

WVDOH Today!

I-64 St. Albans–Nitro Bridge Expansion Joint

Photo by Randy Damron.



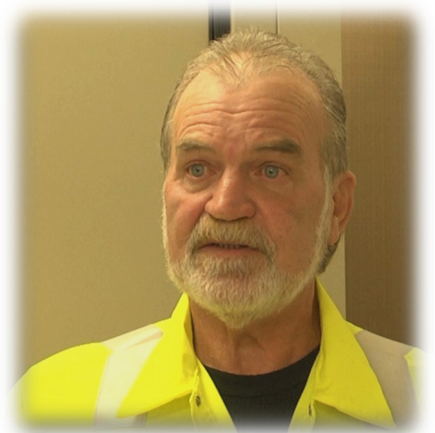
Emergency Repair

“We got together, we got a game plan,” said Charles Hanson, Crew Chief, of the emergency repair to an expansion joint on the I-64 St. Albans Nitro Bridge. “We worked non-stop until we got it done. It’s a multi-talented group. There’s nothing that any of them can’t do.”

“They all done a fabulous job,” said Hanson. “I mean, there was welding involved, there was concrete involved, there was carpentry involved, there was cribbing work to be done. Under the bridge, we had a truck. We had to go under. We had to figure out a way how to get the plywood up to hold. We had to wire it in. We saw cut it, and took a ram hoe. Brian, he done a fabulous job breaking it out without disturbing anything. We had to go back in and put shims in. And they done that throughout the night Thursday.”

“It was cold,” said Hanson. “I would do a bay, Chuck Young would do a bay, I would do a bay, Chuck Young would do a bay. But the crib work, that was the most vital part. If you didn’t

have that right, and the amount of weight and the way we had to apply the concrete, you had to have that right. If it failed there we was really in trouble. But like I said, we have a multi-talented group of people. You couldn’t beat them.”



State Bridge Engineer, Tracy Brown, P.E., closed the lanes on Thursday, February 6. Crews completed work and the bridge was reopened less than 48 hours later. Stay tuned; a contract has been awarded for lane expansion on this bridge (which is a dangerous traffic bottleneck, even on a good day.) That work is made possible by Governor Justice’s Roads to Prosperity program.

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Significant Occurrence: The Words You Finally Want to Hear

District 7 Engineer, Brian Cooper, P.E., recently filled out “Record of Significant Occurrence” forms for four employees. These forms are often used for when there are problems with work habits, but they are becoming increasingly common to commend employees for work that exceeds expectations.

The four employees were commended for performing above expectations on January 24 when pavement damage in a work zone at the Weston Exit (Exit 99) of I-79 required an emergency shutdown of the northbound lanes.

Mackenzie Murphy, Eric Lough (pictured, with Deputy Secretary Jimmy Wriston, P.E.), Jason Sharp, and Dave Wood each responded to the emergency situation. Above-and-beyond is a part of the work culture of WVDOH employees, so much that none of the four employees expected to receive any kind of recognition. This is who they are. They don’t take responsibility lightly.

The four worked along with an emergency contractor to get concrete poured to replace the damaged area. While they waited patiently to test the concrete, making sure it was strong enough before reopening the roadway, they were well-aware that folks speeding by on the southbound side of the interstate were judging. It’s true; they didn’t look busy. How busy can you look when you’re waiting for concrete to harden? Just the same, they worked through both night and day. They worked expediently to open the road, but didn’t rush it at the expense of public safety. Concrete is concrete, it doesn’t listen. (It doesn’t even have ears.)



“This is just a typical weekend for West Virginia Division of Highways,” said Deputy Secretary Wriston, of a weekend that also included major emergency rockslides in Districts 6 and 10. “Our people are the best in the country at emergency management.”

WVDOH Today! is a monthly newsletter published by the West Virginia Division of Highways and distributed statewide via email to a network of the best employees on earth. All content is developed by the editor, unless otherwise credited. The purpose of this publication is to facilitate connection across the diverse worksites and professions represented among WVDOH employees to empower us to function as **one West Virginia Division of Highways**, and with our sister agencies, **one West Virginia Department of Transportation**. We encourage employees to write in and share thoughts.

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Country Girl Road and Ingleside Road The Granddaddy of Mudslides!

“The interesting thing about Ingleside Road and Country Girl Road is that they are both closed due to the same problem,” said Joe Pack, P.E., District 10 Maintenance Engineer. “That is a water source that developed about a year ago, that is off of our right-of-way, on a hillside. The area of Mercer County is well known for its karst topography. There’s a lot of caves, a lot of wet-weather springs that just pop up out of nowhere. That’s what’s happened here. There’s a tremendous amount of water coming out of the hillside that separates the two roads. It has caused a slide to occur on Ingleside Road, which is also the embankment which holds up Country Girl Road.”

On a slide of this proportion, the piling walls that District 10’s Disforce is known to build so efficiently would be like trying to hold up the hill with staples and paperclips. It’s just big. This is not your granddaddy’s mudslide. This is the granddaddy of all mudslides. This big hill is a big deal.

“As far as Ingleside goes, the cleanup and repair are relatively simple,” said Pack, before beginning to elaborate on what **relatively simple** means in D-10 speak. “There is a large mass of earth, trees and rock which is slowly making its way down the

hillside. It’s difficult for us to open the road at this point because we don’t know when it’s going to break loose or if it will pick up speed. It will come down and we’re ready to clean the road up when it does. It could be several days. As soon as it comes down, we will truck it out of there and open the road.”

“Country Girl is a much different beast,” said Pack. “The fact that the embankment has failed, we are noticing deformations in the slope above the road, which tells us the embankment failure is chasing itself up to the top of the ridge.”

“It is unsafe for any driver to be on Country Girl Road, period, at this point,” said Pack. “We are seeing a lot of damage being done to the slope above, and that’s why we’ve closed the road. Repairs are going to be very complex. We have a few standard

repairs we make for embankment failures, and neither one of those are applicable at this location due to the depth of the material and the source of the water. Our first problem is get rid of the water. Once we remove the water, we can get to the problem of repairing Country Girl Road so that it’s a long lasting repair. Water is our enemy. It destroys our asphalt, it destroys our embankments. That is what has happened here.”



Photos compliments of District 10





Deputy Secretary, Deputy Commissioner, State Rail Bridge Engineer, Acting State Highway Engineer, **Grandpa**



WVDOH Today! congratulates Jimmy Wriston, P.E., on the arrival of his second awesome grandchild. Miles Wriston has big plans to make the world a better place everywhere he goes — just like granddaddy. So never fear, West Virginia, your little superhero has arrived and help is on the way.

Safety Awards: Come Home the Way You Came to Work

On February 14, 2018 Commissioner's Safety Awards were handed out in District 10 to the Bridge Department, Heavy Maintenance, Interstates, Expressways and Corridors for Bragg (two-way tie with D-5), Equipment Shops (two-way tie with D-5), and Sign



Departments (five-way tie with Districts 1, 2, 5 and 9.) That's five out of six of the possible categories. Awards were recently handed out to District 1, and ceremonies are coming soon to Districts 2, 5, and 9. Commissioner's Safety Awards have lagged behind in their delivery in previous years, sometimes being awarded 3 or 4 years after the fact. This is one of many areas where we're quickly catching up; because it matters! State Safety Officer, Shane Hudnall, and District 10 Safety Officer, Terry Mullens, are dedicated to making sure our hardworking WVDOH men and women go home the way they came in.





We Move Mountains (Off Our Roadways!)

**Story by Jesse Ward.
Photos by Eric Steele.**



When heavy weather hits the area, you never know what can happen. Snowfall can ice the roads or impair visibility. Rain can cause flooding and slippery conditions. The people of Williamson had a staunch reminder of these facts when heavy rainfall caused a massive rock and mudslide across US 52. The rockslide caused major damage to the area, and knocked down power lines.

When reports from the incident came in on February 12, a crew from District 2 was called to the scene to assess the situation and get the roads cleared as soon as possible.

The amount of rock and mud on the road blocked both lanes. Contractors were brought in to help expedite the process due to the size and quantity of material on the roadway. With multiple excavators breaking up the large rocks and dump trucks carrying away the debris, it was cleared one load at a time and the road re-opened.

Excessive rain and snow across much of the state this season required roads to be closed due to rock and mud slides, and flooding, in many parts of the state. The men and women of the WVDOH had their hands full moving mountains (off our roads!)



Division of Public Transit: On Providing A Lifeline



“Public transit in general in this state serves three very vulnerable populations,” said Bill Robinson, Director of the West Virginia Division of Public Transit. “We serve the elderly, we serve the chronically ill and we serve the economically disadvantaged, all of which... I wouldn’t want to speculate what might happen to those populations if public transit didn’t exist to meet their transportation needs. It would be a bad, bad situation.”

The Division of Public Transit is preparing to deliver eight new busses to five different agencies. They serve rural transit agencies and non-profit organizations.

“The Division of Public Transit is a state agency within the Department of Transportation,” said Robinson. “The federal money going to the transit agencies flows through us, we do the acquisitions on the vehicles. We also help them in conforming to federal rules and regulations, such as drug and alcohol policies, and making sure everybody stays safe out on the road.”

John Caldwell, Procurement Officer, talks to the agencies to determine their needs, and helps to make decisions on what type of vehicles they can get to replace aging busses. The vehicles are ordered and come to the Division, where Lisa Smith coordinates with the Division of Motor Vehicles to get them titled and licensed.

“We’re grateful for our federal partners, and our partners with the West Virginia Division of Highways. We’re grateful for the agencies we serve,” said Robinson.

The West Virginia Division of Public Transit is a small agency, with only eleven

people, but they work to provide a literal lifeline to people who rely on them. “As we West Virginian’s do, we’ve got a can-do spirit and we work together to make sure everyone gets taken care of. We’re all critically aware of how important these services are, and at the end of the day, we’re here to serve the public.”



53 Years, But Wait... There's More Denny Alderson's "Retirement"

As Denny Alderson prepared to retire after 53 years of service to the West Virginia Division of Highways, his co-worker of 26 years, Peggy Armstrong made a list. "I'm going to give you a little bit of information since Denny's been working," said Armstrong. "He's been through Presidents 36 through 45. That's Lyndon B. Johnson, Richard

Nixon, Gerald Ford, Jimmy Carter, Ronald Reagan, George Bush, Bill Clinton, George W. Bush, Barack Obama and Donald Trump. He has been through Governor's 27 through 36. He started off with Hulett Smith, Arch Moore Jr., Jay Rockefeller, Arch Moore again, Gaston Caperton, Cecil Underwood, Bob Wise, Joe Manchin, Earl Ray Tomblin, and Jim Justice. The State Road Commission, not the Highway Department, but the State Road Commission which preceded the Highway Department, was founded in 1917. That's 103 years ago. Denny has been here for more than half of those years. 53 years. That's amazing."

"I'll give it a couple weeks before Mary will be getting tired of me," said Alderson. After those couple weeks, Alderson plans to return to the West Virginia Division of Highways as a temporary employee. His desk will stay where it is, with neatly arranged folders with the best things he's collected from over the years. The cowboy poster, which says something about their being "a

helluva lot of things they didn't tell me when I hired on with this outfit," will hang there on the wall—waiting for his return.

There were, indeed, a lot of things no one told Alderson when he hired on with this outfit, but through it all he has maintained his laughter.

Deputy Secretary Jimmy Wriston, P.E., commended Alderson on his diligent and

meticulous work; work that Wriston saw first-hand while working not-quite-half of those years with Alderson. Secretary Byrd White shared a laugh with Alderson. When White called Governor Jim Justice, the 10th Governor under whom Alderson has worked, White reportedly appeared to be joking. He wasn't. 53 years is nothing to chuckle about. It goes by way too fast, and although Alderson will be right back that won't stop his employees Peggy (who has worked with him for 312 months) and John (who has worked with him for 130 months and 15 days) from missing him in the mean time.

"For you to stay here and give this state what you've given them is miraculous," said White. "Well," said Alderson, "I've always been glad I had a job. I don't think people realize that anymore." "They don't," said White. "They don't. The loyalty and dedication you've shown just isn't available anymore."

