

WVDOH Today!

Special Feature: Silver Bridge Page 6

Arnold Martin: Above and Beyond Times Twenty



Dedication is WVDOH’s collective middle name, and every day there are more examples of this than we could ever list. One employee who has gone far above and beyond his regular duties to help his fellow employees is District 9’s Arnold Martin, pictured above (camouflage hat) with Jeff Boggs (photo by Brandon Cook, District 9 Human Resources.)

“In a time when we are hiring more transportation workers,” said Cook, “an effort like Arnold’s is priceless.”

Martin volunteered his own time, after hours and on days off, to help twenty of his co-workers get their CDL’s. That’s twenty people whose lives were bettered, twenty families who have

paths to better income, twenty careers worked more skillfully, and twenty times a good example set for his peers. In that, twenty is a huge number.

Deputy Secretary and Commissioner, Jimmy Wriston, P.E., was impressed, but not surprised, when he heard what Martin did. “This is exactly the kind of dedication to the mission of the Division of Highways that I’ve been seeing for nearly 25 years,” said Wriston. “Our employees not only think of each other as family, they treat each other that way. For Arnold to donate his time to the betterment of his co-workers is amazing. Kudos Arnold!!!”

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Steve Abshire: “We Live Here. We Need This.”

“Basically, my job is a support role,” said Steve Abshire, Information Systems Specialist. “I support the people that actually go out and do the work. They’re the face of Highways. To me, Information Services, that’s the mindset that we have over there. We try to get the right tools in the right people’s hands to do the job for the citizens of the state.”

Technology has changed since Abshire started his career with WVDOH in the late 1990’s. The goal of Information Services has not. In the beginning, it was a scramble to find the right technology in the emerging field. “We still do that,” said Abshire.

“There’s nothing more frustrating in trying to do a job than to not have the right tools to do that job. I see Jimmy and Secretary White bringing that vision to Highways and I think it’s going to create a culture within Highways to empower people to do what they need to do to get the job done.”

Abshire speaks with pride in his career, and the knowledge that

his role is vital to the mission of the WVDOH statewide. “Things have sped up quite a bit,” said Abshire with a laugh. “It seemed like before, nobody had any real direction, you know. It was business as usual before Secretary White came on board, and he’s brought a new vision to Highways, a new energy. In my opinion, leadership starts at the top, and that filters down to the people who do the job. You’ve got to trust in that leadership, and he brings that kind of direction to the DOT.”

“In West Virginia, the biggest hill to climb is the hills. We have a rough terrain here, and we’re about 6th nationally for the amount of roadways we have and

those need to be maintained. The new systems, the Roads to Prosperity, which I agree with wholeheartedly, that will help this state immensely, bring in new jobs, new people, and new institutions. It’s common sense.” said Abshire. “To do this for the citizens of the state of West Virginia is an obligation to us here at Highways. We live here. We need this.”



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.

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



The Pay Plan: Update



Last month, we featured the basics of what to expect from the upcoming pay plan. In short; the pay plan is not a guaranteed pay raise for all employees. The intent of the plan is to ease hiring, retain and create a path forward for employees, and increase transparency. Job classifications are being updated. Pay grades and responsibilities are being compared with other state DOT agencies, private sector jobs, and national averages. The previous DOH pay scale is being reviewed. Job classification families are being created, with some classifications combined or separated.

At press time, the first rounds of reviews for the plan have been completed and H. Julian Woods, J.D., Executive Director of the Human Resources Division, is now handing off the pay plan to Secretary White and Deputy Secretary Wriston for their review.

Alanna Keller, P.E.: Working For the People

2019 has been the year of accountability and transparency for West Virginia Division of Highways. Balancing a changing culture with getting back to our roots, this effort has taken considerable planning and meticulous effort across all Districts and Divisions.

West Virginia Department of Transportation Interagency Engineer, Alanna Keller, P.E., has recently taken on a new role assisting with making improvements to the SWAT program. Working with Training Coordinator, Susan Hutchison, M.A., she helped develop a training program for SWAT Coordinators across the state. SWAT, which stands for “Safety With Action Today,” is the system Governor Justice put into place to make sure every citizen complaint or question is addressed in a timely and professional manner. SWAT ensures that we are responsible to the citizens we serve.

“We’re trying to re-instill into our individuals that we are providing a community service to the public,” said Keller. “Within this program we’re trying to educate individuals on the need to be consistent on our responses throughout the state. We want all citizens to get the same response, no matter where they are in the state. Also, we are wanting to instill the



urgency that all Districts need to respond in a timely manner, and that our responses must be detailed and complete.”

Keller’s work on Special Projects is everything but routine — from assisting State Rail Authority to the Division of Public Transit. These sister agencies to WVDOH have a smaller number of people, but their work is vital. Keller must be reliable, and must allow no detail to escape her attention. She lent this focus to her work with SWAT due to the importance of the program.



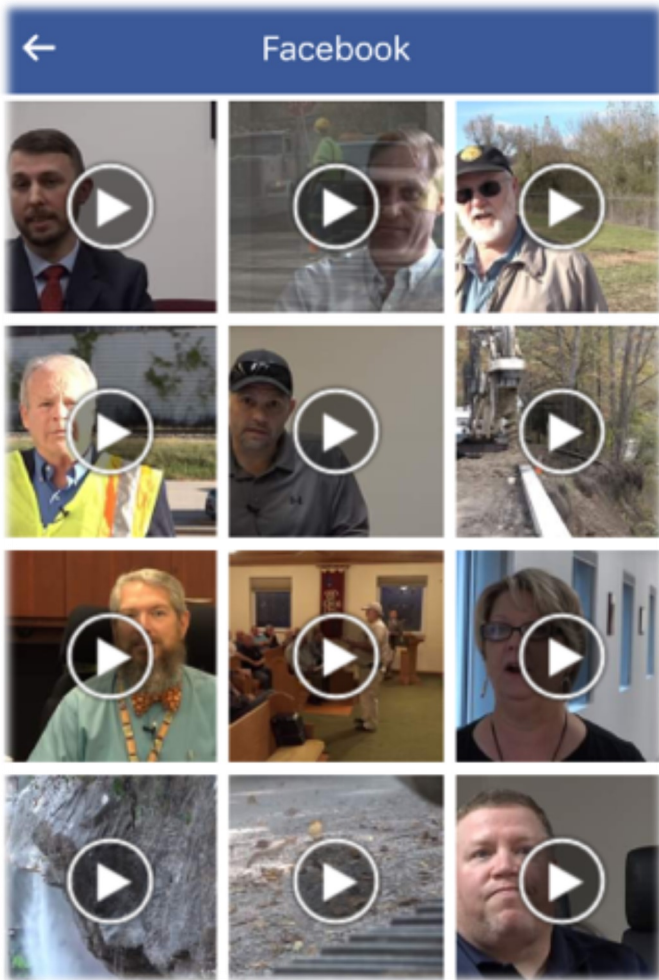
Eight Transportation Agencies

One WVDOT



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Engineering Division Offers After-Work Fitness Classes

Fitness classes are available after work in the basement of the Engineering Division's office on Smith Street in Charleston. The classes run from 4:30—5:15 on Thursday's, and will start on January 9, 2020. The classes will be taught by an employee, Kimi Cunningham, who volunteers her time after work to help improve the lives of her co-workers. Division Director, R.J. Scites, P.E., has been supportive of Cunningham's efforts to help build a healthy working environment for her peers.

The January class offerings are PiYo and Kettlebell. Cunningham asks that participants arrive at least 5 minutes early for the first class to fill out a waiver. PiYo requires bare feet or Yoga socks, as regular socks can cause participants to slip. A mat and kettlebell (3 to 5 pounds is preferred for beginners, 8 to 10 pounds for advanced participants) will be needed. Cunningham advises that kettlebells should be cast iron or steel instead of water or sand filled, to prevent shifting of weight during the exercises.

The Engineering Division's workplace gym was developed using donated equipment, and is available for use by any WVDOH employee while in Charleston. Due to the need to keep the building secure and safe for all employees, those wishing to visit the facility should contact Cunningham for instructions.

The West Virginia Division of Highways encourages employees who wish to combine their wellness efforts with others in their areas. We are a rural state and there are miles between us, but we are committed to being a workplace that is good for our people.

There are only 49 other states.

The goal of being the best Division of Highways in the country isn't impossible. It's a real thing.

To be the best educated. To be the most motivated. To be the most empowered.

To go above and beyond... and then some... for safety in our work zones.

To be the most transparent and efficient with our use of resources.

To be the most connected across all Districts and Divisions.

To be the best at implementing our PLAN.

To build the best quality workplace for our people who will build and maintain the best roads.

Why not? Who can stop us?

Donation Drives Across the WVDOH

Across West Virginia, WVDOH Districts and Divisions are participating in a variety of gift-giving and donation programs this month. Each year, District 5 collects a donation for “Warm the Children,” which provides winter clothing to children, as well as a “Toys for Joy” program to serve Mineral County. District 7 is hosting a canned food drive. District 3 is collecting canned food for Old Man Rivers Mission in Parkersburg, and the D-3 Comptroller's Office is hosting a “Toys for Tots” lunch.

Central Office Divisions are uniting in a canned food, and pet food, drive. This is a tradition in its first year, which is expected to continue to grow. To make the drive more interesting (and hopefully, more successful), Divisions are putting together gift baskets which employees can win through a raffle. For each



item of food, or pet food, an employee donates, the employee receives a ticket, with a drawing to occur at the Commissioner's meet-and-greet on December 20.

This is the season of giving, and giving benefits everyone involved. With donated food, pet food, clothing and toys, the giver never sees the person who receives the item but knows that they can make a difference in a direct way. When a child does not have gloves, and he receives a pair of gloves, it makes a real difference for that child. For our employees, these drives provide another road to empowerment — the ability to solve a problem in a direct

way and contribute to a better West Virginia. With a workforce who solves problems together, WVDOH becomes a better neighbor to the communities around us.

Beyond Wellness: Perspective on Food Insecurity

Food security means knowing you have enough food to meet your family's needs throughout the year, for all the meals you need. If you go buy groceries, store the groceries, cook them on your stove, keep them cool in your refrigerator and would have trouble listing which food items you own, you are food secure. You will spend time cooking, eating and enjoying food, but no time worrying about it.

Food insecurity means the opposite. When you're food insecure, you might have a meal today, but not know if there will be enough food for another meal, or for tomorrow. You might eat insufficient amounts, or overeat when food is available because you know it probably won't be there later. You might run up debt on credit cards to buy groceries, and then start pawning things you own (after work) only to find out that—in 2019—most pawn shops don't still take guitars, and they would give you \$10 for the weed eater if it was spring, but it isn't.

If you're food insecure, you will remember for the rest of your life if someone gave you a cheeseburger. You will remember the time your co-workers were all getting ice cream and you literally couldn't, not just that it was a bad idea budget wise, but that there were not two dollars in your pocket. Food drives, like those WVDOH is hosting all across the state, will catch you in the middle; not able to give, and blending in well enough not to receive. If you are food insecure, you know that a quality item — not a dented, expired can — but something really good

would be a valuable thing to be able to give, but you have seven items in your cabinet, you can list them on-the-spot, and you truly cannot spare one.

In 2018 in America, 11.1% of people were food insecure (statistic from USDA.GOV.) That's down, from 11.8% in 2017, but it's still more than one out of every ten people. If you're food secure, and you've always been food secure, that will shock you. If you're food insecure, it will shock you too, but only because you can't imagine that 88.9 percent of people have all the food they need every day. How could 89 out of every 100 people actually have enough food all the time? You may look around and that's not what you see.

Food insecurity impacts more than health and wellness; it gets into your finances, your career path, the things you want to do. Everyone tries to connect with you by listing what they did on vacation and you're thinking — grilled cheese sandwich. It's not once-upon-a-time, then gone; it's something you continually try to crawl out of, and it follows you. It is a big problem, made of many problems. Everything is connected.

When WVDOH paves a road through a community and the road is the deciding factor in someone taking a job an hour away, it makes a difference. When we make it possible for our own people to have a clear path and the training necessary for building a career, that makes a difference too. Many awful things work together to perpetuate food insecurity, but many wonderful people can work together to destroy it.



Tracy Brown, P.E.: Keeping Us Safe on an Ocean of Bridges

"The first time I was ever in Point Pleasant," said Tracy Brown, P.E., State Bridge Engineer, "I grew up in Raleigh County and we were taking a family vacation. We were coming down the old Route 35, and you remember the old Shadle Bridge that stood right here where the Bartow Jones Bridge is now. It had the real high towers on it, and you could see them way up the river. And the closer we got to Point



Pleasant, we could see the railroad bridge, the Silver Memorial Bridge, this railroad bridge. I thought "Wow, this is like an ocean of bridges out here!" And my dad was talking, and he said, "You know, this is where the Silver Bridge was that fell that time, and it killed people." And I thought, "A bridge fell, and it killed people?" And it just made a huge impact on me that that could happen."

The Silver Bridge collapsed on December 15, 1967, at 4:58 p.m. Every year, citizens of Point Pleasant and the surrounding area come together to read the names of the 46 people who lost their lives. From the Museum Operator to the Mayor, the town is dedicated to making sure they are never forgotten.

This year, Carol Stevens, P.E., of CAS Structural Engineering, worked to get the location recognized as a National Historic Civil Engineering Landmark by the American Society of Civil Engineers. Brown, and several of his employees from District 1, placed bridge deck panels recovered from the Silver Bridge as a walkway for the monument, and built a place for the plaque to rest.

Today, Brown talks to every Bridge Safety Inspector and every Engineer

he trains about the Silver Bridge. "There's not a day goes by that I'm not sitting in my office, or out in the field somewhere,

and the Silver Bridge is not on my mind," said Brown. "Talking with the folks, some of the people on our staff, our Bridge Safety Inspectors, our Bridge Design Engineers, talking with them, we always mention it. Every conversation we're in, our touch-stone is the Silver Bridge."

Congress passed the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1968, which established a National Bridge Inspection Program, following the Silver Bridge tragedy. Before that time, bridge inspections were not consistent from state-to-state, and inspections that were done were more from a maintenance perspective. With

the new standards, Bridge Safety Inspectors look at each member of the bridge structure and evaluate it. For this reason, Brown is very careful to stress the word "safety" when he talks about his Bridge Safety Inspectors. "It served as a thing that you can't really quantify, in that it changed our way of thinking so that now, if you're related to the bridge industry in some way in your career, it's not just a career or a job. It's kind of a mission you're on to keep this from happening again."

Long ago, when the bright-eyed boy from Raleigh County was on vacation in the faraway land of Mason County, Brown would not have known he would someday be responsible for "an ocean of bridges" of his own. Now, as WVDOH State Bridge Engineer, he works tirelessly to ensure the safety of the public and instill that sense of responsibility in the next generation of bridge professionals.



DOH Employees Receive Thank You

Everyone who works in or calls Central Office knows that a recent transition to a new phone system has been difficult. The above-and-beyond helpfulness of Valerie Sayre and Sean Adkins stood out to Hope Fout, from the West Virginia Office of Technology.

“They were so helpful during the process to organize the phone’s before distribution,” said Fout. “They saw the large task I had in front of me and stepped right in to offer assistance. Without their help, it would have taken a lot more time to setup and distribute the phones to employees. It was very nice to work with these energetic, super nice DOT employees. I look forward to partnering with DOT on future projects.”

When Secretary Byrd White heard the comment, he was not surprised. “As to our employees being ‘energetic, super nice DOT employees,’ that is how I have found most of our people,” said White. “We have a great team and for others to find us as energetic and nice does not surprise me at all.”

In being as helpful as they could be, Sayre and Adkins, made a lasting impression. It’s important to remember that every interaction we, as individuals working for WVDOH, have is seen by those we interact with as an interaction with WVDOH itself. When one or two of us represent WVDOH well, the public perception of us grows and a better working environment is created for each of us.



Enjoy the season.

Be ready for the road ahead.

Photo by Robert Hebb, III—TW3 Crew Chief, Raleigh County.

Safety Award Winners

Safety awards will soon be presented to winning organizations from around the state. The winning organizations were;

Counties	District 5’s Hardy County (0516)
Bridge Departments	District 10 (1098)
Sign Departments	District 1 (0197) District 2 (0297) District 5 (0597) District 9 (0997) District 10 (1097) (Five Way Tie)
Equipment Shops	District 5 (0570) District 10 (1070) (Two Way Tie)
Interstates, Expressways, and Corridors	District 5’s Corridor H Knobley (0583) District 10’s Bragg (1072) (Two Way Tie)
Heavy Maintenance	District 10 (1067)

“I have to say that the safety culture in District 10 starts from the top down,” said Terry Mullins, District 10 Safety Coordinator. “Our management believes that employees should go home at the end of the day the way they came in. We have also increased training for our employees to help them identify the hazards associated with each task being performed. Our safety management team out of Charleston has also helped the safety officers in each District achieve training from Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) through WVU that has helped us excel in our knowledge and training for our employees.”

“Another facet of the award that many people may not realize,” continued Mullins, “Is that not only does the Commissioner’s Award include all areas of safety, but it also includes equipment damage as well. As one can imagine, it is very hard to achieve this goal. There are a lot of hours behind each award. In our Bridge Department, we had an overall score of 6.6, we worked 60,000 manhours and had zero dollars in equipment damage. I’m so proud of our people, and we continue to improve.”



Oakwood Road: An Elegant Design for the Public

The Oakwood Intersection Improvements project in Kanawha County demonstrates a success for WVDOH not only in public safety, wise use of taxpayer dollars, working within existing right-of-way, and efficient project scheduling, but also in working cooperatively with the public most impacted by the roads.

The intersection at Oakwood Road currently backs up during peak traffic times; with holiday shopping in one direction and three schools in the other. The new design, called an R-CUT, improves over previous designs presented at a September 19 public meeting. The R-CUT, which stands for "Restricted Crossing U-Turn Intersection" has been used in other states, but this will be the first in West Virginia. It reduces the number of conflict points in the intersection from 32 to 14, making the intersection safer. Not only is it a better fit for the roadway, which can be constructed more quickly without acquiring any additional right-of-way, but with a price tag of \$4.7 million, it is also the least costly alternative.

WVDOH presented the alternative to the public on Monday, December 16, at a public meeting. Dirar Ahmad, P.E. (pictured, top), Traci Cummings (pictured, third photo) and others were present to talk one-on-one with residents and explain the project. For citizens wishing to express concerns, compliments, or

comments, the comment period ends January 13. Construction could begin as early as Spring, 2020, with much of the work taking place at night to avoid already congested peak traffic times.

Project Manager, Dirar Ahmad, P.E., answered questions patiently as groups of citizens passed walked past — looking at the maps, reading the signs and watching an informational video on how the R-CUT concept would work on-the-ground.

"What's the plan here?" Asked one citizen. "This is where I turn, from my house," he said, gesturing at the map.

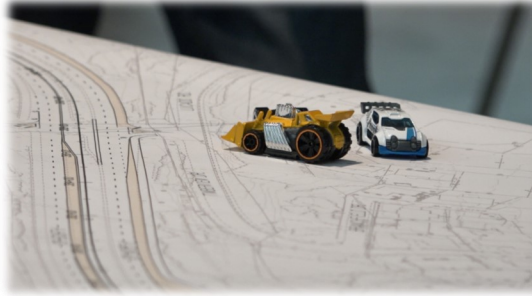
"Say you want to go to Kroger," said Ahmad, "You make a right turn, you come here, to Hickory, and it will be a U-Turn." Ahmad continued, "The signal phasing right here will be cut in half, so right now, when you come here, you have to wait for all four phases, we'll cut it to two."

"Will this be like the old plan, with the flyover?" asked the citizen.

"No," said Ahmad. "This is much cheaper, under 5 million taxpayer dollars, and we don't have to relocate anybody. We don't have to buy property."

"So no flyovers, and no frontage road?" "No flyovers, no frontage road." Question by question, everyone was

heard and answered. The details of the elegant R-CUT design emerged.



I ~~JUST~~ WORK HERE.