

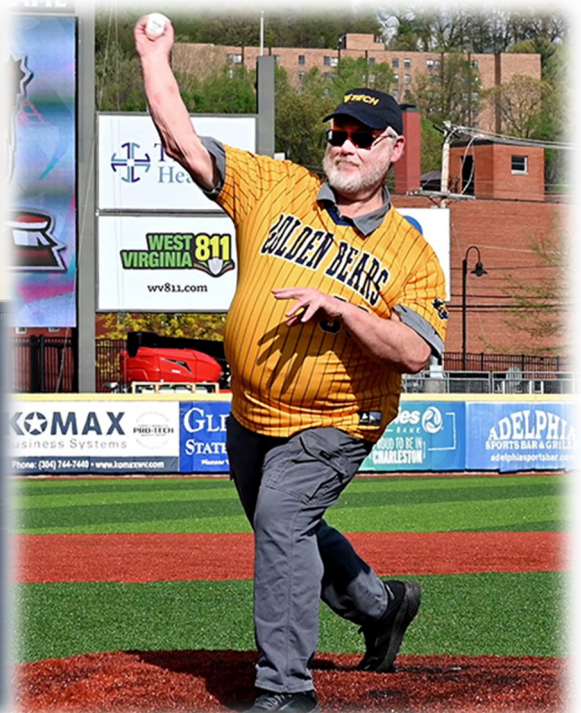
WV DOT Today!



May 2023—Volume 5: Issue 5



Champions, All Around



Moving Up: New Roles for Schaffer and Kinsey



With a vision of continuing to make the West Virginia Department of Transportation (WVDOT) the best DOT in the country, **Jonathan Schaffer** is taking on a new managerial role.

WVDOT Secretary of Transportation Jimmy Wriston, P.E., recently announced that Schaffer has joined the Executive Division of the WVDOT. He is serving in a managerial role that will assist the office with various duties associated with policies, procedures, legislation, and economic development.

Schaffer, who started his new role on Monday, April 24, 2023, said his focus is on “One DOT.” He proudly hangs a WVDOT Vision Award up in his office.

“That’s something that I promulgate, the vision of this agency,” said Schaffer. “I am very passionate about it. To tie that back into legislation, when one of the bills passes that can benefit the agency, it’s something I will watch from introduction through the process.”

Schaffer previously worked in the Human Resources Division for the WVDOT. He said one of his first loves was following legislation and he studied Political Science at Marshall University.

“I think you either love it or you don’t. Since I was a little kid I have enjoyed it. It’s not the politics, it’s the legislation,” said Schaffer.

Schaffer has two undergraduate degrees, two master’s degrees and a graduate degree, all from Marshall.

He resides in Charleston.

For nearly two decades, **Chris Kinsey** has served the West Virginia Department of Transportation (WVDOT) in various roles. Kinsey has recently taken on a new one.

WVDOT Transportation Secretary Jimmy Wriston, P.E., announced on Friday, April 21, 2023, that Kinsey had been appointed to the position of Deputy Transportation Business Manager – Programs.

Kinsey previously worked in the Planning Division and has been with WVDOT for 17 years.

“I enjoy working here because I like to see that we make a difference,” said Kinsey.

Kinsey said in his new role he will primarily manage the federal programs to maintain and demonstrate fiscal constraint. He said he has to make sure the right projects are funded through the right buckets of money.

Kinsey has a bachelor’s degree from WVU Tech and a master’s degree from Marshall University.

As for advice to his co-workers, Kinsey said, “Don’t be afraid to ask me a question.”

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.

West Virginia Department of Transportation
1900 Kanawha Boulevard East
Building 5, Room A-137
Charleston, West Virginia 25305
Editor: Rusty Marks



WVDOH Office Assistant and Artist Unveils Worker Memorial Painting

West Virginia Division of Highways (WVDOH) St. Albans office assistant and freelance artist Gina Gunnoe recently unveiled an original painting of the West Virginia Fallen Workers Memorial during a special ceremony at WVDOH District 1 headquarters in Charleston. The painting pays homage to the Williamstown memorial honoring WVDOH transportation workers who have been killed in the line of duty.



and her father, she enrolled in an art correspondence course, where she studied for three years.

“My mother is an artist,” Gunnoe said. “Maybe I inherited some talent from her.”

Gunnoe’s dedication to her craft has paid off. Her work has been featured in several editions of the West Virginia Wildlife Calendar, published by the state Division of Natural Resources

“I wanted to capture the beauty of that statue,” said Gunnoe, a St. Albans resident who joined WVDOH last year. “I wanted more people to be aware that our people have given their lives in work zone crashes.”



In 2022, there were 800 crashes in West Virginia work zones, killing eight people and injuring 276. Although most of those killed and injured in the state’s work zones are civilians, sometimes they are transportation workers.

Gunnoe developed an interest in art in school. After high school, encouraged by her teachers

(DNR).

The 2023 calendar features two paintings done by Gunnoe, a squirrel and a wild turkey.

More of Gunnoe’s artwork can be found on Facebook at [Ginagunnoefineart](https://www.facebook.com/Ginagunnoefineart).



Statewide Drugged Driving Prevention Enforcement

Drug-impaired driving has become more prevalent on our nation’s roads. In recent years, several states have created new laws allowing marijuana on a recreational or medical basis, which has made discussing the impaired-driving issue even more important. The Governor’s Highway Safety Program (GHSP) wants all marijuana users to know that in West Virginia, it is illegal to use marijuana and then drive.

Although its origins are uncertain, April 20th (more commonly

known as 420) has become synonymous with marijuana use, and, in some circles, this date is considered a “marijuana holiday.” Consequently, there will likely be an increase in marijuana use.

To help keep drugged and dazed drivers off our roads, the GHSP is teaming up with National Highway Transportation Safety Administration (NHTSA) and local law enforcement to spread the message that drug-impaired driving of any kind is dangerous and illegal.



WVDOT Holds Candlelight Vigil to Remember Those Lost

The West Virginia Department of Transportation (WVDOT) held a candlelight vigil on Wednesday, April 19, 2023, in conjunction with National Go Orange for Work Zone Safety Awareness Day, to remember the 58 West Virginia Division of Highways (WVDOH) workers who have lost their lives in the course of their daily work.

“When I got that call in the hotel, emotions overwhelmed me,” said Jake Bumgarner, P.E., Director of the WVDOH Operations Division, of the moment he learned that his co-worker and friend, Randy Bland, had died on the job.

In attendance alongside highway workers were families who had lost a loved one while working on West Virginia roads. WVDOH considers them family, too.

“We’re committed to safe work zones,” said Secretary of Transportation, Jimmy Wriston, P.E., in a press conference with Governor Justice earlier in the week. “Today, we’re not going to worry about compliance, and meeting minimum standards.



Today we’re going to be committed to zero fatalities in our work zones.”

The Worker Memorial, unveiled in 2017 at the Interstate 77 Welcome Center in Williamstown, bears the names of men and women who lost their lives on the job. WVDOH reached back to its beginnings to compile the names, with the hopes that doing so would help prevent

other lives from being lost. This year, smaller replicas of the design by West Virginia sculptor, Jamie Lester, were placed in each of the Welcome Centers around the state.

In 2022, there were 800 crashes in West Virginia work zones, killing eight people and injuring 276. Fatalities in work zones include both workers and motorists. Crashes can be avoided when drivers obey posted speed limits and let distractions wait. On National Go Orange for Work Zone Safety Awareness Day, wearing orange signals a dedication to driving responsibly so that everyone gets home safe at the end of the day.

Those Lost in the Line of Duty

The West Virginia Department of Transportation (WVDOT) remembers those who lost their lives in the line of duty:

Susan Custer, Ellis Ogden, Robert Lilly, Oscar Maynard, Millard Mcatte, Luke Simplicio, Timothy Cox, John Murphy, Arthur Coulter, Roy Vanscoy, Robert Kanode, Victor Abbington, Chester DeLong, Robert Pritt, Dennis Neely Jr., Robert Fleece Jr., Paul B. Kyle, Frederick Sponaule, John Poland, Glen Shrewsbury, John Townsend, James Galloway Jr., Francis Doran, Joseph Chetork, Edwin Logston, David Earliwine, Eli Blankenship Jr., Wetzell L. Bias, Terry L. Webb, William D. Cook, Steven L. Oldaker, Jack Sharps, Roger E. Skinner, Stephen M. Cogar, Rickie H. Sanders, John A. Moat, Randall W. Bland, Glenn F. Lough, Charles E. Himelrick Jr., Ralph W. Swisher, Fernard J. Reto, Richard Johnson, Jack A. Williams, Forrest A. Raynes, Okie Riser, Timothy E. Booth, Okey Dean, Edward

Arnold, James H. Watts, Harold Sherr, Johnny L. Wilson, Stephen A. Herold, Nelson E. Ingram, Benjamin Harris, Eugene Sullivan, John D. Greenwide, Morris Hansford.



Pitchin' to be the Most Educated DOT



West Virginia Department of Transportation (WVDOT) Secretary Jimmy Wriston, P.E., joined his alma mater WVU Tech on Saturday, April 15, 2023, throwing the ceremonial first pitch in its game against Indiana University Southeast at GoMart Park in Charleston. The winners were those among us who want to do more for West Virginia.

"We are so grateful for our partnership with WVDOT and Secretary Wriston," said T. Ramon Stuart, Ph.D., Campus President of West Virginia University Institute of Technology.

"We are excited for the opportunities ahead to provide more educational and employment opportunities so that West Virginians can continue their education and explore careers right here at home."

Secretary Wriston has long listed the goal of being the best educated DOT in the country. Through a series of bridges that help students and workers advance no matter where they are, there are opportunities available at WVDOT for anyone who wants a career that continues to grow. The program WVDOT has built is multi-faceted, and relies on not only each student's personal career path, but on constantly helping build opportunities for the next person. These bridges to education, in

partnership with universities around the state, include tuition reimbursement for WVDOT employees, a recently expanded Summer Co-Op program, on the job training for WVDOT employees, sponsorship of five technical conferences at engineering colleges, a growing capstone project opportunity where college students can design real WVDOH projects, the West Virginia Bridge Design and Build Competition for middle and high school students, and participation in job fairs and career days.

Secretary Wriston grew up watching the New River Gorge Bridge being built, but dropped out of high school to go to work like so many young West Virginians. He longed for more. Getting his G.E.D. and attending WV Tech in his 30's, Wriston graduated with honors and began his career with Division of Highways in District 9 Bridge Department before moving up, and up, to be named Secretary of Transportation by Governor Justice in 2021. Reaching for your dreams is not often an easy road, but WVDOT is fostering an environment where each person can be successful by focusing on a team approach. So, go team DOT! And three cheers for our partners in education! And you, reader, whatever it is you want to accomplish — reach for it.



National "Donate Life" Month Hits Home for DMV Employees

Most West Virginians know that when you apply to get your driver's license, you can also decide whether you want to be an organ donor. For many people, the decision to "check the box" or not doesn't have lifelong benefits or consequences. But for one Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) headquarters employee, and an entire regional office, April's Donate Life month now has significant meaning.

Arlene Moore had a lung biopsy in 2019, and doctors told her she would need a lung transplant within the next 10 years because she had pulmonary fibrosis, an idiopathic lung disease that her mother also had. There is no cure for this disease, and the medications she could take to manage the disease did not work for her. After many medical complications, and being fearful of losing her life before a transplant was available, she finally got the call on May 4, 2021. She continued to have complications after the transplant, but miraculously, she is now back home, AND, back to work at DMV! "It was almost like a



miracle that it even happened the way that it happened," she said. She was featured in an article in the Charleston Gazette-Mail this month!

Williamson DMV customer Bradee Vance, and his dad Josh, came to the regional office on Friday, April 14, 2023, for his skills test. Bradee passed with flying colors, and his dad gave permission for the regional office staff to get pictures with Bradee and share his story. Bradee had kidney disease, and in November of 2022 he was told he needed a kidney transplant immediately. Following family testing, they discovered his aunt was a 99 percent match. The transplant was performed in November and Bradee is doing great. He was as excited to share his story as the Williamson staff was to hear it!

The DMV staff wants to encourage everyone to consider being an organ donor and check "yes" on your driver's license application. As these two stories show--you never know when you might be able to save a life!

Tri-River Transit Gets New Buses

The West Virginia Department of Transportation (WVDOT) is continuing to take an active part in helping West Virginians achieve what they need in terms of transportation.

Five transit buses were recently received by Tri-River Transit following an order from the WVDOT's Division of Multimodal Transportation Facilities – Public Transit.

The five buses will be utilized by Tri-River Transit to serve the residents of Boone, Lincoln, Logan, Mason, and Wayne counties.

"It is so important to so many West Virginia citizens to have the availability of bus service," said Cindy Butler, Commissioner of the Division of Multimodal Transportation Facilities.

"I am very happy that the Public Transit Section of the Division of Multimodal Transportation Facilities was able to procure these new transit buses. I am very proud of the hard work put in by our employees to complete this purchase."



The purchase is part of a Federal Transit Authority (FTA) program to provide transportation options for rural communities.

Division leaders have written a transit asset management plan, as required by the FTA. The plan collects data on the buses and tracks when a vehicle's useful life may be at its end.

There could be around five dozen more buses coming in the next year to serve rural areas in the state. The division is catching up on large-scale purchases following the COVID-19 pandemic.

"It's important because it provides a safe transportation option for folks who may not have a lot of transportation options," said Bill Robinson, the Executive Director of the Public Transit section.

"A lot of people do not own a car, can't keep one up and if they did have one may not be able to drive for some reason," Robinson said.



Rossi Retiring as District 8 Engineer

West Virginia Division of Highways (WVDOH) District 8 Engineer Jamie Rossi retired at the end of April 2023 with 32 years of service.

"I'm definitely going to miss all the people," Rossi said. "The relationships I've formed over the last 32 years I have no complaints about. I've had a good career."

Rossi grew up and went to school in the Randolph County town of Coalton. After two years at Potomac State College in Keyser, Rossi completed his engineering degree at West Virginia University Tech in Montgomery.

He had a stint in the WVDOH co-op program before going to work for the division fulltime.

"Jamie truly cared about the WVDOH," said Chief Engineer of District Operations Joe Pack, P.E. "He cared about the people in his district and he cared about the roads."

Rossi, 55, has a wife, Amelia, and three children – Benjamin, Monica, and Brandon. "They're all out in the world pursuing their own careers," Rossi said.

Rossi is going to work with a consulting firm, where he expects to continue to interact with the WVDOH. But after nine years as district engineer, he thought it was time to move on.

Rossi is succeeded by Tommy Collins, P.E. "I look forward as Interim District Engineer to continue the excellence that District 8 provides the traveling public in Randolph, Tucker, Pendleton, and Pocahontas Counties and set the foundation for future Improvements," Collins said.



Babydog Looks Twice for Motorcycles: And So Should You!



May is Motorcycle Safety Awareness Month, and Babydog is urging all her friends around the state to look twice and be aware. Thanks to transportation workers who take pride in their work and a partnership between agencies creating the Mountain Rides routes, you can expect to see even more motorcyclists discovering West Virginia this year. There's lots to do here but there isn't anything more important than making sure everyone gets home safe at the end of each day. Be thinking about motorcycles and make sure all your friends, and Babydog's friends, and everybody just has a good, safe, wonderful time on the roads we share.



DMV Issues New Tourism-linked License

The West Virginia Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) will begin issuing driver's licenses and identification cards with a new look and design that matches the state's tourism branding.

"This new design reflects the immeasurable pride we have in our state's beauty," said Gov. Jim Justice. "The New River Gorge Bridge is one of our most popular attractions.

It is the centerpiece of our nation's newest national park and draws people from all over the world. By featuring it on our driver's license, we want to inspire more people to come and experience the majesty of West Virginia firsthand. It lets us continue to show the world why Almost Heaven is a must-see destination and maybe even a future home."

The new design features a background of West Virginia's historic New River Gorge Bridge in the nation's newest National Park, the New River Gorge National Park and Preserve, and uses the official state branding. The Almost Heaven tourism mark is also included on the back of each card.

"We've seen huge success with promoting the Almost Heaven



West Virginia brand across the country and around the world," Secretary of Tourism Chelsea Ruby said. "Adding that branding to our driver licenses is another opportunity to promote our great state. I want to thank Governor Justice for his vision for expanding tourism, with exceptional results. I also appreciate the team at our DMV for their collaboration on this exciting project."

West Virginians may apply for a duplicate license or ID card with the new design before their renewal period by visiting the DMV website at dmv.wv.gov or at any of the 25 regional DMV offices across the state.

For more information, and to take advantage of renewing your driver's license online from the comfort and convenience of home, visit the DMV website at dmv.wv.gov, and go to the Online Services Portal. You may also take advantage of the REAL ID HeadStart pre-enrollment program at <http://go.wv.gov/realidheadstart>, which allows you to upload your documentation before going to a regional office.

Spencer Mayor Lauds Bradley Bridge

Good morning, Secretary Wriston.

First I wanted to thank you for posting the video about Ruby Bradley bridge -- it was an excellent piece of work and I finally started telling people I paid you to say nice things about Spencer. I've been Mayor since I was 24 and will be 71 in March. I have loved what I do and like to see projects get done. I want to be a little part in the dedication of the bridge and have a crew who can make it happen. Give out cake and drink or whatever sounds good. I was fortunate to know — meet and talk several times to Ruby Bradley and she was a great lady. I'm also excited about the Scott/Miller hill project and keep an eye on it. I know you and highways have the toughest job of all and none of us are ever



happy with road conditions and always want more. You and your folks have done a good job and getting better. Spencer is a great small town of West Virginia and it's not easy to keep it going. Never enough money to do all that needs done. If I can ever help you just call my office or me. I have lived here all my life and

know just about everyone. It would be good for you to come to my office and speak to us and get to know us....

Again, thanks for all you do.... My best to you.

Terry Williams – Mayor, Spencer, West Virginia.



Chelyan: District 1 Champs



The West Virginia Division of Highways (WVDOT) organization at Chelyan is District 1's go-to group for getting things done in eastern Kanawha County.

"We're here to celebrate you guys and all the work you do," District 1 Manager Arlie Matney said at a recent event. "If Secretary Wriston had his choice, we'd have Chelyan organizations all over the state."

Chelyan has been in a stiff competition to see who can patch more potholes among District 1's various organizations. Matney said the good-natured trash talk between the organizations has been so heated it reminded him of professional wrestlers.

In that spirit, Matney was happy to present the folks at Chelyan with their very own trophy belt to celebrate their indisputable patching prowess.

Good job, Chelyan!

VISION AWARDS

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

Gina Gunnoe—District 1

Justin Pinson—District 2

Roderick "Roddy" Hughes—District 2

Holly Vest—District 10

Nina Orndorff—Budget and Procurement

Fernanda D'Agostin—Information Technology

Charlene Chandler—Correspondence

Franklin "Tim" Kinchen—District 1 Disforce

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.



New guests every week!

transportation.wv.gov *click on Podcast



First IIJA Bridge Project Underway in War

Work is underway on the first municipal bridge project to be funded under the federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), signed into law in November 2021. Part of West Virginia's allotment under the IIJA includes almost \$550 million over the next five years to replace, rehabilitate, preserve and build bridges in the state.



certain off-system bridges, which typically require a 20 percent local match. Even for municipal bridges that would still require matching funds, the IIJA funding allows the WVDOT room to work with municipalities to structure the matching money, Wriston said.

West Virginia Division of Highways (WVDOH) work crews are currently in

A unique provision of the IIJA bridge program funding allows the state to spend at least 15 percent of the total allocation to off-system bridges, which may include city bridges or other spans not owned by the WVDOT.

"Of all the new programs included in the IIJA, this is the one that I can most get behind," said Transportation Secretary Jimmy Wriston, P.E. "This gives West Virginia a robust bridge program that will have an impact for decades. Furthermore, it will allow us to assist municipalities with their non-state-owned bridges without requiring a match."

The IIJA bridge program allows 100 percent federal funding for

the process of replacing the Hale Street Bridge in the town of War. So far, WVDOH crews have installed a temporary bridge and a detour road to the structure, torn down the old bridge and abutments and built a new bench and set beams for the new bridge.

It is the first project undertaken by WVDOH work crews to utilize IIJA funding.

WVDOH District 10 Engineer Ryland Musick, P.E., said the original bridge was in bad shape, but the town of War couldn't afford to replace it. IIJA funding allows WVDOH to replace the bridge on the federal government's dime.

District 2 Recognizes 23 Year Employee

West Virginia Division of Highways (WVDOH) District 2 Traffic Engineer Brian Webb, P.E., is retiring after 23 years of service.

Webb, 60, started with the WVDOH co-op program in 1997 and did three summer co-op tours before coming to work for the WVDOH fulltime in 2000. Having gone to work directly after leaving high school, Webb was 38 before going to college. He has been a P.E. since 2005.

Webb has enjoyed putting his skills to use for the public good.

"There have been a lot of opportunities to do real engineering while I was here," he said. Over the years, Webb has been involved in numerous rewarding projects, including ensuring guardrails are installed where they are most needed.

"One of the things I like to do is make someone's drive to work a little bit better every day," Webb said. "Sometimes that's a stop



sign. Sometimes it's something else."

District 2 Engineer Rob Pennington, P.E., said Webb has developed an excellent rapport with both co-workers and the public. "Brian has been a pleasure to work with over the years," Pennington said.

Webb, who is celebrating his 40th anniversary this summer with his wife,

Debra, is looking forward to raising tomatoes, cleaning out the garage, and studying for Sunday school. He has a daughter, Rachel Aldridge, who is a middle school teacher, and a son, Caleb, an emergency room doctor.

Webb still lives in the Lavalette neighborhood where he grew up, about 200 yards from his parents and even closer to his in-laws.

"I'm really thankful for my wife, who packed my lunch every day for the last 23 years," Webb said.



Congratulations to the Winning Orgs!

Transportation Secretary Jimmy Wriston, P.E., recognized the best maintenance organizations within the West Virginia Division of Highways (WVDOH) at the 2023 Operations Conference in Canaan Valley, which ran from Tuesday, April 25,

through Thursday, April 27, 2023.

“It recognizes orgs that are performing at the highest level of the WVDOH,” said Chief of District Operations Joe Pack, P.E.



District 1 — Cheylan



District 2 — Lincoln County



District 3 — Wirt County



District 4 — Doddridge County



District 5 — Hardy County



District 6 — Hancock County



District 7 — Upshur County



District 8 — Randolph County



District 9 — Nicholas County



District 10 — Mercer County



Best Expressway — Corridor H
Knobley Road



Best Overall — District 7

