

THE NICKEL CITY DISPATCH

NEWS FROM THE NICKEL CITY LINE RAILROAD

JUNE 2014

MAJOR SNOWFALL THREATENS NCL OPERATIONS



Despite the wrath of Mother Nature in January and February crew members ventured out in the freezing cold to staff the first Sick or Retired (SOR) ops session in January and a regular ops session in February.

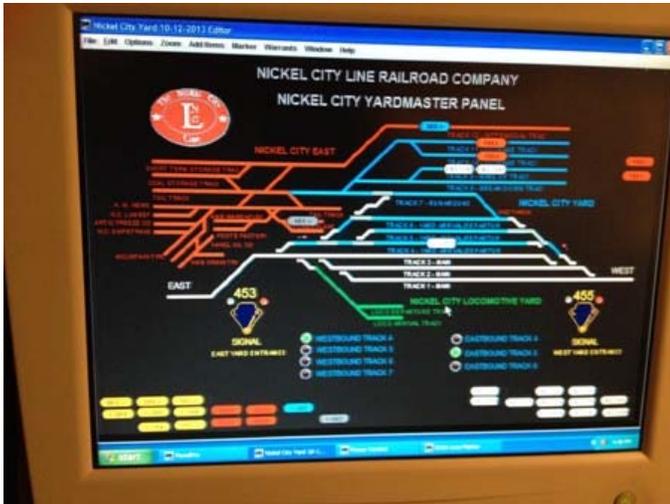
A Special Ops Session on January 11th was full of activity that left Nickel City Yard busting with cars for the second session that month. The second January session continued the busy pace but by the end of the day the yard engine had successfully cleared many cars from the yard and sent them on their merry way on outbound trains.

February's session proved a challenge as snow occupied all on street parking. Crews had no meet at a nearby shopping center and then carpool to the session due to limited parking. Despite the logistical issues, 106 cars were moved during this period. The yard crews were busy sorting and assembling consists. In the end, everything had been taken care of except Train 305 (enroute at the session's end) and

Train 204 (awaiting it's final cars at the yard). Those two trains wrapped up their runs at April's session.

YARDMASTER'S PANEL GET FACELIFT

A cold and icy afternoon IN December was a good time for the IT folks to update and modernize the Nickel City yardmaster's panel. The new panel includes color coding for yard, industry and locomotive tracks. Mainline tracks and turnouts show block occupancy. Turnouts in the yard are now route enabled so a single button push will align the turnouts to the appropriate track. Lastly, there is sound feedback when buttons are activated on the computer display. A successful day in spite of the weather.



NICKEL CITY DOES THE BIG DIG

In February we started a two month project where we exposed almost 6 feet of hidden trackage on the west end of



Exposed track west of Nickel City

Nickel City. A new stone bridge and additional structures were added. The tunnel between Nickel City and Sheppardsfield was shortened to 3.5 feet in length and the rail grade was realigned to correct an error made during the initial construction of the layout. In addition, the single track bridge on the Ca-

nova Grade has been lowered slightly on one end to eliminate the "hump" on that end of the bridge.



A new stone bridge replaces some of the waterfall and view block previously located in this area.

These improvements were well received by train crews at the April ops session. It was a big project that took a lot of planning and time to complete but the results were

well worth it.



Above and below: the new finished scenery west of Nickel City includes a new warehouse, a stone bridge, rock faces and a number of new trees.



SIGNAL WORK WRAPS UP ON THE NCL.

By the end of February the NCL had completed installation of all signals on the mainline and in Nickel City Yard. In early January, additional supplies were acquired to begin construction of the next set of signals on the railroad. Work crews successfully constructed, installed and tested 4 new signals. The single track territory between Sheppardsfield and Underwood now had the final set of signals installed between Laurel Valley and Mills River. At Nickel City Yard, work crews installed the new East end and West end Yard Approach signals. These are controlled by the Yardmaster and allow / prevent trains from entering Nickel City Yard with Yardmaster approval



Dwarf signals in NC Yard.

Then work crews wrapped up signal work on the East end of Nickel City Yard. Dwarf signals for the Arrival / Departure tracks were installed and tested. The IT Department wrote the Logix for the signals and implemented it by the end of the day. The new dwarf signals interact with the mainline signals, telling the engineer when to depart the yard and at what speed based on conditions down the line. The West end yard departure signal was fully interfaced with the mainline signals so departing engineers must obey the signals at all times.



Above—A signal indicates “clear” between Mills River and Laurel Valley.

Below—West departure signal from Nickel City Yard.



Control of yard lead turnouts 17 and 22 was transferred from the Yardmaster to Dispatcher control. This will better interface with the mainline signals and prevent trains from departing the yard until authorized by the Dispatcher.

On January 26 work crews successfully installed the East Staging Yard signals and tied them into the computer signaling system. On February 9 work crews installed the final two signals at the departure point from the West Staging Yard. That successfully completed all signal installations on the layout.

The signal logix will be evaluated over the next series of ops sessions. Until signal control is fully implemented engineers will operate under modified signal rules combining signals and track warrant authorization.

NEW PABX PHONE SYSTEM IMPROVES COMMUNICATION

In January workers successfully installed and tested a new PABX (Private Automated Branch Exchange) phone system for the railroad. The PABX system is an internal phone network. The Dispatcher, Yardmaster and Hostler now use regular phones to communicate with each other. The new PABX phone system was up and running at the January 22nd Ops Session providing the Dispatcher, Yardmaster and Hostler with a regular phone system to talk to each other. The old cordless system has been disbanded.



The new PABX phone system has eight internal lines and one external connection. The NCL does not use the external connection and currently only uses three internal connections for the dispatcher, hostler and yardmaster.

Everyone who used the phone system enjoyed the simplicity of it as well as the familiarity that standard landline phone have.



Right: The Dispatcher's phone connected to the PABX network.

EMPLOYEES EARN CERTIFICATIONS IN FIRST HALF OF 2014

A couple of employees have earned certificates in the first half of 2014.

In January two certificates were awarded to employees who completed hours in certain categories.

Bryan K. earned his Yardmaster certificate .

Mat T. earned his Dispatcher certificate.

Congratulations to Bryan and Mat.

SCHEDULE ADJUSTMENT TO EMPLOYEE BULLETIN 57

Effective January 15 Trains 211R and 212R have been added to the timetable. EP57 has been updated to reflect this change.

2014 NICKEL CITY LINE OPERATIONS SCHEDULE

June

June 14, 2014—1p to 5p

July

July 27, 2014—7p to 9p

August

August 13, 2014—7p to 9p

September

September 20, 2014—1p to 5p
NMRA Ops Session

October

October 8, 2014—9a to 1p

November

November 16, 2014 1p to 5p

December

No Session—Happy Holidays