

2023 ISSUE 2

# Lake State Railway

The Turntable



**FROM THE PRESIDENT**  
**HURON SUBDIVISION**

**SAFETY**  
**DOING THE RIGHT THING**

**ROUNDHOUSE REPORT**  
**HISTORY OF PULLMAN**





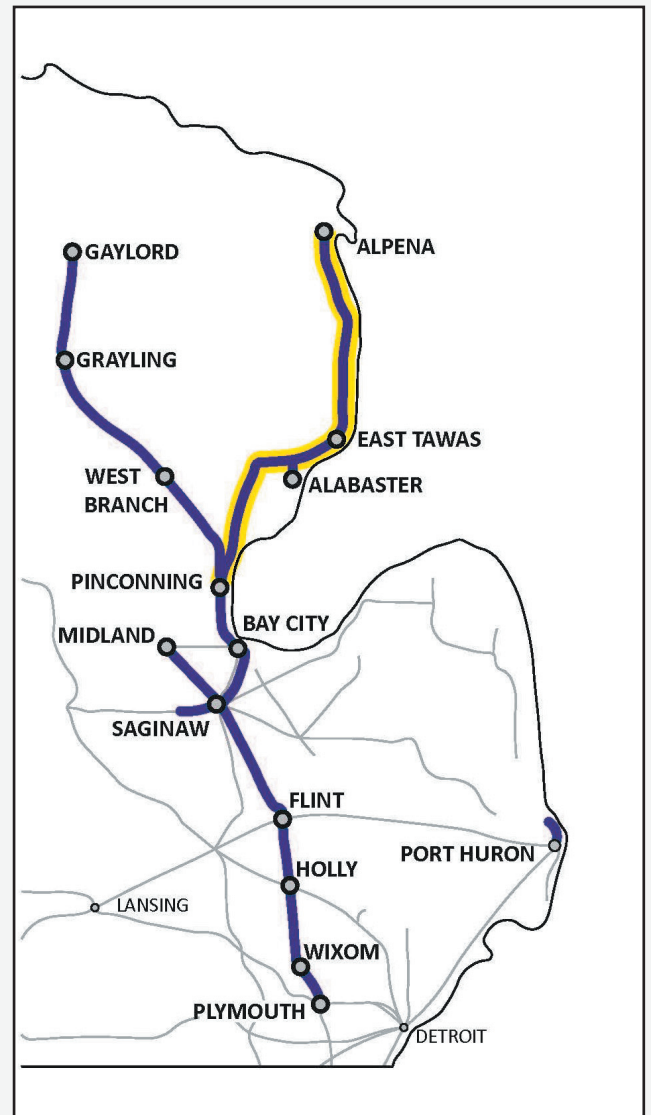
If you have read any of our previous newsletters, you may recall that track improvements on our Huron Subdivision have been a major focus for LSRC as we continue to improve the physical railroad for future growth. LSRC is expecting significant carload growth on the Huron Sub, which is why we have focused so intently on upgrading the rail to improve efficiency and safety. It is clear that over the last 10 years, we have made significant progress in an effort to reach our improvement goals. Most of the progress has occurred during the last few years as the CRISI program (Federal Funding Grants) for the Huron Sub progresses.

The most important elements of the work we are doing is replacing rail that, in most cases, is well over 100-years old and replacing tens of thousands of rail ties. After this year's work is complete, LSRC will have increased rail speeds on over 45 miles of track and more importantly, we were able to increase the gross weight per railcar from 263,000 lbs. to the industry standard of 286,000 lbs. per railcar on over 90 miles of our system. LSRC, as well as our existing customers and future business partners, can expect to see the benefits of these investments for years to come. LSRC's entire system can now handle 286,000 lbs. loads.

After this work season is over, the CRISI program for the Huron Subdivision will be completed but we are not done. We have applied for another CRISI Grant to help us with the ever-increasing high cost of improvements. During the last few years, the cost of material needed to upgrade track has skyrocketed. The cost of rail has doubled, the cost of ties has nearly doubled, and all other material needed has increased significantly. Labor costs have risen as well. Even with the availability of CRISI grant funding, it is difficult to make the progress that we would like to see. LSRC's approach has been focused on making strategic investments that will position us well to handle the expected carload growth while continuing to incrementally improve the balance of the infrastructure.

As rail car volumes continue to increase, the placement of AEI readers and Defect Detectors along the line become even more important to improve safety. AEI Readers are boxes placed at strategic points along the rail line. When a train passes by the AEI reader it can provide information like which direction the train is heading along with the Consist which shows what specific cars make up that train and in what order they fall. Defect Detectors can detect and alert the crew on any hot bearings, hot wheels, or dragging equipment. Later this year, LSRC will reach another important step in our drive to develop the safest railroad possible with the installation of a defect detector on the Huron line near the town of Ossineke.

I am grateful for all the hard work and dedication of our employees to help accomplish our safety goals. When you look back just a few years ago and compare today's Huron Subdivision to what existed then, I get a great comfort in knowing that we are doing the right stuff. While this article is focused on the Huron Sub, I want to remind all the readers that LSRC is making improvements across its entire system to ensure its ability to provide safe, economical and consistent service for our valued customers and the communities that we operate through.



**Huron Subdivision highlighted**

**John Rickoff**  
**President & CEO**

# LET SAFETY REALLY COUNT

With the printing of rule book upon rule book and page upon page, no matter how often we remind ourselves or others that railroad rule books are “written in blood,” they are nothing more than words inked into paper if we do not heed their underlying cautionary tales.



Compliance is, in essence, “doing the THING RIGHT.” It’s following the rules because they’re written as such and because those rules are enforced through things like Efficiency Testing. However, until we’re more heavily focused on ethics, or “doing the RIGHT THING,” we’re ultimately missing the mark and we’ll be remiss in our efforts to establish a culture of safety, rather than a culture of simple compliance.

As an example, we don’t just stop at a red light because the law requires us to, we do so because the consequences of being t-boned by a semi-truck traveling at 55 miles-per-hour seems unappealing. How does this translate into railroading?

What if we began to place culture above compliance? As railroaders, we all have to ask ourselves a few questions. We have to be introspective and answer them honestly: “Did I work safely today or was I just lucky?”

There’s a common phrase I’ve heard: “Sometimes it’s better to be lucky than good,” and while that mindset fits appropriately with golf or poker, it has no place on the railroad. The thing is, data doesn’t lie, and while you may have been the benefactor of remaining lucky in dangerous situations thus far, it’s likely that your luck might just run out. So why chance it? Why even test the water? The same holds true for railroading. It’s far more advantageous to remain actively and conscientiously safe, than to take unnecessary risks just “to get the job done,” a common excuse for cutting corners that I’ve heard countless times over the years. We just have to remember that the work WILL get done, if not by you, then someone else, and if not today, then tomorrow, but you have to work safely to ensure tomorrow remains a possibility for you.

Ask yourself, “how do I railroad when nobody is watching?” Are you cutting corners because you think you can get away with it or are you railroading like the Trainmaster is in your back pocket, monitoring your every move? If you’re already doing the right thing, you’re simply remaining perpetually conscientious of the potential consequences of your actions and you’re striving to take the safest course of action, always.

WHY follow the rules? - If you answered that you railroad like the Trainmaster is in your back pocket, and you follow the rules to avoid getting in trouble (IE: “failing” an Efficiency Test), good on you, but we’ve still got some work to do; Trust me, I get it. At the end of the day, we all want to stay out of trouble and remain gainfully employed, but that line of thinking falls into COMPLIANCE- You’re worried about doing the thing right, which isn’t a bad thing, but we can still do better.

What’s worse are the individuals that know how to do the thing right, but intentionally choose to do it wrong and are then left to worry about being caught. Why? Because they’re worried about getting in trouble, but fail to consider the potentially dire and grander consequences of their decisions.

So, how do we challenge that “compliance” ethos and shift our thinking towards an irreproachable commitment to doing the right thing, thus establishing a safety culture and putting that CULTURE above COMPLIANCE?

It may not seem like an easy task, but how do we inspire that cultural change? Simple - We change the question that we ask ourselves, and we continue to answer sincerely.

WHO depends on you to work safely?

This goes well beyond the individual across the locomotive cab from you, or the switching crew at the other end of the yard, or even the maintenance-of-way or mechanical employees performing inspections in the adjacent tracks. Don’t mince my words, these are

*(Continued on page 4)*

***“Paper doesn’t  
save people - People save people.”***

**-Dan Peterson**



all individuals that are depending upon you to “DO THE RIGHT THING,” if not, at the very least, they’re expecting you to “DO THE THING RIGHT”, but take a moment to think about this question on a more personal level. Your friends, your parents, your children, your spouse or significant other, even your pets - They all depend on you to do what is necessary to work safely to make it home every night.

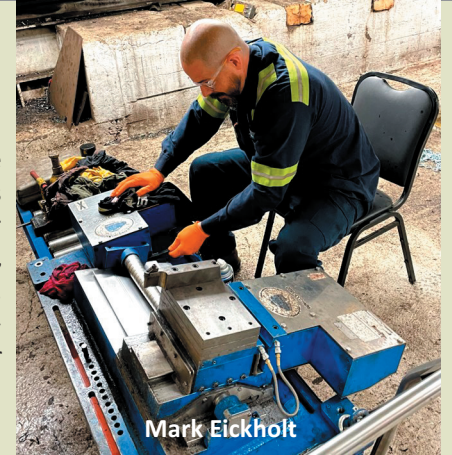
Just remember, railroading doesn’t have to be inherently dangerous, but it can be unforgiving, and if you fail to do the right thing, the consequences can be dire.

**Dave Foster**  
Manager of Safety & Training

## Roundhouse Report

### Saving Fuel, Cutting Emissions and National Park Service

A noticeable change in our locomotive fleet has been the storage of the SD50 locomotives beyond our winter storage, precipitated by the lack of stone movements in the winter months. With the new power assignments and more significant horsepower with the SD70M's in service, the savings in fuel and emissions have been drastically reduced compared to previous years. By gaining over 5,000 horsepower across the new SD70 fleet compared to the previous hard-working SD50 fleet, we've achieved the equivalent of additional 1-2/3rds locomotives when comparing the two fleets. Compared to the SD40 fleet, it's an extra 6500 horsepower or the equivalent of a further two locomotives of horsepower. So more fuel-efficient locomotives that create more horsepower than our previously assigned locomotives equal less fuel burned and less emissions. Win, Win!



So why park the SD50-3 fleet? It made sense to park the only six-axle fleet equipped with plug-in boilers to save fuel and emissions during winter. The SD40-2 fleet has auxiliary power units (APUs) that require the APU to continue to run when temperatures are 40 degrees or below. In addition, the SD40-2 locomotives are still utilizing fuel additives with different injectors for lower emission testing. The program is the continued testing that Lake State Railway participates in under a Federal Railroad Administration Grant through the American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association. The target completion date for this phase of testing will be in July. At that point, the SD50-3s will trickle back into service, and SD40-2s will take a break so we can catch up on some additional repairs on our test locomotives.

Lake State Railway contributed our mechanical expertise to the Pullman National Historical Park in Chicago in May of this year. When thinking of a National Park, it usually conjures images of mountains, canyons, volcanoes, and pristine landscapes that take your breath away. President Obama designated the historic Pullman community a national monument in 2015.

Pullman wasn't only a factory that built passenger rail cars that supported the expansion of the United States. As the National Park Service states on its website, ***"In a growing neighborhood, diverse people and stories intertwined. All were seeking opportunity. Some succeeded. Others were limited - by race, gender, or economic status. Their stories came together in Pullman, a planned industrial community famed for its urban design and architecture."***



The Advance

As part of this story, historic Pullman railroad cars are being found for the National Historical Park and secured for preservation for display on the same factory floor on which they were built once restoration is complete. One such car was the Advance.

The Advance was one of six cars built by Pullman as "company service cars," available for lease. These cars were like private jets that companies or individuals would lease in 2023. In March of 1911, when the Advance rolled out of the factory in Chicago, it was equipped with a kitchen, staff quarters, five private bedrooms, a dining room, an observation room, and the iconic rear platform. Renamed the “Asheville” in 1936, the Southern Railroad

(Continued on page 5)



# Roundhouse Report continued...

(Continued from page 4)

eventually purchased the car. In 1944, the car was purchased by Algoma Central and became the "Michipicoten". The old workhorse continued into the 1990s until sold to a private owner.



Travis Smith & Mike Milkowski

So, what makes the Advance so historic? Robert Todd Lincoln, son of Abraham Lincoln, was the President of Pullman after George Pullman passed away in 1897. He served in that role until 1911, when he stepped down and became Chairman of the Board. He

continued that role until 1924. Two weeks before Robert Lincoln passed away in July of 1926, the Pullman company dispatched the freshly renovated Advance for Robert Lincoln's family to use to take them to their home in Manchester, Vermont. This history is documented in Robert Todd Lincoln's handwriting in a thank-you letter back to Pullman just days before he passed away. In addition, the Advance was pressed into service for President Wilson once in 1914 and again in 1915. President Coolidge utilized the Advance twice in 1924.

As part of our national community outreach, Lake State Railway offered our service to the National Park Service for this historic piece of railway equipment. After a tarp had uncovered the "somewhat" original car near St. Louis, Lake State Railway mechanical forces assessed the mechanical condition of the Advance for movement for future restoration. The assessment included a condition report of items needing attention to bring the car into compliance for movement, and a historical perspective of those repairs.

We are honored to lend our Lake State expertise to the initial portion of this project and are excited to help tell the diverse story of Pullman and the railroad history that built this great nation.

Roger Fuehring  
Chief Mechanical Officer



Mike Milkowski



## The "Excellence Award" Program

New recognition program at LSRC - The "Excellence Award". The award is given to employees who are nominated by managers and/or peers. Every nomination will be reviewed by the Continuous Improvement Team (CIT) for award qualification.

To qualify for nomination an employee must have gone above and beyond the normal scope of their job duties. Nominations can be submitted via the employee portal at any time and will be reviewed on a monthly basis. We encourage you all to keep an eye out for those who go above and beyond so we as a company can show our appreciation.



### AWARD RECIPIENT: Alex Nikora

While working track maintenance on April 24, Alex Nikora from our Maintenance of Way Department noticed an oil spill from activities by a 3<sup>rd</sup> party on LSRC property. His prompt reporting of the spill allowed the oil to be contained on LSRC property, greatly limiting its environmental impact and helped save on containment and clean-up costs. Thank you Alex for staying alert and going above and beyond.!



Tom Klemm, Alex Nikora, John Rickoff

### ELLIOT HUBBARD—YARDMASTER

Elliot Hubbard, or as we call him “Chief”, has been a devoted Lake State Railway family member for over 12 years. Elliot first started his railroading career at LSRC as a Dispatcher in our Saginaw Tower, then trained and worked in the field as a Train Conductor for 3 years. He went back to dispatching full time until 2019 when LSRC acquired the Flint property and is now currently serving as one of our 4 Yardmasters working out of our Flint yard. On any given work-day you will find Elliott coordinating day-to-day operation plans, creating work orders, block/switch lists for the train crews and managing train movements within yard limits. Elliot truly enjoys working with the train crews and Trainmasters to help figure out a plan that provides the best service to our customers as possible. It’s a challenge every day but Elliot feels the most important part of his job is to be able to balance what’s best for the customer vs. what’s best for LSRC and the train crews.

Before Elliot came to settle at Lake State, he worked security at Consumers Energy while also pursuing a law enforcement degree. He was born and raised in Vassar, MI where he graduated from high school. Much of Elliot’s time growing up was spent in the saddle of a tractor working with all the neighboring farmers and learning to love the trade. Today, he and his wife Rashel live on the family land in Kingston, MI which they turned into their own farm growing and canning produce and raising livestock. Together with their 4 dogs and 2 cats, they enjoy canning their own pickles, pasta sauce, tomatoes and much more while raising chickens, turkeys, goats, pigs and cattle. Rashel also owns her own graphic design company so between their day jobs and keeping up with the farm, they stay very busy.

Elliot and Rashel were married in September 2021 after meeting at a deer hunting convention in Mt. Pleasant. I doubt



there are many people who can say they met their wife at a deer hunting convention but, for 2 people who share the same hobby, it must’ve been meant to be. Elliot and Rashel also help run a Facebook group called “Michigan Deer Hunters ‘Let em go, Let em grow’”.

It’s not surprising to hear that Elliot’s hobbies include hunting, fishing and farming, which make his passion in habitat management for wildlife- food plotting and providing consultation for better hunting—that much more important to him. He definitely is one of the great outdoorsman.

Elliot has acquired a well-rounded and vast knowledge of railroading during his 12 years here at Lake State dispatching, conducting trains and managing yard movements. Sometimes you can find him jumping back and forth from one department to the next, professionally filling in vital gaps wherever Lake State needs him. He is a tremendous asset to us and we may not tell him often enough but, we are grateful to have him on board.

*“Elliot is hard-working and dependable, always willing to chip in and help where needed. He is a valuable member of the Transportation team.”* - Brent Keeler

*“We appreciate that Elliot is always looking for ways to make things better or more efficient for the company, whether improving procedures, policies or physical plant.”* - John Rickoff



**Deanna Hennessy**  
**HOS Compliance Manager/AR**  
**Newsletter Editor**





## NEW HIRES

We'd like to give a warm welcome to our newest Lake State Railway team members!  
Welcome Aboard!

### 2nd Quarter—2023

- Seth Baker – Transportation*
- Nathan Joles – Transportation*
- Ethan Galgoci – MOW*
- Kevin Fowler – Administration*
- Charles Dusenbery – CAR*
- David Lathrop – CAR*
- Neetesh Sahu – Administration*
- Michael Shumaker – Transportation*
- Robert Adkins – Transportation*
- Bret Robison – CAR*



## PROMOTIONS

### 2nd Quarter—2023

- Jarod Bucholtz – Manager of Flint VDC Operations*
- Kyle McCloud – Foreman of Flint VDC Operations*
- Adisson Willford – Trainmaster*

***Congratulations!***

## REMINDERS

### LAKE STATE RAILWAY:

- Family Train Ride: TBD**
- Toys for Tots Santa Train: Sat, Dec 2, 2023**
- LSRC Employee Christmas Party: Sat, Dec. 9, 2023**

### We want to Hear from You!

If you have any interesting railroad facts, stories, pictures, or exciting news to share, please submit an article (with corresponding pictures if possible) for a chance at having your story published in LSRC's "The Turntable".

EMAIL SUBMISSIONS TO:  
hennessyd@lsrc.com

*\*Please note, not all submissions will be accepted and those that are approved for publishing will be subject to editing.*

### Look who got Hitched! Congratulations Newlyweds



Kyle & Lesley McCloud  
May 5, 2023

## 2023

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**Lake State Railway  
appreciates our loyal and dedicated  
employees! Through your diligence, we  
continue to prove that we are the premier  
regional railroad of Michigan by providing  
Excellence in Transportation!**

***Lake State Railway***

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Saginaw, MI



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