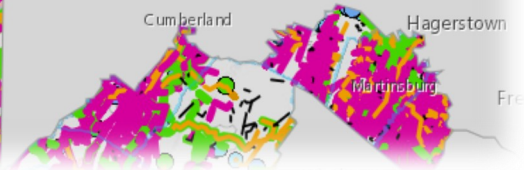


WVDOH Today!



West Virginia Division of Highways leadership team, Byrd White and Jimmy Wriston, P.E., have a message for Highways folk across the state. **The silos are coming down.** Across all Districts and Divisions, there is only one DOH.

“We’ve got groups in Highways that just do amazing things each and every day,” said Wriston. “We’ve been an agency where we relied on the goodwill of a handful of people. **Now that handful of people has turned into armloads of people.**”

“I refer to it as a clean sheet of paper,” said White. **“Let’s forget how it’s always been done, and figure out how it should be done.** Sometimes, they’re the same thing. Sometimes, they’re not.”

“We’ve had what we call ‘silos’ in Highways, and a lot of good things were happening in silos. There’s a bunch of them, and the only time they ever interacted with each other was when there was conflict between the silos,” said Wriston. **“Now, I think we’re more in a — ‘let’s help each other’ — I think the walls of those silos are coming down. They’re melting away.”**

“Sometimes looking at things from a new perspective, from a blank sheet of paper, will **change things for the better,**” said White. “We intend to be the absolute best we can be, the whole department, all of us.”

“The culture here... I wouldn’t say we’re kinder or gentler. I’d say we’re aggressive. I’d say we’re passionate,” said Wriston. **“I’d say we have a mission and we’re focused on it.** People are asking for help to get what they need done, and they’re getting it.”

“Jimmy Wriston and I are looking at the organization of Highways, from the top to the bottom. From the partnership we have at the top, down to who reports to who,” said White. They’re structuring the DOH into a quality place to work, where lines of communication are truly open.

“We’re absolutely going to put systems in place that will help us, move us forward, and make life easier,” said Wriston, “We’re going to move forward with the rest of the state, and that’s how we’re going to be successful. Together.”

- Also in this Issue:**
- Underwater Bridge Inspection**
 - New Direction in Human Resources**
 - Financing at an Expedited Pace**



Kyle Baranowski, P.E. — From a Fear of Water to the Awesome World of Underwater Bridge Inspection

"I was afraid of water at first but when I tried scuba-diving as a recreation for the first time, **I was hooked,**" said Kyle Baranowski, P.E., an engineer in District 5's Bridge Department. "I really wanted to get into it and knew I could fill that void that Division of Highways had."



Bridge Inspectors with the West Virginia Division of Highways brave a variety of fears;

heights, bears, bees! In all types of weather, from so hot you sweat standing still, to freezing cold, from wind, to storms, to an occasional perfect day. **They see all sorts of things, from above ground, to high above ground, and sometimes—underwater.**

"There's a statewide bridge inspection program. A component of that is the underwater inspection," said Baranowski.

"There's a **handful of people** in the Division of Highways that go out and inspect the bridges underwater. They're always short-handed, it seems like. There's no extra money or merit or anything, it's a voluntary program you do in addition to your regular duties. Because of that fact, asking for extra work, we don't get a lot of people who join the dive team. It ultimately saves money from consultant companies from having to do it, and spending more resources. **There's a comradery in the group** because you're all scuba-diving and inspecting bridges together, so I really enjoyed it once I got into it."

"There's been a few instances where the visibility in a large river has been very good, like the Ohio River, and **to see an entire world that nobody gets to see...** You get to see the fish habitat, and the actual bridge structure. A lot of times the visibility of the water in West Virginia is so low there's not much you get to see, but every once-in-awhile, with the sun being just right, and the water being clear enough, you do get to see **an awesome underwater world.**"

Bridge inspectors across the state keep the public safe. Their hands, and eyes, on small details of each and every bridge catch developing problems before it's too late.

WVDOH Today! is a monthly newsletter published by the West Virginia Division of Highways Human Resources Division, and distributed statewide via email to our 5,390* 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.**

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We are recognizing our people.

**Number of employees subject to increase.*



Photos compliments of Dan Brayack and Steve Kimble.



Putting West Virginia

on the Map!

For information on the progress of roadwork scheduled between now and December, visit the website to view the interactive map.

Share it with the public, we made it for them!

transportation.wv.gov

SWAT—Safety With Action Today

Don't forget -

We can't all be Eric Steele or Beverly Elder. Only a brave few of us specifically have answered the SWAT phone lines as a part of our "normal job duties" (whatever that means!) but a call from a citizen concerned about a specific road could come to any of our phones at any time. Our numbers are out there in a lot of places, and folks often call the first of those numbers they can find. If a call comes to you, the SWAT team can be reached at the contact information below. It's important that no citizen feel as if they haven't been heard. Our trained SWAT operators will make sure each citizen receives an accurate response to their question in a timely manner.

1-833-WVROADS

WVROADS@WV.GOV

Dotforms.wv.gov/cra

Carla Rotsch: Financing at an Expedited Pace

"What I like about the financial side of our operation is being able to see **the connection** between all pieces and parts of a project or our operation in total," said Carla Rotsch, Business Manager. "What we do in the financial world is kind of behind the scenes, if you will. We are not the people out there flagging traffic, we are not the people out there driving the trucks, or plowing the snow, but what we do impacts the ability for those people to do those jobs."

Rotsch describes her employees as **hardworking people**, who are willing to work as hard after the clock passes *quitting time* as before. With a focus on both the Secondary Roads Initiative and Roads to Prosperity projects, the pace their work has picked up, just as it has with the rest of DOH. They work in Central Office where they are often unseen but their work is vital to the success of rest of the DOH team across the state.

"I think the DOH is **moving forward full speed ahead**, trying to maintain all of the roadways that we can," said Rotsch. "Making sure we have the ability to get people to school on busses safely, making sure we have the ability to get firetrucks and ambulances where they go safely, making sure that our public roadways are **safe for the travelling public**."

"**We really do care,**" she continued. "There are a tremendous amount of people doing a tremendous amount of work in this agency because we care. We're serving the public. What we do affects our daily commute, and our children too. We're not just here doing a job, it effects us as well." Managing the financial side of an agency of this size in no easy task. There are standards of accounting that need to be followed, and a rigorous system of checks and balances. The projects themselves are expensive, and the number of projects is increasing. Rotsch states that if you ask anyone at this agency, they will tell you we're working as hard and efficiently as we can. Ask Rotsch herself and she will tell you "the pace of the work has been **expedited exponentially**." That's Business Manager speak for — 'it's been hectic!'



Jon Burns, P.E. and Ryan Arnold, P.E.:

On Managing Construction for a District

Area construction engineers Jon Burns, P.E. and Ryan Arnold, P.E., work in Grant, Mineral, Hardy, Hampshire, Morgan, Berkeley, and Jefferson Counties. They used to be divided; with one covering four of District 5's counties and the other covering three, but the workload has necessitated them being flexible. They have a lot of ground to cover. **It's beautiful ground, from steep mountain to rolling meadows, but it's a lot of ground nonetheless.**



"The people I work with sometimes work very long hours," said Burns. "Especially when we assist our resurfacing section with paving jobs. They might put in a 12 or 14 hour day because the pavers, when they get good weather, they pave. **Some of them travel an hour and a half, two hours, to get to the jobs.** They do good work for us."

Arnold and Burns oversee and manage contract work for Design-Bid-Build, Design-Build, and Public Private Partnerships. Between them, they list a variety of types of projects; widening I-81, emergency piling wall projects, finishing up a turn lane and

traffic signal project, rehabilitating an old stone arch bridge, several ADA ramp projects, and Design-Build bridge projects among them.

"From our standpoint in construction a lot of people don't understand the process of how long it can take," said Arnold. "Particularly on these Design-Build projects. You may see a project go out to bid, and the contractor wins it, and it may be several months, even up to a year, before they can

actually even start work on that project because they have to prepare the designs and go through that whole process. There's some timeline things there that I think people aren't aware of, how long it takes."

"I've always been a kind of hands-on, build things sort of person," said Arnold. "I **worked Co-Op with DOH** for three summers and just kind of came on board from there. As a Co-Op, I worked with a few good supervisors who helped me get started out. They **pointed me in the right direction.**"

Two Good Reasons: Reporting Fraud, Waste and Abuse

We all encounter situations in our life and work where we wonder what we need to do about what we've seen. It's rare to find a person who wants to get co-workers in trouble. That feeling makes it difficult to report when we should. In the case of reporting fraud, waste and abuse at work, here are two good reasons to report problems early rather than letting them grow.

Keeping our people safe is the most important thing we do. We build roads, and that's important, but the safety is the reason we build roads. When what you've seen is unsafe for our people, don't trust luck to make it better. There are no safety procedures that we have just for fun, they're all best practices in how to work while staying alive and well.

Another reason to report is that problems don't have a habit of fixing themselves. Whatever size problem you see, it can be expected to keep growing. If what you see is wasteful, it can be expected to become more wasteful. If it's fraudulent, it will become more so. When you lay eyes on it, you're already involved. You will need to make decisions about what to do. If it makes you angry, you may want to report. If it makes you uneasy, you may have to—even if that's not what you want.

The Office of Investigations hotline is 1(866) 206-2728. By email, use: DOT.Fraud@wv.gov. By mail; WVDOT Office of Investigations, 1900 Kanawha Blvd. East, Building 5, Room 503, Charleston, WV 25303.





DOT-12 Training Update



Robin Gump
TRAINING COORDINATOR, DISTRICT 6



Tommy Collins, PE
DISTRICT 5 MAINTENANCE ENGINEER

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



Tom Kennedy
TRAINING WORKER, DISTRICT 6



Brandy Patterson
FEDERAL-AID FUNDING UNIT
PROGRAMMING DIVISION

Hear your co-workers voices and stories on WVDOT's Facebook and YouTube.



WVDOH New Equipment
5.2K views · August 21



WVDOH Crew Chief Harlin Wolfe
and his crew are working on...



State Bridge Engineer, Tracy
Brown, P.E., is also the District 1...

Juanita R. Webb; On Wearing Red Each Friday

“As a returning employee to the West Virginia Division of Highways, I want you to know how much I enjoy the WVDOH Today publication,” writes Juanita Webb, of our Traffic Division. “It is a great way to learn more about the future and completed projects, employees and their successes.”

Every Friday, Webb wears a red shirt to work. It’s a way of bringing someone close to her, with her, everywhere she goes. She sent her letter, one of WVDOH Today’s very first proper *letters to the editor*, in hopes that her co-workers across the state would understand and join her in honoring our soldiers when they are far from home. **For Webb, her soldier is her son, Adam.**

“My son, Adam Townsend, was deployed to Afghanistan on May 14, 2019,” writes Webb. “I wear a red shirt with the Remember Everyone Deployed (RED) logo to **honor my soldier** every Friday.” It’s a matter that touches many West Virginia families. Many know firsthand what’s it’s like when a close family member is serving overseas.

Webb went on to say, “On August 15, 2019, five hundred additional soldiers from our great state deployed to Afghanistan. I was hoping we could as any West Virginia Division of Highways employees that would like to wear red shirts on Fridays to join me in support of our soldiers and their families.”

“I wonder how many of the five hundred recently deployed West Virginians **have family members within the West Virginia Division of Highways,**” Webb wondered. Webb is encouraging Divisions and Districts who have people who wear red on Friday to send their photos in to share with the National Guard for those five hundred West Virginians. “I will certainly let my son know of the support,” she said.

If you would like to share a photo with Webb, WVDOH Today welcomes you to send it to our email address. You are encouraged to share any thoughts or ideas you have with us, on this or any other subject. Write to: DOHNewsletter@wv.gov



Wellness Corner: Packing Healthful Lunches at 4:00 a.m.

Four members of a household are going **four different directions** today and it's 4:00 a.m. Tracy is going to middle school, Stacy to elementary. D.J. is going to work at the DOH, and T.J. to the DMV. Middle school is east, grade school west, DMV south and DOH job site an hour and a half north; and **the work zone needs set-up before the asphalt trucks roll in.**

There are four hard-boiled eggs in the kettle that have cooled enough to fit into four simple lunchboxes. The eggs are the perfect protein punch, and miraculously, the whole family likes them. What else?

Packing lunch is tough while standing still, it's even tougher when juggling careers and education. One idea for how to make work/school lunches more interesting is to involve every member of the household in the grocery shopping at the list-writing stage.

Take the number of household members and divvy up the healthful food categories. Tracy, choose three vegetables; Stacy, choose three fruits. D.J., choose two proteins; T.J., choose two good carbohydrates. Then ask, what else do we want?

The categories rotate with each grocery shopping trip, so that different household members are choosing different categories each time. Plastic baskets go in the fridge, and they hold the choices — veggies, fruits, carbs, proteins, snacks, beverages, whatever the group has dreamed up. They are grab-and-go, simple, whole foods. If there are complicated foods in the mix, those are prepared beforehand by whomever had the idea—with help if needed, so Tracy and T.J. made their best fall gingerbread. Each household member is responsible for their own grab-and-go, and it's toss, toss, toss, toss, into the lunchbox and out the door.

Time to Move Forward: Sorting the Workplace Gossip Closet

One of the best things about moving forward into a new era is getting rid of the things from a previous time **that no longer fit.** Gossip, which is a form of talk in which one person speculates about subjects that belong to another person, is one thing to lay aside as we **tear down the silos** and **start with a fresh page.**

Most of the things we are doing to make our workplace more efficient and functional require substantial effort, time, funding or brainpower. Cleaning out our gossip closet does not. It is simple enough to be done today.

Gossip at work destroys work by making it difficult to get actual work done. It may cause the target illness; raising their blood pressure, causing them excess worry, or diminishing their self-esteem. It can bleed over into workplace discrimination; to decisions about who to hire, to promote, or how to treat the work products the target of gossip creates. When that happens, it can impact how much money the target earns, causing them to have fewer groceries today and more difficult retirement years later. **Keeping gossip around causes harm in all directions.**

Eliminating gossip is as simple as learning to sort. Clothing is sorted into keep and donate, papers into file and recycle. **With personal information, the categories are mine and not mine.** Our awesome map, our Districts who work together to help each other in floods, neatly patched and squared up potholes, ditches pulled with pride; are **mine.** Why she chose that sweater or how much he paid for his shoes; are **not mine.**

Sorting works if you find yourself as the audience of gossip too. "Would you like to partake in a story I made up about our co-worker?" **"That's not mine, I pass."** The person who passes up junk information frees up their own time to work in a motivated fashion. Sorting also helps the target. In that case, the sorting is as simple as remembering what's yours. Your life belongs to you. Others can't control you by talking. **You belong here too.**

The work we create as individuals and organizations is ours to share. The details of our co-workers life, their family, is not. Gossip has no place in WVDOH today, and it's time to clean that closet. **If we each get to sorting, we'll get it done quick.**



Secretary Byrd White recommends starting as if with a **Clean Sheet of Paper**

If you've got that, and you've got plenty of ink pens, you can start anew.

This blank sheet of paper is yours.

If you want to share it, DOHNewsletter@wv.gov would like to see what you do.



A New Direction in Human Resources

With the pace of work picking up in all ten Districts and all Central Office Divisions, with the **tearing down of silos** and a **blank sheet of paper** start to the question of how are we going to get this done, a strong Human Resources Division is key to building a West Virginia Division of Highways tough enough to rise to the occasion.



“We have a strong passionate team, full of compassion,” said H. Julian Woods, J.D., Director of the Human Resources Division. “Where a number of our employees may have felt in the past that their voice was not being heard, that they could not come to Human Resources and have a fair opportunity to share

their visions, their issues, their focuses, I would like all of DOH to know that we are here to help each one of you.”

From hiring, to training, to solving isolated issues, to setting the tone for positive change, Human Resources itself must be open, adaptable, diligent, dedicated, and fully engaged. That’s not a

tall order for Woods, who has crisscrossed the state many times since joining the WVDOH in January.



“I really enjoy working at Human Resources, I have since I was employed, but things are moving more quickly now, ” said Natasha White, who has worked for the West Virginia Division of Highways for 19 years. “We’ve had a lot of ideas that we’ve wanted to implement in the last few years, and **we’ve been able to do**

those very rapidly in the last few months, and that’s been very refreshing.” Although the work of the Human Resources Division can be complicated, the goal is simple; to get five thousand, three hundred and ninety employees working together as one WVDOH — while continuing to hire and train more.

The West Virginia Division of Highways has more bridges than it has people to work on bridges. There are good jobs available here for people ready to work. We are not only Now Hiring, we are Now Training, and Now Empowering.

