



**ROLLING THROUGH 2007 AT THE BELT:**

*By Jim Bridger  
General Manager*

The first four months for our railroad have proven prosperous within most areas but trying in others. While the company is on track to have a record setting year in terms of operating revenues those same revenues are being reduced by operating failures that are chipping away at our bottom line. During the first quarter of 2007 our Quality Failures have already exceeded the amount of money that was spent during the entire year of 2006. Over a quarter of a million dollars has been spent on numerous wasteful derailments that were due to simply not complying with basic operating rules and practices. The "bigger hitters" to our bottom line include the following:

\*\$125,000 due to an engineer failing to understand the car lengths involved in a shove resulting in the derailment of numerous cars and the total destruction of a fairly new covered hopper. In addition, the breast plate of the locomotive was sheared and bent, several hundred feet of track was destroyed, and an outside contractor was required to rerailed the locomotive and cars costing thousands of dollars.

\*\$25,000 due to not securing a box car that had been kicked into a track allowing the same car to roll out and side swipe another cut of cars. This incident could have been catastrophic in that several liquefied petroleum cars were involved which derailed adjacent to several loads of phosphorus.

\*\$75,000 due to a blind shove at the east end of Cotton Warehouse Yard resulting in numerous cars being sideswiped and derailed.

\*\$10,000 due to a conductor not making sure that a box load of printing paper was in the clear and side swiping the same resulting in a transloading expense and damage to the box car.

\*\$10,000 for miscellaneous run-through switches at the lower cross-over near the round house to banging up company vehicles, etc. etc....

So, what do these expenses and losses translate into for the Public Belt Railroad and what do these expenses and losses translate into for every individual coworker within the company?

For the railroad these Quality Failures translate into a net income loss of over a quarter of a million dollars (+\$250,000).

For each and every one of you the net loss remains to be seen based on the performance by each and every department for the remainder of 2007.

The one department that is in jeopardy of not getting their Christmas / Holiday bonus this year is the Transportation Department. Over ninety percent of our Quality Failures this year have resulted from the lack of rule compliance within this department. If marked improvement is recognized within this department for the remainder of the year then there might be a chance for a reduced Christmas / Holiday bonus based on our year end financial results.

The choice is yours and the manner in which you approach your duties and job daily determine the results. All that I ask from each and every one of you is to show up for work with a good attitude, perform your duties and job safely and properly, and return to your home and family with the same good attitude while stressing home safety to your loved ones.

That is it folks plain and simple.

The employees of the Public Belt Railroad, including myself, have it pretty darn good. Let's not "blow it" by some foolish actions at work which places our coworkers personal safety in jeopardy and our bottom line in peril.

Have a safe and enjoyable summer!!

**TRANSPORTATION PLAN:**

*By: Tom Lobello  
Chief Operating Officer*

As Mr. Bridger stated in his newsletter address to you after a record setting year in our safety performance in 2006, the first quarter of 2007 has been less than desirable. I was notified about a week ago the New Orleans Public Belt will be the recipient of the prestigious "Jake Award". This award is given by the American Short Line Association to railroads who have exceptional safety records for a given year in the areas of derailments as well as personal injuries. Your dedication to our safety effort was proven here. Congratulations to all of you.

Turning our attention to first quarter 2007 and where we are today, we have stepped up our efficiency testing in an effort to re-focus on our basic railroading skills. We have joined with the class 1 railroads in our area and are performing joint efficiency testing. We will continue with our safety film program and talking to all of you. I welcome any ideas and comments you may have in this regard. We are all in this together. The performance of the Transportation Department is a direct reflection on all of us. From past experience I know we are better than what we have shown in the first quarter of 2007.

With summer closing in on us rapidly we all need to make an extra effort to stay focused on our jobs at hand. It is very easy to take a mental vacation with all the sunshine and beautiful weather. Lets keep this summer a safe one at work and at home as well.

On the positive side of the scale, we are winding up operations with CGR. We have one, possibly two more vessels to work this month. They should be in full swing in Mobile by mid-May. We are looking forward to starting up a new relationship with Florida Rock. Florida Rock will assume operations in the North Bulk Terminal sometime in late July early August. This will be a "unit train" operation between the NOPB and the CSX. Our container business continues to grow. We are on track to handle upwards of 2200 containers this month.

Turning to all of our other local business your performance is hanging at an impressive 98%, in regard to 'on time' performance.

Keep up the good work!!

**IT'S GOOD TO WORK AT THE BELT**

*John Morrow, Jr.  
Rachel Zimmerle*

In this, the NOPB's first newsletter of 2007, I'd like to draw attention to the advantages we enjoy as employees of the Public Belt Railroad. With the challenges we face daily, both on the job and off, we do not always remember how blessed we are. As Public Belt employees, we benefit from a list of valuable compensations annually:

Employees' portion of health & welfare costs are paid by NOPB following each injury-free quarter \$1,520

Christmas / Holiday bonuses for Union employees (before-tax value of \$718 gives an after-tax cash value of \$500 per employee) \$718

2 paid Safety days off \$350

Gift cards to Wal-Mart or Home Depot for all union employees of any department that achieves one year with no personal injuries or new employee lawsuits \$300

4% non-negotiated increase to base pay (a one-time raise)

1% increase added to the current contract increase in base pay (1% added to the negotiated increase in the final year of the contract)

Annual Safety Recognition dinners for all departments

Numerous departmental cookouts, chicken runs, seafood boils, fish fries, sandwich lunches, and breakfasts provided during the year

Quarterly Safety Awards for all employees – NOPB beach towels, blankets, soft-sided ice chests with wheels, weather band radios, golf umbrellas, first-aid kits, smoke detectors, and fire extinguishers

Provision of the best tools and equipment available for doing our jobs

All of these rewards are made possible through your efforts to work safely and efficiently.

To update you on the NOPB's financial results for the first quarter of 2007, through the month of March, the NOPB has generated \$5,149,806 in Operating Revenue and expended \$3,430,890 in Operating Expenses, resulting in a net profit of \$1,718,916. Through leases of Public Belt properties and income earned on investments, the Railroad made an additional \$430,375. This gives us \$2,149,291 in Excess Revenues over Expenses and an Operating Ratio of 67.4% for the first three months of 2007. If we continue on this course (and I expect that we will), our Excess Revenues over Expenses will amount to approximately \$6,720,000 for the entire year. Congratulations to all on a job well done.

As of the end of March 2007, the Machinists' and Carmen's safety records stand at five years and two years, respectively, without an FRA reportable injury. The Clerical forces have now logged over ten years injury-free. Keep up the SAFE WORK!

**ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT:**

*By: Tony Marinello, Jr.  
Dan Sponsel*

Your Track and Bridge Departments remain busy with our normal maintenance duties as well as our Capital Improvement Projects. I am pleased to report that the refurbishment of the Claiborne and Pauline Yards have been completed with the installation of steel tie switches and heavy rail. The Cotton Warehouse Yard was upgraded with 4,000 new grade ties. The Continuous Welded Rail laying project on our Mains continues. This project should be completed in early summer. Ray Lubrano, Roadmaster, has done an outstanding job implementing this very important project.

The Centennial Improvements Project at the Engine Terminal continues as planned. Mike Dumas, Bridge Supervisor, is providing excellent project coordination and administration in the daily challenges of this refurbishment. We appreciate everyone's cooperative attitude as we face each new opportunity.

In January the Bridge Department was trained in Industrial Rescue by Capital Safety. In February and March the entire Engineering Department received training in CPR and First Aid. We recognize the efforts of Dan Sponsel, Bridge Superintendent, for bringing the Maintenance of Way Department to the next level in Safety.

In March several employees participated in a two-day Leadership Training Seminar at the New Orleans Sheraton. We had a briefing following the seminar wherein each of the participants shared their concepts of the material presented. Participants included Raymond Jemison, Ernie Meisner, Jerry Miles, Don Schielder, Patrick Schielder, Harold Sims, Joe Spot, and Eric Stoulig.

The LDOTD Huey P. Long Bridge Widening Project continues with the Substructure and Railroad Modifications Segments underway. The Superstructure and Approach Segments are scheduled for bidding later in the year. We continue to work with Coco & Associates, Architects to develop Plans and Specifications for Public Belt's newly relocated Administration Building and appurtenances.

We continue to upgrade our machines for both departments. The new Speed Swing replacement is currently being fitted with the hi-rail gear and will be delivered in May. The new Bridge Department Gang Truck should be delivered at the end of April with three additional Engineering Department trucks to be delivered by the close of May.

Manuel Sims, Track Supervisor, advises that he will be retiring at the end of May this year after 37 years of dedicated service. Manuel's unselfish devotion to his career and coworkers have made him the special person that we have all come to appreciate and respect. We all wish him many years of health and happiness. Thanks and congratulations Manuel!

Leo Williams, Senior Trackman also advises that he plans to retire at the end of June this year. Leo will retire with 30 years of service in the Track Dept. Leo has been a source of inspiration, laughter, and good fellowship through the years as he steadfastly carried out his duties. Best wishes, Leo.

We also congratulate Ernie Meisner, former Tamper Machine Operator, who was promoted to the position of Track Supervisor. Ernie has 6 years of distinguished service with the Track Department. We wish Ernie many successful years in his new position.

**PERFECT ATTENDANCE—CONTINUES:**

Remember we told you the story about the Schielder boys, sons of Bridgeman Pat Schielder, who all graduated from high school with perfect attendance? The story continues:

Scott graduated December 9th from ITT Tech with an Associates' Degree, without missing a day. He will continue to earn his Bachelors' Degree. GREAT!

### **GOLF TOURNAMENT:**

Thanks to all who worked and played in the Fourth Annual Louisiana Cancer Research Consortium (LCRC) Golf Tournament on April 9, 2007 held at Chateau Estates Golf and Country Club.

Over one-hundred golfers participated in this year's tournament. The one day event raised fifty-thousand dollars for the LCRC bringing our four year fund-raising total for the LCRC to one hundred forty-five thousand dollars.

Thanks to the General Manager and the golf committee - Ronnie Richoux, Nancy Stoltz, and Louis Burns, for making this event a success.

### **NEW PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE:**

The Public Belt Railroad Commission has elected a new President Pro Tempore. Mr. Edward C. Bush was elected in March 2007 to a two-year term ending March 2009.



*Edward C. Bush, President Pro Tempore  
Public Belt Railroad Commission*

President Pro Tem. Bush has been a member of the Public Belt Railroad Commission since October 24, 2002, serving as an appointee of the Chamber of Commerce.

Former President Pro Tem. Paul Wegener will become Chairman of the Executive Committee and continue to assist the Commission in that capacity.

### **JAKE AWARD:**

General Manager, Jim Bridger, was advised that the Public Belt would be a recipient of the 2006 JAKE AWARD from the American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association.

To qualify for this prestigious award, an ASLRRRA member railroad must have a yearly FSI rate better than the industry average. Public Belt's success in promoting safety served as a model toward which all railroads must strive in order to achieve our goals of promoting the rail industry as the safest means of transportation.

### **NEW THINGS TO COME:**

There's something different every day around the Main Office and Engine Terminal Facility on Tchoupitoulas Street. The main office building has been renovated inside and out, and changes to the Roundhouse and parking area have given the facility new life!

Changes and renovations are scheduled for completion in the fall of 2007, in time for the Centennial Celebration in August 2008.

### **NEW HATS:**

A new light-weight hat, designed basically the same as the black winter hats previously sold, is now available for sale in the Purchasing Department for \$7.00 each. The hats have adjustable backs, so there is no need to know your size.

Please see Louis Burns or Mary Lacrouts to purchase your hat, either with cash or by payroll deduction.

An embroidery on the front shows NOPB 2001, with the words "NEW ORLEANS PUBLIC BELT" and on the back is an embroidered fleur de lis, worded, "Dedicated to our City."

### **NEW WEBSITE:**

Have you checked out the Public Belt's new website?

***[www.nopb.com](http://www.nopb.com)***

Special thanks to everyone who contributed information to the site, especially Jesse Weisman, Marketing Director for putting it all together.