

# WVDOH Today!

In Fayette County, WVDOH employees from Districts 1, 2, 3, 9 and 10 worked together to turn a difficult situation into a widened, paved road after the old bridge at Kanawha Falls surpassed the end of its usable life. The hills are full of stories, but on Boonesboro Road those were stories of employees who went above and beyond to make a good road, passable by school bus, a reality.

“I’m going to stay home when the first frost hits,” joked Mike McMillion (pictured.) McMillion, a District 10 employee who returned from retirement after a 26-year career with the West Virginia Division of Highways, was on the job at Boonesboro Road. “I’ve seen a lot of changes.

There’s still a lot of change taking place, for the better,” said McMillion.

Another above and beyond employee was District 9’s Will Wilson, a mechanic from the Falls View Substation. Every evening, after the workers from other districts went home, Wilson stayed late to make sure their equipment in was well oiled and cared for so they could start the next day ready to work. “You couldn’t ask for a better employee than that one,” said Arlie Matney, of District 10’s Disforce. “I hope that when I go back to District 10, they let me take these Falls View guys with me!”

There were many aspects of the project which made it a difficult one. A large boulder jutting out into the road made it one of

those impossible-to-do-with-our-own-forces projects that, through persistence and patience, WVDOH did anyway. Close proximity to the railroad track meant that the crew could not blast the rock, so they had to carefully chip it away. The process took weeks and sent them home each night with a screeching, repetitive sound in their ears that they still could hear as they fell asleep but throughout the process they remained mindful and alert. Paving a three mile stretch of the winding road was another feat; the road needed widened and paved to allow large vehicles to pass. With District 3 crews paving and trucks from several Districts hauling in asphalt it was necessary to



## 5 DISTRICTS: 1 GOAL

carefully coordinate efforts to

make sure the trucks had room to get through. Ditching and drainage had to be completed before paving, and a seven mile stretch of road across a steep mountain upgraded to allow a back way out. Work continues on piling walls and guard rail, with a finer course pavement to be added in the spring. Working together, the five Districts turned a difficult situation into a solution and made the “impossible” project a drivable reality. When the first frost is on the ground, and we, no doubt, still see Mike McMillion's smiling face on the job at the next project, citizens in the Boonesboro Road area will be driving comfortably on the upgraded road.

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- Byrd White



# Expanding Opportunities for Training and Education



“The door is open for us to do more that we have wanted to do,” said Susan Hutchison, M.A., Training Development Manager (shown below.) “It looks to me like training is a priority so that’s really a thrill for us because we understand that the better trained employees usually stay in their jobs, they do them better and they’re happier. In the Division of Highways right now, I see that happening. It’s really growing and we’re really excited. This is a great time to be here.”

With equipment, mechanic, safety, leadership, clerical, management, and many more trainings — the West Virginia Division of Highways is working hard to ensure opportunities for employees to grow in their jobs. In addition to an increased focus on training, Hutchison reminds employees that there are opportunities

to continue their education through tuition reimbursement, scholarships and co-op opportunities.

“I have a vision for the WVDOH to provide training that, not only checks off the boxes, but also that employees would be happy to attend,” said Julian Woods, J.D., Division Director of the Human Resources Division. With that in mind, topics such as the Train the Trainers class (Bonita Mitchell conducts a session at Materials Division, shown above) help to improve the capacity of our WVDOH to design and conduct trainings that meet the needs of its employees. Whether through training provided on the job, or in classroom settings, there are no dead-end jobs at WVDOH. Employees are encouraged to stay with the Division and grow their skills to build a career of which they are proud.

**WVDOH Today!** is a monthly newsletter published by the West Virginia Division of Highways and distributed statewide via email to \*5,000+ employees. All content is developed by the editor, unless otherwise credited. The purpose of this publication is to facilitate connection across the diverse worksites and professions represented among WVDOH employees to empower us to function as **one West Virginia Division of Highways**, and with our sister agencies, **one West Virginia Department of Transportation**. We encourage employees to write in and share thoughts.

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**We are recognizing our people.**

*\*This number includes permanent and temporary employees.*

*WVDOH is How Hiring with good jobs available all across the state.*



## Safety Matters: Hard Hats and SRIC

As winter approaches and crews across the state work to ready our equipment for the tasks ahead, our focus has also turned to the safety hazards that tend to increase in winter. “Everything is more difficult in winter,” said Terry Mullins, Occupational Safety Specialist.

Another safety matter which is now receiving statewide focus is use of hard hats on project sites. It is everyone’s responsibility to follow OSHA regulations. This has not changed, but the focus

on it has; it will be enforced going forward.

The WVDOH is responsible for taking care of its people, and that responsibility is not taken lightly. Each person who wears their hard hat sets an example and helps to make it a matter of routine for all to wear them. When something goes wrong (remember, bad things happen fast!) you may save someone’s life by the example you set—just by wearing your hard hat. Look out for each other. Be safe, and keep each other safe.

## Drug Abuse in WVDOH: *Speak Up—Receive Help* *We Solve Problems By Facing Them*

“The short version of the story is that yes, WVDOH tests for drugs and alcohol year-to-year and that program has not changed,” said Gordon Cook, of the Human Resources Division. “The goal of the drug testing programs is primarily deterrence. It is not to bring down employees, or point fingers. It is always about safety. Safety for you, me, our families and our communities. We can talk about federal rules, established state laws, legal marijuana, or countless other topics, but it will always come full circle... back to safety.”

“We need to get the word out that drug abuse will not be tolerated,” said Secretary Byrd White. “Our first priority and concern is for the safety of our people.” The WVDOH cannot talk about going above and beyond to take employee safety seriously and then fail to do even the basic things which keep our workplaces safe. Even when we follow all safety standards, the unexpected can occur quickly in the situations in which we work.

“The bigger picture,” continued Cook, “is that we are dealing with increased medical and recreational marijuana, neighborhood retailers carrying CBD oil, still battling fatal overdoses in our communities, and an all-time high number of beds needed for in-patient treatment. The WVDOH is certainly required to maintain a drug testing for CDL-equipment operators, but plans are now in motion to include additional positions into our drug testing program. As many have heard, these are positions that routinely work around equipment and throughout our worksites. All employees that are classified within the Transpor-

tation Worker job classifications will begin random testing, and pre-employment testing, starting on January 1, 2020. Coincidentally, this is exactly 25 years since the date the WVDOH began drug testing. I expect more workplace testing to be announced throughout other state agencies in the months to come.” Cook added that he is working to get the message out to all WVDOH employees that use of CBD oils may cause positive drug test results. These positive results will count as positives. The products are not regulated, so employees should be aware that their content may vary.

The WVDOH strives to be a drug-free workplace, yet this drug epidemic is hurting our people too. We do not want the drug epidemic to be here, but it is. It’s a problem we need to face, and one that won’t be solved by looking away. For the employee reading this who knows their drug test would come back positive, the best thing to do is self-report and get help. Ask your District Human Resources person about self-referral before a reasonable suspicion or random drug test is required. The best outcome for an employee in this situation is to be able to get past the problem, move forward and continue building a career of which they can be proud. The self-referral program exists because it is needed. You’ve heard that we have great benefits, this is one of them. It’s not designed for someone else — it belongs to you, to use when you need it. This will not be easy, but often the easy paths don’t lead anywhere good. We at the WVDOH know about steep roads that lead to better places. Speak up.



## We've gone public with the good work of our people!

Join the 55,000+ followers of WVDOT on Facebook; watch your co-workers solve impossible problems and do great things.



## Roads to Prosperity: Two Year Anniversary



The West Virginia Division of Highways recently celebrated the two-year anniversary of the Roads to Prosperity program. **If it was easy, everyone would do it!** Balancing a focus on much-needed expansion projects and fixes to big problems such as dangerous traffic congestion, with the long under-funded maintenance of our Secondary Roads has required a monumental group effort. Our West Virginia Division of Highways has risen to the occasion and some days feel like a week; some weeks feel like a month; some months feel like a year — and what a year this one has been! We're building the WVDOH that we have wished for, for a very long time. With full support of all levels of management and a coherent plan to move forward as One WVDOH, we've got this!



## Human Resources Conference



District Human Resources professionals, Training Coordinators, District Engineers, Division Directors and others recently gathered for WVDOH's first Human Resources Conference. In addition to sharing information, providing for consistency in the way practices are implemented across Districts, and allowing an opportunity to meet face-to-face, the Conference also brought

people together to gain a better understanding of their co-workers across the state. Human Resources professionals working in each District received affirmation that while the demands of an already-demanding job are increasing, they will be supported as they work to find and hire qualified people in the midst of a rapidly changing culture in the WVDOH.



# Office of the State Highway Engineer:

***“A chain of command that goes both up and down.”***

Aaron Gillispie, P.E., State Highway Engineer, and the three Deputy State Highway Engineers, Ryland Musick, P.E., Greg Bailey, P.E. and Todd Rumbaugh, P.E., recently took the time to share their reflections on the current direction of the WVDOH and some of the things about our workforce of which they are most proud. The importance of working together and recognizing our people for what they do is a unanimous sentiment among the four.

“I’m very careful in making the distinction that people don’t work for me, they work with me,” said Gillispie and Rumbaugh.

“With the way management works now, we are encouraged to use a chain of command that goes both up and down,” said Musick.

“If people want to thank anybody, they need to stop and thank some of these guys and gals that are in the fluorescent green shirts out there and just realize how tough their job is,” said Bailey.

“There are a lot of opportunities and a lot of challenges, but the challenges themselves become opportunities. I believe that,” said Gillispie. “If you come to the Division of Highways and you want to build things, and you want to do things, right now would have to be as exciting a time as could be possible.”

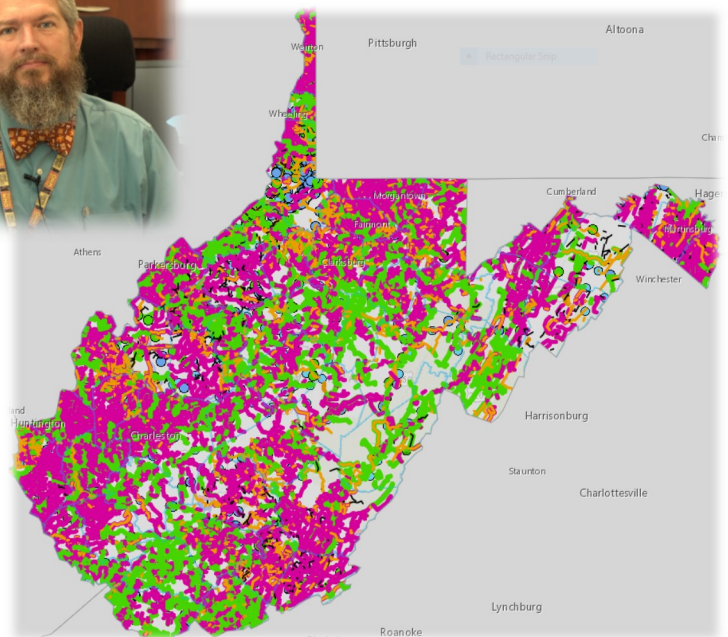
“I could not be happier for the direction that the Division of Highways is going now,” said Musick. “If you like to work, if you like to be proud of what you do and be able to stand your ground and show what you’ve done, now is the time to work for the Division of Highways. Secretary White and Deputy Secretary Wriston have made it a point to help us be a part of the solution. To be a part of the plan, and for us to have a vested interest in the success of this agency, without everything pointing back to a manager, or Secretary or Commissioner. Those folks go out of their way to make sure that our grassroots effort folks, be it the folks in the Districts or the folks in Building 5, wherever the work takes place, they work hard to make sure that those folks get the credit.”

“The challenges our folks face and what they overcome on a daily basis is incredible,” said Rumbaugh. “I think the more that

the public knows what they do and what they have to do it with, and what they actually get done, they will come to understand that these folks are here because they love the work, they love the challenge and they love serving the community more than they are for the money.”

“We have a lot of very, very good employees who are dedicated to the work that they do,” said Bailey. “And sometimes in doing that work, people just drive by one of our operations and they might see somebody standing there for a minute, but what they didn’t see is a minute before that they were down in some muddy ditch, or it was sub-zero weather and they’re still out there inspecting bridges in the middle of the winter, and they just climbed off a bridge and took a breather. We have a lot of very, very dedicated people that work year-round and I just wish that people could understand that better, and understand this is a very tough job maintaining our highway system.”

West Virginia has the sixth-largest highway system, but not the sixth-largest funding pot. In order to grow into a more capable team each day, is essential to make the connections, look for efficiencies, communicate, and work together to make our Division of Highways function as one for the good of everyone.



# Wellness Corner: Just. Slow. Down. for Orange Foods

Every October, orange-food enthusiasts step forward to join the pumpkin-spiced frenzy. The trees are orange, the food is orange, nature has joined us in **WORKZONE SAFETY AWARENESS.**

Pumpkins are the most popular orange food in October; but they're not alone in their cheery hue. Apricots, cantaloupe, carrots, mangoes, oranges, tangerines, sweet potatoes and spices from turmeric to cinnamon color the season beautifully; while being packed full of benefits for your health.

Pumpkin is high in vitamin A and C, antioxidants, potassium and fiber. It is a versatile food, which can be both our favorite pie and our favorite soup.

Carrots, which are lovely in orange but also yellow, purple or white, are also very high in vitamin A and antioxidants. They



make a great addition to veggie trays for easy snacking at parties and get-togethers. They are also a good addition to other dishes; like the West Virginia staple—fried potatoes (*with carrots!*)

Oranges and other citrus fruits are high in vitamin C and they help keep the immune system healthy. Mix orange juice and carrot juice together for drinkable nutrients—yum.

Eating simple foods should be simple, but often it is not. You're a motivated employee who is always willing to work overtime; but the number of actual hours in the day is a firm 24. Sometimes, simple is difficult to come by. We overcome that by sharing orange foods with our hardworking co-workers, and remembering to **Just. Slow. Down.** in work zones. Seriously, for the safety of everybody's pumpkins.

## Now Hiring, Please Share!

Accountant Auditor 1, 2 and 3

Accounting Technician 3 and 4

Administrative Secretary

Administrative Services Assistant 1, 2 and 3

Administrative Services Manager 1, 2 and 3

Attorney 2 and 3

Attorney Supervisor

Chemist 1

EEO Specialist 2

Electronics Technician 2

Geologist

GIS Programmer Analyst 2

GIS Technician

Highway Engineer

Highway Engineer Associate

Highway Engineer Trainee

Highway Equipment Specialist

Highway Equipment Supervisor 1

Information Systems Consultant 1

Information Systems Specialist 2

Intell Trans Fusion Center Operator

Investigator 2

Office Assistant 2 and 3

Paralegal 2

Personnel Specialist

Programmer

Programmer Analyst 1 and 2

Secretary 2

Staff Development Specialist

StoreKeeper 2

Trans Systems Analyst 1 and 2

Trans Service Manager 1

Trans Worker 1 and 2 Craft Worker

Trans Worker 2 Equipment Operator

Trans Worker 3 Core Drill Helper

Trans Worker 3 Mechanic

Transportation Engineering Technician

Transportation Engineering Technician Senior

Transportation Engineering Technician Trainee

Transportation Engineering Technologist

Transportation Services Supervisor

Transportation Systems Analyst 1, 2 and 3

## WVDOH 5K: Workplace Wellness — on a Rainy Saturday!

Kimi Cunningham, of the Engineering Division, recently organized a 5K run/walk for WVDOH employees, friends and families. The event took place on Saturday, October 12, at the State Capitol. Participants ran, or walked, a three mile course around the capitol grounds. First, second and third place was awarded to;

Female—First Place: Jessica Church, Legal Division, 23:15 time.

Female—Second Place: Laura Register, Friend of DMV Kanawha City Office employee Michele Grigoraci, 28:34 time.

Female—Third Place: Mendy McClure, Information Services, 30:45 time.

Male—First Place: Dustin Smith, Fiance of Engineering Division employee Ahleah Boise, 19:04 time.

Male—Second Place: Doug Kirk, Engineering Division, 19:24 time.

Male—Third Place: Travis Haley, Legal Division, 25:40 time.

Congratulations to all participants on their dedication to a healthful lifestyle. It was a chilly morning, with periods of rain, but employees, their families and friends supported each other and made the day a success.



# Photo Feature: Boonesboro Road

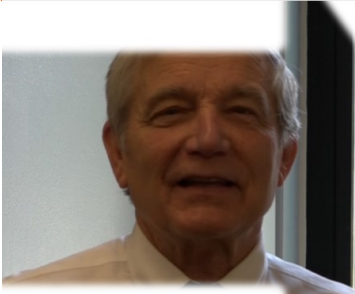
## Goodbye Rock—Hello Pavement



Photo compliments of Scott Kelly.



# The JimmyByrd Wall: Words of Support, Clear Expectations



“One of the citizens down here, he called them Again’ers. Whatever it was, they’re Again’ it! They’re not FOR anything. They’re AGAINST everything.”  
—Secretary Byrd White



“I want us to have the very best DOH, the very best DOT in the country, in every category across the board. I want us to be the best educated. I want us to be the most innovative. I want us to be the absolute best we can be.”  
—Jimmy Wriston, P.E.

**For the Best WVDOH, Not Again’ It!**

## The JimmyByrd Wall

Along a wall in Central Office, a collection of quotations from our management team is assembling — ideas and ideals to share with all of our people. Secretary Byrd White and Deputy Secretary Jimmy Wriston, P.E., are pro-employee all the way; but they stand united against naysayers and again’ers, as Byrd calls it. When faced with the most difficult tasks, attitude makes all the difference in the world. Here is a portable version of The JimmyByrd Wall — place it wherever you need a reminder that you will be supported and empowered in doing your job, and that you are expected to do great things.

“The people I’ve met so far are dedicated employees. They’re really trying to do the right thing. Some of them have been frustrated in the past, but now they see a clear path forward and they’re working hard to get everything done.”  
- Byrd White

“I can tell you there’s nobody in this state that’s never complained about the West Virginia Division of Highways, it’s just a fact, because we’re easy targets. We’re not going to be as easy targets in the future.”  
- Jimmy Wriston, P.E.

“I’ve found in my career that most people want to do the right thing. They want to do a good job. They just need to be directed and told what they should do, and then they’ll do it, and they’ll do a good job.”  
- Byrd White

“We have a perfect understanding of how big a job is in front of us. We’re serious about it, and we’re all together on it. The Governor gave us a vision and trusted us to apply our expertise to carry this out, and that’s exactly what we’re going to do.”  
-Jimmy Wriston, P.E.

“Thank you to each and every one of you that are out there doing your job every day. I know it’s thankless. I know that people get to fussing at you and I know that people don’t understand what you’re doing. I do. Jimmy Wriston does. We understand what you’re doing.”  
-Byrd White

“You’re professionals, and you’re working like professionals. You’re making a living for your family doing a very noble thing. You’re turning the economy of this state around, and you’re fixing the roads.”  
-Jimmy Wriston, P.E.

“I have been pleasantly impressed by the work ethic of most of the Division of Highways. They’re smart. They work hard. They know what they’re doing. They show up every day. They do everything good employees are supposed to do.”  
- Byrd White

“I have been here for 25 years with you guys. I know many of you personally and I’ve worked with many of you on a lot of different various things. I’ve never worked with better people in my life.”  
- Jimmy Wriston, P.E.

“I understand that the guy in the field knows more about what he’s doing than I do. I want to hear about it.”  
-Byrd White

