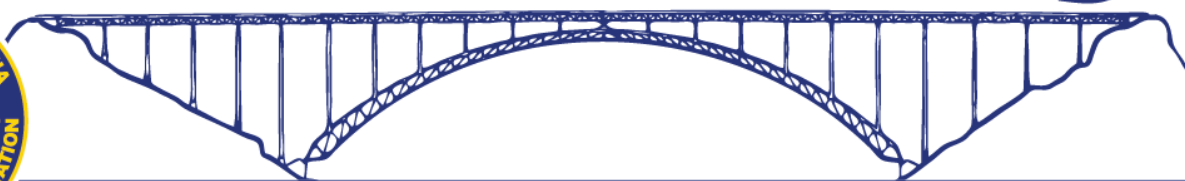
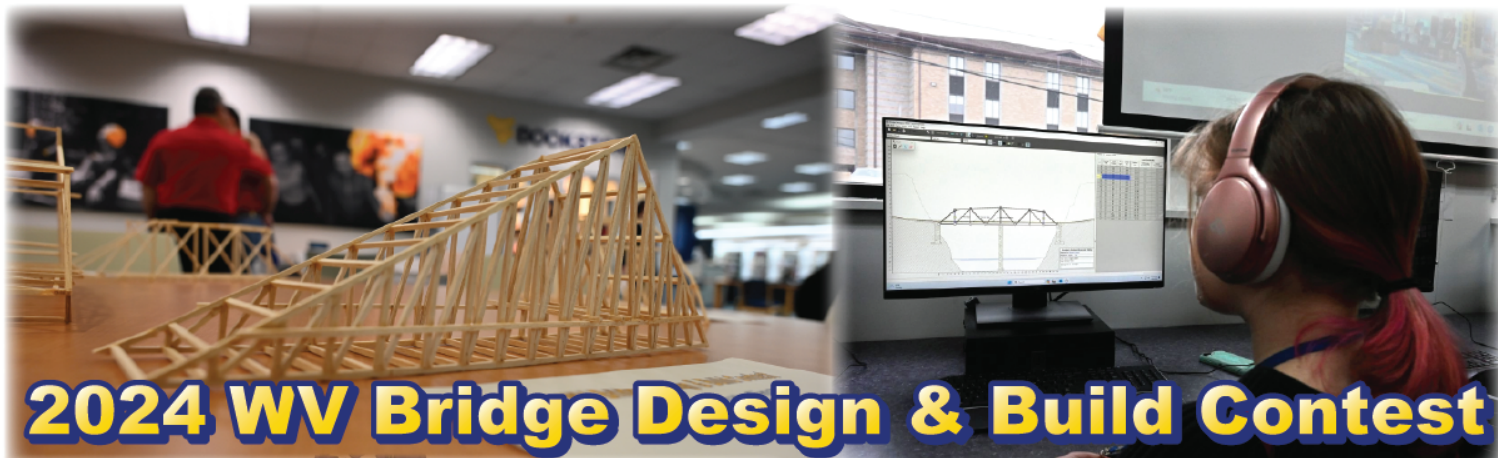


WV DOT Today!



May 2024, Volume 6: Issue 5





2024 WV Bridge Design & Build Contest

Twenty-two high school teams and nine middle school teams participated in the finals at the WVU Institute of Technology campus in Beckley on Friday, April 5, 2024, and Saturday April 6, 2024.

The event, sponsored by the West Virginia Department of Transportation (WVDOT) for over 20 years, focuses on engineering, by using real world design principles in the software with which students design their bridges. There were 38 teams, an individual or team of two students, from schools all over the state submitting a total of 650 designs for this year's contest.

"West Virginia Division of Highways has hosted the competition for 25 years and counting," said Jennifer Dooley, WVDOT Public Relations Director. "We've witnessed students go to college and go into engineering because of the competition, and it's really rewarding."

The high school finalists included 12 teams from Pikeview High School in Mercer County, three teams from Greenbrier East High School in Greenbrier County, three teams from Morgantown High School in Monongalia County, two teams from Winfield High School in Putnam County, one team from East Fairmont High School in Marion County, and one team from Princeton Senior High School in Mercer County.

The middle school finalists included five teams from Eastern Greenbrier Middle School in Greenbrier County, one team from Pikeview Middle School in Mercer County, one team from Suncrest Middle School in Monongalia County, one team from Andrew Jackson Middle School in Kanawha County, and one team from Barboursville Middle School in Cabell County.

"This competition brings out the best in West Virginia's students," said Dooley. "Not only the students, but parents, siblings, teachers. Everyone rallies together around the student teams and it's something we at West Virginia Department of Transportation are proud to be part of."

On Sunday, April 7, 2024, students got rewarded with a tour of the New River Gorge Bridge catwalk, courtesy of BridgeWalk. All students who entered the competition earned a free tour for themselves and their families.

WVDOT hopes this competition can interest students in a career with the agency. Numerous students who have participated in this competition are current employees of WVDOT.



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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2024 WV Bridge Design & Build Contest Winners

Thirty-eight teams from 21 counties participated in the competition in 2024, which pits middle school and high school students against one another in both computer software and balsa wood model contests to see who can come up with the most cost-effective and sturdiest bridge designs. The contest is sponsored by the West Virginia Department of Transportation (WVDOT), BridgeWalk, West Virginia Department of Education, and WVU Tech.

Thirty-five teams made it to the finals, with 30 present at the WVU Tech campus. The contest is designed to encourage STEM education and inspire tomorrow's engineers, today.

Teams from Eastern Greenbrier Middle School and PikeView High School in Mercer County took home the most honors at the West Virginia Bridge Design & Build Contest, held Saturday, April 6, 2024, at WVU Tech in Beckley.

First place in the software design competition went to students from Eastern Greenbrier Middle School in the middle school division, and to students from PikeView High School in the high school division.



First place in the balsa wood bridge competition went to Eastern Greenbrier Middle School in the middle school division, and to PikeView High School in the high school division. In all, PikeView Middle School or High School students took home five awards, while students from Eastern Greenbrier Middle School took home three.

WINNERS:

Software competition, middle school:

Third place, Ben Kelso and Saja Huggi, team Scheming, Eastern Greenbrier Middle School.

Second place, Laura Du and Riya Zenn, team In it for the money, Suncrest Middle School.

First place, Emma Vincent and Ellie Burns, team DumbleDores Army, Eastern Greenbrier Middle School.

Software competition, high school:

Third place, Larry Du and Max Chen, team LarryMax, Morgantown High School.

Second place, Landon Palmer and Landon Lester, team Landon_Squared, PikeView High School.

First place, Ben Williams and Jacob Lafferty, team Infinity+2, PikeView High School.

Balsa wood bridge competition, middle school:

Third place, Carley Coleman, team Tinker Belles, Andrew Jackson Middle School.

Second place, Laura Du and Riya Zenn, team Initforthemoney, Suncrest Middle School.

First place, Arabella Webb, team The Strawberries, Eastern Greenbrier Middle School.

Most creative, John Williams, team Johniscool1000000000.

Balsa wood bridge competition, high school:

Third place, Janie Gilchrist and Alex Gilchrist, team AsianInvasion, Morgantown High School.

Second place, Parker Worline and Ethan Coleman, team PandE, Winfield High School.

First place, Johnathon Scott Meadows, team UNCivil engineering, PikeView High School.

Most creative, Madelyn Cole and Parker Shrewsbury, team Ihavethehighground, PikeView High School.

Most creative, Connor Atkins and Lucas Messenger, team Negative Zero, East Fairmont High School.





Storm Damage Clean Up

West Virginia Division of Highways (WVDOH) road crews worked overnight and continued to work 24 hours a day to assess and clean up damage caused by a massive storm that moved through the state on Thursday, April 11, 2024.

Most of the state had been under a tornado watch until 9 p.m. Thursday night. High winds and a largely stationary storm front dumped record amounts of rainfall on the Kanawha Valley and other parts of West Virginia, leading to mud and rockslides, downed trees and flash flooding.

Some parts of the state received five inches of rainfall in the space of several hours.

WVDOH Chief Engineer of Operations Joe Pack, P.E., said the worst of the flooding was concentrated north of Interstate 64. On Friday, April 12, 2024, multiple roads remained closed by high water in Kanawha, Cabell, Jackson, Clay, Mason, Lincoln, Pleasants, Wood, Doddridge, Harrison, Marion, Monongalia, Morgan, Brooke, Marshall, Ohio, Tyler, and Wetzel counties.

Such large amounts of rainfall are bound to cause flooding. But, Pack said, "In West Virginia, it's not the volume of the water but the velocity that causes damage to roads."

In Kanawha County, record rainfall overwhelmed storm drains on Interstate 64 near the Greenbrier Street exit, flooding the interstate. WVDOH work crews waded into the rushing water with rakes to clear the drains by hand and drain the cascading water away.

WVDOH crews worked overnight Thursday and Friday to clear downed trees and mud and rockslides. But on roads that were still flooded, work crews waited until the water receded to assess any damage to the road.

But Pack said an aggressive core maintenance program over the last several years has significantly reduced damage to Mountain State roads during floods.

"Water is our enemy," Pack said. "Anything we can do to keep water away from our roadways is going to extend the life of our pavement."





Go Orange Day!

The West Virginia Department of Transportation (WVDOT) had it's Go Orange Day on Wednesday, April 24, 2024. This event encouraged all WVDOT employees to wear orange to celebrate work zone safety awareness. The Public Relations Department had a photo shoot that day at 10 a.m. on the Capitol grounds for all employees and departments who participated in the event. The turnout was amazing and it was a beautiful day to celebrate.

We want to thank all who participated in Go Orange Day, because work zone safety is a top priority for the WVDOT. Our goal is to spread the message in hopes it will encourage citizens to have it on the top of their minds when traveling through work zones. This in turn will make the roads safer for everyone.



WVDOH Fallen Workers Events

More than 50 West Virginia Department of Highways (WVDOH) highway workers have been killed on the job. Backed up by State Police, the Federal Highways Administration, and the Contractors Association of West Virginia, the WVDOH held a press conference on Monday, April 22, 2024, to urge drivers to slow down and pay attention in work zones. The press conference was punctuated by 57 men and women dressed in orange and draped with black sashes to remember the 57 highway workers killed in the line of duty.

Also, the WVDOH held a special ceremony honoring workers who died in the line of duty Wednesday, April 24, 2024, at the Fallen Workers Memorial at the Williamstown welcome center on Interstate 77.





WVDOH Canopy Clearing a Big Success

West Virginia Division of Highways (WVDOH) maintenance crews cleared more than 1,700 miles of trees and branches away from the state's roadways between November 2023 and the end of March 2024, enough to stretch from Charleston to Tuscon, Arizona.

Canopy clearing plays a vital part in prolonging the life of the pavement on West Virginia's 36,000 miles of road. Along with keeping ditches cleared and proper drainage, keeping roads cleared of overhanging canopy is important both to the life of the road and to the safety of drivers.

Last year, Transportation Secretary Jimmy Wriston, P.E., set a goal for the state's 10 highway districts to clear at least 500 acres – roughly 1,500 linear miles – of trees and branches along the state's roads, a process known as canopy clearing. By law, maintenance crews are only allowed to clear canopy between November 15 and March 31. The restriction is in place to protect endangered bat populations, which don't use trees during those months.

WVDOH work crews exceeded that goal last year. This season, they beat the record, despite having to take personnel away from canopy clearing to fight winter storms and despite a mid-February start to patching potholes.

Canopy clearing is important in maintaining uncluttered sight lines for drivers and eliminating the hazards from falling trees and branches, but it is vital in keeping roads dry.

"Water is a highway's worst enemy," said Joe Pack, P.E., WVDOH Chief Engineer of District Operations. "Anything we can do to keep water off our roadways or to help dry up that water will prolong the life of that road." Moisture left on pavement degrades asphalt fast, so maintenance crews cut away limbs and branches to allow sunlight to get to the roadways below.

Maintenance crews use bucket trucks, chainsaws, pole saws and chippers to clear away branches and limbs and grind them up. Bucket trucks have a reach of 40 feet, but maintenance crews have pole saws that are up to 175 feet long for reaching the highest branches.

Like cutting grass in the summer, milling and filling potholes or clearing ice and snow, canopy clearing is part of the WVDOH core maintenance program. Combined, core maintenance procedures prolong the life of pavement and keep roads safer.





Secretary Wriston Accepts ACEC National Diamond Award in NYC

West Virginia Transportation Secretary Jimmy Wriston, P.E., and Deputy Secretary Alanna Keller, P.E., attended the American Council of Engineering Companies (ACEC) 2024 Engineering Excellence Awards Gala in New York City on Saturday, April 13, 2024, to accept a Diamond Award for the Wellsburg Bridge project in Brooke County.

“West Virginia has arrived; we’re on a roll,” Wriston said. “Alanna and I couldn’t be more proud to have accepted this award.”

The West Virginia Department of Transportation (WVDOT) shared the award with COWI consultants, design consultant on the innovative bridge project. COWI and construction contractors Flatiron Construction made a bold decision to build the 830-foot main span of the bridge on the shore of the Ohio River and float the completed span downriver on barges to be lifted into place on its piers. It was the largest bridge lift ever attempted in North America.

On Wednesday, September 21, 2023, Gov. Jim Justice cut the ribbon to officially open the bridge to the sound of marching bands, clouds of confetti and fireworks. An estimated 2,500 people turned out to celebrate opening of the bridge, which connects Wellsburg, West Virginia with Brilliant, Ohio.

“That structure was decades and decades in the making,” Wriston said. “When Gov. Justice cut the ribbon it was like an explosion of celebration.

“Everyone worked so long and so hard for that project,” Wriston said. “That’s the leadership that Gov. Justice has brought us.”

Keller, who attended the event with her husband, WVDOH Chief Economic Development Officer Perry Keller, bought a new evening dress for the gala. Wriston, whose office attire ordinarily consists of khaki work clothes with an untied necktie, donned a black tuxedo.

“It was a little overwhelming for a southern West Virginia boy, but it was a lot of fun,” Wriston said.

Wriston and the rest of the West Virginia entourage also had the opportunity to see some of the sights of New York City, including Central Park.

“I met a lot of great and interesting people, real leaders in the transportation industry, and consultants from all over the world,” Wriston said.





Raleigh County Hosts Drifting Event

Screeching tires from 40 cars from around the United States (and one from Japan) pierced the air Friday, April 26, 2024, and Saturday, April 27, 2024, when Drift Appalachia held their second West Virginia event on a ¾-mile stretch of Pluto Road in Raleigh County.

“It was an amazing event, and everyone who participated said they intend to come back to West Virginia to vacation and visit,” said Jebediah Smith, West Virginia Operations Director for motorsport organization Drift Appalachia. The group organizes drifting events in Kentucky and West Virginia.

Drifting is the act of intentionally throwing a car into a controlled power slide on curvy roads – something the Mountain State has in abundance. Drifters use specially modified cars outfitted with roll cages and other safety equipment.

“Most of these cars are two-door sports cars,” Smith said. Drift cars typically have engines ranging from 300 to 1,000 horsepower, he said.

The West Virginia Legislature passed Senate Bill 686 in 2016, allowing drifting and other motor sports on West Virginia roads under safe, controlled conditions. Drift Appalachia previously held a drifting event in the state in November 2023.

Drift Appalachia also hosted a cruise-in Friday, April 26, 2024, in Beckley. Smith said the event was well-attended. Drift Appalachia estimated the event contributed about \$1.7 million to the state economy.





High School Students Experience the Realities of Impaired Driving Through Virtual Simulation

MADISON, WV — Nearly 200 students from Scott High School were given a stark look into the dangers of impaired and distracted driving on Wednesday, April 24, 2024. The event, hosted by the Michigan-based UNITE Corporation, showcased its Arrive Alive Tour, a virtual driving experience designed to simulate the effects of driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs, as well as the distractions caused by texting.

West Virginia Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) Commissioner Everett Frazier watched the impact of the virtual reality (VR) goggles on the students. Participants faced the challenge of navigating simulated roads while experiencing the impairments and distractions common in real-world scenarios. The event was funded by the West Virginia Governor's Highway Safety Program (GHSP).

Bringing the training to Scott High School cost \$2,850, or about \$15 per student. Among the observers was GHSP Director Jack McNeely, who underscored the importance of such educational interventions. "Our mission is to reduce crashes, serious injuries, and fatalities on West Virginia's public highways via education, engagement, and enforcement" McNeely said, adding that the event is effective in motivating young drivers.

The Arrive Alive Tour is aimed at the pervasive issue of distracted driving, a leading cause of accidents among young drivers nationwide. As schools across West Virginia gear up for prom season, similar virtual educational opportunities are being provided to instill a sense of responsibility and awareness among students.

In a society where young drivers are increasingly exposed to distractions, initiatives like the Arrive Alive Tour are vital in fostering a culture of safe and responsible driving. Through education and engagement, West Virginia is taking proactive steps to ensure its roads are safer for everyone.



WVDOH Helps In Time Of Crisis

From Jessica D. Wallace on behalf of her father, who lives off Old Route 60 in Rand on Midland Drive.

I have a short story Wednesday afternoon my dad got a call that his house was on fire. He needed to get home quickly; luckily the fire was minor and contained to his front porch. But what I am reaching out about is the reason his entire house did not burn down. WVDOH highway workers were working in front of his home and immediately called 911 when they saw the fire. He wanted to send his praise and thanks to these workers for their great assistance.



**A HUGE THANKS TO
WVDOH GHELYAN CREW
FOR THE FAST ACTION IN A CRISIS!**

VISION AWARDS

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

Nathan Lloyd - District 2
Nichole McKissick - District 2
Clarence "Jimmy" Pruett - District 1
Steven Holmes - District 1
Robert Blaylock - District 1
Jessica Shrewsberry - District 9
Michelle "Renee" Clendinin - District 9
Logan Cole - Human Resources

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.





I'm a Highway Maintenance Worker

*A poem by Central Office Maintenance Liaison -
Paul Denkler*

In the dark of night
Or light of day
Required is my duty
To get you on your way.

Often unnoticed for the work
That I must do
My pride is fulfilled by
Giving safe passage to you.

We touch the lives of many
In the work that we perform
For we are the keepers of the roadway
During any type of storm.

My work is never ending
And my resolve will carry on
Because I am a Highway Maintenance Worker
Tireless and Strong.

So safe travels to you
As you go to and from
Just remember to give space
For the work that must be done.





Thanks For Your Hard Work

All,
Good afternoon.

I wanted to say thank to the work crew who repaired Rocky Branch Road in Roane County on 17 APR 24. I have a house on Rocky Branch, and I was not looking forward to my drive because of the condition of the road after the bad storms we had in early April.

Your crew came in and fixed the river crossing (on the Pocatalico) between Stringtown and Rocky Branch. You most likely get a huge amount of grief because people may not understand the amount of work it takes to repair roads. Can you send this email to the folks in Roane County? I believe there is a substation on highway 36.

Thank you for all of your help.

Respectfully,
Tommy



During a recent road trip I was pleasantly surprised by how well maintained and clean (free of roadside debris) Interstate 64 East was from Charleston to the Virginia boundary. I encourage you to keep up the high standards. Too many times during my travels, I see highway shoulders filled with trash and remains of blown out truck tires and wonder if other state highway departments make any effort to clean their highways.

Keep up the good work!

Dave Baker
Vine Grove, KY

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. 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 also 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 and
Sam Nibert, Commissioner

Great Job!

WE ARE ONE DOT!





Print Shop Office Services

Print Shop Services Include:

Business Cards, Calendars, Stencil Work, Fuel Books, Directories, Compliance Posters, Office Posters, Scholarship Announcements, Division Flyers, Guides, Training Manuals etc.

Imaging Services Include:

Scanning office files to PDF, Thumb Drive, CDs. Scan Maps up to 3 feet. Laminating.

They are located in the basement of Building 3 at the Main Capitol Complex in Charleston.



For any questions or requests, please email:

DOHOFFICESERVICESHLPDESK@WV.GOV



WVDOT Tapping Federal Funds To Replace and Renovate Bridges In Huntington

The West Virginia Department of Transportation (WVDOT) is taking advantage of funding opportunities provided by the federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) to renovate or replace several city-owned bridges in Huntington.

A unique provision of the IIJA bridge program, signed into law in November 2021, allows the state to spend at least 15 percent of the state's total bridge 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., following passage of the law. "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 WVDOT is working with the city of Huntington to use IIJA funding to renovate or replace eight municipally owned bridges within city limits. The spans include two bridges in Wilson Court, the Enslow Boulevard Bridge, Whitaker Boulevard Bridge, Beechwood Bridge, Harvey Road Bridge, Madison Avenue Bridge, and the 12th Street Bridge in Ritter Park.

The WVDOT is hosting a public informational workshop on the bridge project Tuesday, May 7, 2024, at the Ritter Park Rose Garden Room With a View & Grounds, located at 1570 McCoy Road, Huntington.

Plans are to replace the bridge, built in 1927, with a span that resembles the existing bridge. The WVDOT undertook a similar partnership with the city to replace the Eighth Street Bridge in 2021.

The WVDOT hopes to begin construction in late 2025.





Editor's Note

You may notice a new look to WVDOT Today!

The new design is the work of the newest addition to the WVDOT Public Relations team, graphic designer Chris Moynahan.

The son of two high school teachers, Moynahan grew up in Charleston and graduated from Riverside High School. He attended West Virginia State University studying art and graphic design, securing his Bachelor of Arts degree in 2019.

"Art was always a passion and outlet for me so choosing that major was a no-brainer," Moynahan said. "I enjoyed my time at WVSU and learned many great skills that I use in my career still to this day.

"I became a graphic designer at a local print shop in South Charleston called Dynamic Graphics, where I was able to hone my skills as a designer," Moynahan said. "I worked there just under three years, before obtaining my current position with the WVDOT."



Chris Moynahan

Need More Water For Your Office?

Here is a quick rundown on how to request more...

If water is needed, email dohofficeserviceshelpdesk.com and let them know how many empties you have. They will deliver up new water jugs and take your old empty jugs.

844
HELP4WV
WV's Addiction & Mental Health Helpline
1-844-437-7498
Help4WV.com



New Guests Every Week!



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