

Greetings!

This is your Maintenance of Way Team update for December 10, 2017. Polar Express is in full swing and your MOW Team is right there both slinging hot chocolate as crew as well as keeping up with the track work. Before the hot chocolate gets cold, let's get this update started.

The first bells of Christmas were ringing in the Shops on Tuesday and, of course, Pat Scholzen, Cliff Hayes, Heather Kearns, Gene Peck, Joe Margucci, Anthony Filamor, Frank Werry, Mike Harris, and Chris Carlson could hear them (because they believe). Joe, Frank, and Chris took on the lack of lights on our yellow Hyster forklift. Neither the forward-facing flood-lights nor brake-lights were working. As they dug into the machine, they figured out the problem but it would require that they be re-wired. By evening's end, it seemed as if we were experiencing that special moment from Genesis 1:3 when Joe said, "Let there be light." And there was light! Anthony and Heather headed over to the Boiler Shop to replace broken handles on several of our hand-tools. Mike H. took on the job of installing a new air-horn on Green Machine 2 (GM2). The old horn had simply disappeared. So, Mike managed to re-plumb the air-lines leading to the trumpet. All told, quite a productive evening.

Thursday, the mighty Weed Team headed to Hood. Mike Taylor, Heather, and Steve Wilson took on the most hideously overgrown portion of the Hood Line and completed clearing the area between the rails and the east side of the track. Because the Weedies have been good boys and girls this year, instead of bells, Santa has rewarded them with a brand new Barnel pole-saw which is a couple of feet longer than their old one. This first gift of Christmas has opened up an entirely new pruning universe for the Weedies. The nice thing is that the gracious Weedies are willing to share their largess by inviting all and sundry to come and experience the new Barnel saw for themselves next Thursday!

Meanwhile, back at the Shops, Alan Hardy, Heather, Anthony, Joe, Mike H., and Chris kept the bells ringing (hoping that Santa will find them, as well). You will recall from last week's update that a new mounting-bracket system is being built on the rail-wheeled air-compressor for a Nolan track-cart. Alan designed this new system, located and cut the steel, painted it and, on Thursday, installed it on the compressor's cart. Thanks to Alan, we now have a safe and convenient way to haul the Nolan track-cart, which works in conjunction with the pneumatic spike-drivers. Also, Alan has designed and is building a dedicated flatcar for our new hydraulic power-units and tools. Alan has the frame built and attached to the axels. Following his work on the compressor, Alan began bolting-down the deck that he has built onto the new flatcar. Anthony installed three new hydraulic hoses on the scarifier. Mike H. finished fitting-out the new horn on GM2 and then gave it a test-toot. It sounds a bit like a strangled-duck but, it's loud and makes the point. Chris, Heather, and Joe went Christmas shopping for transmission components for the A-6 motorcar. Getting the A-6 back in operation is a priority. So, that pretty much sums up Thursday – a good day for your MOW Team.

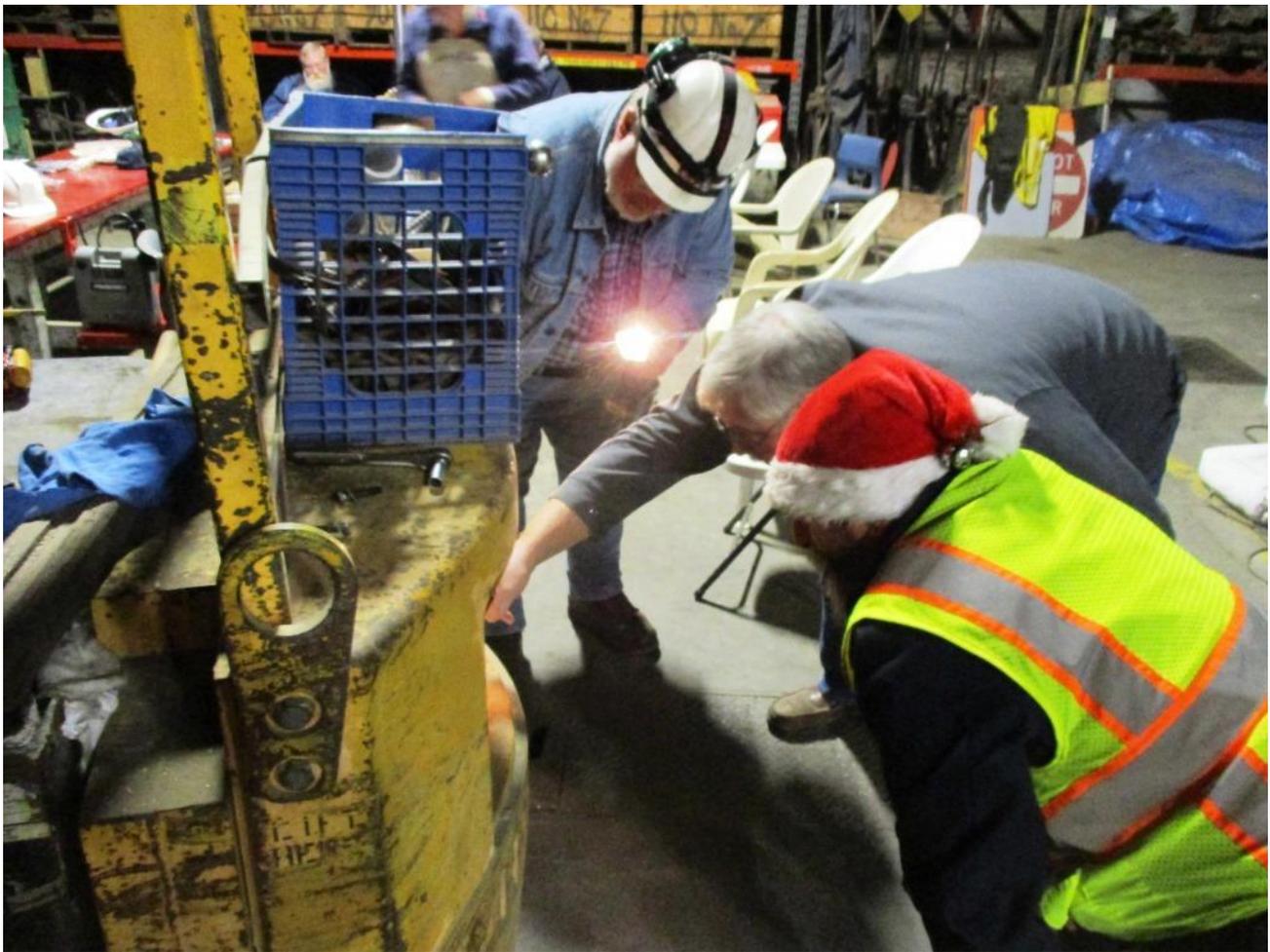
Michael Florentine and Joe showed up in Old Sacramento extra early on Saturday to get the equipment ready to roll. But, they were "Johnny on the spot," back at the Shops as Chris arrived with the doughnuts. So were Alan, Heather, Mike H., Anthony, Weston Snyder, Art Flutter, and Jose Gomez. As the pink box emptied, we were visited, once again, by the drug-testing lady. So, we had to go through the whole rigmarole of randomly selecting all the folks present. Somehow, the logic escapes me. Anyway, following all this fuss, Team headed over to Old Sac. to implement its plan of ballasting the Zoo Line track. Joe piloted the Kalamazoo pulling the sided-dump hoppers while Chris handed the regulator with the center-dump cars. Off to Setzer they headed where they met up Mike H., in the front-end loader, and Mike F., in the back-hoe. It was like a choreographed dance as back-hoe and loader filled the hoppers. While the hoppers were being filled, Weston and Heather continued the installation of brand new, highly reflective, anti-graffiti switch targets along the SSRR Mainline. These new targets are far more visible and provide greater safety – especially for nighttime operations such as during Polar Express. While they were at it, Heather and Weston realigned the switch-target aspects at Switches 18 and 19 along the Center Siding at Baths to correctly indicate that it is the through track. The same was done at Switch 15, the South Miller Park/Setzer Spur switch, to show the Miller Park Siding as the through track and not the Setzer Spur. Team Rock-Droppers hauled their hoppers down south of the I-5 Bridge and began disgorging it on the track. The ballast regulator arrived first. Art and Anthony deliberately disgorged the rock from the center-dump hoppers. Then, Chris lowered the plows on the regulator and plowed the track. Next, Joe in the Kalamazoo brought in the side-dump cars. Jose and Mike H. let the rock drop on the field side of each rail. This process continued throughout the morning until five loads of rock had been dispersed. The Team worked delayed lunch as it was under a mandate to be back in Old Sac. early to avoid potential interaction with the Polar Express. So, at 1:30 the, the Team broke for lunch which was kindly hosted by the lovely and talented Lynda Norgaard in the Docent Lounge. Many thanks to Lynda for the yummy chilly-dogs with all the fixin's!

Following lunch, the Team had lots of switching to do. The Jackson 125 tie-exchanger needed to go over to the Shops for repairs to its blown turntable hydraulic cylinder. It would trade places in the Shops with the tamper, which was brought back to Old Sacramento. Also, the tie-crane was deployed to remove a pile of ties at the south end of the MOW container left over from the J Street Crossing rebuild. Mike H. used the Kalamazoo to tow the 125 across the UP Main while Weston piloted the tamper in the opposite direction. Alan took on tie-crane duties and, as soon as the Polar Express departed on its journey south to the North Pole, rushed in, grabbed the ties, and placed them on a flat car. Then, everything was shuffled and all the machines arranged in the proper order up on the 150 Track. With all that done, the Team retreated to the Shops very pleased with the day's accomplishments.

This coming week, the Team will gather on Tuesday and Thursday evenings at the Shops starting at or before 5 o'clock. The Weed Team will head to Hood on Thursday. Meet at the Shops at 8:30 a.m. Saturday, doughnuts and drug testing kick off at 8 o'clock a.m. Many thanks to the amazing and dedicated volunteers of the MOW Team who, week in and week out, strive to build a better railroad.

See you out on the line,

Alan, Chris, and Richard



Frank, Chris, and Joe seek-out the problem with the forklift's lights



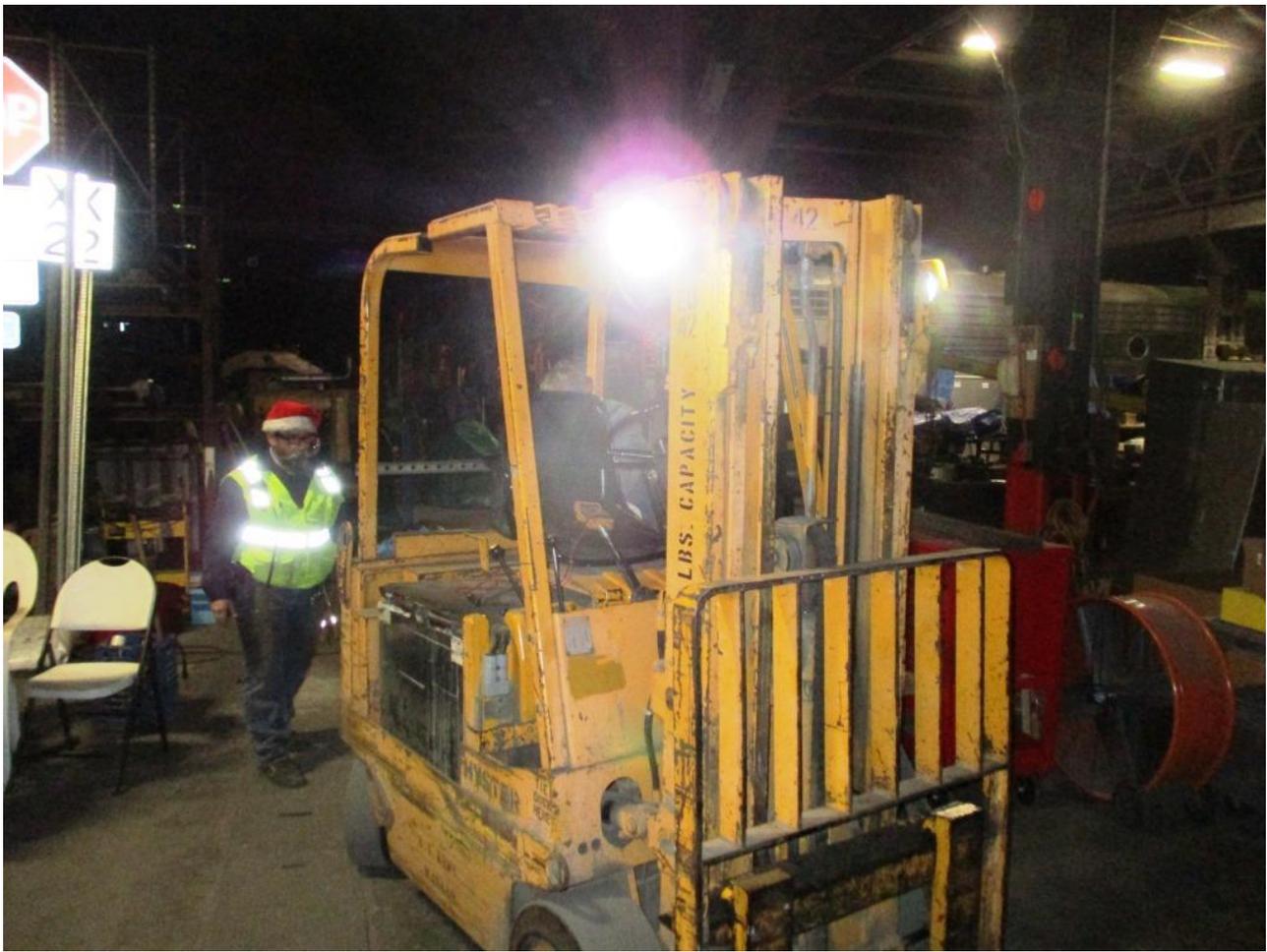
Anthony, using the press, presses out the broken handle from a sledge hammer



Heather helps set the height of the press



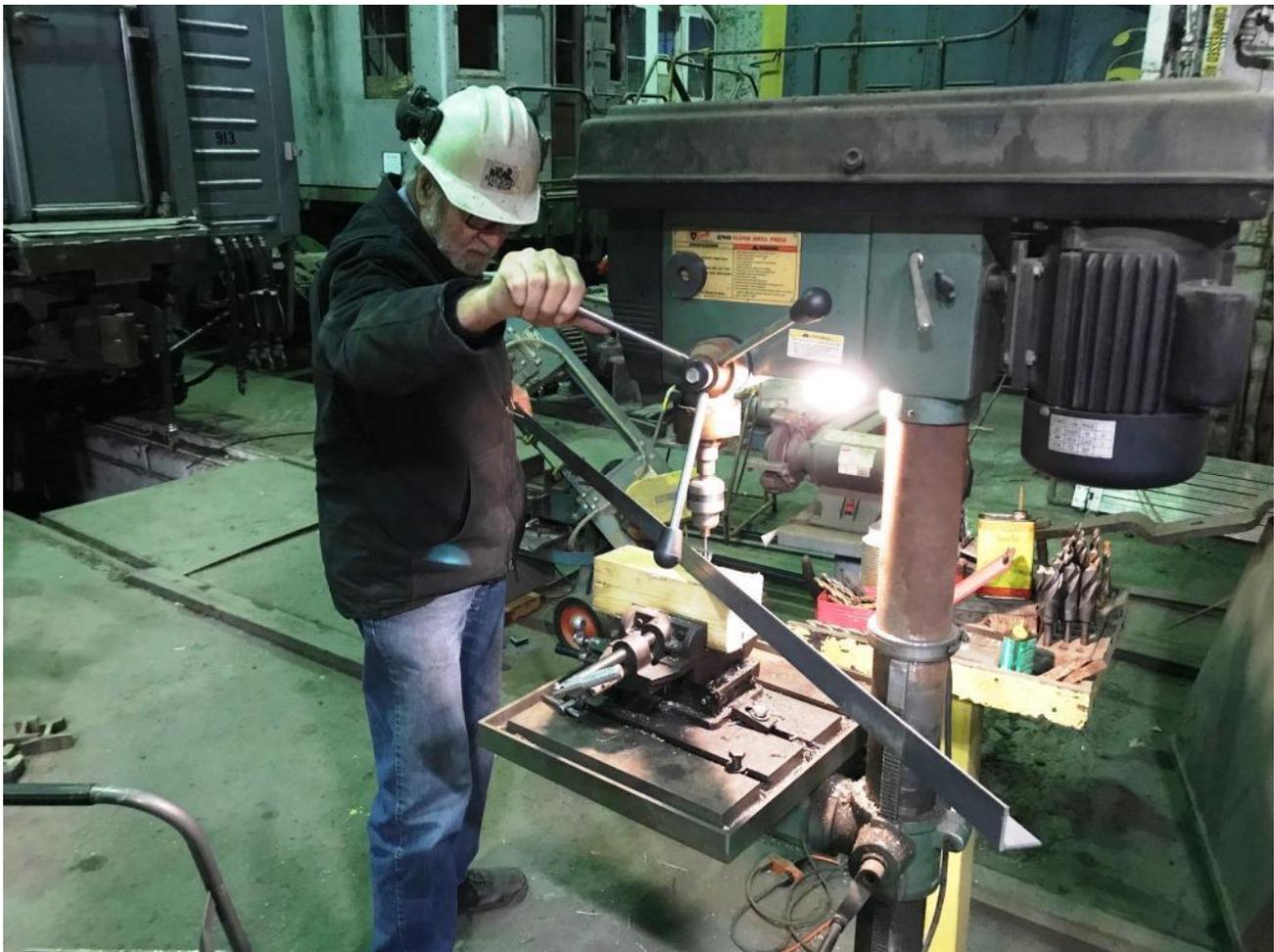
Mike H. plumbs an air-line for the new horn on GM2



"Let there be light!" And it was good...



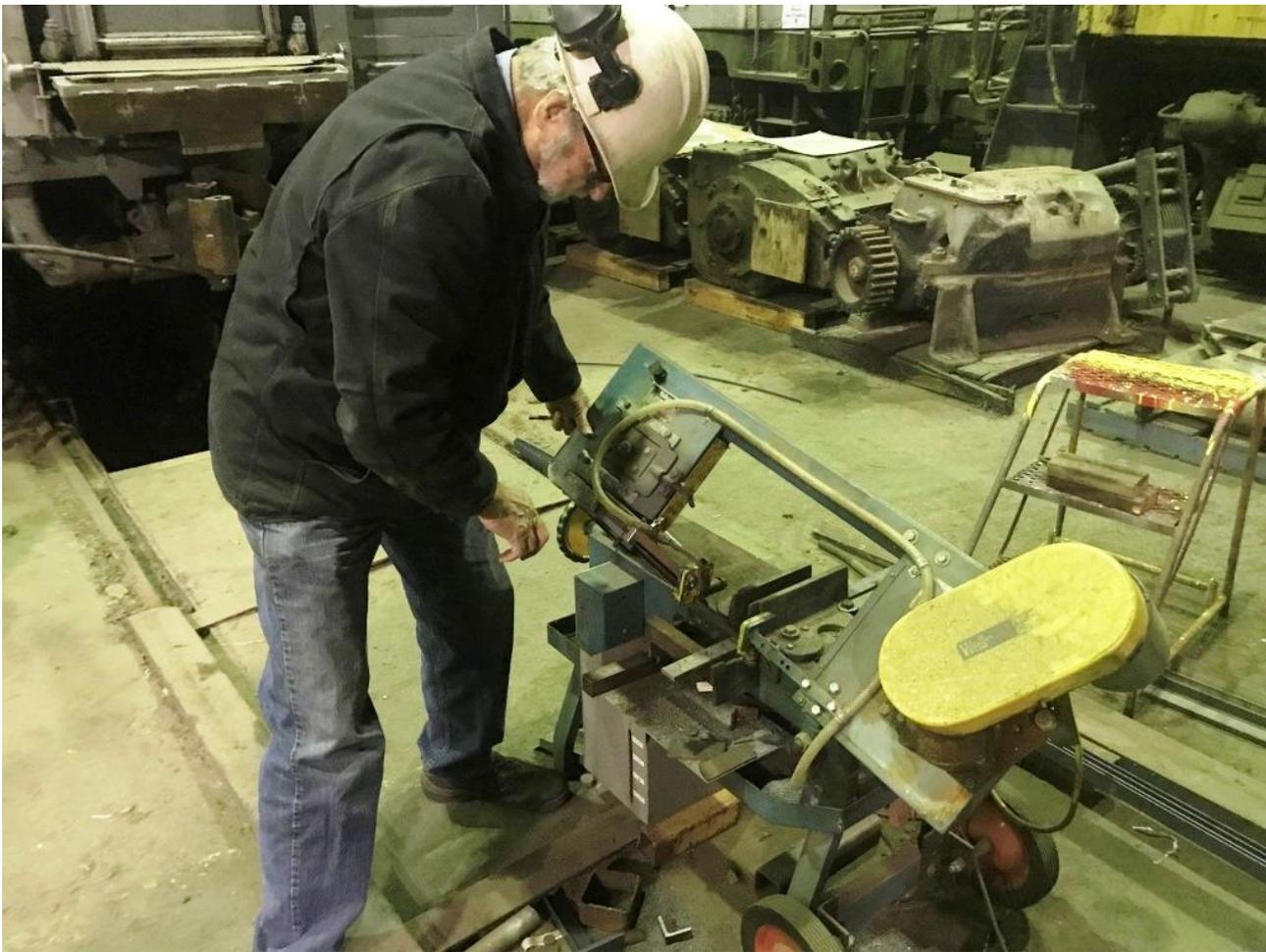
Frank, Joe, and Chris show how the brake-lights now work on the fork-lift



Alan uses the drill-press to drill bolt-holes in a piece of angle-iron to be used as an edge on the air-compressor's cart



Alan drills bolt-holes through the deck of the compressor's cart where the new mounting brackets will be attached



Alan uses the band-saw to cut a shim for the new mounting brackets



Alan installs the new mounting brackets for the Nolan Track Cart



Well, ain't that purdy. The Nolan Track Cart is mounted to the side of the air-compressor



Anthony installs new hydraulic lines on the scarifier



Mike H. finishes plumbing the air-lines for the new horn on GM2



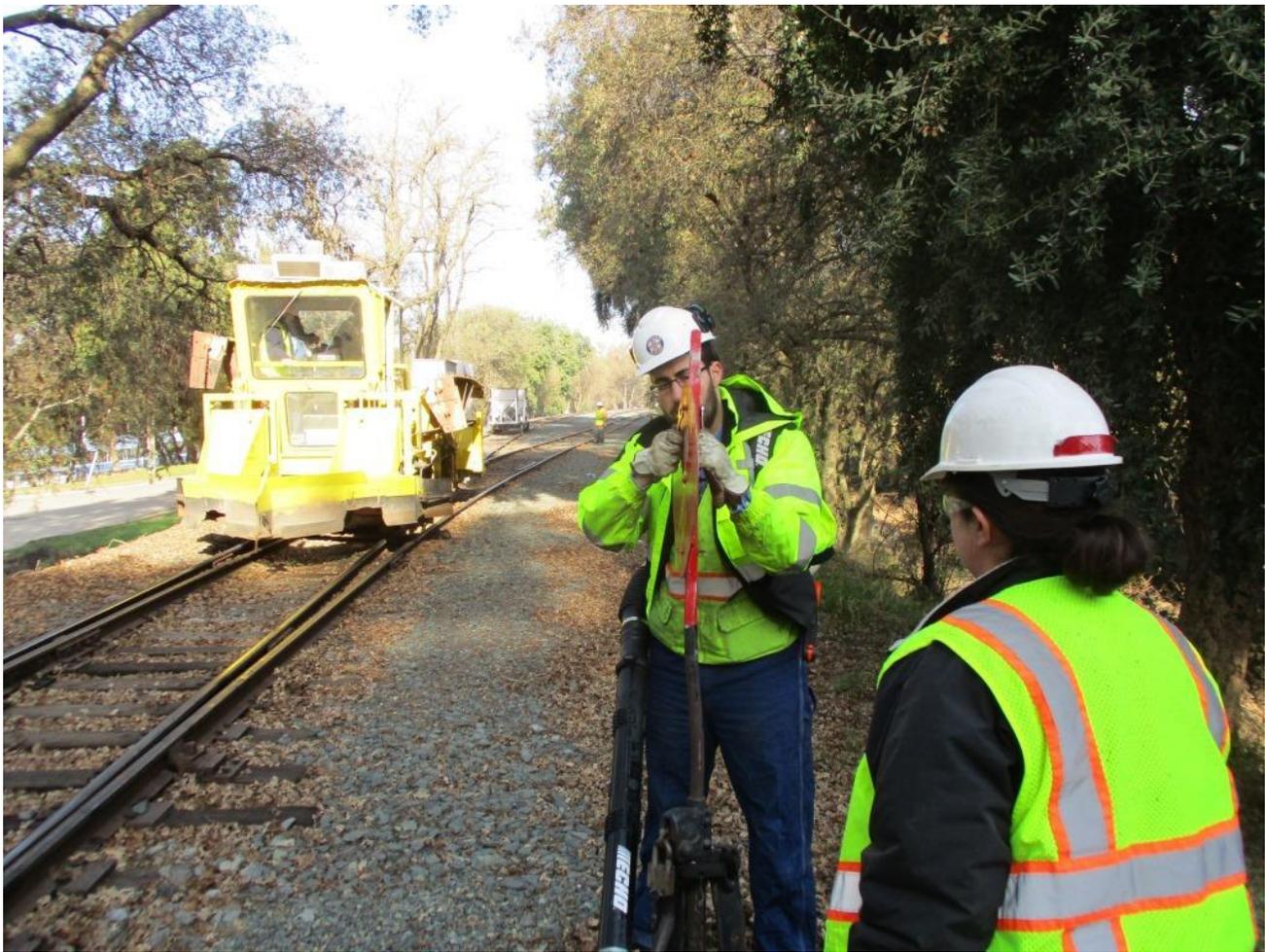
Alan begins the installation of the deck on the hydraulic tool dedicated flatcar



First things first. The Team fuels the ballast regulator



At Miller Park, Anthony cuts-away the two side-dump cars from behind the regulator for the Kalamazoo to come and pick-up



As the ballasting operation switches onto the Setzer Lead, Weston and Heather remove the old target at Switch 16



As Weston replaces the target at Switch 15, Heather takes the opportunity to remove organic debris from the track



At Setzer, Mike H. in the loader scoops up a bucket-full of rock



Mike F. in the back-hoe follows suit



The Mikes fill the hoppers



More rock gets loaded into the hoppers



Meanwhile, the ballast regulator passes by an abandoned Santa's Village



Anthony drops rock from the center-dump ballast hopper



Art handles the other hopper



After the rock is disgorged, Chris in the ballast regulator plows the track and spreads the rock



The MOW Team declares Santa's Village an "open city" and lays claim to all its largess



Mike H. and Jose discharge rock from the side-dump car



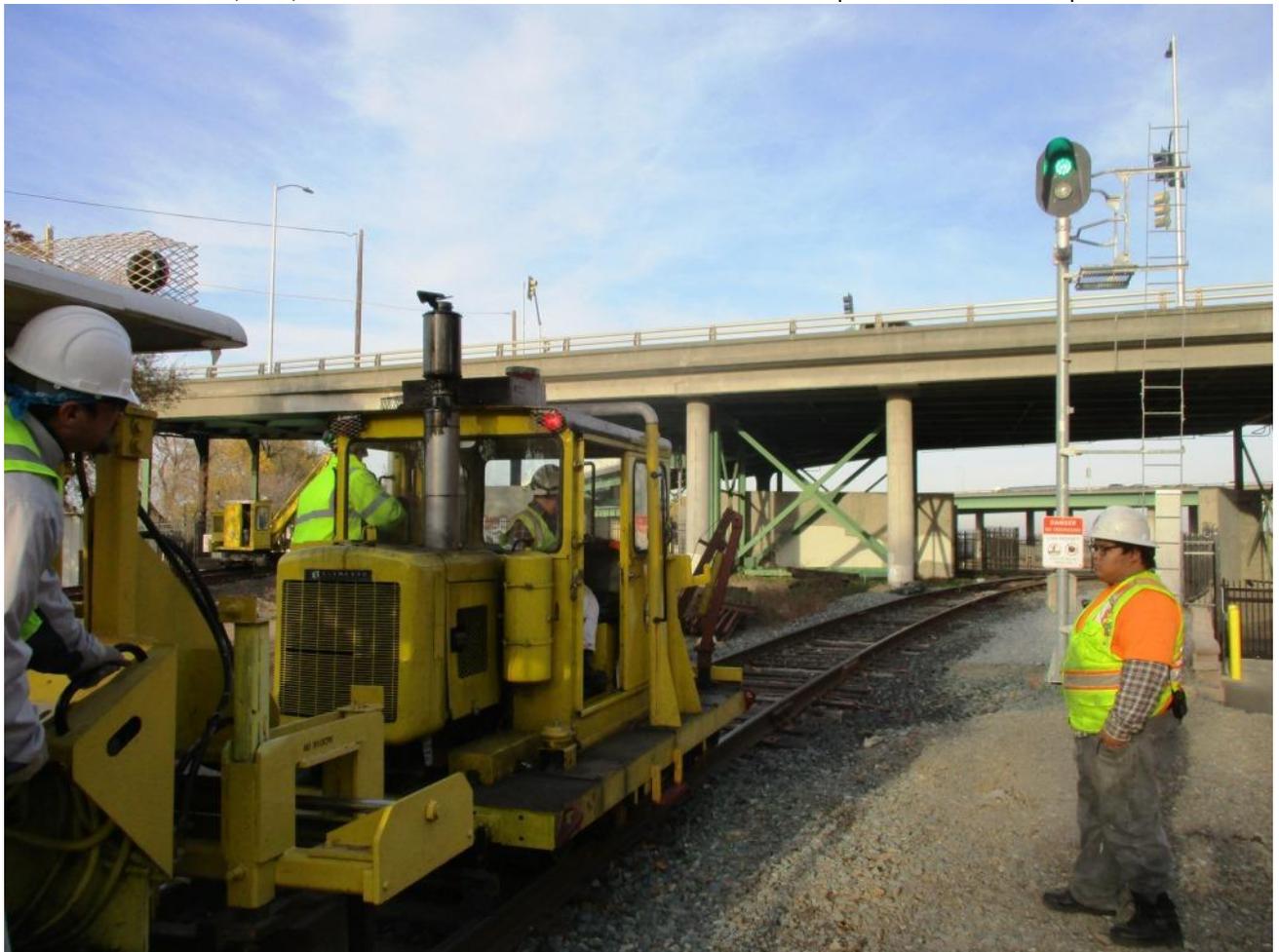
Joe skillfully pilots the Kalamazoo as Mike H. and Jose discharge rock from the side-dump cars



Back in Old Sac., brakeman Joe signals to Chris in the ballast regulator which will haul the Jackson 125 off the North Turntable Lead



Chris, Jose, and Joe now hook the 125 to the Kalamazoo to be pulled over to the Shops



Green signal indication means GO!



Meanwhile, Alan in the tie-crane moves the bundle of ties stacked by the south end of the container



Ties, ties, everywhere! Alan loads them onto a flatcar