

Industry demands tons of Bentonite

By JOHN WILLARD
BN Regional Manager

ULM — Wyoming Bentonite — more than 1.5 million tons of it — moved to domestic and overseas markets in 1973, starting its journey by Burlington Northern.

BN hauled 17,335 open-top hopper and box cars of the fine white powder so useful to industry throughout the world. The hoppers, which carried the clay in bulk, were 70 to 100 ton capacity and made up in multiple-car shipments to American manufacturing plants or coastal ports for loading into ships.

In oil country much of the clay goes into drilling mud, where its unique characteristics make it valuable. Another principal use is for binding finely powdered iron ore into pellets, the taconite process

which makes possible processing of ore not previously usable. Much of this goes to the Iron Range area of Minnesota, one of the principal U. S. iron mining regions.

Loading points were: Bentley, Bentonite Spur, Casper, Clay Spur, Colloid Spur, Greybull, Lovell, Mills, Newcastle, Quality, Sage Creek, Stucco, Ulm and Upton. Nearly every state received Wyoming Bentonite and overseas shipments terminated in England, Tasmania and Australia.

Bentonite producing companies in Wyoming are: American Colloid Company, Wyo-Ben Products Company, Dresser Industries, Federal Bentonite Company, Archer, Daniels, Midland, Haroid Sales Division of National Lead Company and Black Hills Bentonite.

Domestic and International Bentonite Moved on BN Tracks

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