

WVDOT Today!



April 2022—Volume 4: Issue 4



On Wednesday, April 6, 2022, Gov. Jim Justice, Transportation Secretary Jimmy Wriston, P.E., and paving crews from District 4 met on Harner Road in Morgantown to unveil the West Virginia Department of Transportation's 2022 statewide resurfacing schedule and to plug the DOT's updated online paving map.

But the star of the show was West Virginia First Canine Baby Dog.

"During this pandemic, I kept looking at her, and every time I'd look at her, I'd smile," Gov. Justice said after introducing Baby Dog to the assembled highways officials and journalists.

The governor said Baby Dog can provide all West Virginians with a lesson.

"It doesn't matter if you're black, white, rich, poor, Republican or Democrat," Gov. Justice said. "Nothing.

"She loves everybody," Gov. Justice said. "Wouldn't we be so much better in life if we could make others smile, and we could love everybody?"

Earlier, District 4 Maintenance Assistant Earl Gaskins gave credit to his paving crews for the hard work they do. "They show up every day to make sure our roads and communities are better," Gaskins said.

He also gave credit to Gov. Justice for his Roads to Prosperity program and vision for improving West Virginia. "Mr. Justice, to the boots on the ground, you've made a big difference for our state," Gaskins said.

The WVDOT has 266 separate paving projects on tap for 2022 involving more than 300 different roads around the Mountain State. The WVDOT plans to resurface approximately 800 miles of highway at a total cost of about \$208 million.

The resurfacing projects, along with WVDOT plans for Roads to Prosperity, core maintenance, bridge, and slide projects in 2022 can be found on the WVDOT projects map on the WVDOT website.

Also in this issue: Work Zone Safety

All Smiles! Baby Dog Visits District 4



Expansion Joint Maintenance Key to Safety

West Virginia Division of Highways (WVDOH) bridge maintenance workers are cutting, hammering and clearing debris on a bridge in northern Kanawha County as cars and tractor-trailers whiz by at 55 mph. They're in the process of replacing expansion joints on the McQuain Brothers Bridge on I-79.

"Expansion joints are an important part of bridge construction, and maintaining them is a key part of keeping our bridges safe," said WVDOH State Bridge Engineer Tracy Brown, P.E. "That's because bridges don't just sit there – they breathe.

"A bridge is going to move," said Brown. "You can't stop it. It's going to move the way it wants to move, and all you can do is accommodate that movement."

A steel and concrete bridge expands as it warms up and contracts as it cools, a factor bridge designers must take into account. Brown said a 100-foot bridge will be about a quarter of an inch longer at 120° F than it is at 68 degrees, and it will be about three quarters of an inch shorter if it's -30° F.

An expansion joint at each end of the bridge allows the span to stretch and shrink without damaging the bridge or the road-



way.

There are different kinds of expansion joints, but all are designed to expand and contract with the bridge while keeping debris and water from getting underneath to the bridge superstructure.

A properly installed expansion joint should last for 15 or 20 years, but sometimes they get damaged or wear out sooner. Brown said there are WVDOH bridge crews who routinely travel the state looking for bad expansion joints.

To replace the expansion joint on the McQuain Brothers Bridge, repair crews first cut out the old expansion joint and removed it. Then they cleaned out all the debris from the hole. A foam spacer the width of the joint will then be placed in the hole and concrete will be poured on either side of the spacer. The work is being done on one lane of the bridge at a time to allow traffic to continue using the bridge.

Once the concrete sets up, the foam spacer will be removed, and a new expansion joint will be installed.



WVDOH 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 WVDOH employees to empower us to function as **one West Virginia Department of Transportation**.

West Virginia Division of Highways
Attn: WVDOH Public Relations
1900 Kanawha Boulevard East
Building 5, Room A-137
Charleston, West Virginia 25305

Editor: Rusty Marks

Submit articles, letters, suggestions, and Vision Award nominations to:
Jennifer.J.Dooley@wv.gov.



Major Construction to Begin on Jefferson Road

Major construction is about to begin on the project to widen Jefferson Road in Kanawha County to five lanes between US 60 and US 119 (Corridor G).

“This is another project moving forward thanks to the vision of our Governor,” said Jimmy Wriston, P.E., Secretary of Transportation. “It’s

very exciting to finally get major dirt moving on this project. Complicated projects sometimes require complicated solutions that take time, and we’ve had great people working through those complicated issues.”

Work to widen Jefferson Road will begin immediately, with the contractor installing silt fences, excavating, and demolishing 16 homes south of Kanawha Turnpike to make way for the widening project. By the end of April, motorists should notice work beginning on pilings and abutments for the new bridge.

The announcement was made at a public meeting March 28, 2022 in South Charleston, where members of the public were able to ask questions and hear from officials with the West Virginia Department of Transportation..

Wriston said Gov. Justice’s Roads to Prosperity highway construction and maintenance program allowed the WVDOH to free up federal funds and state money to pay for the Jefferson Road project.

In April 2019, Gov. Justice approved the bid award for the project to Kokosing Construction Company for \$46.8 million to design and build the five-lane upgrade. Since then, much work has been done behind the scenes, planning, obtaining rights-of-way, and making arrangements to move utilities along the route.

However, Wriston said, the complicated project has taken time.



Contractors have had to coordinate with utility companies, the city of South Charleston, CSX Transportation, and various property owners along the approximately 1.7-mile route.

In addition to widening Jefferson Road to five lanes, the project will replace a

congested dogleg intersection and rail crossing at the intersection of Kanawha Turnpike and Jefferson Road with a new bridge and roundabout. Heavy growth along Corridor G has led to growing congestion on Jefferson Road, especially during the holiday season and on weekends.

The Jefferson Road widening project will work in conjunction with a new half-mile connector road to link Jefferson Road with RHL Boulevard. That project will add an additional access road to the Trace Fork Shopping Center, allowing direct access to Jefferson Road and alleviating congestion on both Jefferson Road and Corridor G.

In September 2021, Triton Construction Inc. was awarded a contract for more than \$10.9 million to build the connector road, which includes the construction of a 420-foot bridge.

The first project in the series of three designed to alleviate congestion on Corridor G was completed in September 2021 when the WVDOH opened West Virginia’s first Restricted Crossing U-Turn, or R-CUT, at the intersection of Oakwood Road and Corridor G. The R-CUT was designed to keep traffic flowing smoothly on Corridor G by shortening wait times at the traffic lights and redirecting traffic coming off Oakwood Road to two new U-turns; a faster and safer design.

“This project, in conjunction with the RHL Boulevard project and the new R-CUT, will greatly alleviate congestion along Corridor G and improve travel times once complete,” Wriston said.



Mountain State Rail Excursions to Begin This Month

The Mountain State's scenic rail excursion season is about to get underway, with excursions scheduled to begin in April, said West Virginia State Rail Authority Executive Director Cindy Butler.

Excursions on the Durbin and Greenbrier Valley Railroad were scheduled to begin the first weekend of April on the New Tygart Flyer, with excursions on Cass Scenic Railroad and the Durbin Rocket scheduled to begin later in May.

Excursions on the Potomac Eagle are scheduled to begin May 6.

The Potomac Eagle Scenic Railroad runs excursion trains from Romney to Moorefield and Petersburg. One of the railroad's most popular runs operates through "The Trough," which runs



along the South Branch of the Potomac River.

The Durbin and Greenbrier Valley Railroad operates excursions from Elkins, Durbin and Cass. Excursions include historic Shay, Heisler, and Climax steam locomotives.

Contractors operate the excursion trains on tracks owned by the

State Rail Authority.

Schedules and fares vary for the various excursions. For more information on Cass Scenic Railroad, the Durbin Rocket, and the New Tygart Flyer, visit <https://mountainrailwv.com>. For more information on the Potomac Eagle, go to <https://potomaceagle.com>.

Am I Blue? Color Scheme Announced for Charleston Interstate Bridges

A series of nine interstate bridges and six interstate ramps running through downtown Charleston will be painted blue with white concrete work.

A dedicated website will also be created to keep the public informed about the massive project.

"This area has the highest daily traffic counts in the state of West Virginia," said Greg Bailey, P.E., West Virginia Division of Highways (WVDOH) Chief Engineer of Operations. "It's a very visible piece of highway."

On March 1, 2022, Blastech Enterprises Inc. was awarded a contract for \$27,420,996.50 to clean and paint the series of bridges and ramps on Interstate 77 and Interstate 64. Funding is a combination of federal and state monies.

The project includes bridges over Piedmont Road, Bigley



Avenue, and Court Street and ramps accessing Court Street, Leon Sullivan Way, and Brooks Street. Work on the bridges was scheduled to begin the week of Monday, April 4, 2022.

The WVDOH worked with the city of Charleston to determine the bridge color scheme and to help plan the staged work schedule for the project.

Contractors have planned the project with as little impact to the traveling public as possible. "However, with a project this large, there is going to be some traffic disruption," Bailey said.

Contractors have developed a website, www.CarterBrooksIC.info, where the public will be able to find work schedules, detours, and other information about the project. A QR Code will allow the public access to the website through their smart phones.

The website will be updated regularly as work progresses.



Let's Gooooo, Bridge Painteers! Work Underway to Paint Chuck Yeager Bridge

Contractors have begun rigging work for a new blue and gold paint job on the Charles “Chuck” Yeager Bridge on the West Virginia Turnpike.

In June 2021, Southern Road and Bridge LLC was awarded a contract for \$16,267,273.80 to completely repaint both northbound and southbound spans of the bridge. The winning bid was 11 percent lower than the engineer’s estimate for the project.

In honor of Yeager, a Hamlin native who was the first man to officially break the sound barrier, the decision was made to paint the bridges blue and gold.

“The Yeager Bridge is an iconic bridge entering the Kanawha Valley on the West Virginia Turnpike and it is in desperate need of a full painting,” said Jeff Miller, Executive Director of the West Virginia Parkways Authority. “The West Virginia Parkways Authority is proud that Gov. Jim Justice had the vision to honor Yeager, who is one of the greatest West Virginians of all time, by



painting this bridge in the official state colors of gold and blue. Not only will this help improve the overall condition and appearance of the bridges, but it is also a simple, yet classy gesture to honor this great West Virginian.”

The southern span of the bridge was built in 1952 as part of the original alignment of the West Virginia Turnpike. The northbound bridge was built in 1980. Plans call for the southbound bridge to be painted blue and the northbound span to be painted gold.

Through December 2022, contractors plan to clean and paint the steelwork below the bridge decks. The work will require intermittent lane closures on US 60 and WV 61.

Beginning in January 2023, contractors plan to tackle the main bridge trusses above the bridge decks. Plans call for painting both bridges at the same time.

Painting is expected to be complete in June 2023.

Winners Announced for 2022 West Virginia Bridge Design & Build Contest

Winners have been announced for the 2022 West Virginia Bridge Design & Build Contest. Finals were held Saturday, March 26, 2022.

The contest is designed to encourage Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) education and inspire tomorrow’s engineers, today. Every student who makes it to the finals receives \$100. First place winners take home \$500, second place winners receive \$400, and third place winners get \$300. Every student who participates in the contest gets a free BridgeWalk tour for themselves and their families.

More than 150 teams from around the Mountain State took part in the qualifying round. A total of 36 middle and high school students on 23 teams participated in the finals, including 18 high school teams and five teams from West Virginia middle schools.

WINNERS:

High School:

- First Place, Bussne Bridge, Ian Burford, Greenbrier East High School.
- Second Place, TayK, Caelan Adkins, Wayne High School.
- Third Place, Bob_the_Bridge_Builder, Masan Adkins, Wayne High School.

Middle School:

- First Place, Potato Games, Nathaniel Vincent, Eastern Greenbrier Middle School.
- Second Place, Double Trouble, Sophie Carpenter and Nadia Madenspacher, Mountain Ridge Middle School.
- Third Place, Tucker and Brody, Tucker Wiant and Brody Cochran, Mountain Ridge Middle School.



Division of Motor Vehicles Enters Third Year of Pandemic More Efficient Than Ever

The West Virginia Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) is leading the way for the nation in customer service and through many different business transactions, processes, and procedures. From contactless driver skills testing to online knowledge testing to the upcoming electronic liens and titling, the DMV continues to focus on advancing technology to improve efficiency and provide the best customer service possible.

When faced in early 2020 with the global COVID pandemic, the DMV completely revamped the way they do business to keep citizens and staff as safe as possible, while greatly expanding opportunities for citizens to conduct DMV business online.

DMV initiatives in response to COVID included the institution of an appointment system to limit the number of people in DMV offices at any one time, reinstatement of a call center to answer customer questions, creation of a contactless driving skills test, increased online services to allow customers to conduct many of their transactions from home, the use of drop boxes at regional offices to leave title and registration documents, online knowledge testing and other changes designed to increase efficiency and make the DMV more user-friendly.

As the world adjusts to the start of the third year of a pandemic, the West Virginia DMV continues to focus on what we can control: Giving the best customer service possible, working to develop as many processes and procedures that will assist our customers efficiently and effectively, and working together as a team to advance our agency and the state of West Virginia forward. Here are some of the projects we are currently working on:

- Continue modernizing outdated mainframe-based technology.
- Continue to promote the usage of the online transactions through the DMV website.

- Implement a new, more convenient Interactional Registration Plan (IRP) solution that will allow customers to perform IRP transactions online as well as from a mobile device. This will also provide customers with real time Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration updates made directly to their mobile devices.

- Add online renewal of a dealer license for West Virginia Automobile Dealers to our current web services.

- Implement the mobile ID, which is already gaining traction in some states.

- Expand the availability of web-based business processes and increase the use of online self-service transactions by 5% each year.

- Improve the safety of the motoring public through public awareness initiatives and driver rehabilitation.

- Develop a customer-centric business system to replace outdated standalone databases to provide state-of-the-art motor vehicle services to customers in an efficient and cost-effective manner by the end of FY 2022.

- Complete the e-citation interface which will allow DMV to electronically import municipal and other court convictions.

- Add duplicate titles and the ability to check a title status to our online services. Additionally, a fees calculator is scheduled to be added online.

- Complete the transition of the Fairmont Exam Center to a full-service regional office by July 1, 2022.

- Continue construction currently underway for a regional office in Morgan County, opening in Spring of 2023.

Open Door Policy in WVDOH District 1



In what has become a routine occurrence, WVDOH District 1 Manager Arlie Matney recently met with state delegates Kathie Hess (left) and Dana Ferrell (right). Matney has let it be known he has an open door policy for state lawmakers interested in projects going in and around District 1, which includes Boone, Clay, Kanawha, Mason and Putnam counties.



Governor's Highway Safety Program: *U DRIVE. U TEXT. U PAY.*

The West Virginia Governor's Highway Safety Program (GHSP) is joining highway safety and law enforcement agencies nationwide in a high visibility enforcement mobilization that targets distracted drivers. Working in conjunction with the U.S. Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's (NHTSA), the GHSP is supporting West Virginia law enforcement agencies in their efforts to cite distracted drivers, as well as statewide public information efforts with the *U Drive. U Text. U Pay.* message about the dangers and consequences of distracted driving. This national campaign will take place April 7-11, 2022, to focus on heightened efforts, with statewide efforts taking place throughout the month. The GHSP also supports these efforts year-round in statewide endeavors.

West Virginia's high-visibility enforcement effort will begin April 1, 2022, but will kick off with Connect to Disconnect (C2D), a 4-hour national distracted driving enforcement and awareness initiative coordinated by state highway safety offices and law enforcement agencies across the country. The goals of C2D during the enforcement period are to demonstrate a nationwide commitment to enforcing cell phone and texting bans, ultimately preventing crashes, injuries, and deaths associated with distracted driving. This initiative will take place on April 4, 2022, with multiple agencies conducting high-visibility enforcement in the same timeframe.

"It's as simple as this: put your phone down when you're driving on West Virginia roads," said Gov. Jim Justice.

According to NHTSA, nationwide between 2012 and 2019, 26,004 people died in crashes involving a distracted driver. While fatalities from motor vehicle crashes decreased slightly from 2018, distraction-related fatalities increased by 10%. NHTSA also reported that the number of deaths linked to driver distraction was 3,142 nationwide, or almost 9% of all fatalities, in 2019. This represents a 10% increase over the year 2018, or 284 more fatalities. The distraction figure was the largest increase in causes of traffic deaths reported for 2019.

Millennials and Generation Z are the most distracted drivers, often using their cell phones to talk, text, and scroll through social media while behind the wheel. According to NHTSA research from 2017, young drivers 16 to 24 years old have been observed using handheld electronic devices while driving at higher rates than older drivers since 2007. In 2019, 9% of people killed in teen (ages 15-19) driving crashes died when the teen drivers were distracted at the time of the crash.

You may think a text doesn't take long, but you're wrong.

"Would you drive while blindfolded? Did you know that when you send or read a text message, you take your eyes off the road for approximately five seconds? Traveling at 55 miles per hour, that's like driving the length of a football field—blindfolded," said Bob Tipton, GHSP Director.

"Driving while looking at your cell phone is as dangerous as driving while impaired by alcohol or drugs. People do not realize that distracted driving is as dangerous as it is. If you see a vehicle weaving in its lane, you may be on the road with an impaired driver. Or, you may be on the road with a distracted driver. Both are equally dangerous," Tipton continued.

Violating West Virginia's distracted driving laws is not cheap. The fine for the first offense of using a cell phone while driving in West Virginia is \$100 plus court costs. The second offense carries a fine of \$200 plus court costs. The consequences of a third offense and subsequent offenses are a \$300 fine plus court costs, plus demerit points being applied to the driver's license record.

"The bottom line is this: distracted driving is illegal in West Virginia," concluded Tipton.

In its 2018 Traffic Safety Culture Index, the AAA Foundation reported that while nearly 96% of drivers believed it was very or extremely dangerous to read a text or email while driving, 4 out of 10 drivers admitted to doing so within the previous 30 days.

Drive Safe Every Trip

The GHSP, NHTSA, and law enforcement agencies across West Virginia urge drivers to put their phones away when behind the wheel. If you are the driver, follow these steps for a safe driving experience:

- If you are expecting a text message or need to send one, pull over and park your car in a safe location. Once you are safely off the road and parked, it is safe to text.
- Ask your passenger to be your "designated texter." Allow them access to your phone to respond to calls or messages.
- Do not engage in social media scrolling or messaging while driving.

Cell phone use can be habit-forming. Do you feel the overwhelming need to text or respond to text messages, while driving? Please consider activating your phone's "Do Not Disturb" feature, or put your phone in the trunk, glove box, or back seat of your vehicle until you arrive at your destination.



WVDOT Today! Goes Orange for Work Zone Safety Awareness

This month, WVDOT Today! newsletter is orange for Work Zone Safety Awareness. Please join us by wearing orange on Tuesday, April 12, 2022. These photos, by and of, your co-workers around the state are a good reminder of the reason why.



EXPO!

On March 23 and March 24, 2022, contractors, construction workers, architects, engineers, and technology representatives from all over West Virginia and the surrounding region attended the 2022 West Virginia Construction and Design Expo in Charleston. Many members of the West Virginia Department of Transportation (WVDOT) were in attendance as well.

The expo, featuring more than 400 exhibit booths, is the biggest conference in the area for the construction, engineering and architectural industries, and returned to the Charleston Coliseum & Convention Center following a hiatus for COVID-19.

The expo is a natural fit for the WVDOT, offering unique opportunities for networking, learning about new techniques and technologies, and invaluable continuing education opportunities. And it's all free.

"It's a place for people to meet and discuss business without the expense of conference fees," said Chief Engineer of Construction Todd Rumbaugh, P.E. "This is totally open for anyone to see and learn."

The expo featured more than four dozen seminars providing continuing education credits on all aspects of construction and engineering, including compliance with government regulations and utilizing the latest technologies.

Major topics discussed at the expo included opportunities that will be provided by the recently passed federal infrastructure bill, including \$3.7 billion for new highway and bridge projects, \$700 million a year for Abandoned Mine Land projects, \$46

million for clean energy initiatives and electric vehicle charging stations, \$487 million for clean water projects, \$600 million for broadband expansion, and \$44 million for new airport projects.

WVDOT was also highly visible at the expo. Transportation Secretary Jimmy Wriston, P.E., was in attendance, presenting on the expo's final day. Baby Dog and Gov. Jim Justice also did their part, with the governor honoring nine graduates of his Jobs & Hope program now qualified as heavy equipment operators.



Broadcasting Live from EXPO - WV on the DOT!



May 2, 2022 Deadline for LTAP Build a Better Mousetrap Competition

May 2, 2022 is the deadline for the West Virginia Local Technical Assistance Program's (LTAP) annual "Build a Better Mousetrap" competition.

The "Build a Better Mousetrap" competition is the perfect opportunity for public works agencies to highlight innovative solutions to everyday challenges that local transportation

professionals encounter. While the Mousetrap name sounds like LTAP is seeking mechanical innovations, they are looking beyond that. In addition to equipment modifications, tools, or gadgets, LTAP is looking for processes or systems agencies have put in place that enhance safety, reduce costs, improve efficiency, or improve the quality of transportation.

Participants shouldn't assume their ideas are not innovative. While a process might seem like common sense, it could be something that another agency or department hasn't thought of. Small ideas can grow into even bigger ideas, and one approach might be a tweak that someone else hasn't yet considered. Remember that the purpose of this competition is to transfer



technology through collecting and sharing real world examples of best practices and tips from the field. So think about how something could help others, and please submit your ideas!

West Virginia Division of Highways District 4 won the competition in 2021 with a truck-mounted device to spray tack coat on

highway patching and paving jobs. The sprayer utilizes a 55-gallon drum to hold and dispense tacking compound, eliminating the need to pour tacking compound out of 5-gallon buckets and spread it with brooms, making the process quicker and more efficient. The device cost the district about \$200 in materials and about two hours labor to build the tack sprayer.

To enter the competition, complete an entry form at www.wvltap.org/mousetrap. Photos or video clips that showcase the project are encouraged.

Help is also available for writing up your project. Email Kim Carr at Kim.Carr@mail.wvu.edu.

Public Transit Assisting Potomac Valley



Division of Public Transit Director Bill Robinson said the agency recently met with officials for the Potomac Valley Transit Authority about a project to upgrade the transit authority's headquarters facility on Providence Lane in Petersburg. The Potomac Valley Transit Authority serves Grant, Hampshire, Hardy, Mineral and Pendleton counties.

The transit authority wants to expand their existing facility. The Division of Public Transit is assisting the transit authority in determining the extent of the expansion project with the help of a consultant.



WVDOH Expanding Options by Operating its Own Paving Machines

West Virginia Division of Highways (WVDOH) Maintenance Assistant Earl Gaskins is in the driver's seat of a rumbling paving machine, steering confidently as the machine lays down a smooth, steaming ribbon of asphalt on a rural Doddridge County Road.



District 4, which includes Doddridge, Harrison, Marion, Monongalia, Preston, and Taylor counties, has made extensive use of their state-owned paving machines. Access to the machines has given Gaskins and other crews the flexibility to pave routes it might take years to get to if contracted out.

In support of Gov. Jim Justice's massive Roads

to Prosperity highway construction and maintenance program, in March 2020 the WVDOH bought eight new paving machines for distribution around the state's 10 highway districts. The machines allow local DOH work crews to pave local roads without having to hire a contractor.

"It's an added resource for us that lets us get more work done," said Joe Pack, P.E., WVDOH Chief of District Operations.

In their first two years of operation, State Force paving machines have resurfaced everything from short, one-lane country roads to primary state and US highways.

If you live on a one-lane country road, it's a big deal if your road gets repaved this year instead of two years from now.

"It lets us better serve our population in the rural areas," Gaskins said.

District 2 was using their state-owned paver on Barberry Road and Steer Fork in Lincoln County. District 9 was paving in Monroe County near Peterstown and in Fayette County near Scarbro.

District 8 plans to put their paver to use on Sugar Camp Road.

Statewide Drugged Driving Prevention Enforcement Observed on Wednesday, April 20, 2022

Drug-impaired driving has become an increasing danger on our nation's roads. In recent years, several states have created new laws allowing marijuana on a recreational or medical basis, which has made discussing the impaired-driving issue even more important. The Governor's Highway Safety Program (GHSP) wants all marijuana users to know that in West Virginia, it is illegal to use marijuana and then drive.

Although its origins are uncertain, April 20th (more commonly known as 420) has become synonymous with marijuana use,

and, in some circles, this date is considered a "marijuana holiday". Consequently, there will likely be an increase in marijuana use.

To help keep drugged and dazed drivers off our roads, the GHSP is teaming up with National Highway Transportation Safety Administration (NHTSA) and local law enforcement to spread the message that drug-impaired driving of any kind is dangerous and illegal.



WVDOT Will Have a Seat on New Uncrewed Aircraft Systems Advisory Council

A law just passed by the West Virginia Legislature sets up an Uncrewed Aircraft Systems Advisory Council, with the West Virginia Department of Transportation (WVDOT) having a seat at the table.

“We’ve got more experience than anyone else regarding drones,” said Travis Long, director of the Technical Support Division, which oversees the WVDOT drone program. “We use them for a lot of things.”

The WVDOT has a fleet of 17 drones which are used for everything from surveying and mapping to inventorying stockpiles of construction materials and public relations use. One drone is even optimized for surveying bridges.

House Bill 4667, passed by the Legislature during the 2022 legislative session and signed by Gov. Jim Justice in late March, sets up a nine-member advisory council to keep abreast of developments in the drone industry. “It’s trying to keep us up to date with new technology and make West Virginia favorable for that technology,” Long said.

The advisory council, set up under the Department of Economic Development, will include a representative from the WVDOT, a representative from the state Adjutant General’s office, at least one member of academia, a member with experience running an airport, and representatives from the business community and uncrewed aircraft industry.

VISION AWARDS

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

Rodney Hedrick—District 5

Cathy Weaver—District 7

Gregory Silvester—District 8

Jamie Cox—District 9

Deanna Simms—Legal Division

Kevin Hissam-District 7

Lee Ann Cole—District 7

Bryan Hunt—District 9

Michele Grigoraci—DMV

Mendy McClure—Finance

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.

ORANGE you glad you read the newsletter this month?

