

Vinton Construction from Manitowoc has just about completed the removal of all the old rails and ties from the Plymouth to Kohler line. This is the former C&NW Line originally constructed in 1857 to 1859. They have also done preliminary grading of the old ballasted road bed. Photo enclosed shows a CAT excavator loading the last of the scrap steel and rails at Clifford Street crossing. Some of the rail being loaded had dates on it from 1889! All the old ties are stockpiled at Clifford Street in Plymouth and Poplar Street in Sheboygan Falls. Arrangements are being made at this time to transport them to an electrical generating plant, where they will be burned to produce electricity. It is interesting to note that the US railroads replace approximately 15 million ties each year! On the north/south line which runs from Milwaukee, through Plymouth to Elkhart Lake, (former Milwaukee Road Line) the 55,000 old ties which were removed last year and stockpiled along the right-a-way are being gathered and stockpiled into huge piles starting at Cty Road J transload site and now at the Plymouth railroad yard. Work is being completed by a firm called National Salvage & Service Corp. from Bloomington, Indiana. They should be currently near Waldo picking up ties. It is assumed these ties will be used to produce electricity.

Also, on the north/south line Wisconsin Southern Railroad crews are spreading new ballast and resurfacing the rail line. With the new ties in place and resurfacing completed the line now looks better than it has since the 1960's. Goal is to be able to increase the speed limit to 25 mph. Photo of the resurfaced line was taken just north of Random Lake where the WSOR crew was tied up for the evening. On Saturday evening April 26, there was a train which left Plymouth heading south which had 57 cars. Yes, that is correct! 57 cars! WSOR had 37 ballast cars in town, which were empty. They had dropped all the ballast north of Random Lake to just south of Waldo and pulled the empties into Plymouth so they could run around the train with the two engines. But while in town they ran up to Elkhart Lake and picked up 20 bulkhead center beam flat cars which had been in storage, and brought them into Plymouth, where they were added to the 37 ballast cars. The train left Plymouth at about 10pm. I have enclosed a photo of one of the ballast cars. It is interesting to note, all the bulkhead center beam flat cars, when they went into storage were painted a red color and labeled as being owned by AOK. (Arkansas-Oklahoma Railroad, a 73 mile railroad which operates on property owned by the State of Oklahoma) When the most recent 20 cars were removed from storage on April 26, they are now "pink" on color (faded red) and labeled as being owned by NOKL. (Northwestern Oklahoma Railroad) While they were in storage north of Elkhart Lake the ownership changed and someone had to re-stencil all the cars before they were moved. About this time last year over 200 bulkhead center beam flat cars were removed from storage, and they were re-stenciled for Union Pacific. Their ownership had changed from AOK also. More updates are to follow, as work progresses. Goal of State DOT and WSOR is to be able to service Bemis Manufacturing with direct rail service by December of 2014.

Jerry Thompson
Railroad Services Coordinator
City of Plymouth

Saturday, May 10, 2014



