

Greetings!

This is your Maintenance of Way Team update for August 2, 2015. Sparks were flyin' this week as the MOW Team replaced a broken rail on the Business Car Spur-Track in Old Sacramento. Let's get this update flying before any sparks catch it on fire!

It was a severe case of global warming inside the Erecting Shop on Tuesday as one might expect under the metal roof of a brick building in the Great Central Valley in late July. But, the heat didn't dampen any spirits. In fact, Pat Scholzen, Gene Peck, Cliff Hayes, Frederick Carr, Frank Werry, Heather Kearns, Mike Harris, and Alan Hardy were all raring to go on important MOW Team projects. Mike H. and Frank got right to work installing a new multi-directional joystick control valve for the Super "B" Spiker. Fred got the new filter housing installed on the "Sea Tiger" ballast regulator. As the plan for Saturday called for the MOW Team to replace a segment of broken rail on the Business Car Spur-Track across from the Freight Depot in Old Sacramento, Alan headed out our rail supply storage area under I-5 and located a decent stick of rail to use. Then, the Big Green Machine was brought in with the "stinger" attachment to grab the rail out of the pile and drag it to a position alongside the 560 Interchange Track. Thursday, the Team would take the rail over to Old Sacramento.

Speaking of Thursday, Cliff, Fred, Frank, Heather, Mike H., and Alan kept the MOW fun rolling. Heather did a gas run and filled-up the truck as well as all the jerry-cans. Then she serviced the track-inspectors' motorcar by adding antifreeze and oil. In the afternoon, using the forklift, she retrieved the rail-saw and rail-drill from their storage place up high on a pallet rack. Cliff and Fred took the tamper out onto the apron of the Erecting Shop to clean out the dirt and grime that has accumulated around the radiator. This should help eliminate the over-heating issue it's been experiencing. Mike H., conductor Frank, and Heather headed to Old Sacramento to get the Kalamazoo tug and a couple of flat-cars for a journey over to the Rail Yards to gather the replacement rail. However, a UP train decided to stop right on top of the interchange. Conductor Frank communicated with the dispatcher in Omaha who said, "It will be just a couple minutes." Famous last words. Evidently, another train was shoving through the Elvas Wye. By 7 o'clock, Omaha finally gave us the green light. Mike H., throttled-up the tug and, in less than a minute, was in position for Green Machine to load the rail onto the flat-cars. Once the rail was secured, Frank arranged a quick "green" from Omaha and off we went. Alongside the Business Car Track, Heather and Frank rolled the rail onto the ground using rail-forks. Then, it was time to put everything away. Yep, the Team was all staged for Saturday's operation.

Saturday started with a doughnut emergency. The normal supply chain was interrupted. Fortunately, the crisis was averted with an emergency doughnut-run. Alan, Pam Tatro, Heather, Frank, Mike Miller, Michael Florentine, Chris Carlson, and Harry Voss were never aware of the near catastrophe. Doughnuted up, the Team set off for Old Sacramento to replace the broken rail on the Business Car Spur-Track. At the far south end of the Business Car Track, a "bumping post" has been bolted to the rails. Bumping Posts are designed to stop movement of a railroad car beyond the end of the rail. Recently, the tank-car was brought in a little "hot" and impacted the post with enough force to snap the rail. But, the bumping post is a safety device and worked exactly as it was designed -- no equipment was damaged and no one was hurt. And, the MOW Team got the interesting assignment to replace a rail -- something we don't do very often. First thing was to cut the replacement rail to size. Mike M. and Chris brought in the rail-saw, hooked it to the replacement rail and fired it up. The rail-saw always puts on quite a show with a river of sparks and lots of noise. The rail cut rather easily. Frank and Mike F. then gathered the rail-drill to cut new holes in the web for the bumper-bolts to hook in. When drilling, the drill-bits need to be kept cool so Pam kept a constant stream of water flowing onto it with one of the hand-pumps. Once the holes were drilled, the two Mikes pulled spikes on the old broken rails while Harry and Heather unbolted the rail-joint. Heather, using the rail-fork, rolled the old broken rails out of the way. Frank, the two Mikes, and Chris then carried in the newly cut rail. Alan noted that the south-end of the spur looked a bit catawampus. As a result of the impact, the end of the Spur had been shifted over about six-inches to the west. He devised a plan to use a track-jack bracketed by a piece of the old rail to jack the track back into position. Everything was going great. Heather, Mike F., and Pam lined up the bolt-holes of the two rails and joint-bars and set the bolts linking the new rail onto the Spur. Then Mike M. and Frank tightened all the bolts down. Done. It was a well-executed plan which the Team completed by noon. Yes, once again, Maintenance of Way saved the day!

In other news, Frank and Heather re-spiked the switch machine at Switch No. 6 (north center-siding) which had become wobbly then focused their attention on making Switch No. 10 (south-depot) easier to throw. In the afternoon, Frank brought in the front-end loader with the rail-tongs and, with the assistance of Mike F. and Heather, grabbed the left-over rail from the morning's project. The loader lifted it onto flat-cars for the journey back to Old Sacramento. In addition, Heather secured a new battery for the man-lift to replace the one that was stolen. The Team then moved every piece of track equipment off the old 150 Track to access the man-lift which was buried at the very north end of that spur. This took quite a bit of time to switch everything out but, in the end, we managed to get the man-lift and chipper over to the Shops for servicing before commencement of tree-trimming season in September. Indeed, Saturday was a very productive day. The team was tired but quite proud of its accomplishments. Now, onto the next project!

This coming week, the Shops will be open for MOW business at the regular times on Tuesday and Thursday -- at or before 5 o'clock. Saturday, we'll avoid a repeat of the near doughnut disaster and make sure the pink box is well placed before the clock strikes eight. You won't want to miss out on the fun. Many thanks to the fantastic railroad crew on Saturday for working with us and adjusting normal practices while we were fixing the broken rail. Everyone was great. And, of course, thanks to the dedicated volunteers of the MOW Team!

See you out on the line,

Alan, Chris, and Richard.



Mike H. installs the multi-directional joystick control valve for the Super "B" Spiker



The replacement stick of rail is dragged out from the rail pile



Cliff and Fred clean out the radiator of the tamper



The pusher on the end of a UP freight train stops dead on top of the Museum's interchange track



Maybe if we hope hard enough, the light will turn green...



Finally, the UP Main has cleared. Mike H. and Frank in the Kalamazoo pull the new stick of rail over to Old Sacramento



The new rail arrives on site



The offending rail on the Business Car Spur...



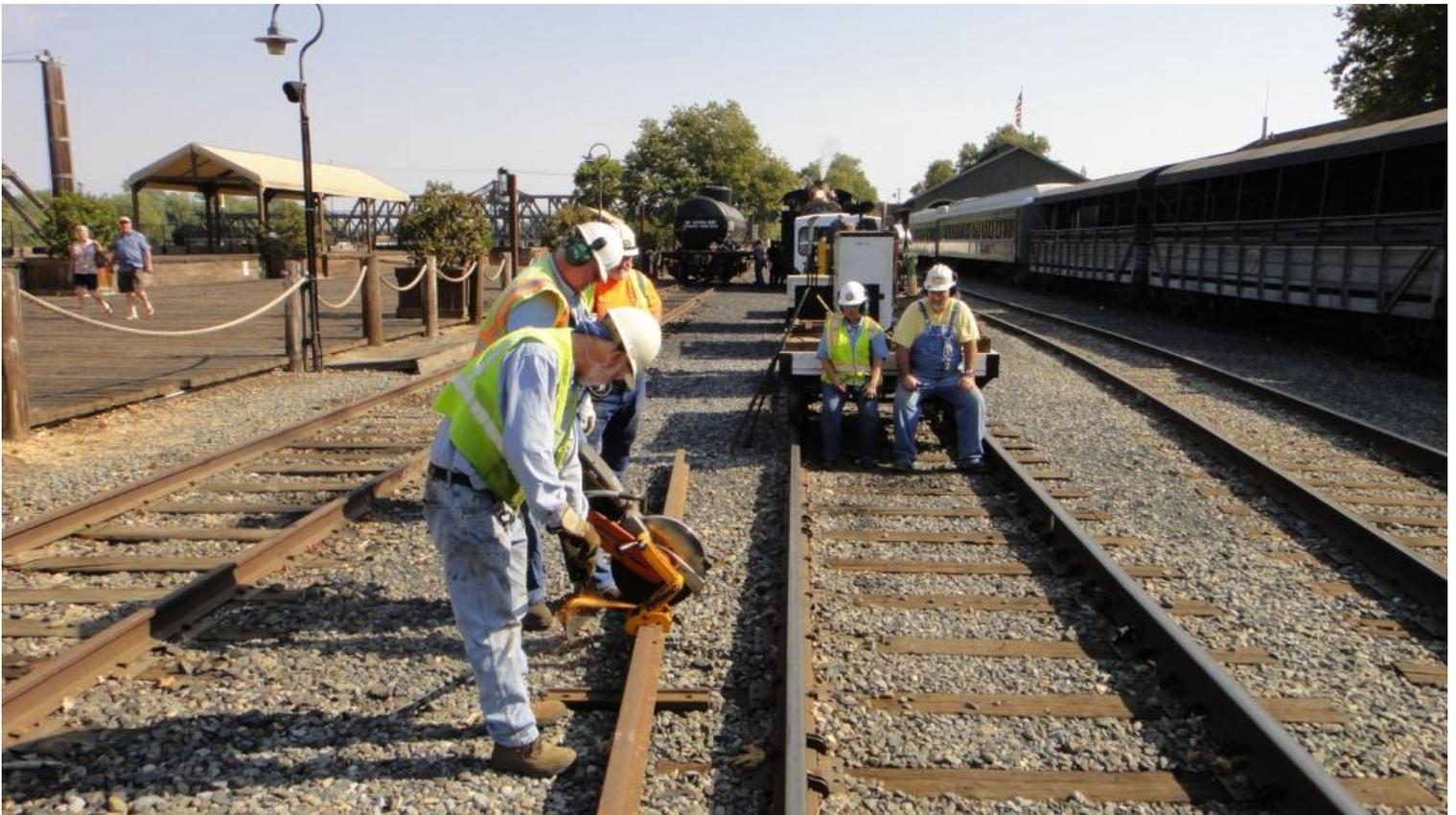
Heather and Frank make adjustments to Switch 6



Chris and Mike M. lever-up the new rail while Alan puts a joint-bar under it to make room for the rail-saw blade to cut through the base



Mike M. places a shovel behind the rail-saw as a shield for the sparks as Chris cuts the new rail to size



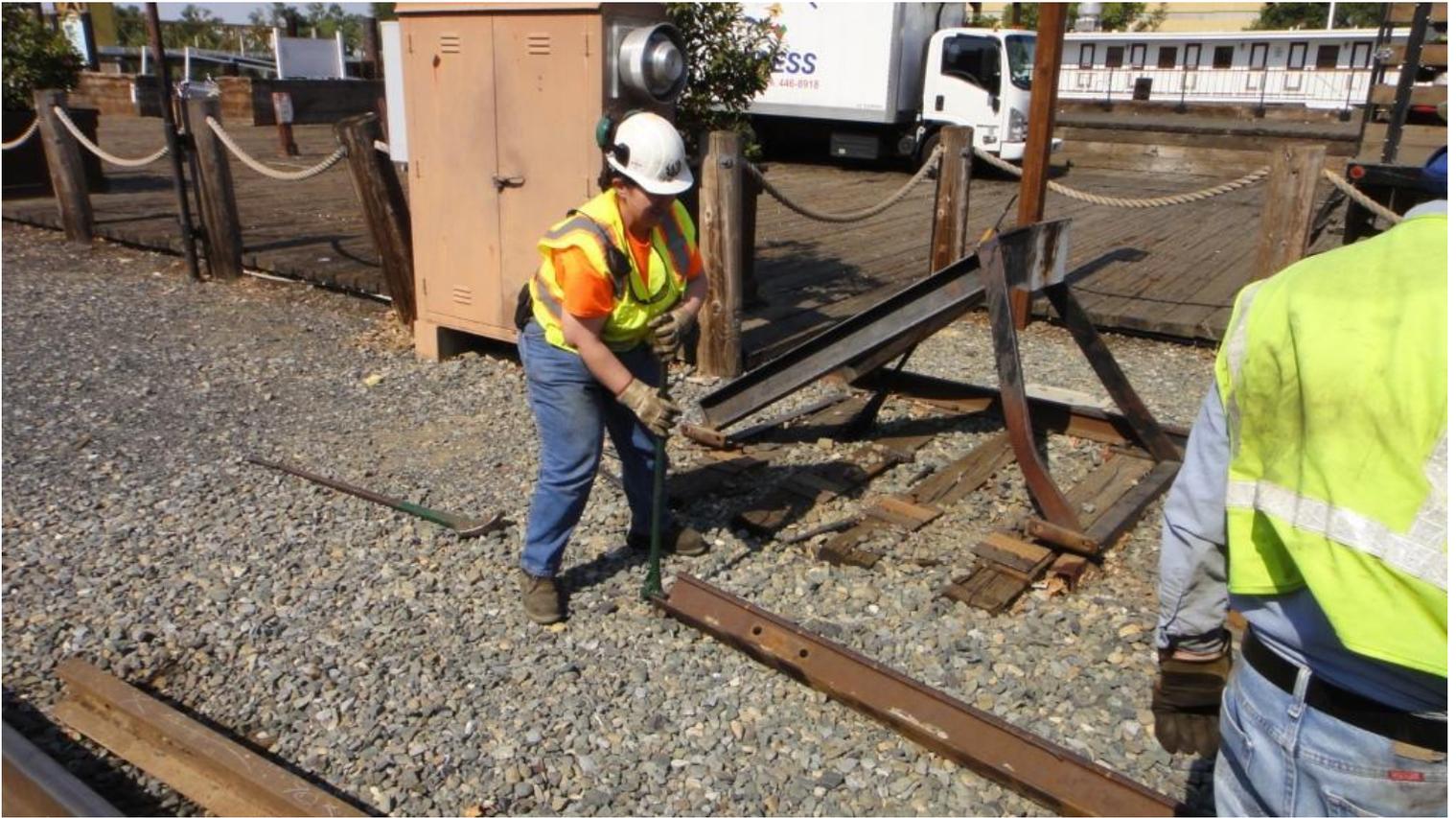
Cutting rail is quite entertaining



Frank and Mike F. bring in the rail-drill to make new bolt holes for the bumper's brackets



Pam pumps water onto the drill bit in order to keep it cool as it cuts into the rail



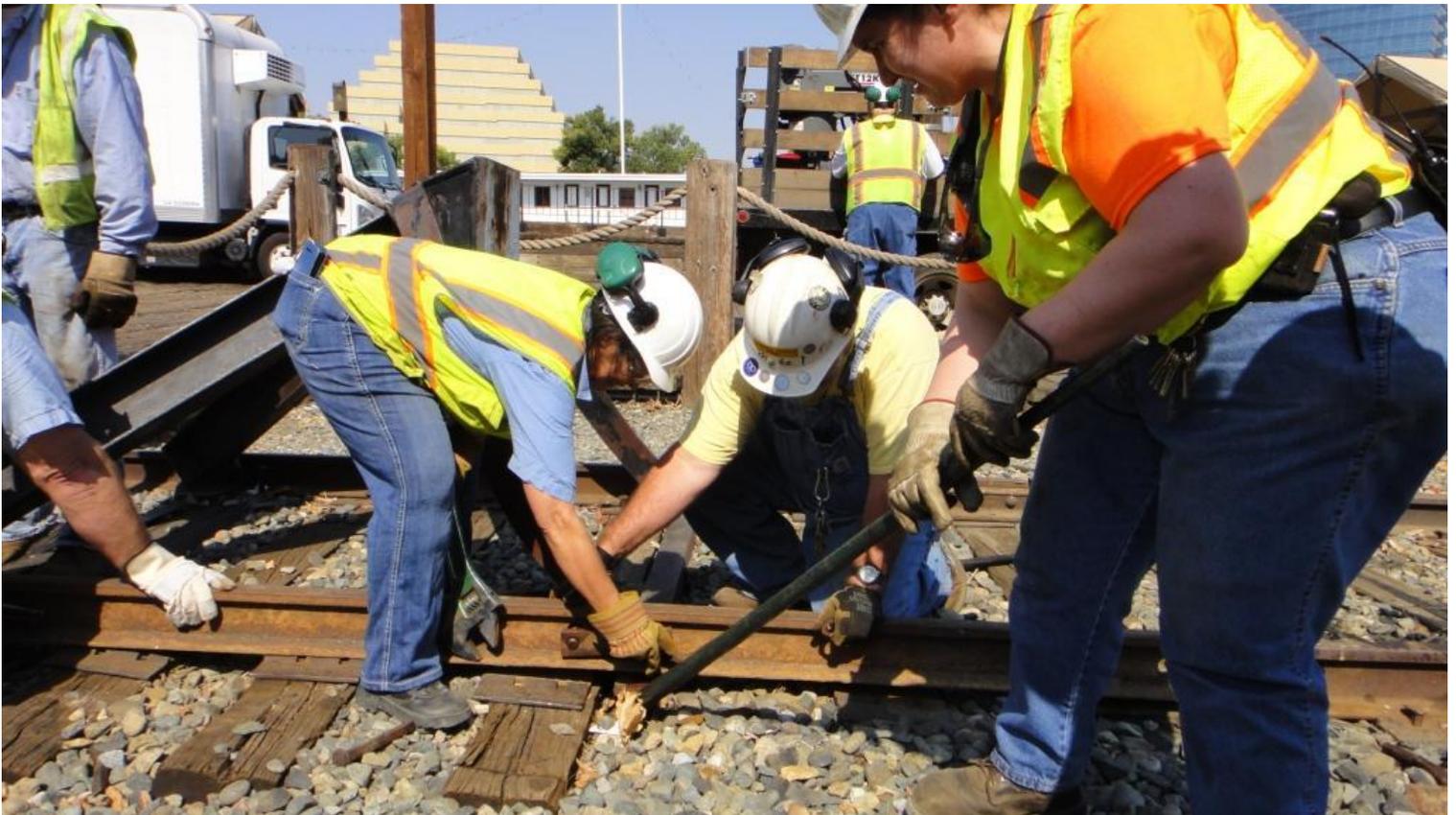
Heather rolls the old offending rail out of the way...



...While Frank, Mike F., Chris, and Mike M. bring in the new rail



Mike F. and Mike M. shimmy the new rail into position



Heather levers-up the rail as Pam and Mike F. line the bumper bracket to bolt it in place



Using a track-jack and a piece of broken rail, Mike F. and Alan shove the south end of the Business Car Track back into alignment. Pam gets another track-jack to lift the rail slightly in order to get all the bolt holes to line up



Mike F., Mike M., and Chris "Kroil" the bolts at the joint



The final step: Mike M. and Frank tighten the bolts



The winning team! Mike M., Harry, Chris, Alan Mike F., Heather, and Frank – wait, where's Pam?



Frank drags the remaining rail to a position where it could be loaded onto a flat car



Heather pilots the man-lift over to the Shops pulling the chipper and flatcars with the extra rail