

NEWSLETTER



934 Royal Court, Canonsburg, PA 15317 Office: 724-873-7333 Fax: 724-873-5733
Cell: 973-222-1300 — E-mail: zuspan@trackguy.com — Website: www.trackguy.com
by: John Zuspan, Track Guy Consultants



Some Bid Results

Track Rehab: Coatesville, PA

1.	CPR Railway Services	314,300
2.	Railroad Construction	409,900
3.	KW Reese	419,800

Switch Steel (5-#10, 2-#15)

1.	Unitrac	432,800
2.	Cleveland Track	442,700
3.	Progress Rail	474,200

Rail Spur: Griffin, GA

1.	Balfour Beatty Rail	616,900
2.	STX Corp	657,900
3.	Bullock Construction	678,700

Track Guy Consultants

We have been very busy and finished our Training Tour around the country. It was a great success again and we met some wonderful people in the Rail Industry. It is very encouraging to see some young people in attendance. The mix of the over 700 people we have trained this year is 44% Contractors, 38% Owners, 15% Vendors, 3% Designers and the demographic mix is overwhelming and truly reflects the greatest Nation in the World. The percentages have stayed about the same over the last 4 years we have been doing this. The emotional rewards are absolutely humbling and help to keep things in the proper perspective. We are doing many custom training programs for our customers also. 2009 is starting out good with 12 classes lined up



for January and February. We are doing Management Training for one of the larger Track Contractors consisting of 2-4 day sessions. We have graduated 2 groups of Managers and are working on 2 more groups. It is amazing when I look back on many of my experiences in Managing projects and asked "why me"? Why did this problem happen to me? Those questions are now coming full circle when we share experiences and I can identify with the problems and situations that happen to new Managers. It is truly rewarding when I see light bulbs go off in the young Managers. The next generation of Managers must be ready to face the new and in many cases, different challenges. The Rail Industry is booming and there is no sign of decline even in the economic troubles we may have. Rail is real and the Rail Renaissance is still going and will continue as long as we need fuel efficient transportation of people and goods.

Spotlight: The Voters have Spoken

The election is over, now what? I think I will put in for a bail out. Bailouts all around. The interesting thing is that the election seems to have turned some focus on Transportation as well as the increasing fuel prices. Of the 32 propositions relating to transportation, 23 were approved which gave funding for \$75 billion in projects. 11 of the approved measures were directly related to rail and only 3 of those failed. 65% of the money was approved for projects in California: High speed Rail (\$10b) and highway and transit projects in LA (\$40b). Another big hitter was in Seattle (\$17b). Another interesting one was the passage of \$3.7 billion for the Honolulu commuter rail system. A few top Engineers I know have already relocated there. Sounds like a nice place to do that last project if there is such a thing. In general, these projects will be funded by State sales tax increases of 1/8th to 1/2 cent. They still need the Federal share for full financing and Obama seems to be leaning toward supplying 80% of the money which is what we had before. It looks like Kansas City will not get their light rail system now and St. Louis fell short also. So what does all this mean? One important fact is that ridership on transit has been steadily increasing. Never has ridership decreased and all the new starts have exceeded their predictions almost immediately. In 1980 New York City alone was moving 3 million people a day. Now that number is 6 million. Can you imagine all ridership throughout the country doubling in 30 years? The CATS system in Charlotte has already doubled their ridership in 1-year. The planners are busy and 30 year mobility plans are in every major metropolitan area. If you do a search for mobility plans, you will be floored by the projects and the dollars assigned to them. Our new President says he will be investing big bucks into Rail transportation to help with creating millions of jobs and at the same time rebuilding our aging infrastructure to accommodate the rising population. I am not sure if it was billions, trillions or gazillions but it was a lot of money. I am still trying to figure out what comes after trillion. We must



also remember that the latest Transportation Bill (SAFETEA-LU) expires this year. Congress has a lot on their plate which makes Railroad Day on the Hill so very important. So all us Railroad Guys and Gals go to DC on February 26th. It is an experience that you will never forget and the American Short Line Association does a wonderful job of organizing the event.





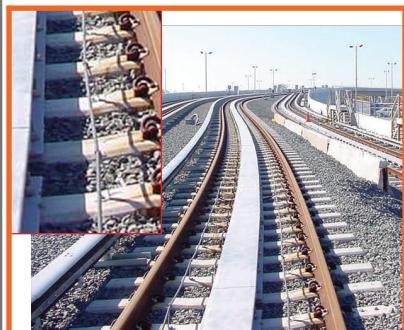
Ask The Track Guy



This is where you, the reader get to ask questions about Railroad Track engineering, design, construction, maintenance or anything to do with Trackwork. Simply write or e-mail a question and we will answer in a timely manner. Some questions will be published here.

What is Automatic Train Control (ATC)?

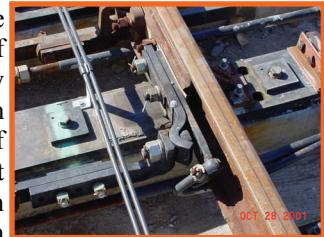
I may not be the person to ask this question since Electricians and Track Guys seem to have a love/hate relationship mainly because if there is a wire in the ground and a track guy within 1000' then the track guy broke it and it will cost 12 gazillion dollars to fix. However, I do know enough about train control to be dangerous. Simply put, automatic train control will positively stop a train if it runs a red signal, even if the operator is asleep or texting on his cell phone. Most Transits are equipped with ATC and rightfully so, since peoples' lives are in jeopardy. In the case of mechanical ATC, the rolling stock must be equipped with a physical tripping mechanism that when displaced, will automatically dump the air and the train will go into emergency braking. The track signal system must also be equipped with wayside tripping mechanisms that when in the up position, they hit the tripping mechanism on the train. Another more modern system is the CAB system that still must use the rail as the conductor to identify locations of trains. Another system uses a wire suspended from brackets. When the wires cross, that signifies a block and when a train crosses into another block that is occupied by another train, the brakes go into emergency. The more modern systems use GPS devices to identify locations of trains. The bugs still need to be worked out on this type since it is difficult to determine if a train is on track 1 or 2 with 14' track centers. Now for the commentary. The latest incident on Metrolink that



killed 29 people would never have happened if the track system had automatic train control. There was a similar incident in New England about 10 years ago where 2 trains collided. It was during the construction of the Old Colony Railroad. Immediately a rule came down that no new system can be built without ATC. It held up construction for 2 years but may have saved dozens of lives and we will never know. I have a sister and her family that live outside of Boston and wouldn't it be sad for me if 2 trains collided and my sister was on the train and wouldn't it be really sad if I made the decision to not spend the money to install an ATC system. We do have certain moral obligations when designing and building these systems. Think about it.

What is a point detector?

Wow, too many electrical questions give me a head ache. A point detector is a small box that attaches to the front rod of a switch, not the #1 rod. This is a separate rod sometimes called the foot rod. It is in the crib ahead of the points and is generally installed by electricians and in some cases will affect the throw of the switch and the proper seat against the stock rail; again with the track guy and electrician relationship. If the switch point were to open more than 1/4 inch then the rod activates the linkage inside the little black box and the signals go red. If the train were to run the red light then there is a high risk of picking the point and derailing. The installation of the detector rod usually takes place after the track guys have adjusted the switch points to seat against the stock rails. When installing the detector rod it is strongly advised that one side of the detector bolts holding the cipated bar be loosened and permitted to float until the rod is attached to the tip of the switch points. If the bolts are not loosened and the rod installed then the switch points will be out of adjustment and the track guy will be blamed for the tip of the switch point not seating properly with the stock rail. Let us not confuse this with a point **protector**. The point protector is a track guy



thing to install and there are many different styles ranging from the little steel block attached to the web of the stock rail to the elaborate and expensive "house top". Both styles work to perform the primary object of forcing the flange of the wheel away from making contact with the tip of the switch point. This inturn saves wear and tear on the tip of the switch point when almost guaranteeing a positive wheel path. So detector, protector; two completely different parts installed by two completely different people.

