For the next bundle, Weston brought in the yellow Hyster forklift and positioned the bundle which Joe in the loader could grab. Things went much more smoothly that time. With the flatcars loaded and ready to roll, Heather announced, "Quittin' time, USA!"

Thursday started early for Heather. She met the crane inspector in Old Sacramento for the annual inspection of the man-lift. The inspector went over the machine with a magnifying glass. After poking and prodding and lifting and lowering, the inspector signed the annual inspection sheet indicating the man-lift had passed with flying colors. Plus, he said, "That's one cool machine!" In the evening, Heather was joined by Kyle, DJ, Mike H., Joe, Taka, and Frank. Wednesday, the Union Pacific brought in four super-long flatcars and spotted them on top of the Interchange Track switch. They aren't moving out until next Thursday so, we were completely blocked from taking our equipment (and bundles of ties) via rail to Old Sacramento on Saturday morning. So Heather put on her thinking-cap and found a solution to this challenge. The Team would load the A-6 motorcar onto the trailer and truck it over to Old Sacramento so it would be available on Saturday morning. Frank got the motorcar in position while Joe, Mike H. DJ, and Taka got the trailer hitched to the truck. The motorcar was then winched-up onto the trailer. Mike H., Taka, and Kyle then took it to Old Sac. where it was unfurled and put away in the container. The next challenge would come in getting ties over there but, that's what Saturday mornings are for...

Speaking of which, Joe and Heather arrived extra early to load a bundle of ties onto a flatbed truck. Fortunately, the doughnuts were on-site for their arrival. With the allure of doughnuts in the building, Pam Tatro, Clem Meier, Mike Willis, Kyle, Taka, Michael Florentine, John Rexroth, Bill Hastings, and Frank soon joined Heather and Joe. The plan was to get bundle of ties over to Old Sac. and load them on to a flatcar over there and then head down to the Sutterville Line to the Zoo. Also, the Team needed to fix the switch machine at Switch 13 (ground-throw at Clunie). The UP flatcars are being moved to the Clunie Siding and that switch needed to work. So, while Heather, Pam, Clem, Mike W., Mike F., and Bill got things prepped in Old Sac., Kyle, Taka, Frank, and John headed to Clunie to fix the switch. Something had hit the ¾-inch thick steel handle with such force that it twisted and would not seat in the securing notch when thrown to the siding. We have no idea what hit it. John and Taka removed the point-clamps while Kyle set up his torch. The plan was to heat the handle then twist it back into position. Once Kyle got the steel perfectly heated, Taka and Frank used a lining bar to twist the handle back into shape. It worked! The switch was repaired. Meanwhile, in Old Sac., some sort of silly concert thing was being set-up and completely blocked access for the truck with the bundle of ties. Again, Heather rose to the challenge and found another way in. But, this silly concert thing further delayed the Team's ability to deploy equipment and depart. Eventually, they got to Sutterville Road with Mike F. running the scarifier-inserter. Joe, Kyle, and Taka began dropping ties next to each empty crib. John and Bill then worked with Mike F. in the scarifier to pull them in under the rails. Kyle, Joe, and Taka got the ties lined up for insertion. Although delayed, once on site, this Team was "cooking with Crisco." It was an amazing sight to see these fantastic volunteers get the job done in such a professional manner. By lunch time, 32 new ties were under the rails. Unfortunately, they could have easily gotten another 64 tie in the ground but, due to the challenging circumstances, we could only bring one bundle down the Zoo Line on Saturday.

Following lunch, Heather held a training session on the operation of the scarifier for Bill and Taka. Kyle and Joe fired-up our new hydraulic power unit and went to town pulling spikes on the remaining ties slated for replacement. With the amazing power of our new hydraulic spike-puller, they managed to get the rest of the way up the hill. Then, the Team loaded the remaining tie-debris from the previous week's tie-removal on the now empty flatcar. The tools were stowed and the Team headed back to Old Sac. With the silly concert thing going on, we knew put-away may be a challenge. But, the Team plowed its way through town and managed to get everything put-away in a timely fashion. It was an outstanding job by a Team that faced many challenges once again proving that they can adjust quickly to out-of-normal situations.

This coming week we hope will be less challenging. The Team will gather for MOW fun on Tuesday and Thursday starting at or before 5 o'clock. Saturday, more Zoo fun starts at 8 o'clock a.m. sharp. Many thanks to Heather for the outstanding job she did managing the operation this week. And, of course, to the entire Maintenance of Way Team that, week after week, takes on the challenge of building a better railroad and gets it done! They are a testament to the power of volunteerism!

See you out on the line,

Alan, Chris, and Richard.



Kyle works on better system to secure the chipper to its cart

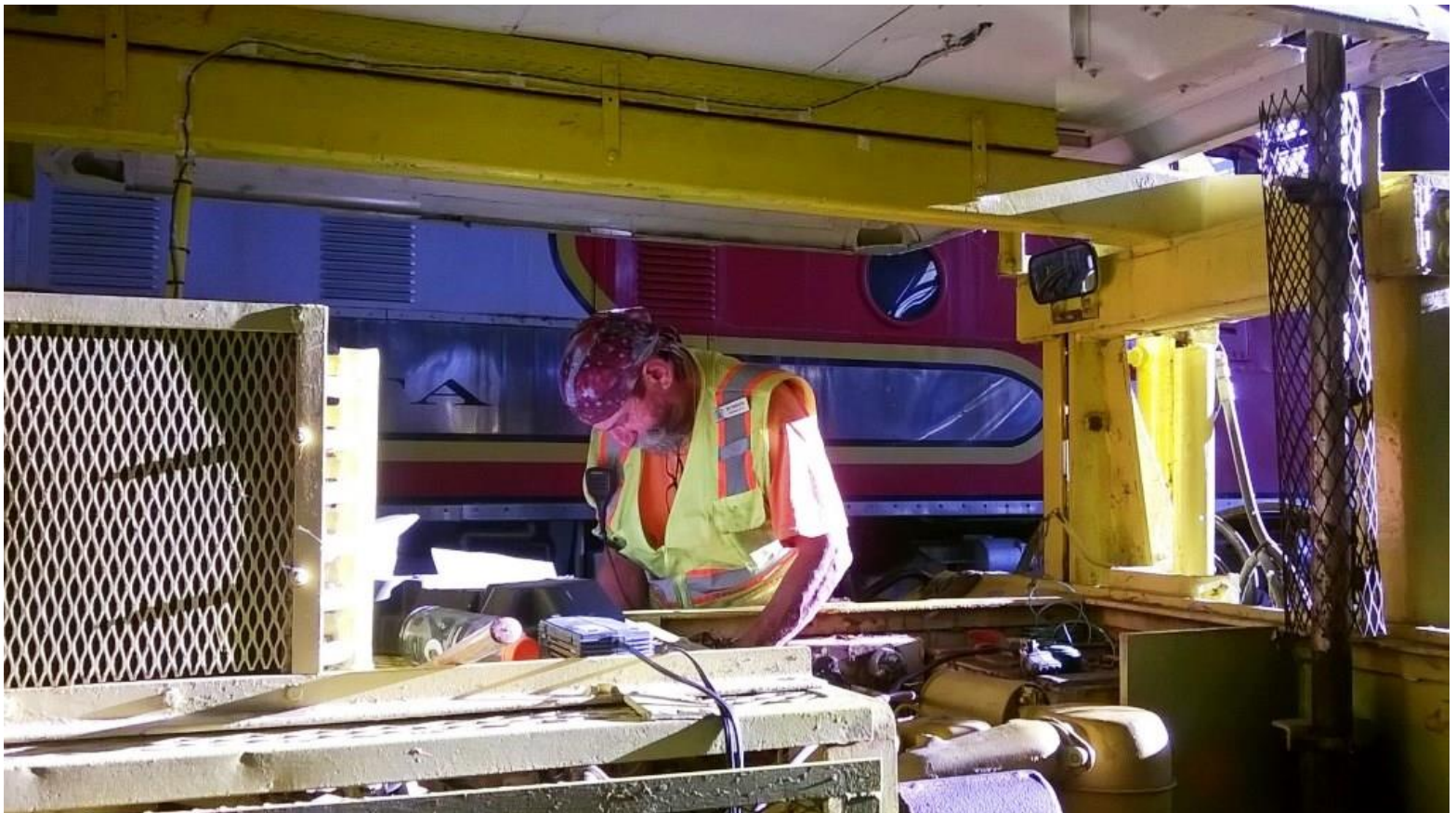


Gene and Mike H. work on repairing the Big Green Machine





Cliff makes new securing clamps for the chipper and his cart



Joe brings the Jackson 125 back to life





Kyle at the drill-press works on the chipper's new securing system



Frank in the loader grabs a bundle of ties





DJ with Frank, on the back-hoe, secure the wobbly bundle of ties to the front-end loader



Bundle number two is brought to Joe on the loader by Weston on the forklift which Taka, Kyle, and Dave prepare to chain it down





The crane inspector conducts the annual inspection of our "cool" man-lift



Kyle welds the securing system to the chipper's rail-mounted cart





Mike, Taka, and Kyle bring the motorcar to Old Sacramento on the trailer



Four flatcars foul the Interchange Track preventing any movement of equipment from the Shops to Old Sacramento



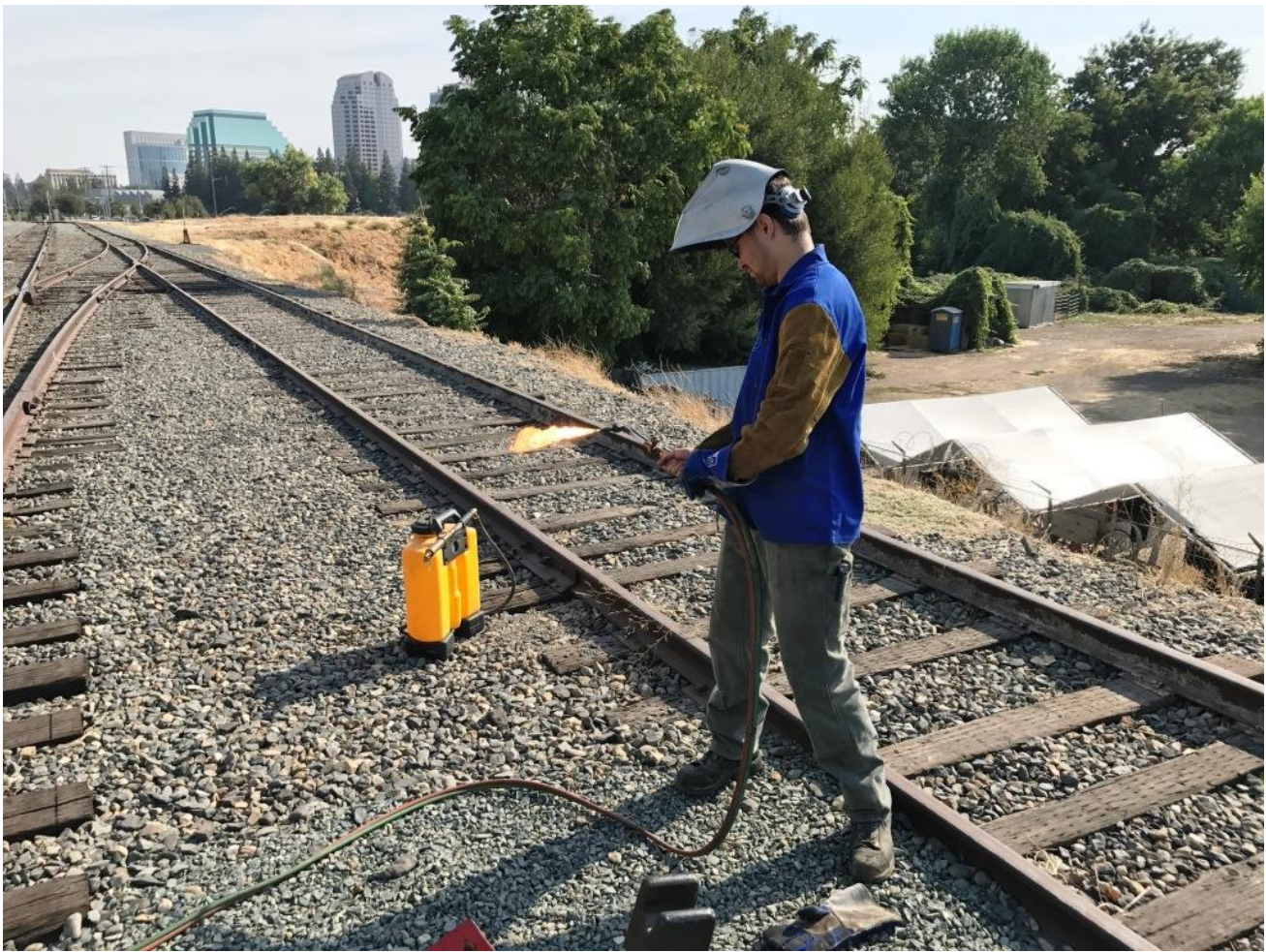


Joe arrived early Saturday to implement the new plan of loading a bundle of ties on a flatbed truck



At Switch 13, John removes the point-clamp





Kyle sparks up his trusty torch to heat the twisted handle on the switch machine



Delayed due to circumstances beyond their control, the Zoo Track Team zoom past the Switch 13 job-site





Kyle heats the  $\frac{3}{4}$ " thick steel handle to the perfect temperature...



...for Taka and Frank to easily twist it back into shape





At Baths, Bill adds fuel to the motorcar



Down near the Zoo, John guides Mike F. to the empty tie-crib to be scarified





The scarifier creates its own weather!



Frank and Bill brave the storm





As the tie-cribs were dug out by the scarifier, John, Joe, Kyle, and Taka deploy new ties for insertion



Bill and John hook the inserter function on the scarifier to the new tie





With Bill guiding the tie's path, Mike F. in the scarifier pulls the tie under the rails



Mike F.'s steady hands at the controls of the scarifier





Joe attempts to prove the superiority of man over machine



Taka, Joe, Bill, and John get ties lined-up for Mike F. in the scarifier to insert





Kyle adds fuel to our super new hydraulic power unit



Heather teaches scarifier 101



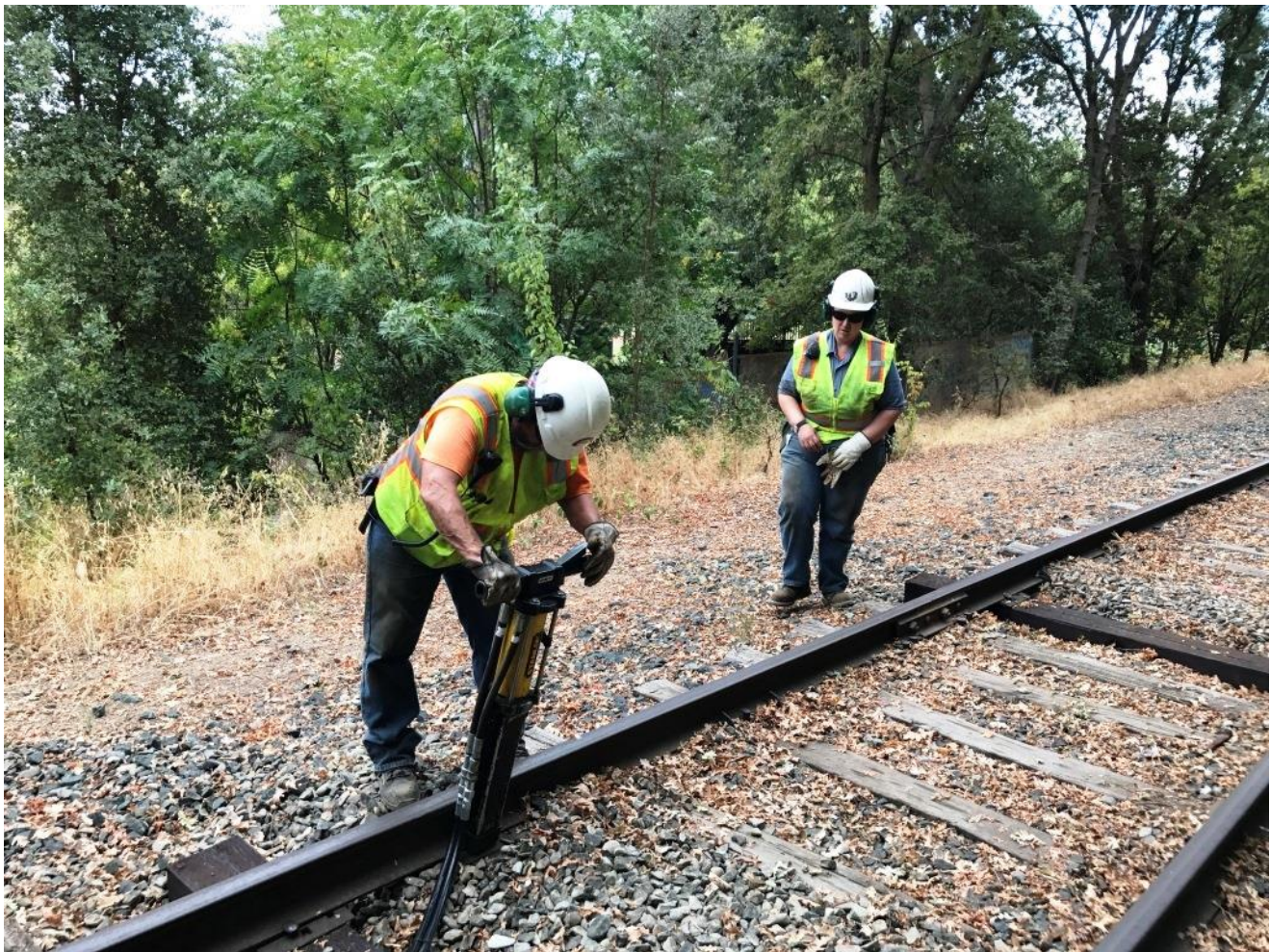


Joe uses the hydraulic spike puller to pull spike on ties slated for removal



Kyle demonstrates how our super-duper new hydraulic power unit makes the hard job of pulling spikes super easy





EIC Heather manages (but not micromanages – there are others who do that much better) Joe as he pulls spikes



Final task of the day to dispose of tie-sheared tie debris