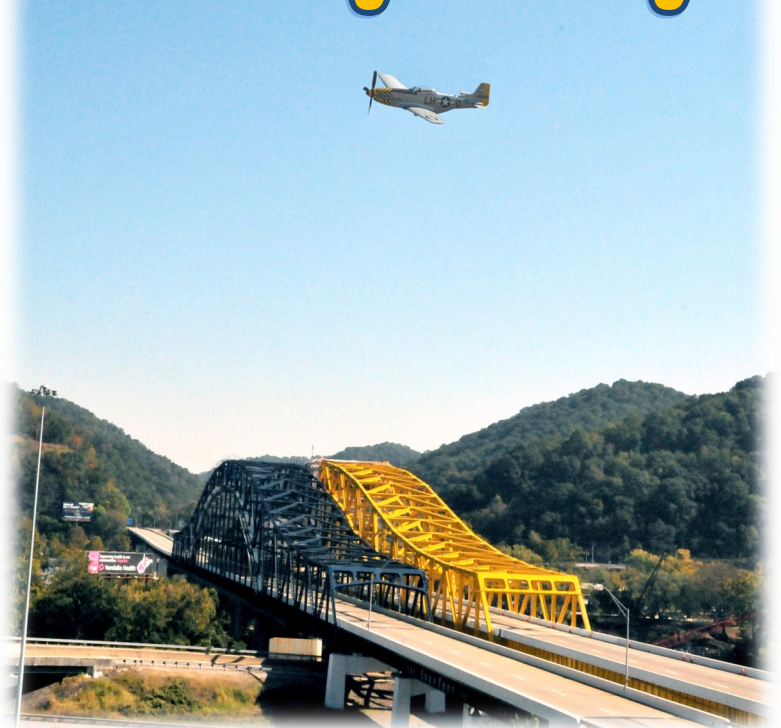


Flying High Again! Celebrating the Chuck Yeager Bridges



On Friday, October 13, 2023, Gov. Jim Justice celebrated the completion of a new gold and blue paint scheme on the Charles Chuck Yeager Bridge in Kanawha City, and to commemorate the 76th anniversary of Yeager’s historic breaking of the sound barrier on October 14, 1947.

The ceremony was highlighted by a flyover of a World War II era P-51 Mustang fighter aircraft, the type Yeager flew during his time in the U.S. Army Air Force in the war.

The Governor was joined by Transportation Secretary Jimmy Wriston, West Virginia Parkways Authority Executive Director Jeff Miller, and Victoria Yeager, wife of deceased Brig. Gen. Chuck Yeager, during the event.

"We truly owe so much to Chuck Yeager and his family," Gov.

Justice said. "I was blessed to meet him a few times, and his courage, intelligence, and grit were remarkable. Not only that, but he’s from West Virginia. We owe everything we have in life to this great man. We will always remember the Yeager family and Chuck’s accomplishments."

Born near Hamlin in 1923, Yeager officially broke the sound barrier on October 14, 1947, in the Bell X-1, a specially built rocket plane. He nearly lost an upgraded version of the X-1 in a later flight when the aircraft went into an uncontrolled spin. After plunging 50,000 feet in about 70 seconds, Yeager recovered from the spin and landed the aircraft.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2.



Yeager Bridges

"Thank you, Gov. Justice, because you have kept your word of keeping the Yeager family name alive. Chuck really loved you, and you have been so generous to our family. Thank you, again," Victoria Yeager said.

Shot down on March 5, 1944, Yeager evaded the Germans, made his way back to England and volunteered to go back into combat, appealing all the way up to Supreme Allied Commander Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower. Yeager returned to combat, eventually racking up 11.5 aerial victories. Most of his victories were made while flying a P-51 Mustang he dubbed "Glamorous Glen."

In June 2021, Southern Road and Bridge LLC was awarded a contract for \$16,267,273.80 to completely repaint both northbound and southbound spans of the Charles Chuck Yeager Bridge.

It is important to paint bridges regularly to protect the bridge structure and prolong the life of the bridge. The decision was made to paint the bridges in gold and blue in honor of Yeager.

"The Yeager Bridge is an iconic bridge entering the Kanawha Valley on the West Virginia Turnpike, and it was in desperate need of a full painting," Miller said. "The West Virginia Parkways

Authority is proud that Gov. Jim Justice had the vision to honor Yeager, who is one of the greatest West Virginians of all time, by painting this bridge in the official state colors of gold and blue. Not only will this help improve the overall condition and appearance of the bridges, but it is also a simple, yet classy gesture to honor this great West Virginian."

The southern span of the bridge was built in 1952 as part of the original alignment of the West Virginia Turnpike. The northbound bridge was built in 1980.

The throaty sound of a Rolls-Royce Merlin engine screamed down the Kanawha River Valley as a P-51D fighter aircraft, similar to the one flown by Brig. Gen. Chuck Yeager during World War II, roared down the river for a series of flybys of the Charles Chuck Yeager Bridges.

The flyby, organized by West Virginia Department of Transportation (WVDOT) Events Director Randy Damron, in celebration of the painting of the Yeager Bridges made use of a P-51 Mustang flying out of Cincinnati, Ohio. Widely considered the best fighter aircraft of World War II, the P-51 Mustang has a top speed of approximately 440 mph. The plane arriving from Cincinnati came in at a more leisurely 300 or so.



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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DMV Mourns Loss of Jesse and Cathy



In the last couple months, the West Virginia Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) has experienced the loss of two valued members of their workforce: Jesse Corlis, who was a Public Information Specialist and mainly served as DMV's Graphic Designer, and Cathy Graceson, who was working as a Transportation Business Operations Assistant, Senior, in the DMV Procurement section.

"It shows us just how short and fleeting life can truly be, said DMV Commissioner Everett Frazier. "Both of these employees had just been at work, and both of their deaths were completely unexpected and a big loss to our agency. We stand in solidarity with their family and friends as we mourn their loss."

Cathy worked at several organizations throughout her career, including Union Carbide, Toyota, Dingess Rum Properties, and finished with the DMV. Jesse worked long hours as a freelance artist in addition to his DMV job, and you can find his work in many restaurants, buildings, and towns across the state, as well as catching several of the license plates he designed on West Virginia vehicles and roadways. His Silver Bridge Memorial painting, featured below, was dedicated when WVDOT joined with the City of Point Pleasant for the 50 Year Remembrance Ceremony for victims of the Silver Bridge collapse. Several of Jesse's works are featured within the City of Charleston.



Smooth Sailing: QC in the WVDOT

You might refer to Colton Farley as a smooth operator. Farley drives a van specially outfitted to test the smoothness of West Virginia's roads.

"We probably look at more roads than anyone in the state," said Farley, an engineering trainee in the West Virginia Division of Highways (WVDOT) materials division in Charleston.

Smoothness testing is required on just about any paving job that's more than a mile long on a road with two or more lanes. So far in 2023, the WVDOT has paved almost 930 miles of roadway, so that's a lot of pavement to test.

Between May and August, peak paving season, Farley got 70 requests to test freshly paved road surfaces.

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and WVDOT require minimum smoothness standards for paved roads, defining smoothness using a scale called the International Roughness Index (IRI). A roadway scoring 95 or less on the IRI scale is considered smooth, while a score of 96 to 170 is considered fair. Any road scoring over 171 is considered rough.

Smooth roads don't just mean a quieter and less bumpy ride. Smooth roads increase the fuel efficiency of cars and trucks, add up to less wear and tear on vehicles, and last longer.

Contractors hired to pave Mountain State roadways are required to meet minimum smoothness standards. If a paved road isn't smooth enough, contractors face monetary penalties



and must smooth out the road or redo the job.

"We're seeing improvement from the contractors," Farley said. "The roads are getting smoother."

Farley uses a special van equipped with precise lasers to measure the relative

smoothness of a road surface. The lasers point at the road surface in front of the left and right front tires, detecting the most minute changes in surface height. Data points are then compared for a stretch of road to create an average IRI score.

Smoothness testing serves as a quality control check on contractors, ensuring

taxpayers get the most for their money and have the smoothest roads possible.

Farley recently tested the smoothness on a stretch of Interstate 64 near Charleston, which had been repaved over the summer.

Average IRI score for the stretch of road was 43, well under the 95 the FHWA considers smooth. Farley got some IRI scores on the stretch of road in the 20s, which is extremely smooth by FHWA standards.

Farley said smooth roads last longer, Farley said.

"They're safer," he added. "Cars are more fuel efficient, your ride is smoother, your ride is quieter, it makes the parts on your vehicle last longer, it makes our vehicles last longer, all the way around."



New Resurfacing Technique Could Mean Substantial Cost Savings

A new technique being used in Mason County by West Virginia Division of Highways (WVDOH) District 1 paving crews could save taxpayers substantial amounts of money if all goes as planned.



District 1 has a machine that can grind up the old asphalt into small particles, which can then be spread on the roadway like gravel.

Crews first spray down a layer of tar, then cover it with a layer of ground-up asphalt. A roller then

District 1 is trying a new way to resurface tar and chip roads, using ground up asphalt instead of gravel for the main road surface. The technique uses recycled materials the WVDOH already has a large stock of to create a road surface that should be better than traditional tar and chip.

“If this works out, it could save us a lot of money,” said WVDOH District 1 Manager Arlie Matney.

Tar and chip roads are reserved for rural areas without a lot of vehicular traffic. On a tar and chip road, crews put down gravel and spray a layer of a tarlike substance to keep the gravel in place.

Matney said he thinks there’s a better and a cheaper way to maintain old tar and chip roads. Instead of using gravel as a road base, Matney is experimenting with ground up asphalt, which the WVDOH has in abundance.

When the WVDOH or contractors repave a road, they must first mill off the old asphalt. The ground up asphalt is kept in big piles for possible reuse later.

compacts the tar and ground up asphalt before another coat of tar and asphalt is laid down.

“Our hope is that with the tar, the sun, and the compaction, it will all melt together,” Matney said. “It should be almost like you’re getting an asphalt road.”

Crews recently tried out the new technique this summer on Flatfoot Road in Mason County. Matney said trying the new technique on the 3.2-mile section of road was \$225,000 cheaper than it would be to pave the road.

Since the asphalt was free, he also saved \$35,000 that he would have otherwise spent for new gravel if he had used traditional tar and chip methods. “On this job, we had no material costs at all,” Matney said.

Crews will know in a few months whether the ground-up asphalt holds up better than traditional tar and chip.

But early results are encouraging. Matney said the surface is holding up well so far and local residents are asking if the technique can be used on their tar and chip roads next.

Will the Real Jimmy Wriston Please Stand Up?



Watch out Barbie and Ken! The top Halloween trendsetter this year at WVDOT is Transportation Secretary Jimmy Wriston, P.E. This year’s imposters include Dawna Skaggs (one of the two Wristons on the right), and Daniel Mashayekhi (left). Both costumes included Wriston’s tie and ballcap, but the ever stylish blue jean jacket spotted on our Secretary this fall has not yet been duplicated.



DMV Passes 80,000 Online Tests



West Virginia Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) Commissioner Everett Frazier is pleased to announce that over 80,000 knowledge tests have been taken online through DMV's secure online services portal since its implementation in February 2021. The online knowledge test saves customers time, and is a benefit for those who get test anxiety.

"We are thrilled to see so many customers take advantage of the online driver's license knowledge test. We recognize that some people simply don't do as well with test-taking, and being able to do it securely from the comfort and convenience of home is a real benefit," said Commissioner Frazier.

For customers to use the online services portal to take the knowledge test, they must have access to a computer with a camera, mouse, and keyboard. Go to the DMV website at dmv.wv.gov, and click on the Online Services Portal at the top of the page. From there, simply choose the "Drivers" column, and then the link to "Register now and immediately take your knowledge test online." Notes and tips to assist customers in taking the online knowledge test may be found here before beginning: <https://transportation.wv.gov/DMV/Drivers/Pages/What-You-Should-Know.aspx>.

After customers pass the test, they will still need to come into a regional office to present their documents and have their picture taken, but the online testing process significantly cuts down the time needed in an office, and also often makes anxious test-takers feel more comfortable.

Several high schools across the state are also using the DMV's online services portal in their Driver's Education classes. Teachers are able to assist students with logging in, and then the students may take the online knowledge test at school, which is a benefit especially if students may not have access to a computer with keyboard, mouse, and camera built in at home. Test scores are good for 30 days after a passing score, which gives customers plenty of time to visit a regional office at their convenience. DMV recommends that you take advantage of their appointment scheduling system to make the process even easier and more efficient.

"It's exciting to see that our efforts to provide more convenience and options to our customers are really being utilized," said Commissioner Frazier. "We have a strong Graduated Driver's Licensing (GDL) program that emphasizes safety and supervised driving to not only make our roads safer, but help new drivers feel more comfortable and confident behind the wheel."

In addition to the online knowledge testing option, over this past summer DMV introduced a partnership with the Parent's Supervised Driving Program, which provides guidebooks for new drivers, as well as an "app" for parents and caregivers to download to make training and monitoring new drivers easier. The RoadReady mobile app is available for iPhones at the App Store and for Android on Google Play.

"Safety on our roadways for all drivers is one of DMV's biggest priorities, and we are fortunate to have strong safety and enforcement programs and messaging through the Governor's Highway Safety Program," said Commissioner Frazier. "I also plan to continue exploring new and innovative technology to bring convenience to our customers--not just the drivers, but everyone who owns a vehicle, our commercial drivers, and our dealers, too. We've got some exciting opportunities on the horizon, so continue checking in with us!"

For more information on online knowledge testing, the Parent's Supervised Driving Program, or the RoadReady app, please visit the DMV website.

New guests every week!

Follow WV on the DOT on SoundCloud or Apple Podcasts.



WVDOT Celebrates Roadeo Team

On Wednesday, November 1, 2023, the West Virginia Department of Transportation (WVDOT) hosted a special luncheon and awards ceremony to honor the 12 men who brought home a state victory at the 2023 Southeast Regional Roadeo in Beckley. West Virginia's transportation workers proved they were the best among 11 southeastern states, bringing home first and second place awards in tractor with lowboy trailer and single axle dump truck, and third place in the backhoe division, enough to take home the winning trophy. Let's do it again next year!



WVDOT: Why We Love This Agency

A quality workplace is one where you can grow a career limited only by your own dedication; where get it done people are empowered to make a real difference in the world around them; where days, months and years are measured by accomplishments— 100% of CORE maintenance, the time we trimmed enough tree canopy to reach to Myrtle Beach, all the potholes patched by Memorial Day, an unprecedented amount paving. For this month's write-in feature, WVDOT's own get it done army writes in to tell their story in their own words.

For over 25 years, the State of West Virginia has been my employer in various positions and agencies. From our important mission of providing safe transportation for the public to all the awesome co-workers within the agency, the WVDOT Rocks! I am very thankful and blessed to be a part of the WVDOT team.

—Dawna Skaggs

I started working for the Division of Highways in 1997. I started as a transportation worker 2 for Parkersburg Interstate. Since then I have had the great privilege to advance to a Transportation Worker 3 at Wood county maintenance. I was given the opportunity to become certified as a backhoe , grader, skidsteer, endloader, paver, rollers as well as certification on many other pieces of equipment to benefit the state to be able to perform the task needed for the job. I was given the opportunity to lead crews within the county and was asked to oversee the interstate crew in 1999 for three weeks while the supervision was away. I later was promoted to the highway administrator for Ritchie county in district 3 as well as the highway administrator for Wirt County. I was the Safety officer for District 3, 4 and 6 for three years. I was given the opportunity to become the highway administrator for Doddridge county and later to become the maintenance assistant for district 4 over dis-forces and building and grounds as well as assisting the other maintenance assistance as needed. I then had the opportunity to transfer closer to home and work in District 3 as a maintenance assistant over Pleasants and Calhoun counties. I have had the opportunity to assist in twenty eight federal and state declared disasters and emergency management throughout the state with highways. I was then given the great honor and privilege to become the District Manager in district 4 where I currently reside. With this all being said, I have had a great time and had the opportunity to talk with thousands of residents in the great state of West Virginia as well as working with Department of Transportation Directors across the United States. And yes, This is why this is the greatest job/ jobs that I have had in my life with the WVDOT. "What a great opportunity for any person to experience"

—Mike Daley

A great workplace is one where employees trust the people they work for, who have pride in the work they do, and who enjoy the people they work with. I know that working in Contract Administration our Director and Assistant Directors treat each person with respect and value everyone's opinion. When you have an open-door policy, and it is utilized it makes the workplace so much nicer and makes it where we look forward to coming to work. Our management team is one of the reasons that this is the best place to work.

—Regina K Burdette

I love working for the DOT and serving the people of WV. Each day brings a new challenge, and with that comes a learning opportunity. I am proud of our agency and the people who work here.

Our one DOT approach allows collaboration with the districts, divisions, and other DOT agencies and makes employees feel like they are all part of the team.

—Michelle Oxley

I have been with DOT since January 30, 2023. I love coming to work every day. I feel like I am making a difference for the residence of WV. I feel a large sense of pride in the work I do and the impact that it has on our agency, our state and its residence. I appreciate the competitive pay scales and benefits that are offered here at the DOT. The ever evolving culture and work atmosphere makes working for the DOT an enjoyable experience. My chief and director always make me feel like I can come to them with ideas or concerns and give me a sense of belonging and that I matter. I have met so many wonderful people and have made new friends that bring positivity to my work day. I would recommend that everyone check out the careers page and see what opportunities there are available.

—Tammy Woolridge

I enjoy working in this collaborative and engaging environment. This is a fun and flexible agency to work for.

—Kerrigan Garrison

I have worked for Highways for over half of my life. So over the years it's become a way of life. I have been allowed to work all over the state and have seen amazing work done by amazing people. Our people are selfless when it requires them to miss weekends, holidays, ball games and so on to make our roads safer.

The support we have by our upper management, all the way to the Governor, has never been as good as it is today, and it shows with the work being done. The teamwork from the Secretary, the Chief Engineers , as well as the other Districts has never been as good, so you know when the 782 problems hit every day someone is willing to help. Our staff makes the quality of life for every citizen go up! That's what a rewarding career is all about.

—Arlie Matney

Working for the West Virginia Department of Transportation Human Resources Division has been a rewarding and fulfilling career choice. I have been able to be a part of a team that really supports the entire West Virginia Department of Transportation. I started in this Division back in 2017 as a trainee and have been fortunate enough to work my way up through the ranks to become an Assistant Director of this division. I have had the opportunity to hire, classify, compensate, train, and develop a diverse and competent workforce that serves all of the citizens of West Virginia. If you are looking for a challenging and meaningful career that makes a real difference in communities throughout the entire state of West Virginia then this is the place for you.

—Matthew Ball



New D-6 Manager



West Virginia Division of Highways (WVDOH) District 6 has a new leader, and one who is very familiar to the district.

Charlie Reynolds, a Moundsville native and lifelong resident, was named as the District 6 Engineer in October. District 6 includes Brooke, Hancock, Marshall, Ohio, Tyler, and Wetzel counties.

“This position brings me back home to where I can see my kids, less than a few minutes from my house,” Reynolds said. “This gives me so many benefits of being home. I am excited.”

“I’ve always had an interest in highways because I have worked the transportation side of the railroad industry,” he said. “I’ve been out in the public.”

Reynolds is now a former House of Delegate member. He served Marshall County communities for two terms, assuming the office in early 2020.

Reynolds has worked as a freight conductor for CSX and a rail manager for Carload Express. Most recently, he worked as a railroad safety inspector for National Railroad Safety Services.

“I enjoy being out in the public eye, I enjoy seeing everyone,” said Reynolds. “I enjoy talking to people. I’m not the type of person that is going to hide. I will constantly serve the public.”

He is a John Marshall High School graduate and graduated from trade school in Atlanta, Georgia.

Reynolds has spent his first weeks on the job in meetings, getting to know the people and the projects of the district. He said will continue to make core maintenance a focus in the district.

VISION AWARDS

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

Joey Smith,—District 10

Chad Loudin—Equipment Division

Mike Simpson—District 8

Chance Swecker—District 8

Joe Hinton—District 9

Michael Hill—District 7

Eric Blankenbeckler—District 10

John Garrett—District 1

Nick Southern—District 8

Randal Randolph—District 1

Carlus Bailey—District 7

Joe Strickland—District 9

Rachel Payne—DMV

Melissa Hess—DMV

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.



US 340 Rockfall Project Passes Halfway Mark

Contractors are now more than halfway through a 90-day project to remove dangerous rocks and debris from a mountain-side high above US 340 near Harpers Ferry.

In May 2023, Triton Construction Inc. was awarded a contract for \$10,277,500 to remove

rock and install rockfall barriers on a one-mile section of US 340 where it hugs the Shenandoah River just south of Harpers Ferry. The project will require closing US 340 completely until the project is complete.

A posted detour around the project area during work is WV 9 and Virginia SR 9 and Virginia SR 671. Work is being scheduled after Memorial Day and before Christmas to lessen the impact on the traveling public.

West Virginia Division of Highways (WVDOH) District 5 Engineer Lee Thorne, P.E., said WVDOH has adjusted traffic signals and tweaked traffic control along the detour route. "There are still delays, but we're on the downhill side of the project," Thorne said.

Triton is currently removing loose material from the mountainside high above US 340, removing large rocks and boulders that threaten to fall, and installing mesh barriers and



fences to catch any large rocks that may fall in the future. US 340 along the Shenandoah River was built in the mid-1950s. The cut slopes and exposed rock tower from 150 to more than 300 feet above the roadway.

Approximately 1,500 cubic yards of rock have been removed so far. That's about 2,300 tons, and is enough to fill 150 tri-axle trucks.

Boulders the size of cars have also been coming down, sometimes unexpectedly. That's why the WVDOH chose to close US 340 completely during the project instead of keeping one lane open.

"You never know when a rock is going to come down," Thorne said. "It sounds like pecking, then all of a sudden there's a huge crash, and this boulder comes down."

The WVDOH encourages all motorists to allow extra time when traveling near Harpers Ferry and the surrounding area. Motorists can keep track of the project on us340harpersferry.com or check on traffic conditions on WV511.org.

US 340 is expected to reopen Tuesday, December 12, 2023.

**I Just Work Here!**

