

Biz NS

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good business



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BIG COMPANY, BIG HEART Thoroughbred Volunteers put a Face on NS



■ **Karen Dillich**, wife of **Carl Dillich**, NS manager intermodal budget and contracts, helps at a Thoroughbred Volunteer project.

Norfolk Southern employees spend workdays focused on safety, customer service, and daily performance goals – all part of what makes NS a successful FORTUNE 500 corporation.

Beyond office buildings, mechanical shops, and rail yards, however, thousands of NS employees in their free time are out in the community, sporting red, white, and blue Thoroughbred Volunteers T-shirts and doing good things. They paint homes for seniors, read to at-risk children, pack boxes for food banks, and clean up public spaces.

From senior executives who trade in suits and ties for work shirts and jeans to field employees who spend a day off working on a community project, these volunteers are the heart and soul of NS.





■ AT TOP: Norfolk's volunteer council organized volunteers for the Virginia Special Olympics games in November. Here, **Donna Talani**, assistant to vice president law, **Felishia Squires**, manager electronic records, and **Steve Young**, assistant pricing manager intermodal, shout encouragement to an athlete. In background at left is **Helen Hart**, general attorney and council co-chair.

■ ABOVE: **Marjorie Heard**, left, assistant manager revenue accounting customer service, and **Cassandra Crute**, accounting customer support, members of Atlanta's volunteer council, organized a supply drive last fall for a women and children's shelter. "A community is only as strong as the people who live in it," Crute says.

"I think the reason we have the Thoroughbred Volunteers is that there's this firm belief that we need to give back to the communities in which we live and work," said **Cindy Earhart**, vice president human resources and chair of the Thoroughbred Executive Volunteer Council. "You just know deep down that it's a good thing for us to do."

With community nonprofits hurting because of budget cuts in a tight economy, volunteers are needed more than ever, said **Helen Hart**, general attorney and co-chair of the Norfolk Thoroughbred Volunteer Council.

"Our communities have needs that can't be met absent volunteer services," Hart said. "So if we're not going to do it, who is?"

NS employees are in a position to help others, added **Trish Long**, manager market development ports and international, and an executive council member.

"We're all pretty lucky because we have jobs, and we work for a great company," Long said. "We have it better than a lot of people. Times are tough out there, so volunteering is our opportunity to give back."



■ LEFT: **Trish Long**, NS manager market development ports and international, cheers on a special athlete.

Heart and soul

On a Saturday and Sunday in early November, about two dozen Thoroughbred Volunteers gathered each day on a soccer field in Virginia Beach, Va., to help coach and cheer on athletes participating in Virginia's Special Olympics games.

"Way to go! Good job," shouted **Chris Luebbers**, group manager international marketing intermodal, as one of the special athletes, a boy of about 15, kicked a soccer ball into a net.

"This is a great activity for our volunteers," said Luebbers, Norfolk council co-chair. "It's not a big commitment of time, but it makes a difference in the lives of these athletes and their families. It doesn't take much to have a big impact."

In addition to the community, the company and employees benefit from participating, said NS volunteers at the event.

"I think it gives us soul," said **Steve Stasulis**, manager performance intermodal, as he watched co-workers trade "high fives" with the athletes. "Big companies have such a reputation for being greedy and uncaring that it's good for the public to see that we go out and do things like this in the community."

Bernadette Williams, claim agent litigation, brought her daughter Victouria along. Williams agreed to serve on Norfolk's council last year to get more involved in the community.

"I'm always so focused on my job that I wanted to branch out," Williams said. "You get to see another side of Norfolk Southern. Most of the time you see the business side, and now you see the heart. This is a good way to bring joy to someone else's life."

Mike Wheeler, vice president transportation, was accompanied by daughter Lindsay and wife, Dana. They began volunteering at Special Olympics three years ago, and their oldest daughter, Ashley, now is studying for a degree in special education.

"I'm trying to send a message that Norfolk Southern is a part of the community," Wheeler said, "and that giving back is very important."

Organizing the effort

NS adopted a companywide approach to support volunteerism in 2006, forming the Thoroughbred Volunteer Executive Council to oversee the effort. In the railroad's headquarters city, the need for a company program was driven home during the region's Family Volunteer Day, an annual event that draws corporate sponsors from across southeastern Virginia.

"We would have these huge community volunteer events, and 10 corporations would be there, but our company was not present," said **Katie Fletcher**, director NS Foundation and member of the executive volunteer council. "We had volunteers from NS there, but never in any organized manner. The Thoroughbred Volunteers is a way that employees can make a large, meaningful impact on behalf of the company in communities served by the railroad."

During the next two years, employees in Atlanta and Roanoke followed Norfolk by forming their own councils. In 2010, employees in Harrisburg, Pa., became the first at a field location to form one.



■ TOP LEFT: **Linda Briggs**, carman, and **Bobby Carlow**, mechanical supervisor and member of the Norfolk volunteer council, enjoy volunteering to help those in need.

■ TOP RIGHT: Roanoke Thoroughbred Volunteers help screen and sort food goods at Feeding America Southwest Virginia Food Bank. Pictured, from left, are **Allison Shaw**, daughter of **Alan Shaw**, NS marketing; **Sarah Lex**, wife of **Charles Lex**, taxation; and **Terrell Shaddix**, husband of **Judy Shaddix**, information technology.

■ FAR RIGHT: Nearly 70 NS employees, family members, and friends gathered on a Saturday in September to spruce up Chastain Park Conservancy as part of a communitywide Hands On Atlanta event. Pictured are NS accounting department employees **Shannon Falk**, **Matt Bass**, **Matt McDonald**, **Michelle Santagelo**, and Shannon's husband, **Todd**.

The results have been impressive. During events sponsored by the four volunteer councils in 2010, employees, family members, and friends of NS contributed more than 3,400 hours of service to more than 30 organizations, including the Special Olympics, the Atlanta Day Shelter for Women and Children, the Foodbank of Southeastern Virginia, Clean Valley Council, the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, and the Appalachian Trail Museum. That's more than a year and a half of 40-hour work weeks.

"Whatever each person gives, it all adds up," said **Linda Briggs**, a carman at Norfolk Terminal's 38th Street Car Shop who has been recognized by NS for her volunteer efforts. "It makes me feel good inside to help somebody else. With the company, it's vital to show the community that we're in there with them to give a helping hand. That helps us become greater and stronger."

Earhart said she hopes additional field locations will organize volunteer programs, noting that the executive council is available to support those efforts.

"We have expanded the Thoroughbred Volunteers beyond Norfolk because employees at those other locations asked for it," Earhart said. "Wherever employees feel the need and desire to start a volunteer council, we'd love to help them."

It's OK to do only one or two volunteer projects a year, she said, recognizing that organizing employees is a challenge at far-flung field locations. Harrisburg employees started with a project to help the Susquehanna Appalachian Trail Club clear brush and spread gravel on a parking lot at a state park along the popular hiking trail. Since then, they've organized drives for school supplies for needy children and canned goods for the Central Pennsylvania Foodbank.

"We wanted to get the momentum going and build on that," said **Adam Lemarr**, manager hub operations intermodal and co-chair of the Harrisburg council. NS' executive council offered valuable guidance, Lemarr said, adding that he appreciates NS' spirit of volunteerism.

"It means something to me to work for a company that supports doing good things in the communities we serve," he said.



Many ways to volunteer

In Atlanta, which has the largest program, the 14-member volunteer council organizes about one event a month, said **Stacia Minton**, assistant vice president Atlanta accounting operations. The council draws volunteers from a list of more than 400 employees who have participated or expressed interest in council projects.

"We've never struggled to get enough volunteers, which is good," Minton said.

To avoid burnout, each council member takes the lead in managing only one of the monthly activities, with a second member assisting. Participating on a volunteer council is a good way to develop leadership skills, and taking part in the various activities is an excellent way to network with other employees, including senior executives, Minton said. Employees in Norfolk, for instance, have packed food boxes with executive vice presidents **Mark Manion** and **Deb Butler** and picked up litter with CEO **Wick Moorman**, getting an opportunity they never would have had otherwise to interact with NS' top officers.

"We dress in our grubbiest clothes and get to see each other in a very different light," Earhart said. "There are no labels. We're just co-workers trying to do something good."

Because communities have different needs, the local councils choose their own volunteer projects within a framework of company guidelines. Atlanta's council, Minton said, tries to select projects that appeal to a range of volunteer interests, including outdoor environmental cleanups, indoor activities such as sorting food at a food bank, and hands-on events such as painting houses for senior citizens.

"A lot of our employees were asking for regularly occurring events they could do with a few co-workers on a Saturday morning. We've seen a nice revolving door of participants, from newly hired employees to 30-year veterans, so it's been really successful."

– Pat Rickard, manager
transportation training

During events sponsored by NS' four volunteer councils in 2010, employees, family members, and friends contributed more than 3,400 hours of service to more than 30 organizations – that's more than a year and a half of 40-hour work weeks.

Melissa Fennell, supervisor gondolas north, transportation, oversees the “Everybody Wins” initiative, a lunchtime reading program at an elementary school near NS’ Goode office building. She joined the Atlanta council in part to show appreciation for the financial support NS provided her to earn a master’s degree, which has advanced her career at the railroad.

“With NS doing that for me,” she said, “I figured I could help somebody else out, and the volunteer council was a good avenue for that.”

In Norfolk, the volunteer focus is on hunger, homelessness, education, and the environment, including projects that allow family involvement.

“I enjoy doing the family-based things because it’s a nice way for me to integrate my children into what I do at work,” said Long. “It’s a way to show them that it’s not just about going to work and getting a paycheck, but that there’s a responsibility on all levels.”

To expand volunteer opportunities, Norfolk’s council last year formed the Thoroughbred Crew, or “T-Crew,” to do hands-on projects, such as painting and landscaping.

“A lot of our employees were asking for regularly recurring events that they could do with a few co-workers on a Saturday morning,” said **Pat Rickard**, manager transportation training and co-chair of the Norfolk council. “We’ve seen a nice revolving door of participants, from newly hired employees to 30-year veterans, so it’s been really successful.”

Many agreement craft employees are drawn to “fix-it” projects, said **Bobby Carlow**, mechanical supervisor at the 38th Street Car Shop and a Norfolk council member. He is helping recruit more agreement volunteers, a council goal. Carlow first became involved with Thoroughbred Volunteers at a “Paint Your Heart Out” community event, helping to paint a house for an 80-year-old woman who lived near NS’ Portlock Yard.

“I saw the unity of all of us getting together for a common good,” Carlow said. “The homeowner was just so appreciative when we were done, and that has stayed with me.”

■ **RIGHT: Juan Cunningham**, assistant vice president human resources, and **Kimberly Harpster**, assistant manager SAP integration, pitch in with other Thoroughbred Volunteers during a Paint Your Heart Out event in 2011. The NS team painted the house of an elderly widow who was caring for a sister and son with medical problems.



NS volunteer program has Olympic heritage

Atlanta employees launched NS' first official volunteer program after the city was selected to host the 1996 Summer Olympic Games.

It takes a lot of people to stage the Olympics, and organizers of the Atlanta games created an Olympic-size network of volunteers. Help came from 16 large corporations, including NS, said **Rick Harris**, NS director corporate communications. To be selected as a volunteer, you had to demonstrate a record of community service.

Thus was born the first Thoroughbred Volunteers organization.

"The impetus for creating the program was to recruit volunteers for the Olympics," said Harris, who spearheaded the effort as then manager public relations in Atlanta. "The Thoroughbred Volunteers program recognized employees for their already generous community service, sponsored additional project opportunities, tracked their hours of service, and ultimately rewarded them by selection as official uniformed Olympic volunteers."

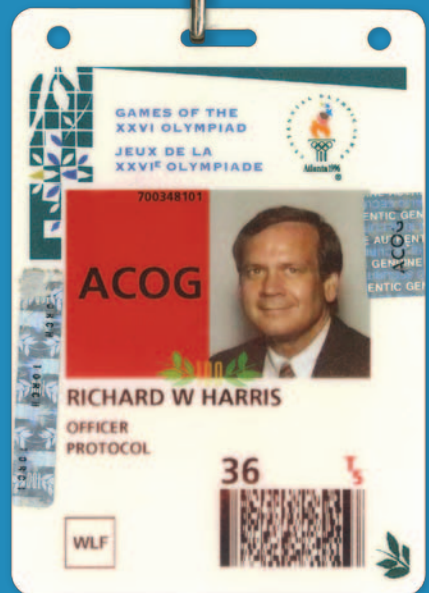
Leading up to the Olympics, the Thoroughbred Volunteers logged more than 15,500 hours of community service, representing 646 days or a year and nine months of volunteer service to more than 80 organizations, benefiting everything from AIDS research to Zoo Atlanta. At the Olympics, more than 200 railroad employees, family members, friends, and retirees served as ushers, ran errands, and kept track of score sheets, among other duties.

"It was a great time to be in Atlanta, and our volunteers had the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to experience Olympic history," Harris said.

During those games, the U.S. women's gymnastics team won its first gold medal, Carl Lewis won his fourth long jump gold medal at 35, and Michael Johnson set a world record while winning gold in the 200-meter race.

Atlanta's volunteer organization, launched in 1992, continued for a time beyond the Olympics. In 2006, senior officers in Norfolk decided to restart a company-sponsored program. Harris, as an inaugural member of the Corporate Volunteer Council, recommended resurrecting the Thoroughbred Volunteers name. The organization today uses the same logo created for the Atlanta group, designed by **Frank Wright**, manager of design and creative, corporate communications.

"Our dream in Atlanta was that Norfolk Southern some day would establish an official companywide volunteer program," Harris said. "Today, people are serving in corporate volunteer leadership roles who were part of that initial Atlanta legacy program. That, and the NS volunteer program's expansion, speaks well of the commitment our employees always have had for giving back to their communities."



■ ABOVE: This is the Olympic volunteer security badge worn by **Rick Harris**, director corporate communications. ACOG stands for Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games.



Leaving a lasting impression

Harrisburg volunteers last year constructed and installed a wooden kiosk outside the Appalachian Trail Museum, located 30 minutes from the new Crescent Corridor intermodal facility at Greencastle. Along with trail updates, the kiosk will highlight safety issues and information about NS for the museum's more than 8,000 annual visitors.

"It's a good way to keep the company's name out in the community," said Lemarr. "We stress safety, and now we are able to emphasize safety to museum visitors and hikers along the trail."

Roanoke employees also enjoy activities that involve hammers and power saws. Since forming, the volunteer council has supported projects to build a deck patio for a local zoo, fish ponds and a pergola for an elementary school, and a ramp for a child care center.

"It's creating something and being able to show your family you had a part of that," said **Jamie Helmer**, manager process improvement and co-chair of the Roanoke council.

Last year, Roanoke volunteers teamed up with the Clean Valley Council to pick up litter along the Roanoke River near NS tracks. Once a month, about 10 NS information technology employees help serve lunch at a homeless shelter two blocks from NS' office in downtown Roanoke. The council also collects toys for children and youth at the shelter.

It's rewarding to work with a program that has such a large presence in the community, said **Judy Shaddix**, NS senior technology engineer. "I especially like being able to give them a smile when they wouldn't have one."

John Turbyfill, NS director information systems development, helped start Roanoke's volunteer program. Employees in Roanoke, he said, appreciate the company's willingness to support the communities it serves.

"Norfolk Southern is a company that cares," Turbyfill said. "It's a good feeling to know the company is behind you when you want to do something that helps make our communities better places to live." ■ BizNS

"Norfolk Southern is a company that cares. It's a good feeling to know the company is behind you when you want to do something that helps make our communities better places to live."

— John Turbyfill, NS director information systems development

■ **RIGHT:** Members of the Harrisburg volunteer council built this visitor kiosk for the Appalachian Trail Museum.

Donald Hoffman, buildings and bridges mechanic, Enola, constructed the component parts using blueprints from the museum.

■ **BELOW:** Harrisburg volunteer **Keith Carney**, carman, Enola Car Shop, helps prepare the site for installing a kiosk at the Appalachian Trail Museum.





Volunteering boosts corporate sustainability

Employees who volunteer in their communities are advancing Norfolk Southern's sustainability program, says **Megan Garry**, manager corporate sustainability.

The company's sustainability goals are reducing environmental impacts, ensuring long-term economic success, and supporting communities where NS employees live and work. Through the company's Thoroughbred Volunteers, employees can contribute to all three, Garry said.

"Volunteerism is good for business because it creates opportunities for personal and professional development and connects employees with their co-workers and communities, which can lead to improved retention," she said. "It's also good for the company's reputation. The company connects with society through its employees, and when employees volunteer in the community, they're really ambassadors for NS."

Many activities supported by the company's volunteer program benefit the environment and help strengthen communities, she said.

Since 2008, NS has published an annual report outlining the railroad's accomplishments in sustainability. Employee volunteerism factors into the company's accounting of its social responsibility initiatives and can affect how investor groups and others that evaluate NS' sustainability program score the company's efforts.

For her part, Garry has volunteered with co-workers to help at the Special Olympics games, pick up litter on Clean the Bay Day, and read to at-risk children as part of a literacy program supported by the Thoroughbred Volunteers.

"Employees at NS are active, engaged, and team-oriented, qualities that are well-suited for volunteer work," Garry said. "There are so many people out there who need help. If we all find our niche for volunteering – something we can stick with and really enjoy – it will enrich our lives as well as our communities."



■ TOP: Norfolk volunteers bagged tons of debris on Clean the Bay Day in 2011, an effort to clean up the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries.

■ ABOVE: **Megan Garry**, manager corporate sustainability, pitched in on Clean the Bay Day.



NS Foundation Fills community needs

As director of the Norfolk Southern Foundation, **Katie Fletcher** hears often from leaders of nonprofit groups thanking her for the railroad's charitable giving.

For employees unaware of the impact the foundation has in communities served by NS, consider these two examples:

"Wick wants us to be the best community partner in every aspect, from business, to volunteerism, to giving. We are making a commitment to our communities."

– **Katie Fletcher**, director
NS Foundation, on CEO Wick Moorman

■ From 2009 through 2011, the foundation gave \$122,500 to ForKids, a nonprofit in Norfolk that assists homeless families and children.

"In these last three years, when the recession really took hold, the NS Foundation has made an extraordinary difference," said **Thaler McCormick**, ForKids' CEO. "Norfolk Southern's gift allows us to do what's so very needed right now, which is to provide essential services to families. It goes to provide for our after-school programs, to shelter families, for mental health services, and for all the wide variety of things we do to break the cycle of homelessness and poverty for the families we help."

■ From 2010 through 2011, the foundation gave The Foodbank of Southeastern Virginia \$132,500 to purchase food and other supplies and to make needed building improvements.

"Norfolk Southern sets the example for other corporations, from your top management on down, in the effort to eliminate hunger in our community," said **Marianne Smith Vargas**, chief philanthropy officer for the food bank, which serves 325 agencies, including food pantries, food kitchens, and women's shelters. "We would be in a world of hurt if Norfolk Southern picked up and left."

Receiving such feedback makes Fletcher proud to work for NS.

"It's really meaningful to get calls and letters and know that we're touching lives in this manner," Fletcher said. "I truly feel it's a privilege to do this job."

■ ABOVE: **Katie Fletcher**, director NS Foundation, sorts through a stack of grant applications at her desk.

A time of need

Since NS formed the foundation in 1983, it has donated nearly \$117 million to charitable organizations. Almost a quarter of that, \$26.5 million, has been given during the past five years.

In recent years, NS through the foundation has distributed around \$6 million annually across the railroad's 22-state system. In response to a sharp rise in requests, NS has increased the foundation's budget to \$7 million for 2012.

"We try to be a good corporate citizen, and I think the foundation plays an essential role in that in all of the communities we serve," said **Jim Hixon**, executive vice president law and corporate relations. "Our foundation giving has always been an important part of NS and will continue to be."

Hixon heads the foundation as its appointed executive officer. The foundation's board of trustees includes CEO **Wick Moorman**, his executive vice president team, and Fletcher.

Since its creation, the foundation's core giving has centered on the arts and culture, education, and community nonprofits. Since Moorman became CEO in 2005, and with the economic downturn in 2008,

the foundation has focused more attention on health and human services needs, such as food banks, homeless shelters, and free medical clinics, stepping up funding as the economy slumped.

■ **LEFT: William Tyson**, systems analyst human resources, helps package cereal during a Thoroughbred Volunteers event at the Foodbank of Southeastern Virginia.

■ In 2011, the NS Foundation and employees gave \$123,602 and 831 pounds of food to the Foodbank of Southeastern Virginia, enough to provide for 375,201 meals.



"We get thousands of requests, and obviously, we can't fund most of them," Fletcher said. "We're doing the best we can with what we have and are trying to make the biggest impact possible."

In another shift that reflects Moorman's influence, the foundation has increased contributions to organizations working to preserve the environment, which dovetails with NS' efforts in sustainability.

"We're the environmentally preferred mode of transportation – we're more fuel efficient and emit fewer greenhouse gases – so I think this is a natural area for us," Hixon said. "The foundation's activities do fold into our corporate sustainability score, but we were moving into the environmental area even before we started keeping sustainability scores. Wick and his team are very interested in helping out environmental causes and in helping with human services."

Even with the shift, education and the arts organizations will continue to receive a significant share of foundation funding, Hixon said, because they enrich the communities where NS employees live and work.

Stretching dollars

A key foundation goal is to leverage the contributions of others, be they NS employees, government grants, or charitable giving organizations. As one example, 25 percent of the foundation's annual budget is allocated to a matching gift program that matches employee donations of at least \$50 and up to \$35,000 to eligible nonprofits and up to \$25,000 for retiree donations – around \$1.5 million annually in recent years.



■ CEO **Wick Moorman** was campaign chairman for the United Way of South Hampton Roads' 2011 fund-raising drive. He is pictured here in a photo used to promote the campaign.



Another 25 percent of the budget goes to United Way agencies, which assist many nonprofits that provide human services. Currently, about 80 United Way organizations receive foundation grants, with the largest going to where NS has the most employees – Norfolk, Atlanta, and Roanoke.

The remaining 50 percent of the budget is for grants to organizations based on the foundation's four funding priorities: arts and culture, education, health and human services, and the environment.

To ensure that NS reaches across its network, the foundation has provided \$12,000 annually to each operating division, with plans to increase that to \$15,000 in 2012. Many of those division grants, ranging from \$500 to \$3,000, go to local police, fire, and emergency medical departments that work with NS to plan for disasters or accidents such as derailments.

"These are small grants, but they're meaningful because most of these organizations are publicly funded and don't get any outside support," Fletcher said.

Doubling the benefit

Some organizations receiving foundation grants also benefit from NS' employee volunteer efforts. In Norfolk, the Thoroughbred Volunteers sort and package food at the Foodbank of Southeastern Virginia and help out at ForKids.

"It's wonderful when companies provide funding and volunteerism, because volunteerism just stretches our resources," McCormick said. "Without the help of community volunteers, we simply could not get done some of what we need to do."

Dozens of Thoroughbred Volunteers pick up debris in support of Clean the Bay Day, an annual environmental event sponsored by the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, which now receives foundation grants.

The foundation has begun providing support to mitigate the impact of railroad operations on the environment. One grant to the American Chestnut Foundation helped fund a project to reforest abandoned coal mines in West Virginia, Kentucky, and Pennsylvania.

"We want the foundation to reflect our core business values," Fletcher said. "We want people to see that what we're doing in our communities is reflective of what our executives are saying, what our employees are saying, and what we're saying as a foundation. Wick wants us to be the best community partner in every aspect, from business, to volunteerism, to giving. We are making a commitment to our communities." ■ BizNS



"Norfolk Southern's gift allows us to do what's so very needed right now, which is to provide essential services to break the cycle of homelessness and poverty for the families we help."

– **Thaler McCormick**,
ForKids' CEO



PEERS HELPING PEERS

NS is stepping up awareness to prevent drug, alcohol abuse

A Norfolk Southern conductor used to show up for work with hangovers so bad that he now thanks God he never got himself or somebody else injured – or worse. He and other employees who have overcome alcohol or drug problems say they would not be working for NS today if others had not stepped in to help.

That's a message NS is highlighting in an initiative to improve safety and service in the workplace and promote healthier lifestyles.

The effort will raise visibility of NS' commitment to a drug- and alcohol-free workplace and on ways that employees, co-workers, and families can better use the company's Drug and Alcohol Rehabilitation Services program, or DARS. The voluntary DARS program, with counselors in all of NS' operating divisions, assists employees and families who are struggling with a drinking or drug problem.

The awareness initiative has a twofold purpose: to educate employees about the dangers of substance abuse on and off the job and to provide employees with a clear and safe path to seek help.

In particular, employees will be encouraged to look out for co-workers who show signs of abusing alcohol or drugs, a "peer-to-peer" approach similar to NS' push for employees to promote safe workplace behaviors. It complements the well-known safety adage to be your brother's and sister's keeper.

"If somebody is abusing drugs or alcohol, it affects us all," said **Jack Scott**, manager DARS. "We're trying to add another layer of awareness to the safety net by asking all of our workers to look out for this. The bottom line is so people can get help."

"This is not about bad people – it's about wellness and addressing unhealthy behaviors. We'd like to create a culture where if you see a co-worker declining, you won't hesitate to speak up about it."

– Barbara Taylor,

NS manager substance abuse testing

■ ABOVE AND NEXT PAGE: Pictured are the cover and a photo used for a DARS brochure on how to help a co-worker showing signs of drug or alcohol abuse.

The added focus on health offers another avenue to reach employees, said **Barbara Taylor**, NS manager substance abuse testing.

“Just like with our WellINS program, people make better choices when they’re presented good information,” Taylor said. “This is not about bad people, or trying to catch people who’ve done something wrong – it’s about wellness and addressing unhealthy behaviors. We’d like to create a culture where if you see a co-worker declining, you won’t hesitate to speak up about it.”

Commitment to safety, service, and employees

The company’s heightened emphasis on DARS grew out of a two-year review of drug and alcohol peer-prevention strategies used by other Class 1 railroads. The review was launched at the request of the Federal Railroad Administration, which routinely audits railroad alcohol and drug abuse prevention programs.

In a letter to the FRA, **Mark Manion**, executive vice president and chief operating officer, said the review provided “a very helpful opportunity to reflect on how we might improve safety and help our employees prevent drug and alcohol abuse and assist those who may abuse drugs or alcohol.

“NS has committed to refreshing our educational efforts and we will continue to sustain a culture supportive of identifying and helping troubled co-workers,” Manion said.

In one step, NS’ Safety and Environmental Department has set aside space on safety bulletin boards to post messages about the importance of a workplace free of drugs and alcohol.



“This is an issue that can affect everybody’s safety,” said **Barry Wells**, NS system director safety. “It’s in everybody’s best interest to be proactive rather than wait until it’s too late and something bad happens.”

The federal government requires railroads to randomly test certain operations employees, including train and engine crews, for alcohol and drugs while on the job, and it mandates testing after major train accidents and certain rules violations. Typically, fewer than 1 percent of NS employees tested have positive results, but on one day last October, eight employees tested positive, including five for alcohol.

For employees hesitant to seek help from DARS or to refer a co-worker prior to a rule violation, consider this: Coming to work impaired is a violation of NS’ Rule G and is grounds for dismissal.

“People are better off volunteering to seek help than they are getting caught for a Rule G violation,” said **Dr. Ray Prible**, NS’ medical director. “We’re trying to get people to step up and take ownership of their behavior before something happens. If they come forward voluntarily, they can receive assistance, and they will not be jeopardizing their jobs.”

In 2010, more than 800 employees were actively supported by DARS, including 208 new referrals. In addition to helping employees, DARS also benefits the company: For every worker retained through DARS, NS saves a minimum of \$50,000 in hiring and training costs.

Turning lives around

“Sherry” (real names not used), who works in transportation, said her career has blossomed since a family intervention nearly five years ago led her to DARS. With DARS guidance, she completed a drug rehabilitation program and learned a new way of living. The former yard operations clerk, who overcame a methamphetamine addiction, is now a manager.

“With our company, and especially in my group, they like to see you better yourself,” she said. “If you’ve gone through a struggle and they see that you’ve turned yourself around, I think that sticks out.”

As her drug addiction took hold, she missed days of work, her weight dropped to 95 pounds, and she constantly fought with family members. Finally, her father, also an NS employee, contacted a DARS counselor for help.

“I wouldn’t be here today if he hadn’t made that call,” Sherry said. “I didn’t know much of anything about DARS, and I would never have asked for help even if I had. It’s a hard thing to admit that you have a problem.”

Union rep points the way

“Tom,” who works in mechanical, began struggling with alcohol and drugs after a divorce six years ago. His job performance fell off, and he began missing work. Co-workers knew something was wrong, he said, and eventually it got so bad that Tom recognized he needed help.

“I was fearful of going to the company and telling them I had a problem, because I was terrified of losing my job,” he said. Tom confided in his union representative, who assured him that going to DARS was the right thing to do.

“It came down to the point where I put my trust in NS and the DARS program,” he said. “It has paid off substantially.”

Since getting his life back on track, Tom has advanced his career through NS’ Operations Supervisor Training program.

“NS cares about you, and will help you,” he said, “but you’ve got to take the first step.”

Train wreck waiting to happen

In 2004, “Dan,” an NS conductor, had a drinking problem that everybody in his family except him recognized. He was missing work and coming in with hangovers, his blood pressure was high, and he was barely eating.

Help came when his father approached one of Dan’s co-workers, a trainmaster who attended their church. The trainmaster suggested that the family contact a DARS counselor. After seven years of sobriety, Dan now recognizes he was “a train wreck waiting to happen.

“Thank God I didn’t hurt myself or someone else,” he said. “I’m grateful for what DARS has done for me. I needed fixing, and DARS gave me a road map to get back on track.” ■ BizNS



SIGNS THAT YOU OR A CO-WORKER MIGHT HAVE DRUG, ALCOHOL PROBLEM

- Increased absences from work
- Declines in health or quality of life
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- Abusive arguments at home
- Driving or working under the influence
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For more information on DARS, including a 20-question “Is DARS for you?” quiz, go to www.nscorp.com, click Employees tab, and click DARS. Reach the DARS manager at 1-800-552-2306, ext. 629-2447.



New grain facility puts NS in the ‘loop’

For Norfolk Southern's agriculture products group, the new CGB Enterprises Inc. facility is one beautiful sight. **Steven Blinn**, NS' director sales Chicago, describes it as the "Taj Mahal" of grain loading facilities.

Opened during the fall harvest season near Dwight, Ill., the operation has added a new dimension to NS' unit train business. It is the first new grain and soybean loading facility constructed on NS' network since 1998, and it features a loop track – a design that allows the continuous loading of cars as they pass beside huge storage bins. Only one other grain loading facility on NS' system has a loop track.

The CGB facility can load a train in under eight hours, about half the time it typically takes at a traditional grain loading facility, where arriving rail cars are pulled off the train in segments for loading.

CGB's decision to locate the plant on NS demonstrates the importance of strong customer support and interdepartmental teamwork, said **Pat Simonic**, NS director marketing agriculture products. Employees from industrial development, agriculture marketing, and transportation worked together to land the facility, helping to expand NS' market reach in northern Illinois.

"It represents a significant investment on NS' network," Simonic said. "It supports our big unit train program and gives us corn and bean origination at a point where we didn't have any in the past. That spreads our network out a little more, improving our efficiency and competitive advantage."





■ LEFT AND BELOW: A loop track constructed at the new CGB Enterprises grain facility near Dwight, Ill., allows for the continuous loading of NS grain trains. Grain is dumped in rail cars as they pass beside storage elevators, eliminating the need to break the train into smaller segments for loading.



Another option for grain sourcing

Located about 80 miles southwest of Chicago, the facility is on NS' Kankakee line, a secondary east-west line that runs between Hennepin, Ill., and Wheatfield, Ind. It is on the western edge of the Corn Belt, giving NS another source for high-quality corn and soybeans, said **Sandy Santangelo**, NS senior account manager who serves the CGB plant.

CGB buys from local farmers and has the product trucked to the facility, which currently has four grain bins with total storage capacity of 2.2 million bushels.

"It strengthens our grain elevator network and gives us additional flexibility for supplying NS markets," Santangelo said.

Presently, NS loads unit trains at 44 grain facilities across the system and delivers the product to livestock feed mills, soybean-processing plants, and corn-processing plants across the southeastern U.S.

NS serves the CGB facility with 75-car unit trains, including the use of NS super jumbo grain cars that each can haul 3,900 bushels of corn or soybeans.

The plant was strategically located to take advantage of an NS unit train interchange facility in Streator, Ill., enabling the company to collaborate with western railroad BNSF on 110-car unit trains that will reach into the Texas feed market.

Time is money

Charlie Threlkeld, general manager transportation for Louisiana-based CGB, said NS' pricing strategy and customer service factored into the company's location decision.

"Our view of NS is that it has always been steady and predictable in pricing as it relates to grain and other markets, which means a lot," Threlkeld said.

"NS' service also has always been very good. That's what led us to NS in that area."

Threlkeld said the loop track design was developed after consulting with NS industrial development and sales and marketing employees.

"The message they brought to us is that time is money and that we want to do everything as quickly as we can to get the train in and get the train out," he said. "We tried to design something that NS sees as working for the future."

Jesse Moose, NS industrial development manager, said NS had developed a strong relationship working with CGB at other locations, including a large plant in Naples, Ill., where NS handles grain, fertilizers, and pig iron.

"We worked with them from the beginning to plan the facility," said Moose. "They came right to us and we began working in lock step. This is an example of those long-term partnerships paying off."

“The message Norfolk Southern brought to us is that time is money. We tried to design something that NS sees as working for the future.”

– **Charlie Threlkeld**, general manager transportation for CGB Enterprises



The biggest challenge, Moose said, was finding a site large enough to accommodate a loop track. Most grain loading facilities in the more developed northeastern market don't have the space or topography to support a loop design. NS' industrial development employees scouted a dozen potential sites and drew up engineering plans for three of them, Moose said, outlining how the facility would be integrated into NS' system.

Brad Graham, NS trainmaster, Dearborn Division, worked with CGB on the transportation side. He and Santangelo invited the plant manager on a tour of NS' Kankakee yard to show him how rail service to the CGB plant would work.

Graham said CGB was the first to stake out a grain facility on the Kankakee line, but since then another facility, operated by Prairie Central Co-Op, has opened on the line in Sunbury, Ill.

“The CGB facility was a very welcomed development in our district,” Graham said. “The loop track design makes it much easier for us in transportation to operate with because we don't have to worry about separating the train. We pull it into the loop and hand it off. They load it up and hand it back, and we're on our way.”

■ BizNS



■ TOP LEFT: **Brad Graham**, left, trainmaster Kankakee District, and **Sandy Santangelo**, right, senior account manager, present a plaque to **Calvin Koeller**, manager of CGB's new grain loading facility, welcoming the plant to NS' grain network. Good customer relations played a key role in CGB locating the plant on NS.

■ ABOVE: An NS grain unit train is loaded at the CGB Dwight facility

At Lamberts Point, brothers carry on a family tradition



As a child visiting his father at the Lamberts Point coal pier, **Jim Welch** watched in fascination as dozens of yard clerks recorded the comings and goings of rail cars.

"You would see all those clerks go out with their switch lists," he said. "They were like ants crawling everywhere. It was amazing."

Some 40 years later, Welch remains fascinated by the operations. Only now, he's an active participant, as senior general foreman car-locomotive.

Along with his brother, **Dan Welch**, senior pier master, he's carrying on a family legacy. Their father, **Bob Welch**, began his railroad career with the Virginian Railroad in 1955 after serving in the military during the Korean War. Bob retired as senior pier master at Lamberts Point – the job Dan now holds – in 1987.

"I came out of the service, and I needed a job," Bob recalled. He briefly worked in purchasing, where he met his wife, **Jeanne Daniel Welch**, a clerk in the department. "I worked there long enough to meet my wife, and then I transferred to the coal piers. I didn't like sitting in an office."

Bob spent 20 of his 35 years at NS predecessor railroads working the night shift, including Norfolk & Western. "We would say N&W stood for nights and weekends," Dan said. In the 1980s, when an employee buyout was offered following the merger of N&W and Southern Railway, Bob took early retirement – a decision he soon regretted. "I was retired for two and a half years and didn't like it," he said. "I like to stay busy."

Returning to the coal piers, Bob worked as a manager for Capes Shipping and then joined T. Parker Host in 2001 as coal manager. Now 80, and with 56 years on the Norfolk waterfront, he relishes his informal title of "godfather of coal."

"If there's some historical question about coal and the pier industry, he's on the short list of people to call," son Dan said.

■ At NS' Lamberts Point coal pier, brothers **Jim Welch**, left, and **Dan Welch**, right, flank their father **Bob Welch**, at 80 the family patriarch and the unofficial "godfather" of coal.



Back in the day

The Welch brothers' ties to railroading start with their maternal grandfather, Joseph A. Daniel. He hired on with the Virginian Railroad in 1929 as a purchasing clerk. He eventually became chief clerk at the railroad's freight station in Norfolk before dying of a heart attack while on the job. His daughter, Jeanne, joined the Virginian in 1946, remaining until a merger with N&W in 1959 moved her job to Roanoke. "She had to leave the railroad to stay with my dad," Jim said. "His job was here."

Growing up, Dan and Jim saw that railroading provided a stable career with a good paycheck. "We had that example of how to provide for your family for a couple of generations," Dan said.

Ten days after his 18th birthday, in September 1976, Dan signed on as a laborer at NS' 38th Street Car Shop. Moving up the ladder, he became a gang leader, was promoted to management in January 1990, and later ran the Lamberts Point locomotive shop.

Choosing the railroad over college, Jim began his NS career as a track laborer on a muggy August day in 1978. The job entailed using pick axes, claw bars, and hammers on a rail gang that worked local derailments.

"I barely weighed 100 pounds and was trying to handle a claw bar that weighed 62 pounds," Jim recalled. "The foreman told me I wouldn't make it." His low expectations made Jim more determined to prove himself. "If you told me I couldn't make it, I knew I was going to make it."

Most workers on the gang were older men who had spent careers on the railroad. "I got to see some crazy stuff," Jim said. One morning, he arrived at a work site to find a dog tied to a tree. His co-workers told Jim they had found the animal and planned to eat it. Not sure what to make of that, Jim hid the dog in his car. "I ended up keeping that dog for 15 years," he said, laughing.

"NS provides opportunities for you to be anything you want to be. If you work hard and handle yourself with integrity, you have the opportunity."

– **Jim Welch**, senior
general foreman car-locomotive



Jim worked with the rail gang for only a few months. In January 1979, he became a student carman at the 38th Street shop, where he spent the next 13 years. "I was proud to be a carman and had no intention to be a supervisor," he said. Despite his reluctance, various people encouraged Jim to move into a supervisory role.

"NS provides opportunities for you to be anything you want to be," he noted. "If you work hard and handle yourself with integrity, you have the opportunity." He became a gang leader for the department in 1984 and was promoted to management in 1990.

Big changes

An employee buyout offer in 2003 led to major job changes for both brothers. “All three pier masters at Lamberts Point took a severance package at once,” Dan said. “The company wanted to use managers from within to replace them and deemed the mechanical department top heavy with managers.”

Dan was asked to transfer from the mechanical department to become a pier master, while Jim moved to the Norfolk locomotive shop. “I’d never even set foot on a locomotive,” Jim said. “I had no idea of what I was getting into.”

That’s why he is especially grateful for the 35-member crew who showed him the ropes. “They were some of the finest railroaders who ever worked for NS,” he said. “They took me under their wing and taught me to run a locomotive. To this day, there’s a definite bond. That means a lot to me.”

Jim had settled into running the locomotive shop when his boss, **Jeff Yates**, superintendent Norfolk Terminal, told him he was the best candidate for senior general foreman. “I have a lot of respect for Jeff Yates,” Jim said. “He asked me to take the job, so that’s what I did.”

Today, Jim supervises 239 employees from Norfolk to Crewe, Va. “Being responsible for them and trying to do everything I can to ensure they go home every day to their families safe and sound is on my mind 24/7,” he said.

Both brothers believe safety is NS’ biggest challenge. When he began, Dan said supervisors took the lead on safety. Now, all employees are expected to be responsible for safety and for each other.

“Our challenge is to instill that culture into new employees,” he said.

It’s a philosophy Dan constantly conveys as he supervises operations at Pier 6. Dan became senior pier master when his father’s successor retired in 2006. He oversees clerical and transportation employees at Lamberts Point, including about 100 who work at the pier.

Dan enjoys interacting with NS customers, including his father. As coal manager at T Parker Host, Bob tracks coal movements via the railroad and shipping lanes for his firm’s customers. While he deals mainly with NS’ coal business group in Roanoke, Bob sometimes contacts Dan to ensure deliveries are not delayed.

“If there’s a problem, I’m the one he’s going to call to find out what the problem is and how we’re going to solve it – not as a father, but as a customer,” Dan said.

While Bob has no plans for a second retirement, his sons are beginning to think about life after NS. Dan has toyed with the idea of going to work for his wife’s landscaping business when he turns 60. Jim, who recently became a father for the first time, noted that when he turns 60, he will have spent 42 years working on the railroad.

“My daughter will be 9 years old,” he said. “My joke is I’m going to be senior general foreman of the PTA.” ■ BizNS

■ FAR LEFT: **Jim Welch**, senior general foreman car-locomotive, talks to NS mechanical employees at Lamberts Point.

■ LEFT: **Dan Welch**, senior pier master, coordinates coal operations at NS’ Lamberts Point coal pier.





■ After joining a Weight Watchers program sponsored by NS, **Chuck Deanes**, first rate carpenter-welder, and **Frank Wall**, supervisor bridges and buildings, lost a combined 90 pounds, equivalent in weight to the four power tools they display here.

NS 'losers' are winning with healthier choices

At Norfolk Southern, more employees are discovering that being a "loser" is a good thing. Just ask the operations guys over at Lamberts Point.

Since forming a Weight Watchers At Work group at NS' coal transload facility in October, the 28 male employees who signed up collectively had shed more than 300 pounds by late December.

Workers there were eager to enroll in the 17-week program after seeing the effect on **Chuck Deanes**, first rate carpenter-welder, bridges and buildings, and **Frank Wall**, supervisor bridges and buildings. Earlier in the year, the two completed the Weight Watchers program at NS' Norfolk headquarters – Wall lost about 50 pounds and Deanes dropped 40 pounds.

As co-workers noticed their transformations, Deanes and Wall suggested bringing the program to Lamberts Point. **Ray Jones**, assistant division manager mechanical operations, Virginia Division, readily agreed to offer it during lunch break. He was one of the first to register.

Lamberts Point is the first NS field facility to host the Weight Watchers program.

"It's for everybody's health," Jones said, who has lost more than 10 pounds himself. "When people lose weight, they feel better about themselves. If they talk about how they're doing, they get other employees excited, and maybe they'll join the next go around."

The Lamberts Point group gathers on Tuesdays at noon to celebrate weight loss victories and to exchange tips on making smart food choices and becoming more active. The men now rev up their energy by snacking on grapes, bananas, yogurt, or popcorn instead of potato chips and candy bars.

"This is the easiest diet I've ever been on," Deanes told co-workers at a Weight Watchers meeting in November. "Just try to work it. It's going to work for you."

Jones has found that to be true.

"Before, I starved myself on diets and would go back to eating like I did," he said. "With Weight Watchers, you can continue eating things you like to eat. They just teach you to eat it in smaller portions."

Deanes and Wall also are among approximately 1,700 NS employees who have signed up for Virgin Health Miles, a Web-based health management program NS introduced in 2011 to encourage walking and other activity.

"I don't want to work here 35 years, retire, and die because I'm overweight," Wall said.

The collective support provided by Weight Watchers groups helps employees be more successful, said **Mary Pitman**, NS manager health promotions.

"If there were not some level of camaraderie at Lamberts Point, it wouldn't have happened," she said. "They've got the right mindset and have really embraced wellness." ■ BizNS



■ ABOVE: **Freddie James**, drummer, counts down the start of a song during the recording of “Winning Streak.”



■ RIGHT: **Rex Blancett**, left, lead guitarist and vocalist, and **Mark Crawford**, bassist, lay down rhythm tracks in the studio.

In the studio with the Lawmen

Left foot tapping, head nodding in time, **Rex Blancett** seemed satisfied. The lead guitarist and vocalist for Norfolk Southern’s Lawmen band had just cranked out a searing guitar solo, and he sat in front of a large recording console listening to the playback.

“I believe you’ve got a song,” said **Scott Barnett**, the studio engineer.

Blancett nodded approval. “I think that’ll work.”

“Good job!” chimed in **Stan West**, the Lawmen’s manager. “That leaves us two songs to go before we start the vocals. We’re good on the schedule. Let’s break for lunch.”

With that, Blancett and the four other Lawmen retired to the studio’s kitchen to make sandwiches, grabbing a bite there to save time and hold down recording costs.

It was the second day of a September recording session at Crossroads Studio outside Asheville, N.C., and the band was feeling good about how their new CD was coming together. Released in November, “Winning Streak” is the first of the Lawmen’s 11 albums to feature all original material. Previous albums recorded over the past 30 years or so were mostly renditions of traditional country, bluegrass, and gospel tunes.

“The band has created its own product here,” said West, who joined the Lawmen in 1987, playing bass guitar before becoming manager in 1994. “This CD really showcases the talent of our musicians.”

“The band has created its own product here. This CD really showcases the talent of our musicians.”

– **Stan West**, manager
the Lawmen



CD will make the rounds

As the railroad's good will ambassadors, the Lawmen play around 200 events a year across NS' system, including corporate gatherings at Brosnan Forest. Along the way, the band will give out thousands of copies of the new CD as mementos to customers, employees, friends, and guests of NS.

"We're always getting requests for the CDs. I bet we could get an award from the Country Music Association for the band that hands out the most," joked **Myron Smith**, the band's electric pedal steel guitarist.

Blancett wrote three of the CD's 13 songs, including the irony-tinged title track "Winning Streak," "Stone Cold Heart," and "Smooth (Southern 4501)," a rocking tune about a steam engine that's being restored for NS' 21st Century Steam program. ("I've never heard a train song like that before," West told the band during recording. "You're breaking new ground there.")

Most of the other songs were written by musician friends. One, "Learning to Love," was co-written by Tom Wopat, the musician-actor who starred in the 1980s TV series "The Dukes of Hazzard." Blancett, who once worked as guitarist for Wopat and "Dukes" co-star John Schneider, helped write the song but sold his rights to Wopat. The tender love ballad, sung by Blancett, sounds like a radio hit waiting to happen.

The song "Sweet, Sweet Lies," one of three tunes that Smith sings on the CD, was written by **Brenda Libby**, a musician Smith previously performed with at the Country Shindig in Osage Beach, Mo.

Band members spent about six months listening to demos before choosing the songs that seemed right for them.

"Every one of them we changed in some way or another," Smith said. "That's the creative part of being able to do your own thing."

Rock meets country

The CD reflects the Lawmen's shift toward a more rock-infused, Top 40 country sound, something that has evolved since Blancett joined the band in late 2010. During his career, Blancett has played in bands backing Percy Sledge (of "When a Man Loves a Woman" fame), The Drifters, Frank Sinatra, Garth Brooks, and Kathy Mattea.

In the studio, with headphones on, his black Fender Stratocaster cradled in tight, Blancett's fingers moved in a blur across the fretboard. On "This Old Car," a song by former NS trainmaster **Paul Giles**, he recorded a guitar lead in one take, while on others he made as many as a dozen passes before he was satisfied.

Bandmates kidded him about his hard-rock guitar flourishes, especially Smith, who once backed up Nashville stars such as Connie Smith and Grandpa Jones and whose pedal steel sound is authentic country-issue.

"It's like Merle Haggard meets Guns N' Roses," Smith ribbed Blancett during recording of "4501." "That steel saves it, and brings it right back to country."

Blancett got in some digs of his own, waving off one musical suggestion with an inside joke: "That's so '80s."

"Hey, that's when I did my best playing," shot back bassist **Mark Crawford**, who has a sly humor. Crawford played with pop and country crooner Billy Joe Royal in the mid-1990s and rubbed shoulders with the likes of Ray Stevens and Chet Atkins before joining the Lawmen in 2004.

Studio gems

The easy camaraderie in the studio flowed into the music making. Together, the band members worked through changes in chords or tempo, tried out different approaches, and added their own touches as the songs took shape during the recording.

■ The Lawmen, as pictured inside their new CD package, are, left to right: **Rex Blancett, Dale Henson, Myron Smith, Mark Crawford, and Freddie James.**

On “NS Boogie,” an instrumental written by **Dale Henson**, the Lawmen’s versatile keyboardist, banjo picker, and trumpet player, the band cut loose with a full-speed-ahead jam. Members decided on the spot to add a chorus in half time, creating a funky interlude.

“We had played a version of that song at the Forest and people seemed to like it, but we had never done the part in half time like that,” Henson said. “It’s exciting writing stuff and seeing what kind of creativity comes out.”

“Yeah, did you see the smoke coming off Dale’s fingers?” drummer **Freddie James** joked about Henson’s lightning fast piano.

James, charged with keeping the band in time, maintained the tempo using a digital “click track,” an important tool in the studio that clicks off beats per minute. He and the other band members monitored the clicks through headphones.

“You don’t want any fluctuation in the tempo at all,” he said. “When we play live, we can stray off tempo a bit and nobody would notice. On a recording, it would stick out. You have to be precise.”

Occasionally during recording, the musicians produced unexpected gems. “I never played it that way before,” Smith said, commenting on a catchy steel guitar riff he pulled off during the recording of “4501.” “It was a mistake.”

“Well, make some more mistakes,” Barnett said.

The studio engineer sat behind a digital computer-controlled recording console inside a dimly lit control room. He offered constant feedback as the musicians built the songs instrument by instrument.

“You don’t want it to get too busy, with too many notes,” he said as Blancett worked through a guitar part on “Winning Streak.”

Before Smith recorded the vocals on “Sweet, Sweet Lies,” Barnett told him, “Try a couple of passes just to get a little warmed up on it. Just relax and have fun with it.”

“Cool,” Smith said.

Singing can be nerve wracking in the studio. “It puts you on the spot – it’s like being under a microscope,” Barnett said.

James, who sings lead on “Just Because” and “This Old Car,” testifies to that.

The first time he sang in front of a live audience after joining the Lawmen in 1995, he said he almost fainted. Around the same time, the Lawmen went into the studio to record the album “Horsin’ Around,” and he was asked to sing lead on “The Chair,” a George Strait tune.

“I had never sung before, so I bought a voice lesson tape,” he said. “I was out in the car going over and over it. When I came into the studio, I did a few cuts and you could just hear the nervousness in my voice. The guys were trying to find ways to loosen me up, and finally somebody said, ‘Let’s just cut off the lights and let him sing in the dark.’ It was so dark I couldn’t see my hands, but it worked. The nervousness just left.”

This time around, after closing a sliding glass door and getting situated in a small booth for recording vocals for “Just Because,” James told Barnett: “The first one is to get the jitters out.”

“Just sing from your heart,” Barnett counseled.

That’s just what he did – and the lights stayed on.

■ BizNS

“It’s like Merle Haggard meets Guns N’ Roses.”

*– Myron Smith,
the Lawmen’s electric
pedal steel guitarist*





ON THE COVER:

Volunteerism is an important way that NS employees can contribute to the vitality of their communities. The Thoroughbred Volunteers, the company's formal volunteer program, enables employees to join together to make a difference.

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Who are they gonna call? 1-855-NOR-FOLK

Norfolk Southern's customer service and operations support offices field about 2,000 calls daily, ranging from questions about orders and delayed shipments to loud train whistles. To help callers from across NS' 22-state network connect with the right person, the railroad has introduced a new toll-free number, 1-855-NOR-FOLK.

The easy-to-remember number is going in telephone books, Internet listings, and advertising materials. Callers are greeted by a friendly female voice thanking them for calling "the railroad line that brings a world of transportation possibilities to customers and communities." They are offered selections for safety, security, and grade-crossing issues; customer service; specific departments; job seekers; and shareholder information.

"This gives people a way to contact us even if they have no idea where to start," said **Frank Brown**, assistant vice president corporate communications. "We've never had one number people could call to find out their options when contacting the company."

Corporate communications and information technology teamed up on the project, aiming to update and streamline print and online telephone directories and improve ease of doing business with NS. The number offers a single point of contact but does not replace existing toll-free numbers for specific NS departments.

Employees, Brown said, should use 1-855-NOR-FOLK in promotional materials as NS' main contact number when communicating with customers and suppliers. ■ BizNS

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