

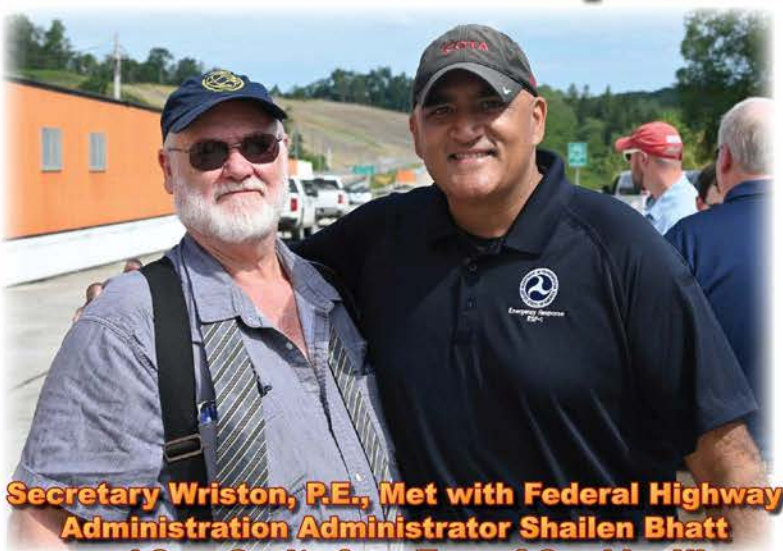


# WV DOT Today!

September 2024, Volume 6: Issue 9



## WV DOT Sweeps Three Out of 10 Categories in 2024 America's Transportation Awards Competition!



Secretary Wriston, P.E., Met with Federal Highway Administration Administrator Shailen Bhatt and Sen. Capito for a Tour of Corridor H!



## Rail Explorers is a Huge Success!



# WVDOT Wins Three Awards in 2024 From America's Transportation Awards Competition!

The West Virginia Department of Transportation (WVDOT) took home three out of 10 regional awards in the 2024 America's Transportation Awards, in competition with 13 other southeastern states. The awards were presented at the Southeastern Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (SASHTO) Annual Meeting on Tuesday, August 20, 2024, in Arkansas.

Sponsored by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), AAA, and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the America's Transportation Awards competition was created almost two decades ago to showcase the tremendous projects delivered by state DOTs each year to tell the broader story on the importance of transportation. The projects nominated in this competition are making people safer, our communities stronger, our economy more efficient, and our quality of life better, all while utilizing the most innovative technology to get these projects done better and faster.

The WVDOT won the award for Quality of Life/Community Development, Medium Project for a project to replace the Grant Street Bridge in Bluefield, which reunited two sections of town that had been separated by closure of the bridge. The award for Best Use of Technology & Innovation, Large Project went to the WVDOT for the Wellsburg Bridge project, which entailed floating the main span of the massive bridge downstream on barges and lifting it into place. The WVDOT won the award for Safety, Medium Project with the US 340 Rock Fall Mitigation project, which installed safety barriers and removed dangerous rocks and debris high above US 340 near Harpers Ferry.



## 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 Division of Highways  
Attn: WVDOT Public Relations  
1900 Kanawha Boulevard East  
Building 5, Room A-137  
Charleston, West Virginia 25305

Editor: **Rusty Marks**

Layout and Design: **Chris Moynahan**

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

**Jennifer.J.Dooley@wv.gov**



# WVDOH Helps The Town of Thomas During Water Crisis!

In response to Gov. Jim Justice's statewide emergency declaration due to drought conditions, the West Virginia Department of Transportation (WVDOT) sent a tanker truck filled with service water to the town of Thomas in Tucker County.

Due to a prolonged shortage of rainfall, Gov. Justice declared a state of emergency for all 55 counties on Friday, July 26, 2024.

"Governor Justice has been very attentive to the drought conditions we've been experiencing around the state," said Transportation Secretary Jimmy Wriston, P.E. "In that regard, the Department of Transportation has dispatched some assistance to the town of Thomas in the form of a tanker of water that we've strategically placed at the fire department."

Thomas is one of the towns suffering due to low rainfall. Thomas Mayor Jody Flanagan said the town's water supply has been unusable for the past month due to high levels of iron in the water.

"This is the lowest our dam and reservoir have been in 60 years," Flanagan said.

City officials secured drinking water for the town through other sources. The WVDOT sent a tanker full of non-potable water to use for washing, flushing toilets, etc.

The tanker truck, carrying approximately 5,000 gallons of water, originated in Huntington (WVDOH District 2), and was trucked by employees from Charleston (District 1), with the assistance of the Equipment Division in Buckhannon, to Elkins in District 8. District 8 then completed the delivery to the city of Thomas.

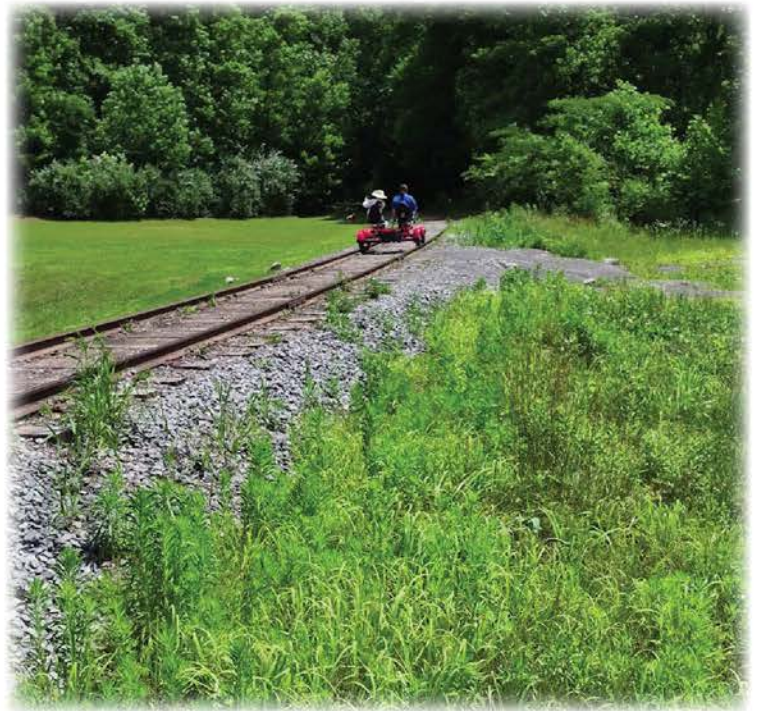
"This demonstrates the teamwork and determination of the WVDOH employees across the state to serve our citizens," Wriston said. "This is just one more example of how this governor is responsive to the needs of the citizens."



# Just 80 Days in And Rail Explorers is a Huge Success!

So Rail Explorers is now at 80 days! Here's the numbers This was the day that started our journey ... 80 days ago we had a vision and HOPE for our community in Clay. Rail Explorers saw the beauty of our mountains, they embraced the history and culture of our rails, and most importantly, they embody and share the bond that the people of Clay County have. In those 80 days (only running 3, then 5 days a week) we've brought nearly 8,000 people from 48 states and 14 countries into our little town SO FAR! The PROOF of tourism working here, the PROOF that people will travel here, the PROOF that the OPPORTUNITY is here, is right before you!!! Change isn't coming ... IT IS HERE!!! Bring us your menus, your rack cards, your business cards! Allow us to showcase MORE of what our community has to offer with our guests from around the world. And if you have considered opening a business of your own ... now is the time! Wonderful!

--From Trey Corwell, Division Manager, Elk River Division, Rail Explorers



# DMV Employee Participates in 7th Annual Honey Festival!

West Virginia Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) employees Kim Harrison and Courtney Hudson participated in the 7th Annual Beckley Honey Festival. The DMV was asked to participate and had a booth set up to support and promote the Protect Pollinators license plate. Employees answered questions about the license plate and other DMV services and gave directions in how to apply for any of our specialty license plates.



# More Than 70 Roads to be Paved in District 4!

The West Virginia Division of Highways (WVDOH) and its contracting partners are paving more than 70 roads in the north central West Virginia counties of Doddridge, Harrison, Marion, Monongalia, Preston, and Taylor. The massive paving program is the result of a \$150 million supplemental budget appropriation provided by Gov. Jim Justice and the West Virginia Legislature.

The counties make up WVDOH District 4.

“District 4 is excited to announce that this paving season has a record-breaking 70-plus roads slated to be paved,” said District 4 Manager Earl Gaskins. “With this year’s allotment of over \$18 million, District 4 is able to achieve an unprecedented amount of road work in our immediate area.”

Some of the roads being paved include sections of WV 18 North and Smithton Road in Doddridge County, Sections of US 19 near Goodhope and several roads in the Country Club Community in Harrison County, parts of WV 857 and WV 705 in Monongalia County, parts of US 250 and Monumental Road in Marion County, and sections of US 50 in Taylor and Preston Counties.



“With the help and support from our leadership these many other roads will receive a fresh new surface thanks to the programs and funding made available by our current administration,” Gaskins said.

On Thursday, May 30, 2024, Gov. Justice signed Senate Bill 1002 giving the WVDOH an extra \$150 million in supplemental highway funding for paving projects throughout the Mountain State. The money is in addition to \$190 received by the WVDOH in federal highway funds.

“Signing Senate Bill 1102 is a huge win for our roads, our people, and West Virginia,” said Gov. Justice. “With federal funds only stretching so far, this additional \$150 million means our hardworking Division of Highways crew can roll up their sleeves and tackle even more roads. I am beyond proud we got this across the finish, and I thank the West Virginia Legislature for prioritizing our roads. Now, we can keep the momentum going and continue to improve every corner of our state.”



# Erosion Mitigation Project at Donel C. Kinnard Memorial State Veterans Cemetery!

The West Virginia Department of Veterans Assistance and West Virginia Division of Highways (WVDOH) are teaming up for a significant project to protect and preserve the Donel C. Kinnard Memorial State Veterans Cemetery in Dunbar. Efforts are underway to mitigate erosion and enhance drainage at the state's only veterans cemetery.

WVDOH work crews will conduct the work, which will include adding dirt, topsoil and sod to Area 2 of the cemetery. The goal is to protect both the burial sites veterans and the land within the cemetery.

"I have been to cemeteries across the country, and Donel C. Kinnard is one of the most scenic and best that you will find," said Edward Diaz, cabinet secretary of the West Virginia Department of Veterans Assistance. "But cemeteries need upgrade and care, and that's why we must take on this project at this time.

"We are extremely pleased to have a great partner in the Division of Highways to help us with this critical reconditioning at the Veterans Cemetery," Diaz said.

Veterans and their families interred in Section 2 will not be moved or disturbed.

The work will raise the ground by as much as several feet in some areas and replace earth that has been washed away because of heavy rains. Work will also include measures to divert excess rainwater flow from burial areas.

The Department of Veterans Assistance will carefully remove and store the headstones from the site while the work is performed. Once the work is completed, cemetery staff will utilize GPS records to reinstall them in the correct locations.

The project is expected to take approximately two months.



## VISION AWARDS

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

**Marie Purdue - Legal**

**Tracy Hallman - Legal**

**David Ford - Legal**

**Liz Isabella - Finance and Administration**

**Lynn McKinney - District 9**

**Rex Carter - District 9**

**Shana Lambert - DMV**

**John Springer - DMV**

**Mike Kelley - District 8**

**Josh Irvine - District 8**

**Cody Rider - District 8**

**Bill Harold - District 1**

**Tommy Hivley - 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.*



# Go Emma!



Greenbrier East Middle School student and a winner of the 2024 WVDOT Bridge and Design contest Emma Vincent was chosen as a participant this year for the Appalachian STEM Academy in Oak Ridge, Tennessee. She was one of the 52 middle school students chosen for this program.

While in Oak Ridge for the weeklong program, Emma worked closely with award-winning scientists from the Oak Ridge National Laboratory. She collaborated with other students in small teams with the guidance of teachers to solve real-world issues that Appalachian communities face every day. The teams developed innovative solutions through a hands-on approach. The program also promotes teamwork, and also provides college opportunities.

We want to congratulate Emma on this outstanding achievement and are looking forward to seeing all the great accomplishments she will reach in the future.

## GHSP and WVDOT Urge Safe Driving in School Zones!

The Governor's Highway Safety Program (GHSP), along with the WVDOT, want to remind everyone that schools are back in session and kids will be out on the roads and bus stops. We encourage everyone to be on the lookout and practice safe driving on the roads, but especially in bus and school zones.

Heads up. Phones down. Actions behind the wheel can last forever!

**HEADS UP.  
PHONES DOWN.**





# West Virginia DMV Rolls Out the Country's First Digital Vehicle Titles!

West Virginia marks a significant milestone in its digital title journey with the nationwide rollout of the country's first Digital Vehicle Title program. Setting a new standard in electronic titling systems, West Virginia's Digital Title is not only digital but also fully transactable, marking a distinctive advancement that will revolutionize the industry.

Fully transactable Digital Titles allow dealers and fleet operators to better manage inventory and eliminate the need for laborious, manual matching of titles with vehicles on the lot or in their systems. Digital Titles create real-time updates that ensure the system of record is continually kept current. Any time an attribute of the title changes – a lien is filed, a brand is added, a new owner is listed – the Digital Title is immediately updated in the state's system of record.

The West Virginia Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) has been working with Champ Titles, Inc., a leading provider of digital vehicle title, registration, and lien systems of record, and Tyler Technologies Inc., (NYSE: TYL) a leading public sector software and services provider, to take a revolutionary approach to modernizing the infrastructure of its statewide motor vehicle system. Launched in 2021, West Virginia's Digital Title and Registration Suite ("DTRS") is a comprehensive vehicle title administration solution to manage titles, registrations, liens, and dealer licensing.

"We are incredibly appreciative of the longstanding public-private partnership with the State of West Virginia and the DMV," said Ian McQuinn, General Manager for Tyler Technologies West Virginia. "We've worked closely with the DMV since 2007 to help modernize their services, and the launch of the Digital Title represents a major culmination of those efforts."

"We are so pleased to have such a bold and forward-thinking partner in the West Virginia DMV. The state's constituent-first approach to upgrading infrastructure continues today with the Digital Title. This technology will be a gamechanger for the country, realizing the digital efficiency that Champ Titles set out to achieve when it was founded," said Shane Bigelow, Chief Executive Officer.

The printed version of the West Virginia Digital Title is a paper representation of the Digital Title, akin to a mobile boarding pass, providing a legal, transactable physical alternative. Just as boarding credentials can be presented using a mobile device, a Digital Title can be presented in the same way. But, if a physical copy is preferred, the printed version of the WV Digital Title exists for just that scenario.

Titles involved in transactions outside West Virginia using either the Digital Title or the printed version can be easily authenticated using West Virginia's verification portal, ensuring security, useability, and reliability.

The process of educating the country on the use of Digital Titles and evaluating their usability starts now. Frazier continues, "We are launching an educational campaign to ensure that every motor vehicle administrator across the country is familiar with and knows how to transact using the West Virginia Digital Title. We will be talking about it with motor vehicle administrators at their conferences and in their newsletters, and we will continue to work closely with our partners in industry. As other states move in this same direction, it is imperative that we support one another. It is with this support that we'll successfully bring the Digital Title to the market."

West Virginia DMV joined with DDI Technology (DDI), a leading automotive title management firm and a subsidiary of IAA Holdings, LLC (IAA), a leading global digital marketplace, connecting vehicle buyers and sellers, to begin a nationwide pilot of the technology. DDI tested a limited number of Digital Title and printed versions of the WV Digital Title transactions throughout the US, using the tools created for West Virginia to support that process.

According to Kevin Park, Government Affairs and Industry Relations Manager of Insurance Auto Auctions at DDI, "This was a hypercare pilot, where we engaged with our partners to guide the Digital Title transactions through the entire process. We demonstrated usability, proved the verification tools, and validated the end-to-end security of the program."



# WVDOH Supports Landmark Land Purchase in Blackwater Canyon!

The West Virginia Division of Highways (WVDOH) applauds the U.S. Forest Service's recent acquisition of a 2,700-acre tract of land in Blackwater Canyon. The WVDOH is working closely with Gov. Jim Justice and federal, state, and local partners to complete the Blackwater Loop Trail project, which will link key outdoor destinations and provide a continuous, scenic route for hikers, bikers, and nature enthusiasts. The project is in conjunction with completion of Corridor H, Gov. Justice's top priority for improving accessibility and economic development in central West Virginia while respecting and preserving the environment.

"This is a critical step forward in preserving one of West Virginia's most iconic natural areas," said Travis Long, director of the Technical Support & Services Division of the WVDOH. "The WVDOH fully supports this acquisition, which aligns perfectly with our ongoing efforts to enhance outdoor recreation in the region. The protection of this land will complement our plans for completing the Blackwater Loop Trail project."

Corridor H begins near Weston and travels across central West Virginia, through Wardensville, to eventually link up with Interstate 81 in Strasburg, Virginia. The highway is expected to open some of West Virginia's most remote areas in Grant, Tucker, and Hardy counties to economic development and tourism, speed travel times through the mountains and provide a smooth, safe highway for travelers and local residents.



More than 120 miles of Corridor H is currently open to traffic, with about 30 miles left to complete.

The Forest Service land purchase, supported by U.S. Senators Shelley Moore Capito and Joe Manchin, underscores the importance of maintaining West Virginia's scenic landscapes while promoting economic development. The WVDOH is confident in the leadership and vision shown by Gov. Justice and our senators, whose efforts will ensure that future generations can enjoy the unparalleled beauty of Blackwater Canyon.

"As we move forward with the Blackwater Loop Trail and Corridor H, this land purchase is a significant milestone," Long said. "It will enable us to create a world-class trail network connecting Blackwater Falls State Park to the Allegheny Trail system, and will bring the towns of Thomas and Davis a little closer together."

The WVDOH remains committed to promoting sustainable infrastructure projects that balance the need for economic growth with the protection of the Mountain State's natural resources. The acquisition of this land is a testament to the power of collaboration and shared vision among federal, state, and local stakeholders.



# West Virginia Infrastructure Hub Hosts Workshop in Martinsburg!

The West Virginia Infrastructure Hub team hosted a workshop in Martinsburg on Thursday, August 1, 2024, to inform communities in the region about transportation grant opportunities. Developed in partnership with the Hagerstown/Eastern Panhandle Metropolitan Planning Organization (HEPMPO), this workshop had 27 attendees, including HEPMPO Director Matt Mullenax, who gave an overview of transportation in the Eastern Panhandle region.

The workshop featured presentations by the Infrastructure Hub Team and Tim Sedosky of the West Virginia Division of Highways (WVDOT), who discussed federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) grant programs and non-traditional transportation grants offered by the state. Gehan Elsayed, P.E., the West Virginia IIJA Program Manager, was also present and discussed grant resources offered by the Infrastructure Hub. After the presentations, attendees were able to discuss potential projects with a panel of grant subject matter experts, who offered insight on funding opportunities and overcoming project obstacles.



# Just a Reminder The Importance of Work Zone Safety!

BE THE **LEADER** OF YOUR OWN PARADE!

DRIVE THE **SPEED LIMITS** IN WORK ZONES!



## New Guests Each Week!



Follow us on SoundCloud & Apple Podcasts. Listen at: [transportation.wv.gov](http://transportation.wv.gov) \* Click on Podcast



# ADI Scholarship Recipient Spotlight!

One of Right of Way Division's own is being spotlighted as a Appraiser Diversity Initiative (ADI) scholarship recipient.

ADI was launched to raise awareness of real estate appraisal career options through outreach events and to facilitate opportunities for overcoming barriers to entry in the field.

Danielle Taylor of Bluefield received an ADI scholarship July 1, 2022, and now has finished the classes for residential and high and best use. Through the ADI team, Danielle started a new job with the West Virginia Department Transportation (WVDOT) as a Transportation Appraiser Trainee in the Right of Way Division.

"It is a privilege to live inside of your dream, and WVDOT has made it possible," said Taylor.

Taylor assists in the Right of Way Division in purchasing properties on behalf of the state which will be developed into future roadways.

"When we interviewed Dani, it was like we had found a unicorn," said Sarah Runyon, Director of the Right of Way Division. "Most Appraiser Trainee applicants have no relative experience because appraisal work is very specialized, so the fact that she was well underway to licensure was significant. Right of Way Division has been working towards expanding the in-house Appraisal Section to include more licensed Appraisers, and we look forward to seeing Dani progress through training and ultimately become a licensed Appraiser."



Danielle Taylor  
ADI Scholarship Recipient  
Bluefield, WV

# Stay Tuned! 2025 West Virginia Bridge Contest Coming Soon!



It's almost time for the 2025 West Virginia Bridge Design & Build Contest. The contest, sponsored by the West Virginia Department of Transportation (WVDOT), BridgeWalk, West Virginia Department of Education, and WVU Tech in Beckley, challenges middle and high school students to see who can design the lowest cost bridge using bridge design software developed for students. Finalists will also build a balsa bridge to see how much force the model will stand before collapsing.

The contest is designed to encourage STEM education and inspire tomorrow's engineers, today.

To register, download bridge design software, or find out more about the contest, visit

<https://wvbridgedesignandbuildcontest.com>.

