UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

Investigation of:	*
	*
CRUDE OIL TRAIN DERAILMENT WITH	*
HAZARDOUS MATERIALS RELEASE	* Docket No. DCA-14-FR-008
APRIL 30, 2014	*
LYNCHBURG, VIRGINIA	*
	*

Interview of: R.S. BENNETT

SpringHill Suites Inn
Lynchburg, Virginia

Friday,
May 2, 2014

The above-captioned matter convened, pursuant to notice.

BEFORE: RICHARD HIPSKIND
Railroad Accident Investigator

APPEARANCES:

RICHARD HIPSKIND, Railroad Accident Investigator
Chairman, Track and Engineering Group
National Transportation Safety Board
Washington, D.C.

ROBERT "JOE" GORDON, Track Inspector
Office of Safety
Federal Railroad Administration

JIM GRUPPOSO, Director
Train Accident Investigation and Prevention
CSX Transportation

BRAD SPENCER, Engineer of Rail Services
CSX Transportation

RUSSELL FARMER, Vice Chairman
Allied Federation
Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employes
Division (BMWED)

I N D E X

Legend:

(ph.) = phonetic spelling

I N T E R V I E W

MR. HIPSKIND: Good morning. My name is Richard Hipskind and I am the Track and Engineering Group Chairman for NTSB for this accident. We are here today, on May 2, 2014, at the SpringHill Suites Inn in Lynchburg, Virginia to conduct an interview with Mr. R.S. Bennett, who works for the CSX Transportation, or CSX. This interview is in conjunction with NTSB's investigation of a crude oil train derailment with hazardous materials released on CSX's James River Subdivision in Lynchburg, Virginia on April 30th, 2014. The NTSB accident reference number is DCA-14-FR-008.

Before we begin our interview and questions, let's go around the table and introduce ourselves. Please spell your last name and please identify who you are representing and your title. I would remind everybody to speak clearly and loudly enough so we can get an accurate recording. I'll lead off and then pass off to my left.

Again, my name is Richard Hipskind. The spelling of my last name is H-i-p-s-k-i-n-d. I am a railroad accident investigator and Track and Engineering Group Chairman for this accident.

MR. FARMER: Russell Farmer, F-a-r-m-e-r, Vice Chairman, Allied Federation, Brotherhood Maintenance of Way.

MR. SPENCER: Brad Spencer, S-p-e-n-c-e-r, CSX Transportation, Engineer of Rail Services.

MR. GORDON: Robert Gordon, FRA officer. Last name, G-o-r-d-o-n, FRA Office of Safety, Track.

MR. GRUPPOSO: Jim Grupposo, G-r-u-p-p-o-s-o, Director of Train Accident Investigation and Prevention, CSX.

MR. HIPSKIND: Okay. Thank you, gentlemen.

And, Mr. Bennett, can we have you to introduce yourself and put yourself on the record?

MR. BENNETT: Steve Bennett, B-e-n-n-e-t-t, and I am the roadmaster for James River Subdivision, representing CSX Transportation.

MR. HIPSKIND: Okay. And, Mr. Bennett, do you mind if we go on a first-name basis?

MR. BENNETT: No.

MR. HIPSKIND: And you prefer Steve, right?

MR. BENNETT: Yes.

MR. HIPSKIND: Okay. So let me get a couple preliminary questions out of the way. Steve, do we have your permission to record our discussion, our interview with you today?

MR. BENNETT: Yes.

MR. HIPSKIND: All right. And do you wish to have a representative with you at this interview?

MR. BENNETT: No.

INTERVIEW OF STEVE BENNETT

BY MR. HIPSKIND:

Q. All right. Let's proceed. Steve, if you can just talk for a couple of minutes and kind of give us a synopsis of your work experience and take us up to your present job and let us know how long you've been in that position?

A. Okay. I've been with the company for 33 years, then in management for 14 years, and been in the current position for 5 years.

Q. Okay. And your current position and title is roadmaster?

A. Roadmaster for the James River, yes, sir.

Q. Okay. And how long have you been in and around this part of the country?

A. All my life.

Q. All your --

A. Well, Clifton Forge and -- I was born in Clifton Forge.

Q. Okay. And Steve, if you would, kind of give us an idea of what your duties and responsibilities are. I mean, what are the big things that you address on a daily basis for CSX?

A. Well, my job is to maintain the track between Gladstone and Clifton Forge and do the maintenance to ensure safe passage of trains.

Q. Okay. And kind of give us an idea of what are some of the resources that you have to maintain that territory and kind of give us an idea of how many miles we're talking about.

A. Okay. I'm in charge of 110 miles, and the resources

that I have is, which I'm not sure what you're asking, but --

Q. Well, just manpower and gangs, stuff like that?

A. I'd say as far as men I'm entitled to, it's 11 men. And, of course, you know, if needs -- a situation comes up, my immediate supervisors will provide me with any help or extra manpower needed.

Q. When additional projects and stuff hit your territory?

A. Yes. And actually, I'm 3 weeks away from having system production things come in.

Q. And give me some examples of what that -- what we're really talking about there?

A. Okay. We have two large-scale tie forces and two rail gangs come in in the next -- in 3 weeks to exchange rail in the curves and ties.

Q. Okay. And some of what I have heard since I've been out here, and I want you to confirm it if it's true, was the curve, you know, the curve in front of the depot there where we think the accident happened and all that, was that lined up to receive curve patch, curve rail renewal?

A. Yes. It was in the program.

Q. Okay. And tell me a little bit about how you come to know that or how any of that was determined, if you're knowledgeable about that.

A. Actually, Mr. Castle (ph.) actually inputted that curve into the system, basically not on the weld process but as the

amount of defects, you know, in the -- that we've had in that one section.

Q. Okay. So just in general terms for the layman, if a curve just experiences a defect or two and the rail dimensions, not a lot of wear, that's a curve that might not get renewed because it doesn't need renewed?

A. Exactly.

Q. And but if a rail or in a curve or something, or even rail on tangent, if it starts to get some wear or the number of defects start to increase over time, then that becomes a candidate?

A. That is correct. That is --

Q. Okay.

A. -- one of the factors that will --

Q. All right. Okay.

A. -- qualify it.

Q. Well, let's kind of just cut to the chase, Steve. Why don't -- we know -- we've heard that there's been a Sperry test truck was out on the track Monday, April 28th, and testing April 29th. So why don't you just kind of take us through what was going on at your territory with respect to that and just kind of talk for a while, tell us how Monday and Tuesday went?

A. Well, actually the Sperry test car was only on for 3 days. It started on Friday. Then on Monday and Tuesday, Monday it was a pretty light day. We got along pretty good with the

Sperry car. Tuesday was a little different. We found several defects on Tuesday. Actually, we finished up the subdivision as far as testing 2 and the single main track, with a total of 13 total defects for the day.

Q. And that's just on Tuesday?

A. Yeah.

Q. Okay. Well, is that a lot, about average, or a little bit more than normal?

A. A little bit more than normal --

Q. Okay.

A. -- you know, for a day, you know.

Q. All right. Did you happen to have any leftover stuff that you were addressing from Monday's test?

A. As far as defects?

Q. Yes.

A. Well, yes, we had some defects, but usually I'll keep the section and we'll address the defects, you know -- I'll keep them pretty close to the Sperry car. And as far as Tuesday was concerned, to kind of give you a little bit of an idea, a lot of my service failures that I had been experiencing, it's been close to field welds. So the Sperry car found a 30-percent TDD right beside of a field weld. So I instructed the pilot for the Sperry car to protect that with a 10-mile-an-hour slow order.

And we changed that -- now, that's a little bit more strict than what we were required to do, but I done that based on

the history of the subdivision that we've had issues at field welds. So that was a concern of mine, so we protected that particular one and -- with a 10-mile-an-hour and we changed that rail out that day.

So rest of the defects that we actually found, we found a 40-percent TDD and a 50-percent that day, along with -- we had a total of 8 TDDs for the day, and we put joint bars on the 40-percent and the 50-percent and changed out the 30-percent next to the field weld.

Q. And these are the defects you found on Tuesday?

A. Yes.

Q. Okay. So I don't want to put words in your mouth, but are you on the car, on the truck or whatever?

A. Ninety percent of the time I am, but that day I wasn't.

Q. You were not on the car --

A. No.

Q. -- Tuesday?

A. Yes.

Q. But you were on the car Monday?

A. I was on the car Friday, but I was not on it Monday and Tuesday.

Q. Okay. But were you ramrodding the logistics of the crews and everything following this or --

A. Yes.

Q. Okay. So you were part and parcel to assessing and

directing people, right?

A. I was -- I was 100 percent in charge of directing it.

Q. Okay. Did you have somebody on the car?

A. Yes.

Q. And who was that?

A. Jonathan Ware.

Q. Okay. And why did you put him on the car? Did you have confidence that he would make the right calls --

A. Yeah.

Q. -- communicate?

A. Well, usually any issue that he calls has -- he calls me and I'll instruct him what I want him to do.

Q. Okay. So you were being fully informed --

A. Yeah.

Q. -- about what they're finding and the progress of the car Monday and Tuesday?

A. Yes. And that is, like I said -- now, on Tuesday, he found a 30-percent defect beside a field weld. He called me and I instructed him to put a 10-mile-an-hour slow order, and a crew came right in behind him and changed it out.

Q. Okay. And we talked about the other two that was a little bit larger, the 40 and the 50, and you put joint bars on them?

A. Yes.

Q. Okay. But then there are five other TDs that what -- do

you recall what you did with them or were you able to do anything with them?

A. Actually, they were small amount. They was 20 percent or less, and that actually with CSX standards, I got 5 days before I have to actually apply joint bars or slow order. So I had a plan for them within the 5-day period, it's just that I did not do anything that particular day, not on Tuesday.

Q. Okay. And one of the goals with the Sperry test truck is to get it over the territory, right?

A. Yeah. Um-hum.

Q. And I'm just going to try and distill this down and see if you agree with this. A lot of what you're doing there is let's test, let's find what we can find, and let's deal with worst first?

A. Exactly.

Q. Exactly?

A. Um-hum.

Q. Okay. When you say um-hum, you have to say yes or they might not know what you're saying.

A. All right. Yeah.

Q. Okay. So and --

A. I apply it towards everything, so --

Q. Pardon?

A. I said I apply it towards things -- I apply it towards everything, so --

Q. You apply it -- okay, I got it.

So let's talk about in the curve, you know, where the track's tore up and we're all out there walking around trying to find rail and stuff. What did you come to know about that defect in that particular curve?

A. All right. Jonathan called me and he told me that we had a 20-percent TDD. By the MWI and the FRA standards -- well, CSX, I really don't go -- because our standards or our guidelines are stricter than the FRA. By CSX standards is what I go by. It gives me 5 days to put joint bars up. Okay? Mr. Ware told me that within a 40-foot section, I had a field weld, a TDD, and a joint. So that 40-foot piece of rail would take that out, so I made a plan for the immediate future. I had the rail set out the next day and I had a 707 in place to change that out for the next day.

Q. Well, let me get the days straight. So on the test on Tuesday, April 29th --

A. Yes.

Q. -- you've got your guy on the car and he's calling back and telling you about the size of these defects and you're instructing the men, you know, go change out that rail that had the 30 percent, put the bars on the one that's a 40 and a 50, and eventually, I'm going to guess, later on in the afternoon is when you find out about the 20 percent that was in the curve by the depot, right?

A. Um-hum, yeah.
Q. Do you recall about what time or --
A. No, sir.
Q. Okay. But in the afternoon?
A. Yeah.
Q. Okay. And so that one you know you don't have to do anything with. And tell me why you didn't have to do anything with it. Is there something about the speed or anything like that?
A. It's the size of the defect.
Q. Okay. But is there also a consideration about the operational speed?
A. The operational speed was part of my decision to make, you know, to make a plan the next day to get a order in place, you know, for the following day.
Q. Okay. And what --
A. So the speed did make a -- was a factor in my decision.
Q. And tell me, for the record, what is the speed through that area?
A. Twenty-five mile an hour.
Q. Okay. Always been that?
A. Yes.
Q. Okay. So Tuesday afternoon they find it, operational speed's 25, FRA says you're good to go but you have to put -- at least have to put bars on it within 5 days?

A. Yes.

Q. You've got a window of time and your plan was: I got a guy with a boom truck and he can go out and set me out some material and I can schedule the rail change-out at a different time?

A. Yeah.

Q. Okay. So you were going to change out the rail on Wednesday or Thursday?

A. Wednesday. No, Thursday. I take that back. Thursday.

Q. Thursday?

A. Yeah.

Q. And the derailment happened on Wednesday?

A. Wednesday.

Q. And I want to be clear on the record here. We're not saying that the cause of the derailment is a broken rail and we're not saying that it is associated with this TD. This is just some information about the Sperry, the progress of the Sperry and how you're handling your work. Okay?

A. Um-hum.

Q. Do you agree with that?

A. Yes.

Q. Okay. So how does Tuesday end up? What do you say with the crews? How many of the defects are still out there and what -- just give us a little insight into your thinking and the game plan going forward over the next couple of days.

A. Okay. On Tuesday at the end of the day, I had fixed the 30-percent TDD that I was concerned about.

Q. Okay.

A. The other two that was large enough, I protected them and felt comfortable with putting joint bars on. The 15 or 20 percent to less, I had a 5-day window, but that doesn't mean I wouldn't do anything within the 5 days, but I had a 5-day window. Two more defects that we found that day was defective field welds. I had a 40-percent defective field weld at the 120.3.

The next morning while I had the guy in the boom truck put all the material in place on Wednesday, I sent the section down and we changed out the 40-percent defective field weld because with the history of the subdivision, my most problems with service failures has been close to field welds.

Q. Okay.

A. So I made the decision to change out the field weld. I had slow ordered it the day before and I changed it the next day with everything being in place to start it -- the one at the 20-percent TD, to yank it out in small TDDs out the next day.

Q. On Thursday?

A. On Thursday.

Q. Okay. You had the material, you had the trucks, you had the manpower to accomplish all that?

A. And I had a 707 work authority with the milepost for them to perform the task for that already in the system.

(Noise.)

BY MR. HIPSKIND:

Q. Okay. Sorry for that computer noise.

Well, the other thing, Steve, and I want to try and pull it out of you, is that is Tuesday the last day for the Sperry on your territory?

A. Yeah, to finished up.

Q. And so some of how I should think about this is the smaller defects, you're going to have Wednesday and Thursday to address them and get caught up on them?

A. Yes.

Q. Okay. Now, watch this. This -- how you went about this work, is -- how you went about this work with the Sperry, is that typical of a Sperry coming over your territory? Was this -- were you doing something unusual or is this just pretty much the way things pan out when a Sperry comes over the territory?

A. Well, when a Sperry comes out, it's just like a spread out -- I'll got to my -- the ones that I feel is the most critical and I'll address them and work my way down.

Q. Worst first?

A. Yes.

Q. Okay. All right. So --

A. And as far as changing my process, I've always done it. I always get my most critical and work my way down to the least critical.

Q. Okay. Now, you've been on the -- you've been in management 14 years, you've been railroading for 33 years, you've been in this position for 5 years. And I'm just going to ask you, to the best of your recollection, when the Sperry runs over your territory and they identify defects, have you ever had an occasion where something that they have identified failed right away? I mean, like that day, the next day, something like that?

A. No.

Q. Okay. And in terms of the reports and the information and all that kind of stuff, that's readily accessible to you?

A. Yeah.

Q. And either you're on the car or you have a guy on the car, but you're always communicating about what the Sperry car is finding, right?

A. Exactly. Yeah.

Q. Exactly? Okay. Steve, that's all I've got for right now, and you filled in quite a few blanks for me. But let me give my other co-investigators a chance too. Okay?

MR. HIPSKIND: Russell.

BY MR. FARMER:

Q. Russell Farmer, Vice Chairman, Allied Federation.

Normally when the Sperry car runs, how many days does it normally take to get over the territory?

A. Usually, maybe -- it depends on traffic. It'll -- and it depends on what we'll test. It'll usually, anywhere from 3 to

maybe 5 days.

Q. Okay. Was this time that the Sperry car come, was it a rush or you got good track time and was able to complete in 3 days?

A. We just happened to get some good windows because we've got a complete cutoff on the subdivision ahead of us and we've got some pretty good windows in the mornings and we took advantage.

Q. So it wasn't trying to rush through --

A. No.

Q. -- and get it tested?

A. No.

Q. Okay.

A. It was just that we was lucky enough to get some windows in the morning to --

Q. And you said, I didn't -- when you was answering Mr. Hipskind's questions, you stated Jonathan and I missed his last name? What was Jonathan's --

A. Ware, W-a-r-e.

Q. Ware. Okay. And is he the foreman or track inspector?

A. No. He's a trackman, but he's really good on organizing and getting track time for these situations.

Q. Okay. And as you stated, anytime that he found or they found a defect, he would call you and --

A. Yes.

Q. -- see what to do with it?

A. Um-hum.

Q. Okay. Was he the one putting the slow orders on or were you?

A. Yeah. No, he was.

Q. Okay. And you said the curve was going to be laid with rail, with SPG?

A. Yes.

Q. Okay. And that it was because of a history of defects on it?

A. Yes.

Q. And what kind of defects have been normally found on that rail?

A. We've had just similar things of TDDs and we've had a couple of service failures.

Q. Okay. You stated that on Tuesday you all found 13 defects and that was more than normal for a day. What was your, what's your average that a Sperry car would find in a day?

A. It's hard to say. I mean, there's no average. I mean, if you took the 5 days and divide it up. But it was 1 day you might not find any and the next day he'll find 13, you know. So it's kind of hard to tell.

Q. Yeah.

A. And then right at the rail changes, you know, he might go through the whole subdivision and not find but two. The next time he'll come through, he might find 20, so --

Q. Okay.

A. There's no way to determine an average because there's no two tests the same.

Q. And prior to the Sperry car running this time, when was the last time it ran?

A. Thirty days. I'm on a 30-day cycle.

Q. Thirty-day cycle. Okay. I think that's all I have for now.

MR. HIPSKIND: Okay. Thanks, Russell.

Brad.

BY MR. SPENCER:

Q. Mr. Bennett, the hi-rail, you -- I see that you signed the reports at the end?

A. Yeah.

Q. Were you -- and I was told that you were hi-railing with them?

A. I caught up with him out -- actually, that morning I had a production conference call and then I got with Ed Wilhort (ph.) and Joe Jackson and we rode over some of the locations for the production, and soon as we finished, I met up with the Sperry car soon as I could and got in behind it.

Q. So you were --

A. I followed it.

Q. You were in there at the --

A. At the very end.

Q. -- part of the day and at the end of the day, so you --
A. Yeah, at the end.
Q. -- had received the reports for that day yourself?
A. Yes.
Q. That's the only question I had.
The number 2 track, what is the normal direction of train travel? Do they typically go in one direction there or is it -- I know it's six for bidirectional, but is there a prevalent direction there?
A. I'd say on the majority it's a eastbound traffic. But through Lynchburg, it'll be a kind of a mix with -- but we got more eastbound traffic than we do westbound.
Q. Okay.
A. Lynchburg, a lot of the times the local, the yard crew uses number 1 track and the main line traffic is usually ran on 2 to give the yard crew a chance to do the work off of 1. And they do that because they service some of the industries off of 1.
Q. Okay. Primarily your loads go east; is that correct?
A. That's correct.
Q. So most of your loads are on track 2 then?
A. That's correct.
Q. Okay. And do you know what the degree of curve is in that particular curve?
A. No, but I'd say it's right around 6 degree or above --
Q. Just --

A. -- with being a Pandrol plate curve.

Q. Okay. Thank you. That's all I have. Thank you.

MR. HIPSKIND: Thanks, Brad.

Joe.

MR. GORDON: All right.

BY MR. GORDON:

Q. Joe Gordon -- Robert Gordon, FRA Office of Safety.

Steve, I believe the answer on the curve in the -- was in the program because of the number of defects. Do you have, I mean, an estimate of the number of defects, just from your knowledge, that you had in, say, the past year in that curve?

A. No. I couldn't give you a direct answer.

Q. All right. I know that recently there's been some traffic that's been picked up over there. Your annual million gross ton, do you know -- I mean, do they give you a figure on that? I know that comes into the testing.

A. I, if I'm -- last time that I really checked on it was between 55 to 60.

Q. Fifty-five to 60. Okay. And I know that goes into how they figure their test cycles.

You may have answered this. If you did, I missed it. Monday, you said that on Tuesday there were 13 defects identified.

A. Yeah.

Q. Monday do you remember the number of defects?

A. No.

Q. Okay. And I believe the other questions that I had were asked by the gentlemen before me, so that's what I'm -- I'm finished for now.

MR. HIPSKIND: Okay. Thanks, Joe.

Jimmy.

BY MR. GRUPPOSO:

Q. Jimmy Grupposo, CSX.

Steve, I only got one. Do you remember when that joint was put in that curve?

A. No, sir.

Q. No? Okay, that's all I have.

MR. HIPSKIND: Okay.

BY MR. HIPSKIND:

Q. Doing okay?

A. Yeah.

Q. Ready to continue?

A. Yeah.

Q. All right. I just got a couple of things I want to button up here. On the annual tonnage, I heard you just say 55 to 60.

A. I'm pretty sure.

Q. Now --

A. I can't -- that's not exact. I'm pretty sure that it's close.

Q. And do you think that's a annual tonnage from several

years ago or do you think this year, last year?

A. Oh, this year to last year.

Q. Okay. So a ballpark figure on the most recent annual tonnage for the calendar year?

A. Yes.

Q. Okay. So the other thing to think about is, when we use the number 55 to 60, and I understand that's just a kind of a ballpark guess on your part, that's for both tracks?

A. I would have to say yes.

Q. Okay. And the point being that where it -- not all your territory is double-tracked. It just happens to be double-tracked through a section of Lynchburg, right?

A. Um-hum.

Q. So -- yes, right?

A. Let me change that to -- that I really can't give you a correct answer on that question.

Q. On the tonnage?

A. Yeah.

Q. Okay. So I can look it up or ask --

A. Yeah.

Q. -- somebody else? Okay.

But I just wanted to point out that when you say 55 or 60, where it's double-tracked, it's not 55 or 60 on each of the tracks; that may be the accumulative tonnage for the both those tracks, right?

A. Yes.
Q. And the other point to make is, whatever the correct figure is on the tonnage, part of your territory is single track?
A. Yes.
Q. So the annual gross tonnage figure applies to everything there?
A. Yeah.
Q. Okay. That's just a distinction I wanted to get out there regarding that number. Okay.
So going back to the Monday/Tuesday test, we talked with your material handler, the guy with the big truck. Did you have any conversation with him on Tuesday about setting a plug out there or anything like that?
A. Yeah, I did. I asked him to put the plug out.
Q. So you guys had a dialogue, and this was part and parcel to a conversation you had I had earlier, you were developing a plan of what -- of how you were going to address fixing things Wednesday and Thursday?
A. Yes.
Q. And fair to say that the reason you had him to put out that 40-foot plug there was that's something you were going to take care of on Thursday?
A. Yes.
Q. And you wanted a longer piece for what reason?
A. The pilot put it -- I think he measured it out and he

told me that to get the field weld, the joint and the Sperry, I needed a 40-foot piece to get it all out. So that's why we got a 40-foot piece. I can get out -- anytime that I can take out a field weld, I take it out.

Q. Okay. And then just general engineering principles, a longer piece of rail on a high side of a curve is better --

A. Yeah.

Q. -- versus a shorter piece?

A. Exactly.

Q. All right. And CSX may have some standards on that.

MR. HIPSKIND: And Brad, maybe we, you and I can talk about that later on or whatever?

MR. SPENCER: Yes, sir.

BY MR. HISPKIND:

Q. So let's go back to the service rail failure question. When there is a service rail failure on your territory or pretty much anywhere on CSX, you guys have instructions: one, you find out about it; and two, somebody goes out and fixes it, bars it, changes out a plug, whatever's required. But the point I'm driving to is there's usually some paperwork, a report, some follow-up documentation. Is that correct?

A. Yeah.

Q. Okay. So even though you might not remember the exact service rail failure date or whatever, we can ask for records and see when it occurred and what it was and --

A. Yeah.

Q. -- all that should be there detailed?

A. Yes.

Q. Okay. Some of what we've looked at in just our preliminary examination of some Sperry data would indicate to us that somewhere on that high rail in that curve in front of the depot, there was a weld and then there was, like, a joint bar and then there was another weld, and from weld to weld was about 15 feet. And some of our preliminary information says there may have been a service rail failure between those two welds in that high rail, on the high rail of that curve in that location. Do you have any recollection of who may have gone out and made that repair?

A. I can't say for sure, no.

Q. But one of your -- one of the people that work for you, right?

A. Yes.

Q. Okay. When there is a service rail failure, if it's at night, do they always call you or is there a chance they call somebody else?

A. Usually they'll call the track inspector, and if it's a track light and he'll get the call and if he doesn't answer their call, then they'll call me.

Q. Okay. But it could be that if there was a service rail failure and they called a track inspector and he goes out there,

he has the authority to go ahead and get a crew and put a plug in or whatever's needed, right?

A. Yeah.

Q. So there's a case where you might not know about it, what, until the next day?

A. Yes, that's could happen, yes.

Q. Okay. All right. But they have to run the report and the paperwork back through you?

A. It would go through the system. When he gets called out, it's a ticket made and then that will start the paperwork.

Q. Okay. So you would have to access the system and look at the paperwork --

A. Yes.

Q. -- if you wanted to?

A. Yes.

Q. Okay. All right. Let me think here for a minute. Just in general, the curve patch that was coming for this curve, when was it scheduled to be -- when was the rail scheduled to be installed?

A. The gangs come on the 19th and I can't really give you the exact week of the program.

Q. May 19th?

A. Yes.

Q. Okay. And do you know how many curves they were going to do on your territory?

A. Yes, I do, but I cannot give you the number right now.
Q. Well, was it 1 or 10? Closer to 10?
A. It was closer to 10, but like I say, I cannot give you a correct answer.
Q. All right. So again, we can ask for the production plan and get all the data from that, right?
A. Yes. Exactly, yes.
Q. And that would be correct?
A. Yes.
Q. All right. But this curve you know was one of those curves, right?
A. Yes.
Q. All right. That's all I've got for right now, Steve. And you're doing great.
MR. HIPSKIND: Russell, any follow-up?
MR. FARMER: I think I'm good for right now.
MR. HIPSKIND: Okay.
Brad, anything?
MR. SPENCER: I don't have anything further. Thank you.
MR. HIPSKIND: Joe?
BY MR. GORDON:
Q. The last time -- you said that you were with the Sperry car Tuesday morning, had to break away for a little bit, and then you were hi-railing across the territory with some other guys. Who was that that you were hi-railing with?

A. Well, I didn't say that I hi-railed with them Tuesday morning. I said I got with them Tuesday evening.

Q. Oh, Tuesday evening? Okay. And did you guys make a hi-rail trip Tuesday evening?

A. We made the hi-rail trip -- I had a production call -- no, Wednesday. Tuesday morning, yeah. Tuesday morning I had the production call. Then I got with Joe Jackson. Then we hi-railed, and I finished the day out with the Sperry car.

Q. Okay. And when you and Joe Jackson hi-railed, do you remember where you hi-railed to and from?

A. No.

Q. You don't remember where you guys were?

A. I mean, I can go back through my records, but right now I cannot give you a correct answer.

Q. Okay. To your knowledge, did you guys hi-rail through the area where that -- right there around the depot?

A. No.

Q. Okay. And the last time that you know that your track inspector, one of the track inspectors that worked for you, the last time they came through there, have you verified that date? Do you know when that inspection was made?

A. I do. I have verified, but I don't have it in my mind.

Q. Okay. But it was on schedule with --

A. Yeah.

Q. -- regular schedule? Okay. All right. I have nothing

further.

MR. HIPSKIND: Thank you, Joe.

Jimmy, anything?

MR. GRUPPOSO: I have nothing else.

BY MR. HIPSKIND:

Q. Okay. Steve, you are in sight of the finish line, okay? And I just want to ask you some general questions. In what you're doing now, in supervision/management, do you feel comfortable doing that work?

A. Yeah.

Q. Do you feel that you are -- that you receive adequate training --

A. Yes.

Q. -- to prepare you to continue and do that work?

A. Yes.

Q. Okay. Is -- in terms of addressing rail defects, Sperry, any of the other work, production work or anything like that, do you have all the tools and resources that you need to accomplish that work?

A. Yes.

Q. You're sure?

A. Yes.

Q. Okay. Nothing on the wish list? You don't want more men? You don't want more machinery or --

A. I have the tools and resources to do my job. Do I have

a wish list? Who doesn't? But --

Q. Okay.

A. -- yes, as far as to be able to perform my task, yes, I have -- I can do my job with what I have.

Q. Some days are more challenging than others, just depending on what --

A. Every day is a challenge.

Q. Okay. All right. But, and do you feel comfortable with the cycles of production that come through your territory every so often?

A. That's part of my wish list, but --

Q. Part -- more production?

A. Yeah.

Q. Okay.

A. That would be added to a wish list. But yes, I do get a lot of help from production on the -- each year. So yes, I did get a lot of help. Do I want more? Yes.

Q. Over the years, other supervisors I've talked to, it's almost you live and die by the amount of production that you get. Do you agree with that or --

A. I say you get what you ask for. If you request it, if they say no, you know, then -- the thing is, if you don't -- that's like a lot of times I ask for a lot of things that might be on the borderline, but the only thing they can say is no. But yes, I think you get what you ask for and what you need.

Q. Okay. And in regards to the curve renewal in the accident curve, was that something that popped in on the list here of late or has that been a plan for a longer period of time?

A. That was a -- that didn't just pop in, but it was a plan from last year. So it was, I mean, at -- towards the end of last year to be able to do this year.

Q. Okay. So the way I should understand that is you guys analyze stuff and there is a lead time?

A. Yeah.

Q. I mean, you have to plan to somebody to have the material to bring out, to lay out, and then you have to have the gangs come in and then install the material?

A. Yes.

Q. Okay. Anything else you would like to add? Anything else safety-wise that you would want to add to the investigation or anything like that? Anything that you think that maybe we haven't talked about but that you wish that we would've talked about?

A. No.

Q. So you're good to go?

A. Good to go.

Q. Wasn't that bad, was it?

A. No.

Q. All right.

MR. HISPKIND: Gentlemen, anything else?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I'm good.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: No.

MR. HIPSKIND: Everybody good?

All right. With that, Steve, I will just tell you on behalf of our investigative group and NTSB, we appreciate the fact that you've been flexible. I know you've got a lot going on right now, trying to get the track back and all that kind of stuff, so I appreciate the time that you have spent, set aside to come in and talk with us. I would tell you it was important. We wanted your understanding and we wanted a little bit more detail about how you tackle some of the Sperry stuff and just in general how you go about your maintenance. So if you -- do you have anything else you want to add?

MR. BENNETT: No.

MR. HIPSKIND: Okay. With that, on behalf of all these guys, I thank you for your time and patience with us today. And also, you have my business card. You know several of these people. If in the future you think of something that you think would be helpful to the investigation, don't hesitate; you can call us up. The interview's kind of always open and we'd appreciate a follow-up if you have something to add, okay?

MR. BENNETT: Okay.

MR. HIPSKIND: All right. Thanks again, Steve.

MR. BENNETT: All right. Thank you.

(Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF:	CRUDE OIL TRAIL DERAILMENT WITH HAZARDOUS MATERIALS RELEASE APRIL 30, 2014 LYNCHBURG, VIRGINIA Interview of R.S. Bennett
DOCKET NUMBER:	DCA-14-FR-008
PLACE:	Lynchburg, Virginia
DATE:	May 2, 2014

was held according to the record, and that this is the original, complete, true and accurate transcript which has been compared to the recording accomplished at the interview.

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Karen A. Stockhausen
Transcriber