

# WV DOT Today!



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## Building Bridges Nitro WWI Memorial Bridge Opens



On Friday, Oct. 29, 2022, Gov. Jim Justice; Transportation Secretary Jimmy Wriston, P.E.; local mayors, and representatives of U.S. senators Joe Manchin and Shelley Moore Capito gathered on a wide concrete span over the Kanawha River to celebrate the opening of the new Nitro WW I Memorial Bridge. The bridge, built alongside the Donald M. Legg Memorial Bridge, carries Interstate 64 over the Kanawha River between the Nitro and St. Albans exits.

"Today is a monumental day," Gov. Justice said. "This project has not been in the works forever, ever, ever, and a day. There have been a lot of comments about how we've moved quickly, how our great workers have done their jobs, and how all the great work our workers for Division of Highways do every day."

The new bridge, 1,425 feet in length, was built to alleviate a bad bottleneck on one of the busiest sections of I-64. The heavily traveled Donald M. Legg Memorial Bridge carries approximately 60,000 vehicles a day.

The new span is part of a \$224 million project to widen I-64 to six lanes between the Nitro and the Scott Depot exits. The renovation is paid for through Gov. Justice's \$2.8 billion Roads to Prosperity program. The construction of the new bridge was a joint venture between Brayman and Trumbull Construction.

Gov. Justice was the first to drive across the completed bridge under water cannons shot off by the Nitro and Teays Valley fire departments. Everyone in attendance was able to drive the length of the bridge, as well.

"This project has a big impact on the Kanawha Valley," Wriston said. "Thanks to Governor Justice's leadership and the Roads to Prosperity program, we, along with our contracting partners, are able to see this truly amazing project come to fruition. This project is much needed and will have an impact on the entire region. It will improve safety for drivers and help our growing economy."

Now that the new bridge is open, much work remains to be done. Once eastbound traffic is shifted onto the new bridge, demolition of the Donald M. Legg Memorial Bridge will begin. A new Donald M. Legg Memorial Bridge will then be built using a portion of the existing bridge piers.

Once complete, the Nitro WW I Memorial Bridge will carry four lanes of westbound traffic and the Donald M. Legg Memorial Bridge will carry four lanes of eastbound traffic.

**Also in this Issue:**  
**WVDOH Mourns Passing of  
Former Secretary Fred VanKirk, P.E.**





# More Photos from Historic Nitro Bridge Ribbon-Cutting



**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**.

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# Wife of Brig. Gen. Chuck Yeager Approves of Mountain State Paint Scheme

After seeing some paint samples, Victoria Yeager decided she really liked the blue and gold paint scheme proposed for the Charles Chuck Yeager Bridge.

The bridge, on the West Virginia Turnpike in Charleston, is named for Victoria's late husband, Brig. Gen. Charles E. "Chuck" Yeager, a Hamlin native and the first man to officially break the sound barrier in a specially built rocket plane.

Yeager saw a press release featuring an artist's rendition of the blue and gold paint scheme and contacted Jeff Miller, Executive Director of the West Virginia Parkways Authority, which oversees operation and maintenance of the Turnpike.

"He sent me two paint samples," Yeager said. Once she saw the actual colors for the twin spans, Yeager liked the idea of blue and gold bridges.

Yeager got a look firsthand at the paint job on a recent visit to Charleston, where she was promoting a new book and helping unveil a new exhibit on Gen. Yeager at West Virginia International Yeager Airport.

Contractors are nearly halfway finished repainting the two bridges, with work nearly complete painting the steelwork underneath the two spans.

In June 2021, Southern Road and Bridge LLC was awarded a contract for approximately \$16.3 million to repaint the bridges. They will begin repainting the upper surfaces of the bridges in



early 2023.

"This is so beautiful," Yeager said of the work completed so far. "It's outstanding.

"Before, the bridge was just drab. It didn't say 'excellence' like its namesake."

Gen. Yeager grew up in Hamlin and flew P-51 fighter aircraft during World War II. Shot down, he evaded the Germans, made his way back to England and volunteered to go back into combat, appealing all the way up to Supreme Allied Commander Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower. Gen. Yeager returned to combat, eventually racking up 11.5 aerial victories.



In 1947, 75 years ago, Gen. Yeager officially broke the sound barrier in the Bell X-1, a specially built rocket plane. The general nearly lost an upgraded version of the X-1 in a later flight when the aircraft went into an uncontrolled spin. After plunging 50,000 feet in about 70 seconds, Gen. Yeager recovered from the spin and landed the aircraft.



Victoria Yeager is concerned that more people don't know about Gen. Yeager and his legacy. She hopes the new paint scheme will help draw attention to Gen. Yeager and all he did and achieved.

"Now, I can proudly say, 'That's Yeager Bridge,'" she said.



# Bluefield Transfer Station Wins Local Construction Award



The Bluefield Area Transit's (BAT) Transfer Station project recently received an Excellence in Construction Award through the Associated Builders and Contractors of West Virginia.

Swope Construction was awarded the \$3.2 million contract to build the 2,000-square-foot, state-of-the-art facility on Bluefield Avenue. The transfer station opened in June 2022, and also serves as a Greyhound stop.

BAT serves Mercer and McDowell counties and carries about 211,000 passengers a year.

# VISION AWARDS

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

**Darren Bennett—Operations**

**Keith Cox—Legal**

**Julie Ashworth—Operations**

**Zach Murphy—District 4**

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.



# New guests every week!

transportation.wv.gov \*click on Podcast





# It's Official! Signage in Place for US Bicycle Route 11

Signage is now in place for one of only two US Bicycle Routes in the state of West Virginia, USBR 11 in Jefferson County.

US Bicycle Routes are a nationwide system of bike routes designed to follow existing federal, state and county roads to connect cyclists with significant destinations. US Bicycle Routes have been likened to an interstate highway system for cyclists.

Planners of USBR 11 worked closely with federal officials and the West Virginia Department of Transportation (WVDOT) on the planning and signage for the route. USBR 11 was approved in the fall of 2020.

USBR 11 travels for 17.5 miles in Jefferson County. The route begins at the Virginia/West Virginia state line near the community of Wickliffe, Virginia, and travels north on existing



local roads through Meyerstown, Kabletown and Mechanicstown before jogging east to hug the Shenandoah River.

Along the Shenandoah, riders will pass local Moulton Park, and further up, the River Riders Family Adventure Resort. Closing out the West Virginia section riders come into the Harpers Ferry National Historical Park by way of the

Armory Canal, and then join the Appalachian Trail across the Potomac River to connect with the C&O Canal National Historical Park and USBR 50.

USBR 50 was the first US Bicycle Route in West Virginia, approved in 2019. It runs for just a few miles in Brooke and Hancock counties to connect a stretch of bike route from Indiana to Washington, D.C.



# Secretary Wriston Visits Marshall University Engineering Students



Secretary of Transportation Jimmy Wriston, P.E., (center left) spoke to Dr. Wael Zatar's (center right) engineering students at Marshall University on Tuesday, Nov. 1, 2022, sharing the success of the Roads to Prosperity program, what's on the horizon with the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, his perspective on the value of education, advice on taking the FE exam while still in school and the PE as soon as possible and perspective on what it means to be an engineer with the West Virginia Department of Transportation. "How many of you are planning on getting your Master's Degree," asked Secretary Wriston. "Come joins us, we'll pay for it!"



# Safe Driving Key Ingredient to a Happy Thanksgiving

The West Virginia Governor's Highway Safety Program (GHSP) is reminding everyone to be safe during your holiday travels and make it to the table this Thanksgiving. Whether you drive downtown or to your hometown, the GHSP wants to remind you to: Buckle Up and Don't Drive Impaired.

Thanksgiving is one of the busiest holidays for Americans, with more drivers being on the roads than usual. With higher traffic volume, the risk of being in a crash increases. That's why we are reminding everyone to Buckle Up. Every Trip. Every Time. We also remind drivers that even one alcoholic beverage can impair their ability to safely operate a vehicle.

"Thanksgiving is a time for celebrating gratitude with loved ones and friends. We want everyone to arrive at the Thanksgiving table safely," said Bob Tipton, GHSP Director. "A key ingredient to having a happy Thanksgiving holiday is safe driving. This includes correct use of seat belts. Properly using your seat belt increases your chances of surviving should you be in a crash."

During the Thanksgiving holiday weekend in 2020 (6 p.m. on Wednesday, November 25, to 5:59 a.m. on Monday, November 30), there were 333 passenger vehicle occupants killed in traffic crashes across the nation. More than half (52%) were unrestrained. Nighttime proved more deadly than daytime, with 67% of Thanksgiving weekend fatal crashes occurring at night. These deaths represent needless tragedies for families across

America and may have been prevented with the simple click of a seat belt.

Once you have arrived at your destination, please remember to continue making smart choices. If holiday gatherings will include alcoholic beverages, hosts should make sure that there are non-alcoholic options for designated drivers. Travelers need to plan ahead. If you know you'll be consuming even one alcoholic beverage, make sure you have a sober driver or use public transportation or a ride service to get home safely.

"By making smart choices like buckling up and not driving impaired, drivers and passengers will be able to focus on the celebrations and enjoy themselves rather than facing preventable tragedies," concluded Tipton.

A little background on us: each state is required by federal statute to have a highway safety program. West Virginia's program falls under the Division of Motor Vehicles. Our ultimate goal is to reduce crashes, injuries and fatalities on West Virginia's roadways. We do this through concerted media and enforcement efforts in an attempt to change driving behaviors. We want YOU to be safe on the roadways so that we ALL are safe on the roadways.

For more information, please visit [highwaysafety.wv.gov](http://highwaysafety.wv.gov) or visit the GHSP's social media channels at [facebook.com/wvghsp](https://facebook.com/wvghsp) or [twitter.com/WVhighwaysafety](https://twitter.com/WVhighwaysafety).

# Statewide Impaired Driving Enforcement to be Held Throughout Holiday

Let's give thanks by being responsible drivers so that we keep ourselves and all road users safe. The GHSP is conducting a statewide impaired driving prevention enforcement period surrounding the Thanksgiving Holiday.

Specific messaging will address all forms of impairment, which will be targeted by law enforcement officers during this high visibility enforcement period.

The holiday weekend will give everyone an opportunity to get together with friends and family as the unofficial beginning to a busy holiday season. Some will plan to have alcohol beverages on hand to celebrate. If you are hosting, be sure to make sure to

have plenty of non-alcoholic beverages for designated drivers.

The GHSP reminds all drivers that for some, just one alcohol beverage is one too many. If you plan to drive, plan to refrain from alcohol or drugs during your Thanksgiving celebrations. Be a safe, responsible, sober driver.

## Check for Recalls

The end of Daylight Saving Time is when we replace the batteries in our smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors. It's also a great time to check to see if your vehicle has an open recall. Visit [NHTSA.gov/recalls](http://NHTSA.gov/recalls) and use your vehicle's VIN to check for safety recalls.





# DMV Opening Regional Office in Berkeley Springs

Construction began recently in Berkeley Springs on a new, full-service Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) regional office that will bring additional and much needed driver's licensing and vehicle services to the citizens of the Eastern Panhandle.

"We know how busy our Martinsburg and Charles Town Regional Offices are on a daily basis," said DMV Commissioner Everett Frazier. "Population continues to grow in that location, and opening an office in Morgan County will help us to provide accessible, more efficient and convenient customer service to that area."

Full-service DMV Regional Offices offer driver's license skills

testing, written knowledge tests, vehicle registration renewals, title work, and more. A motorcycle course will also be built so that the new office will offer motorcycle testing as well.

"We are anticipating a staff of at least a dozen or more at the Morgan County Office, and will begin hiring for that soon," Frazier said. "We hope to be open and fully operational by Spring of 2023."

The DMV hosted a hiring event Wednesday, Nov. 2, 2022 in Martinsburg to hire a regional office manager, assistant office manager, floor manager and DMV agents to staff the new facility.

# Touch a Truck, Touch a Life

West Virginia Division of Highways (WVDOH) transportation workers like Zach Murphy, motivated by a desire to build a bright future for their home state, participated in Monongalia County Head Start's "Safety Palooza" on Saturday, Oct. 22, 2022.

"Everybody wants to get inside the truck, see the buttons, see the lights, press the horn, anything that makes noise," said Murphy. "Just to see the kids' faces light up when they hit that horn or see those lights, makes my day."

"It's obvious the kids really enjoyed this," said Secretary of Transportation, Jimmy Wriston, P.E. "I think it's just so important for our agency to be connected to the local levels, and as you can see we've already begun recruitment early."

WVDOH has a long history of investment in West Virginia families; participating in career days, bridge tours, and, for 22 years, hosting the West Virginia Bridge Design and Build Contest for middle and high school students statewide. The agency sponsors conferences with the five major engineering colleges in West Virginia each year, hosts Co-Op students in multiple disciplines each summer and works to bridge the gap between school and meaningful employment opportunities statewide.



At the "Safety Palooza," held in the parking lot of the Mountaineer Mall in Morgantown, "Touch a Truck" has made a big, loud impression on children and families.

WVDOH's focus on education does not stop once employees are hired. With educational reimbursement available for employees pursuing advanced

degrees, increased focus on training, implementation of the Classification and Compensation Career Plan for all West Virginia Department of Transportation agencies -- including not only WVDOH but also Division of Motor Vehicles, Parkways Authority and the new Division of Multimodal Transportation Facilities, Secretary Wriston encourages employees to work together to reach the goal: to be the best educated Department of Highways in the country.

For transportation workers like Murphy, Oct. 22 was a Saturday well-spent.

"It was fun, you know, positive vibes," said Murphy. "Kids love coming out, touching the trucks, and maybe, someday, if we influence them today, maybe later on they'll have a good career at Highways."





# New Basement Print Shop Ready for Business

The newly revamped print shop in the basement of Building 5 is almost open for business and ready to take your orders!

"It's just a matter of getting the word out," said West Virginia Division of Highways (WVDOH) Office Services Director Ameche Watson. Office Services recently invested

\$223,000 in three new, state-of-the art copying machines capable of magazine-quality printing up to 12 by 18 inches in size.

"We need to better utilize our equipment," said WVDOH Business Manager Carla Rotsch. "I'll walk around and see people taking 10-page documents and making 50 copies of them. They don't need to be doing that on these little office copiers."

Office Services now has two new color and one new black and



white copy machine capable of printing 70 sheets a minute. The machines are able to print custom envelopes and business cards and pre-punch documents for binding.

The machines are intended to save the WVDOH money in the long run by eliminating the need to farm out large print jobs to

contractors. Farming out business cards alone is currently costing the WVDOH \$40 for a box of 200 cards.

"We don't want to use Charleston Blueprint unless we absolutely have to," Watson said.

Taking on larger printing jobs in the basement print shop should also save wear and tear on individual office printers and possibly eliminate the need for some printers altogether, saving even more money. The print shop currently has a staff of three, but Watson expects he'll have to hire more help.

# Good Job. WVDOT!

The public notices when we do good work. The West Virginia Department of Transportation (WVDOT) has recently received the following notes of thanks from grateful citizens:

"I want to write a thank you note about the WV Highway Dept. was wonderful cleaning up the trees in back of our home after they cut them down along I-81. Paul from the highway department in Berkeley County WV was wonderful and very attentive to our problem that was caused by cutting down the trees along I-81. Thank you, Paul for a job well done!!!"

**Rhonda Nayne**  
Bunker Hill

"Wanted to express my appreciation for the crew that repaired the bridge just over the county line (Hardy), on Ford Hill Road, on the SW side of short mountain that was damaged in March from that derecho storm we had.

Each time I drove over it I made it a habit to say hi & thx to those working on it. Again, I appreciate the attitude during the repair and all the work that went into an unplanned large project of 6+ months. Thanks to all!"

**Respectfully,**  
**Frederick C Montney III**  
MSgt USMC Retired



# WVDOT Mourns the loss of former Transportation Secretary Fred VanKirk, P.E.

Everyone with the West Virginia Department of Transportation (WVDOT) is saddened by the news of the passing of our former Secretary of Transportation, Fred VanKirk, P.E.

VanKirk, who served as Commissioner of Highways and Secretary of Transportation under former governors Gaston Caperton and Bob Wise, passed away on Monday, Oct. 24, 2022. He was 87.

"This is indeed a sad day," said Transportation Secretary Jimmy Wriston, P.E. "Secretary VanKirk was an icon of transportation in West Virginia. As a young engineer, I had an opportunity to work with and interact with him during the devastating floods in southern West Virginia in 2001. His influence has had an impact on all of transportation in West Virginia."



VanKirk served for more than 41 years in West Virginia's transportation sector. After earning a degree in engineering from West Virginia University in 1962, he worked in the Highway Department's planning and engineering fields until being named the State Highway Engineer in the early 1980s. In 1989, Governor Gaston Caperton named him West Virginia Commissioner of Highways,

and in 1995, VanKirk took on the added role of Secretary of Transportation. He later served in this dual capacity under Governor Bob Wise from 2001-2005.

In his role as West Virginia's lead highway official, VanKirk worked closely with then-Sen. Robert C. Byrd, R-W.Va., on the planning, development, and funding of West Virginia's transportation network.

# Bumgarner finalist for Vanguard Award

Jake Bumgarner, P.E., West Virginia Division of Highways (WVDOH) Operations Division Director, was recently named as one of 19 finalists for the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials' (AASHTO) prestigious 2022 Vanguard Award.



within the transportation field.

"I am exceptionally proud of Jake and blessed to nominate him for this award," said West Virginia Transportation Secretary Jimmy Wriston, P.E. "The competition to win this is fierce, and represents the

best of the best in young transportation officials."

The annual award recognizes innovative engineers aged 40 and under who are leading the way in new developments or ideas

Bumgarner, 40, has been with the WVDOH since 2006. He holds an engineering degree from West Virginia University.

# How Will We Ever Replace the Cramer's? Just Ask Whitmore and Keller



Ted Whitmore, P.E. replaces longtime Traffic Engineering Division Director Cindy Cramer, P.E., who retired on Monday, Oct. 31, 2022.

"I feel like she's a tough act to follow," said Whitmore. "I like a new challenge!"

Whitmore, a New Martinsville native, received his engineering degree from West Virginia Tech, and has been with the West Virginia Division of Highways (WVDOH) since 1999. He has been with Traffic Engineering his entire career, so is perfectly suited to take over the reins of the division.

Whitmore also expressed his appreciation for the flood of congratulatory emails he received on the appointment.

Traffic Engineering is involved in all stages of the design and construction of highways, including traffic signals, signage and road striping. The division also collects and analyzes safety data, and oversees the daily operations of the Transportation Management Center (TMC).



Perry Keller takes over for David Cramer, who retired as the West Virginia Division of Highways (WVDOH) Chief Economic Development Officer on Monday, Oct. 31, 2022.

"I've got big shoes to fill," Keller said. "Dave Cramer was here for decades doing this job."

Keller grew up in South Charleston and has degrees in business from Marshall University and West Virginia Graduate College. He worked for the WVDOH from 1988 to 1999 and again from 2007 to the present.

The mission of the office is to "ensure appropriate coordination between the WVDOH and other public and private interests during the development of economic development projects affecting the state transportation system.

"It's a good opportunity for me," Keller said. Keller is looking forward to building relationships all around the state.

## Did You Know?

Two things that are always being asked of Career Services section:

1. **Why do I need to fill out an application for every job that I am interested in?**

We review applications individually for each posted position. We do not collect names to place on a register for future use.

2. **Why do I need to describe my DOH job duties if I already work here?**

Although we may have an idea of what you do, we do not have first hand knowledge of your day to day job duties, special equipment you may operate etc. Detailing your work history ensures we provide a complete evaluation of your skillset.

