



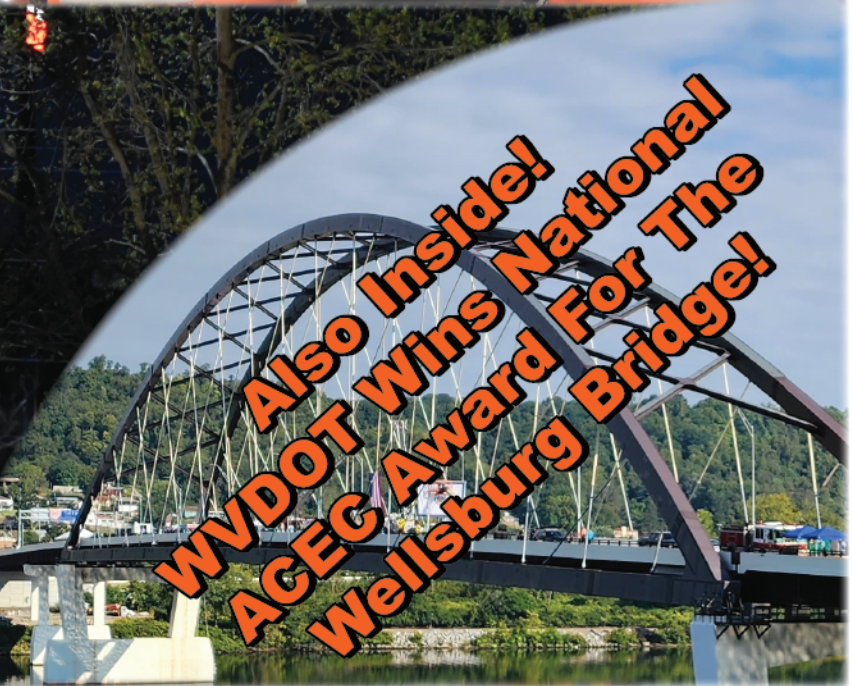
WVDOT Today!



April 2024 - Volume 6: Issue 4



This April, We're Going ORANGE For Work Zone Safety Awareness!



**Also Inside!
WVDOT Wins National
ACEC Award For The
Wellsburg Bridge!**



This April, We're Going Orange for Work Zone Safety!

Wednesday, April 17, 2024, is National Go Orange Day as designated by the Federal Highway Administration and U.S. Department of Transportation. It's a day set aside to remind transportation professionals and the general public about the importance of work zone safety.

The event coincides with National Work Zone Awareness Week, which runs Monday, April 15, 2024, through Friday, April 19, 2024. Remember, work zones are temporary. Actions behind the wheel can last forever.

As the West Virginia Division of Highways (WVDOH) embarks on its massive new construction season, Gov. Jim Justice and Transportation Secretary Jimmy Wriston, P.E., are inviting our partners and members of the public to join us in wearing orange this Go Orange Day to share our commitment to driving safely in work zones.

Randy Damron, Work Zone Safety spokesperson for WVDOH, said many speed limits are restricted to 55 mph in highway work zones. That's because work zones can be narrower, rougher and provide drivers less time to react than open highway.

While most work zone crashes involve drivers traveling too fast, Damron said drivers should also look out for highways workers who may be on the job.

"Working on the roads is a challenge," Damron said. "You're in constant danger when there's traffic. The least motorists can do is to be considerate, slow down, and recognize that there are men and women in the roadway."

In 2023, there were five crashes in West Virginia work zones, killing five people and injuring one. All crashes were avoidable. Wriston has vowed to do everything in his power to reduce the number of people killed in Mountain State work zones to zero.

The WVDOH urges drivers to remain alert when passing through work zones, pay attention to signs and other safety devices, and stay off cell phones.

As we prepare for National Work Zone Safety Awareness Week, April 15 - 19, please consider joining with your co-workers statewide to wear ORANGE all month long. Wearing orange can be fun. Orange is the color of caution cones everywhere, and it goes nicely with chartreuse vests! Send us your photos and you might end up in the next WVDOT Today! newsletter.



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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Submit articles, letters, suggestions, and Vision Award nominations to;

Jennifer.J.Dooley@wv.gov



WVDOH Dives In To Shore Up Bridge!

Underwater Repairs Made To Wayne County Bridge!

In rural Wayne County, not far from the entrance of Beech Fork Lake, three men in dive suits are filling big white bags with concrete grout in the frigid, murky water under a bridge.

The men are divers with the West Virginia Division of Highways (WVDOH), and they are working to fill a 17-foot void that developed beneath the bridge abutment.

“This is a perfect example of how our bridge inspection program is working,” said Chase Lindsey, P.E., WVDOH District 2 Bridge Engineer.

A routine bridge inspection in December 2023 showed that riprap from the base of the abutment had washed away, allowing water to get underneath the concrete abutment and wash further material away. A field of stones could be seen downstream of the bridge where the riprap came to rest.

To fill the void left under the abutment and shore up the bridge, divers filled half a dozen bags of various sizes with grout from an overhead cement mixer. They slipped the bags beneath the murky water under the bridge and filled them in place. Lindsey said District 2 bridge crews wanted to make the repairs before Beech Fork Lake was refilled for the spring tourist season, when the water was still low. The tradeoff is that the water is still pretty cold in mid-March.

Divers filled the bags with a long hose from a cement mixer parked atop the bridge. The semi-liquid grout flowed into the bags to be placed beneath the bridge abutment. An exothermic chemical reaction within the grout itself ensured that the mixture hardened, even underwater.

Once the bags of grout hardened, WVDOH crews replaced the riprap around the bridge abutment with larger rocks so the abutment won't wash out again.



Repair Work on Airport Road!

Dear Secretary Wriston,

On behalf of the Central West Virginia Regional Airport Authority, I wish to express our profound gratitude for the Department of Transportation's diligent repair work on Airport Road. As the exclusive access road to West Virginia International Airport (CRW), serving over half a million passengers annually, this project was vital to maintaining our operations and ensuring the safety and convenience of our travelers.

We would also like to extend a special thanks to Joe Pack, Chief Engineer of Operations, whose expertise and cooperation significantly contributed to the smooth execution of this essential project.

Your team's commitment to excellence has not gone unnoticed, and we are sincerely appreciative of your efforts to support West Virginia's gateway to the world.

Loyally,

Dominique Ranieri

Airport Director & CEO

This Month We're Going ORANGE For Work Zone Safety Awareness!

National Work Zone Safety Awareness month is April 15 - 19. To raise awareness of safety for our co-workers in work zones, many WVDOT employees are continuing last year's tradition of wearing something ORANGE every day in April. Orange tie, shirt, accessories, socks... Caution cones and flashing lights help keep our co-workers safe, but mindfulness is key --- so let's remember to slow down and pay attention when we, ourselves, are driving through work zones.



Secretary Wriston to Receive ACEC National Award for Wellsburg Bridge!

The Wellsburg Arch Bridge, which spans the Ohio River to connect the communities of Wellsburg, West Virginia, and Brilliant, Ohio, is one of the American Council of Engineering Companies (ACEC) 2024 Engineering Excellence Award winners. The award will be presented at the ACEC Engineering Excellence Awards banquet on Wednesday, May 15, 2024, at the Grand Hyatt Hotel in Washington, D.C.

An estimated 2,500 people gathered on the bridge when it was officially dedicated by West Virginia Gov. Jim Justice on Wednesday, September 21, 2023.

Flatiron Construction, headquartered in Broomfield, Colorado, was awarded an approximately \$131 million contract for construction of the new bridge. The 830-foot main span of the bridge was built off-site on the bank of the Ohio River just upstream from the bridge site, floated into place and lifted onto its pilings in April 2021.

Construction of the new bridge cut what used to be a 40-minute drive to the nearest bridge across the Ohio River to a five-minute trip.

Project on West Virginia Turnpike! Contractors Beginning Road Reconstruction

West Virginia Parkways Authority contractors began the second phase of a major road rehabilitation project on the West Virginia Turnpike near Beckley on Monday, March 25, 2024. The work is being done on Interstate 64 West from mile marker 121.5 to mile marker 40 on Interstate 77 North. Contractors will remove the existing asphalt and then use a special machine to break up the underlying concrete into small pieces. The concrete will be reused to build up a new road base. New asphalt pavement will then be installed on top of the base.

“Travelers are going to get a road that’s smooth and free of potholes,” said Andy Hambrick, Highway Production Manager for the West Virginia Parkways Authority. “We want to give the highest level of service that we can for people driving the West Virginia Turnpike, and this is part of it.”

The left lane of I-64 West in the project area will be permanently closed through the latter part of May. The Parkways Authority will also close the I-77 South exit ramp. Traffic will be detoured from I-64 West onto I-77 North to the Harper Road exit (Exit 44) and then back onto I-64 South. The detour is approximately eight miles long. The lane closure and detour will be complete no later than Thursday, May 23, 2024, in time for the busy Memorial Day holiday travel weekend. This is the second phase of a \$32.8 million project on the West Virginia Turnpike. The eastbound lanes of I-64 in the same area were reconstructed in 2023.

During the busy summer travel months, crews will work on the project both day and night. Lane closures will be done during the overnight hours when there is less traffic on the road. The work is expected to be completed in November.



Special Thanks!

***Stephen White - Employee referred to in letter.**

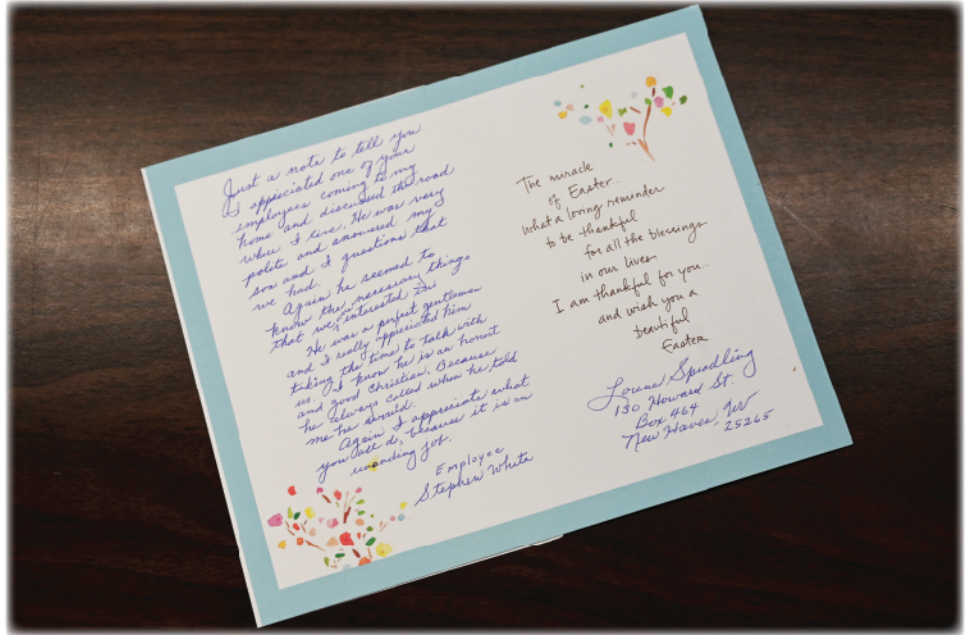
Just a note to tell you I appreciated one of your employees coming to my home and discussed the road where I live. He was very polite and answered my son and I questions that we had.

Again he seemed to know the necessary things that we were interested in.

He was a perfect gentleman and I really appreciated him taking the time to talk with us. I know he is an honest and good Christian. Because he always called when he told me he would.

Again I appreciate what you all do.

Lorene S.



Upcoming 2024 Trainings!

Virtual & In-Person!

Public Works Safety

Virtual Class - RS I - April 2, 2024 8:00 AM to Noon

Traffic Calming

In-Person Class - RS I - April 16, 2024 8:30 AM - 4:00 PM

City Service Center 915 Quarrier St. Charleston, WV

Risk Management/Tort Liability

Virtual Class - RS I - April 23-24, 2024 8:30 AM to 11:30 AM Both

Days

***Participants must attend both days in their entirety to receive RS credit.**

Transportation Planning Conference

May 21-23, 2024

DoubleTree by Hilton - 1003 3rd Avenue Huntington, WV

***Please note - the per person attendee registration fee is \$160.**

Snow & Ice Control Workshop

September 18, 2024 - Summersville, WV - at the Summersville Arena & Conference Center

Roadway Management Conference (RMC)

October 23-25, 2024 - Rehoboth Beach, DE



Historic Covered Bridge Repaired Within A Week Of Being Damaged

On Friday, March 22, 2024, West Virginia Division of Highways (WVDOH) bridge engineers discovered the historic Laurel Creek covered bridge leaning precariously to one side. WVDOH District 9 Engineer Jim Moore, P.E., said the wooden structure had apparently been hit by an oversized truck.

District 9 District Forces, or DisForce, used a come along winch tied to a tree to pull the bridge back upright and immediately installed temporary beams in the roof to keep the bridge from collapsing until permanent repairs could be made.

The following week, DisForce crews were back to replace broken beams and rafters and restore the span to its original condition.

“It’s a historic structure,” Moore said. “There aren’t many of these covered bridges left, and it’s important to preserve them.”

Built in 1912 at a cost of \$365, the Laurel Creek covered bridge is the smallest of West Virginia’s 17 remaining covered bridges. The 24 ½-foot bridge carries Laurel Creek Road over Laurel Creek about four miles southwest of Union.

DisForce is a dedicated crew specializing in bridge and other projects requiring special expertise. For the Laurel Creek repair, DisForce brought in locally sourced hemlock to make repairs to the bridge using original materials. Restoration required partial disassembly of the existing bridge structure to replace some of the beams underneath.

Crews completed structural repairs on the span on Friday, March 29, 2024, and intended to restrain parts they had to replace on Monday, April 1, 2024.

“DisForce does a lot of maintenance work on bridges throughout the district,” Moore said. “It was because of them and their skill level that we could respond as quickly as we did.”

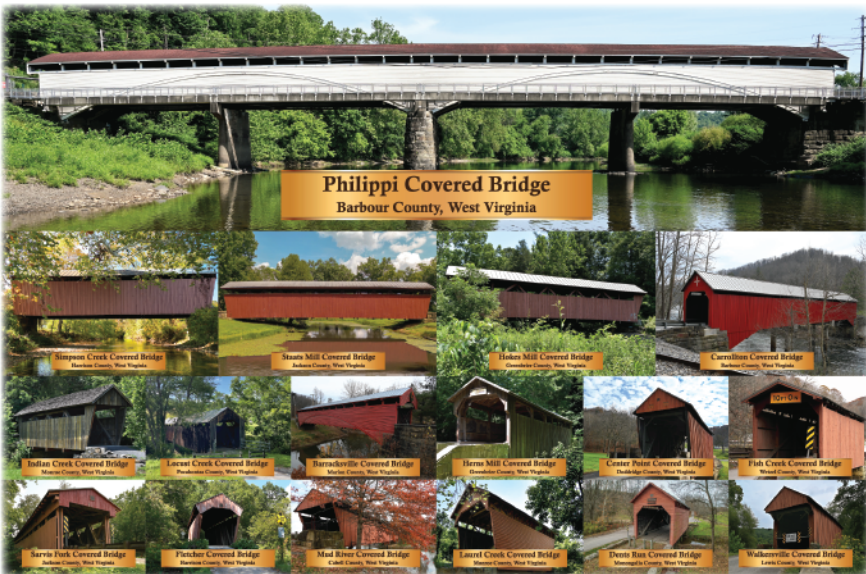


Special Guest on WV on the DOT!



WV on the DOT had a special host stop by at the Design and Construction Expo! We're expressing our thanks to Carrie Hodousek from Metronews for helping us interview Joe Pack! Join us any time, Carrie!

Covered Bridges of West Virginia!



Fun Facts: There are 17 historic wooden covered bridges in the state of West Virginia. Each uses a standard truss design, the longest being the historic Philippi Covered Bridge which is 285 feet.

Laurel Creek Covered Bridge is a historic covered bridge located near Lillydale, Monroe County, West Virginia. It is the shortest of all the bridges in the state measuring 34 feet, 6 inches long and 13 feet, 2 1/2 inches wide.



WVDOH Presented With Encova Safety Award!

Congratulations To The WVDOH!

The West Virginia Division of Highways (WVDOH) has been recognized for its commitment to safety.

Recently, Encova Insurance presented the WVDOH with a safety recognition award for 2023. WVDOH was selected out of 22 states for the award based on a reduction of frequency of injuries in the workplace, increase in return-to-work activity and improvement in timely reporting each of the last four years.

“This is the most important thing we do,” said Secretary of Transportation Jimmy Wriston. P.E. “This is the biggest commitment that we make as a department is to keep our workers safe. To do what we do with zero incidents. Zero. That’s the goal and we must commit to that.”

State Safety Officer Shane Hudnall said, “We all are very proud to receive this award and are planning to continue Secretary Wriston’s goal of zero injuries on the job.”

Wriston and Hudnall joined West Virginia Insurance Commissioner Allan McVey, BRIM Insurance Manager Tom Judy, Encova Safety Manager Chuck Baldwin, several officials from Encova, and WVDOH safety officials for a presentation of the award.

The WVDOH safety leadership statewide includes Noah White – District 1, Thadd McClung – District 2, Melissa Jarvis – District 3, Josh Sweeney – District 4, Bill Keller – District 5, Mike Himes – District 6, Eric Dever – District 7, Mike Karlen – District 8, Tim Coffman – District 9, Terry Mullins – District 10, and WVDOH Regional Safety Seniors Melinda Mastrogiuseppe and Sarah Marsh.

“This has been a collaborative effort with crew leaders, county supervisors, maintenance assistants, and District Engineer/Managers,” said Hudnall. “It really is a team effort to tackle such a huge task.”

“I also want to thank Chief of Operations Joe Pack, Special Programs Chief Jake Bumgarner, Operations Director Stephen Johnson, Operations Assistant Director Kathy Bowe for their continued support to our safety staff and program. Lastly a huge thank you and appreciation to our workers out on the road and in the field for their dedication to safety. Our number one goal is for everyone to go home safely to their families.”

Wriston added, “We’re going to meet this goal of zero incidents in our work zones. We’re going to have the safest DOT in the country because we’re already the best DOT in the country.”



WVDOH Public Relations Division

Our Team!



Randy Damron

Public Relations Division Leadership Team
Events Director



Jennifer Dooley

Public Relations Division Leadership Team



Rusty Marks

Transportation Program Manager 2
Press Writer / Editor



Troy Morgan

Transportation Public Information Specialist, Senior
Videographer



Jake Flatley

Transportation Public Information Specialist, Senior
Social Media Manager : Media Response



Rob Macko

Transportation Public Information Specialist, Senior
DMV, GIS, Multimodal Transportation Facility, Parkways Authority



Jessica Sowards

Transportation Office Manager



Chris Moynahan

Transportation Public Information Specialist
Graphic Designer

Open Enrollment Is Upon Us!

Here Is An Update About Some Changes.

It's That Time of Year Again.... Open Enrollment begins Tuesday, April 2, 2024 and runs through Wednesday, May 15, 2024.

Changes to coverage made during the Open Enrollment are effective Monday, July 1, 2024 through Monday, June 30, 2025.

PEIA PPB Plan Health Insurance changes:

There will be a 10.5% increase on active employee premiums effective Monday, July 1, 2024. There will be no changes to coverage. Non-Medicare Retirees will also see a 10.5% increase in their premiums effective 7/1/2024, but no changes to their coverage. Medicare Retirees will not see an increase in premiums, as well as no changes to their coverage.

The Health Plan HMO Health Insurance changes:

Health Plan HMO members will see a 11% increase in their premiums, but no changes to their coverage.

FBMC/Mountaineer Flexible Benefits:

There are some changes coming so you will want to pay special attention to the FBMC Reference Guide, as well as any emails, fliers, online Open Enrollment sessions which the Agency hosts.

A brief summary of the FBMC/Mountaineer Flexible Benefits changes:

FBMC is adding the following plans:

- Hospital indemnity Plan
- Accident Plan
- Critical Illness Plan

There will be no rate, plan, or carrier changes for:

- Dental
- Vision
- Legal
- Hearing

Flexible Spending Account changes:

Payflex has changed their name to Inspira Financial. If you have a Payflex card currently, it will be good until the expiration date on your card. Healthcare FSA limits will now have a \$3,200 maximum for the Plan Year. Health Savings Accounts for Individuals will have a maximum of \$4,150 for the Plan Year. For families, the Health Savings Account will have a maximum of \$8,300. There will also be additional benefit education resources available to FBMC/Mountaineer Flexible Benefits Plan participants. The details will be in the FBMC/Mountaineer Flexible Benefits Guide you will be receiving in the mail. Be on the lookout for mailings, posters, emails... We want you to have all the information you need for a successful Open Enrollment! Stay tuned....

**For More Information or Any Questions
Please Call Angie Hughes or Joeli Carpenter at
(304) 558-3111**

Why Work Zone Safety Is So Important!

In March, two West Virginia Division of Highways (WVDOH) workers were struck by vehicles while on the job in marked work zones. The WVDOH wants to remind everyone that work zone safety is our top priority. We ask all citizens to be aware and alert in work zones for the safety of our workers.

A WVDOH worker was treated and released from the hospital after being hit by a car while patching potholes on Interstate 79 in Braxton County on Friday, March 29, 2024.

"There would be far fewer accidents if drivers would pay attention and obey the law in work zones," said West Virginia Transportation Secretary Jimmy Wriston, P.E. "This incident could have been far, far worse."

The WVDOH District 7 worker was patching potholes on I-79 when a driver ran through the work zone, drove through the pothole that was being patched, and struck the worker on the arm. The worker was taken to a local hospital and treated for bruises.

Another WVDOH road worker was struck by a car at the scene of an accident on Thursday, March 14, 2024.

The worker was part of a crew of three setting up traffic control devices at the scene of an accident on US 50 in Clarksburg when a vehicle crashed into the work zone at about 9:45 p.m. All three workers were wearing hardhats with bright lights, and the work zone was illuminated by flashing lights on the workers' truck and a flashing arrow sign.

"Work zone safety is about keeping every worker, every driver, and every passenger safe in every work zone," said Randy Damron, Work Zone Safety spokesperson for WVDOH. "We each play a role in getting everyone home safe at the end of the day.

"It's easy to get in a hurry or become distracted," said Damron. "But we need every driver to work with us and remain alert each time they get behind the wheel."

Five people were killed in work zone crashes on West Virginia highways in 2023.



Recognition of Exceptional Employees!

Hello,

I just wanted to send an email to recognize the kind act and over all amazing job performed by 2 of your employees. We live on Smith road in Charles Town where the 340 expansion is going in and we observed your employees taking a moment to fix a memorial where to unfortunate souls lost their lives recently in a car accident. We thought such a kind act should be recognized, they were also handling the dangerous intersection safely. I would love to see our beautiful state take time and recognize these two, unfortunately I did not get their names. The date was 3-26-24.

Thank you for your time, have a great day.



VISION AWARDS

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

Tracy Dawson - DMV

Pam Donnan - DMV

Stefen White - District 1

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!



*Follow Us at: transportation.wv.gov * Click on Podcast*



WVDOT Hosts Hiring Events In District Four!

Come Join Our Great Team!



WE ARE

HIRING!

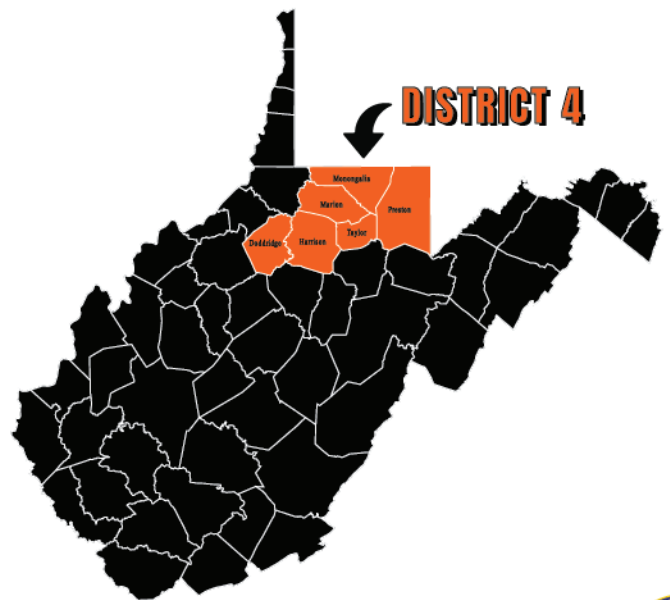
The West Virginia Department of Transportation (WVDOT) hosted hiring events in District Four from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. in Preston County on Tuesday, March 19, 2024, and in Monongalia County on Wednesday, March 20, 2024. The WVDOT is looking to hire Transportation Worker 1 & 2 Equipment Operators and Transportation Worker 2 Mechanics. The Monongalia County event was planned partially because of a recently shut down company in the area. "We wanted to take this opportunity to help the community and gain future WVDOT employees," said Logan Cole, Division Manager of the West Virginia Division of Highways (WVDOH) Human Resources Employee Services Division.

A typical hiring event for transportation workers, according to Cole, consists of various one-on-one exchanges of information such as benefits, job descriptions/expectations, the CDL process, drug and alcohol policies, starting wages, and the tier program. "The WVDOT has the Transportation Worker Apprenticeship Program that allows the opportunity for employees to progress through a tiered pay system by meeting

required training and proficiency levels every 10 months," Cole said. WVDOT District Four is currently experiencing a staff shortage, and is hosting events to boost employment. The WVDOT is looking for applicants who are ambitious, willing to work hard, and eager to learn. Cole said the WVDOT is looking for applicants who strive for not just a job, but a career.

There will be more hiring events in District Four in the future to continue to gain employees. The Preston County event garnered 14 potential hires, and the Monongalia County event interviewed nine.. District Four had a total of 101 new hires in 2023, with a total of 911 for the entire WVDOT.

In the coming months, District Four is hoping to hire 45 people. In the meantime, visit <https://www.governmentjobs.com/careers/wvdot> to see available WVDOT positions or apply.



WVDOT SWAT Program In Action!

Ms. Masley:

Thank you for your email (shown below) that was forwarded to the West Virginia Parkways Authority from WVDOT's SWAT division earlier this morning. The Authority's highway maintenance division has been at the site today and has painted the "black" graffiti area on this underpass to green. If you have any questions or if we can be of any assistance in the future, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Best regards,
Robin Shamblin

Dear Ms Shamblin,

Thank you so much for your email and prompt attention to my request. It's not often that the average person feels like government will be interested in their feedback or willing to act on it. You and your fellow friends at DOT made my day by showing a wonderful side of the West Virginia Turnpike and DOT teams being willing to listen and act quickly on my request! The paint job looks so much better! As a former retired Project Manager, your SWAT process is spot on and wonderful to see in real life practice. Thank you so very much for kind help and for everyone working together so we can all enjoy our Almost Heaven West Virginia!

All my best,
Debbie Masley

Dear Mr. Kreider:

Thank you for your email to the West Virginia Division of Highways (WVDOH) regarding your concerns with road conditions on County Route 26, West Teter Creek Road, in Barbour County. We are pleased to inform you that repairs were completed to this road on March 12, 2024. We will continue to monitor this road and make additional repairs as needed. Again, thank you for emailing and sharing your concerns. Should you require additional information and/or assistance, please contact Brian Cooper, District Engineer, at Post Office Box 1228, Weston, West Virginia 26452 or by telephone at (304) 269-0400.

Sincerely,
Brian Cooper
District Seven Engineer

A BIG THANK YOU! to all who were a part of this project. I was bowled over when I drove the road last Friday. Very quick response! Very good work! Every farmer who passed by stopped and shared a big smile of gratitude as well! Friends who joined me to help install our driveway gate were blown away too!

Thanks again for the good work! Sincerely, Kenneth Kreider

Special Thanks!

Sent to recent retiree, Arlie Matney, at home:
Superintendent Pruett,

The Mason County Commission would like to express their sincere gratitude to the Mason County Department of Highways for their efforts in cleaning, repairing, and maintaining our county roadways during the recent stretch of winter weather. Your vital roles provide our citizens with the ability to travel safely during these weather events. The Commission realizes the amount of time and resources that must be compiled to efficiently execute snow removal and implement preventive treatments to the roadways.

The County Commission would like to thank you and your team for continued maintenance and repairs to all roadways systems as travel increases throughout the county. We feel your continued commitment to Mason County is a major factor in the increase of future developments. Again, we thank your department for the hard work and dedication to the roadways and the citizens of Mason County.

Sincerely,
Tracy Doolittle, President

Rick Handley, Commissioner

Sam Nibert, Commissioner

