



The Safety, Asset Utilization and Fiber Optic Technology (SAFT) team gather in Denver for a staff meeting. From left are Brian McCall, construction coordinator; Paul Pino, senior project engineer; Rick Holmes, assistant vice president-systems engineering; Tom McGovern, associate systems engineer; Darren Walker, construction coordinator; Dave Moser, construction coordinator; Phil Stevenson, construction coordinator; Steve Waits, construction coordinator; Gary Voogd, systems consultant; Craig Johnston, director-Fiber Optics and Asset Utilization; Joe McIntyre, manager-Fiber Optics and Asset Utilization; Mike Argo, construction coordinator; Bob Miller, construction coordinator; Tim Neumaier, construction coordinator; Clarence Styvar, construction coordinator; Mike Wallman, systems engineer; Matt Petrali, construction coordinator; and Jeff Osthus, construction coordinator.

## Staff Meeting Sharpens Customer Focus, Strengthens Bonds

Normally stationed across the country, Safety, Asset Utilization and Fiber Optic Technology (SAFT) members gathered in Denver for their first in-person staff meeting since Assistant Vice President-Commercial Technology Rick Holmes assumed his role in early 2017.

The three-day meeting allowed 18 attendees to meet more co-workers, sharpen communication skills, better understand customer needs and strengthen team spirit. Holmes presented an organizational overview of the group, which falls under his purview. He and Craig Johnston, director-Fiber Optics and Asset Utilization, commended the team's strong participation and

showing in Union Pacific's 2016 employee engagement survey.

"As with other departments, our work group sees the survey results as a gift and looks for areas that will likely have the greatest impact for our SAFT team to improve our overall effectiveness leading to great customer interactions and to our organizational success," Johnston said.

Guest speakers from area SAFT customers such as CenturyLink Communications, Level 3 Communications, Zayo Communications and SBA Communications presented new technology trends in fiber optics industry to spark ideas and aid collaborations. Business partners including PS Technology and

Breeze Broadband Communications also shared their latest outlooks, research and development, and product development.

"These meetings make everyone feel like part of the group, and this kind of information sharing allows us to find synergies among our groups," Systems Consultant Gary Voogd said.

Attendees also went on a team excursion to the Colorado State Capitol and Denver Mint, which has produced coins since 1906. The teambuilding time bolstered the group's camaraderie, Voogd said.

"We had fun," he said. "Everyone is good at what they do, and everyone's a good fit for their role."



Construction coordinators receive jackets commemorating surpassing 1 million miles of safe driving.

# Coordinators Celebrate 1 Million Miles of Safe Driving

Congratulations to Safety, Asset Utilization and Fiber Optic Technology (SAFT) team's regional construction coordinators who surpassed 1 million miles driven with no at-fault incidents April 1.

"This is a great achievement as they cover 23 states and drive approximately 30,000 miles a month combined," said Joe McIntyre, manager-Fiber Optics and Asset Utilization.

The 11 coordinators in the group are Mike Argo, Brian McCall, Robert Miller, Dave Moser, Tim Neumaier, Jeff Osthus, Matt Petrali, Phil Stevenson, Clarence Styvar, Steve Waits and Darren Walker.

To celebrate the record achieved between 2014 and 2017, UP's Safety Steering Committee presented the coordinators with commemorative jackets.

## Breeze Broadband Communications, SAFT Begin Partnership

Today, millions of Americans live in areas with little or no access to reliable internet service. Breeze Broadband Communications, Inc., is positioned to fill that void and be the leading provider of fast, reliable fixed wireless internet service to rural and underserved communities.

Breeze President Bill Wax said the company, a wholly owned subsidiary of Union Pacific Corp., will leverage the railroad's existing microwave tower and pole infrastructure to deliver service through fixed wireless connections to homes and business. This will involve interfacing with the Safety, Asset Utilization and Fiber Optic Technology (SAFT) team to coordinate use of UP's existing tower space.

"UP operates one of the largest private telecommunication

networks in the U.S.," he said. "The depth of experience its employees have with maintaining and operating a highly reliable network will be invaluable in connecting rural America."

Headquartered in Omaha, Breeze aims to offer internet access through a variety of competitive packages across UP's 23-state network. Wax said 211 markets have been identified, with the first seven being built in California, Iowa, Illinois, Kansas and Texas. The first market, located between Boone and Marshalltown, Iowa, went online May 30.

The company plans to expand into another 35 markets in the near future. To learn more about Breeze Broadband, visit [breezeinternet.com](http://breezeinternet.com).



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**- Bill Wax, Breeze president**

*This newsletter appears under direction of the IT Department. For news coverage, contact Jaclyn by phone at 402-475-6397, fax 402-475-6398, mail information to 2201 Winthrop Rd, Lincoln, NE 68502-4158, or email [jaclyn.tan@newslink.com](mailto:jaclyn.tan@newslink.com). This material is intended to be an overview of the news of the department. If there are any discrepancies between this newsletter and any collective bargaining process, insurance contracts or other official documents, those documents will govern. UP continues to maintain and reserves the right, at any time, to alter, suspend, discontinue or terminate all plans and programs described in this newsletter. This newsletter is not an employment contract or any type of employment guarantee. Any photo submitted may be used. Anyone who submits a photo retains all rights to the image. However, by submission you give the newsletter permission to use your photo(s) in all related media. Thanks to everyone who contributed to this newsletter.*



# Osthus, Waits Reflect on Service

With almost 80 years of combined service, Construction Coordinators Jeff Osthus and Steve Waits have been with the Safety, Asset Utilization and Fiber Optic Technology (SAFT) group since its inception. They reflect on their 39 and 37 years of service, respectively.

## Osthus Evolves Alongside Railroad

With 39 years of service, Construction Coordinator Jeff Osthus considers Union Pacific to be the best in the industry.

“There’s a new adventure every day; never a dull moment,” he said. “At times, there are challenges, but we work together to accomplish each project, large or small.”

Osthus began his career in January 1978 as a system survey crew member in Rawlins, Wyoming, and joined the Safety, Asset Utilization and Fiber Optic Technology (SAFT) team as an engineering inspector in 1986.

Today, he travels his territory that includes Nebraska, Kansas, Missouri and Oklahoma, interfacing with customers, contractors and railroad personnel.

A common misconception Osthus has come across is that fiber optic infrastructure is maintenance free once constructed.

“But just like the rest of the railroad,” he said, “the rail infrastructure continually changes as a result of many factors, such as customer responsiveness, product demands, competition and weather events.”

Because he says safety is his highest priority, Osthus is proud to have helped develop what is today the group’s Fiber Optic Engineering, Construction and Maintenance Standards manual. The document was originated in 1995 at the conclusion of a very successful Quality Improvement Team (QIT) initiative. It is reviewed and updated annually to ensure the latest guidelines, standards and procedures are communicated uniformly for the successful completion of fiber optic installations along railroad rights of way.

“Every day we try to take the safest course for a project from start to finish,” he said. “It’s the most important thing I can do for myself, the job and the people I work with.”

Craig Johnston, director-Fiber Optics and Asset Utilization, expresses high regard for Osthus.

“Jeff has worked with our SAFT group for about 80 percent of his nearly 40 years of service at UP,” he said. “His diverse work experience and knowledge of territories have proven to be very helpful for our overall operations and contributed to effective business relationships with our customers.”

Originally from Plattsmouth, Nebraska, Osthus’ hobbies include music, American history and outdoor sports.



Jeff Osthus, construction coordinator

## Waits Takes Safety Seriously

When Construction Coordinator Steve Waits married his wife, Gina, in 1980, he joined a railroad family. He started his career in July 1980 as a laborer alongside his father-in-law in the Fort Worth, Texas, Car Department. Today, Waits remains one of the founding members of the SAFT group.

“When I was introduced to the fiber group in 1985, I hired out as a temporary manager,” Waits said. “I guess I’ve been temporary for 32 years.”

Waits has overseen numerous projects across the U.S. in 37 years on the railroad. But his proudest achievement has been spending those years reportable injury free, he said.

Based in Fort Worth, Waits has driven more than 2 million miles in a company vehicle without an at-fault accident. He attributes this accomplishment to the Safety, Asset Utilization and Fiber Optic Technology (SAFT) family’s unparalleled focus on ensuring people go home in the same way they came to work every day.



Steve Waits, construction coordinator

“We are very, very adamant that safety is the most important thing we do,” he said. “It’s been my driving force in every action I take.”

SAFT’s daily conference call, weekly Monday call and job briefings before every single job demonstrate caring among co-workers and contractors — something Waits enjoys about his role. He also appreciates being liaison among external and internal customers, like his colleagues in Engineering, Telecommunications and Operations.

“Our work group is very proud of Steve’s commitment to safety and for his attitude that exemplifies the underlining premise of Union Pacific’s Courage to Care core values that places safety as the cornerstone of our program,” said Craig Johnston, director-Fiber Optics and Asset Utilization.

Though his territory covers mainly Texas and Oklahoma, Waits is grateful to have traveled much of the UP system. From his first project between Fort Worth and Sierra Blanca, Texas, he has remained fascinated with the advancement of fiber optic technology. He has seen landlines transition from copper to fiber optics, which yield much higher data transfer speeds.

“I like to think that we’re on the forefront of revolutionizing communications,” he said. “Consumers and other railroad departments have become much more aware of the kind of work our department does with fiber optics.”

Waits enjoys time with his wife, four children and five grandchildren. An ordained minister, his hobbies include hunting, fishing and outdoor activities.



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# Flaggers Boost Customer Responsiveness

As peak construction season arrives, the Safety, Asset Utilization and Fiber Optic Technology (SAFT) team is enlisting the help of reinforcements to keep customer projects on schedule.

Joe McIntyre, manager-Fiber Optics and Asset Utilization, said the team experienced a recent surge due to increased customer demand and elected to participate in Union Pacific Engineering Department’s initiative allowing qualified third-party contractors to perform on-track safety.

“The use of third-party contractors is determined on a case-by-case basis,” he said. “Right now, we’re seeing how well they work with our team on UP-specific projects. This helps us to be customer responsive as we coordinate our projects and complete them in a timely manner while maintaining a safe working environment.”

Flaggers may be required for protection whenever customers and their representatives are on railroad rights of way. Flaggers are not authorized to regulate train frequency or train speeds, but are provided to ensure that the track is cleared for approaching trains. Flaggers are not inspectors and cannot recommend or approve work practices or product. However, as authorized railroad representatives, they are able to shut down projects for work practices that appear potentially unsafe.

McIntyre said effective communication between regional construction coordinators and flaggers — whether they are contracted third parties or Union Pacific employees — is important to keep workers safe within the rail corridor and carry customer projects past the finish line.

“Most of the contract flaggers have railroad experience too, which makes them a valuable asset to us,” he said.

As the main point of contact for this trial process, McIntyre is learning the ins and outs of the system so the SAFT team can continue to evaluate and enhance its effectiveness moving forward to facilitate customer-driven initiatives.



*Flagging duties are performed by a railroad representative.*