

WVDOT Today!



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On a Sunday, Jan. 22, 2023, the Colonel Ruby Bradley Bridge began its slow ride home. Built beside the bridge it replaced, along a heavily traveled roadway in Spencer, the bridge was slid into place using ingenuity and dish detergent, eight inches at a time.

“This particular project is a good example of how a highway project can impact a community,” said West Virginia Transportation Secretary Jimmy Wriston, P.E. “It carries a lot of traffic through the town of Spencer. It’s always busy across that bridge.”

Built in 1932, the Colonel Ruby Bradley Bridge carries US 33 across Spring Creek at the intersection of US 33 and US 119. It is one of the busiest intersections in Roane County.

Replacing the aging bridge had been in discussion for years. But Gov. Jim Justice’s Roads to Prosperity program finally allowed construction to begin. In September 2020, Justice awarded Rock

Forge Bridge Company, of Amma, a contract for \$5.8 million to rebuild the Colonel Ruby Bradley Bridge.

Because of the almost constant traffic across the bridge, a new bridge just upstream of the old span. When the new bridge was finished, traffic was shifted onto the new structure and the old bridge was torn down. Then, beginning on the evening of Sunday, Jan. 22, 2023, Rock Forge began sliding the new bridge onto the abutments of the old bridge, a few inches at a time.

Work was done at night to minimize the impact on traffic. Huge bolts that run the entire width of the bridge – one on the eastern side and one on the western side – were loosened and tightened to slowly pull the bridge into its new position.

Progress was so slow that it was hard to see any movement, but time lapse video available on WVDOT’s website, Facebook, Twitter and YouTube shows the historic move.



WVDOH Completes First Round of Pollinator Zone Plantings

The West Virginia Division of Highways (WVDOH) Environmental Section is looking out for pollinators along the state's highway systems.

The year 2022 saw the WVDOH plant more than 125 acres of native plants and flowers along highways at 80 sites in 18 counties. These pollinator zones provide habitat for bees, butterflies and other important pollinators.

"Supporting pollinators in our state is important because they play a role in so many things, including crops that produce fruits, vegetables, spices, and nuts," said Traci Cummings, Natural Resources Unit Leader for the WVDOH Technical Support Division. "These species are important to protect now, as we are seeing many declining.

"By implementing this program, we are helping our state shine

in addition to helping support endangered species," Cummings said. "As the WVDOH, it is exciting to be able to do this type of

conservation program for our state, it shows we do more than just build highways."

Nationally, bees and other creatures that help spread pollen are in decline. State programs to protect pollinators along public roadways are one way to protect habitats for these creatures.



Many of these programs, like West Virginia's, set up designated pollinator zones where important flowers and plants are spared the mower. Cummings and WVDOH Technical Support Division endangered species specialist Sydney Burke have spent four years developing a pollinator zone program for the Mountain State."

It's a good day to BEE a pollinator in West Virginia!



WVDOT Today! is a monthly newsletter published by the West Virginia Department of Transportation's Public Relations Division. The purpose of this publication is to facilitate connection across the diverse worksites and professions represented among WVDOT employees to empower us to function as **one West Virginia Department of Transportation.**

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Special Feature: WVDOT Extends Appreciation to Retiring State Highway Engineer

With 26 years of dedicated service, Alan Reed, P.E., State Highway Engineer, retired on January 31, 2023. As Reed looks forward to a well-earned retirement full of working on old cars, lots of fishing trips and hanging around with his wire haired puppy dog, WVDOT takes a moment to ask — who are we going to call?

There's a family stuck in their car in a snow avalanche on Bolt mountain.

Call Alan Reed!

We need to get trucks in here to help supply drinking water to flood victims.

Call Alan Reed!

There are mudslides all over the state and we can't fix one without two more occurring.

Call Alan Reed!

That's a good solution, but it's never been tried before—so how do we know it's going to work?

Call Alan Reed!

When you've had a go-to problem solver at the entire WVDOT's beck and call for 26 years, who really are we going to call? So as we all step in to try to fill Alan's shoes, WVDOT takes a moment to appreciate the tireless energy and lasting influence this one spark shared with us.

A graduate of WVU Tech, with a background in construction, Alan began his career as boots on the ground in District 10. Leading by doing, he worked his way up to become the District 10 Maintenance Engineer, then District 10 Engineer, before stepping into the statewide leadership role of State Highway Engineer — where he worked to bridge the gap between the Highway Districts and Central Office, sharing no nonsense best

practices so that work is consistent across the state.

“Mr. Reed was a critical factor in the development and implementation of many of the key programs that will drive success in our Division for years to come,” said Natasha White, Director of WVDOT Human Resources Division.

Some such programs include the Transportation Worker apprentice series for WVDOT workers, and the Classification and Compensation Career Plan which changed not only the landscape of not only WVDOT but all WVDOT agencies with career steps and training which curbed high turnover, helped the Department attract and hire qualified applicants and put in each employees hands the key to

building a career that best suits their skills.

But it is the human element, Alan's compassion, that stands out most to many who worked with him.

“Alan took the job as State Highway Engineer the same time COVID hit; he worked tirelessly to make sure not a single employee lost their job, the roads stayed safe and everyone was paid,” said District 1 Manager, Arlie Matney. “He was the first to go to bat for every employee we have. Great leader, intelligent engineer, even better friend. He stood by people, always.”

On the long and happy road of his retirement, we know we can still call on Alan. But who are we going to call when we need an innovative answer or practical engineering solution? We will call on the inspiration and example Alan provided us as we carry that influence forward in our own careers with WVDOT.



Catching Up With Katie Everly

Just a few years ago, Katie Everly was struggling with drug addiction while trying to plot her path in life.

"I attempted college, but I dropped out," Everly recalled. "I was making bad decisions."

Today, Everly is back in school studying to become an engineering technician through the West Virginia Division of Highways (WVDOH) Transportation Engineering Technicians (TRET) training program. Under the program, the WVDOH pays for employees to go back to school to broaden their skill sets and grow both within the WVDOH and personally.

"I know how to use a snowplow, and I can run equipment," Everly said. "I want to learn something I don't know."

"This is my forever job."

Everly went to work for the WVDOH in Ohio County in September 2021. She immediately went to work to get her CDL.

Everly's boss, District 6 Engineer Tony Clark, P.E., said Everly



displayed that kind of drive from the moment she walked in the door.

But Everly wouldn't be working for the WVDOH at all had it not been for Gov. Jim Justice's Jobs & Hope West Virginia program.

Through a collaboration with the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources and state Department of Education, Jobs & Hope

offers a personalized plan for each participant in the program outlining education and career opportunities to get off drugs and into the workplace.

With one-on-one help, it worked for Everly.

"It's amazing to be here," Everly said after graduating from the program. "To overcome what I did takes a lot of hard work, dedication, determination and willingness to want a better life."

Today, Everly is excited to continue her education.

"I love it," she said. "I'm learning a lot. I want to get my bachelor's degree and become an engineer."

DMV Featured in Trade Publication

The West Virginia Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) has been featured in a national trade publication for the division's efforts to develop digital titling of vehicles.

"At this time, we have launched our digital title submissions," DMV Vehicle Services Director told Transport Topics, a national trade publication for the trucking industry.

"What that means is that all dealers and license services in West Virginia that submit title work to the state must do so in an electronic format."

According to Transport Topics, West Virginia is among about two dozen states developing programs to issue vehicle titles electronically.

Gov. Jim Justice recently announced a plan to allow state residents to access and keep their vehicle titles online or on their smartphones, much like electronic airline boarding passes. A DMV portal will allow residents to conduct all title and registration-related transactions remotely.

Justice said the program will allow residents to conduct business without having to go to a DMV office.

Digitizing vehicle titling is in its early stages, and will be perfected for passenger vehicles before being rolled out for commercial vehicles later this year.

"As more and more pieces of the system are added, we will be releasing information to the public on how their interactions with the DMV can be more efficient and convenient with the use of this new technology," Springer told Transport Topics.

According to Justice's office, the new process will "reduce the number of pieces of paper currently used by 4 million annually, the days vehicles sit in salvage yards waiting on titles by 1 million and significantly reduce the time that West Virginians need to spend in DMV offices processing title- and registration-related transactions."

"At this time, the biggest savings the DMV is realizing is the time it takes to get title work processed and back out to the owner or lien holder," Springer told Transport Topics. "What used to take on average 30 days is now being done in less than a week."



Division of Multimodal Transportation Facilities Celebrates Aviation Day

The aviation industry was recently celebrated at the West Virginia State Capitol with Aviation Day at the state Legislature. The West Virginia Division of Multimodal Transportation Facilities was part of the celebration.

Senate Resolution 14 designated Wednesday, Jan. 25, 2023, as Aviation Day at the Legislature, and recognized the contributions of aviation and aerospace in West Virginia.

Cindy Butler, the Commissioner of the West Virginia Division of Multimodal Transportation Facilities said the day is to celebrate aviation to bring awareness to the industry itself.

“It plays a tremendous role in the economy but also the well-being of residents and visitors of West Virginia,” Butler said. “Also, a big part is bringing awareness for the need to grow our educational opportunities in the field of aviation for our youth.”

According to Senate Resolution 14, “Airports have played, and continue to play a critical role in promoting economic development opportunities, serving national defense purposes, and facilitating response to natural disasters, medical emergencies, and search and rescue operations.”

Dozens of booths, from aviation education to local airports to the Transportation Security Administration, lined the Upper Rotunda at the state Capitol.

A 2020 West Virginia Aviation Economic Impact Study suggests airports in West Virginia contribute over \$1.6 billion to the state’s economy, support over 10,700 jobs with a payroll of \$550 million, and generates over \$75 million in state and local tax



revenues annually.

West Virginia has 24 airports in the National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems, seven of which are served by commercial airlines. That includes North Central West Virginia Airport (CKB) in Clarksburg and West Virginia International Yeager Airport (CRW) in Charleston.

North Central airport director Rick Rock was in attendance for Aviation Day. “It’s important for

us and all of our airports to come down here and create awareness to our legislators about the importance of aviation and aerospace in West Virginia,” he said.

Yeager airport director Dominique Ranieri said, “Aviation Day is a great opportunity because you get to connect with so many different audiences. Of course our representatives and senators,

and people that work here in the state Capitol that might not have had the opportunity to fly out of our airport yet.”

Ranieri also said she understands the importance of having a relationship with the state and the Division of Multimodal Transportation Facilities.

Butler sees the division in a role of support and promotion for the industry.

“We have 24 public airports with seven having commercial flights,” Butler said. “We receive aviation fuel tax funds and we provide that to airports to use as matching funds for federal grants from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) federal airport improvement program. We’re in a support role for these airports.”



Fans Don't Let Fans Drive Drunk: Enjoy the Big Game Responsibly

Every year, football fans gather to watch the biggest game of the year, the Super Bowl. This year, the Big Game is on Sunday, February 12, 2023. The Governor's Highway Safety Program (GHSP) is teaming up with the U.S. Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) to remind devoted



enthusiasts to once-a-year watchers and everyone in between that Fans Don't Let Fans Drive Drunk. If you plan to drink alcohol, plan ahead for a sober ride home. If you're hosting a party, take care of your guests and have plenty of non-alcoholic drinks

available for your designated drivers.

The GHSP reminds all drivers that for some, just one alcoholic beverage is one too many. If you plan to drive, plan to refrain from alcohol or drugs during your Super Bowl celebrations.

In 2020, there were 11,654 people killed nationwide in alcohol-impaired-driving

crashes. Have a game plan in place to make 2023 a safer year on our roads by being a safe, responsible, sober driver or planning beforehand to have a sober ride home.

Services Still Available at Travel Plazas

Travelers will still be able to stop, take a break, and pick up items for the road now that the Beckley and Bluestone travel plazas on the West Virginia Turnpike are shut down for renovations.

The Beckley and Bluestone travel plazas closed on Wednesday, Feb. 1, 2023, to begin demolition and site redevelopment. Both travel plazas will be rebuilt from the ground up.

But Jeff Miller, executive director of the West Virginia Parkways Authority, said that doesn't mean drivers won't be able to stop.

"We will still be able to provide motorists a safe area to get off the roadway, park and rest, take a break," Miller said. "We will have those areas still open.

Travelers in Beckley can still go to Tamarack Marketplace next door. Beginning Saturday, April 1, 2023 Tamarack hours will expand. The facility will open seven days a week from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m., a change from 6 days a week from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Restroom renovations at the Tamarack Marketplace will be completed in a few weeks. The Tamarack Marketplace will also open 'Country Roads Market.' The addition is aimed at supplementing the needs of interstate travelers with

convenience store offerings such as food, drinks and car items.

Miller said drivers of tractor-trailers will not have to look for alternative locations from Beckley and Bluestone for meeting, switching equipment, and fueling.

"The fueling operations, which do contain restrooms and sell snacks and beverages, will remain almost through the entirety of the project," Miller said. "We will be able to keep all of the parking open which is highly utilized for tractor-trailer parking."

The newly redeveloped travel plazas will offer expanded food concepts, a 24/7 Mountain State Market convenience store, outdoor dining options, expanded parking for tractor-trailers and passenger vehicles, electric vehicle charging stations, vehicle and tractor-trailer fueling options, picnic area, and pet relief areas.

The Beckley travel plaza will offer a drive-through, increased restroom facilities, and bus parking, as well as enhancing and highlighting the Parkways Authority Tourist Information Centers.

Construction of the new travel plazas is expected to be completed by late 2024. The Morton travel plaza will be open until renovation work there starts in 2025.



Deadline Approaching for Bridge Design and Build Contest

Students in West Virginia middle schools and high schools have until Wednesday, March 1, 2023 to enter the 2023 West Virginia Bridge Design and Build Contest, hosted by West Virginia Department of Transportation (WVDOT) for more than 20 years, registration is entirely free and available on the website wvbridgedesignandbuildcontest.com.

"We have schools that have come back to the competition for 20 years and counting," said Jennifer Dooley, of WVDOT's Public Relations Division.

"With WVDOT, we have scholarships, Co-Op programs, tuition reimbursement, and training opportunities; backing up our dedication to being the best educated WVDOT in the country. The competition helps us reach students with the message that there are great careers available in their home state."

The competition focuses on engineering, using real world design principles in the software with which students design their bridges, however Dooley stresses that the competition is not just for students who already feel they would be good at engineering.

"All students are encouraged to give it a try," said Dooley. "This contest can reach any school, any student, and it's a level playing field. It's exciting to see a seventh grader give it a try and find out they can do it. Students need to know that it's okay to be a beginner and start where they are. This contest teaches them about engineering without expecting them to already know."

Secretary of Transportation Jimmy Wriston, P.E. served as a classroom volunteer in the early years of the competition and developed a process for coaching West Virginia's students that blends hard work with creativity. In 2016, Wriston created a tutorial for students outlining a step by step process for using the software. That tutorial, which starts at the beginning and

moves logically through steps, is available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E84yQRxee4&t=202s>.

The Qualifying Round of the contest will end on Wednesday, March 1, 2023, at 11:59 pm EST. Competing in the contest to qualify for the final competition is open to middle school and high school students, but siblings, families and teachers are encouraged to submit designs as well in Open Competition just for fun. Participation in the contest is entirely free, with software available for download on the website wvbridgedesignandbuildcontest.com.

Students in grades 6-12 attending a West Virginia public, private, or home school may enter individually or in teams of two. For teams of two, the team captain should be the only one to register. You must include the contact information for you, your parents, and your teacher.

"Teachers can email us at any time until February 17 to request volunteer assistance," said Dustin Fezell, Transportation Engineering Technologist with the WVDOT Information Technology Division. "It helps students build the foundation for what they want to do in the future."

Approximately the Top 25 individuals/teams with the lowest cost designs will be invited to participate in the Finals, hosted this year at the WVU Institute of Technology Campus in Beckley.

Finalists will be notified by Friday, March 3, 2023, with an invitation and details of the Finals event. Finalist Notification Deadline is Friday, March 10, 2023. The Finals event is scheduled for Saturday, April 1, 2023.

Last year, more than 80 schools and over 200 individual teams participated. All finalists will be awarded cash prizes between \$100 and \$400 plus. There is also a prize for the Most Aesthetic Bridge.



Cass Opens Line to Durbin



The Durbin & Greenbrier Valley Railroad recently made their first test run over the recently completed Trout Run Bridge, traveling from Cass to Durbin to retrieve Heisler No. 6 for its return to Cass. Replacement of the bridge will reopen the rail line from Cass to Durbin, which was severed by flooding in 1985.

Replacement of the bridge was undertaken by crews from the West Virginia Division of Highways (WVDOH) Central Forces, who spent more than a year in harsh weather conditions to replace the bridge to reopen the rail line.

Beginning this spring, the Greenbrier Express will depart the restored, historically important town of Cass and closely follow the free-flowing Greenbrier River to the small mountain village of Durbin. The ride upriver to Durbin passes through secluded wilderness featuring beautiful scenes of forested mountains at each turn of the river. Sightings of deer, river otters, and black bear along with a wide variety of eagles, hawks, and ospreys are common.

VISION AWARDS

Congratulations to the following individuals being recognized this month by Secretary Wriston for their dedication to The Vision.

Chris Collins—District 2

Wilmer Napier—District 2

Kathleen Everly—District 6

Sidney (Nathan) Thomas—District 9

Michael Griffin—DMV

Todd Gibson—Operations

The Vision is simple; to be the best DOT in the country, for the purpose of giving our West Virginia the chance it should have — a place of prosperity and joy, where citizens have the best chance to build the lives they hope for. To be the best DOT in the country based on the quality of our work and motivation. To be the safest place for our employees to work. To be the best trained, and most educated.

To go Above and Beyond, every day.

