Improving while Moving. Conrail management innovation teams met for the first time on the tracks between Philadelphia and Pittsburgh.

**FIVE TEAMS PROGRAM IMPLEMENTED**

By Tim Tierney, Vice President / Chief Engineer

Providing a safe and efficient work environment is the top priority of Conrail management. Keeping trains moving to satisfy our customers’ growing demands requires constant effort and coordination by managers. As many experienced managers prepare to retire after decades of service to Conrail, it is vital that the new generation of managers develop expertise and learn to apply new methods and technologies that will maintain Conrail’s excellent service in our bustling Shared Asset Areas. To equip the up-and-coming generation of Conrail managers with the tools they need to operate a 21st Century railroad, senior management has assembled five teams to address some of the organizational challenges that affect employees and operations. Each team was assigned a focus area (Eliminating work errors, Communications, Operating Workforce, Shared Asset Areas) and developed a solution to drive improvements in these areas.

The goals of the Five Teams program are to develop “real-life” improvements to our daily operations; to make Conrail the safest, most efficient railroad; and to provide employees at every level with the opportunity to succeed. The teams are composed of managers from different operating departments in the three Shared Asset Areas. In every case, the cross-functional approach led to a range of discussion and creative solutions.

The teams began their work during three two-day train trips between Philadelphia and Pittsburgh along the Norfolk Southern Harrisburg and Pittsburgh lines, one of the country’s busiest freight corridors. These working trips provided the chance for teams to focus on their assignments away from their day-to-day work environments while getting to know one another, and to observe the operations of a Class I railroad.

While on the rails, each team put their heads together to tackle their particular assignment. After the trips, teams continued to convene in person or by phone several times to further identify, develop and implement possible solutions. The solutions evolved into presentations made on behalf of the teams, as summarized below.

**Team 1: Reducing Risk with Error-free Work**

The team identified that many avoidable errors result from mistakes made upstream from the actual incident, and that current efficiency check procedures and forms are successful at identifying failure causes, but are ineffective at preventing the risks that led to them. The team’s proposed solution is to implement integrated processes and forms to record knowledge gained from a failure and transfer it forward to avoid similar mistakes in the future.

**Team 2: Improving Post-incident Communications**

The team identified a lack of timely, uniform communication to the workforce after an incident to educate them in avoiding similar future incidents. The team’s proposed solution is to produce an easy-to-comprehend flier detailing the visual and factual results of each incident, to be distributed to craft employees. While the program’s emphasis is on field supervisors personally briefing employees on the flier, its content will be posted on breakroom televisions and bulletin boards, and referenced in safety briefings.

**Team 3: Increasing Efficiency of the Operating Workforce**

The team identified opportunities to improve coordination in operations planning by expanding communication at the manager level to eliminate the disruption of field managers’ work plans. The team’s proposed solution is to broaden awareness of operations activities among pertinent managers by encouraging them to pay closer attention to the Weekly Track Usage report. This will enhance communication between departments and strengthen field managers’ ability to effectively plan their gangs’ activities and efficiently complete tasks.

**Team 4: Improving New Hire Assessment Practices**

The team identified opportunities to improve the current employee training process, especially in the cases of those crafts that have traditionally relied upon on-the-job training, or posting. The team’s proposed solution is to standardize the training process for each department, so that all employees are given the best opportunity to verify their craft skill before working on their own. Specific elements include setting achievable expectations, progressive guidance and mentoring, and consistent testing of both agreement and non-agreement employees.

**Team 5: Enhancing a Manager’s Abilities/Skills with Training**

The team identified the opportunity to prepare new managers for their expanding responsibilities through a rigorous management training program. The team’s proposed solution is to move managers through a four-tiered training program that begins with basic management techniques, progresses to leadership skills education, department oversight technique and advanced rail industry training. Beyond the formal training program, managers will be encouraged to further their professional education at approved college-level programs.

While the teams succeeded in developing workable solutions to each of the assigned challenges, this is not a one-and-done effort. These issues will demand constant and continuous attention over the long term. The teams’ program will continue to build on their work, with current and future members expected to test these solutions in the field and improve them based on results and employee input.
Detroit Shared Assets Area

Detroit traffic improved by track upgrades

Keeping larger volumes of freight moving smoothly through a busy corridor has increased the demand on Detroit Division’s yards and main lines.

Longer railcars and trains are taking up the extra product, but maintaining efficiency in movement is vital in preventing holdups and interruptions that can ripple through the system. For that reason, Conrail’s Engineering Department has undertaken a program consisting of numerous track improvements to tune the system by easing the flow of activity throughout its mainline tracks in Detroit. The combined effort over the last four years of Detroit’s MW, C&S, and B&B gangs has noticeably improved the consistency, reliability, and safety of the Detroit division’s operations. The last three major projects in this program are due to be completed between this summer and fall.

Upgraded interlockings and yard switches

The No. 10 crossovers located at CP Vinewood are being upgraded to No. 15 crossovers to provide smoother movement for trains. Moreover, plans are in the works to reconfigure CP Lou and CP Bonita, with preliminary work already underway. In addition, hand-thrown turnouts continue to be renewed at both North Yard and River Rouge.

Install new welded rail

With the goal of staying ahead of track wear, Detroit’s MW gangs will work in conjunction with CSX’s rail gang to install new sections of continuous welded rail, replacing segments that have become worn through years of service.

Tie replacement and surfacing

To further harden Detroit’s track infrastructure, roughly 30,000 ties are planned for installation by Norfolk Southern’s tie gang, along with a surfacing program encompassing the Detroit and Lincoln Secondary lines as well as Brownstown Yard.

Maintenance

It is a testament to the tenacity of Detroit MW that the system has been able to contend with the meteoric rise that freight shipping has seen in the last two years.

“We look at all of our rails the right way,” said Terminal Engineer Tom Szpond.

That means making standard maintenance procedures a priority, implementing new ideas and verifying that all work is done to the highest standard.

In addition to these track and signal projects, Detroit Division is making plans to upgrade operating facilities, including construction of a new yard operations building at River Rouge Yard. These new buildings will offer improved facilities across the board for employees and administration alike.

PVS Chemicals Considers Conrail Crews Like Family

PVS Chemicals is a leading manufacturer and supplier of chemical products to industries throughout North America. Based in Detroit since 1945, PVS provides high quality sulfur compounds, hydrochloric acids, ferric chlorides and other chemicals that are critical to numerous manufacturing, mining and environmental processes.

Conrail crews serve the shipping needs of three of PVS’ largest divisions in the Detroit area — PVS Transportation, PVS Technologies, and PVS Nolwood — expediting nearly 400 cars per month to locations throughout North America.

PVS Terminal Manager Frances Jenuwine considers Conrail crews to be “family” in terms of keeping her operation running smoothly to meet customers’ expectations.

“They’ve never let me down in 21 years,” she said. “Conrailers prove their value to PVS day in and day out.”

In January, Jenuwine’s confidence in Conrail was proven again. On a particularly cold, snowy morning, PVS’ tracks were in rough shape, resisting the PVS crews’ efforts to thaw them with salt, steam and picks. The Conrail crew was at the gates of the PVS yard ready to spot vital incoming inventory. Seeing the difficult weather and circumstances was what the PVS crew needed to open the tracks for the switch.

In short, threatening a possible shutdown that may have ultimately forced customers to halt their operations,” she said. “Conrail saved the day!”
By Rachael Crandley

Recently, the development of a GIS system was approved for Conrail by our Board of Directors. With the direction and input of Conrail representatives from Real Estate, Engineering, Transportation, Customer Service and Risk Management, industry experts Bartlett & West are already creating the first phase of the Conrail GIS system. Initially, they are importing all existing map data and spreading resources (CAD, Valuation maps, Bernie Beaver maps, etc.), to reproduce the Conrail rail system and property assets online. Authorized users will be able to sign onto the system to view all kinds of proprietary information, such as property boundaries, utility occupations, bridges, signals, leases, easements, licenses and sidetrack agreements. These will be visible by highlighting specific “layers” overlaid on a street map or clicking certain icons representing these various features. For example, clicking a bridge icon may reveal the bridge number, location, weight, bridge type, and a link to any agreement relating to that bridge (see illustration below).

Since the inception of the Conrail GIS project a little over a year ago, there have been many requests for future capabilities, many of which are being considered for the next phase. Some of these include: automated track charts, mobile accessibility, charting locations where land has been remedi ated, integration of customer information from CARIS and importing of billing data from SAP (to name just a few). When the first phase is released, GIS will likely spark ideas about even more ways it can benefit Conrail.

This first phase is just the primary build-out, intended to be the beginning of a sys tem that will grow with the company. With time, Conrail’s GIS system will be a valuable asset, simplifying the way research and mapping is performed and creating greater efficiencies through immediate access and more precise real-time information to max imize our railroad operations.
MOUNT LAUREL/PHILADELPHIA

Retirements
• Kurt Holt, Conductor, retired with 40 years of service.
• Harry Kirby, Locomotive Engineer, 25 years of service.
• Joseph Love, Locomotive Engineer, 15 years of service.
• Kenneth McColligan, Conductor, 15 years of service.
• Daniel Miller, Locomotive Engineer, 15 years of service.
• John Rizzo, Mechanic, 15 years of service.
• Neul Rodriguez, Conductor, 15 years of service.
• Vincent Vaccarella, Train Dispatcher, 15 years of service.
• John Vessels, Conductor, 15 years of service.
• Frank Forant, B&B Foreman, 5 years of service.
• John Frei Jr, Electronic Technician, 5 years of service.
• Alexander Hoye, Welder Foreman, 5 years of service.
• Randall Sweeney, Car Repairman, 5 years of service.
• Newton Wollan, B&B Foreman, 5 years of service.

First anniversary
• Jake Abraham, Conductor

NEW Hires
• Christopher Reeder, Management Trainee HR
• W McCall, Management Trainee Engineering

First anniversary
• Jennifer Ryan, Supervisor Workforce Planning, 5 years of service.
• Carol Kane, General Clerk, 5 years of service.
• Jennifer Ryan, Supervisor Workforce Planning, 5 years of service.
• Matthew Warren, Supervisor Service Delivery, 5 years of service.
• Anthony Taylor, Document Specialist

SOUTH JERSEY

Retirements
• Victor Kowalski, Conductor, retired with 45 years of service.
• Frank Damaco, Machinist, retired with 41 years of service.
• George Grams, Locomotive Engineer, retired with 39 years of service.
• Daniel Gould, Locomotive Engineer, retired with 38 years of service.
• Thomas Lindermeir, Supervisor Signal Construction, retired with 36 years of service.
• Andre Silvestry, Supervisor Signal, retired with 36 years of service.
• Clarence Jones, Locomotive Engineer, retired with 30 years of service.

First anniversary
• Diego Ypanaque, Carman
• James McDermott, Conductor Trainee

NEW Hires
• Anthony Brown, Conductor Trainee
• Tyler Cook, Billing/Paying Clerk
• Jamilla Cromartie, Conductor Trainee
• Barney Dibenedetto, Conductor Trainee
• James McDermott, C&S Maintainer

NORTH JERSEY

Retirements
• Victor Kowalski, Conductor, retired with 45 years of service.
• Frank Damaco, Machinist, retired with 41 years of service.
• George Grams, Locomotive Engineer, retired with 39 years of service.
• Daniel Gould, Locomotive Engineer, retired with 38 years of service.
• Thomas Lindermeir, Supervisor Signal Construction, retired with 36 years of service.
• Andre Silvestry, Supervisor Signal, retired with 36 years of service.
• Clarence Jones, Locomotive Engineer, retired with 30 years of service.

First anniversary
• James Angley, Conductor trainee
• Anthony Brown, Conductor Trainee
• Tyler Cook, Billing/Paying Clerk
• Jamilla Cromartie, Conductor Trainee
• Barney Dibenedetto, Conductor Trainee
• James McDermott, C&S Maintainer
• Silverio Jomar Mendoza, Stevedore

NEW Hires
• Randy Castella, Stevedore
• William Dugan, Stevedore
• Oscar Giton, Locomotive Machinist
• Recco Massie, Stevedore
• Michael Mendoza, Stevedore
• Gregory Quinto, Locomotive Machinist
• David Smith, Locomotive Machinist
• Eric Tice, Locomotive Machinist
• Tahon Williams, Stevedore
• Stephen Zipp, Stevedore
Connections

When things get hot

John Vanemburgh, Machinist, Pavonia Engine House

For 40 years, John has been a vigilant and courageous member of the Delanco Township Washington Volunteer Fire Company #1. The town of 3,237, situated on the point between the Delaware River and Rancocas Creek, depends entirely on its volunteer firemen to keep families and homes safe from fire and other emergencies. Everyone in Pavonia Engine Shop knows that John can fix just about anything, and that undoubtedly is important in responding to alarms, as well as maintaining the engine company’s equipment. John has served in every role with the WVFC, including as Captain, and has served alongside his brother. In hale health, John is looking forward to serving his neighbors for many years to come.

Treasures from the tracks

Anthony Boone, Conductor, North Jersey Shared Asset Area

A Conductor has to have an eye for spotting trains, but when he has completed a task, Boone takes an extra look along the rails for the cast-offs of the hard work of moving freight through the North Jersey Shared Asset Area. Sometimes, he finds a real treasure to augment his sculpture series, entitled “In My Travels.” Last year, he found a piece of crumpled, weathered corrugated metal. Taking care against the item’s sharp edges, he brought it home to his studio, where he also paints abstract canvases, and applied his vision to turn a piece of junk into a work of art titled, “Still Standing,” which was selected by an expert jury panel as a featured entry at the FLUX Art Fair this past May.

New Year’s Joy

Buzzy Woods, Train Dispatcher, Mt. Laurel

Philadelphia is famous for the Mummers Parade held on New Year’s Day and featuring flamboyant marching troupes of musicians, comics, and other players. Dispatcher Buzzy Woods was born into the tradition that harks back to the 18th Century among the Swedish and Finnish immigrants that populated Philadelphia from colonial times. His 42 years with the Quaker City String Band follows on the participation of multiple generations of his family. Currently, he is the senior representative of the seven-strong Woods family contingent. The team’s 125 members work year-round to raise the funds to put on their production, which features 67 orchestrated musicians marching in theatrical costuming and moving sets. Apart from the big New Year’s event, Buzzy’s club performs at Summer and Fall festivals, on cruise ships, and has visited as far as Ireland to perform.
Every part of a locomotive works hard, and keeping Conrail power in service demands a consistent effort against time and space at the Pavonia Engine House. Seven days a week, the Pavonia crew assembles for the 6 a.m. safety meeting. Whether the day’s work is to renew brake shoes, inspect running gear, top off sand and lubricating oil, and other regular service on some of Conrail’s 91 assigned engines, or conducting unscheduled repairs to road power either at the Diesel Terminal or outlaying points, the first job on every job is Safety.

Potential risks are part of every job at Pavonia, where locomotives roll in and out for the full slate of maintenance and repair services. Being prepared for what the day may bring requires both organization and coordination between every member of the 14-person crew of machinists, electricians, foremen and laborers. While every person has a title, there’s no separation of responsibility when it comes to helping. Extra hands and eyes make a big difference in reducing risks and getting the job done right. Every crew member learns exactly how to work together – what to watch, when to lift, how fast to move. That kind of teamwork is a big part of why Pavonia stands out across Conrail for its safety culture.

“Consistency is the key,” says John Curdy, Director of Motive Power. “We do things by the book.” Knowledge of policies and procedures is augmented by craft and equipment expertise acquired at CSX REDI Center, Westinghouse Air Brake program, EMD “Dash 2” program, and other technical specialty programs.

“Our most important asset is our people,” Curdy said. “We develop experts who are proud of what they do and where they work.”

While most Conrail operations enjoy a break on the weekends, the action at Pavonia heats up. The Engine House territory fills up right through Saturday with locomotives that are needed on Monday morning. Track space is limited. Between one engine exiting either of the two indoor shop tracks, and the next one pulling in, a quick cleanup of the pit, docks and gang-ways is made to minimize any chance of an incident. Most work is routine servicing, but some locomotives need heavier work. Pavonia is equipped with a full-track drop-table to facilitate changing out such major components as a traction motor - wheel assembly Combo, or repairing springs, center castings and side bearings. The shop is equipped with a traveling crane that allows repairs to power assemblies, governors and other components.

By Sunday night, the herd of engines is turned back around and headed back to their home yards or heading up long haul trains as the Pavonia crew heads home with another record-breaking day of safely completed work.

From Left: George Blaszko, Eric Levin, John VanEmburgh, Tim Grywuta, Daniel Cogan, Matt Middleton, John Curdy, Bryan Eichinger, Mike Lynch, Mark Rudasiewicz, Ken Browning, Mike O’Malley, Jim Weiss (rat) J. Paul Henry, Don Martin and Al Roda (rat)
Doremus, Ridgefield auto terminals run at rising volume

The Conrail North Jersey Shared Asset Area is the largest distribution point for domestic and imported automobiles in the Northeast United States. Conrail serves several auto distribution terminal operations, including Ridgefield, Doremus I, Doremus II, and Foreign Auto Preparation Services.

With auto sales surging at the highest sales rate since 2005 at more than 17 million unit annual sales estimated, Conrail is providing more of the specialized cars and services necessary for the safe and efficient transport of automobiles. The many different sizes, shapes and option configurations of popular vehicles requires broad training with a multitude of configurations, and a lot of care in ensuring that the tightly-packed cargo – often stacked three-high in an articulated railcar – suffers no damage during loading/unloading and switching.

The activity is nearly constant. Conrail Doremus crews start on a flexible early-morning schedule seven days a week, and no damage during loading/unloading and switching.

By the end of 2016, rail traffic is likely to increase by approximately 50 percent, to six daily outbound trains, three inbound and a daily inbound of empties. With Conrail facilities already heavily utilized, this additional volume of traffic will present some new challenges. Fortunately, prior North Jersey SAA track improvements, such as the Bergen Tunnel clearance project, 2010, and double-tracking the Lehigh Line, 2007, will pay even greater dividends as far as access for these additional trains. Storing and moving the larger number of cars during the longer loading and unloading cycles of the larger ships will require constant juggling.

“Of course things will change as the thousands of containers hit the docks,” Megali said. “We are ready to meet the challenge.”

Maher Terminals prepare for Port of Newark expansion

Maher Terminals Port Elizabeth Container Facility is preparing itself for a dramatic increase in container traffic when Post-Panamax ships dock at Port Newark for the first time in early 2016. Two major infrastructure projects – the raising of the Bayonne Bridge just 2 miles from the Port Newark Yard, and the expansion of the Panama Canal more than 3,000 miles away – are expected to double the monthly volume of containers shipping into the Port of New York/New Jersey (PNYNJ) within the next year. The expansion is leading to a lot of changes in Maher’s intermodal operations.

PNYNI is the highest-volume port facility on the U.S. Atlantic seaboard. The Garden State Secondary Line is the main artery for rail traffic in and out of the Port Newark area. Currently, Conrail dispatches four daily trains out of the Port and two in, reflecting an imbalance of imports and exports, and creating a constant shortage of railcars. To make up the short-age, three trains of empties are brought in every week.

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“Our crews and conductors will work closely with Dispatch and Maher Director of Rail Operations Steve Kolodziej’s crew to keep things moving safely and efficiently,” said Mo Megali, North Jersey SAA Manager of Field Operations.

Kolodziej said Maher is ready for the surge.

“We’ve got four rubber-tired gantry cranes, 12 straddle-carriers and three reach-stackers dedicated to loading trains,” he said. “Our Conrail crews know our 18 tracks and lead-ins like the back of their hands. I’m completely confident they will mesh with our needs to safely and efficiently keep things moving throughout the terminal.”

With an expected 50 percent increase in rail-bound container traffic, Megali initially anticipates that Maher will require round-the-clock service by three crews to keep pace with the jump in demand.

“Our Conrail crews know our 18 tracks like the back of their hands.”

— Director of Rail Operations Steve Kolodziej

“Of course things will change as the thousands of containers hit the docks,” Megali said. “We are ready to meet the challenge.”
Summertime offers many great and fun opportunities for employees to participate in charitable giving and volunteer service opportunities. Conrail supports its employees’ support of worthy causes and service to their communities through the Matching Gifts and Dollars for Doers programs.

Detailed information regarding eligibility and processing can be found in the Conrail Policies, Guidelines, and Programs manual, or downloaded from www.conrail.com/employees. Highlights include:

**Matching Gifts Program**
The Matching Gifts Program provides a dollar-for-dollar match of donations made to eligible charitable organizations. Many nonprofit 501(c)(3) organizations qualify for Conrail matching funds. For full details including eligibility and application forms, visit www.conrail.com/employees/.

Program highlights are:

- Matching funds are applicable for eligible donations ranging from $50 to $5,000.
- The employee applicant must show proof that the primary contribution was made from his or her own funds (copy of check or securities registration).
- Eligible matching gifts are processed quarterly.
- Specific eligibility restrictions apply for recipient status and type of contribution. Make sure you fully understand the eligibility requirements before submitting your request.
- Request for matching funds must be made using the appropriate Conrail form.
- Annual matching gift limit for an employee is $5,000.

**Dollars for Doers Program**
The Dollars for Doers program compensates individuals for up to 40 hours of volunteer service work done on personal time during nonworking hours to benefit eligible nonprofit 501(c)(3) organizations in a calendar year. For full details including eligibility and applications forms, visit www.conrail.com/employees/.

Program highlights include:

- Each hour of qualified volunteer activity earns a $10 contribution to the eligible charity of the volunteer’s choice.
- Youth team coaching or leadership can qualify for up to 10 hours per year.
- Charitable walks, runs and rides qualify for up to two hours per event, up to 10 hours total per year.
- Eligible Dollars for Doers grants are processed on a biannual basis.
- Employee volunteers cannot actively solicit support from fellow employees on behalf of his or her chosen organization or event during work hours and on Conrail property.
- Eligibility restrictions apply for recipient status and type of volunteer service. Fully understand the eligibility requirements before submitting a request.
- Grant requests must be made using the appropriate Conrail form.

Karen Rosella, 39 Years

Practically everybody in our company has had some connection with Karen, who has served as Executive Assistant to Ron Batory for the past 14 years in Mt. Laurel. As “Gatekeeper” to the executive suite, Karen has been at the center of vital company communications, events, and initiatives that have marked our company’s progress inside and outside of our offices and Shared Track Asset Areas. Karen entered the company as a General Clerk in September, 1974, rising to Secretary in 1989. Working through several positions of increasing responsibility, Karen joined Mr. Batory’s office at the time of Conrail’s split in 1999, and has been an indispensable member of the executive administration team since then. Karen has made every effort to get her replacement up to speed on the innumerable ongoing activities of the head office, and to transfer her uniquely deep and wide-ranging knowledge of our organization’s activities and assets. We will miss her friendly face and unflagging effort.

Joe Flanley, 38 Years

Joe’s retirement is most deserved after a career of accomplishment in the Conrail Labor Relations Department. His candor and integrity are personal attributes that fostered his unique style of maintaining a collaborative, “surprise free” atmosphere between management and union officials. Joe came aboard Conrail in November, 1977 in Bethlehem, PA as a Trackman, moving up to Supervisor - Crew Assignments in 1982. He entered the Labor Relations department in 1985, becoming Director in 1997, and Senior Director Labor Relations & Personnel in 2011. Although Joe will be missed at Conrail, he has transferred his wealth of knowledge to his LR colleagues, and we can expect his manner and style to endure in the Labor Relations office. — RB

Tom Lindenmuth, 37 Years

Tom Lindenmuth has been a core member of the Communication and Signal Department since hiring in as an Assistant Signalman in September 1978. Through Tom’s leadership, Conrail has significantly enhanced the reliability of the signal system, including adding needed capacity during the Shared Assets era in the North Jersey area. All this work was planned and completed in a logical, timely and efficient manner during Tom’s tenure. Tom’s legacy is the reliable, technologically advanced North Jersey signal infrastructure, and the well-trained C&S workforce that is capable of supporting our signal construction needs for the next generation.

Andy Silvestry, 36 Years

Andy Silvestry has been a key member of the management team in the North Jersey Shared Assets area for the majority of his career, dating back to the Philadelphia and New Jersey Divisions of Conrail. Since hiring in April 1979, he has been very responsive to the needs of the railroad ensuring that the trains operated reliably over his area of responsibility; his work ethic always put the railroad first. He was on the front lines for many of the significant snowstorms, hurricanes, and signal cutovers, during which he continually demonstrated his commitment to keeping the railroad operational by ensuring the signal system worked as intended under all conditions. Andy’s legacy is leaving the North Jersey area in much better condition than he found it, with a group of employees who will continue to maintain our signal system to the highest standard.