

Greetings!

This is your Maintenance of Way Team update for April 9, 2017. It was like 1970-something all over again for the Team this week as we suffered a bit of a diesel-fuel shortage. But, there was no shortage of excitement, nor shortage of words in this update, which starts now!

Alan Hardy, Pat Scholzen, Cliff Hayes, Matt McCracken, Joe Margucci, Weston Snyder, Mike Harris, Chris Carlson, Heather Kearns, and Gene Peck made the Erecting Shop a lively place on Tuesday. Cliff and Pat spent the evening welding new rungs on the rear ladders of the ballast regulator. The additional steps that Cliff welded on the front ladders have been well received by the Team. So, our master of metallurgy extended the rear ladders, as well. Alan continued painting the derrick car a happy shade of MOW Team safety-yellow. Heather and Joe worked on fixing the problematic front-end loader. They dealt with several electrical issues. Chris, Mike H., Weston, and Matt took the tamper and Kalamazoo-tug pulling the full hopper cars down to the track-raise site to add some more ballast. Both machines were low on fuel but, there was enough to do the evening's work. After the rock was disgorged, Chris and Weston tamped the newly laid rock, while Mike H. and Matt headed to Baths to replace a broken bolt in a joint identified by our trusty track inspectors. With the defect corrected, the Team returned to Old Sacramento and put the very thirsty machines away. At the Shops, "Quitting time USA" was announced and everyone said, "good night."

Thursday, while the Legislature was working late to pass the transportation funding bill, Alan, Ed Kottal, Heather, Mike H., and Frank Werry were having fun at the Shops. Alan and Ed arrived early. Alan continued building window shields for the ballast regulator and Ed worked on getting the track-gauger machine up and running. It has been sidelined for a while but, after a couple hours, Ed had it purring like a kitten. Well, like a very loud, gassy kitten. Then, Ed joined EIC Heather, Mike H., and Frank over in Old Sacramento rearranging the positions of the equipment on the 150-track for a quick getaway on Saturday morning. Heather managed to scrounge up a couple jerrycans of diesel which they drained into the Kalamazoo-tug and tamper. Then they made all the necessary moves (in the rain, no less) to get the tie-crane and Kalamazoo up front. The tie-crane would be needed on Saturday as the plan was to dispose of dead-ties from the dead-tie pile at Setzer. A dumpster had been delivered, thanks to State Parks contracts guru and MOW Team member, Mike Miller. With that, the slightly wet Team headed back to the Shops where the evening of good works and good times came to conclusion.

Alan, Ed, Clem Meier, Heather, Steve Nemeth, Frank, Michael Florentine, Jose Gomez, and Pam Tatro knew all was right with the world when Chris walked in the north door of the Erecting Shop carrying a bright pink box of sugary fried-dough goodness. The plan was to start tearing into the mountain of dead-ties at Setzer. It's one of those less than exciting jobs we must do. So, Frank climbed aboard the back-hoe and Mike F. on Green Machine 2 (GM2) and headed to Setzer where they met up with Clem, Pam, Jose, Steve, and Ed. In Old Sac., Heather and Chris poured the last of Team's diesel into the Kalamazoo tug and tamper. Alan fired up the tie-crane followed closely behind by the Kalamazoo. Although sunny when the Team arrived, dark clouds soon covered the sky. At Setzer, the rain started to fall as Jose, Steve, Clem, Ed, Pam, Chris, and Heather loaded dead-ties into the bucket of the back-hoe for dumping into the dumpster. We often say, there's no need to join a gym when you volunteer with MOW. And, that sure was true for the Team at Setzer which got quite a work-out handling those dead-ties. Mike F. on GM2 used the forks to scoop-up eight to 12 dead-ties at a time. It didn't take too long for the Team to fill the dumpster. As more and more ties found their way into the dumpster, Frank used the back-hoe's "extenda-hoe" to push them below the top of the dumpster's walls. By now, it was raining cats and dogs. Yet, your MOW Team kept at it. There's no doubt. The dedication of the MOW Team volunteers is extraordinary.

Meanwhile, back in Old Sacramento, the tie-crane and Kalamazoo stood ready to head south. However, due to a special early train and the need to switch cars in and out of the special train's consist, Old Sacramento's tracks were impacted. By the time the special train got back to town and the switching was completed, Chris called from Setzer to say that the dumpster was full. That made the decision easy. The tie-crane and Kalamazoo headed back up the 150 track for a quick put away. Everyone gathered back at the Shops to debate the most important question of the day: where to go for lunch...

After lunch, the rain dissipated and the Team returned to the Shops. Chris, Ed, Heather, and Alan would work on the tie-shear. The main shear lift cylinder was rebuilt and reinstalled a few weeks ago. Now it needed to be replumbed with all its hydraulic lines. Over in the Boiler Shop, Jose, Frank, Steve, and Mike F., began assembling the frog destined for Switch 19 frog. As you may recall, the MOW Team scrimped and saved to have extra funds available at the end of 2016 to pay for the restoration of this frog. Well, the wing-rails, which were sent out to be milled at a professional machining company, were delivered a week or so ago. Steve aboard GM2, picked-up the main frog structure took it outside where Jose, Mike F., and Frank assembled the pieces. Putting a frog back together is a somewhat involved project. But, Jose, Frank, Mike F., and Steve sure proved that they knew what they were doing. The wing rails were lifted and placed into position. Wedges and brackets were aligned pounded into place. Bolts were installed and tightened down. It's always challenging when trying to make intricate, delicate maneuvers with pieces that weigh hundreds of pounds. By afternoon's end, the frog's basic structure was reassembled. Nonetheless, there's still more work to do. But, if all goes well, the reassembly will be complete this week and, this coming Saturday, the plan is to get the frog installed at Switch 19. That is, if all goes well. As the day concluded, the Team felt good about the progress made Saturday.

This coming week, the Team will gather as usual on Tuesday and Thursday evening in the Erecting Shop starting at or before 5 o'clock p.m. Saturday, 8 o'clock a.m. is the call time. Doughnuts are guaranteed. Thanks one and all for your dedication to building a better railroad!

See you out on the line,

Alan, Chris, and Richard.



The master of metallurgy, Cliff, welds a new step onto the regulator's rear ladder



Chris and Matt drop more rock around the west rail



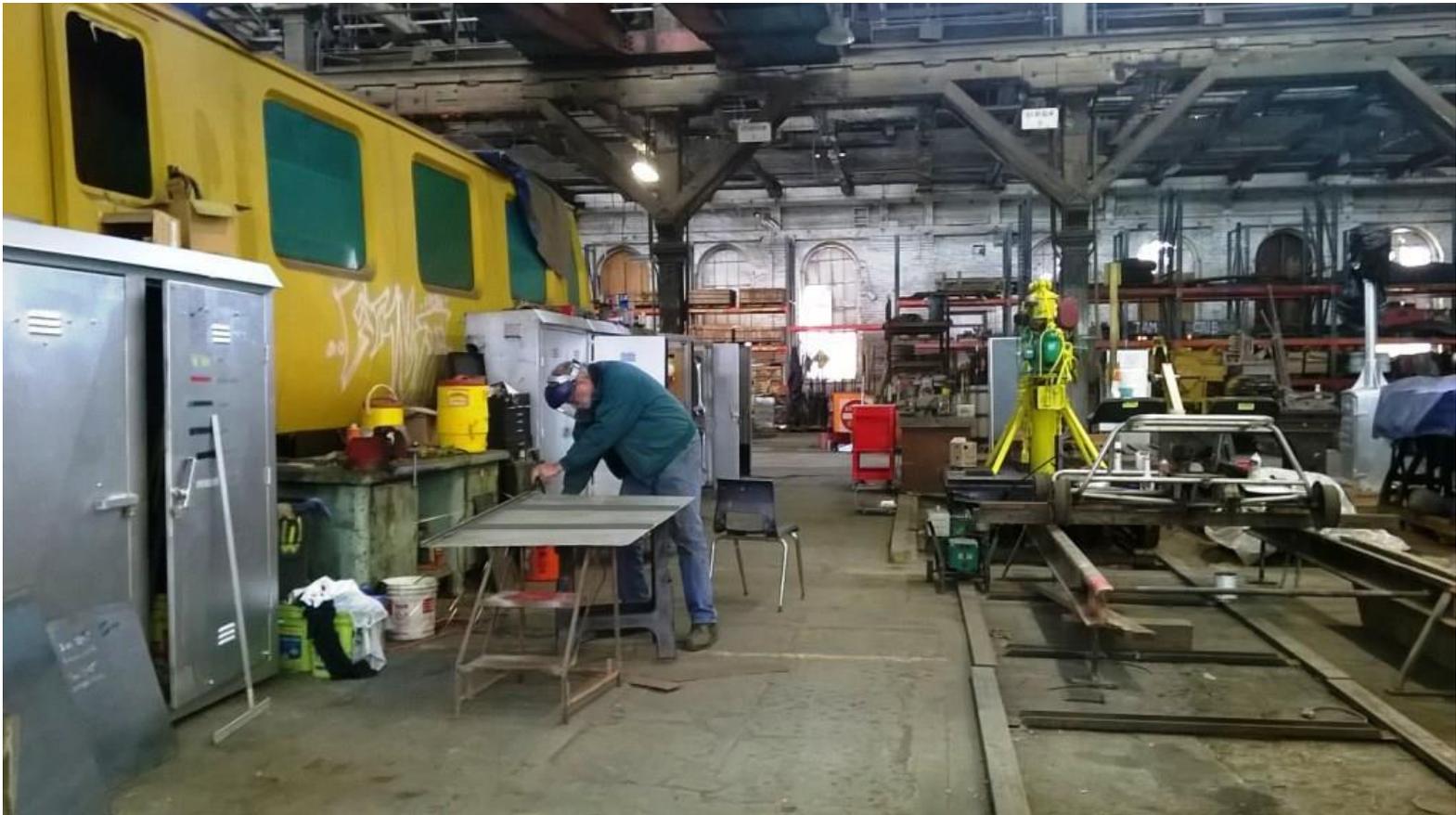
Mike H. nimbly nudges the Kalamazoo tug slowly south as the rock is disorged



At Baths, Matt and Mike H. replace a broken bolt



Joe works his way through a maze of wires under the dash of the front-end loader



Alan constructs window shields for the regulator



Ed gets the gauger going



Moving equipment in the rain: Mike H. takes out the tie-crane



Frank and Ed review their work with the rearranged line-up of MOW equipment



Mike F. checks the oil in GM2



Chris drains every last drop from our only remaining jerry-can of diesel fuel into the tamper



Clem and Jose work with Mike F. on GM2 to load dead-ties onto the forks



Mike F. drops dead ties into the dumpster



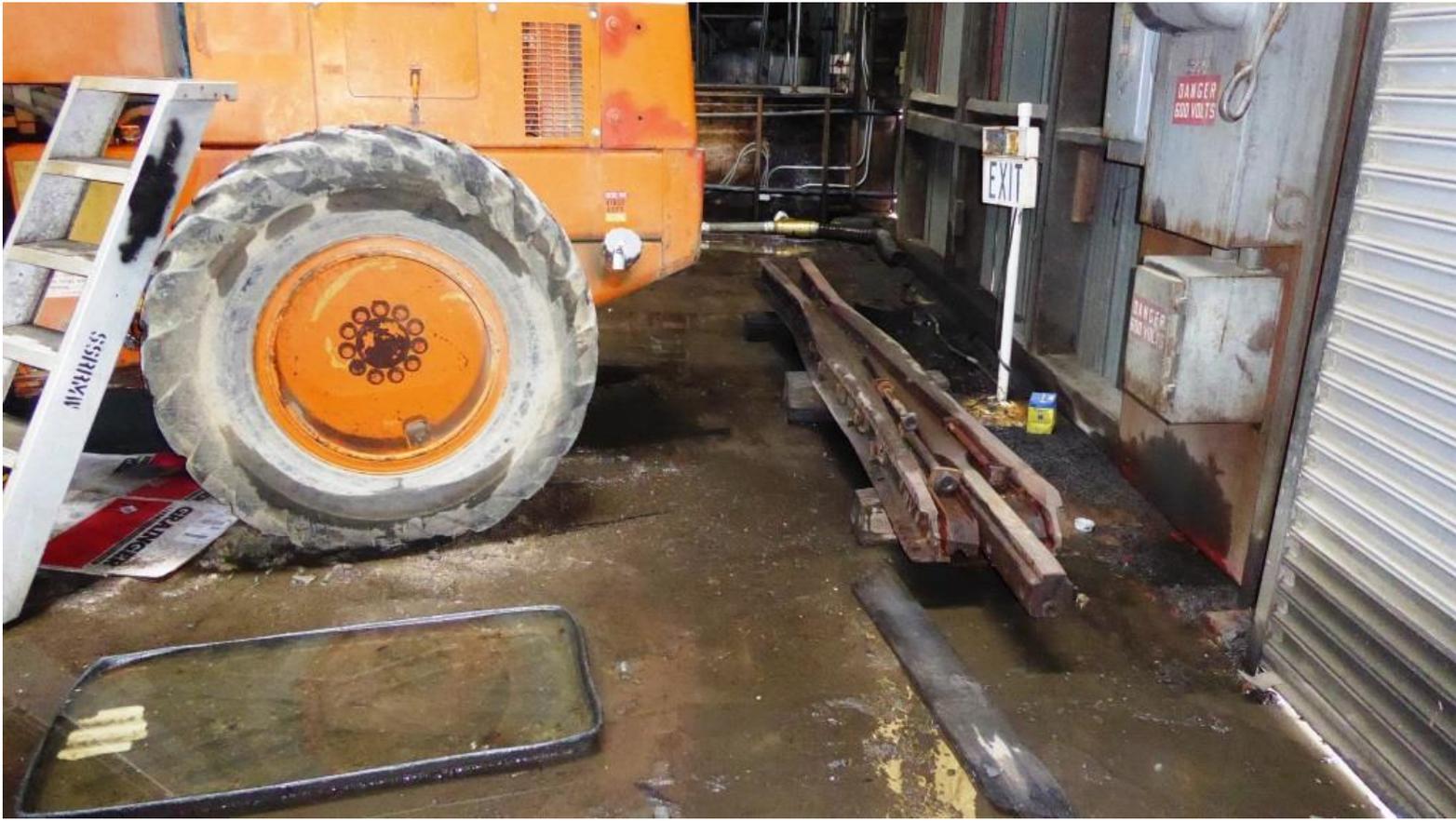
With Frank on the back-hoe, Clem and Ed fill the bucket with dead ties



Pam, Jose, Ed, and Steve take a "selfie" while seeking shelter at Setzer



Heather takes a look at how much room is left in the dumpster as Mike F. on GM2 and Frank on the back-hoe dump dead ties



The Switch 19 frog is buried behind the dead loader



Jose guides Steve on GM2 as he shoves the white trailer out the south door of the Boiler Shop to access the frog



Mike F. chained the frog to GM2's fork which can be moved laterally and pulls the frog out of its hiding place



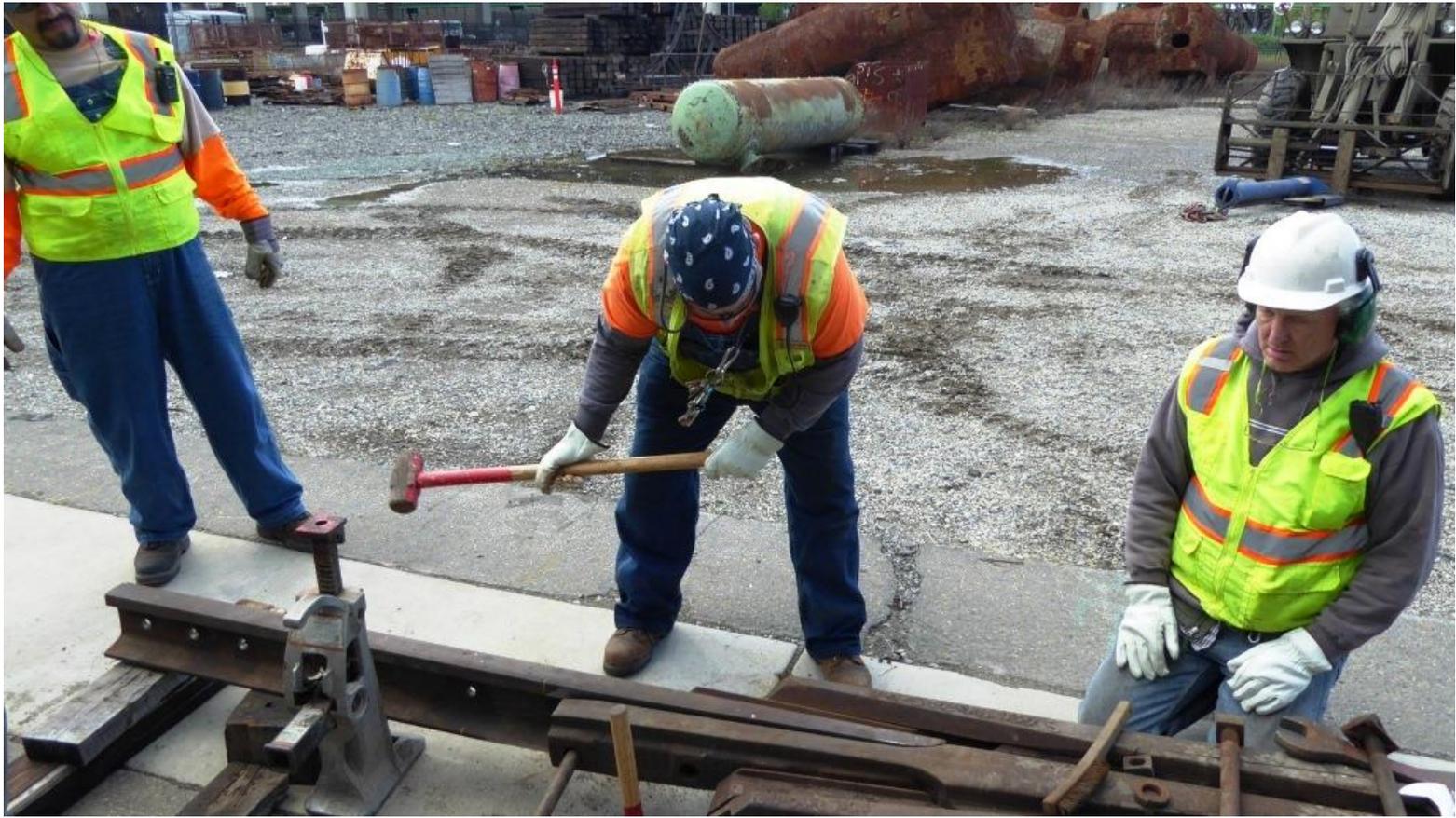
With the frog now accessible, Steve on GM2 lifts it up and prepares to take it outside



Jose uses rail-tongs to grab a newly milled wing rail which Steve on GM2 will move into position



Intricate movements of pieces that weigh hundreds of pounds take skill and patience



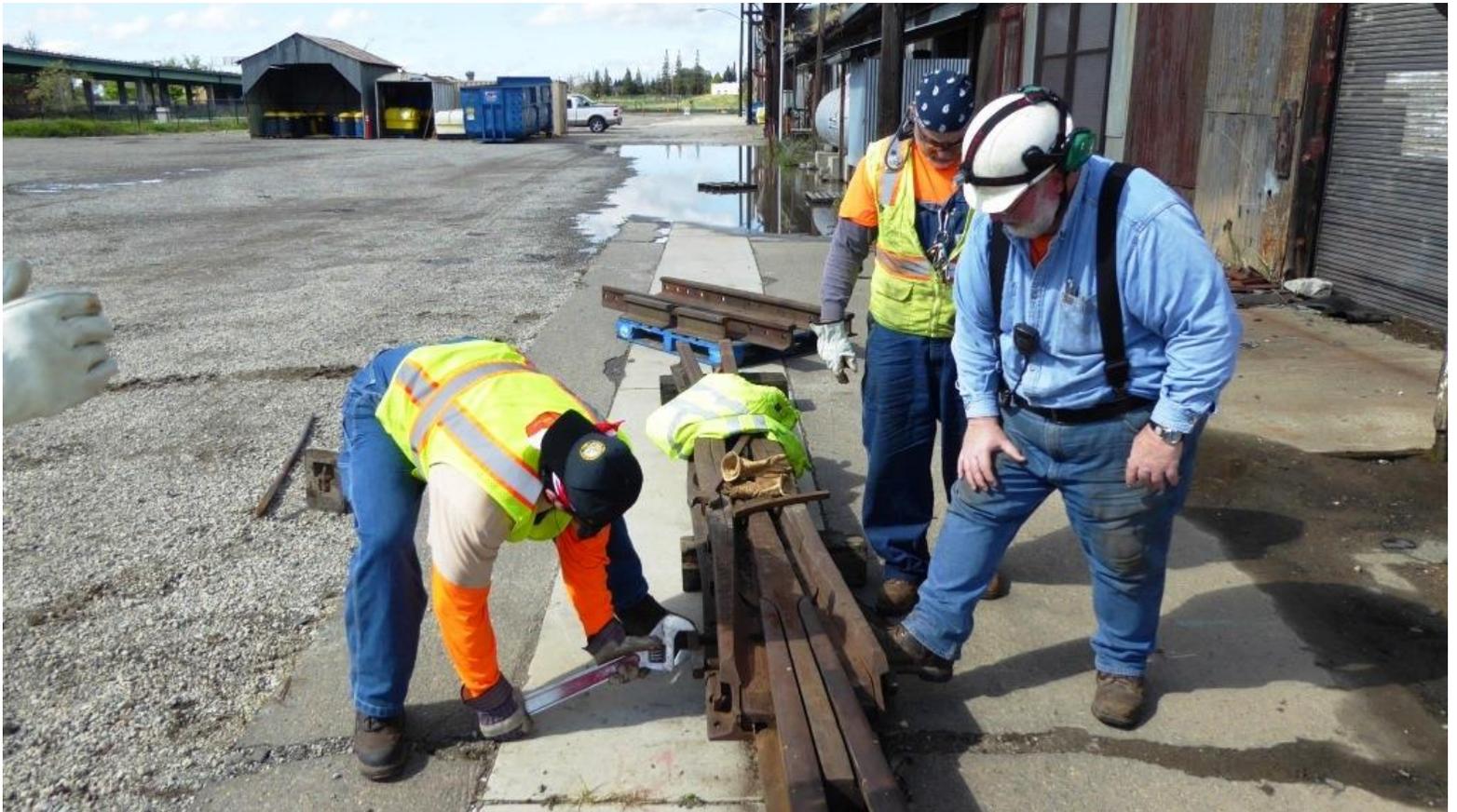
If at first you don't succeed, force it! Mike F. uses a sledge hammer to coax a wedge into place



Frank, Mike F., and Jose have Steve on GM2 move the next wing-rail into position



Management arrives on scene to make sure we weren't mucking things up



Frank holds the bolt-head in place as Jose uses a large crescent wrench to tighten down a nut



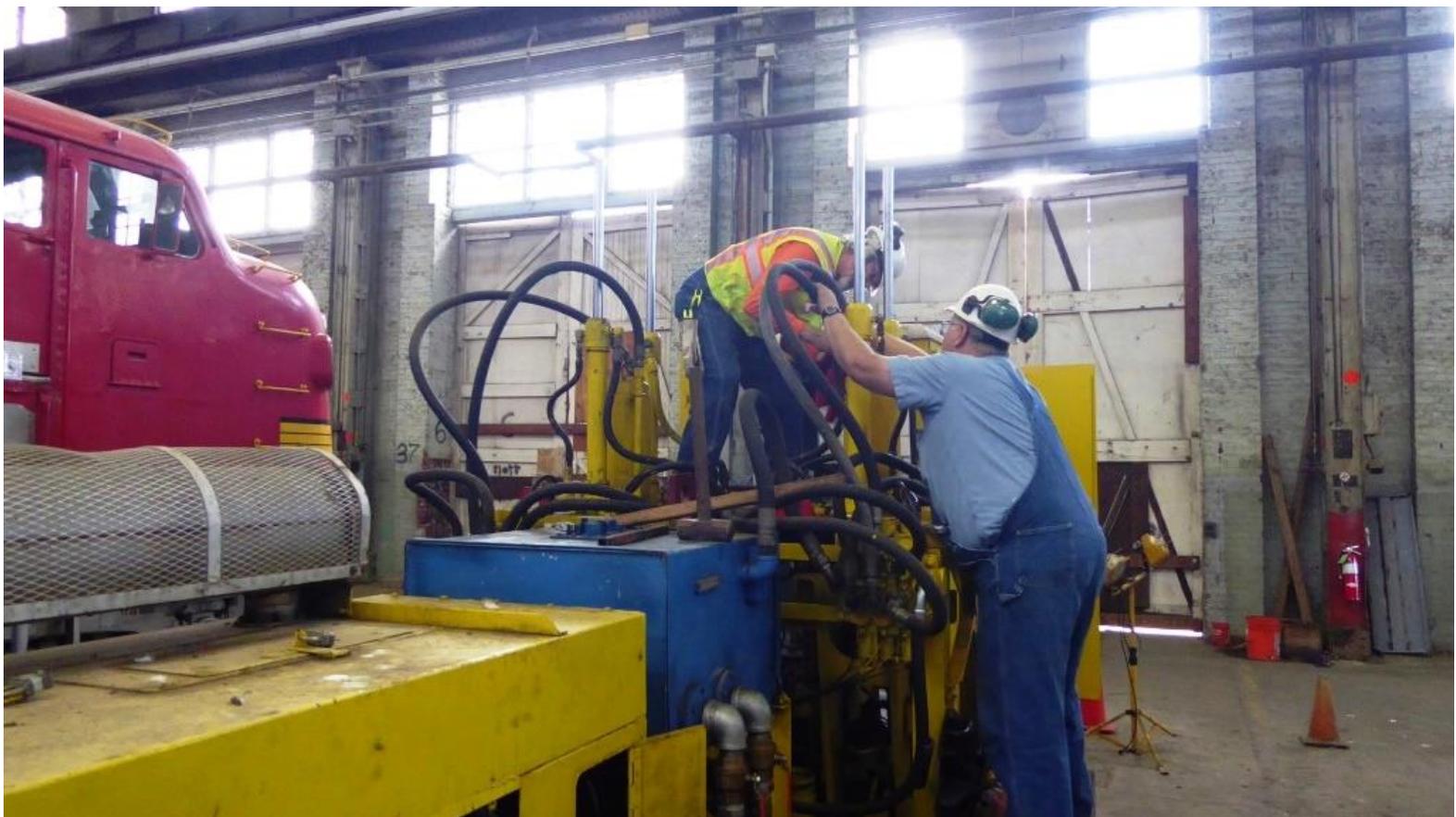
Steve uses a track-wrench to tighten down nuts



And now it's Mike F.'s turn to pull on the wrench



Meanwhile, Chris and Ed re-plumb the tie-shear



Yeah, just a few hydraulic hoses to hook up...