

Central Oregon & Pacific Railroad wins safety award

by Bend_Weekly_News_Sources

Harriman Award is First-Ever Recognition for the Short Line Company. Locomotive Engineer James Armstrong is also nominated for the Hammond Award.

RailAmerica, Inc., a leading operator of regional and short line railroads, stood proud May 17 as its Central Oregon & Pacific Railroad (CORP) accepted the Silver E.H. Harriman Award for an impeccable safety record in 2006. It was the first time a RailAmerica road won a Harriman honor.

The E.H. Harriman Memorial Award was established in 1913 by Mrs. Mary Harriman in honor of her late husband "a railroad pioneer" and to recognize and encourage outstanding safety initiatives in the railroad industry. It is divided into three groups based on man-hours and an additional group for switching and terminal companies. Group C, for which CORP was nominated, is comprised of roads with 250,000 to fewer than 4 million man-hours.

"Today, we celebrate a double honor in terms of safety," says Preston Claytor, RailAmerica's Vice President of Safety and Operating Practices. "Not only has CORP won the Silver Harriman Award in their group, but their locomotive engineer, James Armstrong, was nominated for the Hammond Award. We are extremely proud."

The Harold F. Hammond Award "named for the former Transportation Association of America president" is presented in conjunction with the Harriman Awards and is given to an individual who demonstrates superior safety achievements.

Armstrong, a former firefighter, has been with CORP for 12 years, and has worked injury-free during his entire tenure there. In addition to his regular duties and eagle-eyed attention to safety, he is a qualified Operation Lifesaver presenter, regularly teaches crossing safety in schools and is also certified in CPR and first aid. Thanks to his efforts, CORP attained an impressive FRA frequency rate of .71 for 2006.

Adds John Giles, RailAmerica's CEO, "I congratulate CORP and James on their success at keeping safety at the forefront of their everyday duties; I am very happy to be associated with such a terrific group of hardworking people."

RailAmerica, which was acquired by Fortress Investment Group earlier this year, recently reorganized into five operating regions for more streamlined communication, safety and business goals.

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