



Johnston Treasures Railroad Memories

Throughout his decade as Director-Safety, Asset Utilization and Fiber Optic Technology (SAFT), Craig Johnston embraced opportunities to challenge those in his group to achieve even greater success.

“I thank and acknowledge the folks I have known and collaborated with throughout my career.”

*— Director-Fiber Optics and Asset Utilization
Craig Johnston*

Johnston retired Sept. 30 with the knowledge that his team possesses the depth of skill, understanding and teamwork necessary to safely accommodate internal and external customer requirements. He expressed his gratitude to serve alongside his team members for a segment of his 34 years of service.

“I was fortunate to lead a group of self-driven employees who, when afforded the opportunity to make things happen, prevailed with pride,” he said. “As a well-tuned business unit, we effectively adapted to the business environment of today. I thank and acknowledge the folks I have known and collaborated with throughout my career. You have my gratitude and appreciation.”

From Telegraph to Fiber Optics

Born in Caliente, Nevada, and raised in Ogden, Utah, Johnston was a third-generation railroader. His grandfather, Glen, was a telegrapher sending and receiving train orders at the Caliente Railroad Depot, while his father, Duane, was civil engineer working mainly in Nevada, Utah and Wyoming. As a child, Johnston watched his grandfather receive



Director-Fiber Optics and Asset Utilization Craig Johnston retires Sept. 30.

train orders from a telegraph machine in binary code, then hand the paperwork to train crews with a long wooden stick.

“Who would have thought that decades later, I would see and be a part of railroad telecommunications for which train orders are still given essentially in binary code, but through fiber optic cables and wireless communications?” he asked.

On April 2, 1984, Johnston joined a system rail gang as a laborer, working rail, switch, welding, curve and yard rehabilitation projects. Due to his fondness for remote high desert areas, his most memorable job was being section foreman in Gerlach, Nevada.

Entering SAFT

Following the Bell System breakup in 1984, right-of-way providers began to serve telecommunications startups that rushed to install fiber optics along rights of way. By 1987, Johnston had become an engineering inspector-fiber optics — a precursor role to

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Assistant Vice President-Commercial Technology Rick Holmes presents Director-Fiber Optics and Asset Utilization Craig Johnston a commemorative plaque as thanks for his service.

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today's SAFT regional construction coordinators — as liaison between Union Pacific and its telecommunications customers.

He moved to Omaha in 1990 to accept a SAFT assistant manager role. He was promoted to senior manager in 1999 and then director in 2007. Through dedication to safety and customer service, the SAFT team developed alliances with customers, protecting their systems and networks along Union Pacific properties. Another big achievement is SAFT's employee engagement survey ranking as one of the highest in the company.

"We gained respect through the internal and external relationships we built," Johnston said, "serving our customers' needs without losing sight of our prime railroad business."

Keeping Busy in Retirement

Johnston will enjoy more time with his son, Michael, and daughter, Kati. He also aims to travel more in retirement. Within his first month of retirement, he returned to his home state to visit southern Utah national parks, such as Canyonlands, Bryce Canyon and Zion.

Getting back to woodworking, including refinishing an old railroad desk his father gave him, is on his to-do list. Johnston also wants to pick up playing the guitar again.

"I find I have a lot more to do than I thought," he said.



Through the Years: Johnston Appreciated

"Thank you for the opportunity to convey my appreciation for Craig. Next to former SAFT Director Jim Farrell, Craig was the closest contact I had with the SAFT group. Craig has been a gentleman and a man of integrity who always had time to talk. He assisted me numerous times to reach the correct persons at Union Pacific. I will miss Craig and would like to keep in touch with him in his retirement."

— V3 Companies Director of Railroad Services Ted Niemeyer

"Craig, congratulations and best of luck in your retirement!"

Craig and I have worked together for almost 20 years now in both developing and subsequently administering the Union Pacific/Level 3 Communications ROW agreements and partnership. I could not have asked for a more willing and able partner than Craig as, collectively, we've managed through expansions of the Level 3 Network on the UP Rights of Way, various contract and billing adjustments, and yes, even the occasional contract dispute. Craig and his team have been personal, approachable, and extremely professional and have gone out of their way to maintain a close relationship with the Level 3 ROW team. This continued partnership throughout the years has been extremely beneficial to the ongoing growth and expansion of the Level 3 Network, and I dare say, has had a positive impact on the overall performance of Level 3 itself.

I will always be grateful to Craig for his leadership, his partnership, and his mature judgment during the many years that we worked together. Again, best wishes in your retirement, and you will be sorely missed."

— Senior Director, Network Infrastructure Services Steve Gordon

Don't Forget to Call Before You Dig

The Safety, Asset Utilization and Fiber Optic Technology (SAFT) group operates its own Call Before You Dig (CBUD) operation to ensure Union Pacific's rights of way are protected for placement and continued operation of customer facilities.

Call CBUD at 1-800-336-9193 at least 48 hours before a project begins. It is answered 24/7 to accommodate all emergency requests

for fiber optic locates along UP rights of way. Don't forget to also call 811, the federally designated one-call number.

CBUD allows railroad personnel and those applying for permits within the railroad's rights of way to provide ample time for the railroad and its customers to locate and protect their facilities.

This newsletter appears under direction of the IT Department. For news coverage, contact Jaelyn Tan by phone at 402-475-6397, fax 402-475-6398, mail information to 2201 Winthrop Rd, Lincoln, NE 68502-4158, or email jaelyn.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.

Neumaier Celebrates 40 Years

June 20 marked Construction Coordinator Tim Neumaier's 40th year as a Union Pacific employee.

Assistant Vice President-Commercial Technology Rick Holmes and former Director-Fiber Optics and Asset Utilization Craig Johnston recognized him for this milestone anniversary during a recent visit to review customer projects. Neumaier received the UP Shield Service Award, representing UP's appreciation for his dedication.

"Tim has worked with our Safety, Asset Utilization and Fiber Optic Technology (SAFT) group for nearly half of his 40 years of UP service," Johnston said. "His diverse work experience and sound geographic knowledge of the territories he has worked in has proved to be helpful for our overall operations and has contributed to the effective business relationships with our customers."

From Midwest to Southwest

A second-generation railroader, Neumaier began his career with the Chicago and North Western Railway's Engineering Department in Waukegan, Illinois. He recalls his first day at work in 1977 working on a surfacing gang cleaning down ties in the cutoff near Tower KO between the New Line and the Kenosha Subdivision. He gained diverse experience in 22 years — mostly in Commuter Operations' track department — in structures, work equipment and as a crane safety instructor.

In 1999, Neumaier joined SAFT as a construction coordinator interacting with fiber optic and tower customers and their contractors.

Though initially covering Illinois and Wisconsin, he transferred to the Southwest in 2005. He now lives in Tucson, Arizona, and is responsible for Southern California, Arizona, New Mexico, West Texas and Las Vegas.

Safety, Camaraderie Best Parts of Job

Neumaier oversees fiber optic maintenance, emergencies, relocations and new construction of fiber optic and tower facilities. His priority is ensuring every job is completed in a safe and efficient manner. He liaises with UP maintenance and construction departments to schedule projects and oversees protection and relocations to prevent



Assistant Vice President-Commercial Technology Rick Holmes, left, and former Director-Fiber Optics and Asset Utilization Craig Johnston, right, congratulate Construction Coordinator Tim Neumaier on 40 years of service June 20.

delays to railroad operations.

After 40 years, he said his co-workers have become a second family and know him well. Neumaier strives to bring fresh perspectives to safety for the sake of himself and those around him.

"My favorite part of the job is interacting with our customers and contractors," he said, "and knowing that, at the end of every day, we did our job safely and are able to go home to those we care about."

Neumaier promotes Union Pacific's Call Before You Dig (CBUD) program and gives damage prevention presentations at events such as Arizona 811's annual Damage Presentation and Safety seminar. In 2012, he received the National Utility Contractors Association of Arizona Mark Dryer Award.

Family Man and Outdoorsman

When not working, Neumaier appreciates time with his wife, Kathy; his daughters Kaitlin, Alison and Dana; and visiting his five grandchildren. In addition to being a sports fan, his hobbies include road and mountain biking or just enjoying the outdoors.



Construction Coordinator Tim Neumaier and his wife, Kathy



Construction Coordinator Tim Neumaier receives an award for his 40 years of service.



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Meet the CC: Argo Applauds Astros

For Construction Coordinator Mike Argo, one of life's greatest sporting moments happened Nov. 1 when his favorite baseball team, the Houston Astros, beat the L.A. Dodgers to win the World Series.

Argo, who describes himself as an Astros fan through and through since age 6, said the win was surreal. Throughout the World Series, he and his friends shared meals of shrimp, barbecue, steak and gumbo at each of their homes, cheering on the Astros. When the team clinched their first World Series win, crowds in Houston took to the streets to celebrate. This was what "Houston strong," the city's mantra in the face of Hurricane Harvey's flooding and damage in August, meant, he said.

After the game, Argo's friends lined up at a local sporting goods store until 2:30 a.m. so they could buy World Champion hats.

"They waited in line like it was Black Friday," he said. "My wife goes to bed, and my friends and I are still hootin' and hollerin'."

Picking Up a Railroad Tradition

Both Argo's grandparents worked for the Missouri-Kansas-Texas Railroad, affectionately known as the Katy. His parents met at a railroad company picnic. Railroad employment, however, skipped a generation until Argo joined Southern Pacific in 1980 with MofW department. He had been a laborer, driver, motor car operator and track inspector by the time he transferred to Safety, Asset Utilization and Fiber Optic Technology (SAFT) in 2005.

Now based in Houston, Argo oversees customer projects in Texas from Palestine to Brownsville and Orange to El Paso. His MofW experience comes in handy when working along the main line tracks connecting yards in Austin, Beaumont, Houston and San Antonio. Thanks to his current role, he has traveled extensively in the U.S. to assist with various projects.

"Before getting this job, I had never been anywhere north of the Red River," he said. "When I flew to Omaha to get my truck, finding my way back to Houston with Google Maps printouts was

a funny adventure."

Safety and the Human Connection

Driving safety remains on Argo's mind when traveling. Like the 10 other construction coordinators on the team, he is proud of their 19-year reportable injury-free record. He does a 360-degree walk-around before each trip and keeps his truck windows clean to ensure good visibility. When working with others in the field, he ensures proper clearance and PPE are in place. If something is potentially unsafe, work stops.

Keeping people safe is a focus for Argo because people are important to him. That's why he has kept in touch with train dispatchers with whom he has worked for close to two decades. He celebrates their birthdays with cookies and donuts. One time after learning a dispatcher was a fellow fisherman, Argo brought him flounder fillets to show his appreciation.

He is thankful for building similar bonds with his SAFT family. "When my house was hit by Hurricane Ike in 2008, two of the guys in our group came down and helped me remove trees," he said. "As far as I'm concerned, I'm in the best and most caring group in the entire railroad."



Originally from Eagle Lake, Texas, Construction Coordinator Mike Argo is a Houston Astros and New Orleans Saints fan. He has been married to his wife, Dena, 27 years, and they have a daughter, three sons and two grandchildren. "I'm blessed to have every one of them," he said.