

## Client Highlight - Madison Railroad

Cathy Hale, Madison Railroad's CEO, has been with the company for 36 years. The Madison Railroad operates a 25-mile mainline extending from Madison to North Vernon, Indiana. The railroad offers daily train service, and interchange is accomplished with CSX Transportation at North Vernon. The Madison Railroad also owns and operates 17 miles of railroad track within a 3,400-acre industrial park, offering a team track and rail car storage facilities.

Cathy is very passionate about her position at the Madison Railroad. She loves utilizing the revenues the Madison Railroad earns and stretching them to accomplish the most she can. She finds pride in knowing that communities believe in the Madison Railroad, and when they offer to help, they do so as a hand up not a hand out.

The mission at the Madison Railroad is to provide economic development to the communities they serve. They are preserved to be an economic development tool. The Madison Railroad has a nine member board of directors made up of businessmen and businesswomen. Although all the board members each have a broad range of backgrounds, they all have the same mission of making sure the railroad thrives. They believe it is important to maintain jobs and create new ones.

Cathy enjoys the fact that every day she has a new task at the Madison Railroad. She loves creating and learning new things. When asked what Cathy enjoys least about her career at the Madison Railroad, she couldn't come up with one answer. She says that she has grown with the railroad over the years and has a strong passion for her job.

Madison Railroad has experienced tremendous growth. When they first took over, they accommodated 200 car loads, and now they have 1000 rail cars that carry freight. Polyethylene, what a lot of the cars carry, is a huge part of the rail industry. Cathy says that the rail car is a warehouse on wheels. The business has also expanded employees. At one time, there were only four employees, and now there are six employees plus the volunteer board of directors. Madison Railroad has made many contributions to the community. The railroad has helped grow and maintain business. Some businesses do not locate in cities unless rail service is available. Because of this, Madison Railroad has encouraged businesses to locate in the Madison area that wouldn't have if not for their services. In addition, Madison Railroad enjoys giving back to the community. The Santa Express Train Ride is a staple in Madison. This train ride runs through Madison and North Vernon and provides children and families with a fun, low-cost activity during the holiday season. Last year, 1200 people participated in the express ride, and 900 rode in Madison. The express ride, which the community seems to really appreciate and enjoy, sells out every year. The money collected from the Santa Express Train Ride is donated to a worthy cause.

Cathy Hale has been a client of the Southeast ISBDC since 2012. She says that her advisor, Eric Kranz, is very professional and knowledgeable. She believes that Eric adds a great level of professionalism to the Madison Railroad and is always willing to help.

"Cathy has spent countless hours working to improve the quality and capacity of the railroad. She has explored and taken advantage of every opportunity she can to make Madison Railroad a vital economic artery for the city and surrounding communities," Kranz says of Cathy.