

Working in Three Time Zones

The summer of 2012 will go down in Hamilton history as the year the plan came together. Five years earlier, with the U.S. economy crashing and budgets for bridge work in Oregon drying up, the leadership at Hamilton realized we'd have to approach business differently if we were going to keep Hamilton's talented group of employees together. So quietly and without a lot of fanfare Hamilton began looking at ways to leverage our reputation and skillset to expand into new areas.

This summer we began to enjoy the fruits of that forward thinking. At the peak of this summer's construction season we had more people working than the five previous years. With Hamilton crews replacing three bridges in Alaska, the HCo rail division doing change outs in Idaho, more scheduled in Utah, and by putting feet on the ground with the opening of a Colorado office, Hamilton—in its usual action oriented way—has achieved measurable success in finding work in new

places. Add to that, two significant new customers (the Army Corps of Engineers and the Port of Vancouver) as well as seven ODOT jobs in Oregon where we keep the home fires burning and you see the pattern as Hamilton emerges from a storm that has reduced construction jobs nationally from 5,554,000 to 2,172,000.

But success comes with its own challenges. And in this issue of the Herald we talked to employees who are learning what it's like to be part of a company working in three time zones.

"It all comes down to respect."

Perhaps the biggest challenge of all is learning how to adapt in a way that allows us to maintain what we do best while at the same time adjusting to meet expectations of new customers. "It all comes down to respect," said Chris VanderPloeg who provided leadership for the Westmoreland Phase I Army Corps of Engineers project this summer. "The Army



Chris VanderPloeg explains the environmental restoration portion of the Westmoreland Fish Passage project.

has processes for assuring safety and quality that were different from my experience with ODOT jobs," Chris explained. In addition, the project was also being closely monitored by several bureaus of the City of Portland, and a clear priority for both was making sure needs were being met of local residents who spent the summer "at ground zero" as one resident termed it. Said Westmoreland resident Andrea Leal, "The only way this situation would have been perfect was to figure out a way to do construction silently and without dust. I hesitate to go so far as saying I'm going to miss the wake-up call every morning when the trucks started up on the nose at 7 a.m., but I will say Chris was incredibly responsive, answered phone calls, and was personable and professional. In short: He was great." Chris and his team's respect of owners and neighbors alike paid off when the Corps awarded Hamilton Phase II of the Westmoreland project for next year.

The Northern Exposure

Robert Fletcher, reporting in from Alaska where it was eight degrees Fahrenheit as the final concrete was being poured on the Trail Bridge, said Hamilton's extensive cross training of its craftspeople took some getting used to by other workers who came onto the job from Alaska. "It's our nature at Hamilton to be able to do a little bit of everything," Robert said, "and

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Hamilton Rail crews successfully accomplished change outs on the Union Pacific rail line in Idaho outside of Pocatello.



Record breaking snow in Alaska greeted Hamilton crews



Robert and Margo Fletcher, along with dog Randy

WRB Exceeds 80,000 Injury Free Hours

This crew is building the largest ODOT bridge project ever undertaken in the State of Oregon and they are doing it without injuries. Pictured here at a lunch celebrating 50,000 hours of injury free work — at publication the hours have now surpassed 80,000! Keep it up WRB!! ■

WRB staff at summer safety luncheon.



Morning Stone: A Wilderness Lifestyle Leads to Bridge Building



Any story told about Morning Song Stone, a laborer at the Willamette River Bridge (WRB), needs to start with an understanding of her unique upbringing. About a month after Morning was born in Gold Beach, Oregon, her parents moved their young family to a homestead located six miles into the heart of the Kalmiopsis Wilderness Area in the Klamath Mountains of southwestern Oregon. Accessible only by hiking or horseback—and without electricity—the Briggs Ranch was 79 acres lush with vegetable gardens, pastures, fruit trees, and a host of a livestock including horses, dairy goats, pigs, chickens—all the essentials to support life off the grid for a family of five.

By the time she was eight or nine, Morning was as wild as the countryside. Disappearing for days at a time by herself she would head off into the woods—tracking, hunting, trapping (mostly bobcats, but also coyote, and fox), and fishing in the wild and scenic rivers head watered in the Kalmiopsis. Homeschooled and hardworking she and her two siblings learned how to garden and do home canning, activities she enjoys to this day.

In looking back at her upbringing, Morning said, “Maybe not everyone would see it the way I see it, but I feel like I just got a lot of insight about nature. It was disciplining to do that much hard work. A life like that gives you the confidence you can handle any situation.”

Influenced by her love of the outdoors, Morning turned to the jobs that took her back to the wilderness she loves to this day. “At 15, I started building and maintaining hiking trails and building trail bridges for the U. S. Forest Service,” she recalled. She worked in fishing lodges, led pack horse teams into wilderness areas to bring supplies for the forest service work crews, and even did some forest fire fighting.

In 2003, she joined the carpenters union, and that was when she started doing her first

bridge work—checking grade was her job.

By the time she arrived looking for work at Hamilton’s Eagle Mill—Neil Creek job outside of Ashland, almost four years ago, Hamilton Chief Estimator (then project manager) Neal Spoon recalls that Morning had amassed an impressive resume of bridge experience having worked for Wildish, Copeland Sand & Gravel, Carter and Company, and Roy Ladd Construction out of California. “One of the first days out on the job, Bob Fletcher and I were watching her,” Neal recalled, “and she was out there whipping around a three-inch grout hose like it was a little garden hose, and at that point we looked at each other and agreed, yep, we hired the right person—she’s tough!” Neal said.

At WRB Morning says she enjoys the variety of the work. “I help do carpentry, cleaning up things, cutting and welding, forming things up, just about everything except operating a crane,” she said.

WRB Project Manager Con O’Connor says. “Morning is very tough, and she’s always willing to pitch in, and she always has a smile on her face.”

Morning feels she has good reason to smile. “I like the people I work with, I love staying active, I

love there’s always something new every day,” she says about her job. She said that it has been especially satisfying working at WRB this year as the crew can glance over at the first completed arch spans. “It reminds you where all the hard work is headed,” she said.

Married to Hamilton pile buck Jason Stone, the two commute to their home in Agnes, Oregon and share a son—Rowdy—age seven. Morning also has twin sons now 18 attending Southwestern Oregon Community College in Coos Bay this fall. They all enjoy hunting and four-wheeling. ■

Oct/Nov/Dec Anniversaries

Bob Sherman	25
Bob Klein	22
Jack Young	21
Mike Phillips	11
Bryon Genz	10
Frank Martin	9
Judy Betts	9
Dave Weinhold	8
Virginia Watson	8
Kasey Lebechuck	6
Bonnie Simpson	5
Guy McAllister	4
Greg Blakeley	4
Brad Morgan	4
Noel Liemam	3
Teresa Corona	1
Nick Randall	1

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that was different than what the locals were used to. But now everybody is getting along great and a lot of the guys here are awe-struck by how good Hamilton treats their employees."

Robert pointed out that Hamilton showed up in Alaska "for the worst winter ever: most snow ever, a 100-year flood; a typhoon that blew up to 160 miles an hour, and a 4.7 earthquake just as we were launching girders on Falls Creek Bridge." But despite the extremes of the weather, Robert said the warmth of the Alaskan people has made everything a good adventure. "The locals are nice and easy to talk to," Robert said, "And in typical Hamilton fashion, we've become involved in the community." Robert's wife Margo joined him in Alaska for the summer and has become very involved in the Animal Rescue Center at Seward. Another example of becoming part of the community was the crew saving up broken timbers and donating them to local people in need of firewood. "We get lots of compliments from the



Dave Weddle: "Hamilton sets a high bar!"

locals and from the people at the DOT," he said. And best of all Hamilton, finished the bridge work on time and before the harsh winter weather took hold.

"It's an environment of extremes up here and you're gonna love it or not – but for my friends at Hamilton, tell them I couldn't imagine having missed this opportunity.

Rail Division in Idaho

In Montpelier, Idaho where the rail crew worked for five months, more than 12 hours away from home, and two hours from another city, Dave Weddle said that rounding up qualified vendors and suppliers was the biggest challenge. "We're so spoiled when we work in Oregon because everyone knows us. Out of state, we're just another contractor. But,



Craig Almont (with white hat) pictured here with the seniors of his winning football team.

it didn't take long for the local vendors to find out that Hamilton sets a high bar," Dave said. "I came in with all my welding lists, everything nailed down in advance in terms of what I needed down to the smallest detail, and the supplier was blown away. He'd never seen so much advance planning."

Change Outs Completed On Time and a Winning Football Team Too!

The ability to have some fun and quickly become part of the community seems to be a common theme wherever Hamilton worked this summer. The best example of that involved Craig Almont, Hamilton's Rail Project

Engineer, who was invited to help coach the local Montpelier football team. The smallest school in the league with only 300 students, the team had not won more than two games in a row for more than ten years. Craig, who played college football at Central Washington, soon found himself named as assistant defensive line coach, offensive line and line-backer assistant coach. And at the end of the season the team made it to the playoffs in Pocatello. "There are a lot of good kids here. And the coaches have been so nice, taking me in and making me feel at home. I was sad to leave!" Craig said. ■

American Concrete Cutting Donates \$10,000 to Celebrate Four Years of Safety

Hamilton subcontractor American Concrete Cutting celebrated four years and 100,000 no-injury work hours with a donation that will also make life safer for the 175 students, staff and parents at Coburg Community Charter School.

As Coburg Community Charter School Executive Director/

Principal Terry Hoagland explained, the \$10,000 American Concrete Cutting donation will allow the school to improve its student drop off and parking area. "The money will be used to expand the drop off area to two lanes, which will reduce to zero the number of cars that have to

be waiting on the road when parents drop off their students in the morning," Hoagland said. "The whole point of this is safety for the community, parents, and of course the students. This is a great contribution to our program."

Eric Hill, General Manager of American Concrete Cutting (ACC), said the ACC employees are excited to be giving back to the community. "This is a win-win situation for all of us," Hill said, "We've successfully created a culture where we send our people home safely every night after work...and now we can give back to the community where we live and work as well. This is quite an accomplishment to put in 100,000 hours without a single loss time injury. I am proud of our people." ■

Announcing the Hammies!

At the Hamilton Annual Meeting, plans are being made to announce a new safety recognition award to be known as "The Hammies".

Throughout the year if you see a colleague going above and beyond what's expected to make Hamilton a safer place to work—be sure and nominate your colleague for a Hammie award.

Hamilton's Safety Managers Dave Holland and Rich Carden will be talking more about the new award at Tool Box talks throughout the year. ■



Back row – left to right: Terry Hoagland (CCCS), Russ Felsing, Pete Manzone, Roger Downard, Janel McPherson (CCCS), Eric Hill, Tim Downard, Jeff Gates, Dave Owsley & Rich Dugan. **Front row – left to right:** Stefani Myers, Ethel Seaman, Ben Moen, Greg Booth, Rick Garrick & Jason Tipples.

PARTNER'S MESSAGE

Thanks to all of you for your efforts and contributions to yet another busy and successful construction season. As you can see from this letter and other news, 2012 has held many new and diverse opportunities for the Hamilton Family. With contributions from each of you and your winning ways the positive results have shone through brightly once again.

As generally is the case, some of these opportunities came with a few bumps and potholes in the road. This required people to step out of their comfort zone; but in the end all have excelled, and we are truly grateful for the performance of our team.

Hamilton continues to invest in our collective future. Like most good long-term goals, the real results are not seen imme-

diately, but rather they take some staying power to reach. We are positioned well and while we have seen some good wins, we are confident Hamilton will see many more long-term victories in the upcoming year. Unlike gambling that can quickly yield big gains and equally big losses, true investments are for our future. Examples of these start with training of supervisors and field leaders and then move to education and training of all employees throughout the year. You all can expect a busy year ahead.

Some projects are slowing down for the winter season while others are gearing up. Overall, much work remains to be completed. In addition, we are looking closely at some upcoming bids. In the next six months we are seeing more projects that fit our target

markets to bid then we have in most of the past months. These are in a number of areas throughout Oregon as well as Washington, Alaska and Colorado. The HCo Railroad group has a number of upcoming projects that include some as close as Harrisburg and as far away as Idaho. In addition, American Concrete Cutting and Bridge Access Specialties are looking for more employees in anticipation of a busy 2013 as well.

For those of you that wish to learn more about current and future opportunities and successes you will not want to miss "60 Minutes Hamilton Style" on Friday December 14, when we will host an "all invited" review and celebration of the year. We would be pleased to have you and your



guest join us at 3:30 PM in the Wilder Room of the Eugene Hilton for a quick presentation and lively discussion that will end at 4:30 PM with time to get ready for the party.

Best wishes for you and your family this Holiday Season, Here's to a prosperous 2013. ■

*Have a Merry Christmas,
Bob Sherman*



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