

# WVDOH Today!

Photo by WVBDBC team "TS6."



Dave Hollow Road, Hardy County. Photo by District.

## Paving the Road to Prosperity for W.Va.

"We told each of the Districts they needed to prepare to put \$240,000 more dollars out in paving by the end of June, on top of the \$140 million dollar paving program we are already doing," said Jimmy Wriston, P.E., Deputy Secretary of Transportation. "Many of these projects are being paved by our own WVDOH crews, in addition to the purchase order paving and contract jobs. We do just as good a job as the contractors. Many times we do a better job."

"I've never been more proud to work here than I am right now," said Secretary Byrd White. "Our people are out there getting their jobs done, keeping our roads safe, every day." In times like this (which we've never known before) it seems like everything is against us. But somewhere in West Virginia, there's a transportation worker joking about how they passed Wile E. Coyote while on their way to work. Coyote was hobbling along with a broken spirit, head hung low. They laugh, "Roadrunner troubles?" And Coyote replies, "No, I tried to stop the West Virginia Division of Highways from getting their work done. Let me never again be so foolish."



**Shane**  
**is**  
**100!**  
**See**  
**Page 6**

### Also in this Issue:

**A+ for Smooth Potholes**

**Teen Bridge Builders**

**More Paving Photos**

**Why We Wear Masks**



# Hurricane Get's an A for Smooth Patching

"We work out of Putnam County, Hurricane, 0140," said Bill Smith, Transportation Worker. "I've got to give my men credit. You've got a good warm day like today, and you've got asphalt that comes out of the back of that truck that's 350 degrees, and they still wear their masks. My hat's off to them."

"Their hard work, the effort they put into it, they don't quit. Just being who they are, they've got a lot of common sense to them. They know what needs done. My hat's off to every one that I work with," continued Smith.

All the effort in the hot sun wouldn't make a difference at all if the patches Smith's crew left behind were rougher than the potholes that were there before. By focusing on the smoothness of the approach, and giving consideration beforehand to how long the patches will last, Hurricane Org #0140's folks have their hearts set on making

real improvements to the roads they share. "I just hope the people in Building 5, or the Governor, would see this work and give us an A on it," said Smith.

"This crew gets their A," said Jimmy Wriston, P.E., Deputy Secretary of Transportation. "To drive this stretch of road, each patch is the same. You get a 4.0 by always getting the same result."

Smith has worked for West Virginia Division of Highways for seven years, and four months. He hopes to build his career and take on the Crew Chief position in which he is temporarily serving. When he gets to retirement, he wants to have earned it. "I get tired of hearing people complain about potholes," said Smith. "Yes, it is a problem. It is. But the reason I came is maybe I can be a value to the problem."



Photo by Randy Damron.

**WVDOH Today!** is a monthly newsletter published by the West Virginia Division of Highways and distributed statewide via email to a network of the best employees on earth. 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.

Editor: Jennifer Jo Dooley, M.A.  
West Virginia Division of Highways  
Attn: WVDOT Information Corps  
1900 Kanawha Boulevard East  
Building 5, Room A-137  
Charleston, West Virginia 25305  
Email: DOHnewsletter@wv.gov

**We are recognizing our people.**  
**We are going above and beyond to keep them safe.**



# West Virginia Bridge Design and Build \*Virtual\* Contest

## Student Bridge Builders Work From Home

For the nineteen years WVDOH has hosted the West Virginia Bridge Design and Build Contest, we've always known our students are too cool for school. Not literally, of course. Literally our students make their schools, their communities and the world better all the time. They're motivated. They share, teach and encourage each other. They cooperate. They lock in their focus on the often tedious process of trying to figure out which series of perhaps fifty-seven choices they can make to bring down the cost of their bridges by maybe fifteen dollars and rise a spot on the next leaderboard update. And they do so much else; their tennis matches, their school dance, their track meet, their volunteer time.

The Statewide Final Competition each spring is our way of rewarding them, their parents, their teachers, their schools, and their little brothers and sisters for the combined efforts of so many it takes for any one person to succeed. Students from five engineering colleges across West Virginia, professionals, the folks at BridgeWalk, sometimes musicians—or magicians—or both, additional prizes and contests, breakfast, lunch and a banquet dinner; it tends to be all the fun we can pile up in one weekend. It's a great tradition, except when there's a vicious pandemic with an annoyingly cute name (COVID-19? Seriously? Our middle schoolers could have named it better than that!) threatening more than just the end of one school year. So we took the contest virtual, and best and brightest young bridge builders worked from home.

Students work as individuals or in teams of two. Generally, the top 30 teams advance to the state final competition by having the lowest cost bridge using Engineering Encounters Bridge Design Software. (If more top teams work as individuals, sometimes more teams are invited.) This year, teams advancing to the final competition received \$100 per team member for earning their spot at the competition.

There is also a balsa bridge building component. Teams work to build the balsa bridge with the best strength-to-weight ratio and the bridges are loaded to failure at the final competition. This year, no tension on their faces. No little sister's jumping when big sister's bridge breaks. That didn't stop our students. They built their bridges anyway, not because they had to but because they could. Each team who uploaded a photo of their balsa bridge on the contest's Facebook page was awarded \$100 per team member for the balsa component as well. WVBDDBC will continue the tradition in the 20th annual competition next year.



**"This is my 4th and final year competing in the West Virginia Bridge Design and Build Contest. Although my final year didn't go as planned, I'm so very thankful that we were given the opportunity to earn money for building our bridges. Over the past four years, I've met so many incredible people and made so many new friends by competing in this contest, and I will look back on these four years fondly."**

**-Taylor, Student**

**"I've been a part of the bridge design competition from 6th grade to my junior year in high school. I wanted to congratulate all of this years participants."**

**-Callia, Student**

**"I'm a freshman in high school and I've had many fun experiences with the bridge design competition."**

**-Max, Student**



**"Let's keep going!"**

**-Tigr, Parent**

# Why We Wear Masks.

We don't wear masks because we're afraid. Obviously. We've continued to gain ground on the long-neglected maintenance needs of our roads. We've continued to build the WVDOH our state deserves. We're paving more than ever before. We've cut tree canopies, ditched, implemented a tracking system which allows us to improve the system as a whole. We've focused on training for employees all across the state. We've represented West Virginia admirably amongst other state's DOH's. We've worked tirelessly to be transparent and accountable for both the quality, and the quantity of our work. We haven't let up.



So why do we wear masks? Because that's the plan! West Virginia Division of Highways loves implementing a good plan.

For a plan to address this situation, it needs to keep us on a path between two very awful places. We need a safe, healthy West Virginia, and we need to maintain and grow what we've built — for the good of all our people. A very small, workable step that we can implement with ease and so little inconvenience it's barley worth a mention are these masks we wear with pride

and love. The pride is in giving our state the chance it should have to flourish and grow. The love is in the same. We wear masks not in fear for ourselves, but to protect others.

## A Few Words On Right Now; Steve Cole, P.E.

"I've been impressed for years," said Steve Cole, P.E. "We've got some of the best staff, and dedicated people. They just show up at all hours of the night. They go out and get the job done. They just get after it. They don't get frustrated. They come to work, jump in their trucks, get the equipment, get the material and they don't hesitate."

"We've had great teamwork throughout the current situation," said Cole. "The weekly meetings we've had with District management and Central Office management have been great. That way we are communicating with each other, sharing ideas, sharing resources and really working as a team statewide."

"We've split shifts," said Cole. "We have teams showing up each day at different times to lessen exposure. One crew

shows up at 6:00 a.m., another at 7:00 and another at 8:00. That limits the exposure of our employees being around each other."



The unique challenges of this time come on top of, not separate from, the challenges District 9 typically faces; challenges such as roads that wash out, not only in heavy flooding but even in a hard rain. Cole says his people are thankful they can make a difference.

"I think everybody is happy that they've been able to continue to work and continue to earn a paycheck," said Cole. "If somebody doesn't appreciate that, shame on them. It's been very rewarding for management and all our workers. We appreciate it, I think all our people do." With DOH's across the country laying off workers to get through this time, Cole understands the commitment WVDOH has to its people.

# Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor,

I'm writing to you about Dianne Davisson, an Office Assistant 2 in District 4. Her primary job is to be our receptionist, but she is so much more than that. When we sent transportation workers home to train, Diane jumped in and helped assemble packets to send with them. She was up and down the steps constantly to retrieve printed materials from copiers so we could be efficient. She kept in contact with supervisors to schedule when they would pick up materials. She disinfected the offices. She organized and gave out masks. She even watered plants for employees who were teleworking.

There are not enough Dianne's in the world. It would be a wonderful thing if more people were as motivated. She kept her own job duties going, making sure citizens never went unanswered as she jumped into action to help everyone out. I can't say enough how much I appreciate the help Dianne gave me at a time of uncertainty with an overwhelming amount of work that had to be completed to ensure our employees had what they needed. She always has a smile, and a positive word, for everyone she meets. I am forever grateful to her.

-Judy VanPelt, Training Coordinator, D4

## Symptoms of Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Know the symptoms of COVID-19, which can include the following:



Symptoms can range from mild to severe illness, and appear 2-14 days after you are exposed to the virus that causes COVID-19.

**\*Seek medical care immediately if someone has emergency warning signs of COVID-19.**

- Trouble breathing
- Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
- New confusion
- Inability to wake or stay awake
- Bluish lips or face

This list is not all possible symptoms. Please call your medical provider for any other symptoms that are severe or concerning to you.



[cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://cdc.gov/coronavirus)

# Coming Soon

# VISION AWARDS

The vision is simple; to be the best DOH 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 DOH 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 take pride in all we do.

**“The work of the DOT COVID task force to coordinate return to work plans across such a large, geographically dispersed agency will undoubtedly make the workplace safer for your employees and customers.”**

**-Michael O. Cadle, Colonel**

**West Virginia National Guard**

## Even Our Restrooms Are Getting Noticed

A couple traveling through West Virginia to Florida recently passed along an observation. On an 18 hour drive, they stopped at rest areas in every state. West Virginia rest areas were the cleanest of all.

Have you seen a familiar set of smiling eyes, above a mask, in the halls of Building 5?

*Welcome back, Keith Chapman!*



# WVDOT In-Depth—100th Episode: Shane Hudnall

“I was fortunate to be on a conference call with a group called NAATSHO, North American Association of Transportation Safety and Health Officials, from numerous states, all across the country,” said Shane Hudnall, State Safety Officer. “It was very beneficial to hear the different things that other states are doing, but at the same time, it was amazing, and very comforting to hear how well we’re doing compared to. When I mentioned what we were doing and how we had sent our crews home for training, and our safety being on top of that, and still making sure our crews are in compliance, with their PPE (Personal Protective Equipment), with masks and traffic control and everything, they were all just astonished at how well that worked and that we even thought of it.”

As WVDOH’s COVID Task-Force, led by Jeremy Casto, constantly evolved to keep employees safe on the job, the key was to be flexible and adapt like never before. What made that possible was an extreme level of care. Task force members, including Hudnall, were a phone call away at any hour of the day or night. All levels of WVDOH management were on the phone with Casto, Hudnall, and the others — Monday morning at 8:00 a.m., Friday night at 10:00 p.m., it was all the same. An intense level of personal care for not just the job, but the safety of the people, our WVDOH family, our West Virginia family, fueled the hyper-focus each task force member showed to making sure they made the best decisions for our agency.

“I was nominated to be on the COVID task force,” said Hudnall. “And I was so glad I was, to be able to have that focus on safety in the group. It’s been very stressful; a lot of long hours, a lot of long days. Phone ringing off the hook at all times, day and night, but we’re used to that. It’s been very, very busy, but rewarding to see our policies that we’re developing and our procedures that we put out are being followed and people are liking to have that direction so they know exactly what to do. It’s worked really well.”

“I believe the proudest moment is when they all stepped up and said, ‘what do we need to do,’” said Hudnall. “There was never a time when they wanted to run away from the situation.

They were up front, boots on the ground, in this whole situation. They were willing to do whatever needed to happen to make sure our employees are the safest in the country.”

Hudnall’s interview was the

Spring Paving Season



Spring Patching Projects



State Safety Officer on COVI...



**Shane is 100!**

100th episode for WVDOT In-Depth, a social media series that focuses on dispelling the myth of the lazy state worker and replacing it with real-life stories in the authentic voices of actual WVDOT employees. From September of 2018 to the present, the voices of real people working in the diverse parts of our WVDOT have been heard — from Transportation Workers, to District Engineers; from the Division of Public Transit to the State Rail Authority; from Disforce crews on piling wall jobs to new equipment in Buckhannon. To keep up with the series, and its awesome sister, WVDOT in Motion, join the 57,013 people who Like and the 58,462 people who follow (at press time) WVDOT’s Facebook page.

Each project accomplished by WVDOH folk requires the work of many hands, heads... and hearts. The right people, in the right place, at the right time are designing, building, repairing, not just the roads but the equipment, not just the equipment but the team, not just the team but the economy, not just the economy but West Virginia having more than a snowball’s chance in hell to be a place where students can grow up and come to work in a place they can put their hearts into. This massive team of more than 5,000 people (a team called “DOH workers”) knows that, and so, what we know, we share.

“You know, a lot of people in the field look at our employees as family, and they treat them as such,” said Hudnall. “We don’t want anybody hurt, we don’t want anybody sick, or for something to happen, so they take it very seriously.”



# Photo Feature: Paving, We're the Ones Who Never Give Up



We put in the effort to get the accomplishment, which would fade right after the ribbon cutting if we didn't put in more effort... and more effort... and more effort...



Here's to the ones who never give up, on anything!



Photos submitted collectively by Districts.

