During the pandemic, North America's railroad workers are doing whatever it takes to keep their colleagues and customers safe while also keeping goods and people moving.
RAIL’S FRONT-LINE HEROES
The Future of Rail is Here

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FOCUSED TECHNOLOGY SOLUTIONS
# Rail's Front-line Heroes

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Railway Systems Suppliers Would Like to Congratulate the Heroes of the Rail Industry!

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As companies around the world confront the COVID-19 pandemic, front-line workers continue to demonstrate how vital they are to the industries they serve. They’re also showing how heroic they can be.

In April, we reached out to officials at a range of North American railroads, asking them to help us shine a light on the front-line workers at their respective roads who’ve been particularly heroic in recent weeks.

Eager to share, rail officials told us about dozens of dedicated employees who’ve been doing whatever it takes to safeguard the health and safety of their colleagues and customers. Whatever it takes to keep goods or people moving. Whatever it takes to help lay the tracks for economic recovery.

What follows is but a sampling of these front-line heroes, organized by railroad. Thanks to the railroads who helped us identify these front-line workers. And: Thanks to all the front-line heroes who do what they do every day, pandemic or no pandemic.
THE PREMIER PROVIDER. YOUR TRUSTED PARTNER.
While BNSF Railway Co. is helping deliver perishables and non-perishables to help feed the nation, the railroad’s Twin Cities and Chicago employees wanted to do more locally. So they held canned food drives.

“We wanted to find a food bank that was near our facility, one where we felt we could best serve those where we live and work,” said Terminal Trainmaster Eddie Mendoza, who, along with local chairmen, led the Twin Cities drive at the Northtown (Minneapolis) and Midway (St. Paul) terminals. “Many pantries have been temporarily closed, and there are limits on how much food can be purchased at grocery stores. But we’re excited to do something we know can really help.”

Mendoza found Community Emergency Service (CES), one of Minnesota’s oldest crisis relief ministries that operates neighborhood food programs. CES has been hit hard during COVID-19, seeing its numbers served nearly triple.

The Twin Cities drive concluded April 28, with employees collecting points for each can collected. The winning team (Midway, with 1,035 pounds of food) will get a pizza lunch.

“We wanted to create a little competition and to keep it fun,” said Mendoza. “It’s been amazing to watch the donations come in.”
At the Cicero, Illinois, terminal, the food drive will benefit the Lakeview Food Pantry, which employees voted to support, with about 1,200 food items plus $1,200 in cash donations.

“We started this drive after Cindy Donnelly (manager of Ops Safety and Training) saw on the news how families across the country are spending hours in lines just to get food to feed their families. She approached me about working together to do a food drive to help the people in our community,” said Allison Hyatt, terminal trainmaster. “We realize how fortunate we all are and decided to do something to help others less fortunate.”

Intermodal clerk Tearsa Villagran donated 400 cans, thanks in part to collecting around $200 from her friends outside of BNSF to purchase more food.

In addition to supporting nonprofit neighborhood food programs with employee contributions, the BNSF Railway Foundation made grants to other deserving organizations as part of the railroad’s COVID-19 response and relief. Nearly a dozen food banks across the BNSF network, including the CES and the Chicago Food Dispensary that supports Lakeview Food Pantry, received grants.

**MECHANICAL SUPERINTENDENT DONATED IPADS FOR STUDENTS’ VIRTUAL SCHOOLING NEEDS**

With children all over the country now engaged in virtual learning, having the technology tools needed to be able do their work and connect with teachers is crucial.

Thanks to a donation of 19 used iPads by BNSF’s Havre, Montana, Diesel Shop, local special education students needing access to applications only available through these devices are able to continue their learning from home.

The iPads are a first-generation Wi-Fi model no longer usable by the railroad’s mechanical employees. It was Superintendent Shawn Ball’s idea to donate the iPads.

“While schools are closed due to COVID-19, I knew kids would need
access to online apps, so this would be a good way to put the iPads to use,” said Ball. “The local internet providers are doing their part by getting internet access to those same kids.”

The devices were reimaged, with all content and settings removed. The iPads were boxed for delivery in early April.

**ENGINEERING TEAM CREATES MOBILE WASH STATIONS FOR TIE-REPLACEMENT GANGS**

Sometimes all it takes is a little initiative and ingenuity. That’s exactly what Gang Assistant Roadmaster Andy “Hammer” Adams did when his team created eight mobile hand washing stations for his tie-replacement gang of about 75 employees. The gang was working on the Cuba and Hannibal subdivisions on the Heartland Division when the COVID-19 pandemic started.

“I realized we needed to get something in place pretty quickly to take extra precautions against the coronavirus,” said Adams, who oversees TP-04 (Tie Placement Gang 04). “We’re in the midst of a pandemic, and everyone should do what they can to protect each other and support our railroad.”

Adams and the team knew one of the best ways to protect themselves was by regularly washing their hands with soap and water. They quickly and easily added hand washing stations to their gang consistent with commonly used, cost-effective supplies.
“We’ve always had two heavier washing stations — one on the lead and one on the end machine of the gang,” said Adams. “But, we knew we could use something that was a lot lighter and mobile, so we could easily move them around as we needed to.”

He determined that large thermoses would do the trick, and they proved to work perfectly. Within a day, the gang had a wash station set up on almost every machine along the gang’s consist including the spike puller, the kicker, a tamper and an anchor squeezer rail car.

“It is nothing fancy or elaborate, but excellent improvisation to provide a place for his team to wash their hands,” said General Director of Maintenance Marty Lott. “I am continually impressed by our teams’ ingenuity and leadership, even in the toughest times on the railroad.”

**MOVING WHILE STILL RUNNING A RAILROAD**

Moving is never easy, especially when it’s unforeseen, but in this case, it was a welcomed option for our dispatchers. With COVID-19, moving a portion of those working at the Network Operations Center (NOC) to an offsite location is now providing an additional level of safety by reducing the number of people at one location.

While it took a lot of effort and coordination, the nearby Operations Support Building (OSB) is now temporary home to the South Region’s dispatching team, with the North Region remaining at the NOC. Other dispatchers that support the South Region are at offices in San Bernardino, California, and Spring, Texas.

“Having the OSB available was a nice fit, though not necessarily as easy as setting up 40 new work stations,” said General Superintendent Operations Jon Gabriel. “The move was made in less than two weeks and executed seamlessly, thanks to our NOC teams as well as Technology Services, Network Control Systems and Telecommunications teams, which had to establish the underlying signal and telecom safety overlay systems.”

A large portion of NOC support functions, like crew management, business units and van ride desks, were also moved to other headquarters locations or are now working remotely to reduce exposure.

The moves were made without impact to the operation, largely due to the engagement of the dispatcher-leaders themselves, partnering with our American Train Dispatchers Association union reps led by Dispatcher
David Ursini and the NOC Safety Committees.

“We’ve had great collaboration with many people contributing to the cause,” said Director Dispatching Practices and Rules Bob Newlun. “Throughout the moves, everyone recognized the need to take this situation seriously and with a sense of urgency.”

- Amer Khayal, lead, I&T workplace management, Executive I&T Services, Montreal. Khayal provides round-the-clock information and technology (I&T) support to CN’s employee population working from home during the pandemic.

“During the pandemic, I am helping different departments manage their Work From Home (WFH) processes to make sure everyone has what they need to work from home,” he said. “I support the I&T WFH Committee that’s managing employee moves to permanent or mixed WFH environments. ... It’s a great privilege to be part of an essential service and motivating to see so many I&T team members come together to make the WFH move as successful as possible in these challenging times. It makes me proud to see that CN cares for the safety of its employees.”

Some of the job’s biggest challenges so far have included “providing technology support to all the employees working from home right now within a tight timeframe,” he said. “The team had to stay focused on ensuring everyone was up and running quickly and safely.”

- Bruce Radelet, owner-operator, CNTL, Nanaimo, British Columbia. Radelet made a video tribute thanking everyone who is sheltering during the pandemic.

“I received a care package from one of my customers with fresh fruit, snacks, hand sanitizer and a thank you note for delivering their goods. But I was just doing my job, a job I felt fortunate to have, Radelet said. “I wanted to reach out to all my Facebook friends who are self-isolating. I wanted to encourage them and let them know they are doing the right thing by limiting contact with others and staying home. They are the ones who will help solve this very serious problem.”
• **Matthew Chung and John Frederick**, safety officers, Walker Locomotive Repair Centre, Edmonton, Alberta. They are helping to assist management with COVID-19 action planning and initiatives. They’re also ensuring all employees are following the process and rules set in place by health and government authorities and by CN. They bring any concerns to the attention of management for a safer, less stressful work environment.

“We set up weekly safety stand downs (meetings) to discuss safety with the shop craft,” Chung and Frederick said. “Each week, we have different topics that always include the most up-to-date information about COVID-19, as well as a weekly topic on general safety and a specific Life Critical Rule. We help find the most current information to answer questions and concerns about COVID-19, and other health and safety issues.

“The biggest challenge has been calming the uncertainty and fear around COVID-19 in the shop,” they added. “Employees are understandably nervous so showing empathy is important as well as dispelling misconceptions with science.”

• **Kevin Lemp**, mechanical supervisor; **Mychal Gunther**, mechanical supervisor; and **Scott Waila**, carman. They put together a safe bleach and water solution to sanitize areas, filled and marked spray bottles for employee use, and prepared enough pre-mixed supply for refills. They also put out briefings for all shifts on how to use it.

“We were out of our usual sanitizing products such as the Clorox wipes,” Lamp said. “Speaking to my colleagues (Gunther and Waila), and listening to media reports, we knew that these things were going to be in short supply.”
supply. I took a look at what we had in our inventory and noticed a lot of industrial grade bleach, a peroxide based cleaner and some spray bottles. After doing some online research, we made up bottles of bleach with the right ratios. We labeled the bottles and briefed the carmen. We made up a quick reference sheet that we posted in the lunch rooms explaining how to achieve the proper ratio so the solution could be used for any size container and that the solution should be used within 24 hours in order for it to still be effective.”

Dealing with “the constant demand for physical distancing or sanitization” has been one of the biggest challenges working during the pandemic, Lamp said. “We have a very hands-on job and often work closely with each other as we do our tasks or to help one another out. Whether it is lifting heavy objects, holding tools for a peer or even just giving someone a ride somewhere in the yard, maintaining physical distancing is easier said than done a lot of the time.”

- David Smith, special agent, CN Police, Jackson, Mississippi. As part of the CN Police Network Security and Intel Unit (NSI), Smith works with the entire corporate security team conducting research on employees who have tested positive for COVID-19.

“We communicate with them to determine where they have been and when, and with whom they have been in contact who might possibly be at risk,” Smith said. “This information is provided to our leadership to determine any future mitigation efforts that may need to be put in place to disinfect areas and/or vehicles. Some CN employees may be notified to self-isolate based on their exposure.

“It’s just a small part of the overall collaboration between multiple functions within CN to respond to the pandemic, and it’s a process that’s working really well. In addition to these duties, our unit continues to monitor threats against the rail industry and advise leadership about those potential security risks. I’m also the eRailsafe coordinator for CN, making sure there are no delays with getting CN contractors cleared.”

The biggest challenge, Smith said, has been having to work from home.

“CN has provided the necessary tools to work remotely, however it is just a different environment,” he said. “My wife has been working from home and my daughter has been doing school work from home. It has been an adjustment, but I’ve settled into a routine.”

- Dan Barcelona, running trades employee, Brandon, Manitoba. He has shown leadership and creativity during the pandemic by seeking out ways to protect the health and safety of his co-workers. He communicates about best practices with employees both inside and outside his territory. He also has helped CP control costs by identifying that a spray being used on display screens in locomotives was causing damage to the screens.

“Dan is a very active employee within his crew base and his community,” said Pat Remillard, CP’s general manager for the Central Division. “As a local chairman, he joins Home Safe calls and shares his tips and tricks to help others work more safely.”
- **Rashid Banuga**, trainmaster, Brandon, Manitoba. He promotes and exemplifies CP’s health and safety policies, and during the pandemic starts his day by disinfecting the booking-in room. He has promoted CP’s non-smoking policy and sets an example for other employees by eating well and exercising. Remillard said Banuga’s personal values on health, safety and sanitation, which he promotes enthusiastically, align closely with what Remillard and her team are trying to achieve daily.

- **Robert Mead**, train dispatcher, Minneapolis. A 15-year veteran train dispatcher at CP’s Minneapolis Operations Center, he also serves as general chairman with the American Train Dispatchers Association. He has worked to ensure open lines of communication between union employees and managers at the operations center during the pandemic. This included designing a work schedule that ensured dispatchers could keep working while maintaining social distance.

- **Troy Plummer**, assistant superintendent, Thunder Bay, Ontario. He stays close to employees in his area. He has an empathetic ear, asking how employees’ families are coping with the pandemic and listening to their concerns. Plummer spends time to make sure employees have the tools necessary to do their jobs. He has personally overseen the distribution of hand sanitizer across the region so that he can ensure employees have the tools they need to operate safely during the pandemic.

  "Troy is a hardworking person who wears his heart on his sleeve and takes tremendous pride in his team's work," Remillard said.

- **Jon Hill and Ryan McCann**, running trades employees, Thunder Bay, Ontario. Both are active in their local health and safety committee, and have reputations as leaders at the terminal. They are known for proactively offering their time to employees when it’s needed. They have offered to stock cleaning supplies at company facilities to help maintain a sanitary environment during the pandemic.

  “They are true workforce leaders,” Remillard said.

- **Stephanie McKenney**, trainmaster, Smiths Falls, Ontario. She has shown leadership during the pandemic by personally ensuring train crews have proper supplies and a clean work environment when they go on duty. She personally purchased cleaning supplies and distributed them directly to employees to ensure everyone had access to them. She works carefully to ensure she maintains physical distance during job-briefing with train crews.

- **Amanda Theis**, chief administrative clerk, St. Paul, Minnesota. She is charged with ordering cleaning supplies for CP’s St. Paul terminal. Keeping sanitation supplies on hand has been challenging due to the demand for these items, and Theis has had to be creative in order to ensure there are enough supplies at the various buildings around St. Paul. Like many CP administrative workers, she works from home to reduce the risk of contracting or spreading COVID-19, including to other CP employees.

- **Anna Dylewicz**, chief administrative clerk, Bensenville, Illinois. She works from home but continues her involvement in day-to-day business at the Bensenville terminal near Chicago. Her co-workers describe her as “on top of it;” whatever it may be on a given day. Dylewicz, like Theis, has had to ensure sufficient cleaning supplies for the terminal, even as these supplies have become scarce. She goes beyond her typical job duties to ensure a safe and sanitary working environment.
CSX TRAINMASTER DAN MYERS SERVES ON THE FRONT LINES OF COVID-19

Across the United States, health care providers, first responders and military men and women are providing critical testing and care in an effort to help contain the deadly virus. One of these heroes is CSX’s Dan Myers.

An operational leader in the Northeast Region, serving as a trainmaster on the busy Old Main Line and Metropolitan subdivisions, Myers joined the U.S. National Guard 11 years ago for the education benefits and to prepare for a possible future in civil law enforcement. Last month, he was called back to active duty.

“I remember getting the call on March 15, which also was the third day of my vacation,” Myers said. “Now my day-to-day activities look a little different.”

He is currently serving on the front lines at one of Maryland’s largest COVID-19 testing sites, FedEx Field in Landover, Maryland.

“I have traded in my railroad personal protective equipment for a new kind of PPE,” Myers said. “My fellow Guardsmen and women are working with the Maryland State Health Department and Prince George’s County to help maintain security and safety around our COVID-19 testing site and helping medical professionals process hundreds of coronavirus tests as safely and securely as possible each day.”

Photos courtesy of CSX
From the moment he steps out of his hotel room until he returns from his shifts at the testing site, he is wearing medical-grade gloves, a mask and a full-face shield.

“The only place I don’t have to wear my PPE is when I return to the hotel,” Myers said. “Our service men and women are present at the site to provide security and aid in safely processing community members at the staging site from about 10 hundred hours to 17 hundred hours, or sometimes later, each day. We really focus on trying to keep the symptomatic and asymptomatic community members at a safe distance and all of the medical supplies and equipment secure.”

Myers’ unit is currently broken into three teams that rotate shifts.

“My immediate team will be rotating to the third shift soon,” he said. “We were originally told the orders would be for 30 to 45 days, but due to the rate of the virus spreading, the orders have now been changed to indefinite.”

Despite the unknown, Myers maintains a bright spirit and thinks of his CSX railroad family often.

“I still feel connected and am reading the communications,” he said. “It cannot be emphasized enough how critical railroad transportation is during this time. We are struggling to find medical equipment such as masks and antibacterial items around the country to keep up with the demand in testing. None of this stuff would be available as rapidly as it is without the railroad.”

Myers emphasized how much appreciation he has for his fellow railroaders in helping keep the railroad running during unprecedented times.

“Just like me, our railroaders are serving our country from the front lines — helping to keep America’s supply chain moving,” Myers said. “I have so much pride in the work of our teams across our 20,000-mile network, and I look forward to getting back to my team.”

**CSX SPECIAL AGENT FINNEGAN HELPS SAFEGUARD HOSPITAL SHIP IN NEW YORK HARBOR**

Opportunities to perform heroic service have a way of finding **Jim Finnegan**. Or maybe it's the other way around.

It was just last December that the Supervisory Special Agent for the CSX Police Department helped save the life of a man involved in a fiery crash on Interstate 83 north of Baltimore. The [story of his quick response](https://www.csx.com/csx-news/agent-saves-life) to put out the fire and free the man from the wreck was featured on the front page of the CSX website.

Now, Finnegan is involved in heroic service of a much different type — safeguarding the USNS Comfort hospital ship deployed to the New York City harbor to assist in the coronavirus pandemic response.

A U.S. Navy reservist assigned to the Naval Criminal Investigative Service as a Master-at-Arms 1st Class, Finnegan is serving on a team of NCIS investigators coordinating anti-terrorism efforts, and providing protection to 1,000-bed hospital ship and other Navy assets and personnel deployed to New York.
"The bad guys are always looking for a target," Finnegan said. "Plus, the citizens are scared, and our team feels like we can stop the bad guys and reassure residents at the same time."

Finnegan credits his CSX position with helping him stay sharp to perform his NCIS role.

"Working for CSX has given me experience managing large-scale incidents, providing force protection and working with anti-terrorism," he said. "I'm also able to interact with local, state and other governmental agencies in a familiar manner."

His latest active duty deployment in the Navy Reserves is unique in many ways, but what isn't unusual is the support he has gotten from his CSX colleagues.

"I never have to worry about my family (or my K9 Shelby), because I know the men and women I work with are always checking on them," Finnegan said. "I have received dozens of calls and texts asking about me and my family's well-being. I'd like to say thanks to my coworkers for their support and tell them they rock!"

Finnegan isn’t sure how long his deployment will last, and he acknowledged that it's difficult being 200 miles from his family and unable to visit on days off because of concerns about coronavirus exposure.

Nevertheless, he said “it’s easy to do what’s right when you’re doing it for a noble cause and you have support from your family, employer and co-workers!”

MITCHELL THOMPSON, CSX SPECIAL AGENT III, SERVES AS A MAJOR WITHIN THE TENNESSEE ARMY NATIONAL GUARD

Mitchell Thompson has been a CSX Special Agent protecting the strategic rail network, employees, customers and communities where CSX operates since 2008. And since 2005, Major Thompson has served in 17 countries on combat and NATO deployments as well as training missions.

As an executive officer in the 117th Military Police Battalion, he was called upon to serve within the Tennessee National Guard’s State Surgeon office as the COVID-19 pandemic broke. They had three key tasks: develop a COVID-19 management program; create a joint Army and Air Force command and control to help support the Tennessee Department of Health and Tennessee Emergency Management Agency situate for testing and screening; and mobilize front-line personnel for alternate care facilities and COVID-19 testing.

As this work was quickly coming together, Major Thompson was then asked to set up a joint task force between the Army and Air Force to support state safety and security operations. His 153-person task force is now operating at the discretion of the governor.

“It is men and women like Major Thompson, whose dedication not only to the CSX railroad but also to serving our country in difficult times, at a moment’s notice is deserved of more than our appreciation,” CSX officials said. “He is one who helps keep our families feel safe each night.”
Human Resources Manager Lesley Myers implements and administers H.R. programs, policies and practices in Shreveport, Louisiana. She responds to employee inquiries, questions and complaints, and provides information, guidance and direction on H.R. programs, processes and procedures to managers and employees.

One day, she is managing everyday personnel issues. Next, she’s making badges for operations employees working in states or municipalities with stay-at-home orders, hiring nurses, ordering PPE and medical supplies, and directing traffic into the terminal for employee temperature-taking. In addition to her normal H.R. duties, she now manages 17 nurses — no easy logistics feat, given the size and scope of the 24/7 terminal operation.

As the sole H.R. point person at KCS’ largest U.S. terminal, Myers is used to working directly with front-line operations heroes. Since the virus outbreak, her focus has been on making sure they can keep trains and North America’s economy moving.

Union Pacific North Platte Trio: Joe Burkink, switchman; Greg Otzel, locomotive engineer; and Melissa White, switchman/conductor

Joe Burkink, Greg Otzel and Melissa White took quick action to prevent the spread of COVID-19 at Union Pacific’s Bailey Yard in North Platte,
Nebraska. They provided crews with disinfecting products and health recommendations from the Center for Disease Control.

Otzel and White enhanced professional cleanings, continuously wiping down crew room tables, keyboards and other surface areas. They separated large industrial tubs of materials into individual hand sanitizer bottles and sandwich bags of Clorox wipes.

Burkink handed out spray bottles of disinfecting solution in the yard and placed six-foot distance markers to encourage social distancing. The trio's tireless efforts contributed to a clean and healthy work environment, demonstrating Union Pacific's spirit of looking out for the safety and wellbeing of their fellow railroaders.

Johanna Lancheros and Union Pacific's Occupational Health Nurse Team

Johanna Lancheros and Union Pacific's Occupational Health Nurse Team are vital to keeping employees safe and healthy during the COVID-19 pandemic. They implemented CDC recommendations and helped railroad employees experiencing virus symptoms and requiring quarantine.

Lancheros and her fellow nurses educated employees on preventing the spread of the virus through social distancing. They also helped employees recognize stress reactions and shared coping techniques.

Occupational health nurses are essential employees who remain on the front lines, ensuring employees can continue delivering essential products for American families and businesses during this difficult time.
When the CDC recommended face coverings as an added preventive measure on April 3, the Alaska Railroad Corp. (ARRC) shared the news with railroaders. Within a couple of days, the ARRC COVID-19 Working Group launched a volunteer-supported campaign to outfit railroaders who wanted a face-covering.

A call for mask-making volunteers was quickly met with responses from nearly two dozen employees and family members raring to assist. By mid-April, nearly 500 face-coverings had been made and about 200 had been handed out to employees. So ARRC was well-stocked when Alaska began to reopen at the end of April, and the railroad made face-coverings mandatory for employees working alongside others, and not always able to socially distance. By May 6, nearly 550 volunteer-made face-coverings had been distributed and several volunteers started a second round to produce more.

Supply-side heroes include ARRC Safety Field Trainer Ricardo Cornejo, who bird-dogged supplies, including collecting donations from JoAnn Fabrics. He spent hours assembling kits, each including enough fabric, elastic, instructions and a template to make 10 masks.

When elastic became difficult to find, an immediate solution came from an unexpected source: a railroader in-law. Soon after Contract Administration Specialist Tim Bates shared news of the shortage with wife, Amy, she spread word to her sister, Sarah Klebs, who, in turn, secured a generous donation of quarter-inch elastic. Amy delivered the giant spool to the warehouse (see photo), ensuring many more kits could be made.

Warehouse Manager Ron Lewis managed the flow of mask-making kits, established a face-covering inventory, and oversaw distribution of coverings to departments and individuals who asked.
The colorful inventory of hand-fashioned coverings resulted from hundreds of volunteer hours. Even before kits were available, some railroaders made face-coverings from their own stash of sewing supplies. Conductor/Engineer Martha Conlan made masks for fellow trainmen, and Transportation Timekeeper Amanda Hurry made coverings for train crew and crew dispatchers.

Volunteers came from across the company and help from family has been heartwarmingly common. Technology mask-makers include Business Systems Analysts Judy Claugus and Cynthia Douglas; I.T. Infrastructure System Engineer Bob Thomas (with wife, Shannon); and Print Shop Operator Kelly Reinhardt. Human Resources volunteers include Receptionist/Admin Technician Lilly Henry-Pasia; H.R. Compliance Administrator Barbara Rogers; and H.R. Assistant Kristine Stone.

Freight Customer Service Manager Sasha Kincaid teamed up with her adult daughter and ARRC Gift Shop Sales Associate Kelsey Kincaid, and Sales Account Executive Tracy Zadra represented the marketing department’s passenger side. Additional Operations volunteers included Mechanical Supervisor Jamie Fetterman and Suzan, the wife of Engineer Gerald Davis.

While most volunteers had sewing machines, others were willing to stitch by hand, including Manager of Real Estate Contracts Kristen Gratrix and Procurement Administrator Candace Humphrey. Both Gratrix and Manager of ROW and Public Projects Kate Dueber broke in newly-purchased sewing machines with the face-covering sewing projects.

Real Estate was also represented by Real Estate Technician Crystal Wilson and Facilities Director Paul Farnsworth, who garnered support from wife, Joan.

On the north end, in Fairbanks, Mechanical Supervisor Scott Byron, Carman Scott Jenkins and Terminal Supervisor Katrina Lehse enlisted their spouses and partners.

Volunteers in Wasilla, just north of Anchorage, included Safety Director Tom Covington, and even a soon-to-be retiree. Indeed, just days before concluding his railroad career, Mechanical Planner/Scheduler Jim Steele fetched kits for his wife, Linda, who churned out several dozen.

“I volunteered because it was something I could do to help,” said Gratrix. “The railroad has been great at looking out for us through all of this and I think it is on all of us to look out for each other.”

California-produced food products, including beans, diced tomatoes, malt, olives, rice, sugar, and tomato paste and sauce, encompass the majority of commodities transported by the CFNR.
“Approximately 75 percent of our carloads fall into the food and kindred category, in fact, with tomato paste, diced tomatoes and tomato sauce comprising nearly half of them,” said Eric Kreutzberg, CFNR sales and marketing manager.

CFNR hauls box cars of those tomato products from northern California’s Morning Star Co. to the national rail network, bound for producers and distributors of shelf-ready products to markets throughout the Midwest, Northeast and Southeast. Morning Star is California’s number-one tomato processor and also accounts for 94 percent of the total U.S. output of processing tomatoes.

“Our relationship with Morning Star dates back to 1982,” Kreutzberg said. “Today, we serve three of their plants. Other tomato-products customers include Ingomar; Johnston Trading Post, which warehouses and ships paste for Campbell’s; and Paradise Tomato Kitchens.”

Kreutzberg noted that demand has increased amid emptying supermarket shelves.

“CFNR has been critically important to the success of our overall business,” said Morning Star’s Bob Henry, who works closely with CFNR. “We have a tremendous relationship with them, based on daily communication. What sets them apart from others is their willingness to be flexible with scheduling, and that’s key for us.”

CFNR General Manager Jake Harrison said his team is in frequent communication with customers in the food products sector and is not only keeping trains moving during the pandemic but ready to step up service if necessary. Precautions are being taken to keep the team safe and healthy — including discussing health measures in job briefings, limiting the number of people in a crew room at a time, and sanitizing offices, locomotives and other high-touch areas regularly.

COLUMBUS & OHIO RIVER RAIL ROAD — MORE THAN EVER, A VITAL SUPPLY CHAIN LINK FOR ESSENTIAL PRODUCTS COMPANIES

While Genesee & Wyoming’s Columbus & Ohio River Rail Road (CUOH) has been an important part of transportation logistics for many customers across central and eastern Ohio for nearly two decades, the coronavirus pandemic has further emphasized that role. Two customers served by the railroad produce essential products, including cleaners and disinfectants, as well as pharmaceuticals and nutritional therapeutics:

- CUOH serves the Colgate-Palmolive plant in Cambridge, Ohio. The facility produces cleaning products that require CUOH to deliver ethyl and fatty alcohols, as well as cleaning compound. The raw materials predominantly ship by rail from suppliers in Illinois, Louisiana, New Jersey and Texas, with CUOH making the final delivery.

- Abbott produces various supplements, including infant formula and other nutritional supplements, at its Columbus, Ohio, laboratory. These products require oils transported by rail from a single supplier in California, with CUOH delivering the raw material shipments to Abbott.

“CUOH always strives to provide safe and efficient service, and these
customers, who are critical suppliers of products needed by consumers across the country right now, have thanked us for providing exemplary rail service,” said Greg Arnold, marketing and sales manager for CUOH.

CUOH General Manager Tim Slusser said he and his team are in frequent communication with all customers and are ready to help meet any increased demand for transportation services during these unprecedented times. Precautions are being taken to keep the team safe and healthy — including discussing health measures in job briefings, limiting the number of people in a crew room at a time, and sanitizing offices, locomotives and other high-touch areas regularly.

Indiana & Ohio Railway Ups Service to Help Proctor & Gamble Produce More Hand Sanitizer

An effective killer of viral and bacterial particles, hand sanitizer is critical in the fight against coronavirus. Genesee & Wyoming's Indiana & Ohio Railway (IORY) plays a key role in meeting increased demand for the product across the region by closely supporting its manufacturing.

IORY delivers inbound fatty and cyclic alcohols to the Procter & Gamble (P&G) production facility in Lima, Ohio. The two alcohols, which are main ingredients in most hand sanitizer formulas, are transported by rail from a Shell plant in New Orleans. IORY takes the shipments in Cincinnati for final delivery.

“We’ve served P&G for many years, but as a result of the pandemic, our team has been providing extra weekend switches to accommodate P&G’s increased production of hand sanitizer,” said Bill Henderson, assistant vice president of marketing and sales for IORY and other G&W short lines. “Several times over the last month, we’ve also expedited railcars from Cincinnati so that P&G can generate sanitizer more quickly.”

IORY General Manager John Keffer said he and P&G’s transportation manager are in constant communication from the moment additional service is requested until delivery.

“IORY always does whatever they can to help P&G when we require urgent or special shipments,” said Tony Fries, inbound transportation leader for P&G’s North American transportation operations. “We appreciate the agility.”

Keffer also acknowledged the cooperation of IORY conductors and locomotive engineers.

“Our team understands the importance of working extra shifts and going beyond the call of the duty,” he said. “And in turn, IORY is doing everything it can to keep our team safe and healthy — from including health measures in job briefings, to limiting exposure so that no more than four people are in a crew room at a time, to sanitizing offices, locomotives and other high-touch areas regularly.”
With state orders to stay at home and social distance during the coronavirus pandemic, residential consumption of toilet paper, facial tissue and paper towel products increased dramatically — almost overnight — becoming one of the most sought-after essential items and stressing the industry’s delivery logistics. The Statista Consumer Market Outlook claimed that toilet paper sales in the U.S. for March 2020 rose by nearly 60 per-cent compared with the same 2019 period.

The stay-at-home orders also increased the need for shipping containers and boxes, made from wood fiber, necessary for expanded home deliveries. As paper-product producers work to meet the intense demand, Genesee & Wyoming (G&W) Portland & Western Railroad (PNWR) continues to play a vital role in supplying raw materials to the sector at several customer manufacturing facilities in Oregon.

For 25 years, PNWR has carried inbound wood pulp to Georgia-Pacific mills in Wauna and Halsey, Oregon. The pulp is shipped by rail from Beaumont, Texas, and used at the Georgia-Pacific mills to make an immediate product for personal paper-product producers who finish, package and distribute such goods to the consumer market.

Over that same time period, PNWR has hauled inbound wood chips and outbound containerboard for the Georgia-Pacific plant in Toledo, Oregon. The chips are shipped by rail from Lincoln and Anderson, California, while the containerboard is shipped out over PNWR to box and packaging plants throughout the western states.

“We are doing everything we can to ensure that we continue the level of safety and service that Georgia-Pacific has come to expect of PNWR over our 25-year relationship,” said Matt Artz, director of sales and marketing for the railroad. “They depend on consistent service, particularly through the pandemic, so that they, in turn, can keep their commitment to customers. We thank them for choosing rail during these unprecedented times.”

“PNWR has been very helpful during these times,” said Jim Crawford, logistics team leader at Georgia-Pacific’s Toledo site, “with support coming in three primary areas – adding days of service for inbound raw materials, ensuring that we receive ample supply of empty railcars for loading finished goods and adding additional locomotive power to pull the increased outbound loads to our warehouses and customer sites.”

PNWR General Manager Don Craine said his team is in frequent communication with managers at the three plants and is not only keeping trains moving during the pandemic but ready to step up service if necessary. Precautions are being taken to keep the team safe and healthy – including discussing health measures in job briefings, limiting the number of people in a crew room at a time, and sanitizing offices, locomotives and other high-touch areas regularly.
OmniTRAX Inc. is working through its extended supply chain network to provide hand sanitizer to the city and county of Denver, plus a few local hospitals. The company also is arranging donations in the communities serviced by its managed railroads and terminals around North America. **Greg Ferraro**, vice president of supply chain, is leading the effort. Understanding the dramatic increase in demand for hand sanitizer, PPE and other materials, the Supply Chain Management group found a company in Boulder, Colorado — vodka maker J&L Distilling — that had turned its production over to the antiseptic lotion using ethanol it had in stock. The initial order of a 55-gallon drum was to provide train operators and others at the company’s rail properties with the materials they need to keep safe while at work.

The Supply Chain Management group then turned its attention to sourcing more hand sanitizer for front-line personnel in OmniTRAX’s hometown of Denver. Hearing from J&L that they couldn’t locate ethanol from its regular sources, the group scoured its extensive resource list to find a supplier, and connected the two companies to provide supply options so J&L can keep up with the demand.

OmniTRAX also is instructing its rail and terminal units to share excess hand sanitizer with local hospitals, first responders and other agencies in need. A list of these donations will be made available at a future date.

“We have a corporate culture that’s based on safety and giving back to the communities we serve, so this effort came naturally to us,” Ferraro said. “We are committed to making a difference in Denver and beyond during these trying times.”

**SOUTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA TRANSIT AUTHORITY (SEPTA)**

- **Ericka Deeds**, station manager, dispatcher, Suburban Station. Deeds directly supervises the daily assignments, payroll, and other needs of 171 employees. “When I took on my position as a manager, I knew the job would be critical in most aspects,” she said. “I take my job very seriously because I’m doing my part in assisting seniors and ADA customers with their essential needs by getting them from Point A to Point B daily.”

- **Larry Pugh**, station manager, control room, Suburban Station. Pugh monitors via closed-circuit television all subway elevated stations for the safety and security of passengers. “I feel that when I decided to become a SEPTA manager, I knew that my responsibilities would extend well beyond the nine-to-five schedule of many other jobs,” said Pugh. “So many people are counting on us right now to do our best.”

- **Ofc. William R. Juliana**, transit police officer, Frankford Transportation Center. Juliana enforces all local, state and federal laws on and around the transit system. “My inspiration for being out here is knowing that the responsibilities of any first responder are very important,” he said. “It’s equally important to know that SEPTA Transit is a team, and we always want to make the best effort to ensure the safe travels of our passengers.”
Rail's Front-line Heroes

Photos courtesy of Southeastern Pennsylvania Transit Authority (SEPTA)

Gary Miller
Ericka Deeds
Robert Crain
Charles Cole
Vaughn Morrison
Larry Pugh
William Juliana
Olivia Hopkins
Luis Rodriguez
Bernard Norwood
Kevin Clark
- **Ofc. Gary Miller**, transit police officer, Frankford Transportation Center. Miller, too, enforces all local, state and federal laws on and around the transit system. “I’m here to help the riding public any way I can — assisting people on trains, buses, or wherever else they need us,” he said. “I want to be a mentor to my fellow officers and help guide the next generation of police.”

- **Luis Rodriguez**, director, regional rail Division Operations, North Region. Rodriguez oversees any issues with operations related to Regional Rail. “The dedication and hard work that we demonstrate as a team on a daily basis pushes me to strive in our mission to make sure we get our passengers where they need to go,” he said.

- **Bernard Norwood**, regional rail conductor, Suburban Station. As a conductor, Norwood ensures the safety of passengers and collects revenue. “As an essential employee, first and foremost, I enjoy being a railroad conductor,” he said. “The responsibilities are tremendous and working with great co-workers makes it easier to work each day during this pandemic. The most important gratification is knowing that in transportation, during times like these, we have doctors, nurses, police, and many other essential personnel that are also on the front line counting on us being there to transport them.”

- **Kevin Clark**, station manager/department training coordinator, 69th Street Terminal. Clark directly supervises the subway/elevated maintenance staff and cashiers, and trains all new maintenance custodians. “What inspires me is knowing that I can make a difference by helping to build morale and bridge the gap between management and hourly employees during these scary times,” he said.

- **Charles Cole**, subway/elevated train operator, Fern Rock Transportation Center. Cole responsibility is to transport subway/elevated passengers in a safe and timely manner. “I know there are a lot of essential employees who rely on SEPTA, so I want to be here for them,” he said.

- **Glen Guenther**, railway signal system maintainer 1st class, Wayne Junction. Guenther repairs, maintains and tests signals, including cable, electrical and mechanical equipment apparatus on rail lines. “I have a positive outlook for the future of the Philadelphia area,” he said. “When the riding public returns to work, we need to have all systems ready. This is my way of doing my fair share.”

- **Jesse Ransome**, subway/elevated maintenance custodian in subway/elevated concourse areas. “I’m tasked with maintaining one of the most challenging areas that we at SEPTA are responsible for,” Ransome said. “The concourse areas provide access for most of our daily passengers throughout the day. During this present crisis that we are all going through, I feel that my job is very important for everyone who needs to utilize our transportation system. I appreciate the importance of my job and feel confident at the end of the day that I made a difference.”

- **Olivia Hopkins**, project engineer (civil engineering). Hopkins inspects all of the drainage structures in SEPTA's railroad right-of-way. “My friends and family in the health care field who are working long shifts without complaint inspire me to approach each day with gratitude,” she said.

- **Joe Donofrio**, telecommunications technician. Donofrio installs, maintains, repairs and replaces telecommunication systems and all related equipment. “I love my job and I love the work I do,” he said. “I’m proud of the responsibilities given to me and the confidence my bosses
have in me to keep our telecom infrastructure up and running, especially in these unprecedented times."

- **James Stoutmire**, Market-Frankford Line Station cashier, 15th Street Station. Stoutmire validates all fares presented to him and provides entry for customers on the Market-Frankford Line. “I’m well aware that it’s critical that I’m healthy and able to perform my duties every day,” he said. “I work at a very busy location and my presence has a great effect on all of my customers.”

- **Donald Collings**, customer service agent. Collings responds to questions, concerns, and commendations from customers. “Being there for our customers is what keeps me going,” he said. “It feels good to be able to help them.”

- **Vaughn Morrison**, customer service agent. Morrison responds to questions, concerns and commendations from customers. “It gives me a sense of accomplishment to be able to answer travel questions from customers who need to get around,” he said.

- **Robert “Bob” Crain**, elevator/escalator specialist. Crain maintains the elevators and escalators throughout the system for Bridges & Buildings, City Transit Division, as part of Engineering, Maintenance & Construction. “During these difficult times, I take pride in ensuring that those in need of or are providing essential services are able to use our elevators and escalators to get to their destinations,” he said.
**METROPOLITAN ATLANTA RAPID TRANSIT AUTHORITY (MARTA)**

- **Angela Hooks**, rail car cleaner. “Angela comes to work every day at Airport Station with a big smile and positive attitude,” MARTA officials said. “She comes to work prepared, and her appearance is impeccable. She performs her daily tasks professionally and exemplifies MARTA’s standard of excellence. In addition to her daily tasks, Angela cleans, disinfects and sanitizes rail cars, frequently touched surfaces and operator cabs.”

- **David Kent**, station agent. “David has worked tirelessly during the pandemic to assist management with getting PPE to co-workers, posting informational flyers and bus modification A-frames in rail stations, and staying beyond his regular work shift to help with passenger counts,” MARTA officials said. “He arrives to work every day and asks his supervisors, ‘What do you have for me today?’ Recently he was tasked with an urgent project at 35 rail stations with minimal supervision and once completed said he was thankful for the opportunity to help. His encouraging attitude and upbeat personality help us all to continue moving forward during this extremely stressful environment.”

- **Garick Ennis**, yard tower supervisor. “Working as an essential member of the rail transportation team during the COVID-19 pandemic, Armour Yard Tower Supervisor Garick Ennis acted when he noticed the individual bottles of disinfectant provided for rail operators were too large for cab stowage,” MARTA officials said. “Garick distributed smaller, more...
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manageable bottles to his staff which alleviated the problem. Garick’s outstanding leadership ensured rail operators had the equipment to do their jobs and protect their health during this challenging time.”

- Kelley Allen, station maintainer. “In addition to maintaining the appearance of the rail stations, she is now placing extra emphasis on sanitizing fare gates, restrooms and Breeze machines,” MARTA officials said. “Kelley also takes time to offer a cheery hello or a wave to fellow employees and customers, something we can all use more of during these uncertain times. Kelley is always visible during her shift, cleaning, sweeping the concourse, emptying trash and making sure the station is clean and sanitized.”

- Stephanie Gauntt, rail operator. “When the pandemic first hit, Stephanie understood the importance of getting essential workers to their jobs and providing transportation to the grocery store, doctor’s office or pharmacy,” MARTA officials said. “As MARTA began enhanced cleaning efforts, she purchased additional cleaning supplies for herself and her co-workers. Stephanie is an inspiration to her co-workers and it’s because of her dedication that MARTA can continue providing essential transit during these difficult times.”

- Mario Herrera, trainman. One of the main roles of a trainman is to ensure the safe and on-time operation of Metra’s trains. That role carries a new weight with the onset of the coronavirus. Herrera is one of the people ensuring that riders such as nurses, grocery store employees and other
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essential workers have reliable transportation to their jobs so that the critical institutions serving the Chicago region remain open.

- **Elizabeth Davis**, engine watchman. Davis keeps the essential workers of northeastern Illinois moving through a variety of tasks: protecting the yard and switches during train movements, logging the equipment entering the yard, checking fuel levels and starting and testing engines before service.

- **Joyce Farrington**, agent/operator, Fox Lake Station. Farrington assists customers by selling tickets and providing customer service, and she assists conductors working on Metra's Milwaukee District North Line. Her secret to keeping the region moving during the coronavirus pandemic has been to remain upbeat. “I make sure to be a cheery person and ask them, ‘How are you doing today?’ I think it’s the right mindset,” Farrington said “I could think about the virus, but that’s negativity. Right now, I’m trying to be about positivity. If I’m going to be at work, I might as well make the best of it for everyone.”

- **John Ruth and Greg Branham**, communications maintainers. From security cameras to platform announcements to data for Metra’s PTC system, the commuter railroad has thousands of miles of wiring for communications across six counties. Communications maintainers like Ruth and Branham keep the data flowing, which means trains keep moving and essential workers who rely on public transportation stay informed.
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• Joaquin Cornejo, coach cleaner. The cleanliness of Metra’s equipment has never been more important. Cornejo carries out Metra’s ramped up efforts to disinfect high-touch areas such as handrails, seats, and doors, and is also using steam cleaners and power washers for additional deep cleanings so that essential workers using public transit have a clean and safe ride to and from work.

• Roderick Hodge, manager, Transportation Operations / COVID-19 Mobile Strike Team. Hodge facilitates a direct line of communication between executive management and the front line, ensuring that key resources like personal protective equipment are provided to all necessary personnel, and coordinates activities with LA Metro’s public safety partners. His specific duties include reminding LA Metro employees about current safety recommendations, coordinating support with the agency’s Rail Operations Center, and working with security and law enforcement to support LA Metro’s homeless outreach.

Roderick is proud of the work he does.

“During this unprecedented time, it’s important for me to be in the trenches with our essential employees and patrons to show management’s solidarity and support through this crisis,” he said.