This edition of The Mainline commemorates the 30 year anniversary of our short line railroads. Through Rick Corman’s vision, the company has grown from two short lines in Kentucky to eleven short line railroads spanning 904.09 miles of track across the nation.

Mr. Corman’s entrepreneurial spirit and can-do attitude paved the road for the company’s success and to this day push us to think outside the box and refuse to say anything is impossible. This is only one of the many reasons I am grateful for the time I got to spend learning from Rick.

I am honored to serve as the Railroad Company’s President and continue working to uphold R. J. Corman’s reputation as a leader in the rail industry.

I would also like to extend my thanks to our employees and their families for the role they have played in getting us to the top of the industry. Without each of you, this would not have been possible.

Thank you all for being part of this great journey.

Brian Miller
President, R. J. Corman Railroad Company, LLC

R. J. Corman Railroad Company was founded with Rick Corman’s purchase of the Bardstown Line in January of 1987. Eight months later, he purchased the Memphis Line in Guthrie, Kentucky. Those two lines, spanning 180 miles of track, were only the start of what would soon become a 904.09 mile short line operating company.

This year, the company is celebrating its 30th anniversary with a look back at its founding. In addition, we’ve included spotlights of employees who played influential roles in the life of the company, memories of Rick Corman and a timeline which showcases the company’s success over the last three decades.
In January of 1987, Rick Corman confided in his brother-in-law and loyal employee, Jerry Adams, that he was considering purchasing a short line railroad from New Hampshire North Coast Land Rail. Before purchasing the short line, Rick, Jerry and another R. J. Corman employee, Lloyd Godfrey, walked the 67-mile line in its entirety to check it for bad ties. This was long before the time of radios and hi-rail gear, so traveling the line on foot was the most effective way to perform an inspection. A few weeks later, R. J. Corman was the proud owner of its first short line railroad, the Bardstown Line. At the time of purchase, the line was shipping approximately 1,100 cars a year and servicing customers such as Bird, Inc., Owens-Illinois and Barton Brands. The line’s first engineer, Bobi Blunt, was one of Kentucky’s first female train engineers. Later that year, in August, the same trio performed a walking inspection on 180 miles of track in Guthrie, Kentucky. This short line became R. J. Corman’s second acquisition, the Memphis Line.

In 1973, Richard J. “Rick” Corman began his career in railroad construction with a backhoe, a dump truck and a tenacious spirit. Driven first by his remarkable operator skills and then by his commitment to safe and reliable service, Rick’s goal was to become one of the nation’s leading railroad service providers. For the next 40 years he worked to establish the railroad service company that is now known as R. J. Corman. Today, R. J. Corman Railroad Group is headquartered in Rick’s hometown of Nicholasville, Kentucky, and has field locations in 23 states. The company serves all seven Class I railroads, many regional and short line railroads as well as various rail-served industries. These operations encompass an array of services, including: railroad construction, short line railroad operations, dispatch, industrial switching services, emergency response, track material logistics, distribution centers, signal design and construction, building eco-friendly locomotives, railroad worker training and an excursion dinner train. The company’s diversity has given them the ability to service all aspects of the freight railroad industry at any scale.
John Phillips  
General Manager, R. J. Corman Railroad Company  
John Phillips joined the R. J. Corman family in 2013 after an extensive career in operations with Norfolk Southern. Philipps has held a variety of roles during his tenure at R. J. Corman Railroad Company, including: Assistant General Manager, General Manager, General Manager of Funded Projects and Assistant Vice President. He currently oversees the company’s short line railroads, railroad funding and distribution centers.

Ed Quillian  
Chief Engineer, R. J. Corman Railroad Company  
Throughout Ed Quillian’s 8 years with R. J. Corman, he has served in a variety of positions throughout the company. Presently he is responsible for managing all crews, maintenance and capital projects for the Railroad Company and overseeing the engineering of 904.09 miles of track, 350 bridges, 250 signal crossings on 11 short lines in 9 states.

Steve Jones  
Chief Mechanical Officer  
Steve’s nearly 20 year tenure with R. J. Corman makes him one of the Railroad Company’s most seasoned veterans. Throughout his career he progressed from a member of the Farm Crew, to a Boom Operator in Derailment Services, before transitioning to the Railroad Company to begin its mechanical department in 2004. In his current position he is responsible for overseeing the maintenance of all 106 R. J. Corman locomotives in 9 states. He also manages the fleet of over 500 railcars.

“I feel privileged to serve as the president of such a successful company. I am inspired by Mr. Corman’s entrepreneurial spirit and strive to embody his can-do attitude each and every day. R. J. Corman’s Railroad Company’s successes would not have been possible without his hard work and we are eternally grateful for his efforts.”

“Mr. Corman’s demeanor would always exude the passion he had for the company. It was easy for an individual to buy into, but impossible to match. As one of his employees, you could bank on the fact that if you had Rick supporting you with his contagious drive there wasn’t much that you couldn’t handle. His encouragement is one of the reasons I am where I am today.”

“I am proud to be a part of a company that is so widely respected throughout the industry and in the public. Seeing the growth of R. J. Corman since its start is truly amazing. I feel lucky to be able to tell people that I work for a company as great as R. J. Corman. Although I never had the chance to know Mr. Corman, his spirit is embodied in the work we perform every day.”

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“Through hard work, Rick built this company from the ground up by continuously treating his employees with respect and constantly showing appreciation. I am thankful for all of the time that I was able to spend with Rick, he taught me so much and I truly owe him everything. He is the greatest man I’ve ever known.”

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Employees Celebrating 30+ Years with R. J. Corman Companies:

Denver Shuman 39 years
Wanda Stewart 32 years
Jackie Overbey 32 years
Jerry Adams 31 years
Ken Adams 30 years
John Lunsford 32 years
Eugene Masters 32 years
Brutus Stinnett Jr. 31 years
Rodney Fryman 31 years

In Loving Memory of
Robert “Bob” Robinson
8.27.1953 - 3.14.2017
Bob would have celebrated 34 years of service this June.
Thirty years ago, R. J. Corman got its start in the short line railroading business with the acquisition of the Bardstown Line. The same year, R. J. Corman began operations on its second short line, the Memphis Line, a 113-mile railroad stretching from Bowling Green, Kentucky to Clarksville, Tennessee. Today, R. J. Corman operates 11 short lines in nine states totaling 904.09 miles of track.

R. J. Corman Railroad Company moved over 65,000 railcars in 2016. The company owns more than 100 locomotives across their railroads, as well as approximately 500 railcars. An in-house engineering department performs all required track inspections and maintenance on R. J. Corman’s short line railroads. An additional team of mechanics is responsible for all of the regular maintenance and upkeep associated with the company’s fleet of locomotives. In the past six years, R. J. Corman completed over $55 million in capital improvements, including the replacement of 310,000 ties across their short line properties.

The largest railroad in the R. J. Corman system is the Pennsylvania Lines, consisting of 243 miles of track which run through the ridges and valleys of north central Pennsylvania. R. J. Corman also operates the Tennessee Terminal Railroad, which interchanges with BNSF Railway in Memphis, Tennessee. R. J. Corman celebrated the 10th anniversary of this terminal in March 2016. R. J. Corman’s Central Kentucky Lines consist of nearly 150 miles of track. These lines service 31 customers and interchange with CSX Transportation and Norfolk Southern. In August 2015, R. J. Corman purchased a 78-mile railroad in North and South Carolina and leased 14 connecting miles from Horry County, South Carolina, for which they restored all necessary Surface Transportation Board authority to begin operations on the lines. Last year, R. J. Corman was awarded a USDOT TIGER VIII grant to carry out an extensive rehabilitation project on this railroad.

R. J. Corman Locomotives Passing Logan Aluminum
Russelleville, KY

We proudly haul: aggregates, agricultural products, building materials, chemicals, food products, metal products, military machinery and equipment, petroleum, plastics, railroad materials, wood and paper.

R. J. Corman Railroad Company serves 51 customers on the Bardstown and Memphis Lines, among those are:

Interchange with:
The Staggers Rail Act of 1980 allowed for the significant deregulation of American railroads. Once the act was passed, larger railroads were able to evaluate their lines and sell off their smaller or less profitable spurs. As a result, companies like R. J. Corman began purchasing these short lines and taking over their operations to be a value add for both Class Is and end-of-line customers.
American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association Jake Award with Distinction:

American Short Line and Regional Railroad Marketing Award:

Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery Grant:
2010 2016

Argus Rail Win-Win Award:
2013

Railway Age Magazine Short Line of the Year:
2007

65,000+ Car Loads Per Year
904.09 Track Miles
9 States Served
THANK YOU

to our valued customers for 30 years of successful partnerships!