



**Veterans' Association
of the
Chicago & North Western Railway**



Organized December 9, 1924

Ron Corrigan Remembers the Western Division

From its headquarters in Chadron, Nebraska, the Division stretched nearly 700 road miles from East to West, encompassing trackage in the States of Nebraska, North & South Dakota, as well as Wyoming. Getting to major employee sites in Norfolk, NE (324 miles), Huron, SD (350 miles) and Casper, WY (a mere 185 miles) was a taxing, time consuming proposition, which on a few occasions necessitated the chartering of a plane in Chadron.



In the photo (ca. 1980), ADM-A Ron Corrigan, AVP-DM Bill Otter and ADM-M Jack Fuhs were preparing to leave for Huron, SD, where a major diesel servicing and repair facility, trainmaster and former Dakota Division clerical employees existed. A road trip to visit the Agent in Oakes, ND was a staggering 480 mile drive.

Being in the Mountain Time Zone necessitated core working hours beginning by 7:00 am to match the hour later time on the rest of the railroad. As a matter of trivia, we were closer to 5 State Capitols than to our own in Lincoln (ND, SD, WY, MT and CO). We were frequently referred to as The Cowboy Line and one of the eastbound trains was knick named The Cowboy. I guess we deserved that reference as the local dance hall in Chadron sported a sign reading: "Gentlemen. Please remove all hats on dance floor." And, of course, on at least one occasion a "local" rode his horse into the place and onto the dance floor.

The early 1980's brought the spotlight on us, as plans to enter the coal fields of the Powder River Basin began to solidify. Land was bought and a 56 mile connector line was built from East of Douglas, WY to South Morrill, NE. The trip north to a barren area known as Bill, WY was on joint trackage with the Burlington Northern (now BNSF). With D.B. Carlisle as AVP-DM heading up the operation, the first coal train was pulled out of the Basin on August 16, 1984. It was a proud day for the entire railroad.

Sadly, the only thing now left of the Western Division is The Coal Line. But that was our crowning glory. We were all so proud to have such an operation under our command. *(Thanks very much to Ron Corrigan for this fine contribution to the web site.)*

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