Our Vision is to realize the tremendous potential of BNSF Railway Company by providing transportation services that consistently meet our customers’ expectations.

EVIDENCES OF SUCCESS
We will know we have succeeded when:

- Our customers find it easy to do business with us, receive 100 percent on-time, damage-free service, accurate and timely information regarding their shipments, and the best value for their transportation dollar.

- Our employees work in a safe environment free of accidents and injuries, are focused on continuous improvement, share the opportunity for personal and professional growth that is available to all members of our diverse work force, and take pride in their association with BNSF.

- Our owners earn financial returns that exceed other railroads and the general market as a result of BNSF’s superior revenue growth and operating ratio, and a return on invested capital that is greater than our cost of capital.

- The communities we serve benefit from our sensitivity to their interests and to the environment in general, our adherence to the highest legal and ethical standards, and the participation of our company and our employees in community activities.
On Sept. 22, we celebrated our 20th anniversary as a company. This was an exciting day and important milestone for all of us at BNSF, and a great time to reflect on all we’ve accomplished and continue to accomplish together.

When this company was created, we dreamed about what we could build together. We knew we could just let the culture of the company happen, or we could decide what we were going to become. One of the first things the leadership of our company did was create our Vision & Values and, shortly after that, the Leadership Model. An important part of our Vision was also our Safety Vision of an injury- and incident-free workplace. All of those guiding principles, set from the beginning, have helped to influence and shape who we are today.

In this edition of Railway, you can read a summary of the 20-year history of our company, reviewing some of the major accomplishments and events that have been instrumental to our success. Here are a few examples:

• One of the many measures of our success is our tremendous progress in building a culture of commitment to safety. We’ve reduced reportable injuries by nearly 50 percent since the creation of our company.

• We’ve also grown our revenues dramatically – from a little over $8 billion at the time of merger to more than $23 billion last year – thanks in large part to our Vision and focus on meeting customer expectations.

• Strong returns also enabled us to invest significant amounts of capital over the past two decades to strengthen and expand our network. Our railroad has never been in better shape, and we have added capacity to prepare for future growth.

When you review our history, it’s also clear that we’ve faced many challenges together, including the Great Recession and other tough economic cycles as well as the physical difficulties of flooding and severe winters. But through good times and challenging times, the strength of our network and the resilience of our people have carried us through and ensured our continued success.

Our 20th anniversary is an ideal time to once again recognize the efforts and commitment of thousands of BNSF employees. Thank you for all you’ve done to contribute to our success. You are an essential part of what we’ve accomplished and who we are today.

So let’s celebrate. Let’s feel pride in how far we’ve come, and look forward with strength and optimism as we build toward the next 20, 50, 100 years.

Carl Ice, President and Chief Executive Officer
1995-2015: BNSF turns 20

Twenty years ago, in September 1995, BNSF was created in the merger of the holding companies of Burlington Northern Railroad Company and the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway Company. From the start, this end-to-end merger of two strong railroad networks had a broad reach, a diverse customer base, dedicated employees, effective leadership and a consistent commitment to safety.

In the 20 years since, BNSF has delivered on the promises of the merger and sustained its focus on the Vision & Values established as the foundation for the company.

Here is a look at some of the major achievements and events of the past two decades.
Twenty years ago, BNSF was created

On Aug. 23, 1995, the U.S. Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC) issued a written decision to approve the business combination between Burlington Northern, Inc. (BNI) and Santa Fe Pacific Corporation (SFP).

At the time, the ICC was the agency responsible for reviewing proposed mergers and other key rail regulatory issues, and this decision was the final hurdle on the path to the merger that created BNSF Railway Co.

But many significant steps were taken prior to this major milestone. The journey began in June 1994, when BNI and SFP formally entered into an agreement that would — after several amendments — build the road map to a merger.

In the summer of 1994, the voluminous merger application was prepared, including an operating plan for the combined railroad and financial projections. The plan also outlined proposed settlements with various parties and included statements of support from shippers, civic parties and many other groups that had an interest.

The process was interrupted, however, when the Union Pacific Corp. (UP) moved suddenly in early October in attempt to acquire SFP and Santa Fe Railway for itself, starting a hostile takeover fight that would last until early 1995. The months that followed included a dramatic series of events that played out on Wall Street and in the board rooms of all three railroads. Ultimately the UP bid failed, but it served to delay the eventual merger transaction for the companies.

With the support of BNI and SFP stockholders, the matter came before the ICC, which ultimately issued its written decision approving the merger on Aug. 23, 1995. Following the ICC’s approval, and according to the Merger Agreement, the leadership of both companies then finalized the structure to complete the merger.

On Sept. 22, 1995, the BNI and SFP merger was consummated, and the railroad that was to become BNSF was created.

The BNSF Vision, established shortly after the merger, continues to drive the company today: “To realize the tremendous potential of BNSF by providing transportation services that consistently meet our customers’ expectations.”

As one company, the power of BNSF was significantly greater than the sum of the two, bringing markets together and unlocking new growth and new opportunities for customers. Ultimately, the plans outlined in the merger application were greatly exceeded.

On Sept. 22, 1995, the merger between Santa Fe Pacific Corp. and Burlington Northern, Inc., was consummated. Locomotives from both railroads were photographed in Chicago for the company’s first annual report.
BNSF’s first five years: Building the foundation (1995-2000)

As Chairman, President and CEO Rob Krebs explained in his letter for the company’s first annual report, recapping the events of 1995, “In the long history of American railroading, no merger has been larger, approved so quickly or demonstrated greater potential. Combining Burlington Northern, Inc. and Santa Fe Pacific Corp. created much more than the largest rail network in North America. It created a new competitor with the market reach needed to deliver new single-line services to customers throughout two-thirds of the United States as well as to Canada and Mexico.”

The merger and consolidation of the Burlington Northern and the Santa Fe resulted in a network that was more diverse, with a broad and balanced portfolio of commodities, and more efficient, offering shorter routes in many cases as well as more efficient interchange of traffic.

Fort Worth was chosen as the headquarters for the new company, in part because BN’s construction of its new campus on 100-plus acres in north Fort Worth was already well underway, designed to replace the leased space it had in downtown Fort Worth. Santa Fe offices were in leased space in Schaumburg, Ill., a suburb northwest of Chicago. Operations and Marketing leadership were the first to move to the new headquarters campus, and additional departments followed in the coming months.

The new railroad also needed to quickly combine the information systems that would drive the new BNSF, taking the “best of the best” systems from BN and Santa Fe. In the early 1990s, Santa Fe had developed the Transportation Support System (TSS), an industry-leading transportation management and scheduling platform, which allowed for a trip plan for every carload based on customer expectations for service. TSS was the core operating system that would drive many aspects of the new BNSF. Leading systems from BN included the Rate Price Management System (RPMS), the Locomotive Management System, several Engineering systems and others.

A monumental effort ensued to integrate all of these “best of” systems and build them out for the much larger network.

Similar work was underway to combine the locomotive and car fleets, as well as build out the network connectors and other combined facilities, as outlined in the plans submitted to the ICC.

Within a year after the BNSF merger was completed, UP completed its own merger with the Southern Pacific Railroad (SP) in September 1996. BNSF received access to nearly 3,500 miles of trackage rights on the merged UP and another 350 miles as an outright purchase, as part of the various regulatory conditions imposed on that UP-SP merger. This meant an even larger network and broader reach for the new BNSF Railway.
But combining the Burlington Northern and the Santa Fe meant much more than combining the physical headquarters and the rail networks. BNSF leadership was committed to creating a new culture that truly reflected the best of both companies.

In addition to creating the BNSF Vision, the Safety Vision of a “workplace free of accidents and injuries” was also established.

Shortly thereafter, leaders created the core values that would also help shape BNSF: the statements that outline the company’s Style, Shared Values, Community, Liberty, Equality and Efficiency. These statements ring as true today as they did then. “We’ve established that these truly are timeless,” said Executive Chairman Matt Rose recently. “In 10 years, whoever is leading BNSF will be talking about the same Vision, the same Values and all of the other basic principles that were established when we formed this company.”

From the start, employees across the combined network were also working to deepen the commitment to and engagement in safety, expanding the site safety teams that brought together employees from all crafts and local leaders to focus on identifying and eliminating risk in our work environment and work practices. The System Safety Assurance and Compliance Process (SACP) Task Force, formed by BNSF in 1997, also brought together members of BNSF management and labor leaders on a system basis to jointly discuss and address safety issues and recommend improvements.

In 1999, Krebs announced his plans to retire, naming Matt Rose, then the chief operating officer, as his successor. Rose was elected president in June 1999 and CEO in December 2000. In 2002, he was also named chairman, following Krebs’ retirement.

Focus on leadership, meeting customer expectations (2000-2005)

The new millennium brought with it significant advances for BNSF. BNSF strengthened its brand during 2000-2005, while sharpening its focus on meeting customer expectations and growing the business. As always, BNSF also maintained its deep commitment to eliminating accidents and injuries.

Leaders continued to build on the Vision & Values that are fundamental to the BNSF culture. The Leadership Model was created in 2000, identifying the five key tenets that mark successful leadership at BNSF. A year later, People Leader Training (PLT) was implemented, an annual, company-wide program focused on developing the leadership capabilities of BNSF people. BNSF also launched a company-wide diversity initiative that included the formation of affinity groups and regional diversity councils, underscoring its commitment to a diverse and inclusive workforce.

In safety, the continuing strength of site safety teams and other joint...
market for Powder River Basin coal was expanded, and coast-to-coast premium intermodal services with the CSX and Norfolk Southern railroads began.

Thanks to these and many other efforts, by 2005 BNSF was leading volume growth among all Class I railroads, reaching a record 10 million units that year and nearly $13 billion in revenues.

As BNSF celebrated its 10th anniversary in 2005, the new BNSF Railway brand was unveiled, symbolizing the strong unified culture built over the preceding 10 years. With a brand personality described as resourceful, vital, approachable and progressive, BNSF introduced the bold orange and black logo to replace the blue and green circle-cross logo. Locomotives would remain the signature BNSF orange, but with the new “swoosh” design.

The new brand was designed to distinguish BNSF from other freight carriers as well as communicate the key strengths of BNSF. The sustained focus on the Vision was clear in the descriptors for the new BNSF brand: “BNSF recognizes that different customers have different needs, leverages technology to meet those needs, listens to its customers and addresses their challenges.”

As is true with the 20th anniversary, the 10th anniversary in 2005 provided an opportunity to reflect on how far BNSF had come and, as importantly, set the tone for what was ahead.

Strong through good times and challenging times (2005-2010)

“It was the best of times; it was the worst of times” could, in many ways, describe the period for BNSF between 2005 and 2010.

In 2006, BNSF achieved peak volumes across many commodities, as the economy boomed and strong service attracted more business to the railroad. In one week in October 2006, BNSF handled weekly volumes of more than 219,000 units – still the record for BNSF or any U.S. railroad. Freight volumes for BNSF grew at a strong rate year-over-year in 2006 across all business units – increasing 10 percent in coal, 6 percent in agricultural commodities, 6 percent in consumer products and 2 percent in industrial products.

2006 was also the year BNSF formally rolled out its key velocity measures. From the beginning, BNSF’s Vision was all about meeting customer
expectations, and BNSF used on-time performance to measure progress. The velocity initiative added another level of rigor and precision to the measures BNSF used to state its goals and gauge its success. Velocity goals were also incorporated into the Incentive Compensation Plan (ICP), in addition to the safety and financial performance goals.

The return on invested capital in 2006 also reached a then-record high, 11.4 percent, as employees looked for ways to make operations more efficient and use track, terminals and equipment in the most productive ways. Improved returns, combined with growth, helped justify significant capital investment in expansion. For 2006, for instance, that included more than 350 new high-efficiency locomotives, 33 miles of new second main track on the main line between Chicago and Los Angeles, and 18 miles of third main track and 19 miles of second main track on the coal line in Wyoming and Nebraska. Logistics Park-Chicago (LPC) was also expanded with 97 more acres of parking and storage. Lifts at LPC increased from 400,000 in 2002 to nearly 1 million in 2006. BNSF announced plans to build another Logistics Park near Kansas City.

For the nation, the Great Recession started in December 2007 and continued through June 2009, but the full impact on BNSF was delayed in part due to the diversity and resiliency of the BNSF network. Although consumer and industrial products volumes started declining in 2008, grain and coal continued to perform well. Volumes fell more dramatically for BNSF in 2009, and BNSF was forced to make the tough decision to furlough employees. During parts of 2009 and early 2010, more than 3,300 employees were furloughed.

Expenses, capital spending and hiring were all reduced to adjust for declining volumes related to the Great Recession. Even with low volumes, however, BNSF exceeded most of its goals in velocity, due in part to Best Way initiatives and other service and efficiency improvements.

The tragic Sept. 12, 2008, derailment of a Metrolink commuter train in California influenced the regulatory treatment of rail safety on a national level. The Rail Safety Improvement Act (RSIA) of 2008 changed hours-of-service requirements for TY&E employees and also mandated the creation, installation and operation of a new technology — positive train control (PTC) — by all U.S. railroads by Dec. 31, 2015. While BNSF was and continues to be an industry leader in developing and testing PTC technology, the implications of that PTC mandate issued in 2008 continue to be discussed today.

Berkshire Hathaway Inc. began acquiring shares of BNSF in 2006, and announced its plans to purchase the company pursuant to a merger agreement entered into with BNSF on Nov. 2, 2009, in a $44 billion deal. At the time, it was Berkshire Hathaway’s biggest acquisition ever.

“The country’s future prosperity depends on its having an efficient and well-maintained rail system,” Chairman Warren Buffett said in a statement. “Conversely, America must grow and prosper for railroads to do well... It’s an all-in wager on the economic future of the United States. I love these bets.”

By year end, 22.5 percent of BNSF’s outstanding shares were owned by Berkshire Hathaway. Proxies were mailed to BNSF shareholders at the close of 2009, and the vote approving the merger was announced at a special shareholder meeting on Feb. 11, 2010. The acquisition was completed the next day.

At the time of the acquisition, BNSF leaders made it clear that the merger with Berkshire Hathaway was a tremendously positive move for BNSF and the future of the railroad. With the acquisition, Buffett affirmed his support of BNSF’s leadership and the company’s strategic direction. Buffett’s focus on investing for the long term was also consistent with BNSF’s focus on investing to strengthen and expand the network to prepare for future growth.

Several months after the completion of the acquisition, in November 2010, Carl Ice was promoted to the newly created position of president and chief operating officer, with responsibility for
Operations, Marketing and Technology Services. This promotion marked a change where the positions of president, chief executive officer and chairman would not be held by one individual.

**BNSF: Building for the future (2010-2015)**

The merger with Berkshire Hathaway Inc. in 2010 ushered in another significant advance and set the stage for the latest era in BNSF’s history, building on the strong foundation established with the creation of BNSF. Day-to-day life as a Berkshire Hathaway company brought relatively few changes, but allowed BNSF to focus on a longer-term vision to position itself for future growth. As a Berkshire Hathaway company, BNSF’s strategic direction was affirmed.

Ice took on the role of president and CEO in December 2013. As Ice took over the leadership of the railroad, Rose assumed the role of executive chairman.

Over the last five years, BNSF has continued to grow in size and strength, despite challenges, with a continued focus on the five Strategic Focus Areas: People, Service, Franchise, Return and Community.

In terms of People, one of the biggest advances was the 2013 rollout of Approaching Others About Safety. Approaching Others represents a fundamental change in BNSF’s safety culture and mindset, while building on the strong safety commitment and processes of the past two decades. It is the single largest training program in BNSF’s history. Tens of thousands of employees have received the annual training that reinforces core principles, including taking responsibility for our own safety and being willing to approach co-workers to recognize safe and unsafe behaviors. Continued strong safety performance affirms that Approaching Others and other safety processes are helping to foster that culture of commitment.

Looking at Service, velocity remains a significant focus, recognizing that best-in-class service is our heritage and the high standard we set for ourselves. At the same time, while floods, mudslides, severe winters and other service challenges are not unusual across BNSF’s 32,500-mile network, two significant weather events in recent years have been particularly disruptive.

In 2011, catastrophic flooding submerged track along the Missouri River and further north, severing key lines at the heart of the network, peaking in July and August. Employees demonstrated tremendous resilience and dedication as they worked to “rise above” the floods, rebuild critical parts of the infrastructure and restore service. Similarly, a record severe winter in 2013-14 contributed to an extraordinarily challenging year for service in 2014. Once again, thanks to the efforts of employees across the railroad and the capital invested to strengthen and expand the network, service was restored to levels more consistent with BNSF’s high standards and the expectations of our customers.

For Franchise, the customer base continued to broaden, including the dramatic growth of the domestic intermodal business, as BNSF attracts more business from highway to rail. The past five
years also saw a significant increase in crude-by-rail from the Bakken in North Dakota and other oil-producing regions. However, cyclical economic changes have become increasingly frequent and dramatic, as with the recent drop in demand for crude, coal and other commodities. BNSF’s broad and diverse franchise is even more important as the company weathers these economic cycles.

In Return, BNSF’s success depends on the ability to continue to grow while also improving earnings capacity. 2014 operating revenue of $23 billion reflected a nearly 40-percent increase since joining Berkshire Hathaway and was almost triple the revenue at the time of the BNSF merger. Our history reflects the strength and resilience of the BNSF franchise over time.

Strong returns enable reinvestment in the network to meet growing demand. The railroad has never been in better shape, and we are building toward the future. In 2015, for instance, work includes nearly completing the double-tracking of the Southern Transcon, as well as installing more than 800 miles of centralized traffic control (CTC) and adding other capacity on the north. By the end of 2015, we expect that we will have completed most of the significant capacity expansion needed for the near term.

In the Community, BNSF has been committed from the start to having a positive impact on the communities we serve, and these efforts have expanded in recent years. Questions about blocked crossings and idling locomotives due to increased train traffic as well as publicity related to recent high-profile derailments, including crude-by-rail trains in the U.S. and Canada, have increased the scrutiny and concerns. Community perceptions can impede BNSF’s ability to permit expansion projects to meet customer demands for growth, especially for haulage of hazardous commodities.

BNSF has focused additional resources in Community Affairs to ensure we are responsive to community concerns and proactive in our outreach and education programs. This effort includes a tribal relations program to foster positive relationships with the numerous Native American communities through which we operate.

Ice recently reflected on the tremendous accomplishments and progress of the past 20 years:

“With the merger of the Burlington Northern and Santa Fe railroads 20 years ago, we knew we were creating a great company. From the start, this end-to-end merger of two strong railroad networks had a broad reach, diverse customer base, dedicated employees and effective leadership. But we also knew this newly formed company had the potential to go far beyond that and, in the two decades since, we’ve continued to realize that tremendous potential.

“The core of what we do has not changed. We move things from where they are to where they need to be. Yet, we’ve come a long way. BNSF has advanced from $8 billion in annual revenue in 1995 to over $23 billion last year, revenues that would equal a Fortune 150 company. In 1996, few would have predicted this level of growth. We can all be proud of this transformation of our railroad. We are making advances that will be with our railroad, our customers and our nation for the next 10, 20, 100 years and beyond.”

Carl Ice, President & CEO

“We are making advances that will be with our railroad, our customers and our nation for the next 10, 20, 100 years and beyond.”
Celebrating BNSF’s 20th

Many 20th anniversary celebrations were held across the system, some during BNSF Family Day events and others on the day of the merger anniversary, Sept. 22, when employees were encouraged to wear BNSF-brand clothing. The celebration was also marked by two anniversary videos on the employee portal and BNSF-TV, including a message from President and CEO Carl Ice.

Here are snapshots of some of the events.

Top row: At Family Day in Fort Worth, President and CEO Carl Ice recognized the anniversary; the celebration included children’s activities, music and 20th anniversary cookies. Second row: Technical Training Center staff celebrated with cake on Sept. 22. Third row: The Interbay Mechanical Facility in Seattle hosted a Family Day; Topeka, Kan., employees gathered on the anniversary day. Bottom: Barstow, Calif., employees celebrated the 20th at a Family Day/softball tournament, with winners hoisting their trophy; Sheridan, Wyo., families rode “Mini Mac” at a celebration earlier this summer.
In 2009, the Southwest Division experienced the loss of four co-workers in four separate incidents within a period of two months. “It was a tough time. Everyone on the division was stunned and shocked,” recalls Rick Spears, locomotive engineer, Clovis, N.M.

Employees there looked for a way they could become personally involved in a sustainable safety process and decided to implement BAPP® (Behavioral Accident Prevention Process), a methodology created by Behavior Science Technology (BST).

For BNSF, the process was a good fit, consistent with BNSF’s focus on fostering a safety culture of commitment. That’s because BAPP® is behavior-based and employee driven.

“BAPP® does not focus on incidents or injuries. It focuses on reducing risk to exposure,” says Director Transportation Safety Phil Mullen, noting that BAPP® is more than work practice observation because it is much more rigorous and is data-driven. It also has more robust systems to ensure the entire focus is on providing positive reinforcement and addressing behavior patterns, not on assessing discipline.

According to BST, BAPP® looks at how work is done, not the employee doing the work. This means identifying and defining, in operational terms, the critical interfaces associated with how the equipment is used or how procedures affect risk to exposure.

The BAPP® process takes about a year to fully implement at each location, starting with informational meetings with management, labor and scheduled employees, and is administered by a team of scheduled employees, with local management support.
BAPP® has been adopted by Transportation teams at 20 locations and currently one intermodal facility (see sidebar on page 17). It continues to grow, with five to seven locations added every year.

“We are committed to BAPP® as a company. Our history with it – and the science behind it – have shown that this process is successful because safety is led from the bottom up, with employees who do the work owning the process,” says Mullen. “Employees have an inherent stake in doing a job safely and they want to be engaged in safety efforts.”

**Taking PRIDE**

Six years ago, the Clovis team was first to test BAPP®. Exploring the process, the team found that BAPP® did, indeed, help reduce injuries and human factor-caused accidents and incidents – plus it had a positive impact on the culture.

“Our first two meetings, we weren’t sure if BAPP® would be right for us, but it has been a good fit and helped us create a culture where people are taking personal responsibility for their own actions,” says Spears. “It’s also helped us to develop relationships and overcome labor-management trust issues.”

To instill ownership, the process calls for each team to develop a name. Clovis came up with PRIDE (Personal Responsibility In Decreasing Exposure).

“We didn’t have a lot of pride at the time we started,” says Spears, PRIDE’s facilitator. “We knew we needed to change the culture so that we see our work as not just a job, but a profession that we take pride in.”

Facilitators manage daily tasks associated with the process, including training. “We’ve never had anyone go through the training say we shouldn’t do this,” adds Spears. In 2010, there were 80 trained observers; today there are 159.

It’s not always easy for employees to be volunteer observers, says Ricky Smith, terminal superintendent, Clovis. “People ask them, ‘What makes you qualified to observe what I do?’ So we remind them that we’re here looking at behaviors, that it’s not about the person.”

**No name, no blame**

While BNSF has been making tremendous strides in reducing risk and eliminating injuries, constant vigilance is essential. Changes in the work environment or task can introduce risk. Even when a task is familiar, it’s important to avoid complacency and to be aware of potential risks as well.

BAPP® observers see behavior – an observable act, not associated to the person. They ask WHY the behavior is performed in a way that exposes an employee to risk. The employee’s answer identifies if the behavior is in his or her control.

Trained employees observe co-workers’ activities against a defined list of safe behaviors in exposures such as pinch-points, line-of-fire, etc. Data collection forms are designed to make the process as objective as possible. After completing an observation, observers pass forms to team facilitators, who enter the data in a confidential database. All information is totally anonymous.

“We dealt with a lot of challenges, but the toughest was getting people to believe that there are no names – and no discipline – associated with the process,” says Spears. “At first people called us the ‘Snitch Club.’ But we had a lot of support, from both the unions and management, and worked through those issues. Of the thousands of observations made, there has not been one instance of discipline.”

BAPP® also relies on regular, immediate and candid feedback. After gathering data, observers have an informal discussion with their co-workers about behaviors – safe and at-risk – and invite feedback and suggestions. These suggestions are also recorded.

Ricky Smith, center, terminal superintendent at Clovis, N.M., with Engineer Ken Berry and Conductor Julie Hobbs. BAPP® provides another opportunity for employees to provide feedback and suggestions.
“A lot of people like that they are being asked their opinion and involved in safety,” says Spears. “It’s a ‘Safety with me vs. to me’ approach.”

Positive reinforcement is another key piece of the process because it encourages repeat behavior.

Using the overall data reported, the steering committee identifies trends and, when necessary, creates action plans to reduce and eliminate at-risk behaviors and communicates those to the field. If the solution is beyond the team’s immediate influence, they will work with management to find one.

One of the action plans being developed by PRIDE focuses on “awake and alert” strategies as feedback from train crews indicated this was an issue. So PRIDE is having discussions on the topic and researching strategies that they will share with crews.

**CYPHER’s story**

Five years before BAPP® came to BNSF, the Tulsa, Okla., Transportation team was already practicing positive reinforcement and open safety discussions focused on trust.

Managers notified train crews before conducting some operations tests, whether in the cab or trackside. After the testing was completed, managers also made a point of telling employees what they were doing right, giving very specific feedback – and thanking them for doing a job well.

“When people get positive feedback, that drives repeatable behavior in day-to-day tasks,” says Dave Devault, recently retired terminal superintendent. “And it builds a level of trust and respect between management and employees.”

With this foundation, when BAPP® came to Tulsa in 2011, employees were more open to accepting the process. Mike Townsend and Audie Stout were among those on the 10-member steering committee, which selected CYPHER (Cherokee Yard Process of Human Error Removal) as its team name.

Stout is a conductor/switchman and local SMART (Sheet Metal, Air, Rail and Transportation Workers) chairman and was the CYPHER facilitator until recently, when his term expired. Townsend was a locomotive engineer and local BLET (Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen) chairman before becoming a trainmaster.

“Before BAPP®, we were starting to build trust at Tulsa, but some still saw it as an ‘us vs. them’ mentality,” says Stout. “Once we got people committed to the idea that changes needed to be made, that they would be engaged in the process – and that we would keep everyone informed along the way – we got great buy-in.”
BAPP® was an essential step in moving the 300-plus TY&E (train, yard and engine) employees beyond a total focus on compliance. Instead of a “follow-the-rules, this-is-how-it-is” mentality, the team members matured into a broader personal commitment to safety, explains Townsend.

“BAPP® helped us change a lot of things, including getting more people more deeply committed to safety. We’re building trust and working toward injury-free operations collectively because we want to help our fellow employees stay injury-free,” he says. (As of Aug. 31, Tulsa Terminal has gone more than 1,426 days without injury.)

Stout echoes this sentiment to anyone considering the process. “It’s not always easy. People are going to say you’re doing this because you want a day off from work. But if you care about your co-workers, if you want to be involved and see things get better, then support BAPP® and those leading it.”

From a management perspective, BAPP® reinforces that the company is truly committed to safety and desires to build trust.

“At Tulsa, we made a commitment that we were going to build relationships – and trust – with employees by doing the right thing for the right reason 100 percent of the time,” adds Devault. “That included explaining to employees why we do things in addition to talking about what needs to be done and how you are going to do it.”

The real key, all agree, is adhering to BAPP®’s no-name, no-blame approach.

“Every time you make an observation and record the data, when there is no discipline or name associated with it, you add a link to your chain of trust,” adds Stout.

Think Memphis, think Graceland, barbecue and blues. Now this Tennessee town is also home to the TITANS (Transitioning Intermodal To A New Safety).

Memphis is the first intermodal facility to adopt BAPP®, largely due to the strong culture of commitment there.

“There really is passion and pride in Memphis, at the terminal and the hub. We understand the BAPP® process and more and more of our employees are on board with it,” says Doug Gage, senior manager, Hub Operations, of the intermodal team adopting the process.

Memphis has a long track record of leading intermodal safety performance, but the employees knew that more could be done to accelerate the path to zero.

BAPP® was introduced to help reinforce sustainable safety processes.

According to Gage, a majority quickly bought in to it – and today the level of engagement is almost 100 percent, he says, crediting facilitator Kevin Beville, intermodal equipment operator and BAPP® facilitator.

“It starts with trust,” Beville notes of the reason why BAPP® has been so well received. “If you have that, and lots of conversations, it will be supported. We’re still growing.” Currently the hub has 16 observers and expects that number to grow.

The TITANS were not the first at Memphis to adopt BAPP®; the Transportation team TIGER (Trust, Integrity Getting Exposure Removed) implemented the process in 2012.

Whether it’s the Transportation TIGER or Intermodal TITANS, the process is the same – recognizing exposures and determining how to mitigate those risks. The difference is the observation sheets, explains Beville.

While the two teams operate separately, they have had a couple of meetings together.

“Now that we both have good footing, we plan to have more meetings,” says Gage. “It helps us understand each other’s point of view. Together, we have learned many things, including how the other approaches performing observations.”

Facilitator Kevin Beville, right, observes Lawrence Boatwright, intermodal equipment operator. Both are members of the TITANS.

“There really is passion and pride in Memphis, at the terminal and the hub. We understand the BAPP® process and more and more of our employees are on board with it.”

Doug Gage, Senior Manager, Hub Operations

Memphis: Now home to TITANS
**Moving the meter**

Those who have been deeply involved in BAPP® at BNSF say its success also reflects how the company is “moving the safety meter,” moving beyond a culture of compliance and rules adherence to one of commitment, where people truly care about one another’s well-being. It’s consistent with the focus in Approaching Others About Safety and other peer-to-peer initiatives where employees are taking a strong sense of ownership.

“There was a time people were more afraid of being fired than they were of being hurt,” says PRIDE’s Spears. “But eliminating injuries is not about making enough rules to cover everything. Our culture is changing to one focused on commitment, and BAPP® is one more thing that helps us get there.”

By the end of 2015, BNSF will add two full-time BAPP® safety specialists who will come from conductor or engineer positions to help deepen the process and expand to more locations, as well as explore ways to involve other crafts.

“What BAPP® won’t do is take away from existing safety programs, such as site safety teams and SIRPs (Safety Issues Resolution Process),” says Mullen. “This is about adding another layer of safety and not at all about replacing other existing programs. It will enhance those already strong safety alliances.”

BNSF’s focus on Approaching Others About Safety shares many similar objectives. Like BAPP®, Approaching Others encourages work teams to take ownership of safety and speak up to identify and eliminate risk.

“We don’t have time not to have these conversations,” says Smith. “Five seconds now could save hours – and lives – later.”

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**BAPP® across BNSF**

Here are the existing Transportation teams and locations where BAPP® is currently in place or being implemented:

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Others currently in planning stages: Beardstown, Ill.; Teague, Texas; Tacoma, Wash.; and LaCrosse, Wis.
Operating a railroad requires many moving parts and people in a wide variety of roles. The vital contributions made by BNSF people in jobs across the railroad are the topic of this Railway series. Whether you’re new to the railroad or a veteran, these “who we are and what we do” stories are designed to bring a greater appreciation of the work and of those doing the work as well as to demonstrate our mutual interdependence.

It’s the end of July and the peak of the summer, with the hot Texas sun beating down on the ballast and steel rail. Despite the 100-degree temperatures, customers rely on switch crews at BNSF’s Cleburne Yard to collect loaded railcars and return empty railcars to their industry.

As a seasoned three-man BNSF road switch crew, Conductor Tim Kennedy, Engineer Bill Berry and Brakeman Si Miller spend their days – usually Monday through Friday – making stops at the various industry properties served by BNSF in this area, just a few miles southwest of Fort Worth.

“A cross-country freight train has to start somewhere,” says Miller. “Switching is where it all begins.”

Every year, BNSF train crews move millions of tons of freight safely across the western two-thirds of the United States, but the long-haul trains don’t move without the skilled hands of the switch crews. Each switchman working across the BNSF network represents an important piece of the puzzle.

Different switch crews serve different roles. The “road” switch crews spend most of their time collecting and delivering loaded and empty railcars to and from customer sites. The “local” switch crews shuffle smaller hauls between various rail yards. And, as the name suggests, the “yard” switch crews often remain in rail yards, rearranging cars and building trains.

Simply put, the switch crews help set the stage as a crucial part of BNSF’s ability to safely and consistently meet customer expectations.
ROAD SWITCHING IN CLEBURNE YARD

It’s 0830 in Cleburne, part of the Texas Division. After receiving their morning assignment from BNSF Customer Support, the road switch crew members hold a safety briefing and board their two general purpose locomotives.

“As road switchmen, we do the industry switching. It’s our job to move loaded cars and empties according to the customer’s request,” Miller explains. “We generally stay in the same designated service area.”

As engineer, Berry keeps his position in the locomotive cab, watching for hand signals and listening closely to the radio as he receives directions from both the conductor and the brakeman, who spend most of their time on the ground.

“Working on a road switch crew is never boring,” says Berry, whose railroading career began with the Santa Fe in 1972. “If you enjoy what you do, then it’s not really a job. That’s how I feel about it.”

After exiting Cleburne Yard with four cars in tow, Berry directs the train onto a local rail spur that services several BNSF customers.

The crew arrives at the first stop of the day, James Hardie Building Products. Kennedy enters the industrial property on foot to identify the specific cars destined for Cleburne Yard. The ground rumbles under the weight and vibrations from the locomotive as Kennedy uses his radio to guide the train backward into the facility.

“Three more car lengths...two more...one more...half a car...stop,” Kennedy calls to Berry.

With the power coupled to the cars, Berry carefully pulls the load out of the customer’s property where Miller waits at a switch. The cars are moved onto the main rail spur and the crew heads to the next customer facility. This pattern repeats several times, and the crew keeps a sharp eye on safety as each cut – coupling and uncoupling of cars – and switch is made.

Bill Berry, engineer, listening to the conductor during a job safety briefing.

Miller, who first joined predecessor Frisco Railroad in 1979, spent years working on road crews, but now enjoys the life of a switchman.

“I enjoy being home every night, and I like the steady hours that come with it,” he says. “Plus, I’ve always considered myself a worker ant. As a switchman, there’s a lot of moving around, climbing up and down trains and using my hands. It isn’t the easiest job, but that’s OK with me.”

After several cuts, kicks – the “kicking” off of a car – and switches along the length of the rail spur, the crew has built a mixed consist of tanker cars, boxcars and divided bulkhead flats. It’s now 1145 hours, and the men return to the yard with the morning’s pull.

The haul is backed into the yard, and the crew climbs off the locomotives. In the terminal, Kennedy inputs the crew’s moves into the BNSF computer system, a task they affectionately call “clicking cars.”

This data entry process is critical, not only because it provides the information on which the BNSF network runs, but because it also supplies vital information to customers about their cargo and enables pickup and delivery schedules. Accurate and timely data entry by the switch crews is just...
another example of the essential role these railroaders play in the safe and efficient operation of BNSF Railway.

After inputting their morning moves into the system, the line of railcars sitting in Cleburne Yard is ready for an afternoon local switch crew to deliver it to the Texas Division’s Alliance Yard, where the cars will be mated with a larger long-haul train. Meanwhile the three-man crew heads to the Cleburne Yard to continue their day’s work.

YARD SWITCHING IN ARGENTINE YARD

A far cry from the Texas heat, it’s been a rainy July in Kansas City, Kan., part of the Kansas Division. After recent tornado warnings, a cold front has brought wet and unseasonably chilly weather. With more rain on the way, it won’t be “just another day at the office.”

Switchmen David DeLeon and Barry Crilley wouldn’t have it any other way. The weather is just one part of the job that keeps things interesting and challenging.

“This is not San Diego,” Crilley quips. “It can be 100 degrees or snowing sideways, but it’s our responsibility to go out there and finish the job.”

Home base for DeLeon and Crilley is the sprawling Argentine Yard, west of downtown Kansas City, Mo. With a history dating back to 1875, Argentine Yard now spans almost 800 acres. It’s the largest classification yard in the BNSF system.

DeLeon and Crilley arrive for an early start with the rest of the yard switchmen. At the 0630 safety briefing, the crews are told about a main track embankment failure to the west as a result of the previous night’s heavy rains. Delays in and out of the yard are likely.

The switchmen head to the locker room to don their radios and blue RCOs, remote control units that allow the switchmen to control locomotives while outside of the cab.

The switchmen use a yellow and black reflective harness to strap on the RCO. With gear in place, they head into the yard to begin building trains.

The team works from a long printed list of railcars to be strung together to build a single consist. This morning’s train will be built by joining several groupings of cars sitting in four different sets of track. The result will be a mixed-freight train destined for Denver and Golden, Colo. Carrying a variety of commodities – from seeds to plastics to ammonia to sand – the complete train will weigh more than 8,000 tons.

Climbing into the bright orange locomotive, Crilley powers up the diesel engine. DeLeon follows into the cab and the team begins to test their RCOs. Each RCO unit includes fail-safe technology that will stop operations in the event the switchman falls or loses contact with the control unit.

With the diesel growling and the RCOs operational, Crilley uses his radio to request clearance from the trainmaster.

“As a transportation company, our job is simple – to safely move freight from one point to another. However, the operational complexities involved are enormous. Our switch crews play a vitally important role in our ability to meet customer expectations and ultimately realize our vision as a company.”

Dave Freeman
Senior Vice President, Transportation
Meanwhile, DeLeon is now outside in the elements, walking in the “bowl” confirming the cars they will soon couple together. Dozens of tracks span the bowl, which gets its name for the slight inclines on either end that keep the railcars gathered in the center. The railcars bound for Colorado sit wet and motionless in the middle of the yard, surrounded by hundreds of other cars destined for other locations.

From the engineer’s position in the cab, Crilley keeps a watch for safety concerns in front of the locomotive. DeLeon controls the engine from the ground using the RCO. With slight and careful movements of his fingers on the controls, DeLeon inches the massive locomotive forward through a switch and then in reverse to connect with the first set of railcars.

“The most important thing we do here is listen,” says Crilley, who keeps his ears tuned to the radio traffic. In addition to DeLeon’s voice, Crilley attends to the radio transmissions from the bowl trainmaster and other switch crews in the yard.

Crilley has been railroading since 1990 and spent time as an engineer prior to becoming a switchman. He’s come to enjoy his role as a yard switchman.

“Although it can get congested at times, no two days are the same in the yard,” he says. “I enjoy the challenge.”

The rain begins to fall heavily as the switch crew continues its moves. With rain dripping off the bill of his hat, DeLeon laces together the air brake hoses between the cars.

DeLeon, a third-generation railroader, says working as a yard switchman gives him the opportunity not only to be outdoors, but also stay active. He takes thousands of steps each day traversing the yard.

His experience serves him well, and he is alert to the added risks that come with the rainy weather.

“Although I’m not bothered by the bad weather, it adds to the risk. You have to be especially alert and attentive,” he explains.

DeLeon points to the wet steel wheels of the locomotive as it slowly passes by.

“See that wheel slipping as it tries to find grip on that wet rail? We’re going to have to give ourselves more room to accelerate and brake.”

DeLeon and Crilley take turns controlling the locomotive as they safely connect the different sets of railcars. At the same time, other switch crews also make their moves on nearby parallel tracks.

“We are packed in here today, and these volumes are pretty typical,” says DeLeon. “As a yard switchman, you’ll have cars moving around you all the time. This job is all about safety and situational awareness.”

The two men continue their back-and-forth movements, carefully and safely building the train according to their assignment. With each switch, the consist grows.

Just after 0900, the four sets of cars are safely coupled and ready for a BNSF road crew to pull the completed train to Colorado. Depending on the volume of traffic and congestion in the yard, each switch crew at Argentine builds several trains a day.

**SWITCHING IS THE ‘SWEET SPOT’**

No matter their specific roles, the various switch crews across the BNSF network prove their value every day. According to Dave Freeman, senior vice president, Transportation, freight doesn’t move without the work of BNSF’s professional switch crews.

“As a transportation company, our job is simple — to safely move freight from one point to another,” says Freeman. “However, the operational complexities involved are enormous. Our switch crews play a vitally important role in our ability to meet customer expectations and ultimately realize our vision as a company.”

Many switch crews have extensive long-haul experience. Their seniority allows them to explore new roles at BNSF, and the former engineers and conductors gravitate toward switching.

“The life of a switch crew is much more predictable when you look at the hours and location,” says Miller of his job in Texas. “I’m at the point in my life where being on the road and staying in hotels isn’t something I look forward to.”

His co-worker Berry agrees.

“I’ve reached the sweet spot in my railroading career,” he says, noting his tenure with the railroad.

As he reflects on his job at Argentine Yard, DeLeon, now soaked, admits being on a switch crew isn’t for all railroaders. Some prefer the life on the road, crisscrossing a landscape that few will have the opportunity to see.

“Switching is like a White Castle burger, either you love it or hate it,” he says. “Me? I love it.”
Roger Lee

Roger Lee started his career in 1977 with predecessor Santa Fe Railway as a laborer on a production gang based out of Gallup, N.M. In 1999, he became a supervisor and now is a gang roadmaster, largely due to his safe production and leadership skills.

“Roger is a long-time leader within our team, and very well respected within the Navajo Nation,” says Steve Anderson, vice president, Engineering, who has known Lee for 30 years. “He’s without a doubt the most respected representative of the Navajo community within BNSF.”

Lee, who has a quiet and unassuming nature, has been a vital asset to BNSF’s relationship with the Navajo Nation. Growing up on the Navajo reservation in Ganado, Ariz. – where he still resides – he was able to learn the language of his nation. Because of his fluency in speaking Navajo, he has acted as translator between his tribe and BNSF, and encouraged many members to apply for careers with the company.

Lee calls the railroad the “bread and butter of the Navajo” because today 70 percent of the rail gang members are from the Navajo Nation.

Lee’s father, grandfather and great-grandfather also worked for the railroad. So railroading was a natural fit for Lee when he first started his career, as was working outside.

“I’ve been working outside and with my hands for as long as I can remember,” said Lee. “We raised cattle on the reservation and worked with livestock, so I’ve always valued working alongside nature.”

He’s also put a high value on working safely throughout his career, and in 1996 was the Engineering Department’s Safety Employee of the Year and BNSF’s nominee for the national Hammond Award, an industry award that recognized an individual for outstanding safety contributions.

Through the years with BNSF, Lee and his team have received numerous safety and production awards.
Willie Buck

Born and raised in Fort Belknap, Mont., Willie Buck still remembers the train whistle ringing through the valley and resounding through the Assiniboine reservation where he grew up. He also has cherished memories of hunting deer in the valley and fishing at Snake Butte Reservoir.

The Assiniboine tribe is a branch of the Sioux tribe. Buck fondly recalls the tribe's support and sponsorship of his baseball, basketball and football teams over the years – a product of their community emphasis.

At 17, Buck decided to join the military. Today, he attributes his discipline and work commitment to his military experience.

"It was a completely different environment than life on a reservation as far as modern technologies and stringent structure were concerned," he says of his Army days.

Following his military career, Buck completed his bachelor's degree in diesel engine technology at Northern Montana College in Havre, Mont. He also has his Master's in Vocational Education from there. Post-college, Buck worked at General Electric.

Mariah Gladstone

After graduating from Columbia University, Mariah Gladstone was determined to find a job that would combine her passion for engineering and problem solving with her indigenous identity. Gladstone is a member of the Blackfeet Nation located on their original homeland in northwest Montana.

She found the perfect position as a BNSF Engineering Management Trainee on the Montana Division. While she is based in Whitefish, her territory runs through the Blackfeet Reservation, just a two-hour drive away.

Gladstone first heard about employment at BNSF at the American Indian Science and Engineering Society’s national conference, where she met members of the Council of Native Americans (CNA). (See box on page 26.) Gladstone liked the idea of working in the field, with opportunities for travel and advancement.

After hiring on in June, she joined the CNA.

“We had a similar group at Columbia,” says Gladstone. “I loved being a part of a community within the larger community. It allowed me to blend my indigenous heritage with my work experience, and I see the same opportunity in the Council.”

Growing up, Gladstone spent summers living and working on the reservation, including as a park ranger at Glacier National Park. She has memories of what she calls “morals through stories,” values she learned through her family’s and community members’ story-telling.

Though she participates in traditional ceremonies and aims to keep learning her language, Gladstone hopes to remind others of the continued existence of Native people. As a performer, she teaches and showcases Blackfeet stories and songs.

“We are contemporary individuals whose cultures have evolved alongside us,” she says. “Saving our regalia for special occasions does not negate our identity as indigenous individuals.”

Gladstone appreciates the opportunity to start her career so close to home, though she knows her path with BNSF may take her across the country.

“My people were always nomadic anyway,” she laughs. More than anything, she says that she is enthusiastic about being part of a company that values and appreciates the input of employees.

“BNSF is a company that recognizes hard work, encourages goal-setting and provides opportunity for advancement,” says Gladstone. “I anticipate a long future with BNSF.”
Transportation Systems, part of the division that manufactures locomotives. After eight years, Buck decided he wanted a change. In 2004, he got a job as a mechanical foreman at BNSF’s locomotive shop in Richmond, Calif.

“My favorite part of Richmond was the diversity because it was the complete opposite of what I was used to – a tribe of largely similar people,” says Buck.

Today, Buck works in Fort Worth in the Network Operations Center as the manager of equipment operations for the Mechanical team. He is also vice chair of BNSF’s Council of Native Americans.

“BNSF provides a number of opportunities for Native Americans,” says Buck. “The council participates in the American Indian Science and Engineering Society conference nearly every year to recruit Native American scholars.”

He notes that BNSF has made it possible for him to provide for his family.

His mother and step-father still live on the reservation. Buck and his wife, who is of the Gros Ventre tribe, visit every few years. At their home in Texas, they recognize their cultural heritage by decorating with hand drums and other Native American art.

**Denise Gauthier**

Denise Gauthier, manager, Field Safety Support, and a member of the Menominee tribe, still remembers listening to her father tell stories of his childhood on the reservation.

Life on the reservation was hard. During World War II, he decided to enlist, and following the war, he insisted his family live off-reservation. He chose a location that just happened to be two blocks from predecessor Santa Fe Railway’s main line.

As an adult, Gauthier moved to Los Angeles, where she worked in the entertainment and advertising industries. But she decided to make a change when she became pregnant with her first child.

“My doctor told me that I couldn’t keep commuting 80 miles to my job every day,” she remembers. “That’s when I went to the California Indian Manpower Consortium, and they suggested I apply to Santa Fe – which they described as a family-oriented company with an impeccable reputation.”

Gauthier was hired and has spent 25 years with the company, now working in Springfield, Mo. In 2003, she joined the CNA to find additional ways to embrace and celebrate her heritage.

When Gauthier’s father passed away, she donated his estate to the College of the Menominee Nation to assist in its sustainable financial independence and to help Menominee students further their education. She often receives updates from the school as well as tribal newsletters to remain current on events, news and information. She also stays in contact with family members that still live on the reservation.

The Menominee tribe is located in Wisconsin and is one of few tribes that continues to hold the lands they originally inhabited. Menominee artifacts dating back 10,000 years have been discovered in the region.

One tradition that Gauthier has carried into her family life is the “ghost supper.” This is an annual dinner and ceremony where families offer food to their deceased loved ones. Family members burn food as an offering and then join together in feast. Her sons have continued the celebration with her.

Gauthier continues to promote and celebrate her Native American descent and commends BNSF on forming a tribal relations team. (See sidebar on page 26.)

“BNSF is an incredible company that has offered me a long career, lots of friends and has surrounded me with great people to work with,” she adds.

**Kenny Abell**

Fresno, Calif., Locomotive Engineer and BLET (Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers & Trainmen) Local Chairman Ken Abell joined predecessor Santa Fe Railway as a trainman about 20 years ago.

He recognizes it has taken him some time to learn about his Native American heritage, and he only recently registered as a member of CNA. “Until I was in junior high, my family thought we were Mexican-American, and that’s what my birth certificate states,” he says.
When he was a teenager, Abell’s mother began questioning his great-grandmother about their heritage. She initially ignored her granddaughter’s inquiries and told her to stop asking questions, but finally revealed they were of Apache and Yaqui descent.

“My great-grandmother kept our heritage a secret because she was concerned about what she saw as the historic mistreatment of Native Americans,” Abell recalls. When his great-grandmother was a child, Native Americans were being forcibly relocated to reservations, so to avoid this, the family claimed that they were Mexican-American.

Once the family understood their Native American heritage, they wanted to learn more about their culture and began attending local classes and powwows. The Apache and Yaqui tribes are native to the Southwest, particularly New Mexico, Texas and Mexico.

Upon Abell’s high school graduation, he received a certificate from the Office of Indian Education (Title VII) recognizing his academic achievement as a Native American.

Another fateful moment happened when he was invited to be in a close friend’s wedding. Initially his then-employer agreed to give him time off for the wedding, but later rescinded. He promptly quit, wanting to be at the wedding for his close friend.

While at the wedding, the father of the bride, Larry England, a now-retired BNSF locomotive engineer, suggested that Abell apply with Santa Fe, speaking highly of the opportunities. Shortly after Abell applied, he was hired.

“It’s a good job, and it’s provided well for me and my family over the years,” says Abell of his BNSF career. “I couldn’t be happier.”

Abell continues to investigate his ancestry today.

“When my son, Jacob, was born, I made a point to list him as ‘Native American’ on his birth certificate,” he recalls. “I want him to know where we came from.”

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**Andy van Wey**

Enlisting in the Marine Corps Infantry at 17, Andy van Wey never imagined he would one day be working as a dispatcher in BNSF’s Network Operations Center.

Van Wey was sent on two combat tours in his six years in the Corps: Just after September 11, he was sent to Afghanistan, then in 2004 he went to Iraq. At this point in his life, he knew little about his ancestry aside from his mother’s brief stories about growing up in northern Mexico.

“At the time, all I knew was that I am both Hispanic and Native American,” says Van Wey. “My mother kept much of our ancestry hidden, and my father passed away when I was a baby.”

Over time, Van Wey derived pieces of information from the stories and family histories told by older relatives. He learned that he is of Comanche descent, and his native heritage comes from his great-grandmother on his mother’s side.

After his second combat tour, Van Wey returned to the U.S. and became a police officer for the city of Fort Worth. He worked in the Special Operations Division with the gang unit and narcotics section primarily as an undercover police officer.

As a police officer, he was sent to Iowa to receive training. At the police school he sat next to a tall, older man who asked Van Wey if he was native, and a mentorship was born.

His mentor is a member of the Meskwaki and Comanche tribes and took Van Wey to his first powwow – a place of fellowship, celebration, dancing, singing and food.

Today, Van Wey rarely misses an annual powwow in Oklahoma. He often brings his son to join in on the cultural festivities.

“Powwows are an incredible celebration and a great networking experience,” says Van Wey. “It’s an opportunity to meet people but also to learn more about my heritage. Many stories and traditions are shared over Indian fry bread.”

He wants to share as much as he can with his son Maximilian, 6. His mentor passed down books on the native
Comanche language, which Van Wey is learning alongside his son.

After working as an officer, Van Wey decided he wanted a change of pace.

“One day I woke up and realized I had been working undercover longer than Max had been alive. Though I loved the life, that’s exactly what it was – my whole life,” he recalls. “I wanted Max to know his father, something I was denied when I was about his age. I wanted to be there for him, and that’s why I left – for my son.”

Jesse Shane

Trains have been a fixture in Jesse Shane’s life for as long as he can remember. He recalls that, as a child, he used the train horn as his alarm clock. As a young adult he saw the tracks as a boundary line – marking a clear line between the reservation where he lived and the world beyond. Today, the railroad provides stability and a secure income.

Shane is now a member of a tie production gang based in Montana and has been with BNSF for just over a year.

Before coming to the railroad, Shane worked as a reservation police officer for his Crow tribe, then worked with another tribe in Nebraska. He decided that he wanted to return to Montana with his family and sought a job with BNSF after numerous suggestions from others.

Shane happily reminisces about his upbringing on the Crow reservation in Lodge Grass, Mont. “Most of my friends lived in town, but the reservation is in the country, so that made it more special,” he recalls. Since most of his family still lives on the reservation, visits to his childhood home are a family reunion.

Shane continues to practice his tribe’s customs and traditions. He is in the process of teaching his children the Crow’s native tongue. In addition, the tribe often uses sweat lodges, dome-like wooden structures covered in canvas, for times of meditation and prayer. Inside, rocks are fired in a pit; once the rocks reach the appropriate temperature, water is poured into the pit to create hot steam. Tribal members pray inside the steam-filled lodge.

“Prayer was a cornerstone of my childhood and has become a fundamental part of my life,” says Shane, who continues this tradition with his family.

Several members of the Crow tribe either work at BNSF or at local industries served by BNSF; for instance, many work at the Sarpy Coal Mine that is a part of the reservation.

“The tribe has taught me many things that I carry into my life,” says Shane. “I learned respect, commitment and to honor authority – values I teach my children and that I bring with me to the railroad every day.”

Join Council of Native Americans

A BNSF affinity group, the Council of Native Americans (CNA) is made up of dedicated employees from diverse backgrounds and welcomes those who are either descended from a tribe or who have an interest in promoting the Native American culture.

For more information, contact CNA Chair Cherie Gordon: cherie.gordon@bnsf.com
t’s time for high school seniors to apply for college scholarships, including those offered through the BNSF Railway Foundation Scholarship Program. Once again, the Foundation will award up to 50 scholarships for the 2016-2017 college year.

Applicants will need to go online to fill out an application request. (Details included below.) Here are answers to the most frequently asked questions.

Who is eligible?
The program is available to current high school seniors who are the dependent sons, daughters or stepchildren of full-time BNSF employees or of retired, furloughed, disabled or deceased employees of BNSF or its predecessor companies. Full-time employees must have at least two years of service as of Dec. 1, 2015, and must still be employed by BNSF when winners are selected in May. Retired, furloughed, disabled or deceased employees must have completed the two-year requirement prior to ending their service with BNSF.

When can students begin the application process?
The online application process may be accessed beginning Dec. 1, 2015, by going directly to the International Scholarship and Tuition Services (ISTS) link: https://aim.applyists.net/BNSF

When are submissions due?
Completed applications, including ACT or SAT scores, must be submitted no later than March 8, 2016. The student or applicant is responsible for making sure their application is complete, including all required documentation. Since the Foundation is not able to keep track of students’ progress or the completeness of an application, applicants MUST follow up with ISTS. ISTS may not contact students who have incomplete submissions as there are many more applications than scholarships available. An accurate and complete submission is part of the competition for the awards.

How many scholarships are available?
Up to 50 scholarships of at least $2,500 each will be awarded to full-time students enrolled in accredited four-year U.S. colleges/universities. Of these, up to 10 scholarships, at $5,000 each, are available through the National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NMSC). If not all 10 NMSC scholarships are awarded, the balance will be converted to ISTS scholarships at $2,500 each. All the scholarships are renewable for three additional years, with satisfactory academic progress. The BNSF Railway Foundation National Merit winners are selected by the NMSC and neither BNSF nor the Foundation has input in the selection of winners.

Who is eligible for National Merit Scholarships?
To be eligible, students must have taken the PSAT in their junior year. After selecting finalists, the NMSC then notifies sponsors, such as BNSF, about award acceptances and provides scholarship certificates for presentation to winners. Neither BNSF Railway nor BNSF Railway Foundation has any input in the selection of winners.

How are winners selected?
For the scholarships handled by ISTS, winners are selected largely on the basis of academic merit, with consideration for past academic performance, leadership of and participation in school and community activities, and an essay. ACT or SAT scores are acceptable. Guidance counselors routinely supply the required test scores on the high school records accompanying the applications. As mandated by federal law, neither BNSF Railway nor BNSF Railway Foundation has any input in the selection of winners. All winners are screened, reviewed and selected by independent parties through ISTS or NMSC. The Foundation is unaware of who has applied until a preliminary list of winners is sent to the Foundation for confirmation of eligibility based on the parent’s employment status as described in the “Who is Eligible” section.

Can more than one scholarship be awarded to an individual?
No. A student cannot win more than one scholarship funded by the BNSF Railway Foundation. Since neither award is guaranteed, it is recommended that National Merit Finalists apply for the scholarships handled by ISTS. Students who win a National Merit scholarship are automatically withdrawn from consideration for scholarships handled by ISTS.

How do I get an application?
ISTS no longer accepts or uses paper applications. To apply for a scholarship, the student must go directly to the ISTS website through this link – https://aim.applyists.net/BNSF – and follow the instructions. If asked to enter an access key, please use BNSF.

The BNSF Railway Foundation is not able to answer any questions regarding specific requirements, timeline, or payment schedules. Please direct any questions to ISTS or to NMSC through the high school guidance counselor.

What is the contact information for ISTS?
• Phone: 615-777-3750
• Website: https://aim.applyists.net/BNSF
• Email: contactus@applyists.com

BNSF COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM
APPLICATIONS CAN BE ACCESSED DEC. 1, 2015
In celebration of the anniversary marking 20 years since the merger that created BNSF, commemorative artwork was commissioned by BNSF and illustrated by Bruce Morser, an award-winning graphic designer based in Seattle. The original artwork, capturing the strength of BNSF and the Vision, is featured on an insert inside this edition of Railway to commemorate the merger anniversary celebrated on Tuesday, Sept. 22, 2015.