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## We are saddened by the passing of our last founding board member



By Mark Wegner, President

It is March 2011. Since the last newsletter, TCW has leased an additional 100 covered hopper cars to meet the carload demand, and we have leased 3 additional locomotives to cover the increased demand and also to alleviate our own fleet where two units have been out of service awaiting repairs that will take time.

This winter has been particularly challenging – the snow cover was the earliest in the season since 1991, and with the blizzard in early December and the heavy rain at the end of December has left operating the rail line and providing dependable service challenging. It would be fair to say that the stress levels of the train crews, the track maintenance crews, the locomotive maintenance crews and the operations people have been particularly high during this long winter. We have taken extra steps like hiring local contractors with dozers and front-end loaders to help clear out particularly troublesome areas where the snow has drifted (at considerable cost, but we need to be dependable).

We continue to have our discussions with Hennepin County with respect to our current route into the Twin Cities and hopefully will have a short-term solution soon and then work towards a long-term solution.

We were saddened by the passing of our last founding Board member, Doug Head, on February 2, 2011. It was a relatively sudden passing. We had just met two weeks prior to discuss current and future opportunities for the railroads.

Doug had a passion for looking into the future, and demanding that we focus on growing the communities we serve. He wasn't satisfied with ideas – he wanted well thought out action plans with specific goals and dates to accomplish the goals. We have his ideas embedded in our organization.

Having worked for TCW since it started in 1991, and having 19 1/2 years to report to our Board of Directors, I think Doug left me with two

primary ideals that are imbedded in me. The first ideal is that we are an ethical organization – we say what we can do, and do it. We do not make promises that we can't keep, we do not change the rules after an agreement is made, and we are up front and honest in all of our dealings. With the various companies I worked for prior to TCW, and the various companies we have done business with since 1991, I can tell you that this idea of ethical business practice is refreshing!

The other ideal Doug left embedded in our organization is the idea of careful planning. Since we have to maintain our track and infrastructure at our own expense, we have to be very focused on what the needs are, and what the revenues are to support the needs. Many times in the past 19 1/2 years needs have been presented, but they had to make financial sense otherwise they would not happen. This has led to financial discipline within our organization which has meant for our customers an on-going, healthy, well maintained railroad and to our employees the opportunity for long term employment.

These ideals have sprouted a third ideal, not one that Doug expressed, but rather one expressed by those of us privileged to having worked for Doug, and that ideal is one of loyalty. When you work for someone that cares about the employees and cares about the communities, and you think about it (especially compared to other companies), we really are fortunate to having this vision when this railroad was formed and this vision going forward.



We will miss Doug's insights and comments, but we also will remember them.

I am pleased that Martha, Doug's wife, has expressed her commitment to carry on the vision of our railroads' founders, and our commitment to our employees, our customers and our communities will not change. We are committed to grow the economy of south central Minnesota, and we look forward to being an integral part of that!

In the meantime, please think safe practices in your daily activities as we continue through this tough winter!



By Craig Glaeser  
Director of Marketing

# Winter weather has been challenging

**W**ith the winter we are having this year, I think everyone is ready for Spring! Record breaking snow falls and frigid temperatures has made it tough going. Daily tasks outside take much longer to accomplish and snow problems have affected rail car movements throughout the Midwest and Northeastern United States. Slow car turn times not only affect the movement of TCW and MPL covered hopper cars, but also private cars used to move ethanol, DDG's, salt and fertilizer. Private cars may not cost railroads an hourly/mileage rate, but they are an expense to the owner of the car which makes it important to keep private cars moving.

This year's grain harvest brought a strong demand for

TCW covered hopper cars. We recognized this need and with our commitment to our customers to provide the best service possible, we made the decision in November to lease an additional 100 covered hopper cars. Most of the cars have arrived and are in grain service. These additional cars will be a large monthly expense to TCW since covered hopper cars are in great demand and a per car full service lease is over \$400 a month. Even with the additional cars we continue to struggle with keeping up with car orders, fueled by poor turn times caused by winter weather conditions and congestion. We are monitoring our car fleet movements daily and continue to look for additional covered hopper cars to lease on a short term basis.

Currently we are experiencing a warm up in the weather. Let's hope this trend continues and will melt some of the snow away from the railroad right of way.

## Burn Prevention - Burn Awareness

By Susan Clark  
Operations Coordinator, Safety Committee Member

**E**ach year on average 18,300 Americans are injured, and more than 3,500 die in fires, with children age 14 and under making up 10-15 percent of all fire deaths.

Did you know that young children's skin is thinner than older children and adults, and their skin burns at lower temperatures and more deeply?

Since burns are recognized as one of the most painful and devastating injuries a person can sustain and survive, we want to arm you with the tools to keep your children safe from this devastating injury.

### Preventing scald burn injuries.

- A scald is a burn from hot liquid or steam.

- 60% of all scald injuries are to children ages 0-4. (National Center for Health Statistics)
- Children have thinner skin than adults which can result in a more severe burn.
- The most common places children experience scalds are in the kitchen or dining rooms and in the bathrooms.
- The maximum recommended residential water temperature is 120°F (48°C).

It is important to remember that children, especially those ages 4 and under, may not perceive danger, have less control of their environment, may lack the ability to escape a life-threatening burn situation and may not be able to tolerate the physical stress of a burn injury.

### If a burn occurs remember these important steps:

- Call 911 immediately for emergency assistance
- Cool a burn with cool water until the ambulance arrives
- Never use grease, butter or ointments on a burn
- Don't remove clothing from the burn

Excellent online resources for fire prevention education materials and protecting children from fire and burns include: [www.usfa.dhs.gov/gov/kids/](http://www.usfa.dhs.gov/gov/kids/); [www.safekids.org](http://www.safekids.org); [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org); [www.fema.gov](http://www.fema.gov) and [www.Ready.gov](http://www.Ready.gov). Learn about FEMA's Children's Working Group (CWG) at [www.fema.gov/about/cwg.shtm](http://www.fema.gov/about/cwg.shtm).



By Robin Bergeron, Director of Sales



## New Ag Leaders Named in House and Senate

January 4, 2011 marked the beginning of the 87th session of the Minnesota legislature and new House and Senate Republican leadership means new committee chairs.

In the House, Rep. Rod Hamilton takes over as chair of the Ag & Rural Development Policy and Finance Committee. Rep. Hamilton is a pork producer from Mountain Lake who is serving his fourth term in the Minnesota House. Hamilton also serves on the Health and Human Services Finance, Rules and Legislative Administration and Ways and Means committees. He also serves at the House Majority Whip, the third most powerful leadership position within the Republican Caucus.

Sen. Doug Magnus, a crop farmer from Slayton, is the chair of the Senate Agriculture and Rural Economies Committee. This is his first term in the Senate, but he has served four terms in the Minnesota House. Sen. Magnus also serves on the Capital Investment, Energy, Utilities and Telecommunications and Finance committees.

## New Food Safety Law Focuses on Preventing Foodborne Illnesses

Minnesota made significant contributions to the new Food Safety and Modernization Act that was signed into law on January 4 by President Barack Obama. The legislation aims to prevent foodborne illnesses through science-based protocols and gives the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) greater enforcement and recall authority so it can shift its focus from reacting to foodborne illnesses to preventing outbreaks. It is the first major overhaul of the FDA's food safety system since the 1930's and the new standards will better address today's complex, global network of food production, processing and distribution.

Several Minnesota food companies were strong supporters and played a critical role in the bill. Sen. Amy Klobuchar, Minnesota was the bill's co-sponsor. Minnesota is the sixth largest agricultural producer in the country and home to some of the world's largest and most successful food processing companies. Senator Klobuchar helped author a provision that will improve the ability of officials to detect and quickly trace outbreaks back to their source. The Centers for Excellence provision is modeled on the successful track record of "Team Diarrhea," a joint initiative by the Minnesota Department of Health, Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) and the University of Minnesota School of Public Health. Minnesota has garnered national attention for its success in identifying and tracing the source of several high profile national food-borne illness outbreaks including salmonella in peanut butter and jalapeño peppers.

### Key Provisions of the Food Safety Act

- **Imported foods.** Imported foods will need to meet U.S. food safety standards.
- **Regulations for high-risk commodities.** FDA, in coordination with USDA, will develop rules governing certain aspects of the growing, harvesting, sorting, packing and storage of high-risk raw agricultural commodities.
- **Mandatory recalls.** The FDA granted the power to impose mandatory food recalls.
- **Increased inspections.** Both foreign and domestic facilities would be inspected more frequently. Higher-risk facilities would have the most frequent inspections.

High-risk facilities will be inspected once every three years and non-high risk facilities will be inspected once every seven years.

- **HACCP plans.** Food facilities will need to develop and implement written HACCP (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point) plans. Facilities will need to undertake food safety hazard analyses, put in place preventative measures at critical control points, monitor the effectiveness of those measures and update plans as necessary to substantially lessen or eliminate food safety problems.
- **Traceability.** Pilot programs will seek to enhance the traceability of both raw agricultural commodities and processed foods. The bill requires more trace forward and trace backward record keeping of food products bought and sold by high-risk firms. FDA granted access to the records in cases of foodborne illness.
- **Improved disease surveillance and tracking.** The FDA will coordinate with state and local agencies to develop coordinated centers of excellence modeled after Minnesota's system to more quickly identify disease cases and clusters.
- **Exclusion for small businesses.** The Tester-Hagen amendment exempts food processors and small farms that have less than \$500,000 a year in sales and sell their products in state or within 275 miles of where the food was produced. These small businesses would continue to be regulated by state and local authorities.

### Funding Challenges

The Act is signed, but now it faces funding challenges. The Congressional Budget Office estimated the food safety law will cost \$1.4 billion in its first five years, including the cost of hiring an estimated 2,000 food inspectors. It has been estimated that foodborne illnesses cost the country \$152 billion/year in medical costs, lost productivity and other expenses and does not include costs to the food industry when a product is recalled.

The new law will affect about 80 percent of the food supply that is regulated by the FDA. It will not affect meat, poultry and some egg products, which are overseen by the Agriculture Department.

# Holiday Party

By Sue Bombeck  
Office Manager

**H**at's off to the 2010/2011 Holiday Party Committee, **Josh Kieser, Robin Bergeron, Katie Masog** and myself. Our festive event was held at Jackpot Junction Casino in Morton, Minnesota in their Crossed Arrows banquet room. The day started off for our guests with first class service by providing hotel check in at our registration table and avoiding a long waiting line for the hotel staff to check them in. Each guest also received a gift box that held a personalized gift card and goodies for coming to the event. The social hour kicked off at 5 p.m. followed by a three-meat banquet dinner, awards program and ending with a surprise game for all to participate in. This year's game was "Crack the Vault," how fitting right, given we were at a casino. We moved up in the world, as far as using computerized technology for this year's game which went off without a hitch.

Our lucky winners include **Rob Murphy** (Apple ipod Touch), **Maurice Valdez** (Toshiba laptop), **Shauna Gruber** (Electric Weed Whip with extension cord), **Don Johnson and Darren Anderson** (1 extra day of vacation), **Scott Spanovich** (Kitchen Aid Classic), **Dan Hart** (Pressure washer), **Greg Graham** (3D Blue Ray DVD player), **Susan Clark** (dehydrator), **Gaylen Johnson** (Shop Vac), **Alan Godel** (luggage set) and **Andrew Runke** (\$225.00 VISA gift card).

Congratulations to our winners, I hope you enjoyed the game!

## This year's service awards

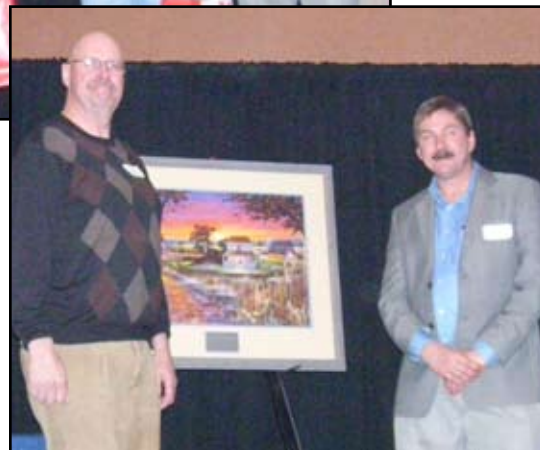
### 5 years of service:

(Left to Right)  
Toby Iddings  
Bob Suko  
Don Johnson  
Chad Hedin  
(not present)  
Pictured with  
Mark Wegner



### 10 years of service:

(Left to Right)  
Sue Bombeck, Dan Westby  
Shauna Gruber, Greg Nordang  
Pictured with Mark Wegner



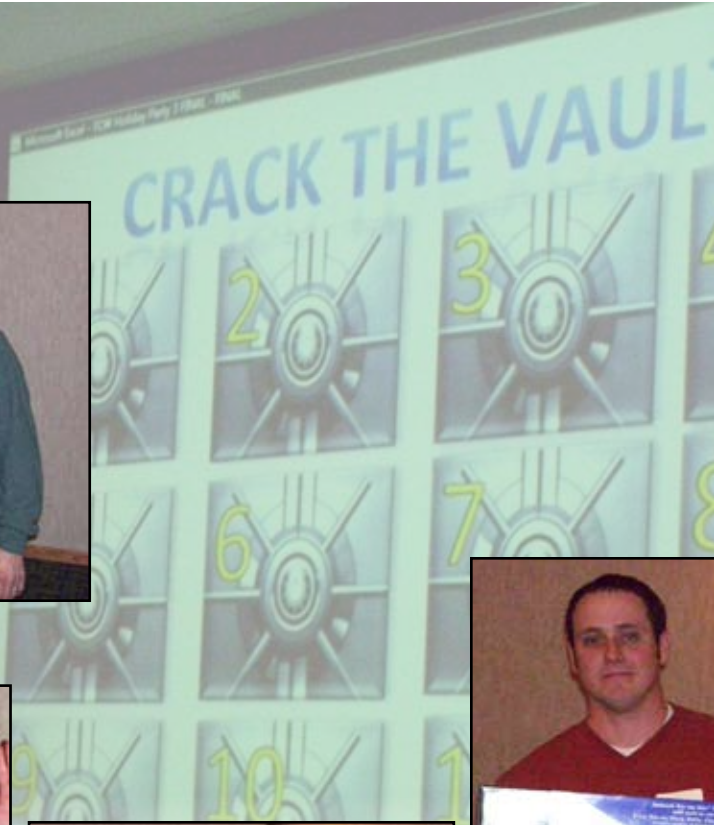
### 15 years of service:

Pieter NouWen  
Pictured with Mark Wegner

### We acknowledge this year's Golden Spike Award winners for their efforts in promoting safety within the organization:

(Left to right)  
Jeff LaBar  
Toby Iddings  
Jeff Shurtleff  
Andrew Pausick  
(not present)  
Cody Holmgren  
(not present)





Maurice Valdez



Shauna Gruber



Dan Hart



Scott Spanovich



Greg Graham



Andrew Runke



Susan Clark



Gaylen Johnson



Josh Kieser and Don Johnson



# Fast Tracks SPOTLIGHT

By Sue Bombeck, Office Manager

*If you recall, in our last issue, I said “Bundle up and hunker down, those long, cold winter days will soon be here!”*

I wasn't expecting this year's snow fall amounts, the arctic blast or the winds that have played havoc with the TCW. Needless to say, the tolerances of our employees are being tested, with the winter conditions that we have been experiencing.

With equipment and employees freezing up on the outside, things are hotter than ever inside the office. We have been busy with a restructure in our accounting department, year-end close, hiring for an accounting position and many other fun HR issues.

## Upcoming events:

**March 1, 2011 – TCW welcomes Jason Just, our new Accounting Specialist**

**April 22, 2011 – Good Friday – Company Holiday, office closed**

**April 28 & 29, 2011- Midwest Claims Conference – Minneapolis, Tim Jeske & Bob Suko**

**May 23, 2011 – All Employee Meeting – Glencoe Event Center, office closed.**  
More details will come, as the agenda is put together

**July 22, 2011 – Government Officials Anniversary Train**

**July 23, 2011 – Customer Appreciation Anniversary Train**

**July 24, 2011 – Employee Anniversary Train/Picnic – Save the dates and invitations to be mailed!**



More Holiday Party photos on pages 4 and 5.