

## Structured Problem-Solving

Written by Tim Smith, Operations Manager for D&I Railroad



Just as the recent flooding was occurring in the Midwest Division, I attended a class hosted by the Short Line Safety Institute and presented by the SmartForce Group. While it was difficult to be away during this challenging time, the topic of Structured Problem-Solving was extremely relevant in this age of daily data overload. It may be easy to do what has always worked rather than take the time to investigate the root cause or find a real solution to a problem. Many times, we only fix the symptoms or in some cases the wrong problem!

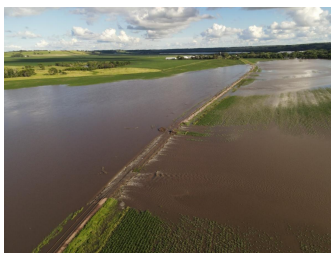
As you approach a problem, consider the following five problem-solving principles:

1. Slow down to speed up – do a quick analysis and really understand the issue.
2. Get to the root of the problem – ensure that you aren't just fixing symptoms.
3. Apply divergent and convergent thinking – involve others and brainstorm ideas.
4. Employ hypothesis-driven analysis – use your experience, but avoid over-analyzing.
5. Lead to action – develop a plan and execute it.

As flood recovery progresses, these strategies have helped me make quality decisions. We all have mountains to climb in the upcoming days, weeks, months, and years. How we safely climb these mountains as a team is what makes us Rock Solid!

“The only difference between stumbling blocks and steppingstones is the way we use them.”

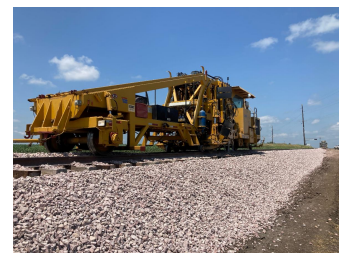
-American Proverb



Flood water flows through the roadbed near Canton, SD.



D & I operating crews, LGE Maintenance of Way, Herzog and Niewohner Construction working together to begin the recovery process.



Ballast tamping in progress as the track nears reopening.



## QC Corner

Our Loader Operators play a vital role in providing a quality product to our customers. They are assigned the tasks of loading trucks, loading railcars, maintaining stockpiles, loading bins, and keeping the site in a clean and organized condition.

They need to know what needs to be loaded, and how it is to be loaded while knowing how to work a stockpile to minimize segregation and contamination. That sounds easy enough until there is a line of trucks backed up, all day long. These apply to not only the Quarries and Gravel Pits, but also Transload Yards, Asphalt Plants, and Concrete Plants.

We extend a big THANK YOU to all Loader Operators for your dedication to quality results every day!

## Happy Birthday

Dylan Arndt - July 26  
Dell Rapids Shop

Edward Gaye - July 26  
Ace Ready Mix

Phillip Krejci - July 26  
Ace Ready Mix

Kevin Mayer - July 27  
Sioux Falls

Michael Blachford - July 28  
Myrl and Roy's

Bruce Rohwer - July 30  
Washta

Evan Schade - July 31  
Brookings

Bryan Heubrock - July 31  
Myrl & Roy's

Steve Brunick - July 31  
Ace Ready Mix

Christopher Wilkins - July 31  
Fort Lupton

Joel Bunkers - August 01  
Dell Rapids East

Lance Elliott - August 01  
Dell Rapids East

Jayson Rice-Kelley - August 01  
Dell Rapids East

## Anniversaries

July

28

Thomas Nohr - 15 Years  
Myrl & Roy's

July

29

Braden Schuver - 5 Years  
Ragsdale

July

29

Tyler Tebben - 5 Years  
Brookings

**CORRECTION to Roxsand Anniversary:**

There was an error in last week's edition regarding Mylene Bangasser's milestone anniversary. It was incorrectly stated that Mylene was celebrating her 30-year anniversary with the company. In fact, she is commemorating an impressive 40-year tenure. Her dedication and contribution to our organization over the past four decades is truly commendable - Thank you Mylene!

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