



The Finishing Touch

Volume 8, Issue 1

January, 2006

Featured Project Norfolk-Southern Railroad – Elkhart, Indiana

Norfolk Southern Corporation operates approximately 21,300 miles of railway in the Eastern United States and Ontario, Canada. Along with CSX, Norfolk Southern pretty much controls the rail system in the United States east of the Mississippi River.

In March of 2005, Kent Companies of Northern Indiana began Phase One in the replacement of the locomotive repair shops for Norfolk-Southern in Elkhart, Indiana. Kent Companies teamed with The Milord Company, the general contractor and engineers for the project. The close tolerances required for the rail placement and the fact that Kent Companies' employees were working below and within 30 feet of live railroad tracks made daily tasks a challenge.

Phase One consisted of a new locomotive service and fueling center, a 400 foot long building housing two parallel sets of railroad tracks. Two pits run from one end of the building to the other and are crammed full of piping, venting and lights (one every 6 feet on each side of the pit). The building may not seem that impressive, but when you stand on one end and sight down the tracks it gives you a completely different perspective. Locomotives are driven through the center where they are fueled, serviced and recharged with sand (for stopping and traction). The facility is located in the heart of a five mile long complex with at least 40 sets of tracks running side by side. At any given time, one or two slow moving, or stopped trains blocked access to the site. It was extremely hard to get concrete deliveries on site in a timely manner. The on schedule completion in October of 2005 and Kent Companies technical know how really impressed both The Milord Company and Norfolk-Southern Railway. Thanks to Willy and the crew.

Phase Two was started as soon as the excavators were able to backfill the walls on Phase One. Phase Two is called a Rapid Repair Facility and is known in the railroad business as a "drop table" pit. The locomotives are driven over the pits where all maintenance work on motors and transmissions are performed from below. If drive components need to be removed from the locomotive for repairs, the table, tracks and locomotive can swing out of the way providing additional access to the pit.

www.kentcompanies.com

If you haven't visited our web site in a while, you should take another look. Matt Fennema and several managers from Kent have been working hard to update the site. Many newer projects have been added. There is also a new section for employee forms you can download (like dental reimbursement claim forms) and links to employee related sites (like the Huntington 401(k) web site).



Above is the completed fueling and service center. Below, heavy duty piers and platforms support locomotives being repaired.

