

WV DOT Today!



February 2022—Volume 4: Issue 2

Katie Everly is among the snowplow drivers statewide who work around the clock to keep the roads clear and safe. Five years ago, she was struggling with substance use disorder.



Eager to make the best of her opportunity, Everly rushed to complete work to get her CDL, just in time to join snow removal and ice control crews battling West Virginia's winter weather. She now

Jobs & Hope Brings Opportunity to WV DOT

Her story is a shining example of West Virginians working together for the good of all West Virginians.

On Thursday, Jan. 27, 2022, Gov. Jim Justice publicly applauded her during his annual State of the State address as her success in his Jobs & Hope Program, designed to help state residents with substance abuse problems kick their habits and move back into the workforce.

With one-on-one help, it worked for Everly.

"It's amazing to be here," Everly said. "To overcome what I did takes a lot of hard work, dedication, determination and willingness to want a better life."

Everly, a West Virginia Division of Highways Transportation Worker in Ohio County, was hired in September 2021.

"Ever since she came through the door, she's been a ball of fire," said District 6 Engineer Tony Clark, P.E.



drives a oneton snowplow.

Clark wasn't aware Everly had gone through the Jobs & Hope Program when he hired her. She had disclosed much of her background during the interview process, but it was her work ethic and 'jump in get it done' spirit which initially impressed him.

"I don't think it's fair to judge someone for a mistake they've made," Clark said. "If they've made changes to correct it, it's

imperative to give them a second chance. With many West Virginians in this situation, this is something West Virginia needs."

Statewide, snowplow drivers like Katie are prepared for winter weather. When the weather warms up and summer returns, Katie, along with Transportation Workers around the state, will be making up for years of neglect maintaining the state's highway system to make Gov. Justice's vision for West Virginia's roads a reality.

Also in this issue...

Educational Reimbursement. Bridge Design Contest. SRIC.



Sunny Days Mean Canopy Clearing

Wintertime in West Virginia means tree-trimming time for the West Virginia Division of Highways.

WVDOH maintenance crews will be out periodically throughout the winter and into spring clearing canopy. It's an important part of highway maintenance that involves clearing branches and trees that overhang roadways.

By law, maintenance crews are only allowed to clear canopy between Nov. 15 and March 31. The restriction is in place to protect endangered bat populations, which don't typically use trees during those months.

Maintenance crews are only allowed to cut trees or trim branches on WVDOH rights-of-way.

Like cutting grass in the summer, milling and filling potholes or clearing ice and snow, canopy clearing is part of the WVDOH core maintenance program. When they aren't clearing snow and ice or fixing roads, maintenance crews find time to trim branches and cut down trees.



Maintenance crews cut away limbs and branches to allow sunlight to get to the roadways below. "Moisture degrades asphalt fast, so if we can keep the pavement dry the road lasts longer," said WVDOH District 1 Maintenance Engineer Kathy Rushworth, P.E.

Canopy clearing can also be used to thin out dead or diseased trees that might fall onto roadways.

Until recently, DOH maintenance crews were also limited to clearing a total of 140 acres of canopy per year. That restriction has been lifted, so Rushworth expects the state's 10 highway districts will try to trim more canopy than in past years.

In District 1, maintenance crews use bucket trucks, chainsaws, pole saws and chippers to clear away branches and limbs and grind them up into mulch. Bucket trucks have a reach of 40 feet, but maintenance crews have pole saws that are up to 175 feet long for reaching the highest branches.

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

West Virginia Division of Highways
Attn: WVDOT 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



There's No Time Like the Present: Safety Specialist Earns Degree

December 2021 was a big month for District 10 Occupational Safety Specialist Terry Mullins.

Mullins graduated from Bluefield State College with a degree in Engineering Management.

"When I graduated high school, rich people went to college and poor people went to work," said Mullins, 55. "I went to work."

Out of high school Mullins began a series of manual labor jobs, slowly working his way into better positions. He might have stayed a laborer had the bread company he was working for not shut its doors in 2010.

"Here I am, in my 40s, looking for a job," Mullins recalled. "I'm thinking, I've got to find something to keep me in the game."

Mullins was fortunate to land a job with the Division of Highways, where he has been for nearly eight years. But the need to do something more kept nagging at him.

"Words don't make careers," he said. "Action does."

In 2017, Mullins was at an engineering conference at Bluefield State College. Encouraged by professors and his family, he decided to take the plunge and register for classes. He never looked back.



Mullins paid for college through a combination of loans and grants. "After one semester, the DOH reimbursed me for up to two classes a semester," he said. "That began a domino effect."

Mullins was lucky to have assignments due on Sundays, so he could be a husband and father through the week and really hit the books on

the weekends. "It's hard, but you keep grinding," he said. "You keep grinding."

"Working full time and going to school, plus being a dad and being a husband, you're going north, south, east and west all at the same time."

In addition to support from the DOH, Mullins was also encouraged by family. His wife, Darla, is a principal over GED programs at two prisons, while his son Trevor just got a master's degree from Marshall University. Mullins' son Drake is a business administration major at WVU Tech.

Almost immediately after graduation, Mullins signed up for classes at WVU, where he is pursuing a master's degree in Mineral Engineering. "Who knows after the master's degree where I might go," he said.

District 5 Shares Snow Safety Tips



Continuing WVDOT's dedication to education and opportunity for young West Virginians, District 5 was recently invited to two local elementary schools, Elk Garden Primary School and New Creek Primary School, to talk to their students about snow safety. Representatives from District 5 put together a presentation that included a video, a song, and an equipment demonstration. The classroom presentation highlighted topics including building snow forts away from highways, backing away from the road when snow equipment is coming through, as well as refraining from sitting on snow banks, sled riding near highways, and throwing snowballs at cars. Both schools asked if District 5 would come back again next year.



Applications Open For Governor's Internship Program

Applications are now being accepted for the Summer 2022 West Virginia Governor's Internship Program.

The Governor's Internship Program offers high-achieving college students the opportunity to step beyond the classroom and into the world of experiential learning by participating in coordinated internships in private businesses, non-profit organizations, and government agencies. Students gain knowledge of the real-world work environment, learn valuable communication and leadership skills, obtain experience, and gain references for the future. These opportunities are a great way for the student to explore interests and consider future careers.

Since its creation in 1989, more than 2,000 talented students have participated in hundreds of rewarding internship experiences in West Virginia. To be eligible for the program,

students must have completed at least one year of study at an accredited college or university, be enrolled at a West Virginia college or university or be a West Virginia resident attending an accredited college or university out of state, and have a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or greater.

To apply, students may visit www.intern.wv.gov and click on the "Apply" tab. Last day for potential interns to apply is June 15, 2022.

The Governor's Internship Program is also looking for state government agencies, non-profits and private business to host interns. To be a host, go to www.intern.wv.gov and click on the "Hire" tab.

WVDOT Says Goodbye and Good Luck to Iconic H. Julian Woods

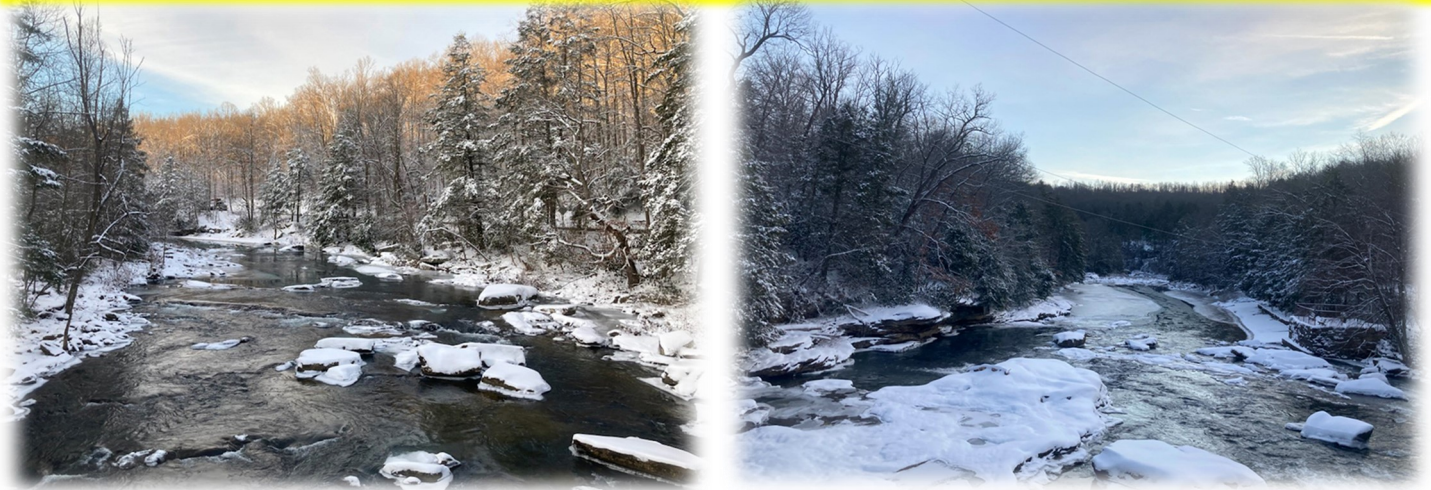
Friends and acquaintances in Building 5 recently gathered to say goodbye to H. Julian Woods, WVDOT Human Resources Executive, who recently left to take a position as Director of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion for WVU Medicine.

Woods made a very large impact on the WVDOT in a short period of time, helping implement new policies and procedures and a whole new way of thinking. We wish him the best for his future and all he hopes to accomplish.

Check out the 77th episode of "WV on the DOT" podcast for more on what Julian had to say about his WVDOT family.



Beauty Is All Around Us



District 7 Deputy Engineer Gary Freeman, P.E., was taken by the view of the Middle Fork River at Audra State Park while on his way to work. The photos were shot off of County Road 11 in Barbour County.

“When I saw it, I couldn’t help but to stop and snap a couple of pictures ... calm and serene,” Freeman said.

“I wanted to give others a chance to enjoy this as I did,” he added.

Wintertime Means Time for Brine

West Virginia Division of Highways snow removal and ice control crews use salt brine in many parts of the state to pre-treat roads to make snow and ice removal easier.

WVDOH road crews make the brine at their own facilities by mixing rock salt used on snowplows with ordinary tap water. The brine is then pumped into tanks for distribution on the state’s roads.

When weather reports call for a storm and field conditions are conducive to the process, WVDOH snow removal and ice control crews spray the brine solution on the roadway at least one day in advance of the upcoming snow. After the water evaporates, fine particles of rock salt remain on the road surface. When



snow or ice falls on the roadway, the salt quickly dissolves, lowering the freezing point of the water and giving road crews a head start on the application of additional materials.

Combined with plowing and the application of road salt and abrasives during and after a

storm, pre-treating roads with salt brine is an effective tool for keeping roads clear.

Not all winter storms call for the use of salt brine as a pre-treatment tool. However, through proper usage and timing, the application of the product provides WVDOH snow removal and ice control crews another option in the treatment process.



WV DOT Supports Continued Education

At the Department of Transportation, we believe in encouraging our employees to take advantage of multiple opportunities to continue in the betterment of themselves and the betterment of their careers with the WV DOT. Here are some opportunities:

Employee Education Reimbursement Program

We currently offer Education Reimbursement. The Department of Transportation will reimburse 100% tuition fees from an accredited college or university for a maximum of 6 credit hours per semester. An employee must achieve a qualifying letter grade for each course. Undergraduate: minimum C or equivalent. Graduate: minimum B or equivalent. For more information contact Monica.R.Kessell@wv.gov.

Co-Op Program

The Department of Transportation Co-Op program is designed to offer practical experiences related to transportation. Co-Op positions are typically degree specific to Engineering, Environmental, Accounting, Information & Technology, Legal, and Legal Assisting. However, other majors are welcome to apply.

Priority for position opportunities may be given to WV residents. All applications are due no later than 4:00pm on February 11, 2022. For more information contact Leslie.R.Adkins@wv.gov.

Scholarship Program

After successful completion of the Co-Op program, Co-Ops will be eligible to participate in our Scholarship Program. After being accepted for the scholarship, students will receive \$3,000.00 per semester for their Junior and Senior year. For more information contact Monica.R.Kessell@wv.gov

West Virginia Transportation Engineering Technician

The core objective of the West Virginia Transportation Engineering Technician Board is to develop highly skilled technicians to service West Virginia's roads and bridges. We have a partnership with BridgeValley Community and Technical College to provide on-line training courses and hands-on field experience to develop our next generation of technicians. Contact Kim.A.Ballard@wv.gov

Public Kudos to Division of Highways

Sometimes members of the public take the time to write personally to thank Division of Highways employees. The following correspondence was received in January:

RE: DOH Workers today,
Kanawha County, Chelyan

Dear Mr. Wriston,

I would like to commend the above area DOH workers and let you know how thoughtful, caring, talented and dedicated those folks are. After this last big snow and ice, they have kept Campbells Creek, and my "main" road of Clover clear and safe. I had requested through the "Request for Road Repair" that if they had time later in the week, could they bring a pickup truck with some salt on my little road (Pittman Road), which is narrow. They brought a truck and half-way slid in the little creek at an angle. Took them almost all day to get it out because of the position and narrow road. I made a pot of coffee and told those men to come in my house to get warm, but they refused ... "didn't want to track mud and snow in my house" even though I said it was OK. Everyone was, "Yes ma'am, thank you ma'am."

They worked for hours together, got their truck out and drove it out without damage.

Watching those me work together as a team all day, the bitter cold, their talent to get that truck out, was AMAZING. I just wanted someone "higher up" to realize what a wonderful group of dedicated men were from that area. Not enough "thumbs up" and "thanks" is given to their talent and dedication.

Respectfully,

Nancy Sarver

Jimmy Wriston, Commissioner, Division of Highways,

I was going to get this letter out some time ago. The shoveling of snow off the road, the Postal Service not running on River Drive has delayed my sending it to you.

The paving of the road has taken a significant amount of labor off my back. I no longer have to fill potholes. Thank you very much for having the road paved.

I hope everything works out for you this year....

Sincerely,

Perry P. Dotson, Elkview

SRIC Crews On The Job



The first two snow events of 2022 created unique challenges for WVDOH SRIC crews, but the plow operators handled things like the bosses they are.

Joe Pack, P.E., Deputy State Highway Engineer for Division Operations, said the 10 highway districts were short about 200 Transportation Workers during the first two snow events.

“COVID has affected us like it has any business organization,” Pack said.

But districts were able to pull other workers with CDLs and non-CDL workers to staff plows throughout the snow events, ensuring clear roads throughout the state.

“A lot of our employees who don’t ordinarily run a plow stepped up and volunteered,” Pack said. “They always pull together when things are tough.”



Senator Nelson Visits District 1

West Virginia Senator Eric Nelson, R-Kanawha, recently paid a visit to West Virginia Division of Highways District 1 headquarters in Charleston.

District 1 Manager Arlie Matney said Sen. Nelson wanted to find out what sorts of highway projects were going on in the district, which includes Kanawha, Putnam, Boone, Clay and Mason counties. At approximately 900 square miles, Kanawha County has its share of highways and bridges.

Government Organization committees. Between the two, important decisions are made on how the state spends its money, including funding for the West Virginia Department of Transportation.

Matney went over District 1’s various accomplishments during 2021, told Sen. Nelson about projects that are going on, and said he would keep Sen. Nelson informed about any upcoming projects within the District.

Sen. Nelson left with an open invitation to come back to District 1 at any time.



WV LTAP Announces Recent Roads Scholar Graduates

Staff at the West Virginia Local Technical Assistance Program (WV LTAP) recently recognized a new crop of graduates from the Roads Scholar Program who completed their course requirements. The Roads Scholar program is designed for local and state level transportation personnel to expand their knowledge and improve their skills in roadway maintenance and management techniques. Current graduates took their training virtually.

Recent Roads Scholar I and II graduates were:

ROADS SCHOLAR I

Tommy Collins, Assistant Chief to Deputy State Highway Engineer; Bruce Debolt, District 6 TW3 Crew Chief; Troy McCumbee, District 5 Technician; Stephanie Neuman, District 6 Transportation Engineer Trainee Associate; Michael Roberts, District 6 TW3 Crew Chief; Marcus Wood, District 6 Technician.

ROADS SCHOLAR II

Scott Billings, District 10 Transportation Engineer Technician, Senior; Dave Brabham, Regional Operations Engineer; Jennifer McNamara, District 6 Transportation Engineer Trainee, Senior.



District 6 Engineer Tony Clark recognizes Bruce Debolt as a recent Roads Scholar graduate.



District 5 Engineer Lee Thorne presents a Roads Scholar certificate to Troy McCumbee.



Operation Division Director Jake Bumgarner presents a certificate to Dave Brabham.



District 6 Engineer Tony Clark presents a certificate to Jennifer McNamara.

SMART529 "When I Grow Up" Essay Contest

The West Virginia State Treasurer's Office is announcing the 15th annual When I Grow Up Essay Contest. Sponsored by the SMART529 education savings program, the essay contest encourages West Virginia students in grades K-5 to dream about their future, award them for doing so, and educate them on the importance of higher education.



selected from five regions by a panel of judges. Each regional winner is awarded \$500 in a SMART529 College Savings account.

The fifteen regional winners are entered into a random grand prize drawing for an additional \$4,500 in a SMART529 College Savings account.

Students may enter electronically at SMART529.com.

Fifteen regional winners will be Contest deadline: February 25, 2022.



T&D GOOGLE CLASSROOM

KEEP UP TO DATE WITH T&D
AND TALK TO FELLOW LEARNERS

Stay Connected with Training & Development.

Join our Classroom for training reminders, calendar, conferences and more!

Class Code: 3ksf3z3
(classroom.google.com)



Mary Haynes, of Daniels, sent an online request for District 10 crews to clean up the entrance to Price Lane after passing snowplows left an accumulation of snow there while clearing US 19. A couple of days later she sent the following follow-up email.

“Thank you for the quick response to my request. The road crew came the day I sent in the request and cleared the entrance. Also, we appreciate you sending a truck this morning to scrape our road into the subdivision. Thanks again, Mary Haynes.

WVDOH also received the following email from Gary and Linda Cunningham of Lerona.

“Kevin, Joey and Anita, we just want to thank you for the wonderful, courteous service that we received down Rocky Bank Road 901/70 at Lerona today (Thursday), January 20, 2022. You folks have done a wonderful job in helping keep the road graveled, cutting brush and snow plowed. Words cannot explain our gratitude. Please pass this on to Charleston. If any questions, please let me know.”

Thank you again,
Gary and Linda Cunningham
Rocky Bank Road, Lerona.

Those of us within the West Virginia Department of Transportation try to do our best, every single day. Under the leadership of Transportation Secretary Jimmy Wriston, WVDOH has a new purpose and a new vision to go above and beyond what is simply necessary to get the job done and to do the very best job possible for the taxpayers of West Virginia.

That new vision has not gone unnoticed. Emails and letters from people like Haynes and the Cunninghams prove that the citizens of West Virginia can see and appreciate what we’re doing.

Every. Single. Day.

VISION AWARDS

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

- Stephen Cogar—District 7**
- Joe Pernell—District 4**
- Jackie Blankenship—District 1**
- Pamela Julian—Operations**
- Charles Anderson—Buildings and Grounds**
- Ben Claypool—District 7**
- Charlie Houdyschell—District 2**
- Mike Harper—District 9**
- Ryan Canfield—District 1**
- Kelly Hayhurst—District 4**
- Mike Sheets—District 4**
- Rob Maury—District 6**
- Michael Harper—District 9**
- Alice Irvine—District 9**
- Tommy Hively—District 1**

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.



West Virginia Bridge Design and Build Contest Open to Middle and High School Students

West Virginia Division of Highways has sponsored the statewide Bridge Design and Build Contest for the past twenty years to give West Virginia's middle and high school students a look at engineering

careers available to them in their home state. This year, students have until the end of February to submit designs to enter the contest. The final competition will be virtual, as it was last year, but trophies will be presented in person to the schools and prize money will be awarded.

Participation in the contest is entirely free to any middle or high school student in West Virginia, whether they attend public or private school or home school. Everything a student needs to compete in the contest is available on the website including a free download of the bridge design software, and a tutorial by Secretary of Transportation, Jimmy Wriston, P.E., who takes students

step-by-step through the process of designing a virtual bridge. The software, which looks similar to a video game, is based on real engineering principles and codes, but

students do not need to have any prior knowledge of engineering to compete.

Students compete individually or in teams of two, and the goal is to design a bridge which passes the load test and has the lowest possible cost. They can reduce their cost by finding efficiencies in their designs, and by experimenting with

different types and sizes of steel. Whether your student is a sixth grader just exploring career options or a senior in high school bound for an engineering college, they will learn something from the contest. For more information, visit

<https://wvbridgedesignandbuildcontest.com/>



Equipment Division Recognizes Harley Smith for 28 Years

Harley D. Smith recently retired from the Equipment Division following 28 years of service.

Smith grew up in Walkersville and graduated from Lewis County High School. He began as a Laborer. He finished his career as Equipment Manager II in the Fleet Planning section at the Equipment Division.

One of Smith's ideas was to paint DOH dump trucks in their current high-visibility gold paint scheme.

"I drove a snowplow for 20 years," Smith said. "I never did understand why we were driving a white truck in a snowstorm."

Smith's favorite thing at the Equipment Division was helping others fix problems with vehicles. "I grew up on a farm, so I've worked on equipment all my life," he said.

Smith had planned on taking it easy for a couple of months before looking for a part-time work, but is already itching to get back into the workforce somewhere.



Meet Monica Ashford, Assistant Director of Human Resources



It is not uncommon to see Ashford at the center of a training program, orchestrating the event like a conductor oversees a symphony performance. Then, suddenly, she will zero in on an employee to provide one-on-one attention.

A Certified Performance and Learning Professional, now known as a Certified Professional in Talent Development, Ashford grew up in Charleston and attended Charleston High School. She has a business administration degree from the University of Charleston and a master's degree from the University of Phoenix.

Ashford has been with the WVDOT since July of 2020.

"It's been an amazing journey," she said. "I'm part of an amazing team of folks who are committed to helping people learn. We can help carry the vision of the agency."

When not on the job, Ashford likes to relax by practicing yoga.

She also likes seeing her home state.

"I love to travel West Virginia," Ashford said.



Monica Ashford is the West Virginia Department of Transportation's Assistant Director of Human Resources, working out of Building 5 in Charleston.

Ashford oversees about 14 other employees. She is over the Transportation Worker Apprenticeship Program, which provides for the training and advancement of Transportation Workers. She also oversees the Transportation Engineering Technician Program through Bridge Valley.

But Ashford's main job is developing and implementing the myriad training programs within the WVDOT. If you've had a training course during the last couple of years, chances are very good that Ashford was involved in it.

"My part is supervising training and development," she said.

Training is her favorite part of her job.

"It allows me to share my experience and knowledge with people, and it helps them to grow," Ashford said.

A collage of four photos showing people in a recording studio. From left to right: a woman with blonde hair, a man with a beard and glasses, a man with a beard and glasses, and a woman with white hair. They are all wearing headphones and speaking into microphones. A logo for 'West Virginia On The DOT' is in the bottom left, and text 'New guests every Thursday WV on the DOT' is in the bottom right.

West Virginia On The DOT

**New guests every Thursday
WV on the DOT**

