

THE CULTURAL NEWSLETTER FOR WABTEC EMPLOYEES

SAME TRACK



MANAGERS' ROUNDTABLE
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PICTURE THIS
Better Bearings

Special Edition: Engines
November 2025



LEADER LETTER

Building the Engine Platform

Team,

The Engine Platform realignment took shape in May 2025. Grove City New Engine (GRV) and Grove City Reman (GRR) have always worked very closely on driving performance metrics, but in May, the Astana Diesel Shop (ADS) was added to the family. The alignment made complete sense as the ADS Team remanufactures EVO Tier 2 engines.

The goal of the platform is to make sure all engine facilities are operating the same way, aligned with similar performance metrics while knowing our global capacity and understanding technology transfer opportunities.

Our engine operation performance metrics are very clear: personnel safety, product quality, customer service, and overall productivity. Using a Lean problem-solving strategy, the Grove City sites are very mature in driving their yearly Targets To Improve projects that are aligned with the facilities' short-term and long-term business goals. The plan is to have the ADS facility solving business challenges with this same Lean strategy in the near future.

Now that the Platform has been working together for the past six months, we have established a regular operating rhythm. This has provided the opportunity to share best practices and pitfalls with all key stakeholders.

The announcement of the 300 Locomotive deal with the Kazakhstan National Railway will be our first opportunity to solve a challenge as a Platform. The Grove City sites will look to machine and kit parts to ship to the ADS Engine shop to be assembled, tested, and painted for the Locomotive Assembly Site. A tremendous amount of planning and effort needs to come together for ADS to ship their first engine in 2027. I am confident that the Engine Platform will be successful at delivering on that expectation.

Best,

Justin Sokol
Vice President, Operations Management
Engines Platform Lead

Justin Sokol, head of the Engines Platform, shares how the recent realignment is helping the Engines Platform take on the massive Kazakhstan National Railway deal.



Committed to Continuous Improvement

With over 22 years' experience across a wide variety of roles in Grove City, Bill Potkanowicz has become an engine for problem solving and improvement.

If there's one theme that defines Bill Potkanowicz's career, it's continuous improvement. Here, Bill and his manager, Jonathon Hall, discuss how Bill's wealth of experience and desire to keep improving have driven success over his 22 years in Grove City.

Studying the system

Bill has become a master at both sides of engine work in Grove City. "Bill has 22 years of experience at Wabtec, with some of it at the New Engine facility, which is also in Grove City, and now at the UX facility," Jonathon says. "Because of that, he knows every part of the Main Assembly process, whether it's safety, ergonomics, assembly processes, quality concerns, or new operator training. There's not much he hasn't seen."

And because he's learned so much at each step of the journey, everyone relies on him to find answers. "If an assembler has an issue or a concern, Bill's able to relate and help find a solution since he's performed every task in the assembly hall," says Jonathon.



Bill
Potkanowicz
Team Leader



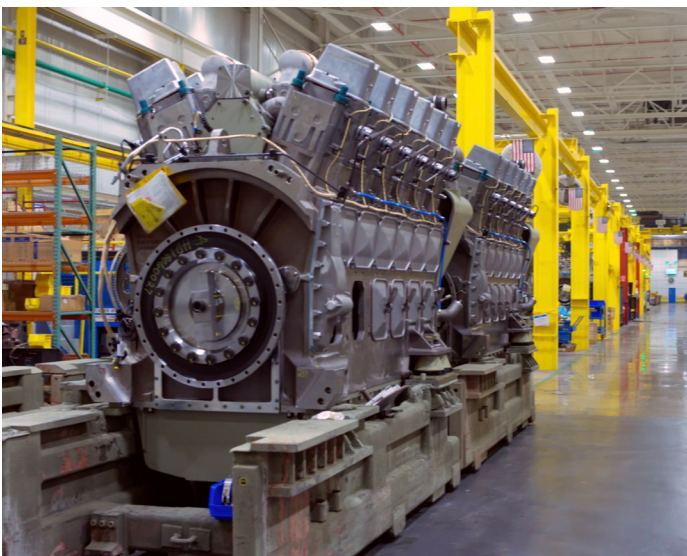
Jonathon
Hall
Senior Operations
Production Manager

Looking for improvement opportunities

For Bill, continuous improvement is a way of life. "Always finding better ways to do things is a practical move that applies to everything in life. The reasons for change can vary, but the principles are always the same," Bill says. "Whether you're looking for safety, more efficiency, improved reliability, or just to

"Whether it's on the shop floor regarding safety or a process, or it's with one of his files that he's created for the team, he's constantly looking for some way to keep improving."

— Jonathon Hall



make changes as an experiment, you must look at things from all angles. What may seem good on paper may not be in real-world applications.”

Jonathon thinks this focus is what makes Bill stand out at work. “He just has this passion for making things better,” Jonathon says. “Whether it’s on the shop floor regarding safety or a process, or it’s with one of his files that he’s created for the team, he’s constantly looking for some way to keep improving.”

All this experience and improvement also matters when new problems arise. “A great example of this is when the FDLA engine was introduced, which was taking 20 extra hours to assemble versus a standard FDL engine,” explains Jonathon. “Bill was instrumental in taking those extra 20 hours and figuring out a way to build the engine within the current engine takt time, moving some processes around, so we could do the extra work while still pulling an engine off our assembly line every four hours.”



“My philosophy is that everyone you meet knows something that you don’t”

— Bill Potkanowicz

“He wants to make his boss’s job easier, and he wants to make his boss’s boss’s job easier.”

— Jonathon Hall



Lifting up the team

Bill tends to spend time mentoring new assemblers as they join the facility, but what impresses Jonathon is the leadership he shows to the entire team. “It’s not just assemblers that Bill is helping to build up. It’s supervisors and management, too — myself included.”

“One thing Bill always says is that he wants to make his boss’s job easier, and he wants to make his boss’s boss’s job easier,” Jonathon says. “So any time there’s an issue, he seems to be the first person to raise his hand with an idea. And he’s constantly listening for other ideas and pulling the right people together to get closer to the right outcome.”

That openness to new ideas is what’s helped him build such a strong knowledge base, and what will help him continue to grow. “I believe listening to people and getting their input is very important in all aspects of life, not just in the work environment. My philosophy is that everyone you meet knows something that you don’t, so I try not to forget that,” Bill says.

Bill thinks that looking out for each other’s differences, and learning from them, makes the team stronger. “We can’t lose sight of the fact that we are not a world of our own. We are here with many other personalities, characteristics, knowledge levels, attitudes, and personal experiences that make us all human and connected in some way,” he concludes. “We must make it work and help each other strive to be the best person they can be.”

Gearing Up for Volume

Steve LaFever explains why the new volume of Tier 4 overhauls is a challenge for Grove City, and how they're preparing to tackle it in 2026.



Steve LaFever

Senior Director, Plant Manager in Grove City

How can you plan for workflow when you don't know how long production will take? Here, Steve LaFever, Senior Director, Plant Manager in Grove City, explains his facility's preparations for the first full round of overhauls for Tier 4 locomotives, starting in Q1 2026.

Volume fluctuation

Steve's team at Grove City UX is experiencing a short-term lull in volume, but they also know they're going to have their hands full as soon as the new year begins. "The fourth quarter was a bit tougher this year. We had a volume decrease, due to some seasonality overlapping with other changes," he explains. "But thankfully, that has also provided an opportunity to prepare for the big increase next year."

The first set of Tier 4 locomotives sold will reach a benchmark repair year in 2026. It will be the first time for that overhaul volume to come through the facility, and it will coincide with an uptick in our

usual work. "In Q1, we'll jump back up to our base load volume with EVO and FDL platforms, and we'll see the Tier 4 platform hitting its stride in the overhaul cycle, leading to a big volume increase for us," he says.

"In some cases, with activities like these, we don't get the warning of a near miss before a serious outcome occurs."

FDL

Legacy platform

- Long history of process improvements
- Fast and consistent throughout

EVO Tier 2 and Tier 3

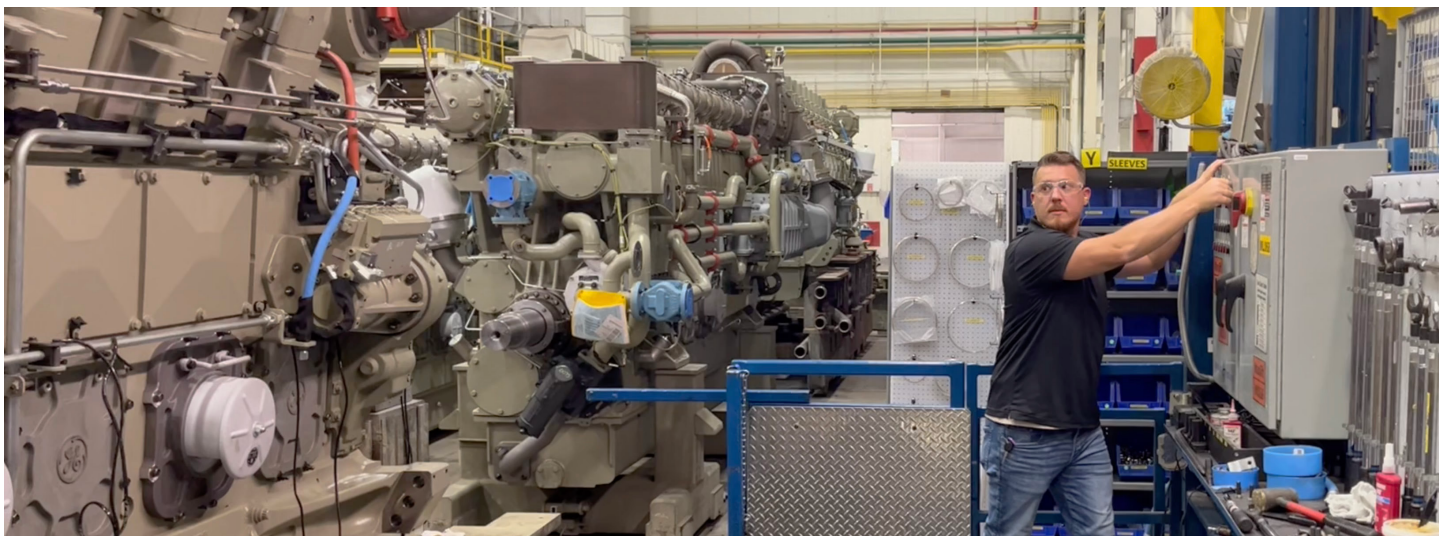
Significant emissions improvements over FDL

- Largely consistent hardware across Tier 2 and Tier 3
- Several years of high volume
- Familiar and consistent throughput

Tier 4

Another big reduction in emissions compared to Tier 2 and Tier 3

- Very different components than Tier 2 and Tier 3
- Only a few dozen overhauls per year prior to the volume spike in 2026
- Not a lot of volume to refine processes or throughput so far



Preparing for Tier 4 volume

While the Grove City team has experience in streamlining the overhaul process for FDL and EVO engines, they have very little data on what it takes to overhaul Tier 4s — especially at a larger scale. “It’s going to bring some opportunities along with some challenges,” Steve says. “We have tons of historical data on EVO and FDL, so we know what that level of volume requires in terms of work hours. We don’t really have any significant data on what overhaul is going to look like for Tier 4.”

Every team at the site has been working hard to prepare for the increased volume and minimize issues as the transition begins. “Operationally, we’re looking at what we can do with headcount and what kind of work we can do ahead of time,” he says. “For example, we can tear down a handful of engines now to get our feeder lines set up to run.”

Balancing the increased Tier 4 volume while resuming the normal volume of FDL and EVO engines will force everyone to think about their capacity. “An additional challenge is that most of the products are going to run down the same feeder lines that the EVO platform currently uses. So we’ve been working on our capacity constraints for the last two years to prepare for this.”

Aligning in Freight Operations

While the team focuses on near-term challenges with volume, Steve is also excited about the long-term systemic opportunities created by the new Freight Operations alignment. “With the new organization, it’s been good to see how we’re able to come together to take on problems,” he says.

One way Steve has seen this over the last few months is through tariff-related port issues affecting Grove City. “Nobody is calling it a Grove City problem or an Engines Platform problem — it’s a Wabtec problem,” he says. “The team’s come together, almost as a task force, from fulfillment to customs to logistics to materials, and that’s really cut down the number of issues.”

Steve’s excited about the potential we’re unlocking to integrate across platforms in this new format, and wants to work with people at other sites to find new ways to improve. “To anyone in one of our other facilities, if you have the opportunity, come see the shop here. There’s so much value in understanding the day-to-day UX life and how your role connects to ours,” Steve says. “We all have a part to play in the process, and we all depend on each other. We can really drive value when we stay closely aligned.”

Accelerating Engines

Managers from Grove City share what it's like working on the heartbeat of the locomotive.



What are some of the products you and your team work on in Grove City?

Michael: I'm responsible for Turbo, EVO power, FDO power, camshafts, connecting rods, art rods, and our paint and pack area, which handles renewal parts that go on to distribution centers. No day is ever the same, with so much going on, but that's one of the things I like about it.

Brad: I'm the value stream leader for four product lines: main frames, air compressors, pin line, and new manufacturing. Those are basically all the engine components at various levels.

Tyler: I work in the Grove City Reman site managing the requalification and assembly of several of our lines, including piston rod assembly, pump lines, turbo lines, oil cooler lines, cam lines, and the small parts area.



What are some of the unique challenges of working in Engines?

Michael: One of the biggest challenges is making sure our supply chain for all the raw materials can keep up with our schedule for engines. We have hundreds and hundreds of different parts that go into an engine, and missing any one of those parts can be a showstopper.

Brad: We have a lot of highly specialized processes, but one of the biggest things we have to worry about is cleanliness. We take a lot of measures to ensure we build a clean product, like internal wash processes, RP application, and multiple inspections.

Any particulate that is foreign to the engine will put premature wear on the bearing or joining surfaces, so the cleaner the engine, the better it will last. And the goal here is to get out of infancy and continue to be reliable for 10 to 15 years.



Michael Parham

Senior Operations
Production Manager



Brad George

Senior Operations
Production Manager



Tyler Niederriter

Senior Operations
Production Manager

Tyler: I think the mechanical complexity of our engines is one of the most unique things. They're very high tech, so they require a lot of specialized equipment tooling and skilled technicians to work on them. The regulatory compliance requirements on the locos are very high, and they're strict from an environmental and safety standpoint as well. The diesel fuel management is also a challenge since it's a major part of our customers' operating costs. So our goal is to optimize fuel efficiency and create a better performing engine.



What are you most proud of with the work you do?

Michael: We produce the engine, and we believe that's the heartbeat of the locomotive. It's a high priority, and we take pride in it. Plus, we know that keeping the engine on schedule helps to keep the locomotive on schedule, helping everyone else out.

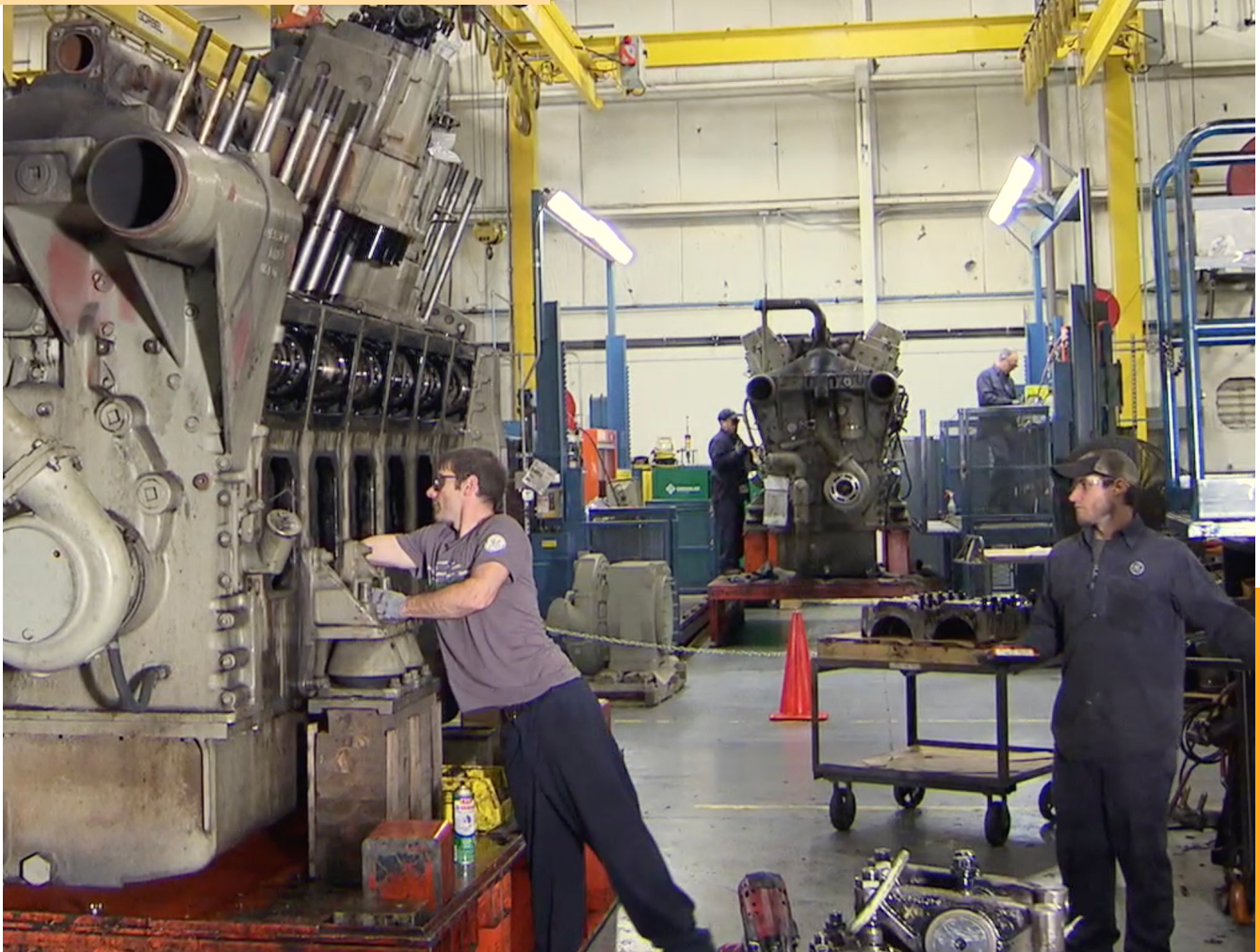
At the end of the day, making a finished good that you know the customer wants, that's of the highest quality and reliability, that's something you can be proud of. I think it's what keeps us all moving ahead, not just here or in Engines, but across Wabtec as a company. It's a sense of accomplishment at the end of the day.

Brad: For me, it's that we're building a product that is not really built anywhere else in the world other than Grove City from a new manufacturing standpoint at the moment. Grove City is a small town — it's where I'm from and where I grew up — and we're creating the heart of something that's pulling freight all across the country. You don't think of something like that coming from small-town Grove City, USA.

Tyler: I really like knowing that the Engines platform is part of this big, integrated system, and we really sit in the middle of all of it. Because of that, there's a lot of pressure on our people to get things right. I think the insight from our shop floor employees is really impressive — they help us solve these real-world problems because they know our product so well. That's what's really cool to see.



Check out the Managers' Roundtable video on the digital version of *Same Track*.



Better Bearings

Hunter McCauley shares how his team modified a rod bearing assembly process to improve the engine's lifespan and reduce human error.



**Hunter
McCauley**

Quality Engineer

THE PROBLEM

"The team identified a need for a more robust assembly process for the rod bearing in the EVO engine. The old process involved oiling the bearing as the last step before it was joined with the crankshaft inside the engine. That means the rod bearing only had one operator, one set of eyes, and multiple opportunities for human error."



THE APPROACH

"The team worked in conjunction with engineering to combine specialized technical engine assembly knowledge with engineered process protection methods to develop this solution. I was assisted with a wealth of knowledge from Bill Gray (DE), John Roth (PE), as well as support from senior leadership in the Engine Quality team."

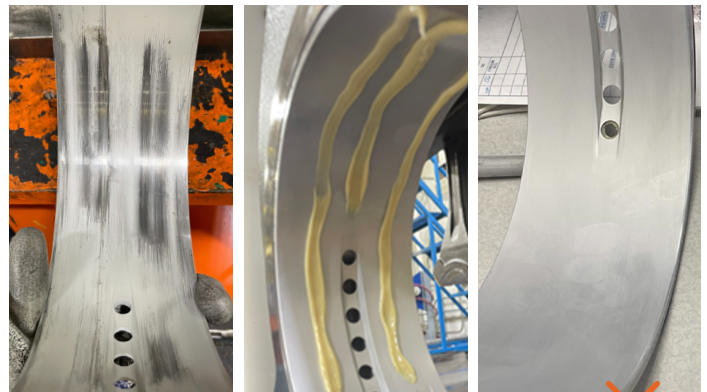


THE RESULTS

"The Engine Assembly lubricant not only provided a more robust assembly process, it also outperformed the old process when doing a direct comparison of bearing condition after engine test."

"Bearings have long been the weakest point in any internal combustion engine. It's technically a wear part, while simultaneously being one of the most critical parts of the engine. This solution is not the fix for all bearing failures; however, it gives our bearings a greater chance of surviving their expected lifespan. For the cost of the solution, if it only saves one engine, it will provide a 22X return on investment."

"We're not sure how many bearing failures we can attribute to this issue, given we've just implemented this improvement recently, but we're looking forward to developing a metric for the true impact of the project."



THE SOLUTION

"The new Line Inspector increased overall efficiency and reduced defects found in FGI to just 8%. Finding defects in the line also allowed us to improve operator feedback as soon as the defects were detected. Previously, it might have taken a few days to determine the source once a combo hit final inspection."