

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

* * * * *

Investigation of:

*
*
*
*
*
*

COLLISION OF AMTRAK TRAIN 280
WITH MAINTENANCE-OF-WAY EMPLOYEE
ON OCTOBER 29, 2014 IN
COLUMBIA COUNTY, NEW YORK

Docket No.: DCA-15-FR-003

* * * * *

Interview of: CRAIG WEED

Courtyard Marriott
Kingston, New York

Friday,
October 31, 2014

The above-captioned matter convened, pursuant to notice.

BEFORE: STEPHEN JENNER, Ph.D.
Human Performance Investigator

APPEARANCES:

STEPHEN JENNER, Ph.D., Human Performance Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

TOM HEBERT, Safety Task Force
Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET)

JIM FINNEGAN, Grand Lodge Representative
Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen

MATTHEW PORTO, Director of Safety
Amtrak

WILLIAM COLLINS, Signal and Train Control Inspector
Inspector-in-Charge
Federal Railroad Administration (FRA)

PAUL HRASKA, Operating Practices Inspector
Federal Railroad Administration

ROBERT WINSTEL, Signal and Train Control Specialist
Federal Railroad Administration

DAN TOTH, Operating Practices Inspector
New York State Department of Transportation

GEORGE GERNON, Investigator
Amtrak Police Department

LONNIE McMILLAN, Safety Officer
Mid-Atlantic Division, Amtrak

WILLIAM FOSTER, Senior Investigator
Columbia County Sherriff's Office

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>I N D E X</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
Interview of Craig Weed:		
By Dr. Jenner		5
By Mr. Finnegan		19
By Mr. McMillan		21
By Mr. Collins		23
By Mr. Hraska		25
By Mr. Winstel		26
By Mr. McMillan		27
By Mr. Finnegan		28
By Mr. Collins		29
By Mr. Finnegan		31
By Mr. Toth		31
By Mr. Winstel		33
By Dr. Jenner		33
By Mr. Collins		36

I N T E R V I E W

1
2 DR. JENNER: Good morning. My name is Stephen Jenner.
3 I'm a Human Performance Investigator with the NTSB. We are here
4 today on October 31, 2014 at the Courtyard Marriott in Kingston,
5 New York to conduct an interview with Mr. Craig Weed, who works
6 for the National Railroad Passenger Corporation, or Amtrak.

7 This interview is in conjunction with NTSB's
8 investigation of a collision of Amtrak train 280 with a
9 maintenance employee on October 29, 2014 at milepost 100.9 on
10 Amtrak's Hudson line near Clermont, New York in Columbia County.
11 The NTSB accident reference number is DCA-15-FR-003.

12 Before we begin our interview, we'll go around the room
13 and have everyone introduce themselves, and please spell your
14 name. Again, my name is Stephen Jenner, S-t-e-p-h-e-n,
15 J-e-n-n-e-r. I'm an investigator with the NTSB. And I'll go to
16 my right.

17 MR. HEBERT: Tom Hebert, H-e-b-e-r-t, BLET Safety Task
18 Force.

19 MR. FINNEGAN: Jim Finnegan, F-i-n-n-e-g-a-n, Grand
20 Lodge Representative, Brotherhood of Railroad signalman (ph.).

21 MR. PORTO: Matthew Porto, P-o-r-t-o, (indiscernible)
22 safety, Amtrak.

23 MR. COLLINS: Bill Collins, William Collins, C-o-l-l-i-
24 n-s, Inspector in Charge of the investigation with the Federal
25 Railroad Administration.

1 MR. HRASKA: Paul Hraska, H-r-a-s-k-a, Operating
2 Practices Safety Inspector, Federal Railroad Administration.

3 MR. WINSTEL: Robert Winstel, W-i-n-s-t-e-l, Signal and
4 Train Control Safety Specialist, Federal Railroad Administration.

5 MR. TOTH: Dan Toth, T-o-t-h. New York State Department
6 of Transportation, Operating Practices Inspector.

7 MR. FOSTER: William Foster, F-o-s-t-e-r, Senior
8 Investigator, Clermont County Sheriff's Office.

9 MR. GERNON: George Gernon, G-e-r-n-o-n, Amtrak Police.
10 I'm an investigator.

11 DR. JENNER: Okay.

12 Craig?

13 MR. WEED: Craig Weed, W-e-e-d. I'm Director of Capital
14 Construction for Amtrak.

15 DR. JENNER: All right. Thank you.

16 INTERVIEW OF CRAIG WEED

17 BY DR. JENNER:

18 Q. Basically, we were talking to different people who can
19 help paint the bigger picture and we're interested in talking to
20 you just to get an idea of the construction, the work that's being
21 done in the area of the accident. Let me just ask, what is your
22 position, how long you've been in your position?

23 A. Like, my position, I'm Director of Capital Construction.
24 I work out of the Ressenlear office. I've been in this position,
25 officially in this position since August of 2010. Basically, my

1 main task up here right now is Amtrak, in partnership with Naizda
2 (ph.) and also through FRA high speed road grants. There's, we're
3 -- we've received, Naizda received four grants from FRA to
4 construct -- we have a double track project, the Rensselaer
5 project, and then we also have this particular project I run.
6 It's the signal cross and improvement project. So and they're
7 all, they're all grants, they're all tied together. But
8 basically, I'm the oversight and the lead for Amtrak to bring it
9 from a design stage into a construction and completion. As they
10 say, cradle the grave.

11 Q. Okay. When did it all begin for this position in
12 particular? For the work that you're assigned to? How long has
13 that been underway?

14 A. I've been actively with it since about 2010.

15 Q. 2010? Okay.

16 A. Yeah, August. Basically when I came up here.

17 Q. And is there a projected completion date?

18 A. Yes. We're projected to be complete, this particular
19 project that we're on, the contractor's projected to be complete
20 by June of next year, June of 2015. Then our Amtrak force account
21 has to do some additional work. Overall, the grant overall
22 completion date is, I believe our implement agreement will be
23 modified if, because there's some of them that will need to be
24 modified, but we know overall there's a general understanding all
25 our construction activities will be complete by December of 2016.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. And they'll be fully closed out by July of 2017.

3 Q. Okay. In terms of this particular project, can you sort
4 of walk me through what it takes to get it up and running in terms
5 of staffing, in terms of training and --

6 A. Sure.

7 Q. -- bringing in people?

8 A. Sure. I mean, basically this project, this particular
9 project, there's four grant, there's four of the grants, projects,
10 we call them, tied into this project and we ended up calling this
11 project Contract S-1), which was the DOT contract signal project
12 1. And with that there was a level design.

13 We worked with NYSA (ph.) and their engineer of record,
14 which was Jacob's Engineering, that developed the contact plans
15 and drawings. And basically, you know, you look at what we can do
16 with the money that we have and we basically, the Department of
17 Transportation, with our implement agreement with the Department
18 of Transportation is to -- the Department is obligated to bring
19 the project to 100 percent design in the documents, which they've
20 done. They've prepared plans and specs, you know, with Amtrak
21 input.

22 And so we get through the whole design of how we're
23 going to build this and then basically the next phase is, in
24 conjunction towards the tail end of that, Amtrak also now, you
25 know, we start building estimates with it and figuring out how

1 we're going to staff this project and, as you say.

2 So we put together, basically, there was a staffing plan and
3 this whole, the whole -- going, stepping way back, there's a lot
4 of history up here. This division, we were never an Empire
5 Division (ph.). We were part of the New York Division. We were
6 an extension of a branch up here. And part of the whole
7 transition of Amtrak taking over, originally we only maintained
8 down to milepost -- only maintained track and structures down to
9 124, up to Hoffman's at 169.

10 Part of this whole high-speed rail program up here was
11 Amtrak taking over leasing from CSX Railroad, a long-term 50-year
12 lease from Poughkeepsie, milepost 75, out to Hoffman's for complete
13 maintenance and dispatching. And there's all agreements that go
14 with all this stuff, so --

15 Q. All right.

16 A. -- basically that's how it all starts. So we did -- and
17 at that time, it used to be just one assistant division engineer
18 up here and then back in 2010, '11 when they started to roll, and
19 I think about '11 and '12, I believe '12 is when we fully took it
20 over, in December of '12. But beforehand, they brought a, at that
21 point they brought a senior director up here, which basically
22 morphed into the division engineer, which is now Andy (ph.).
23 Before him it was Richard Bernaski (ph.)-- Butch Bernaski (ph.)
24 and Richard Bernaski, who's back down in New York is the division
25 engineer down in New York City.

1 But with that, that's where all the staffing plan has
2 started to grow. And on those staffing plans there was, for this
3 particular project, there was a, in New York charts and stuff,
4 there was a five-man signal construction gang that was developed
5 that was in that part of the overall, the numbers and the
6 developments of, you know, with everybody looking at this. And so
7 that's, with that project and discussions with, you know, with
8 Butch and then, you know, a little more with Andy as it came on
9 and all, it's just now we're getting ready to, you know, the mile
10 plans are done. We're kicking this project off.

11 My staff, what I do with my staff directly is I have
12 underneath me, I have now a vacant project control analyst and I
13 also have a senior signal engineer, who's Bill Cole, and we're on
14 the project side. But I also hired a construction management
15 firm, Baker International, and they are basically doing the day-
16 to-day, you know, with our input and stuff, but their main
17 function is to have the oversight construction in coordination
18 with the contractor. They handle all the R-5s, the submittals,
19 the schedule and the invoicing and all that type of stuff.

20 So all that has developed. Baker International came on
21 board last July, roughly I want to say July of -- it was either
22 June or July of 2013, and we just had, we slowly ramped that up,
23 knowing that we were going to be going into construction this
24 year, you know, and they slowly ramped it up and we went further
25 and further. So now they're basically at full staff right now. I

1 know.

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. So that's kind of how we look at, you know, at the big
4 picture. That's how we looked at staffing.

5 Q. Okay. Well, tell me about the challenges of staffing
6 and increasing the work force and, you know, how do you go about
7 that? How do you ensure that you get quality, qualified people,
8 trained --

9 A. Well, there's -- personally, I don't do it. I mean,
10 obviously there's -- the division, it comes out from, you know,
11 from the division and it actually probably comes down to corporate
12 too, I mean, and I can't really speak on how the numbers all come
13 about, but obviously there's discussions back and forth with my
14 brothers or sisters, who's Andy, and then, you know, his bosses
15 that are down in Philadelphia with the whole corporate plan, and
16 manpower counts and looking at workloads, you know, and feeding,
17 you know, feeding that information in, you know, and discussions
18 and projections on overall of how we're going to, you know, how
19 we're going to support these projects that are up here.

20 Q. Okay. Okay. If I talk a little more detail about this
21 particular area. We mention what resulted in discussion of a plow
22 train. Can you talk about that, what it does and --

23 A. Yeah. I mean, basically, our contractor that's doing
24 the work, Henkel's and McCoy, part of their contract was to,
25 obviously, the major the part of their contract is plowing in

1 cable. They have to plow in from milepost 75 to 138. They're
2 plowing in two conduits, standard is two conduits, a power cable
3 and the signal cable. Sometimes there's some additional signal
4 cables and stuff like that. But that's mainly what it is.

5 The train itself is, it's a plow mechanism train.
6 There's a lead car on it and there's an operator that's up in the
7 plow that has communication. He has a headset. He has direct
8 communication -- and well, before we go into that, there's a plow
9 car and then behind it they have three reel cars that hold the
10 reels, the big reels, and basically it's like a big sewing
11 machine. Well, at least the biggest one you could think, and the
12 reels come over. They come through a set of pulleys and rollers
13 down into the plow chute, depending, you know, and it's all laid
14 out in the field, you know, where the cable goes and, you know,
15 what side it needs to go.

16 The way it actually works is we do what they call a pre-
17 operation, where there's no cables going at all, where we just
18 basically we want to run the plow down and at that point, we find
19 if there's, obviously, if there's any obstructions, you know.
20 Hopefully there's none. But, you know, basically you do a pre-rip
21 (ph.) so you know where you're going through and you get it all
22 established, and it's part of the contract. They get paid, you
23 know, they get paid so much a foot to pre-rip and then they get
24 paid so much to install.

25 The power itself that pulls that plow train is supplied

1 by Amtrak. We have a work engine crew. The project pays for
2 them. There's two work train engines on it on the front and
3 there's one work train engine on the back, so it can basically
4 become push/pull equipment when we have to move it up and down.

5 So really, going back to the operator, up in there, that
6 plow does have the flexibility to move in and out. I think it has
7 cant too. I can't quite remember, and it doesn't really, I don't
8 think it really matters. But it does have the ability to move out
9 and the operator has a headset that talks, he has a headset on
10 with the engineer that has a headset, so they can communicate, you
11 know, because it becomes a very, from what I've seen of it, you
12 know, it's -- and in talking with the people, it's a finesse
13 thing. You know, you -- the operators trying to, the guy in the
14 plow, he's trying to operate his plow but, you know, you got to
15 keep a nice -- that's really how the operation works.

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. It -- so --

18 Q. Does it, do you try to cover a certain amount of
19 distance per day? Is there a goal that's set out?

20 A. Their general goal, it's really -- we estimated, we
21 basically estimated in discussions and in other projects, and this
22 isn't new to Amtrak. This is not a new, you know, this plow,
23 Henkel's and McCoy has been contracted out. I know of and, you
24 know, their most recent job with us was over on the Springfield
25 line, so I went and obviously I talked to the people over there

1 just to get a feel of, you know, I got to put an estimate together
2 here guys, you know, because there's all these support people. So
3 we basically typically figure at about 5,000 feet a day. That was
4 our goal based on knowing that we, that certain blocks, we know
5 before that, you know, that we would be able to run that plow, you
6 know, with the track out of service pretty much all the time.

7 Q. Right.

8 A. You know, versus the Springfield line had a much more,
9 you know, a lot of times they were in single main, you know,
10 Springfield line doesn't have, so they have to clear it because we
11 got to run trains.

12 Q. Right.

13 A. So here we, you know, in working with our operating
14 departments way back when, know that some of the blocks that we
15 would be able to take out, you know, let that plow sit out there
16 all day long and be able to work all day long.

17 Q. Okay. Now, I understand that track 1 for the last two
18 or three weeks was out of service because of the work there. And
19 then just recently that was put back in service?

20 A. Yeah.

21 Q. Can you walk us through --

22 A. Well, the actual days and stuff I can't --

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. -- I can give you the generalization because I was --
25 you asked me and I reached out to my construction manager for --

1 you know, there's all daily reports that I was able to provide,
2 you know, to Matt and I believe he has them. And then I just
3 said, you know, provide it, so --

4 But yes, basically the last, a lot of the plowing we've
5 been doing has predominantly been on track 1 and this particular
6 day incident we did go and, you know, we did have to go over to
7 track 2 to do basically a reroute around a rock cut area that, you
8 know, that was actually the last time I was on the project was a
9 week ago Tuesday to go look at this rock cut area because I just
10 wanted to, you know, any time we go over, it costs me additional
11 money because I have to do a, you know, and it, a lot of times it
12 makes sense, but you know, if I'm paying the money, I just want to
13 go verify it, and so we have to do a cross, a directional board
14 and stuff. But then we got, we explain it and it's like, yup,
15 that makes sense. This is why we're going over. So they were
16 basically finishing up I think the block, you know, and what we've
17 been trying to do is block to block, you know, keep regressing a
18 block up as the, you know, you start at 75 and just keep working
19 our way north.

20 So, yeah, this particular day we did come over to track
21 2 and then, you know, predominantly, I mean, and you'll see I
22 provided the records on (indiscernible). But predominantly, if
23 you start with, you know, look at the month of October,
24 predominantly we've been on track, track 1, taking track 1 out of
25 service, I should say.

1 Q. Any idea how long it would've been on track 2?

2 A. I think, generally from what I see, probably when, just
3 not knowing, you know, the exact, I would probably say a day,
4 maybe two, you know.

5 Q. Is there -- how does that information get exchanged to
6 the people, the workers on the field that we're going to be
7 switching one track to the other?

8 A. Well, there's a process in there. We have a, every
9 week, every Thursday, we request the contractors to submit us a
10 six-week look ahead schedule. And that six-week look ahead
11 schedule either comes in by Tuesday night or Wednesday morning.
12 At that point it comes into the, it comes into -- we all see it,
13 but it basically goes right to the Baker's office, you know, and
14 the Baker team puts together a two-week look ahead, what we call a
15 two-week force account RWP look ahead schedule, basically.

16 We want six weeks just so where we can see where this is
17 going so we can, you know, we can really project out, you know,
18 because we want to see the overall impacts because it comes down to
19 track usage, you know. We can't, we got to run trains so we can't
20 single line it all the way up. I would like to, but --

21 So with that, so that process comes in and Baker puts
22 together a draft, a draft two-week look ahead schedule on
23 Wednesday. It gets submitted back out to the supervisors, the
24 Amtrak supervisors and myself and a couple other people in the
25 division and our management train operation. So they, you know,

1 they consign to see the pictures.

2 On Thursday mornings we meet and the supervisors come in
3 and myself usually, typically, if I'm available to come in or call
4 in, and we basically just put the balls together. And when the,
5 going back to how do we know the contractors six-week, he breaks
6 it down in weeks on days and basically tells us roughly location
7 and roughly where we're going, you know, and what operation we're
8 doing, you know, if we're pre-ripping, if we're putting in
9 manholes or whatever, you know, whatever we're doing, it's listed
10 out on his six-week schedule.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. And so we disseminate all this. We talk about
13 protection staff levels and are we going to be able to -- you
14 know, and if there's a question of what they're doing, you know,
15 we will ask back to get further detail to fully understand what's
16 going on, you know, and supervisors and management and -- and this
17 is for all. I'm not specifically talking this project. I'm just
18 saying everything that we're doing, then we get it onto it and
19 then that's how we basically coordinate our work.

20 So then it's all basically put all back together, kind
21 of finalized, and on Friday, by Fridays, we send it out. Either
22 it goes out Thursday
23 -- or no, excuse me. It goes out Thursday night for one last
24 review and then it's everyone's got their chance to say, yeah, hey
25 or nay, you know, if we got any, you know, hey you missed this or

1 no, or whatever, you know, or something. And then on Friday we
2 publish it for the next two weeks. So then it all goes out to
3 everybody. They all have it. So that part of that is -- and now
4 there's also daily track usages, which our supervisor puts in down
5 to the PSCC, so the dispatchers get, knows what we're doing up
6 here. And Mark Campbell basically, him and Mark Campbell and Mike
7 Burns (ph.), Mark Campbell is the track supervisor. Mike Burns is
8 the AD.

9 They basically, it's usually Mark that's put together
10 the track usage, knowing, plotting it up, you know. This track,
11 today track we're going have from 7-A to 5-P, track 1,
12 (indiscernible) run X to Y, you know, and the dispatcher has it.
13 So now when the dispatcher gets the call, he looks on his track
14 usage. This is what's on here, yeah, or you know sometimes you
15 get pushed back. Like, hey guys, you got this wrong. And then
16 we'll might have to make a call. It's either it doesn't happen
17 or, you know, at that point somebody's phone starts ringing and
18 then we might talk to the manager of train operations to help. We
19 got an issue here, can you help us out?

20 But the general day-to-day is based off the two-week
21 look ahead, which goes into the daily track usages.

22 Q. Okay. And how does that information get to the, like,
23 construction foreman?

24 A. He's -- I know for this particular one he's on the, he
25 is on the email distribution.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. You know, and I make sure I have had our constructions
3 managers on the daily distributions. I'm on it. You know, so we
4 all can kind of just take a look at it and our manager of train
5 operations -- just basically we, that's how we get the
6 distribution of it.

7 Q. Okay. Can you talk a little bit about how to service
8 track requests? How do you decide how much territory needs to be
9 out of service for the plow train?

10 A. We're going block to block. We're basically going home
11 signal to home signal.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. That's what we're doing. We're leaving interlockings,
14 we're leaving the interlockings in service and we're going to the
15 approach and home signals. So, you know, and then when you go
16 through the interlocking, then it's a little tricky, obviously.
17 You know, you need to discuss and, you know, it comes a little bit
18 more coordination. But on the day-to-day, we're just taking home
19 signal to home signal.

20 Q. Okay. That's simple enough.

21 A. Taking the whole street.

22 Q. Great. I appreciate that background. That's very
23 thorough. You need a break or anything?

24 A. No.

25 Q. Okay. The questions get fewer, so --

1 A. Okay.

2 Q. -- if you need a break.

3 DR. JENNER: Let me just, before we go, we had a person
4 enter.

5 And if you can just identify yourself and --

6 MR. MCMILLAN: Lonnie McMillan, last name spelling M-c-
7 m-i-l-l-a-n, Safety Officer, Mid-Atlantic Division and I'll be
8 speaking today for Matthew Porto.

9 DR. JENNER: Very good. Thank you.

10 Okay. We'll continue questions. We'll go around the
11 room.

12 MR. WEED: Sure.

13 MR. HEBERT: Tom Hebert. No questions.

14 BY MR. FINNEGAN:

15 Q. Jim Finnegan. Yeah, I've got a couple questions. You
16 said there's a five-man signal construction gang associated with
17 this project. When it was determined that that was going to be
18 the necessary staffing level, did you put it out for bid or was
19 part of this grant was to hire those people for the --

20 A. The increase --

21 Q. -- project?

22 A. -- I believe, I don't think I can give you a fully
23 accurate question. Where we're, as far as the staffing, the
24 original staffing of all signal, the signal department increase,
25 it actually takeover because we did not have a signal department,

1 that was in the overall number of how many, you know, basically,
2 and it and came down to, what I do know, we did not know -- I
3 shouldn't say we. Butch and Greg George (ph.) and the -- Amtrak
4 on the division level was having a very tough time when we, how we
5 were going to be able to staff, not -- of getting the bodies, you
6 know. Because we, you know, you just don't make a signal
7 employee, you know. You do not, you know -- I understand, you
8 know, there's a lot of training that was involved to make a person
9 a signal.

10 So there was, the overall number was there, what we
11 wanted to do, and a lot of them float over from, my understanding
12 a lot of them float over from CSX, you know, from the offices
13 there. Where they all came from exactly, I don't know. You know,
14 I'm not overly familiar with the whole (indiscernible) request
15 operation. I mean, I do know that's one thing is --

16 But then, at that point, and I believe once they
17 finalize who actually came over, then they started hiring signal
18 helpers. But they always have a bottom-line number. That five
19 was a construction gang, not dedicated for this cable project, but
20 just knowing that we were going to have a construction work coming
21 up here with signal work to do, these overall projects, not only
22 that, but on a double -- that, you know, they identified they're
23 going to need a construction gang. So that's how that number came
24 and I don't know if it was also part of negotiations with BRS or
25 not. I don't know.

1 Q. And obviously a five-man gang isn't going to be able to
2 do that work, so was the expectation that they were going to be
3 overseeing the contract or --

4 A. Part of the -- yeah. Part of their duties were going to
5 be expectations to provide RWP protection.

6 Q. Okay. Thank you.

7 DR. JENNER: Okay. We'll move on.

8 Okay. And just identify yourself for the record?

9 BY MR. MCMILLAN:

10 Q. Again, I'm Lonnie McMillan, Safety Officer for Mid-
11 Atlantic Division. I'll be speaking for Matthew Porto. I believe
12 he's lost his voice today.

13 Mr. Weed, correct?

14 A. Correct.

15 Q. You said it was projected 5,000 feet per day?

16 A. Um-hum.

17 Q. What is the average production today?

18 A. It's -- if I had to average it, I would say we're
19 probably making that mark, maybe exceeding that mark a little bit.
20 But there's other days that we hit obstructions and, or, you know,
21 mechanical failures or loading or weather, you know, and you're
22 less. I mean, some days we've actually, you know, I've seen on
23 some days where we've pre-ripped, you know, we're into, you know,
24 13,000 feet, you know? And on other days I see, you know, you
25 pre-rip 2,000 feet, but then you see you have this obstruction or

1 you had to do this and track time, you know, if you're not getting
2 (indiscernible) time and all, you know, it comes down to, so if I
3 had to average, I would have to -- to give you an average. I do
4 know funding, why my estimate numbers are looking good. So right
5 now we -- and ironically, milepost 94, with the way the grant is,
6 75 to 94 is one grant, so I had to estimate that section and then
7 I had to go 94 to 138 as a different section. So, you know, I saw
8 where my numbers are coming in and, you know, I'm like, okay. My
9 budget's looking pretty good.

10 Q. So would it be safe to say that you're ahead of what is
11 projected? I know it averages, like you said, you could have a
12 day that you have 2,000.

13 A. I would say we're on schedule.

14 Q. You're on schedule?

15 A. The schedule. I mean, we are on, you know -- our goal
16 is to be plowed out by the end of this year and right now, you
17 know, up until this incident we were looking, you know, the way
18 the six-week look as we're going.

19 Q. How often do you come across the need to move from one
20 track to another?

21 A. It's site specific. So we basically just do on site
22 specific based off the plans -- plans and field conditions.

23 Q. Is it often?

24 A. Currently has not been.

25 Q. You said on Friday the finalized schedule is

1 communicated out to everyone. Who is everyone?

2 A. Oh, I'm sorry. Basically contractors, people are, when
3 I -- I didn't realize, generalizing people that are involved with
4 a project, contractors, supervision, Amtrak supervisors, Amtrak
5 managers, Baker, you know, Baker people involved and also the
6 Department of Transportation because they want to know where our
7 people are, where their money's being charged.

8 Q. Are foremen part of this communication?

9 A. I believe so. I'd have to look. But I definitely know
10 the supervisors are.

11 Q. All right. That's it.

12 DR. JENNER: Great. Thank you. We'll move on.

13 BY MR. COLLINS:

14 Q. Bill Collins, FRA. How deep is the average cable?

15 A. We're plowing about 64 inches.

16 Q. So with all -- if you encounter an culvert, then that's
17 an obstruction?

18 A. Correct. Right. And a lot of time if we encounter a
19 culvert, we'll, we'll lift the plow right up and we'll lay the
20 cable over it and then we'll go back down and then we'll start,
21 we'll dig it in and put it in conduit.

22 Q. Okay. Currently, you know, there's a maintenance
23 supervisor, Mark Neusome (ph.). Is there an Al Bamus (ph.)
24 equivalent up here, a construction signal supervisor?

25 A. No, there is not.

1 Q. So basically, maintenance -- goes from the ADE signals
2 to the maintenance supervisor and then to the signal gang foreman?

3 A. That's correct. In between there's also, I mentioned
4 before, there's a senior engineer, CNS, who's Bill Cole, that
5 basically assist between him and you say the ADE?

6 Q. Um-hum.

7 A. Basically then it goes down to the supervisor, correct.

8 Q. So, but the maintenance supervisor, so he has his own
9 responsibilities for maintenance of all the existing signal
10 apparatus, grid crossings and wayside, and but there's no specific
11 signal supervisor that would oversee the construction gang? It's
12 basically -- the construction gang is either on their own or
13 they're trying to answer to either Bill Cole or -- I mean, if the
14 duties are split, there's no specific construction supervisor or,
15 per se, like there is --

16 A. I think the latter of what you said is correct. There's
17 no specific construction supervisor.

18 Q. So at times, then, there -- the maintenance, like, the
19 signal maintainers are trying to provide track support for track
20 construction? There's no actual track support signal people,
21 other than maybe the signal gang might parsed (ph.) out for that,
22 but basically a signal gang is for the contractors, is that
23 correct? The construction gang, the foreman and construction
24 gang, they're basically handling plow train duties and --

25 A. They're also doing their, they're also, when they're not

1 doing the plow train duties, are also doing construction work.
2 They're also, we're also doing mark-outs, so --

3 Q. Yeah, but I mean, they're -- they're providing
4 protection for the contractor, like the cable splicer, and then
5 they're marking, going ahead and reading where existing cables are
6 and marking (indiscernible), correct?

7 A. They're supporting the project.

8 Q. Right.

9 A. Whether it's supporting doing their own work or, you
10 know, and because they are, you know -- or the contractor.

11 Q. But Amtrak did not have a specific signal construction
12 supervisor? And for whatever reason they didn't, they decided not
13 to do that?

14 A. Correct.

15 Q. Okay. No further questions.

16 BY MR. HRASKA:

17 Q. Hi. This is Paul Hraska. Just I want to follow up a
18 little bit on what Mr. Finnegan asked you. In terms of hiring,
19 since Amtrak took over from CP-75 northward, you said that a
20 number of people came over from CSX. I guess my question is
21 percentage wise of the total number, and I don't know if you know
22 this or not, how many people came over percentage wise from CSX as
23 opposed to new hires?

24 A. I -- overly, I can't answer. I believe -- I shouldn't
25 say believe, but, you know, I think it was approximately 50

1 percent. I believe, you know, I believe all the new hires are --
2 I can't answer any further.

3 Q. If you don't know, you don't know.

4 A. I don't know the numbers.

5 Q. That's fine. Okay. Thank you. No further questions.

6 BY MR. WINSTEL:

7 Q. Rob Winstel, FRA. I just have one question, at least
8 one question. Are there times when maintenance forces are used
9 for project support and is there enough maintenance, is there
10 enough people available to support the project? And if there
11 isn't enough people to support the project, is it anticipated that
12 Amtrak will hire more people?

13 A. Currently we have, based on these two-week look aheads
14 and the projections and the communications we've had back and
15 forth, what kind of factors in the look aheads, we have not, we
16 have been able to fully support all the contractors, you know, all
17 the projects that we have done. We have, you know, some projects
18 some, once in a while very, once in a while we'll have to ask them
19 to slide something into a week or something in that, but we've
20 been working on where haven't incurred any delays.

21 We will staff properly, and again, it goes down to
22 discussions and providing what we feel. And as far as maintenance
23 or construction or whatever, you know, we're basically providing
24 the people. Now what, as far as where this goes down the road as
25 far as increasing manpower up here, I can't speak for that.

1 Q. Thank you. No further questions.

2 MR. TOTH: Dan Toth. My questions were answered. No
3 questions.

4 MR. FOSTER: William Foster. No questions.

5 MR. GERNON: George Gernon. No questions.

6 DR. JENNER: Okay. I just have a couple more. If we go
7 around a second time, are there any follow-up questions that --
8 okay.

9 A couple more follow-up questions.

10 BY MR. MCMILLAN:

11 Q. Again, Lonnie McMillan speaking for Matthew Porto. Who
12 is deciding on protection staffing levels and how is that done?

13 A. Well, basically it's the supervisors having discussions
14 in the field with an understanding of where the work's going, you
15 know, where the requesting work locations are going to be for the
16 next week. The supervisors are having input on it and then they
17 are feeding that information back down with an understanding of
18 the work and it, like, and I'm going to reiterate, if there's
19 questions of the work, we don't actually sign it, they don't sign
20 or -- until the thing's done, until they understand the work. And
21 at that point, and then my understand is there's discussions with
22 their foreman out there. You know, if the supers decide this is
23 what they're going to be doing, it's (indiscernible) this is what
24 we're doing and this is what we go to do. There's discussions and
25 that's how it's handled.

1 Q. No further questions.

2 BY MR. FINNEGAN:

3 Q. I have a couple questions. Jim Finnegan. Have you
4 found it necessary to augment the five-man gang when, if something
5 came up where you needed --

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. Okay. Where do you draw from to do that?

8 A. Last week there was actually a, it was a six-man gang.
9 The last two, three weeks, based on the work operations and
10 discussions, we augmented one additional signal helper came down
11 from the Rensselaer, along with a track watchman from the track
12 department came down. So they were bringing down two additional
13 people.

14 Q. Okay. One clarification. You said six-man gang.

15 (Indiscernible) --

16 A. Oh, excuse me. One -- one plus six. I just --

17 Q. Right. Okay.

18 A. -- I got the vision of the two-week --

19 Q. So it's seven?

20 A. -- it's a seven-man gang.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. Yes. At least that's what was on the schedule. Now,
23 whether that actual day if that happened, I can't, I'd have to
24 look at the --

25 Q. So second question would be, the helpers that are

1 working now, when were they hired? Do you know?

2 A. I can't answer that. Within, you know, within the last
3 two years. I know that much.

4 Q. Okay. Okay. Thank you. No further questions.

5 BY MR. COLLINS:

6 Q. Bill Collins. I have another question. When you say
7 supervisors, does that include track, maintenance of way --

8 A. Yeah.

9 Q. -- as well? Because there's only one signal supervisor?

10 A. Yeah.

11 Q. Correct?

12 A. Usually there's a B&B supervisor, two track supervisors
13 on the Empire Division, and then a B&B track, two track, one track
14 maintenance, one track construction and one signal supervisor.

15 Q. There's a Hudson gang and there's also a Rensselaer
16 gang, is that correct?

17 A. For?

18 Q. Signal.

19 A. I believe so, yes. Yes.

20 Q. So because I know they're working west of, or in the
21 area around all -- the train station and then west of it?

22 A. Yeah. There's two headquarters. There is two
23 headquarters.

24 Q. Yeah. But my experience the Hudson gang was pretty
25 much, was all brand new helpers, if I, from what I observed when I

1 was in Hudson. They were all very, very new --

2 A. Right, I -- the --

3 Q. No previous railroad experience whatsoever?

4 A. -- I can't speak for that.

5 Q. I mean, none of the CSX men came over and worked as
6 helpers. They were all seasoned --

7 A. The foreman, well, Jimmy (ph.), Jimmy, Jr. I believe he
8 was --

9 Q. They were already, the three Novaks (ph.) are already on
10 the Hudson line. They stayed. And then you had some people come
11 --

12 A. Right.

13 Q. -- over.

14 A. Right. The helpers -- right.

15 Q. The helpers --

16 A. And again, I, you're asking me more questions and I --
17 as far as the actual help, I didn't, the helpers and hiring, I
18 wasn't part of that.

19 Q. Who was part of that?

20 A. I would assume Greg Jordan (ph.) would've had the lead
21 on that and/or possibly his boss. You know, and when they were
22 hired, I can't remember if they were hired when Butch was here or
23 if Andy was here.

24 Q. Who? Butch or who?

25 A. Andy.

1 Q. Andy?

2 A. Keef (ph.).

3 Q. Andy Keef? Okay. Thank you. No other questions.

4 BY MR. FINNEGAN:

5 Q. I have one additional. Just this is a point of
6 clarification. Jim Finnegan. You said additional signal work
7 other than the RWP. Would that be a repairing a track wire that
8 got broken or splicing a signal cable, per se, that was broke by
9 the plow plane, or plow train? Is that what you mean or do you
10 mean actual crossing installation, replacement or --

11 A. I do know that the division is out -- part of the
12 project work is Ice House Road Crossing currently being worked on.
13 And that is another project that the, you know, between the
14 construction and the maintenance folks, they're building that
15 project. And that is part in the, it's at milepost 122. Now, is
16 it, you know, and that's also work being scheduled as well.

17 Q. Are the helpers actively working on that or is it other,
18 are you drawing employees from the maintenance?

19 A. I believe it's a combination of both.

20 Q. Okay. No further questions. Thank you.

21 BY MR. TOTH:

22 Q. Dan Toth. I have a question. Now, for this project
23 you, that we're talking about two different positions here. We're
24 talking about a signal maintainer. You hired signal maintainers
25 and then you also hired signal helpers, signal maintainer helpers.

1 Is that -- there's two different positions here that you hired
2 for? They're not --

3 A. I didn't hire.

4 Q. Right. No, I understand. I know. I understand that.

5 A. Amtrak hired.

6 Q. You just said that you --

7 A. Yeah, they're, I -- right.

8 Q. But --

9 A. I believe --

10 Q. -- some were signal maintainers --

11 A. Correct.

12 Q. -- and some --

13 A. If you were a maintainer and you had maintainer
14 qualifications, you were hired as a maintainer. If you did not
15 have maintainer qualifications, you came as a helper.

16 Q. Okay. And does, I'm not sure if you know this, but does
17 signal maintainer helper, are they, they're not as qualified as
18 the --

19 A. I can't speak for their qualifications.

20 Q. Okay. All right. No more questions.

21 DR. JENNER: Do we need to clarify something?

22 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Can we go off the record for a
23 second?

24 DR. JENNER: Okay. We'll go off the record for a
25 moment.

1 (Off the record.)

2 (On the record.)

3 DR. JENNER: Okay. We're back on the record. We have
4 some additional questions.

5 BY MR. WINSTEL:

6 Q. Bob Winstel, FRA. A question for you. Can you relate
7 to the people in the room the number of signal projects that are
8 currently underway on the segment of track that Amtrak has on the
9 Hudson line?

10 A. Sure. Currently active is basically the, is the cable
11 plow signal improvement project from 75 to, milepost 75 to 138.
12 We do have small mark-out work and preparing to do from 138 to
13 160. But primarily it's just been marked-out at this point.

14 Q. Are there any -- Bob Winstel again. The question is are
15 there any crossing installations presently underway?

16 A. Yes, there is one, which is Ice House Road.

17 Q. Okay. Thank you.

18 BY DR. JENNER:

19 Q. Okay. I just have a couple follow-ups --

20 A. Sure.

21 Q. -- and then we'll close this out. When we had talked a
22 little earlier about augmenting the five-man groups to an
23 additional person or two, can you just give just some examples
24 about under what circumstances you would do that?

25 A. Well, basically, recently, we've, in the last two or

1 three weeks, maybe four. In the last place, we've increased based
2 on the contractor's request to do some -- I'm going to call them
3 fallback operations where the plow train continues to go, but he
4 still wants to dig some conduit down and he wants to put some
5 hand-hold in, so he's not working in a safe, in a position -- it's
6 basically a position that requires additional, you know, RP that
7 can't be -- so at that point we augmented, I think it was
8 augmented, discussed and augmented it's that way, so that, you
9 know, if that with two additional people, they could properly
10 support what the contractor request.

11 Q. Do you happen to know if in the area where the incident
12 occurred, was there ever a need to augment in that area?

13 A. I don't know.

14 Q. Okay. Good. Just a question about the train itself,
15 the plow work train. Let's just say, for example, it does do its
16 5,000 feet per day. Is there ever a need for that train to
17 operate within the limits just to move back and forth? Is it
18 pretty much cover 5,000 one day, 5,000 the next, 5,000 without
19 having move back and forth within the limits?

20 A. I am not understanding. I don't want (indiscernible).

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. I don't, I mean, I'm not --

23 Q. How much does that train, how fast does it go and from
24 point A to point B and then --

25 A. When it's plowing you're basically going walking speed

1 or less.

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. Because you do not want to have good momentum, because
4 if it hits something, it's going to mess things up or injure
5 somebody. So we want to go, you know, we want to be able to stop
6 and if it stops, it stops.

7 Q. Okay. So my question is even at that speed is there
8 ever a time where you need to, okay, we're going to stop at this
9 point and move it a half mile down and do some work there and then
10 move it back and, and --

11 A. Sure. I mean, if come obstructions, rock cuts, sure.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. You will, based on, yeah, based on field conditions and
14 not only field conditions, but possible design plans, bridges, you
15 know, so yes.

16 Q. Okay. So when it moves from one location to another,
17 how fast can it go or does it go?

18 A. That plow train only can do, when that plow is on that
19 train, it only can go 30 miles per hour on the straights and 20
20 miles per hour. But in the track out of service, the track out of
21 service, you're at restricted speed.

22 Q. Okay. That I should've asked you right up front there.
23 Okay. Thank you. Finally, I imagine you've had a lot of internal
24 discussions about this incident. And we're early here and you're
25 earlier in your investigation, but has any changes been proposed

1 or implement at this time as a result of this incident?

2 A. No, there hasn't.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. What is -- the only thing we're aware (indiscernible)
5 there is, you know, there's discussions of when we can start up
6 and there's discussions, obviously, of having a discussions with
7 all parties to, you know -- personally, my biggest concern is
8 everybody's head, you know, it's a tragic thing, and that
9 everybody's head is able to perform the duties that they're
10 required to perform.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. That's my concern.

13 Q. I understand. Well, we've asked you a lot of questions.
14 Is there anything that you'd like to offer that you think is
15 important for our investigation that could help us out?

16 A. No. I think you've pretty well covered everything I
17 think I could provide you for this.

18 Q. All right. Okay. Well, with that said, thank you very
19 much for being here.

20 A. Okay.

21 MR. COLLINS: I --

22 DR. JENNER: Oh, we do have --

23 BY MR. COLLINS:

24 Q. Is there anything that you could -- this is Bill
25 Collins. Is there anything you could think of that could have

1 been done differently that would've prevented the incident where
2 there might have been some form of heightened awareness and
3 training or something? Do you think there was anything, in your
4 opinion?

5 A. From what I seen and what I saw and where the location
6 was, I don't understand it. So no.

7 Q. No further questions.

8 DR. JENNER: All right. We'll end on that note. And
9 again, thank you very much for being here.

10 MR. WEED: Thank you.

11 DR. JENNER: And we'll finish up.

12 MR. WEED: Okay.

13 MR. COLLINS: Thank you.

14 MR. FINNEGAN: Thank you.

15 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF: COLLISION OF AMTRAK TRAIN 280
 WITH MAINTENANCE-OF-WAY EMPLOYEE
 ON OCTOBER 29, 2014 IN
 COLUMBIA COUNTY, NEW YORK
 Interview of Craig Weed

DOCKET NUMBER: DCA-15-FR-003

PLACE: Kingston, NY

DATE: October 31, 2014

was held according to the record, and that this is the original,
complete, true and accurate transcript which has been transcribed
to the best of my skill and ability.

Karen Stockhausen
Transcriber