

WV DOT Today!



August 2022—Volume 4: Issue 8



7,445 miles in the **HOT** sun!

The West Virginia Division of Highways (WVDOH) is in the middle of an aggressive paving campaign in every one of the state's 55 counties.

Since Gov. Jim Justice unveiled his \$2.8 billion Roads to Prosperity road and bridge construction and maintenance program in 2017, WVDOH has paved more than 7,445 miles of the state's 27,000 miles of paved roads.

The undertaking includes work done by contractors, and an

increasing amount completed by WVDOH's own paving crews.

Transportation workers on each paving crew know something the rest of us do not. We can say the asphalt coming out of the back of the trucks is hot, and read the weather on our phones and get an estimated temperature for the day itself, but the only ones who really know hot are the folks out in it. As those miles add up, thank a paving crew.

Think you can walk 7,445 miles in the hot sun— try paving it!



Also in this Issue: WV DOT Named Marshall University's Employer of the Year.



Think you can get past Rita Pauley?

If you think you can get past Assistant Commissioner, Rita Pauley — think twice.

On Sunday, July 24, 2022, West Virginia Division of Highways Chief Engineer of Operations, Greg Bailey, P.E., stood bravely in front of the Joint Transportation Oversight Committee, answering questions before the Oversight Commission on Department of Transportation Accountability when he was stumped by a question; in what section and code does this appear?

Swiftly, Pauley jumped into action, gracefully pointing out the exact page of the code in question to Secretary of Transportation, Jimmy Wriston, P.E., who stepped forward nonchalantly to assist Bailey.

Again, Bailey was asked. Again, Pauley zeroed in. Again, Wriston assisted Bailey. Legislators chuckled.

“Every question they asked, Rita already had it,” said Alan Reed, P.E., State Highway Engineer. “She had all that information together and she just handed it to him. She does a wonderful job taking care of policies, rules and legislation.”

A third time, Bailey was asked. A third time, Pauley zeroed in. A third time, Wriston assisted Bailey. And one more time, legislators chuckled. It did not matter what code, what page. Impossible questions were not so impossible for the well-studied Pauley, whose work is a true passion.

Those who know the quiet, unassuming Assistant Commissioner Pauley know first-hand the pride she has in knowing the details of her work, but those who do not have not missed out on the interction. At wvlegislature.gov, click on Archived Video to do a calendar search for July 24, 2022. See it for yourself, along with all the other high caliber work of our folks as they speak up for our shared goals.



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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Breaking Ground on Coalfields Expressway

On Monday, Aug. 1, 2022, Gov. Jim Justice and the West Virginia Department of Transportation (WVDOT) broke ground on a major road project to connect the town of Welch with the Coalfields Expressway.

“The Coalfields Expressway has been in the making for 30-plus years now. It should have been done a long time ago; before I even walked in the door as Governor. But now, we’re making it happen. We’re getting this done for the people of southern West Virginia,” Gov. Justice said. “I believe in southern West Virginia with all my heart. It’s home to me. And I believe in how much the Coalfields Expressway means to this area. Today is another big step toward us running across the finish line.”

The \$147.6 million project – which is part of the Governor’s Roads To Prosperity program – will be completed by Bizzack Construction of Lexington, KY.

Gov. Justice announced the bid award for the project in May this year.

Roadwork involves building a 5.12-mile section of highway from Welch to WV 16, connecting the southern West Virginia town with the Coalfields Expressway.

The project includes the construction of two ramps, two bridges, and will require more than 16 million yards of excavation.

More than 10,000 feet of large diameter drainage pipe will also be put in place for the project.

“Gov. Justice is the man with the vision, through his Roads To Prosperity program that is allowing projects like this all over



the state to be completed,” said WVDOT Secretary Jimmy Wriston, P.E. “This groundbreaking marks a wonderful, wonderful day for McDowell County. This is the lynchpin project. This is the one. This is when the drum starts beating toward the end of the project to when we get the Coalfields Expressway done once and for all.”

The project is expected to be complete in the summer of 2026.

“I want to see this whole highway completed and all the way to Virginia. We’ve done some sections already. There may be other sections that may still need to be finished after I leave. But by the time I leave office, I’m going to leave enough stones for it to be fully finished,” Gov. Justice added.

Future plans are also in the works to build a five-mile stretch of the Coalfields Expressway from Mullens to Twin Falls State Park, and a three-mile link from Twin Falls toward Pineville.

Once all planned sections of the Expressway are completed, it will eventually connect the West Virginia Turnpike at Beckley with US 23 at Slate, Virginia, opening the southern coalfields to never-before-seen economic development opportunities.

In 2017, Gov. Justice committed to extending the Coalfields Expressway as part of his Roads To Prosperity program if the citizens of West Virginia passed his road bond referendum. Within one year of the bond passing with 73% of the vote, a contract for the extension project was awarded to Kokosing Construction Company. That section was opened in October 2020, marking the first ever four-lane highway in Wyoming County.



Paperless Contracting?

The West Virginia Division of Highways (WVDOH) is taking a major step toward paperless contracting by adopting a new e-Ticketing portal to automatically track the shipment of materials to construction sites.

"It makes it easier to track the appropriate use of materials, which will save taxpayers money," said Todd Rumbaugh, P.E., WVDOH Chief Engineer of Construction.

The WVDOH has worked closely with HaulHub Technologies to develop the e-Ticketing Portal to interface with the supplier's e-Ticketing platform and allow WVDOH, and their jobsite inspectors, to seamlessly manage digital workflows in a single environment.

"We'll know instantaneously what materials have been sent to the job site," Rumbaugh said. "As soon as the truck is loaded at the plant, an electronic ticket is sent to us. We'll know exactly what's coming and how much."

E-Ticketing will allow WVDOH to improve safety for everyone on the job site and utilize inspectors more efficiently as materials are tracked in a paperless environment. The WVDOH hopes all asphalt, concrete, and aggregate suppliers will be connected to

the portal by the end of the 2022 construction season, and all projects will be utilizing e-tickets for the 2023 construction season.

The portal will allow for uniformity, and one system, for WVDOH inspectors to access and consistently view construction materials being delivered to construction projects, in real time, without having to rely on paper to track the job's progress.

Here's what contractors need to know:

- For contractors with existing e-Ticketing services, the WVDOH Portal provides Application Programming Interface access, and HaulHub will assist in setting up this connection.
- For contractors without a provider, HaulHub can also provide a no-cost solution to ensure that tickets are sent to the WVDOH portal.
- We encourage all asphalt, concrete, and aggregate suppliers to reach out to HaulHub directly, or visit <https://www.haulhub.com/wv-state-dot1/> to begin the process of connecting e-tickets. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to WVDOH Contract Administration Division.

Wheeling Streetscape Awarded

Gov. Jim Justice has approved the bid award for Wheeling's long-awaited streetscape project to beautify downtown.

The contract for the project has been awarded to Triton Construction Inc., with a low bid of \$31,900,000. The project will add ADA-compliant curb cuts, widened sidewalks, and decorative brickwork along Main Street and Market Street, between 10th Street and 16th Street downtown. The project will also add decorative traffic signals, plants, and trees.

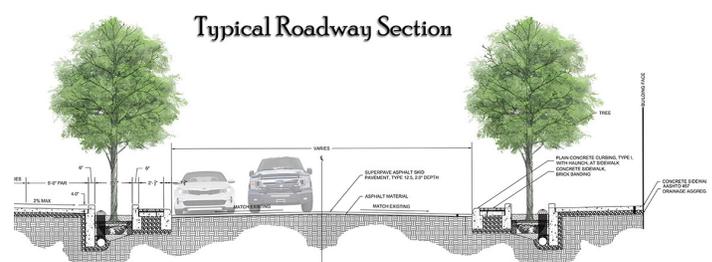
The City of Wheeling is contributing \$1.9 million for construction work on the project and \$100,000 toward design and engineering. Additionally, the West Virginia Department of Transportation (WVDOT) has also been awarded a \$16.25 million federal RAISE grant for the project.

Gov. Justice expressed his support for the project in June 2020, meeting with WVDOT officials, State Senator Ryan Weld, and Wheeling Mayor Glenn F. Elliot Jr.

"I could not be more excited to get the ball rolling on this project, which is tremendously important to the City of Wheeling

and the entire Northern Panhandle," Gov. Justice said. "Not only are we going to be changing the look and feel of downtown Wheeling for the better, the project will incentivize more people to come and explore this amazing area, stimulating the local economy in the process, opening up the door to more growth. It's a win for all West Virginians and I thank everyone who has been involved in getting us to this point.

"This project has been a long time coming," Gov. Justice added. "Along the way, the city changed the scope of the project, which pushed back our start date a little bit. But, at the end of the day, I promised that we were going to get this done, and now we're getting it done."



District 7: Carrollton Covered Bridge



District 7 bridge crews have begun the restoration of the historic Carrollton Covered Bridge in Barbour County.

“We’re excited about it,” said District 7 Bridge Engineer Chad Boram, P.E. “We’ve worked on all kinds of bridges, but this is a new experience for us. These folks take pride in what we do.”

The bridge, the third oldest of 17 surviving covered bridge in West Virginia, was badly damaged by a fire in August 2017. The blaze destroyed much of the outer covering of the bridge but left the basic structure mostly intact.

The West Virginia Division of Highways (WVDOH) was able to reopen the bridge to traffic in September 2017 after minor repairs to the modern bridge superstructure to ensure the bridge was safe. Consultants then developed plans on how to best restore the structure.

The bridge will be closed to traffic until restoration work is complete.

District 7 bridge crews began restoration work on Monday, July 11, 2022, with a thorough pressure washing. The pressure washing is to remove the old, charred wood to see what parts

of the remaining bridge structure can be saved and what parts will have to be replaced.

“We’re running into a few more things than we thought we were going to,” said Tom Shaffer, a consultant with Mead & Hunt who helped with extensive work done to the nearby Philippi Covered Bridge. The WVDOH intends to save as much of the original bridge structure as possible, including filling cracks in otherwise sound timbers with epoxy to extend their life.

The bridge was built in 1856 by brothers Emmett and Daniel O’Brien and crosses the Buckhannon River near Carrollton. At 140 feet, it is one of the longest surviving covered bridges in West Virginia.

Shaffer said West Virginia’s covered bridges were largely built of hemlock and poplar cut on site. In the 1800s these trees were abundant in the state.

Boram hopes to complete restoration work on the bridge by the spring of 2023. The bridge was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1981.



WVDOH is Not Going to Let This Slide

They say what goes up must come down, but with so many roads in West Virginia perched on hillsides, that may not be such a good thing. That's why the West Virginia Division of Highways (WVDOH) has nearly 300 slip and slide repair projects scheduled this construction season.

So far this year, the WVDOH has repaired 198 roadside slips or slides statewide, with another 99 repair

projects scheduled. Slip and slide repairs will exceed last year's total of 235 repairs. From Gov. Jim Justice and Secretary of Transportation Jimmy Wriston, P.E., to County Administrators and Crew Chiefs on the ground, WVDOH is taking a systematic approach to catching up long underfunded maintenance on West Virginia's secondary roads.

"Prioritizing and expediting the repair of slips and slides is one of the most important things we do," said Joe Pack, P.E., WVDOH Chief Engineer of District Operations. "It's a matter related to the safety of the traveling public."

With every rain, water flowing down mountainsides causes erosion. When the mountainside itself washes away, everything attached to the mountain goes with it. To properly fix a slip or slide, WVDOH must evaluate each area for the most cost-effective solution which will function long term, providing the best value to taxpayers while keeping them safe on the roads.

No two mountains are the same, and no road curves, rises and falls exactly like any other road. Soil nails, piling walls, micro pilings, how tall, how wide, how deep, into what type of soil, for how many drivers per day, how many passenger vehicles, how many heavy trucks --- site specific considerations are many. While the information is being evaluated and each individual project is being developed, vehicles -- from passenger cars to ambulances -- still need to get through, so cones and signs are placed to alert drivers that work has started on each project.



Slide repairs are occurring in all parts of the state. Some areas, such as the northern panhandle and the southern part of the state, have more slips and slides happen than other areas. WVDOH is taking a systematic approach statewide, providing the training and equipment to do more and more work with its own crews, in addition to, not instead of, work

completed by its contracting partners. This approach is designed to complete projects of all sizes and types more efficiently.

In Cabell County, WVDOH maintenance crews were recently using one of the WVDOH's own drills to install a piling wall along Raccoon Creek. A piling wall, consisting of concrete slabs supported by steel beams driven deep into the ground, is one of the most aggressive ways to repair a slide.

In Logan County, repair crews recently finished a slip repair on Hanging Rock Road with soil nails. Soil nails are long steel bolts that are driven into the side of a hillside to hold back the rock and soil. Once the soil nails are installed, the hillside is reinforced.

In Harrison County, WVDOH is preparing to use soil nails to repair a slip along Locust Street in Bridgeport. The need for slip repair projects is vast, but with each investment in a drill, a truck or in training a crew to do new and different types of work, WVDOH gains ground -- literally.



We are... Employer of the Year!

The West Virginia Department of Transportation (WVDOT) prides itself in going above and beyond when it comes to building and cultivating relationships with our colleges and universities statewide. In July 2022, the Marshall University Civil Engineering Department named the WVDOT as their "2022 Employer of the Year". When



choosing who would be named "Employer of the Year", Marshall University weighed multiple factors including: feedback from student experiences, number of students hired and full-time employment opportunities after graduation. In addition to the number of students hired, the WVDOT was recognized as being an engaging, rewarding and collaborative employer based on feedback from students who went on to pursue careers with the agency after graduation.

"It's really incredible," said West Virginia Transportation Secretary Jimmy Wriston, P.E. "Of all the employers in the state, to be singled out as the Employer of the Year by MU is truly an honor for the Division of Highways.

"We've had a long-standing partnership with Marshall and their great staff," Wriston said. "It's my understanding that we were chosen by the students, which makes it even more special."

"The West Virginia Department of Transportation has connected with Marshall University's College of Engineering and Computer Sciences since the inception of the Co-Op Program," said Tanner Drown, Co-Op Coordinator for Marshall's College of Engineering and Computer Sciences. "This partnership has allowed students the opportunity for a real-life work experience in which they can apply academic training into industry.

"Through this successful initiative, Marshall University can provide a well-rounded program that results in quality, future employees in the Science, Technology, Engineering, and

Mathematic (STEM) fields," Drown said. "It is a win-win for everyone!"

The WVDOT fully utilizes both a scholarship and Co-Op program in partnership with Marshall University to provide students invaluable on-the-job training to assist them in gaining full-time employment after graduation. The co-op program saw 120 applications in 2022, with over a

quarter of those applicants being students at Marshall University. The WVDOT also awarded numerous scholarships to students at Marshall who went on to pursue full-time careers with the agency.

Participants in the summer Co-Op program get paid to work for WVDOH, where they gain real world experience and learn how the WVDOT works. Many who start as summer co-ops decide to pursue a career with the WVDOT.

As an agency, we are committed to cultivating an environment with a clear nexus to our vision as "One DOT". In the not-so-distant past Natasha White, Director of the Human Resources Division, met with Secretary Wriston and State Highway Engineer Alan Reed to formulate a talent acquisition strategy focusing on the vision of the WVDOT as its centerpiece. Secretary Wriston made a simple, yet impactful statement that soon became the theme of the Talent Acquisition Section of HR: "Tell our story". Three simple words soon became the driving force and methodology used to recruit qualified candidates to meet the organizations' varying employment needs. Our Story is one firmly rooted in a client-centric mentality and a service-oriented thought process. Part of the vision set forth by Secretary Wriston is to "give our West Virginia the chance it should have to be a place of prosperity and joy, where citizens have the best chance to build the lives they hope for."



University Avenue to Campus Drive

Gov. Jim Justice recently announced that he has approved the bid award for a major project to improve traffic flow and relieve congestion near West Virginia University (WVU) in Morgantown. Much of the funding for the project comes from bond sales through Gov. Justice's Roads to Prosperity program.

The contract for the project has been awarded to Bear Contracting LLC, with a bid of \$5,478,899.91.

"Thanks to the bold vision of the Governor's Roads To Prosperity program, we are able to prioritize and expedite projects like this so the people of West Virginia can get where they need to go as quickly and as safely as possible," said West Virginia Transportation Secretary Jimmy Wriston, P.E. "By using bond monies to pay for these projects, it provides us the financial flexibility to continue funding our unprecedented efforts to maintain the secondary roads all across our great state.

"Morgantown is a busy city with a lot going on, especially in the areas surrounding WVU," Wriston said. "This project will go a long way in improving access to Campus Drive and improving

traffic flow on a major corridor through town."

The approximately half-mile project widens Beechurst Avenue from University Avenue to Campus Drive and realigns an awkward intersection at Beechurst Avenue and Campus Drive. Realigning the intersection requires construction of a 240-foot-long retaining wall. It is one of a series of projects undertaken by the WVDOH in recent years to widen University Avenue and other streets along the major transportation corridor through Morgantown and past the WVU campus.

WVDOH is coordinating work with the city of Morgantown and WVU on the realignment of the Campus Drive intersection.

The project is designed to improve traffic flow at the newly aligned intersection. Combined with the widened roadway, the project will greatly relieve congestion near the lower end of the WVU campus.

Estimated completion date for the project is spring of 2024.

Digital Services for Real ID

West Virginia citizens now have a new, convenient option for getting their REAL ID ahead of the May 3, 2023, federal deadline. The West Virginia Division of Motor Vehicle's (DMV) new digital service, REAL-ID Headstart, offers an easy and guided path through pre-enrollment by allowing applicants to verify their identity, upload required documents, and schedule their REAL ID appointment. REAL-ID Headstart is available at <https://dmv.wv.gov>.

REAL-ID Headstart leverages industry-leading solutions from LexisNexis® Risk Solutions to quickly and securely verify identity as well as verify the authenticity of identity-related documentation. Identity and residency documents are reviewed by the DMV and approved prior to a scheduled appointment, helping to ensure that the correct documentation is in place. The

documents are presented and inspected at the appointment, removing the burdensome task of scanning the materials while also saving both West Virginians and the DMV valuable time.

"I'm thrilled to announce this new addition to the DMV's suite of convenient digital services. Each new service offers another choice to busy West Virginians," Gov. Jim Justice said. "We know that the rush is coming as the May 3, 2023, REAL ID deadline approaches. While we have many West Virginians that already have a REAL ID, this new service shows that we're still doing everything in our power to help minimize the crowds in regional offices."

West Virginia is one of only a few states to offer a REAL-ID pre-enrollment service like REAL-ID Headstart.

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Aviation Conference



Cindy Butler, commissioner of the newly created Division of Multimodal Transportation Facilities, and Dave Cramer, former interim director of the state Aeronautics Commission, attended the 2022 West Virginia Aviation Conference, held Sunday, July 31, 2022 through Tuesday, Aug. 2, 2022 at the Stonewall Resort. The pair attended in part to reassure the state's airports that funding under the former Aeronautics Commission should not be affected now that Aeronautics has been absorbed into the new multimodal transportation facilities division.

Office Services Print Shop Growing

The West Virginia Department of Transportation (WVDOT) print shop, located in the basement of Building 5 in Charleston, is adding equipment to extend the shop's capabilities and save the WVDOT money for printing projects that must currently be contracted out.



"Right now we can do just basic printing," said Ameche Watson, Director of Office Services. "But our equipment is old and outdated."

Office Services is currently taking bids for three new printing machines, two in color and one in black and white, to take on new printing jobs that are currently being done within different WVDOT offices or farmed out to contractors.

At one time, Office Services had 25 employees and created printed materials for many state agencies. As office technologies changed, many of those simpler printing tasks migrated to individual offices, which of course meant each office needed its own printers, corresponding ink, paper and service requirements.

Watson intends to take on many of the printing tasks individual offices are now using their own printers for, relieving the burden

on individual offices and ultimately saving the WVDOT money.

"In the past people have been relying on their own copiers," Watson said. "Once this is in place we won't be ordering all those copiers."

One area in particular where Watson hopes to save the WVDOT money is in the printing of

business cards. Printing of new business cards is currently contracted out, at a cost of up to \$50 for a box of business cards.

"Sometimes we get up to \$500 in orders a day," Watson said.

Watson said it was not unusual for the WVDOT to spend \$2,000 a week to get business cards printed.

The three new printing machines are expected to cost about \$150,000, but Office Services will be able to take over many of the projects currently being done on office printers, in addition to being able to print business cards and posters.

Watson said the savings to the WVDOT will offset the cost of the printers. "Just with the business cards it will probably pay for itself within the first year," he said.



WVDOT Submits EV Charging Station Plan

The West Virginia Department of Transportation (WVDOT) has completed a preliminary plan of proposed locations for electric vehicle charging stations and submitted it to the federal government.

The West Virginia National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (NEVI) Deployment Plan was submitted on Thursday, July 28, 2022. The plan outlines proposed locations for electric vehicle charging stations throughout the state and how West Virginia intends to use federal NEVI program funds to develop charging stations along major highways.

All 50 states were required to submit a NEVI plan to the federal government by Monday, Aug. 1, 2022. West Virginia's plan proposes locating electric vehicle charging stations somewhere along Interstate 64, 77 or 79 in the Charleston area; Interstate 64 near Huntington and somewhere near Lewisburg; Interstate 77 in the Beckley area and somewhere in Mercer County; Interstate 68 or 79 in the Morgantown area; Interstate 79 near Flatwoods and Weston; Interstate 70 near Wheeling; and Interstate 81 near Martinsburg.

The federal government asked each state to develop a NEVI plan in anticipation of an increase in the number of electric vehicles on American roads in coming years and the corresponding need

for charging stations. West Virginia is expected to get close to \$45.7 million over the next five years through the NEVI program to help develop charging stations and electric vehicle infrastructure.

Electric vehicles currently have a maximum range of about 300 miles. While West Virginia residents can use the charging stations that will be developed along the interstates through the plan, the charging stations are intended primarily for drivers traveling through West Virginia on their way to somewhere else.

Under the NEVI plan, charging stations should ideally be located no more than 50 miles apart on major travel routes.

In anticipation of the NEVI plan and the expected increase in the use of electric vehicles, the West Virginia Legislature passed House Bill 4797 in June 2022. The bill directed the WVDOT to develop the NEVI plan to "take a holistic approach, considering the future charging infrastructure needs of school systems, public transportation, counties and municipalities, and other public and private users."

To see the West Virginia National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (NEVI) Deployment Plan, visit go.wv.gov/nevi.

DMV Expands Wellness Program

Natalie Holcomb, Public Information Specialist Senior for the West Virginia Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV), was recently given the additional duties of Wellness Coordinator for her agency. Not one to do things halfway, she immediately began searching for worksite health promotion programs already in place that could benefit DMV, which has approximately half of its employees at headquarters in Kanawha City, and the remainder in the field in regional offices across the state.

In addition, she began working with Lydia Bunner, the West Virginia Department of Transportation's (WVDOT) Wellness Coordinator. Both Natalie and Lydia enrolled in and recently completed certification for the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and Prevention's worksite health promotion program called Work@Health. Work@Health focuses on helping agencies implement healthier lifestyle practices for their employees through information and activities.

After completing certification, Natalie formed the DMV Health Promotion Committee (DMV HPC) -- a small group of fellow

employees who have agreed to help "champion" wellness initiatives. In addition, the DMV HPC has sent out their initial survey to employees at DMV headquarters as part of the pilot program to narrow their focus on activities and information employees are most interested in. Some of the initiatives Natalie hopes to implement right away include a DMV Walking Club, weekly exercise program at lunch, mental health awareness, and an "employee shout out" board in the employee break room.

Once the Wellness Program is up and running at headquarters, Natalie plans to implement a similar initiative in the 25 regional offices across the state for all employees to take advantage of. She is excited to work directly with Lydia and WVDOT to share ideas and maybe come up with some healthy and fun competition between agencies! Most importantly, she is hopeful that the Work@Health program at DMV will improve the physical and mental health and awareness of DMV employees.





It's always special when a member of the public reaches out to let our folks know about a job well done. Check out the following;

When Gail Dragoo of Westover told District 4 about a slide problem on US 19 near Westover, it didn't take long before the problem was added to the district's list of repairs. Dragoo sent the district the following response by email:

"Thank you, Tonya!

And "Fred" already called me and is looking into the stop light issue.

YOU FOLKS ROCK! Great customer service! Thanks a million.

Gail"



Follow WVDOT on Facebook for real photos and videos of paving around the state, all summer long. Your projects, your co-workers, your job well done.



VISION AWARDS

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

Amy McClure—District 9

Melissa "Starr" French—DMV

Sherry Weaver—DMV

Eric Canfield—Equipment Division

Jeremy Skeen—Performance Management

Daniel Callaghan—Tech Support

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.



WVDOH Storm Response

West Virginia Division of Highways (WVDOH) maintenance crews were out in the field on Thursday, July 28, 2022, continuing around-the-clock work cleaning up debris and assessing damage from heavy storms.

“Our main goal is to keep the roads passable,” said Joe Pack, P.E., WVDOH Chief of District Operations.

“We’ve been out in the field since the first reports of high water and storm damage. We were out all day yesterday and we’ll be out all day today assessing damage and getting roads back open.”

Southern West Virginia counties of Fayette, Greenbrier, McDowell, Mingo, Wyoming and others were hit hardest by flash flooding on Tuesday, July 26, 2022, and Wednesday, July 27, 2022. For the most part, Pack said, “We hardly have any roads washed out. We have some damage to gravel roads. We have some embankment failures and downed trees.”

On Tuesday, July 26, 2022, Gov. Jim Justice declared a State of Preparedness for all 55 counties as weather forecasters



predicted pop-up thunderstorms throughout the week. Forecasters predicted multiple isolated storm cells that could drop heavy rainfall over small areas, leading to localized flash flooding.

Those types of storms occurred throughout the state on Tuesday, July 26, 2022, and Wednesday, July 27, 2022, and were possible

through the end of the week.

The State of Preparedness allows state agencies to respond more quickly to emergencies around the state.

In Fayette County, several roads that were closed by flooding were reopened on Thursday, July 28, 2022. Other counties hit hard by flooding were also reopening roads.

Once the water goes down, debris is cleared and roads reopen, Pack said the WVDOH assesses any long-term damage and make plans for permanent repairs. WVDOH maintenance crews continue to work until all roads closed by flooding are open to traffic.

Bridging the Gap in Bluefield

Contractors have resumed work on the Grant Street Bridge in Bluefield.

Construction on the new bridge was halted in May after contractors discovered soft rock on the building site which required adjusting their construction plans. Any changes to the plans must be approved by officials with the Norfolk Southern Railroad, over which the bridge passes.

Norfolk Southern’s consultants have signed off on the changes, allowing work to resume.

The bridge, built in 1941 to provide access from downtown Bluefield and Princeton Avenue to the town’s North End and East Side, has been closed since June 2019, leaving motorists with a lengthy detour to get in and out of those parts of town.

In October 2020, Gov. Jim Justice announced \$10.5 million in federal, state and local funding to replace the decaying structure. Highways officials helped hammer out an agreement between Norfolk Southern Corporation and the city of Bluefield,

who jointly owned the old bridge.

Under the agreement, Norfolk Southern agreed to turn over ownership of the bridge to the city of Bluefield and agreed to give city officials \$500,000 as local match funding for construction. The West Virginia Division of Highways agreed to manage the project, with \$8 million in funding from the Federal Highway Administration and \$2 million in funding from state sources.

In the spring of 2021, Brayman Construction Corporation was awarded a contract for \$8,097,117.21 to tear down the old bridge and replace it with a brand-new structure.

Replacement of the bridge will provide easy access to all parts of town and to US 19.

Contractors began disassembling the old bridge in August 2021, one piece at a time.

The new bridge, built on the same footprint as the existing span, will be 330 feet long.

